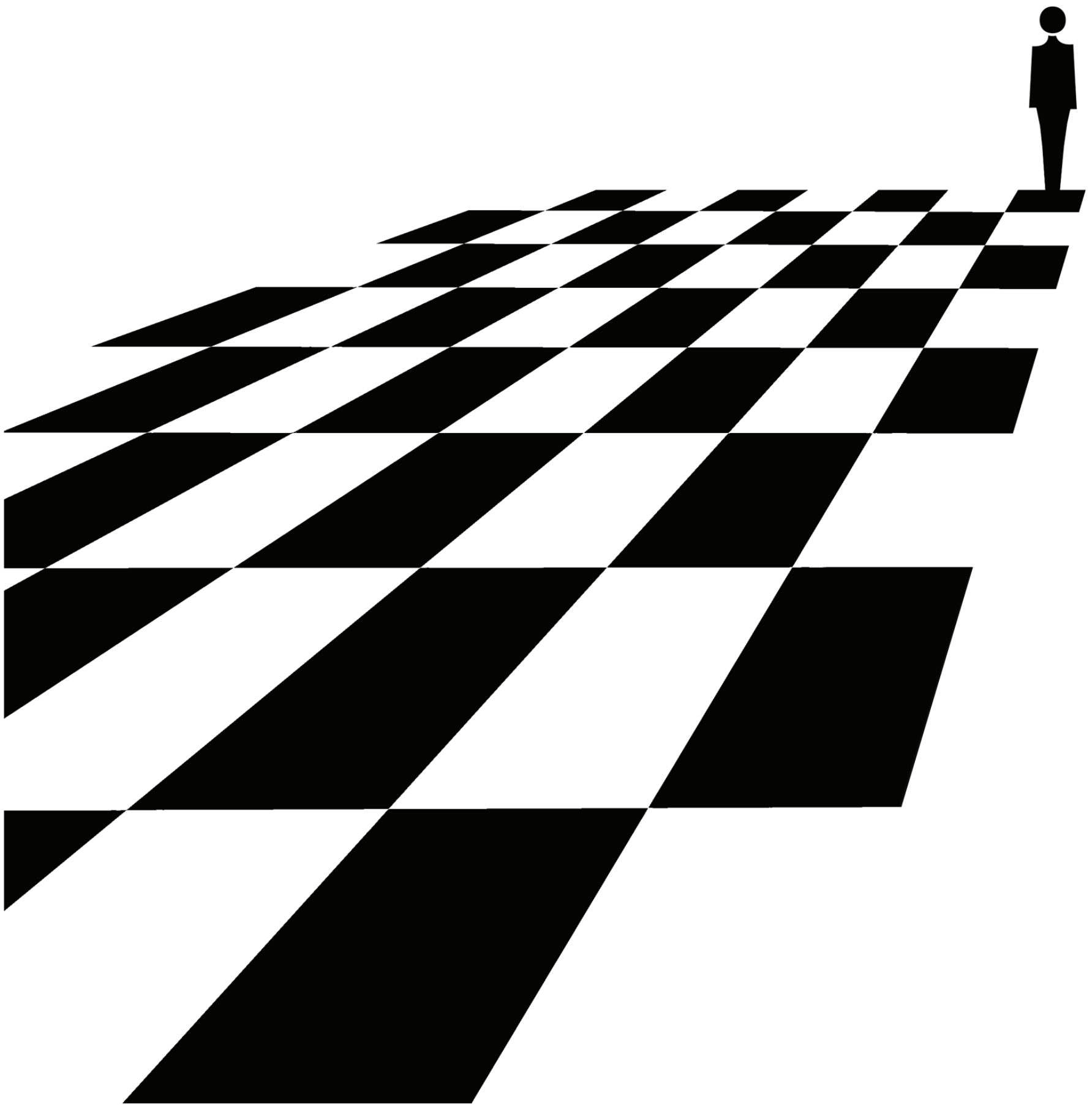


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NEXUS

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editor's letter

Home (away from home) for the holidays

In the coldest season the west coast has to offer, I travel home for the friendship and family I deny the majority-portion of the year. It is known among chores as doing my part. The travel has become a reluctant movement, going from one place to another when the *another* is Vancouver—a city with the depth of a kiddy pool and the heart of an artichoke. This is to say the soul is lacking and it, in turn, strips from mine the last of my vitality. The spirit which should find itself in the air this time of year is smoggy and wet, smelling of premium cannabis and vapid hipster. (It must be recorded for transparency that there has yet to be a city that adequately pleases me.)

I find myself cynical as I drive off the ferry but romantic when away. It is a volatile dynamic I can only describe as dismally exhausting, like a diesel vehicle idling in a chilled parkade.

My home is unfamiliar each time I visit; new, taller buildings replace what is left of remnant history. One will never know under the rubble. If there ever was a video store on Commercial Drive, it is a distant memory. And if there ever were a mural on the corner of 2nd it's at the very least unknown to the naked eye.

The term "home" has lost its traditional definition in my vocabulary this winter, as home does exist, albeit not on the geography of a provincial map, but in the presence and assurance of my adoring husband. In moments away, in the cold Olympic Village condominium of concrete innards and with hundreds surrounding, home is on the telephone, a phone call of eight minutes checking in. Hellos and I miss yous are the furnishings.

Strolling up and down the town, wearing over my plain clothes a mink fur coat I painstakingly begged for since we watched *The Big Heat*, home is draped over my body. A gift I call a holiday miracle. The warmth of a thousand furnaces.

Luckily, the holidays were on the TV this year, and on my couch, and between the intertwining achingly well-fed bodies of my beloved and I.

Lydia Zuleta Johnson, student editor
lydia@nexusnewspaper.com

flashback

25 Years Ago in Nexus



LYDIA ZULETA JOHNSON
STUDENT EDITOR

Adbusters: If the year 2000 was known for any such thing in hindsight, it perhaps could be the outlandish insulting media proudly displayed in advertising. Crass remarks, vulgarity, shock. In our January 24, 2000 issue, *Nexus* spoke to students concerned over the recent advertisement posters displayed around campus. Zoom Media, a contracted advertisement agency, began discussion on Camosun campuses of whether it was appropriate to include the clad, sweaty chest of a woman to sell contact solution, observable behind the stall doors of the men's washrooms. While president of Zoom Media Michel Trambly figured the image was acceptable for the college audience, the discussion concluded with no, it is not appropriate, and was removed.

Kamosun kriminal: If I wasn't mistaken, it would appear that the Camosun student body was made up of serial criminals ransacking campuses at all hours of the day. This issue included the common appearance of *Krime Kount*, a column dedicated to the petty theft, vandalism, and general lawlessness often appearing on campuses. "Jan. 6," the column goes on to say, "an office burglary in CBA 114 of Interurban campus led to theft of a wallet." The suspect, as of the article's publishing, was yet to be found. Students are encouraged to keep their eyes peeled for a 5'10" white male.

Art 101: Depending on who you talk to, whether one can consider graffiti art may spark a variety of responses. In this issue, *Nexus* writer Lisa Hamilton spoke with graffiti artists Morgan Taylor and Hanz Fear on their justifications for the ruthless crime. Graffiti is an artistic and social movement, they say. Taylor denies the law, saying that buildings such as banks are just as offensive on the eyes. While I agree that graffiti is an important and artful expression of the self, I must defend that RBC brings an undeniable charm to its neighbourhoods.



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OVERHEARD AT NEXUS: "Where did your cheese chunks come from?"

open space

On the political division of friendship

LYDIA ZULETA JOHNSON
STUDENT EDITOR

They come to the battleground outraged. They come blaring rhetoric. They come holding their common sense and their family values and their freedom high. And then they come asking us to strip ours, in the midst of the culture war.

