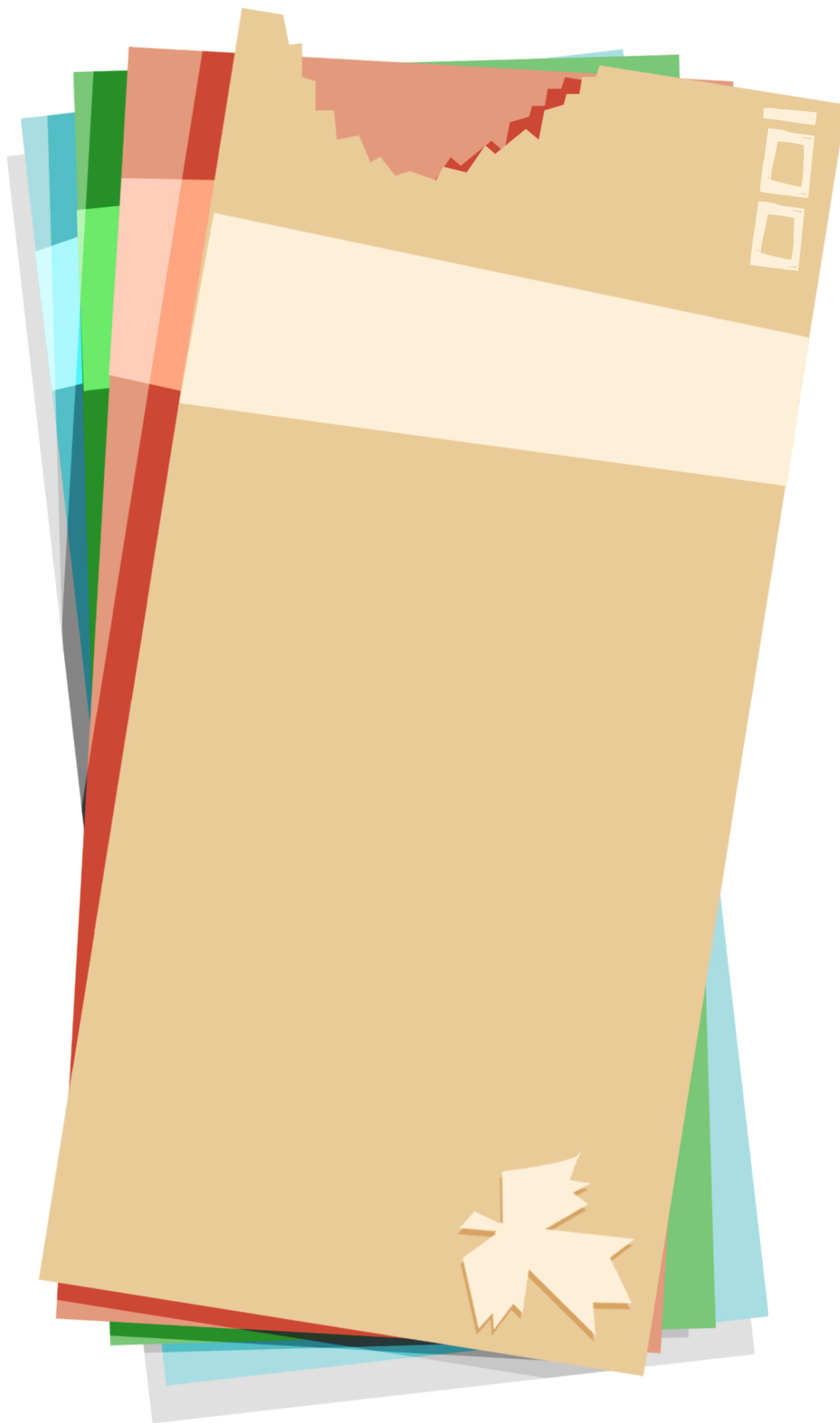


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NEXUS

camosun's student voice since 1990
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Location: Lansdowne Richmond House 201
Phone: 250-370-3591
Email: editor@nexusnewspaper.com
Website: nexusnewspaper.com
Publisher: Nexus Publishing Society

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editor's letter Strands of desire

My hair was three inches longer yesterday. Today, I cut it with a reference photo of Danish-French actress Anna Karina. The black-and-white headshot captures her *joie de vivre* as her dark silk hair bounces all around a Paris made only for her. Short fringe (see more on Fringe on pages 8 and 9) weighs against her forehead, saying “*qui, petite moi?*” My hair replicates the way she dances, side to side. I perform choreography with every head turn.

In a handheld mirror, I am a new woman, a Karina type. She is a woman of authority—spiffy, bold, and elegant. Sass too is hidden among the strands. The ends curl upwards as they graze my shoulders, staring straight into an infinite sky *sans* fear, a force to be reckoned with.

My hair defines me—a tangible expression of my inner workings. A portfolio of my character runs through my fingers as I untangle knotted bits. It could be so, but more likely, it is a game of pretend, a Groucho disguise of feminine idealism.

I am selective of the hairs that mold me and critical of the ones that were once criticized (see more of critics on page 11). Despite childhood prayers, my ancestors water the dark, thick hairs that grow on my arms, legs, upper lip, between my eyebrows, and everywhere else. I clear it off every so often to sustain my French new wave chic, upholding hundreds of years of white supremacy with every five-minute shave, pluck, wax, or Nair, colonizing my own body to please the little boys and girls who once teased me. A history of Maya can be found in my shower drain, while my smooth legs glisten like the satin atop my head. I do not blame the children, of course, for they are just offspring of larger Father Oppression.

Erasure is what I am told is beautiful—hair elsewhere than the scalp is the antithesis of femininity. Anna Karina would surely be caught dead.

As I've aged beyond some of my naivety, the tired skin on my surface misses the tender follicles which fashion tailored armour. A security blanket hand-sewn by my people comforts my body while I silently revolt against the system during the colder seasons, “neglect” hidden under my pant legs, a dirty secret. Shamefully, come spring, my uprising is put to rest and my blanket folded away in the chest for next winter. The world should never know, I, as a grown woman, have body hair. Oh, the horrors that would ensue.

I continue my protest on my arms, where coffee-coloured grass grows dense. Like a framed piece of art (see more on art on page 8), three-quarter length sleeves border my heritage—an avant-garde showcase for witnesses. T-shirts are my personal statement to Gillette Venus and their outrageously priced (see more on money on pages 3 and 6) pastel-coloured hair-removal trinkets orchestrated by bald CEO Gary Coombe.

I beg my ancestors for their forgiveness of my shame and guilt. It may have taken me many years to admit, but my new hairdo is the least beautiful hair I own. *Vive la resistance.*

Lydia Zuleta Johnson, student editor
lydia@nexusnewspaper.com

flashback 25 Years Ago in Nexus



Whack-a-car: Our September 20, 1999 issue was no exception to the general chaos of 1999. This issue covered the successful launch of the U-Pass at Camosun, marked with a ceremonious car smash. Lined up to demolish the beater, students took a swing with a sledgehammer after Victoria Regional Transit Commission chair Judy Brownoff gave a short speech congratulating Camosun students who advocated and voted for their transportation needs. More than 4,700 students participated in the vote, with 3,175 students voting in favour of the pass. Thankfully for the car, not all of those 3,175 students were in attendance on that day.

Speaking up?: In a call-out to Camosun students this issue, we asked “How was your experience

with the registration department and what would you change?” Several students responded with a general satisfaction of the department, however, one student was more than content with his experience, succinctly expressing “It rips. She sounds sexy.” It’s unclear who “she” is and why she is “sexy,” but I figure it still counts as a positive testimonial to the college’s resources.

Time capsule nesting doll: Within this *Nexus* time capsule of the late '90s, we covered a 1914 time capsule retrieved from behind the Lansdowne campus’ Young building and unveiled for stunned spectators. Kept carefully within a copper box, various uncirculated coins and a number of paper slips emerged, including a copy of the 1912-1913 Annual Report of the Public School System, a typewritten sheet listing several honoured delegates, and a 1914 edition of *The Daily Colonist* newspaper. This 1999 issue was, in fact, also recovered from a historic cafe: alongside a beanie baby and a copy of *Reality Bites*, the post-modernist archive was found in *Nexus* HQ in Richmond House, also on Lansdowne campus.

open space Students forced into moral dilemma with defence contractor’s Umo app

DANIEL ELLERTON
STUDENT EDITORIAL ASSISTANT

You’d think that in 2024, with the government constantly spouting on about the value and strength of Canadian commerce, we would have Canadian-owned companies administrating our public transportation systems—but, no, your new Umo bus pass and app is delivered to you through a US-based defence contractor.

You read that right: a defence and public transportation equipment manufacturer based in the US owns the Umo system that BC so lovingly endorses.

I’m not a fan of giving any money or data to defence contractors or the

they knew Umo was administered by a defence contractor, how many would say yes? I doubt it would be many.

Our media is filled with tragedy resulting from wars; while Cubic may not be pulling the trigger, they train people how to do it well.

Not to mention the fact that, like most other apps, when we sign up, we allow the app to record data about ourselves.

And so, I have three major issues with the direction the BC government has decided to go with its public transportation. First off, every Camosun student is now indirectly funding military action. Secondly, a military contractor

No one—not Camosun, not BC Transit, not the provincial government—has been forthcoming about the type of business we are indirectly funding here.

military industrial complex for any reason. I mean, what does a defence company need with my data anyway? We’ve been trained as a society to accept convenience without asking “Where does my money go, and who does it fund?” Umo is a part of Cubic Transportation Systems, a division of Cubic Corporation. Cubic is an international defence contractor. According to their website, Cubic prides itself on its defence, intelligence, and advanced military training techniques. In fact, the advancements they’ve made in teaching people how to kill other people are the first thing you see on their webpage.