It's a sentiment we hear more often as politics become more loudly sung (or more loudly heard): don't let *politics* get in the way of your friendships. But it is so often those who express it who seem not to understand what the *politics* they speak of inform. And it seems so often to be those who praise it who have, moments earlier, voted away another's right to exist.

The image of a gun-toting reactionary holding hands with the anarchist punk may seem immediately endearing to some, but it also poses a question of what they have forgone to find alliance, and who've they forgone.

If politics exist as a collection of morals and empathies and necessities, which they do, then it is a movement against better judgement that politics be swept aside, sweeping along with them the lives and social protections I long for government and its citizens to protect. As if to say that morals are contingent on how much one craves a boy's night—surely there is little reason to believe in anything at all if civility with the oppressor is indispensable.

What we have here is an assumption that friendship is based on only the frivolous, that when one gabs and mingles, there is not an underlying solidarity with the

other's inner psyche, and what happens in all the gabbing and mingling is therefore permissible. What it fails to recognize is *who* is capable of sweeping their sentiments aside, and thus if any should at all. Should the trans person be capable of putting aside their identity in order for civility? Should Indigenous folks shake hands with the people who want so violently to strip away their land? Should a woman have to fraternize with the man who believes her to be lesser?

The privilege to befriend your opponent is that of a small demographic who have nothing to lose in the battle for human rights. That is why it's left to those with the option of solidarity to do so with those who need it most, in a culture of regression.

There's a portrayal of the easy-going fun-loving character, so open minded that they've got no mind at all, that argues putting aside one's political beliefs is a virtuous act. The character is mature and brave for their ability to agree to disagree. Love conquers all, it affectionately proclaims. But if the disagreement lives beyond dining in or out, and into a new realm, the denial of existence, then there lies an empty chest where virtue once filled.

Discussion continues to be a vital tool in understanding the broader view, and it's instrumental to the progress of a better world made not just for the few. But if discussion is lost among a ball game or a movie night, I'm afraid the culture crying out to be saved has just been let go.

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!

letters

Concern over French comments

I was reading *Nexus* as usual and would like to respond to "Asking someone's pronouns should be commonplace" (January 6, 2025 issue). I was very interested in the topic as I am working on inclusiveness in my French courses, for example on how to ask for pronouns. Then, I was disheartened when I read about the French language:

"At the very least, in English, we don't have gendered nouns like feminine apples and masculine lampposts. Who's idea was that?"

"... So, let this be our mission: when you meet someone, ask what their pronouns are the same way (and perhaps in the same sentence) that you ask for their name. (I think that's a lot more reasonable than calling a cabinet "she." Looking at you, again, French.)"

It is a fact that French, like other languages, has gender for common nouns. However, it would have been preferable to highlight even briefly the historical context of the history of languages and their foundations, particularly as regards gender rules. Of course, we're human, and we can't know everything. In this case, it's essential to give ourselves the benefit of the doubt when expressing our opinion: questioning in order to get to know the other better (cultures, languages, communities...) rather than judging in order to constrain ourselves to know the other.

What's more, the subject of this article is pronouns, not the gender of nouns in general. On this subject, I'd like to mention that French uses inclusive and even neutral pronouns, and that several institutions across Canada have created resources on adapting the language to inclusive writing, and not just for pronouns.

Dear author of the letter on pronouns, I'd like to meet you for a friendly chat. It's up to you to accept or refuse... or to remain silent.

ISABELLE GINGRAS, FRENCH INSTRUCTOR
CAMOSUN COLLEGE

PS: To briefly explain the history of the word "apple," it comes from Latin and was named after the fruit goddess Pomona. As for "cabinet," we can talk about it because the word also exists in French... in the masculine form.

alumni

Camosun alumnus to represent Canada in World Photographic Cup



LEE MILLIKEN

The photo of the *Mona Lisa*, and the chaos surrounding it, that Camosun College alumnus Lee Milliken (below) had chosen to be in the World Photographic Cup.

SANTIAGO VAZQUEZ-FUERTES
SENIOR WRITER

From health care to camera lenses, Camosun College alumnus Lee Milliken has been chosen as part of Team Canada in the World Photographic Cup held in Quito, Ecuador. Milliken has gained the attention of judges with his photograph that portrays the frenzy of visitors trying to capture a glimpse of the *Mona Lisa* at the Louvre.

After quitting this job at Broadmead Care Society, Milliken started taking photography seriously, enrolling at Camosun in 2011 to begin a new career path better suited to his passions.

“I just went all in,” says Milliken. “I was really fortunate to essentially meet the right people at the right time. Jesse [Hlady], who I took courses with at Camosun, we kind of hit it off and just became really good friends. And so he offered me a chance to kind of work with him out of his studio and that’s what I did.”

After graduating in 2013, Milliken and his wife Ria started a business in 2018. The company, Spartan Media, found success early, keeping the two busy and without the possibility for vacation. However, in 2023, with some time available, the couple took the opportunity to

“We get to the *Mona Lisa*, and it’s just one of those things you have to experience. The chaos is just all the people [who] are there to see that one painting. And so it’s a big room so I was more focused on the people just because I couldn’t believe it. So I just kind of stood on my tiptoes and held my breath, and I was as still as possible.”

LEE MILLIKEN
CAMOSUN COLLEGE ALUMNUS

travel, accidentally leading them to Paris.

“[The photo] was taken in the summer of 2023, and that was my and my wife’s first vacation in quite a few years,” says Milliken. “My wife is Greek, so we went back to visit her family in Greece. And so the summer of 2023, that was the year that Greece had a bunch of floods. Our connecting flight was in Paris. So her family said, ‘If you have a chance to leave now, you should because otherwise, the roads will get closed.’ So we actually just kind of went straight to the airport and booked an early flight to Paris.”

The unscripted trip to Paris would ultimately lead him to tour the Louvre museum.

“We get to the *Mona Lisa*, and it’s just one of those things you have to experience. The chaos is just all the people [who] are there to see that one painting,” says Milliken. “And it’s a big room, so I was more focused on the people just because I couldn’t believe it. So I just kind of stood on my tiptoes and held my breath, and I was as still as possible. And then I blended, like, six or seven images to capture that one image.”

After his trip, Milliken started submitting his work, something



PHOTO PROVIDED

that he had not done in a while. This led him to join the Professional Photographers of Canada.

“I just started entering competitions, and I did really well. I won quite a few awards last year,” says Milliken. “The biggest one obviously was the World Photographic Cup, making Team Canada. So, essentially, I submitted my favourite images and then, it went through like three rounds of curation with all these judges and then the final selection.”

Milliken says he’s starstruck by some of the people that he’s competing against, feeling honoured to represent his country in a competition of this magnitude.

“There are people that I look up to, like, Tim Wallace,” he says. “He shoots for Lamborghini and Ferrari, and it’s like, holy cow, I’m in the same category as these [photographers]... It’s an extreme honour to represent your country, in anything. I’m just honestly happy to be part of the team.”

NEWS BRIEFS

Engineering program expands transfer schools

An agreement with BC Common First Year Engineering Curriculum will soon allow Camosun Engineering Transfer students the option of transferring to six different universities. Once an agreement is finalized, students who finish the program will be able to finish their degree at Simon

Fraser University, Thompson River University, University of British Columbia (Vancouver and Okanagan locations), and the University of Northern British Columbia. Currently, the college only offers students of the Engineering Transfer program the opportunity to finish their degrees at the University of Victoria for a Bachelor of Engineering or a Bachelor of Software Engineering. Camosun’s agreement will be

finalized for students entering the Engineering Transfer program in September 2025.