While every country has the right to defend itself, I’m not sure military contractors align with my views as a citizen. I certainly don’t like the idea of funding military contractors on the back of my public transportation. And if I were to ask random students whether or not

has access to some of my personal data. Lastly, I don’t have any other options except driving.

I could probably add one more: no one—not Camosun, not BC Transit, not the provincial government—has been forthcoming about the type of business we are indirectly funding here.

Whether they like it or not, people are being forced into what I think is a moral dilemma: you either drive a car or help fund military contractors. You’d think that given the environmental impact of everyone driving a car, and BC residents’ general distaste for war, the government would have tried harder to find a transportation logistics company that was Canadian and not a company that has “superior warfighting readiness” as one of its three major pillars for its defence solutions; this clashes pretty hard with Camosun’s pillars.

I might not be dying to try Umo, but someone is.

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!

NEXUS

camosun's student voice since 1990

Got something to say?

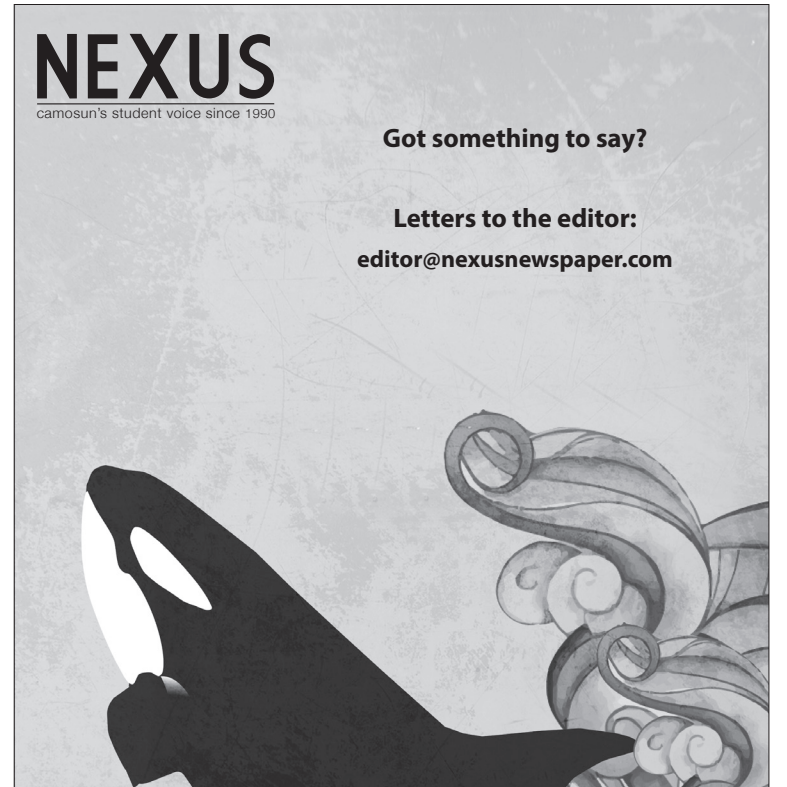
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COVER IMAGE: PROVIDED BY CAMOSUN COLLEGE

OVERHEARD AT NEXUS: “None of Shakespeare’s comedies are really that funny.”



students

New poll results show students are struggling to meet basic financial needs

“We have increased our food services... We are trying our best to support students.”

PRINCE SOLANKI
CAMOSUN COLLEGE STUDENT SOCIETY

LYDIA ZULETA JOHNSON
STUDENT EDITOR

A recent poll has found that Canadian post-secondary students and their parents are struggling to support students' basic financial needs.

Released on August 27, the poll, conducted by TD Bank, found that 65 percent of students consider themselves “financially unstable,” with nearly 45 percent unable to cover necessities such as food and housing. Additionally, 94 percent of parents surveyed are providing some level of financial support to their children during their post-secondary education, while 71 percent of parents have reported financial suffering as a result of it.

Although the poll reflects significant parental support, British Columbia Federation of Students (BCFS) chairperson Jessie Niikoi says the BCFS is still hearing increased concerns from students struggling with the cost of living in BC.

“[T]here’s... a lot of students who have started asking if there’s some sort of financial support that student unions provide because they’re starting to face the pressure of increased tuition, unaffordable housing, a lot of things that are affecting them when it comes to their post-secondary education,” says Niikoi. “And we know that this is something that’s happening across

BC right now, but students have that added cost of tuition to that and it’s causing a problem everywhere.”

The poll also found that one in five Canadian students are currently sourcing financial advice from social media platforms such as Instagram, TikTok, and YouTube. Camosun College Student Society (CCSS) external executive Prince Solanki says he’s concerned about the potential for misinformation and would like to see the college attempt to better educate students on budgeting. Solanki also says he’s noticed more students accessing resources such as the food bank on campus. He says the CCSS has increased their available items to accommodate students’ growing needs.

“We have increased our food services. We used to have bread days, but now we were having vegetables as well... We see lots of students are even more aware of these things now, and they are coming forward to take some bread,” says Solanki. “We are trying our best to support students.”

Niikoi says that in addition to managing basic needs, the BCFS is hearing about an increasing amount of students living in sub-standard housing circumstances. She says issues have only escalated post-COVID.

“Things are unaffordable in BC, there’s increased cost in accessing



LYDIA ZULETA JOHNSON/NEXUS

Students at Camosun College can access services from the Camosun College Student Society to get support.

food, like groceries are expensive now,” she says. “So a lot of students are also having to rely on their food banks on campus... And housing is so unaffordable, so now students are having to rent places with a lot of them in one place. So you would have four or five people in a one bedroom as opposed to usually a one bedroom would take one or two people maximum. But a lot of people are now having to cut the cost by living in places that are not really good for them.”

The BCFS represents over 170,000 BC students at 14 post-sec-

ondary institutions—including Camosun—advocating for affordability and equity for students. Niikoi says the federation is currently voicing their desire to the BC government for greater funding of institutions to better support students.

“One thing that we are advocating for to the provincial government is to get more funding for institutions, because the one thing we have research on is that in the late 1990s to early 2000s, post-secondary was publicly funded around 70 percent to 80 percent from the provincial

government,” she says. “As of right now, we’re sitting at less than 50 percent of that funding coming from the provincial government. So what needs to be done, and what we are advocating for, is for more funding for institutions so they don’t have to rely on students to make up for those funding shortfalls. Because these are things that we’re seeing across the province... The government needs to take this step in actually providing that upfront cost in terms of funding for institutions, so they don’t have to rely on students for that funding.”

NEWS BRIEFS

Overdose prevention comes to Camosun

Camosun College has begun implementing provincial harm-reduction strategies on campus. Outlined by BC’s Post-Secondary Overdose Prevention and Response Steering Committee, four harm-reduction actions will be adopted by post-secondary institutions. The actions are: contacting emergency services; providing access to naloxone; creating overdose prevention awareness; and expanding awareness of toxic drug alerts. Nasal naloxone kits will be found in six locations on both campuses later in the semester. At Lansdowne, kits will be in the library lobby; near offices on the second floor of Ewing; in the main lobby of Fisher; near the second-floor washrooms in Wilna Thomas; near the Fitness Centre in Young; and near the Student Affairs office in Dawson. At the Interurban campus, kits can be found near the third floor washrooms in the Alex and Jo Campbell Centre for Health

and Wellness; near the area that divides the Technologies and Centre for Business and Access buildings on the second floor; the Centre for Trades Education and Innovation atrium; in the Jack White building; in the second floor atrium of the Liz Ashton Campus Centre; and near the washrooms in Helmut Huber. Call 911 if you witness or suspect a medical emergency.

Camosun seeking student input

Camosun’s Equity, Diversity and Inclusion team is holding a series of consultation sessions, and students are invited to participate. The college has outlined its commitment to equity, diversity, and inclusion in its latest Strategic Plan, and to help formulate what that will look like on campus, Camosun is looking for perspectives on barriers to inclusion at the college, strengthening and celebrating the diversity of the college community, and more. The sessions, being held

at Lansdowne and Interurban, run until Wednesday, October 16; see camosun.ca/about/edi/plan-consultations for more information and to sign up.

Victoria Conservatory of Music announces record bursary funding

The Victoria Conservatory of Music (VCM) recently announced that \$168,000 in bursary funding has been made available to students—a record amount for the VCM. The funding comes thanks to a legacy gift by Thomas Underwood, who passed away in 2022. The Thomas & Betty Underwood Bursary Fund will support qualifying students who are in need of financial support, relieving 30 to 60 percent off of registration costs. Last year, the VCM—which offers music programs for Camosun College students—experienced an increased demand for bursaries with the cost of living rising, outpacing what the conservatory had available. For

information on how to access the bursary visit vcm.bc.ca/learn/scholarships-bursaries-awards.

Camosun Trades and Tech students get food bank

A food bank is now open for Trades and Technology students. The service is in room 169 of the Technologies Building at Camosun College’s Interurban campus.

Solar energy project in works at Lansdowne

Construction of a solar energy project at Camosun’s Lansdowne campus is scheduled for completion this semester. The Array of Hope solar project plans to power about 50 percent of the college library’s electricity; the project is estimated to produce 46 MWh per year. The project includes around 90 photovoltaic panels funded by a EBSCO Information Services \$97,000 USD grant along with additional funding from Camosun.

Construction reparation work began back in February 2024, now covering the library’s lower southwest walls and roof, with the goal of reducing the college’s carbon footprint. Additionally, the library will have an interactive information kiosk on solar energy. Look for our full story at nexusnewspaper.com and in our next issue.

—LYDIA ZULETA JOHNSON,
STUDENT EDITOR
AND GREG PRATT,
MANAGING EDITOR

LYDIA@NEXUSNEWSPAPER.COM

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clubs

Camosun student starts off-campus chess club

“There’s something really humanizing about being able to sit across from somebody who enjoys the same thing as you do and to share a mutual experience of connection with them, and especially when it comes to something like chess, which is very complex, there is a lot of opportunity for conversation.”

LANE CHEVRIER
CASUAL CHESS VICTORIA

LYDIA ZULETA JOHNSON
STUDENT EDITOR

The history of chess goes back almost 1,500 years, with details as intricate as the game itself. First evolving from the war game *chaturanga*, chess’ ancestral roots are found in India, where its popularity later migrated across Asia, and eventually to the Western hemisphere. Now, in local communities, chess has evolved into circles of union where aficionados may gather to share their passion and retreat from the hubbub of daily life.

Looking to meet new people who share his interest in the game, Camosun student and *Nexus* contributing writer Lane Chevrier was hard-pressed to find a chess club in Victoria. Looking to resolve his dilemma back in August, Chevrier started a club himself: Casual Chess Victoria, an in-person weekly group that gathers twice a week.

Chevrier says his intention with the club is to bring community members of all ages and skill levels together under one roof, and in front of a chess board.

“I call it ‘casual chess’ because it’s literally no experience necessary. You can never have played a game of chess before in your life. And you can come and I’ll teach you, and it’ll be pretty easy. I don’t want it to be some elitist club where people brag about their ratings and such,” he says. “I just want it to be people just filling out and playing a fun game of chess.”

Since the game’s inception, players have adopted a passion for the tactical strategies and cognitive skills chess requires. Chevrier says the variety of how games may develop is part of the fun.

“Chess is a very old game... It’s [one of] the oldest strategy games... But it’s a game that has so many

millions of possibilities for how a game can unfold,” he says. “It’s easy to learn, but it’s difficult to master. And so there is a lot of room for some really exciting games.”

Since the boom of the internet, the average time spent online per individual globally has increased to nearly seven hours a day, with social media accounting for approximately 35 percent of daily online engagement, according to one study. Chevrier hopes to combat this by building face-to-face connections in concert with the collective enjoyment of one of the oldest strategy games in human history.

“In the current age of social media, there’s an awful lot of empty things grabbing our attention and a lot of things we spend time on that aren’t particularly productive, especially from a social standpoint,” he says. “And being able to find something where you can go to an actual place and sit down with people whose names that you’re familiar with, it brings us back to a sort of social standard that I feel like never should have been lost. There’s something really humanizing about being able to sit across from somebody who enjoys the same thing as you do and to share a mutual experience of connection with them, and especially when it comes to something like chess, which is very complex, there is a lot of opportunity for conversation. I want to pull people away from social media and get them back



LANE CHEVRIER

Scott Byrne (left) and Jiyu Choe at a recent Casual Chess Victoria gathering.

into in-person, human-to-human connection.”

Although Camosun currently offers clubs designed by and for students (including a chess club), Chevrier avoided attaching his club to the Camosun campuses. He says this decision was deliberate in fostering a larger-scale community network rather than one that is just student-oriented.

“[T]hat’s actually one reason why I wanted to keep it out in the community, because instead of booking a room in the college, for example, because I’ve had so much experience with being around people, but not actually being able to connect with them... I want to be able to open it up so that there’s as much opportunity for people to come from wherever and connect

with other people without barriers,” says Chevrier.

Chevrier hopes to continue expanding the group to a greater Victoria chess audience; all he asks is that attendees RSVP beforehand. Information on the club is currently available at meetup.com/casual-chess-victoria and on Instagram account [casualchess.victoria](https://www.instagram.com/casualchess.victoria). The club meets Tuesdays at Bent Mast Pub from 5 to 8 pm and Wednesdays at Interactivity Board Game Cafe from 5 to 8 pm.

“I think that there definitely is an audience out there for chess, but it’s just a question of reaching them. And when you do find somebody who’s interested in chess, they’re generally really interested,” says Chevrier. “And so they’ll keep coming back, which is great.”

CAMOSUN COLLEGE STUDENT SOCIETY SPONSORED CONTENT

Island Sexual Health clinic at Lansdowne free for students

Did you know that there’s a free sexual health clinic at Camosun College? Every Tuesday from 9 am to 2 pm Island Sexual Health has a clinic at Camosun’s Lansdowne campus. Located on the third floor of Richmond House, the clinic offers services to students free of charge.

The nurse-led clinic opened in 2002; RN Jessica Pope works for Island Sexual Health and is one of the staffers at the Camosun clinic. She says that most of the students they see are just learning to access health care and says that the Richmond House space is an easy clinic for them to come to.

“The students who access our services tend to be between the ages of 18 to 45 with primary health concerns in this age range usually being within the area of reproductive and sexual health,” says Pope. “Being able to provide care for people for this facet of their life can be a huge stress reliever. We also feel we act as an accessible gateway to the rest of the health care system.”

“We also all practice with a trauma-informed lens,” she continues. “Lots of people accessing our services have never seen anyone about sexual health issues before and it’s great to be

able to provide the care and time it needs to make their first experience as positive as possible. We seek to empower people in their sexuality and seek to destigmatize sexual health care for people.”

The services the clinic offers include STI treatment, testing, and support; birth/bleed control; pap tests and genital exams; pregnancy testing and pro-choice options; emergency contraception; harm reduction supplies; and education and information.

“We would like to emphasize that our clinic is a safe space for all to go for sexual health care and all our practitioners come from a trauma-informed lens,” says Pope. “We are a sex-positive space and strive to be as inclusive as possible.”

Some products are also available at the clinic for a nominal fee.

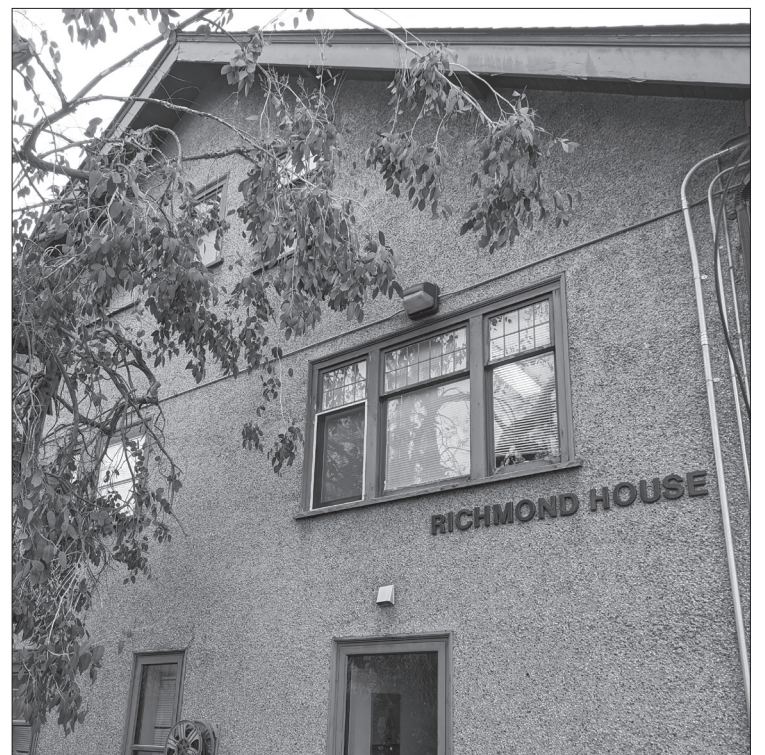
“Since most birth control has become free, we do find access to birth control has become easier without having to necessarily access care at our clinic first,” says Pope. “However, we remain available to students who have never been on birth control before and want to speak with knowledgeable individuals on what methods might be right for them. Phar-

macists don’t always have the time and space to do a deep-dive on what kind of birth control they should be taking so we are the perfect place for that. We also offer basic treatments for BV and yeast and free treatment for most STIs.”

Students can make an appointment at the clinic by calling or texting 250-888-6814; the clinic can also accommodate walk-ins. (Please note the phone line is only monitored during clinic hours; if you want to book an appointment at the Camosun clinic or require assistance outside of the Camosun campus clinic hours, please call the Island Sexual Health Quadra Street location at 250-592-3479.)

The Richmond House location is located at the top of two flights of stairs with no access to lift assistance. If you’re a Camosun student who requires accessible clinic space, please contact the Quadra Street location.

Island Sexual Health is a non-profit organization that is also a registered charity; they provide all things sexual health-related, including pro-choice and comprehensive sexual health clinics, education programs and products for people of all genders, orienta-



FILE PHOTO

The Island Sexual Health Clinic at Camosun is located in the Richmond House.

tions, identities, abilities, and ages.

The Camosun College Student Society funds some of Island Sexual Health’s initiatives at the college, as the student society recognizes the importance of accessibility of sexual health clinics to students.

“We hope to be on campus for as long as the Student Society and Camosun College have us!” says Pope. “We are seeking

to expand some of our reproductive/sexual health services in the future too so stay tuned!”

The clinic operates from September to April. See islandsexualhealth.org for more information.

“It has been a pleasure to serve the students at Camosun,” says Pope. “They are such a lovely population of people and we are proud to be able to offer this service to them!”

event Lecture explores history of doomed local railyard project

DANIEL ELLERTON
STUDENT EDITORIAL ASSISTANT

If you've ever taken a stroll along the southern end of the Gorge or near Bamfield Park in Vic West, you'll likely have noticed a long trestle bridge that connects the Burnside area with downtown. UVic adjunct professor Frank Leonard will be giving a talk later this month about the history of this project, and the often comic, sometimes tragic, downfall of a doomed project that never had much hope of survival.

Leonard's talk is titled "The Other Railway Terminal: Early Development of the Canadian Northern Pacific/Canadian National Yard on the Former Songhees Reserve, 1909-1928," and the idea for it all started when Leonard, after walking along the old Selkirk trestle, started to wonder what this thing was for and why it was there.

"What I discovered is that there was a railyard there, and it was much larger than the E&N railway, which of course everybody knows about," says Leonard.