Camosun gets electric van

An electric vehicle has been introduced to the trades program, providing hands-on training to its students. The 2025 BrightDrop Zevo 400 AWD van is part of the college’s intention to prepare students for a rapidly growing EV sector. Students studying

across multiple trades—including carpentry, pipe trades, welding, and sheet metal—will have an opportunity to train with the vehicle. The e-van will also serve as a mobile trades education to deliver training outside Camosun.

EBSCO library databases see new interface

The Camosun library has announced that their EBSCO

databases have been updated with a redesign, resembling the library’s Single Search interface. EBSCO, a provider of the library’s various databases, now includes personalized dashboards, further accessibility, other ways to share resources, and more.

—LYDIA ZULETA JOHNSON,
STUDENT EDITOR

LYDIA@NEXUSNEWSPAPER.COM

GOT A NEWS TIP? SEND IT OUR WAY!

buses

Camosun students concerned about public transit

RAY NUFER
STUDENT EDITORIAL ASSISTANT

Many post-secondary students depend on the transit system to get to campus, and the Camosun student body is no different. The fees they pay in their tuition provide them with access to a BC Transit UMO bus pass, so even if students have another way of arriving at school, it makes perfect sense to use public transit. But when it comes to fully relying on buses, many students' experiences have left them disillusioned.

Victoria's bus riding population is large, and while Statistics Canada shows that Victoria has a higher rate of convenient access to bus transit (in the range of 84 percent to 93 percent) when compared to other census metropolitan areas, disruptions and transit issues remain numerous—and for many routes, the number of buses scheduled is relatively low.

"I wish that the 39 ran later, because it doesn't run very late, and it goes every hour. Same with the 8," says third-year Business student Angel-Blue Horvath-Veselinovic. "So if you have late classes, it doesn't always line up."

Horvath-Veselinovic has also had classes at both Interurban and Lansdowne campuses and experienced struggle in transiting between the two on time. She isn't the only one with complaints about the frequency of service. Second-year

"I've had buses delayed or cancelled—and there's lots of people coming on that bus, so if they've cancelled one bus, you might have to wait [for] two."

ERIN MACQUEEN
CAMOSUN COLLEGE STUDENT

Visual Arts student Silvan Wood thinks similarly.

"I moved from Nanaimo, and the [Victoria] schedule is leagues better, so I was really excited when I moved here because I was like, oh, cool, I can actually catch buses," says Wood. "But I find that the schedules on frequent routes aren't necessarily frequent enough."

Fourth-year Visual Arts student Erin MacQueen is in the same predicament.

"The only reason why I take the 95 is because buses like the 53 and the 65, that are actually a little bit more accessible to me, just never come," says MacQueen.

Some students acknowledge that there are limitations due to the city's size, but the issue hinders their ability to get to and from school.

"Victoria is not the biggest city, so our transit system is pretty limited in scheduling and where you could go," says third year Art Hist-

ory & Visual Studies UVic student Rhiannon Jeffrey. "It's difficult because obviously you need more people to take the bus to be able to offer more bus routes, and then those things take time."

Schedule accuracy is also a common concern for students. Specifically, buses running severely late can at times lead to a pile-up. BC Transit's Ridership Performance Report from March 2024 shows that their target is 70 percent on-time departures—a report from the previous year showed that 15 routes out of 57—26 percent—hit or exceed that percentage.

"I've had buses delayed or cancelled—and there's lots of people coming on that bus, so if they've cancelled one bus, you might have to wait [for] two," says MacQueen. "That's still 15 minutes—so that's 15 minutes less time that I have to get to school or work, so I have to be early."



FILE PHOTO

Students boarding a bus outside Camosun College's Lansdowne campus.

Jeffrey says that while taking the #4 bus at morning rush hour, between 8:00 and 9:00 am, the bus was consistently late; as a result, she was frequently late for class. She says she would like to see more bus lanes and express buses here in Victoria.

Horvath-Veselinovic also says buses are poorly scheduled and tend

to get backed up, noting that routes such as the #14 would not come for an extended period of time, with two or three showing up simultaneously.

"Thank God most of the teachers are understanding of buses and their unreliability," she says. "I've definitely been late to classes despite leaving on time and giving enough time."

sports

Chargers coach joins female apprentice coach program



PHOTO PROVIDED

Camosun Chargers women's volleyball assistant coach Katie Ludvig.

SANTIAGO VAZQUEZ-FUERTE
SENIOR WRITER

First-year Camosun Chargers women's volleyball assistant coach

and former standout player for the Thompson Rivers University (TRU) volleyball team Katie Ludvig is participating in the Canadian Collegiate

Athletic Association's Female Apprentice Coach Program (FACP), which fosters the development of female coaches in varsity sports.

Ludvig has a myriad of academic and athletic accomplishments—five highly successful seasons at TRU, being named captain and Leader of the Year in her fifth year, and receiving All-Canadian honours each year she was at TRU. And after playing one year of professional volleyball in Czechia, she moved to Victoria to start her coaching career with the Chargers.

"I knew I wanted to get back involved with volleyball but in the coaching sense," says Ludvig.

Once in the position, Hall informed her about FACP and helped her apply. Since then, she has been developing her coaching skills under the wing of her program mentor Hall.

"The goal is to kind of look at him, shadow him, and see how he runs the team, which has been great. I've learned a lot from him," says Ludvig. "We meet with the program, the faculty and the people who run the program every month. So that group is a bunch of girls across Canada who are doing the exact same thing as me."

While learning from Hall, Ludvig has also been able to talk to other FACP participants about her experience in the field.

"We get to connect monthly and

"We get to connect monthly and kind of talk about our experience coaching and give each other some help, advice, and feedback and kind of open up the floor to what our experience has been."

KATIE LUDVIG
CAMOSUN CHARGERS

talk about our experience coaching and give each other some help, advice, and feedback and kind of open up the floor to what our experience has been," she says. "We have a workbook that we go through, kind of helping us to develop our own mentorship and leadership style... It's nice to chat with people who are doing the same thing as you and who have been there before."

While FACP is a great resource and learning experience for her, Ludvig says that she has learned a lot just from being under the presence of Hall and how he treats his team.

"He's definitely taught me to be very open-minded. [The] coolest thing I admire about him is he's so open-minded with his team, and it makes me want to [have] a similar coaching style. He opens the floor to his players every practice for their

feedback, their opinions, and their feelings. It feels like everyone's kind of contributing to the team and it's not just one person," says Ludvig. "And he's also very patient. I think he explains things in a way that everyone can really understand and kind of grasp."

Ludvig says that this year's Chargers team is talented and has potential for future success.

"It's been super cool watching them compete. And I think the most exciting part is how much better everyone [is getting] but especially the younger players [have] gotten since the start of the year," says Ludvig. "They had a pretty strong first semester, but I think the best is yet to come in the second semester... Practices are pretty intense and I think that speaks to the way they show up in games because they're definitely pushing themselves."

mental health

How my adult ADHD diagnosis unlocked my academic potential



CAMOSUN COLLEGE

Writer Antaya Schneider (centre) at her Camosun College graduation ceremony.

ANTAYA SCHNEIDER
CONTRIBUTING WRITER

I remember sitting in my psychiatrist's office and feeling numb and tingly all over as feelings of relief, guilt, and anger washed over me. My psychiatrist and I had finished going over the results of my psychoeducational assessment, and she matter-of-factly said, "you have inattentive attention deficit hyperactivity disorder."

"You mean all the struggling I've gone through... It isn't my fault, none of this is my fault?" I anxiously asked her.

"No, you just have a unique

brain that makes life a lot harder for you," she said, "especially in school."