The E&N railyard is now the Roundhouse in Esquimalt, which has been under debate and development for many years. But what this talk is all about is the other railyard, which is non-existent today, with almost no remnants proving that it ever existed at all. Unfortunately, there is scant information in Victoria—or online, for that matter—regarding this massive railyard.

"There was a railyard there, and it was much larger than the E&N railway, which of course everybody knows about."

FRANK LEONARD
"THE OTHER RAILWAY TERMINAL" SPEAKER



DANIEL ELLERTON/NEXUS

Part of the area today that Frank Leonard will be discussing in his historical talk on Thursday, September 26.

"It was a matter of just wrestling with what was here and in both the provincial and city archives," says Leonard. "Then I got really frustrated and started to talk to my friends in Ottawa at the national archives."

While there are colonial considerations to how the railyard would come to be on the Songhees reserve, this particular talk starts after the reserve was surrendered.

"All of the stuff for this railway was done after the Songhees Reserve was surrendered. That happened in 1911, and this really gets

started after 1911," says Leonard.

The talk will highlight economic and political considerations: basically, the project was doomed to fail with no hope of any real success.

"The railway yard is at one end, and when it was planned it was thought that there would be two entrances: one in the south and one in the north," says Leonard. "But the southern entrance never happened because of the CPR going from east-west onto the Songhees reserve... They only had one entrance, and the entrance is the trestle."

The rail company's determination to extract Vancouver Island's timber knew no bounds as they found clever ways of losing money. Despite their grandiose ambitions, the CN Rail company ended up with one small yard with one track in Victoria.

"They were going to have 20 tracks and ultimately would have... seven miles of tracks, 20 tracks for this thing," says Leonard. "It was going to be really impressive, [but] all the trains that came in had to back out across the trestle

to a Y, which is a set of triangles to turn around, and that Y is beside Uptown today."

The Other Railway Terminal:
The Early Development of the
Canadian Northern Pacific/
Canadian National Yard on the
Former Songhees Reserve,
1909-1928
7:30 pm
Thursday, September 26
James Bay New Horizons
Centre
victoriahistoricalsociety.bc.ca

review Great Canadian Beer Festival 30 year anniversary a great success



LANE CHEVRIER/NEXUS

The Great Canadian Beer Festival was a huge success this year.

LANE CHEVRIER
CONTRIBUTING WRITER

Back for its 30th anniversary, the Great Canadian Beer Festival (GCBF), presented by the Victoria Beer Society, hosted an astounding number of breweries and beers, so much so that I actually had to return for a second day just to explore them all.

I started off innocently with the Bramble Raspberry Vanilla Wheat Ale (5%) by Trench Brewing & Distilling, Inc. This American-style wheat ale was fermented on two kilos of fresh Fraser Valley raspberries, then aged with whole vanilla

beans. Both flavours were clean and distinct.

The next beer I had was pleasantly unusual, the Lime Margarita Voyageur Tart Pear Farmhouse Ale (4.7%) by Camp Beer Co. This one used pear saison as a base, with strong spiced flavours, combined with tequila margarita, and aged in a wooden cask. This is a sweet and heavily spiced beer and I quite enjoyed it.

Also from the same brewery was the S'mores Milk Stout (5.6%), which added vanilla bean, lactose sugar, graham cracker, and cocoa nibs during fermentation. Rich and

dark in colour, with a frothy head, it's exactly what I was hoping for from a stout, and not too strong, either.

Dead Frog Brewery featured their Pepper Lime Lager (5%) with very prominent citrus notes. The black pepper feels like a bit of a ghost, subtly noticeable out of the corner of your palette, but you might swear you just imagined it all.

Beva Brewing and Blending makes beer concoctions by blending flavours and allowing them to assimilate in oak barrels. Their Luna Di Miele Saison (7%) is re-fermented with local wildflower honey sourced from Nanaimo. It's distinct and flavourful enough to be an after-dinner beer, but drink too much of it and you won't last the night.

Small Gods Brewing accosted me with their Blink Milk Chocolate Coconut Porter (6%). The inclusion of shaved coconut is immediately noticeable on the first sip and may be somewhat off-putting, but it quickly assimilates into the larger burnt caramel flavour. Overall, this is a decent porter, but be sure to watch your back or it will steal your wallet and leave you dumbfoundedly staring at a coconut where you swear your cash used to be.

From Ile Sauvage came their Courtney Room Collaboration, the Consensus Berliner Weisse (3.6%), which uses tonka beans from Berlin. These add flavours of

cinnamon, vanilla, and cloves, and drinking it evoked the image of a cozy cottage with a crackling fire. The heavily spiced flavour is unique and endearing but also very bitter.

Chimay Trappist Ales brought their imposing Grande Reserve Blue (9%), which was first launched in 1954 as a Christmas ale with the name "Speciale Noël." It has a deep, dark, wine-like profile with complex flavours of dates, fig, pear, and rose. This is a beer that could take on a sherry with aplomb, with some lingering hints of smoky tobacco.

Dieu du Ciel from Quebec served their Peche Mortel Bourbon Imperial Coffee Stout (9.5%), which is aged for several months in bourbon oak barrels to lend characteristic smoked wood and vanilla flavours. Added coffee accentuates the foreboding, chewy stout body, which is intense, however, the high ABV ensures that whether you like this beer or not, you won't remember tomorrow, other than lamenting an unexpected dental appointment to account for the teeth you left on the bottom of the glass as it kicked your bloody lights out.

Grey Fox Brewing is a BC gluten-free brewery. The Quick Witted Belgian Wit (5%) is brewed using rice, millet, and added quinoa to get that characteristic wheat beer flavour, with added coriander giving a distinct flavour similar to cloves, and bitter orange peel. This is a non-wheat wheat beer that tastes nearly

indistinguishable to its gluten-rich progenitor, which is difficult to pull off, since other grains don't have the same enzymes that wheat takes advantage of to metabolize the grain into sugar.

Fern + Cedar Brewing served my favourite beer of the evening, their Barbados Rum Lager (5%). This is a spiced lager with strong flavours of vanilla, rum, allspice, and a bit of coconut, all derived from added ingredients, and that special smoky flavour characteristic of aging in rum barrels. This was one of the only beers I went back to.

Finally, I finished with the Bridges & Boroughs Jasmine Green Tea Blonde Ale (5.2%) from Steel & Oak Brewing Co. This bright ale is infused with local green tea leaves from the Great Little Tea Company. Much like a pot of Jasmine left to steep for quite a while, the flavour is strong and distinct, but well-balanced with the underlying beer flavours.

Altogether, I was impressed with the selection on offer at the Great Canadian Beer Festival, which featured a massive variety of interesting, memorable beers, and thanks to their collaboration with Vessel, you can actually order quite a bit of it online to be delivered to your home. The 30th anniversary of GCBF was every bit the success that Victoria Beer Society worked hard for it to be, and I am eagerly anticipating next year.

At the crossroads

How students struggle, and

Everything sucks right now. I don't say this to be a pessimist—I say this because it's the elephant in the room. Globally, we are witnessing once-in-a-lifetime horror after once-in-a-lifetime horror; locally, climate stresses and the cost of living are creating an environment where we're so run down we barely have time to react. I don't mean to belittle the joys we have to celebrate or the progress that we've made, nor do I want to make light of the intense suffering of the past. That being said, watching the news these days just leaves me feeling grateful that I wasn't alive during the Justinianic Plague, when the sky blacked out from volcanic ash, everyone's crops died, everyone got sick, and humanity was very literally nearly wiped out, because sometimes it feels like things can't get much worse today.

How on earth are you supposed to be a student in the face of this? How is it that we manage?

In this story, I'm going to be talking about the realities of living with financial hardship while attending school, but I can't only talk about that because that doesn't exist in a bubble. Moreover, when I find myself grasping for solutions to the problems that come up from personal financial crises, I can't help but dismiss suggestions that aren't holistic. If my problem is coming from multiple sources, it's hard to feel comforted by something that doesn't acknowledge all of those sources. To find real change in our lives, we have to accept the interconnectedness of our struggles.

Before I venture further, I need to be upfront about where I'm coming from when I talk about the subject: I have found myself pretty far up the creek financially, and I will not be talking about any resource that I haven't used personally. From food banks and buy-nothing groups to emergency funding and community-centre freebies, I've done it all. Having been a student on and off for the last eight years, I know there's a huge amount of shame and stigma that people feel around the use of these resources. However, I can also speak personally to the dignity gained by helping each other and allowing yourself to be helped.

Let's unpack how we might be able to let ourselves do that.

First of all, what does it actually mean to be a student experiencing financial hardship? While every school is going to have its own definition of what qualifies you for financial aid, financial hardship itself (divorced from being a student) is something that can be hard to pin down. Each person is going to have their own, personal line in the sand. On the spectrum of feeling totally worry-free about monthly bills and daily costs to being completely crushed by panic and debt where it feels like a fire you're constantly fighting, when does the pressure prompt you to find help?

Nowadays, I'm pretty quick to seek out the resources available to me as soon as a bill starts to eat into my grocery budget, but I used to be a lot more stubborn. In 2019, I got hit with a surprise bill due to a mixup in the withdrawal of my rent and found myself holding an eviction notice saying that unless I could pay two months of rent at once, I had to be out in 30 days. With no family to move back in with, it took everything I had to pay it off, and I had nothing left for anything else—food, phone, medication, nothing. So many of us are one mistake or disaster away from the same situation, but I had been unwilling to admit to myself that I needed a backup plan. There are a few reasons for that.

I found myself thinking a lot about a guy I had known during an earlier attempt at a degree, at a different school. I had still been living with my parents, and as such I had a little more money I could spend. He, on the other hand, was struggling with basics and I knew it. We were at a pub and I asked if I could buy him some food, but his reaction was one I'll never forget. He looked pained, and he rejected my offer with a certain amount of venom. Not understanding, I pushed and told him it really wasn't a problem at all. He threatened to leave. I couldn't understand then what offence he might have taken.

As I faced down my own crisis I didn't quite agree with the stance he took, but I finally understood where the hurt came from.

It's an overused joke that those of us who are struggling are just "temporarily embarrassed millionaires," but the joke comes from a place of shame. In a world where money is equal to power, capability, and value in the eyes of others, why would we want to admit to lacking it? I was burning up with

humiliation when I started telling my friends about my financial state, sure that they would think me incompetent, irresponsible, or stupid. I wasn't even reaching out for help, just declining invitations to go out and wanting to assure them they had done nothing wrong when I said "no" for the fourth time. What do you say when the student discount rate is still too high?

Their response, when I eventually fessed up, shocked me.

My friends rallied. While it took some time for me to let them pay my way for meals or event tickets, their support came in 100 small ways I couldn't have dreamed up, like offering me food that they had too much of from their kitchens, giving me gift cards that had been gathering dust, and passing on news to me when they heard about free classes or financial-assistance programs. The community I felt was almost overwhelming.

In all honesty, I had been hesitant to reach out for help for more reasons than my shame. It was in part because during the summer prior I had suffered a severe mental-health break, and many of my friends had made themselves scarce. Having spent a few years mulling over how to explain the difference in support for my crises, I think the answer lies in the actionability of the support. My mental health on its own presented problems which weren't materially solvable, and in turn many of my friends felt

powerless to respond. How could they know what actions they could take to be there for me when the monster I was facing down lacked a clear edge on its influence? Here, my obstacles were clearly visible: food, rent, medication, and entertainment, and with that came direction on how they could show up. The presence of community support, in turn, eased the burden of my depression.

Here we find the ways that shame around finances and shame around mental health meet.

This is the crossroads where asking for help in a crisis intersects with a multitude of pressures that can't help but run into each other; in turn, all struggles experience some relief when we help each other with any of them. We don't know how to help each other with everything, but by leaning into the interconnectedness of these problems we are able to feel empowered by what we can help each other with.

This is the framework of the world I had to adopt to survive, and it has carried me far. Now, having found some level ground again, I try to use this framework to be aware of my communities. I don't have an exact answer for how we get out of this mess of a world we're in, and I don't know how each individual can solve the myriad problems that make bigger problems in their lives. But I do know one thing: the only way through is together.

It took me a while to figure out everything available to me when I needed it, so here are a few suggestions to get you started:

Community centres are your friends

No matter what neighbourhood you're in, you'll find some sort of community centre. This could be somewhere with a gymnasium and a pool, open to the general public, but there are also places of worship, women's centres, youth centres, neighbourhood houses, and culture centres. All of these places exist because it's a recognizable necessity for humans to have a place where they can come together and hang out.

If you're struggling at all, community centres are the first place you should go, because (as the name implies) they know what's happening and available within the community. We're extremely used to spaces where you need to continually pay to be there: coffee shops, movie theatres, malls, even a lot of spaces on the internet are pay-to-play. Community centres, in their many forms, exist to sustain the community, and that includes you.

From just going up and asking at a variety of different centres, I've gotten free toiletries like toothpaste, a free winter coat, and vouchers to thrift shops. I've also been granted access to the free program to use their amenities and been made aware of free events, workshops, community meals, and lectures.

When you're broke, it's easy to want to wallow inside alone in shame. Believe me, I've done it. But

I'll tell you now, it's not a great idea for your mental health or your sense of pride. The power of community centres is that they create connections, and you are worthy of those connections just by wanting to be in the community in the first place.

To find real change in our lives, we have to accept the interconnectedness of our struggles.

I wasn't even reaching out for help, just declining invitations to go out and wanting to assure my friends they had done nothing wrong when I said "no" for the fourth time. What do you say when the student discount rate is still too high?

oads of crises and how to help yourself

Story by Mackenzie Gibson, senior writer
Art by Lydia Zuleta Johnson, student editor

Buy-nothing groups

I love buy-nothing groups. As a global initiative based on the understanding that we have enough stuff to go around, these Facebook groups are extremely regional and encourage connection with your neighbours. The idea is that if you have something you don't need, you simply offer it up for free, with the understanding that if you need something in turn you can ask for it, and if someone has it to share they'll give it to you for free.

This isn't just limited to things and stuff, though. At one point I was going to pick up a really nice immersion blender someone had offered me, but I missed the pickup because I suddenly had to go to the emergency room. After explaining myself, the woman not only brought me the blender but put together a care package of snacks with a fresh salad to help lift my spirits. Another time, someone shared fresh rosemary from their garden when they got too much, and I've even heard of people offering up rides to doctors' appointments, used wedding dresses, and language exchange lessons for free. This isn't the magic of this particular group, it's the magic of treating each other like neighbours.

We've really been sold the idea that the only way to solve problems is by buying things, but something I love about this model is that it shows the human kindness that can be found when we stop basing every interaction around a monetary exchange.

Camosun College Student Society

The Camosun College Student Society (CCSS) is an incredible place to find all sorts of connections, not the least of which is free entertainment. With lots of easy events to access, being a student makes it a lot easier to have a fun night out without breaking the bank. While I could go on and on about everything they have to offer, the easiest way is to connect with them yourself and ask. Tell them about some of your needs or your interests, and I can guarantee they'll have something that can lighten the load.

One thing to note in particular is their emergency fund. If you're suddenly hit with hard times during your semester, for whatever reason, you should investigate this fund, where you can potentially get some financial help to keep you afloat. Check out camosunstudent.org for more info on the CCSS.

Instructors and Camosun staff

While the Student Society isn't technically part of the school itself, Camosun has a lot of its own structures that are hugely helpful to students. They're easy to find, but many people miss them as things get drowned out by the main event of the education we're here for. I mean, you've probably noticed a few of them since you're stopping to read the student newspaper, so good on you for keeping your finger on the pulse, but there's another group of people who know this school better than anyone: teachers and staff.

One-on-one conversations with the people supporting your education is one of the greatest things that a post-secondary school can give you. We are here overtly asking for their knowledge on a variety of topics which means, implicitly, that we trust they have some ability to know what they're talking about. Not every teacher or staff member is going to be knowledgeable about everything you could possibly find and put to use at Camosun, but I guarantee they'll know something that could help.

It's also worthwhile to let your teachers know, ahead of time, when you're facing a crisis in your personal life. I can't promise they'll all be sympathetic, but they can't accommodate for what they don't know about, and, hey, I've had a few teachers point me in the right direction to find paid opportunities in my field. It's always worth a shot.

Foundry and other community groups

If you're under the age of 25, the resources available to you are triple. I strongly encourage you to use this as much as you can. When you're in search of youth resources, the best place to go is Foundry.

Foundry is an incredible collection of resources and can be found across BC. From clinics to support groups to individual counselling and youth workers who can connect you to all sorts of special assistance, this is one of the best organizations I can imagine for support. If you're struggling with anything you can think of, and you're 25 or younger, this is the place.

I used Foundry for four years until I aged out, and I owe it so much. Spending so much of my life as an at-risk youth, I often felt that I was simply a problem to be solved or a box to be checked for the people who were assigned to help me. The reason I speak so highly of this organization is not because one person went above and beyond for me, but rather because no matter who was working with me, the system itself was designed to make me feel heard. I cannot recommend them enough.

Food banks

I remember, with a shocking amount of clarity, the first time I used a food bank. It was a Wednesday morning (the regular time for weekly food pick-up) in late September 2019, and there was a nip in the air. I knew that when I went, I didn't want to look foolish, or reckless. I could imagine the volunteers analyzing me, either deciding I was some pitiful slob who couldn't be responsible with their finances or, the opposite, that I wasn't deserving enough and they'd turn me away. I put a great deal of care into how I dressed. I wanted to look clean, and like I was someone who could handle themselves. I picked a red sweater my grandma gave me and braced myself for judgment and, simultaneously, for a crowd of stereotypes I had been so scared of being cast as.

What I found instead was a group of people who looked an awful lot like me. Not dressed in anything new or flashy, but with obvious care in how they arrived—the way you'd try to look running any errand. Most were women, most were older than me, and many were so excited to see each other. What shocked me the most was the number of them who were excited to see me. I was so afraid being in this new space, feeling both desperate and like an imposter—and they knew how I felt. They offered to show me around and showed me where in the space I could find what I was looking for, even pulling up a seat for me when they finished the errand with a cup of free soup. The volunteers didn't ask any questions or demand any paperwork, they just got me signed up and helped me inside. In the weeks that followed, the people I had talked with welcomed me back with a smile. No questions asked, and community offered.

My main experience with a food bank is from North Vancouver; every neighbourhood will have a different culture and different ways of distributing food. My introduction was with a system where you pick up food once a week, but I know the CCSS offers an ongoing food bank where you pick up a few items at a time.

What I learned that Wednesday morning, though, was that where people come together in need, there is the opportunity for kindness and understanding.

A safety net is not a single line—it's a thousand points of connection. We can't help that crisis will come into our lives, especially as we face the rising cost of living and stagnant wages, and in the background, the world grows more volatile every year. What we can control is how we face it, and I, for one, would rather face it together.

A safety net is not a single line—it's a thousand points of connection.

I don't have an exact answer for how we get out of this mess of a world we're in, and I don't know how each individual can solve the myriad problems that make bigger problems in their lives. But I do know one thing: the only way through is together.

review

Generations exhibit to be remembered for generations

RAY NUFER
STUDENT EDITORIAL ASSISTANT

When I stepped foot into the exhibit space of *Generations: The Sobey Family and Canadian Art*, I immediately became immersed in a powerfully emotive and reflective world of cultural exploration.