I had struggled with my grades in school, and after failing out of college in my early 20s, I gave up, thinking I was too stupid and lazy to succeed. As it turns out, I wasn't stupid or lazy—I just had a brain that was wired differently and couldn't thrive in a typical academic setting.

Receiving my ADHD diagnosis ended up being the key to unlocking my academic potential, but the journey to that diagnosis would force me to confront and overcome years of disappointment and failure.

Two years before my diagnosis, I was working low-wage jobs and had grown tired of scraping by, and I decided I wanted a change. I started applying for local administration positions, but was repeatedly turned down because I lacked relevant post-secondary credentials.

I had attempted college 13 years earlier, but I flunked out after only two years due to troubles with procrastination, staying organized, and time management (all major symptoms of inattentive ADHD, unbeknownst to me at the time).

I was terrified to go back to college, convinced I was going to fail again, but I saw no other way of bettering my life. So, I took a leap of faith and registered for the Office Administration program at Camosun College.

I quickly found myself enjoying the classes and the course content, but the heavy class workload and my lack of focus and disorganization threatened to derail me again. I had to put in double the effort to succeed, and the strain to keep up was starting to take its toll.

To decompress after class, I turned to social media and stumbled upon a video of a woman my age sharing her ADHD symptoms like procrastination, lack of focus, and internalized feelings of failure. These were the same symptoms I experienced, and a lightbulb went off in my head. What if I also had ADHD?

Receiving my ADHD diagnosis ended up being the key to unlocking my academic potential, but the journey to that diagnosis would force me to confront and overcome years of disappointment and failure.

I decided to reach out to my mother to share what I had learned about ADHD and how I thought the symptoms of ADHD explained my poor performances in school.

"This definitely sounds like you," she agreed, "but this sounds exactly like me too." The more we discussed our experiences, the more she realized that she likely had ADHD too.

Being female meant my mother and I weren't likely to be considered for an ADHD diagnosis during childhood, as girls with ADHD usually present with lesser-known inattentive symptoms, compared to stereotypical hyperactive boys with ADHD.

The Centre of ADHD Awareness Canada estimates that boys are three times more likely to be diagnosed with ADHD than girls and that up to 75 percent of girls with attention issues have undiagnosed ADHD.

I took my new knowledge about ADHD and pursued a psychoeducational assessment, and in the fall of 2022, I received my formal inattentive ADHD diagnosis. My college listed ADHD as a permanent disability, so I could now apply for government funding, and academic accommodations like extra time on tests, tutoring, and extensions on assignments.

I finally had the supports I needed to excel academically, and after two years of hard work, I graduated with honours and a 4.0 GPA, a feat I never thought myself capable of previous to my diagnosis.

My ADHD diagnosis was the best thing that could have happened to me. It allowed me to accept myself and understand that all those years of struggle and failure were not because I wasn't smart and didn't try hard enough. It was because my uniquely wired brain needed extra support to excel, and excel I did.

drinks

New year, new beer: a random sampling of new brews for 2025



LANE CHEVRIER/NEXUS

The new year introduced several different brews to Nexus writer Lane Chevrier.

LANE CHEVRIER
CONTRIBUTING WRITER

To celebrate the new year, I found some interesting beers that were either a recent release or new to me. Join me as I drink way too much beer in way too short a time and try to describe it for you.

First up is the Naughty List Dry Irish Charcoal Stout (4.8%) by Wildeye Brewing. The gimmick here feels like a lump of coal in my stocking. Activated charcoal is incorporated into the brewing

process, and if you've ever savagely burnt a burger but ate it anyway, you're familiar with the bitter, chalky flavour of coal, which ruins a decent stout.

Next is Taylight Brewing's Eggnog White Stout (5.6%). A white stout uses pale malts instead of dark roasted malts to achieve a lighter flavour profile and the appearance of a golden blonde ale while retaining the typical stout flavours. This eggnog stout contains mild notes of cinnamon, nutmeg and vanilla,

but I struggled to find anything memorable about it, and at \$6 a can, while the flavour is inoffensive, the price is not.

The most interesting taste experience was the North to Paradise Spiced Mango Dark Lager (5.3%) from Small Gods Brewing. The idea of a mango lager seemed pleasant, but that was before I had a sip, grimaced horribly, and read the ingredients. Look, I celebrate experimental flavours, but the person who thinks that putting allspice, cinnamon, habanero, and mango in a beer needs to check their privilege, because this tasted like cramming cloves and hot peppers into my mouth and chasing it with raw cinnamon. I was grateful to my friend Joel for allowing me to bully a sample from him, because it meant that he was stuck with the rest of the can, not me. What a champ!

Next I tried the Inedit Malt & Wheat Beer (4.8%) from Damm brewery. This hefeweizen contains coriander, liquorice, and orange peel. The inclusion of the spices was done artfully. Some brewers bash you over the head with spices and added flavours, and the resulting monstrosity might send you somewhere south of Hell, but not this Damm beer. Its gentle flavours encourage the drinker to sit with it, just to tease out all its subtle nuances.

From Field House Brewing I

Look, I celebrate experimental flavours, but the person who thinks that putting allspice, cinnamon, habanero, and mango in a beer needs to check their privilege, because this tasted like cramming cloves and hot peppers into my mouth and chasing it with raw cinnamon.

tried the Super Tall Caramel Churro Stout (7.3%), inspired by the malts that lend caramel flavours, as well as the addition of cinnamon sticks, vanilla, and brown sugar. Lactose provides a subtle touch of sweetness. It's malt heavy with mild hops in the aftertaste, along with a strong taste of cinnamon, but the vanilla isn't noticeably present, at least not above the coarse radar of my Neolithic palate.

Then, I tried the Winter Fresh Mint Oreo Stout (5%) from Taylight Brewing. Now, you're either thinking, "That sounds awesome!" or "That sounds disgusting!" Yes, it is both of those things. With a sip, the flavour remains at the front of the tongue. Here, you taste mint, and a bit of dark chocolate, and this is pleasant. But when swallowed, it

washes over the rest of the tongue, and the acrid bitterness associated with dark beer becomes known. However, it doesn't jive well with the mint; the two flavours clash.

Chimay Trappist Ales are a line of beers initially brewed by Belgian monks in 1862. I tried their Grande Reserve Blue (9%), which is a Christmas ale with a deep, dark profile and complex flavours of dates, fig, pear, and rose. This unusually strong brown ale has such intense fruity flavours that it's closer to a barley wine, with a smoky aftertaste. This beer will rapidly end your evening by politely knocking you out cold, like a British butler in a boxing ring.

Happy New Year, folks, I wish you a joyful, stress-free 2025. Go forth and adventure!

A MAN-MADE LONELY

Whys and hows of a N

There was for a long stretch during my formative life a profound seclusion under blankets, enveloped only in the everyday thoughts and experiences of my sole personhood, and with the online interaction I felt required to permit. This period involved little communication with those I was, although at a time less inclined to admit, emotionally or biologically related to. It was, too, during this period I was most fond of the individual over its antipode, the collective, and held high esteem for what she stood for alone—what she meant as a figure without social necessities. And while I struggled to call this a period of self focus, text messages and emails digitally piled around my bedroom, weighing down my moral quandary of alone or *alone*—and to whom my stasis benefits.

For the better half of the 21st century, and even more so in the last decade, a very pretty image has emerged of solitude: an independent, a lone wolf, a forger of many paths. The picture, which in a variety of appearances are pasted on the collective vision board, looks to reason with the ever-growing loneliness which has permeated quiet spaces between neighbours and peers. Whether it was first the hyper-capitalist messaging that formed it or the liberal-minded free-thinker who think it, the narrative of loneliness as a moral token of empowerment has swiftly developed, and has done so, most attractively, in a sermon of wellness.

The ethos of mainstream wellness culture in the contemporary era is perhaps best defined by its lessons of hyper-individualistic self-sufficiency which teach its patients (those who pay or those who tune in to the online sphere) that “personal growth” and “healing” are best achieved without witnesses, in privacy from our loved ones. Both the process and goal of the transaction take on this dogma: be alone to be alone well. The zeitgeist questions love and community, how it benefits, or does not benefit, the individual. And, if outsiders do not pass the litmus test of hyper-normalcy, if they misbehave, disappoint, or run high with emotion, it’s worth questioning the relationship, as it may not “serve,” waving above to below from the moral high ground.

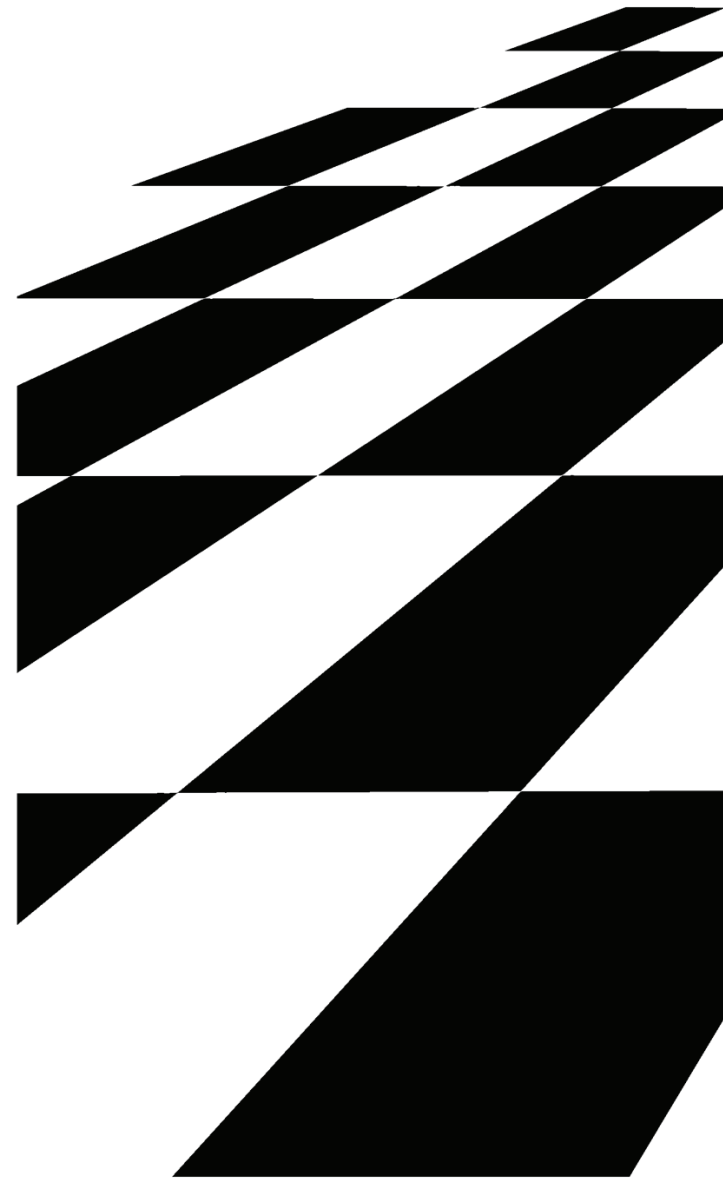
In a puddle of guilt in my own psychologist’s office, wet around my nose from confession, I woefully admitted that my relationship with my now husband had, in ways I had not intended, I stressed, mended parts of me that I hadn’t yet had the chance to mend on my own. I had, in fact, committed mortal sin. And now, married, I was left without the chance to *Eat, Pray, Love* myself, as I had been told I ought to. Not that I wanted to *Eat, Pray, Love*, but because *One Woman’s Search for Everything Across Italy, India and Indonesia* is subjected to *one* woman, not in companion. And to find *everything* is most encouraged individually. But, what I believe is most offensive to the notion of healing within a relationship, and perhaps because of it, is that the accomplishment is improper and isn’t sufficient—that learning to love another isn’t instrumental to learning to love the self.

What North American wellness culture ignores, however blindly or intentionally, is that as individuals with contradictions and new facets in constant formation, we are all permissible at all times to be burned at the stake for our flaws, on the receiving end of one “protecting their peace.” In her essay “no good alone,” Rayne Fisher-Quann writes that, in this case, the contemporary therapizing suggests friction, which may be challenging to navigate, is in direct impediment to the “healthy” individual. And this, indeed, may be true. In pursuit of tolerable connection, *sans* texture or rough edges, one loses the discomfort of humanity and passion.

To be clear, however: conflict, incompatibilities, and asymmetry in relationships are not always agreeable to endure. There are nuances, there are limitations. But, limitations, through a contemporary wellness lens, have been lowered, a tragedy that restricts one from experiencing any friction to begin with, and finally, eliminating all faulty persons. That is to say, all persons, leaving *all* in profound seclusion under blankets, enveloped only in their everyday thoughts and experiences of sole personhood.

The recent zeitgeist for a moral good in solitude exists in a viscous cocktail of social and economic hindrances to form connections, and we have commodified the lifeblood and have said the lifeblood is independence.

But another, most obviously, and well-addressed and I include myself again, is time. Time between jobs, freelancing, and whatever third, fourth, some. And dare they attempt to attain enough to *live*—some data from the Surgeon General of the United States



In 2023, they issued “Our Epidemic of Loneliness” and stand an intersectional influence on those most affected. Dr. Vivek H. Murthy writes “Loneliness is far more harmful to individual and societal health.” And, on page 19, he finds that people who are lonely than those with higher incomes,” adding that 10 percent of people per year consider themselves lonely, 10 percent of people. It is not incidental that the participation in c

ELINESS EPIDEMIC

North American infliction

sed among crowds paying large bills with little pay, n work. Day jobs and side hustles. They have gig etimes fifth, stream of income can assist survival. share their limited time with those they love. And, tes agrees.

the cost of living has risen. \$2,000 one-bedroom, one-bathroom, one-loud-neighbour apartments (not including hot water, electricity, furnishing, or smooth wall paint) are, in part, the death of the social. What more is a barrier than the financial, when the sum salary of one working a minimum wage job, \$17.40 in British Columbia, allows the worker at most \$36,192 per year, a significant gap between the lonely and the wealthy. And what more could one exert themselves, or pay to experience outside the home, when one is below the water, doggy paddling enough to stay afloat.

The peculiar and unintelligible concepts (I say half-jokey, half-sincere) of supply and demand, inflation, and the free market are indeed, too, the death of the once-inexpensive third place—the public gathering spaces where one may connect with another, or have the chance to connect with unknown others: cafes, bars, salons, places of worship—and in turn, the rise of the lonely individual. (The home is known as the “first place,” and the workplace the “second.”)

It is now a frighteningly distant memory, common spaces for closeness to evolve outside the home; chattering, babbling, sunlight beaming over the face for all to see. Playful. Public. Intimate. It is a time of closing libraries and dwindling clubs. It is a time of \$6 lattes.

In his 2000 book *Bowling Alone*, referenced on a Government of Canada webpage on the rise of loneliness, Robert B. Putnam writes immediately on page 15, “No one is left from the Glenn Valley, Pennsylvania, Bridge Club who can tell us precisely when or why the group broke up, even though its forty-odd members were still playing regularly as recently as 1990, just as they had done for more than half a century.”