Generations is a curated exhibition of the Sobey family's personal art collection. Hailing from Nova Scotia, they're best known as the founders of the Sobeys grocery chain—however, for four generations they've also amassed an impressive collection of Canadian art that has been travelling across the country and has arrived at the Art Gallery of Greater Victoria (AGGV).

Generations captures an exploration of what it means to be “Canadian,” and the many tensions within the history of Canadian identity. Through landscapes, daily life, and other cultural expressions, the exhibition develops the effect of an iceberg: what you see on the outside is only a glimpse of what lies within. With the help of excellent lighting and well-planned flow, *Generations* did the job of an art gallery environment well by strongly facilitating the art encapsulating the viewer. This allowed me to look deeper into the works individually and as a collective and understand the depth curators were conveying using the purposeful juxtaposition of European settler descendent art and Indigenous art to explore what Canada is.

Clarence Gagnon's *Winter Landscape, Baie St. Paul* and the famous Group of Seven's work serve as homages to Canadian

landscapes; there's also various scenes of European descendent culture, such as the Toronto streets in Lawren Harris' painting *Sketch in the Ward*. European modernist influence can be strongly felt in the Group of Seven's work, such as J.E.H. MacDonald's *Morning Light, Lake O'Hara*, and A.Y. Jackson's *Northern Landscape, Great Bear Lake*. They're installed near Joseph Tisiga's piece *Fabricated Fear May Only Prolong Risk*, which demonstrates the relationship of settlers with the land in a direct confrontation between a man and a decapitated bear. It evokes the feeling that the land is keeping score as an omniscient presence, and that the laws of nature have been broken.

The exhibition claims to be in the style of art collecting itself—eclectic, drawing new connections between different artists, and defying segregation of art movements. After my visit, I would absolutely agree. *Generations* also notes the exhibition is “artist food for the soul from the Sobey family pantry,” but I think it's more complex than that. By the time I reached the final room of the exhibition, my many thoughts, feelings, and ideas all became clear.

The last room of *Generations* was intense, directly highlighting the tensions between European settler colonial culture and Indigenous culture, with Kent Monkman's work directly taking this tension on.

Erotic, comedic, and deathly serious, the subject matter intensely highlights the historical tension between European colonial settlers and Indigenous peoples. It is



COURTESY OF COLLECTION OF DONALD AND BETH SOBEY

Lawren Harris' *Algoma Hill* is one of the many pieces on display in *Generations: The Sobey Family and Canadian Art*.

the epitome of the exhibition, and being saved for last, it is explosive. People were crowding around each massive painting to talk, unravelling the many threads of the jumbled, knotted mess that Monkman ties together using exaggerated, dream-like symbolism.

Monkman's subject matter is juxtaposed with nearby paintings of lighthouses and ships on the Atlantic, William Kurelek's easter basket

painting, Cornelius Krieghoff's early Canadian sugar-coated “rural life” paintings, and Sobey art award winner Ursula Johnson's *Museological Grand Hall* installation.

My experience at the exhibit was incredible. This is certainly one to spend hours in, giving it the attention it deserves. It really is a collection that needs to be seen, and it benefits from careful curation, to elevate it as a marker of culture and

the way we see it. Catch *Generations* before the exhibit closes at the AGGV—and give yourself time to take it in.

Generations: The Sobey Family and Canadian Art
Until Sunday, October 27
Art Gallery of Greater Victoria
aggv.ca

review

Jewish-ish earnest perspective on religion and identity in need of a rebalance

LANE CHEVRIER
CONTRIBUTING WRITER

Jewish-ish is a performance piece by Canadian violinist Laura Nerenberg that combines storytelling with violin playing. Nerenberg describes what it's been like for her living half a century as a secular Jew in Catholic Montreal. The crux of *Jewish-ish*—part of this year's Fringe Fest—is that Nerenberg was, not by choice, the de facto Jew growing up among people who either understood nothing about what it meant to be a Jew, or—far worse—shamed Nerenberg for clearly not being Jewish enough.

This she discovered through a pretentious, condescending, non-Jewish co-worker who went to great lengths to convert to Judaism for the sake of her new husband. Nerenberg watches as her co-worker becomes a far better Jew than she had ever been, and this causes her no small amount of existential anguish. Growing up in that traditional religious culture as a child who never really connected with the tradition, the religion, or the culture, Nerenberg must come to grips with the lofty expectations placed upon her by strangers, her family, and herself.

The format of the show is spoken

I could easily spend an enraptured hour just listening to Nerenberg play violin.

word interspersed by small snippets of violin. Nerenberg is a classically trained violinist who has been passionately playing since kindergarten, and this has shaped her life and identity arguably more than her born religion. I believe part of the performance is juxtaposing the idea of externally imposed belief with those that are internally motivated.

A simple explanation of religion is the idea of acknowledging that there are forces greater than oneself that we can tap into and allow to guide and inform our lives to give us meaning and satisfaction. Over centuries this has been mystified into abstract concepts such as “God,” but who is to say that the beauty of music can't be someone's religion? If it defines and motivates one's life while giving hope, inspiration, and joy, that seems to me to be a far more pure and sensible God than any I've heard of. Yet, in our society, traditional religion is given such heavy weight, often upon those who never asked for it.

Nerenberg's presentation is wry and witty, and it's heartening to see her gain fulfillment through sharing her story with others. Still, I found myself unable to shake the frustration that she spends very little of the runtime doing what she is exceptional at. When I first heard that it would be a mix of storytelling and violin, I was excited, because I love violin. Yet I quickly discovered that Nerenberg would speak for three or four minutes before performing 20 to 30 seconds of violin.

Her many decades of dedicated practice are evident, as her playing is immediately breathtaking and sublime. I could easily spend an enraptured hour just listening to her play. Unfortunately, she is a far better musician than a thespian, with her spoken-word performance resembling an overly dramatized show-and-tell presentation. This is accentuated by the first 10 to 15 minutes coming from the perspective of a small child, in corresponding tone, cadence, and vocabulary,



PHOTO PROVIDED

Jewish-ish was performed as part of this year's Victoria Fringe Festival.

which sounds somewhat odd coming from a 50-year old. But even the rest of the performance gave me the strange feeling that I was a toddler receiving an emphatic bedtime story.

Of course I recognize that Nerenberg is a violinist, not an actor, and for this reason I think that she would benefit from rebalancing the performance. A slimmer script with more natural acting would ensure that her playing is given more of a spotlight, as it is by far where her talents shine indisputably.

Even so, it's clear that Neren-

berg has put a great deal of consideration into the philosophy of religion, and the importance we project into a construct that, for the most part, we indoctrinate our young into under tremendous pressure, rather than allowing them to discover it organically.

Maybe the world would be a better place if we gave up on the idea of competing religions and arbitrary traditions, and each found our own personal religion, like allowing the sweet sound of music to resonantly fill that empty space deep inside and overflow to those around us.

review

Castle of Glass shining exemplification of raw, independent theatre

As the audience quiets, Sinclair, sharply dressed in a modest suit, walks out from the back, carrying a stool, and a drink. He begins to recite poetry with the flair of someone who understands the melody and rhythm of words themselves, exclusive of music, flowing from one stanza to the next, like waves lapping upon a sandy shore.

LANE CHEVRIER
CONTRIBUTING WRITER

When I first walked into the Metro Studio to see the Fringe production *Castle of Glass*, I immediately sensed something was different from the status quo. Usually, before theatre shows, the audience is greeted with the eerie silence of an empty stage, or the sounds of pre-recorded music piped in over the speakers. Instead, a cellist and a guitarist sat quietly playing a simple melody, releasing the tension built up over a long day. As it turns out, this was only the beginning of the subversion of expectation.

Castle of Glass is a performance by the Victoria-based folk-rock trio Wasteland Preachers, which consists of lead writer and vocalist Jeremy James Sinclair with backup vocals provided by cellist Devon Side-Walker, and Christopher Mattila on acoustic guitar and kick drum.

As the audience quiets, Sinclair, sharply dressed in a modest suit, walks out from the back, carrying a stool, and a drink. He begins to recite poetry with the flair of someone who understands the melody and rhythm of words themselves, exclusive of music, flowing from one stanza to the next, like waves lapping upon a sandy shore. Then, he begins to sing a vulnerable, soulful tune, juxtaposing the imagery

of hopeful childhood and the gradually lost innocence of adulthood. Through song, he tells a story of heartbreak, pain, and growth, finally ending up on the coast at night, buffeted by the salty air, coming to brave terms with his struggle.

At this point, I thought it was yet another “sad beginning, happy ending” inspirational story we’ve heard millions of times before. Functional but safe. Then, something else happens. All of Sinclair’s hope and optimism falls apart. Morning arrives, and the whisper of the ocean turns into the filthy clamour of an undulating city. The feeling of strength fades, and despair returns. In fact, over the course of an hour, this happens over, and over, and over again, with hope destroyed by heartbreak only to rise and fall, and rise again.

All the while, Sinclair is being visibly torn down. His pristine suit is gradually stripped off to reveal a wrinkled, untucked, stained undershirt, and the drink he brought on stage is shown to be a can of beer that he consumes with increasing desperation, until the can, like himself, becomes nothing more than a mutilated, empty shell, loved intensely then hurled away with spiteful violence. The songs he sings increase in tempo, pitch, and frenetic energy, sometimes raw, screaming, and incoherently articu-



PHOTO PROVIDED

Castle of Glass, a performance by Victoria folk-rock trio Wasteland Preachers, was part of this year’s Fringe Festival.

lated, crying out in an anguished plea for emotional solace.

This is the conceptual brilliance of *Castle of Glass*. Rather than sterilizing and optimizing the personal growth process to something polished and inspiring, Sinclair instead exalts in its gruelling dysfunction. The dizzying parabolic swings between the exquisite optimism of new love and the evisceration of self when unbridled affection turns to seething resentment are so frequent that, at least for myself as a writer, a nagging sense of unease formed, an unconscious desire to trim off the needless redundancy, to “tighten the script” to something more efficient.