It is unknown among most, still today, an ongoing, more posed question: why and how we’ve arrived in a lonely continent, once known for its penchant for socializing. Why and how the distance we have manufactured for ourselves, and the entities above who have manufactured the scenario for the population, have left us stranded. Why and how the time spent alone has never felt more lonely.

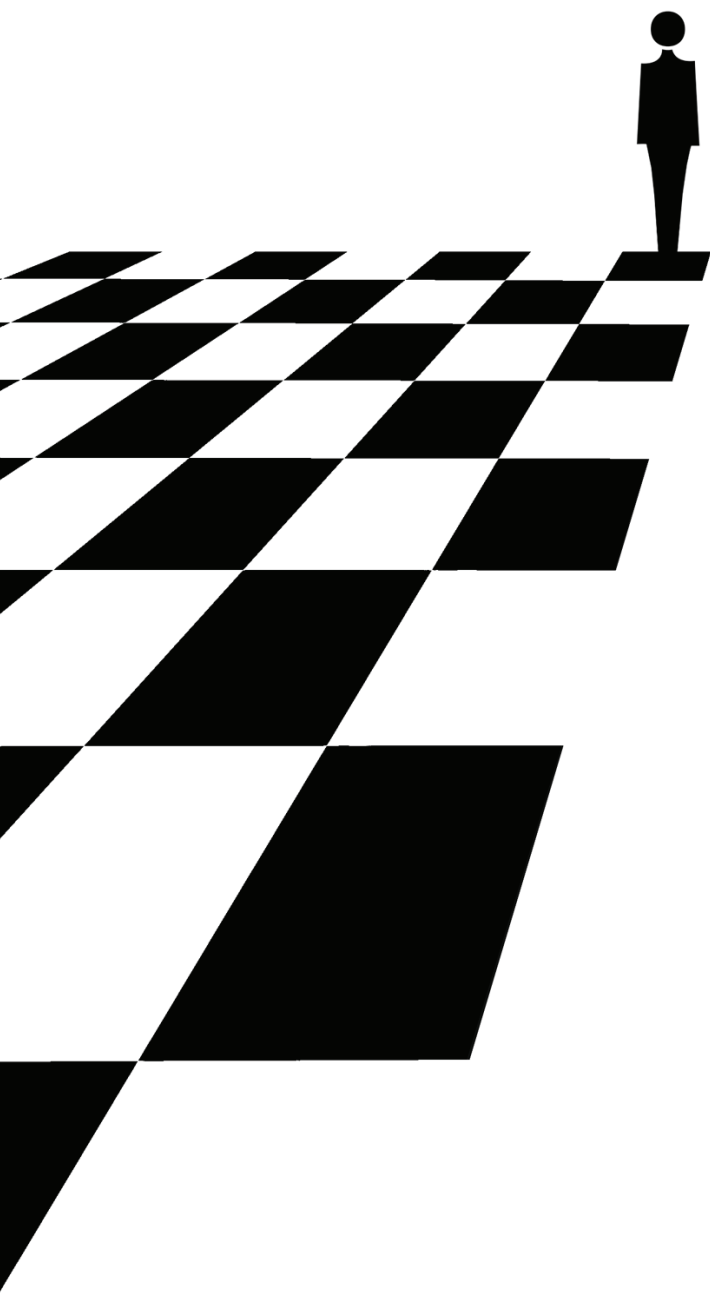
A culture has changed, that is sure. Technology, and with it social media, chat rooms, video games have played a role—it is undeniable. But, although it is widely accepted as a primary source of the epidemic, I resist the claim that it is foremost. Technology has *changed* how one connects, but for better or for worse is individual. Indeed, there are eyes strained from the harsh blue light of a smartphone, blaring the intangible universe defined by its chaos into an easily absorbed brain, but there are, too, transnational relationships able to be preserved and nurtured from 15,000 kilometres afar. And, there are riches of human variation that can only be experienced by watching the online documented life of a small Palestinian family accessible only to be ingested digitally.

What I believe is most potent to this epidemic is a man-made secret, and it comes from the ever-exhausting, obsessive pursuit for one’s self-sufficiency and meritocracy in a continent defined by a narrow ideal of success. The idea denies assistance and support. It denies the existence of togetherness in prosperity. It is lonely at the top. And by the pillars of this virtue, it *should* be lonely; it is designed to be. The self-made billionaire is revered not only for his excessive profits, but his ability to do so alone, in his basement or on his tattered laptop. We glorify the trauma that is instrumental, they say, to be lonely at the top.

There lies at the very core to the loneliness epidemic the disclusion of others for the personal gain, what the result of this phenomenon suggests to observers of the success.

The case of the lonely person is noticed. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has noticed it, the Canadian government has noticed it, I, and my few and far between peer interactions, have noticed it. Yet, we continue with the assumptions of permanency to this infliction, and see loneliness as a natural occurrence to a natural social structure.

I believe in bridge clubs, and the collective wellness. The kind glances and cheap cappuccinos (regardless of quality). Public parks. Bible study. Time. In a man-made North American loneliness infestation, I believe one library card may be the exit to one’s own self-imprisonment, and subsequently those around them.



ness and Isolation,” a report which begins to under- fected by the epidemic. Stated in the introduction, re than just a bad feeling—it harms both individ- ls that “lower-income adults are more likely to be hat 63 percent of those earning less than \$50,000 ge points higher than those earning over \$50,000. omunity affairs has lowered in recent years as

art

Power of pop art on display at Art Gallery of Greater Victoria



PHOTO BY YURI AKUNEY/COURTESY OF THE PAUL AND TRACY MITCHELL COLLECTION

Banksy's *Bomb Middle England*, part of the Art Gallery of Greater Victoria's *From Warhol to Banksy* exhibit.

RAY NUFER
STUDENT EDITORIAL ASSISTANT

From Warhol to Banksy looks at several artists across pop art and graffiti art and makes connections between the anti-establishment and anti-consumerist voice of both movements and their dissolution of the line between low and high art.

The exhibit—running now at The Art Gallery of Greater Victoria (AGGV)—is organized by the Kelowna Art Gallery and curated by Christine May, who worked with a private collector in the Okanagan to put together the show. The Kelowna Art Gallery then decided to offer it as a travelling exhibit to other galleries in Canada, and the AGGV took it on.

One of the main mediums pop artists worked with was printmaking, for its limited-edition value, ease of circulating images, graphic qualities, and bold colours.

“Prints were really important for pop artists, particularly Andy Warhol—it’s more about circulating works in mass numbers and disseminating them around the world, almost like a virus,” says AGGV chief curator and director of exhibitions Steven McNeil. “It’s a way of having the work take on a life of its own, travel around the world, and be seen in many different places at once.”

The pop-art movement—taking place in post-war 1960s North America—satirically regurgitated the bright colours, commanding text, and instantly gratifying nature of advertising that has been inundating Western culture since the Industrial Revolution.

“The work of art itself takes on the format and appearance of advertising,” says McNeil.

There is a strong element of graffiti in the show, he says, with several works from Banksy, a pseudonymous English artist who creates political graffiti-based street art, often utilizing stencils, and Mr. Brainwash, also a pseudonymous English artist, best known for graffiti works that bridge the gap between graffiti and fine art.

“A lot of the power behind graffiti art is the idea that it can be anonymous, appear overnight, and transform a public space that

wasn’t intended to be a space for art, but suddenly becomes a space for art,” says McNeil. “There’s a lot of crossover to the way that earlier pop artists disseminated prints and had them spread across the world, and showed big numbers of the same repetitive image.”

Along with the Warhol pieces in the exhibit, there will also be works shown by American pop artists Tom Wesselmann and Roy Lichtenstein, who brought illustrations from comics and graphic novels into the fine-art world, reflecting popular culture and a piece of the average consumer’s life in the gallery. McNeil says the exhibit will also feature work by Japanese artist Takashi Murakami. (There is also a smaller companion exhibition running alongside *From Warhol to Banksy*—*From Balzar to Hunt*, a collection of pop art from British Columbia curated to complement the main exhibit that includes major work from Shawn Hunt, Joan Balzar, Audrey Riller, and more.)

“It’s quite flashy and pretty in the same way a commercial product would be,” he says. “It plays on animation and parts of Japanese culture that are related to pop art in the same way as the subjects that Roy Lichtenstein and Andy Warhol looked to—comic book characters and more popular life things.”

The exhibit will also see the first Victoria screening of the 2017 HBO documentary *Brillo Box (3¢ off)*, directed by Lianne Skyler.

“It is a documentary that looks to how one of [Andy Warhol’s] brillo box sculptures played a big role in a family’s life,” says McNeil. “They acquired one early on for a low value, and then these works took on much higher values over time. So it’s a documentary that really delves into the art market and how something bought at one point in someone’s life can have a big impact on their life later on.”

From Warhol to Banksy
Until Sunday, April 27
Art Gallery of Greater Victoria
aggv.ca



PHOTO BY YURI AKUNEY/COURTESY OF KELOWNA ART GALLERY

Roy Lichtenstein's *Drowning Girl* is also part of the *From Warhol to Banksy* exhibit, on now at the Art Gallery of Greater Victoria.



PIECES OF PERFORMANCE

BY ACACIA TOOTH

Local drag performer Fierce Brosnan gets iconic

“I want people to walk away from a Fierce Brosnan show feeling like they were in on the bit with me and we’re buddies now.”

FIERCE BROSNAN
DRAG PERFORMER

Fierce Brosnan, also known as Chelsea, has taken the Victoria drag scene by storm.

Stepping up as a '90s heartthrob, this campy and charismatic boy can charm like no other.

“Lately I’ve leaned into a more crooner, classically handsome performer—I guess to show that us old boys still got it,” says Fierce.

When attending a Fierce Brosnan show, you can expect to laugh, be swooned, and maybe even end up with a new friend.

“I want people to walk away from a Fierce Brosnan show feeling like they were in on the bit with me and we’re buddies now,” says Fierce.

The life of a king is never dull when you can make others laugh, feel connected, and crave more. Fierce says that with it comes a chance to express a true neuro-spicy identity that would usually be pushed away.

“Drag has allowed me to give that inside voice a microphone and, it turns out, people enjoy it.”

From Okanagan Valley be-

ginnings, the journey began by attending friends’ crossdressing parties, where some attendees even performed numbers, which prompted a final push from a friend. That caught the eye of a local Indigenous drag legend.

“Ella Lamoureux had asked me to do spotlight night... I was too chicken. Finally, a friend of mine signed me up when I wasn’t there. I received a message from Ella ... [asking] if I would do it.”

Three years into the journey, Fierce has yet to slow down. From hosting monthly shows at Friends of Dorothy’s, brunches at The Vicious Poodle, and transforming other venues around town to become queer-friendly spaces, it has kept him booked and busy. All while creating the up-and-coming drag king group Call Us Men, featuring Bad Shah, Tragic Mike, and Ricky E. Ratmansky. Drag is about sharing who we are authentically, the deepest part of us, and with community comes the best self-realization of who you can be, something not lost on Fierce.

“Drag has given me a community of amazing people that support and show up as well as pushed me to be more confident and vocal,” says Fierce.

An anterior cruciate ligament surgery that took place in November 2024 has given Fierce a chance to reflect on his favorite song choice.

“‘To You from Me’ [is a] number I dedicated to my wife... I was able to perform it at Pride [and] it was selected to be done at an All Drag King Festival called Emerald City Kings Ball, in Seattle.”

The soft spot while performing this number grows every time and there is rarely a dry eye in the audience.

You can catch Fierce Brosnan breaking hearts of local legends at his upcoming show *Drag In Concept Heartbreak Hotel: Double Booked*, with Call Us Men at Lucky Bar on February 13.

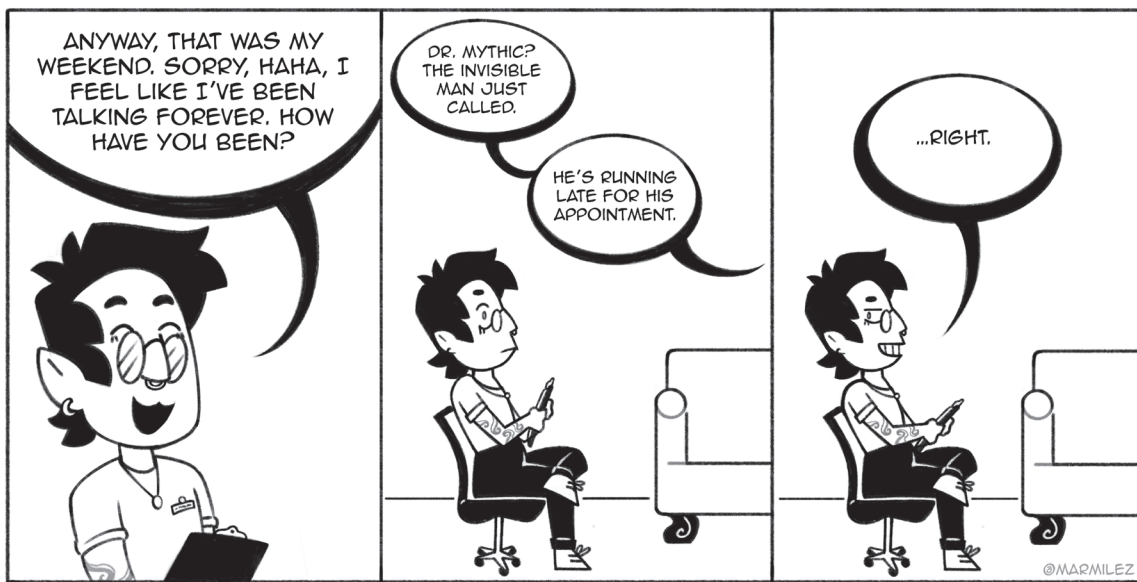
And if you can’t get enough of this iconic king you can follow along on Instagram at its.fiercebrosnan for more show information and the best viral reels.



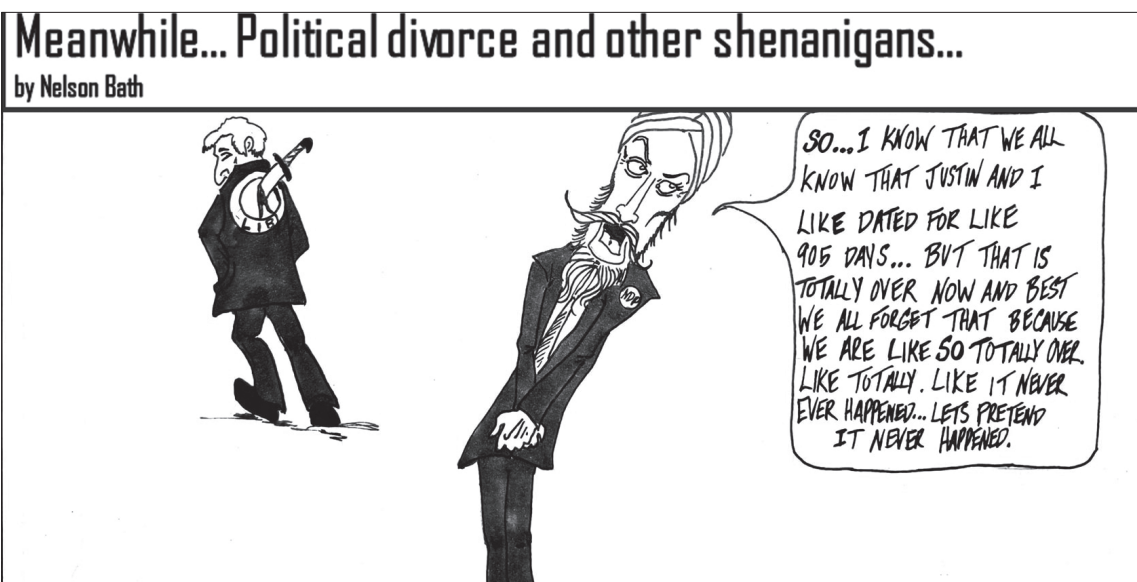
KZ PHOTOGRAPHY

Local performer Fierce Brosnan says that drag has boosted his confidence.