But Sinclair instead embellishes it, and I believe the whole point is to trap the audience in an ad nauseam rollercoaster, where a growing sense

of bewilderment, futility, and frustration puts us right in the shoes of the protagonist.

Throughout the runtime it’s clear to see that the deeply personal story on offer is largely autobiographical, with frequent fourth-wall breaks and ironic humour, and this establishes immense trust with the audience. Sinclair is turning the naked spotlight onto himself, doing away with any concept of masculine bravado and revealing a deeply vulnerable human who has stared into the existential abyss and welcomed death.

It gets better, though. The more pain Sinclair overcomes, the stronger he gradually becomes, more sure of himself, more determined to rise above, until he eventually finds himself welcoming death from an

entirely different perspective. Although I’m paraphrasing, he says something like, “Have you ever met someone with whom you are so completely connected, that even if you died in this very moment, as long as you’re holding their hand, it would be okay?”

Castle of Glass challenges you to remember what it was like to be a child brimming with optimism, to build an elaborate, shimmering crystal castle out of the most extravagant materials in your toy box. When it inevitably falls and shatters into millions of razor shards that cut you into unrecognizable pieces of the person you thought you were, take a deep, ragged breath, curl up and cry a little, then build your castle again, not fearlessly, but courageously.

review

The Illusionary Magic of Sitruc James wholesome fun by talented illusionist

LANE CHEVRIER
CONTRIBUTING WRITER

The Illusionary Magic of Sitruc James is a fun venture into sleight-of-hand magic that was presented at the 2024 Victoria Fringe Festival. This light-hearted show boasts a wide variety of tricks: some we’ve probably seen before, others that seem completely inexplicable.

Sitruc James, a comedian with a wry wit, has been practicing magic for over 30 years, since he was a child. The show is presented as a sort of slapstick sideshow that makes frequent use of audience volunteers to keep the fun flowing. The tricks themselves range from tongue-in-cheek self-aware gaffs with simple props to the elaborate finale, which I have decided was impossible without bending the very fabric of space-time, and, accordingly, James is a real-life Dr. Strange.

Some of the tricks were obviously clever prop work and sleight of hand, but Sitruc James’ charismatic presentation and polished movements made them a joy to behold nonetheless. Others, I spent the entire rest of the performance wondering how they were done.

Some of the tricks were obviously clever prop work and sleight of hand, but James’ charismatic presentation and polished movements made them a joy to behold nonetheless. Others, I spent the entire rest of the performance wondering how they were done.

Reviewing this sort of event is not a difficult task: if you’re into a fun romp of party magic, then bring your children, and James may even

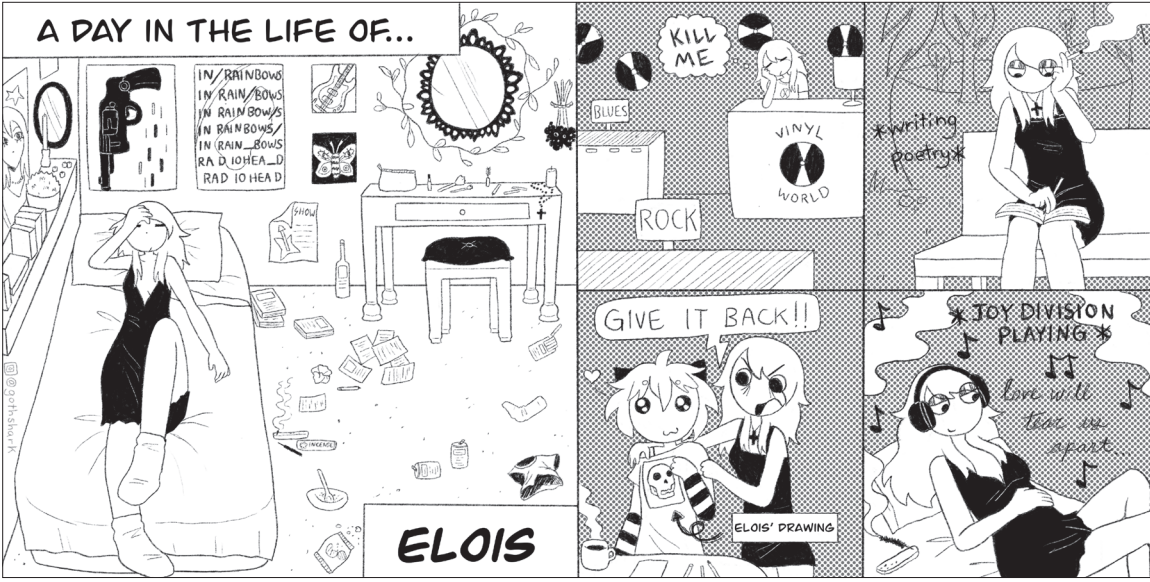
give them the chance to be an honorary assistant onstage. Regarding the demystification of these magic techniques, I advise that even if you have the opportunity to learn how those really mind-boggling tricks are done, do yourself a favour and leave it as a mystery. Much like pulling back the curtain and revealing the squat, elderly Wizard of Oz, sometimes, the fun is in simply being fooled, and enjoying it.



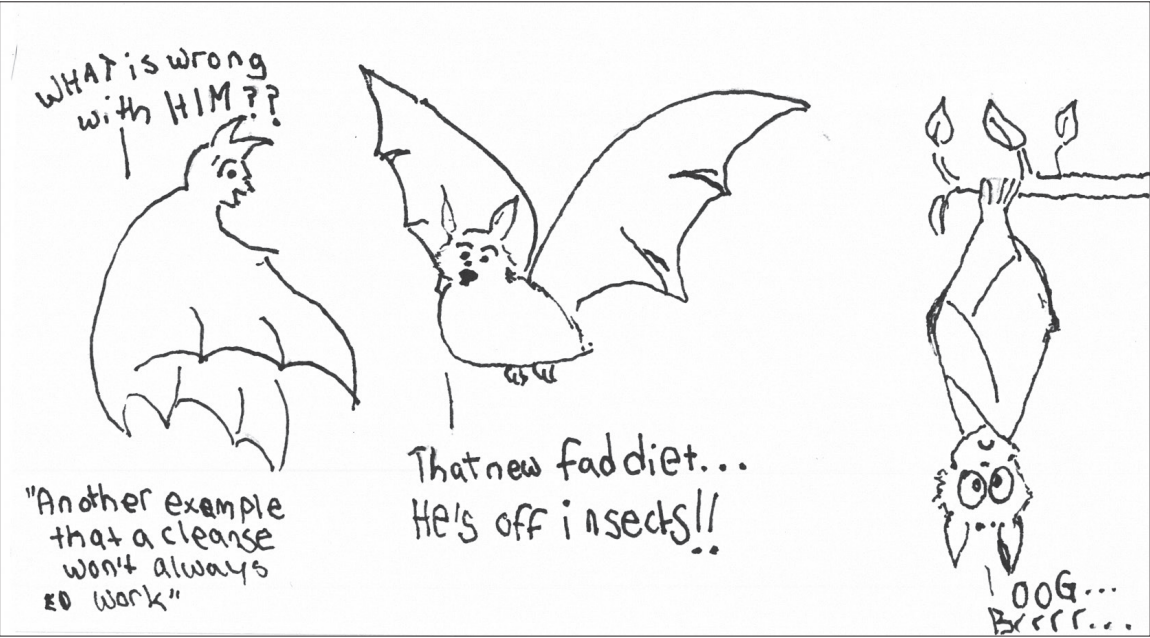
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The Illusionary Magic of Sitruc James showcased some impressive tricks.

Ruby Rioux and the Bats from Saturn - Ray Nufer



Natural Selection - Emily Welch



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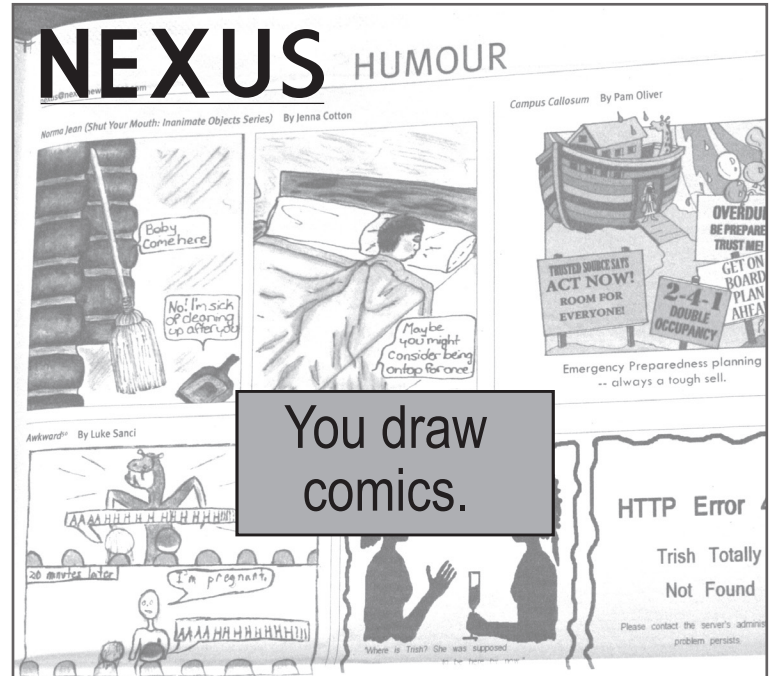
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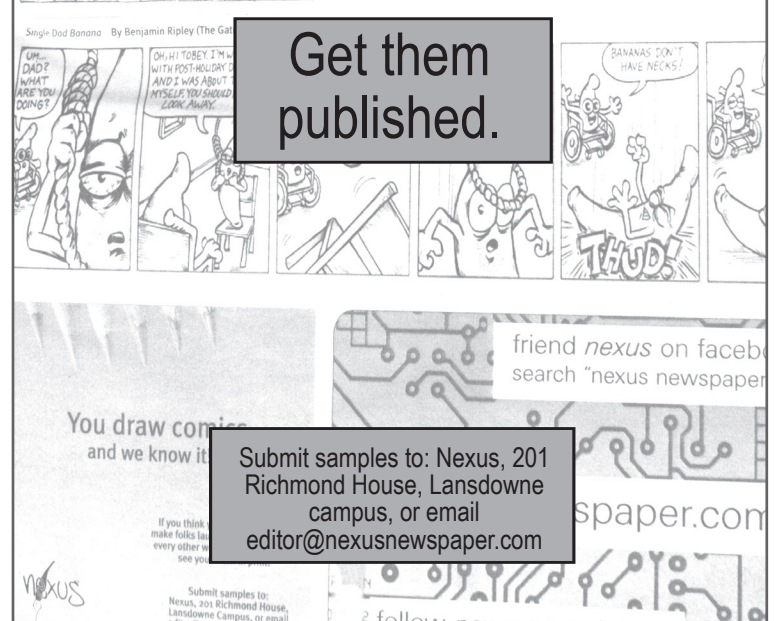
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Lydia's Film Critique

by Lydia Zuleta Johnson

La dolce vita

In the case of *La dolce vita*, a film accredited as one of the very best of all time, I see itemizing my personal translation as reductive to the film's grandest triumph, transcending its own description for decades.

From dark until dawn, glamour is restless—1960s Rome knows this best. While the rest of us retreat from our inadequate lives onto beaten mattresses, the elite awakens to carouse in the streets and clubs and high-rises of Italy. Federico Fellini's *La dolce vita* (1960) visits several nights of extravagant, vain, and depraved stardom. The "sweet" life has a peculiar aftertaste.

On the partition of a gossip writer and gossip-written, Marcello (Marcello Mastroianni) slithers through the city looking for stories to cover and women to lay. Accompanied by photographer friend Paparazzo (later coining the term "paparazzi," Walter Santesso), they grab high Roman culture by the article, fame and fortune at the forefront.

Absorbed by the scene, Marcello's perpetual cycle of days and nights is filled with alluring women, seduced by Swedish-American actress Sylvia (Anita Ekberg), wealthy heiress Maddalena (Anouk Aimée), and the Madonna as sighted in a field by local children.

Over several episodes, Marcello is tossed around in the aristocratic daze further away from his dream of meaningful writing, drowned in orgies, castle rituals, and gaudy entertainment.

What little remains of his dream is visible in distant friend Steiner (Alain Cuny), a loving father, husband, and intellectual. However,



after a terrible incident, the dream is finally buried. And so the cycle persists. Back home, his wife sobs over the life he has made for himself, pining equally for a life outside champagne and affairs.

La dolce vita is a chronicle rich in satire and criticism, dedicating all 174 minutes to the ridicule of fame obsession. Intended as a cautionary tale, the film exists now as a precursor to ever-worsening material worship but delivers the message gracefully.

Where the moral is clear, the poetry felt through the film exists only in interpretation. In the case of *La dolce vita*, a film accredited as one of the very best of all time, I see itemizing my personal translation as reductive to the film's grandest triumph, transcending its own description for decades.

It is just as easy to say the large fish carcass finalizing the film is the representation of a pompous

lifestyle as it is to say the fish is symbolically symmetrical to the statue of Christ from the opening shot. And yet it is just as easy to see the statue, soaring through the sky held by a helicopter, is foreshadow of proceeding sinful stunts. When asking my husband-to-be what he made of this prop, he delivered a distinct interpretation altogether: a device contrasting famed actress Sylvia's grand entrance from a private plane, embraced by a crowd of photographers and applause. This explanation works just as well as the next.

What is best about the film, aside from many technical excellences, score, cinematography, and performance, is the multi-interpretive narrative, endlessly malleable to the viewer. Decades of appreciation and analysis can only boil down to the individual. The sweet life may not be made for anyone, but the film is tailored to each and every one.



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

Tips on decluttering

As the school year begins, I want to share a valuable tip that may lead to more productive study sessions. It also happens to be a reminder to myself. This edition's focus is on decluttering.

College life is busy; no one can deny that. A busy life often leads to a cluttered life, which can lead to unnecessary distractions. I regularly find my car full of empty coffee cups because I just can't find the time to clean it.

More debilitating than a messy car is a messy study space. When your focused work and study area is full of empty papers, cans, and food boxes, it takes focus away from the work you should be concentrating on.

Hands up—I'm guilty of this.

A cluttered life is a cluttered mind. When your eyes are constantly darting between the McDonald's bag on your desk and last semester's quiz, it becomes extremely hard to focus on the timed D2L quiz you're taking.

Distractions are deadly to deep focus. Productivity increases, alongside quality of work, when you are free of distractions, from your phone, or from your environment (check out my two-part series last year on dopamine for more information on this).

If this sounds like you, keep reading for some easy tips to declutter your study space and create better focused work sessions.

Carve out 30 minutes, whether it be twice a semester or every Sunday. You need dedicated time to clean.

When the time to declutter rolls around, set a timer, throw some music in, and get to it. Your quality of work will thank you.

The easiest way to declutter is to limit clutter buildup in the first place. A valuable tip I've come across is the two-minute rule. If a task will take you less than two minutes to complete, do it immediately. Unless you have an absolutely jam-packed schedule, a two-minute task is not going to throw your whole day off.

When you throw away the leftover mac and cheese and get rid of the icebreaker sheet from syllabus week you make your life much easier when declutter day comes.

This might seem like a little thing but it can have major repercussions. Try it for yourself. Do a declutter day and implement the two-minute rule. You'll be shocked at the results.

Sincerely,

A college student with a cluttered car

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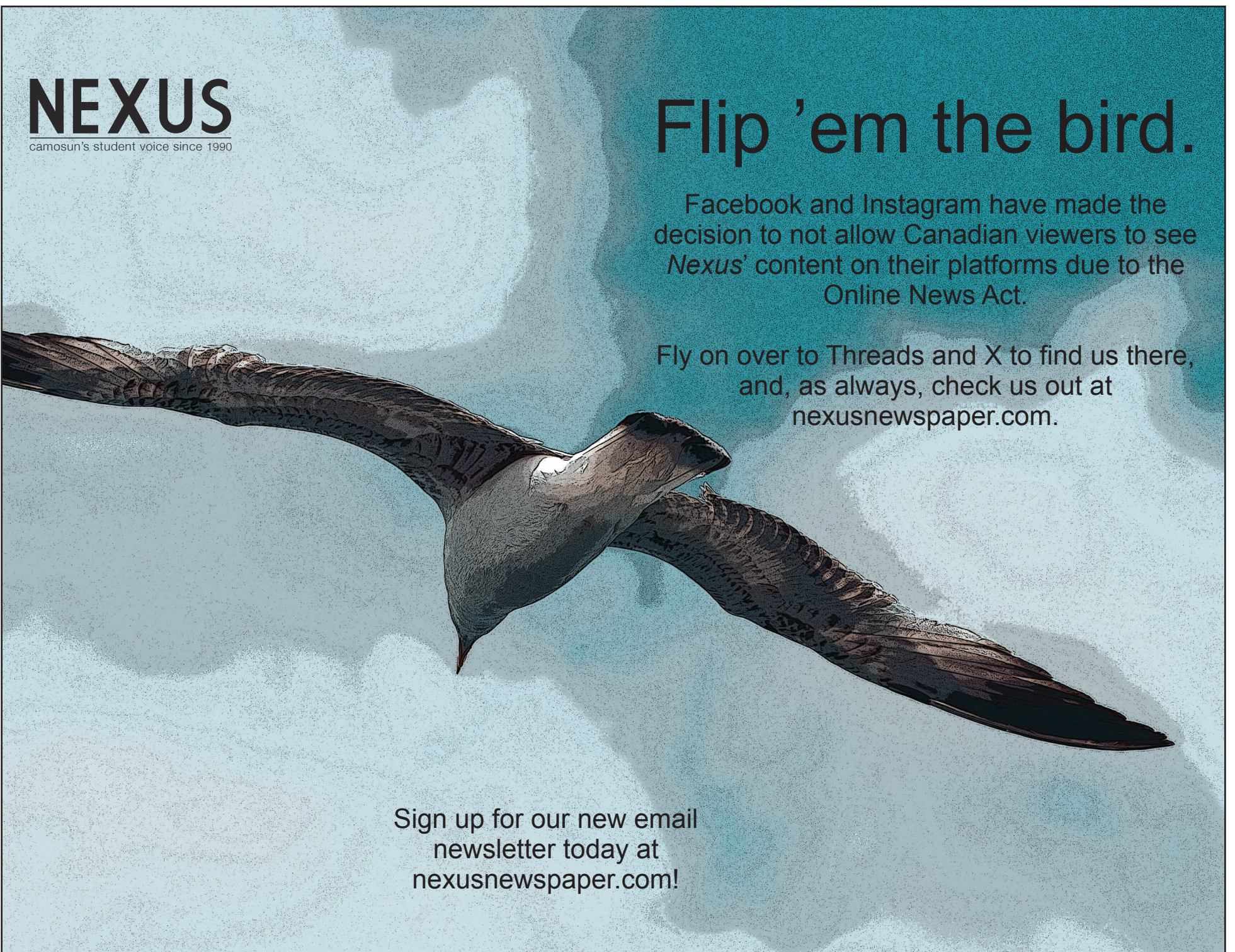


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GREG PRATT/NEXUS
Nexus student editorial assistant Ray Nufer talking to Camosun College students during CamFest at the Interurban campus on Wednesday, September 4.



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