Dr. Mythic - Miles Roever



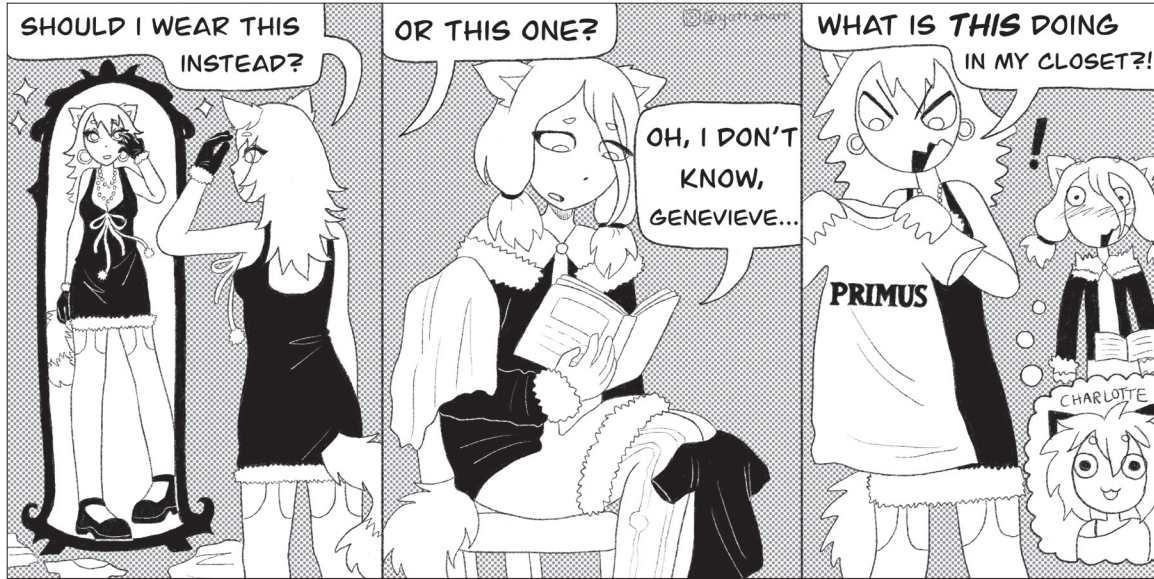
Meanwhile... - Nelson Bath



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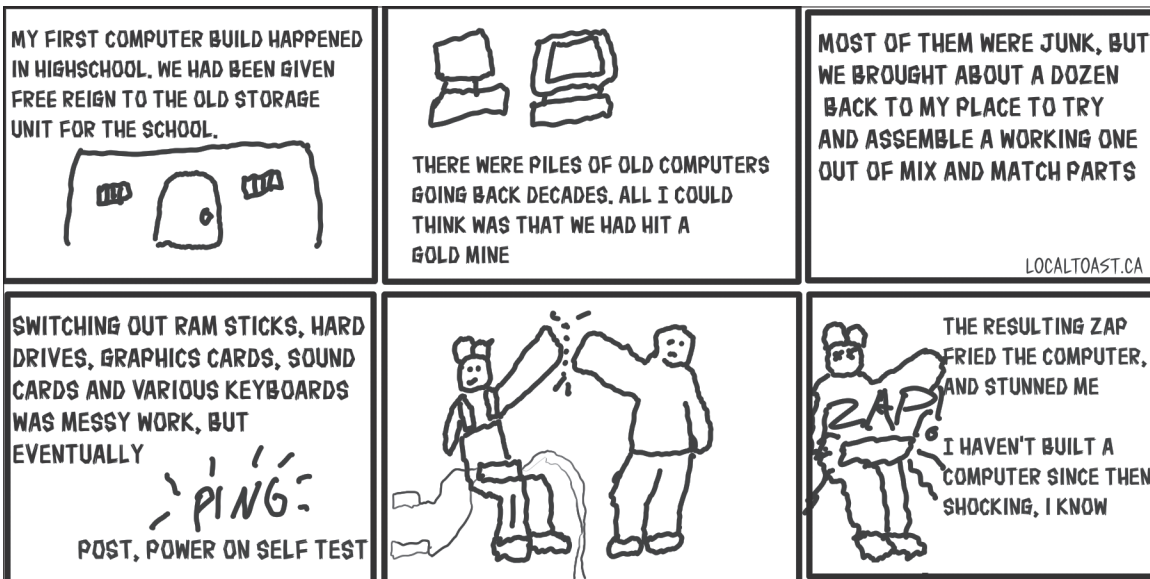
Ruby Rioux and the Bats from Saturn - Ray Nufer



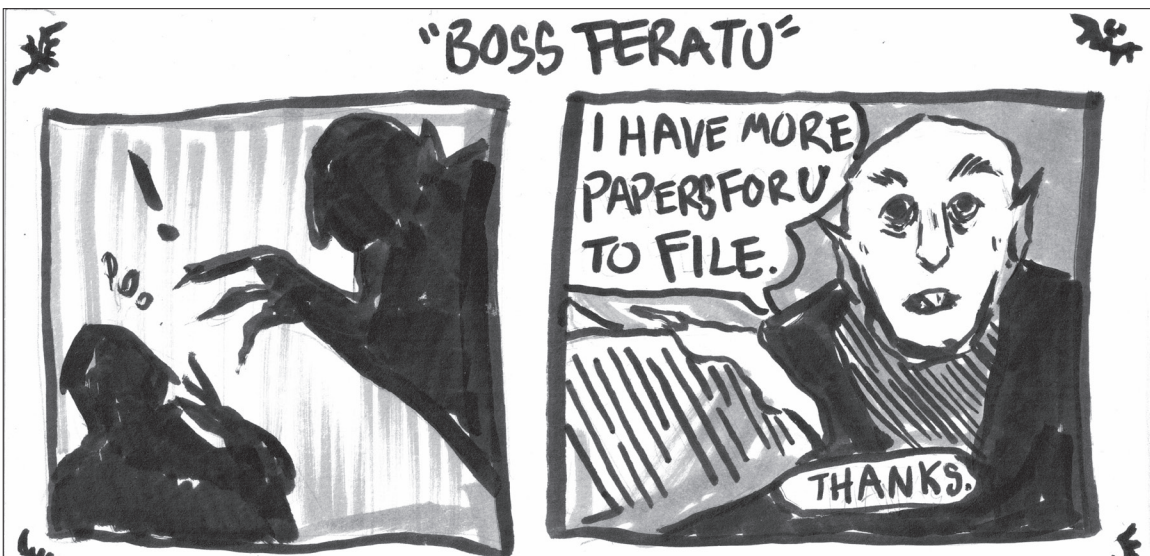
Natural Selection - Emily Welch



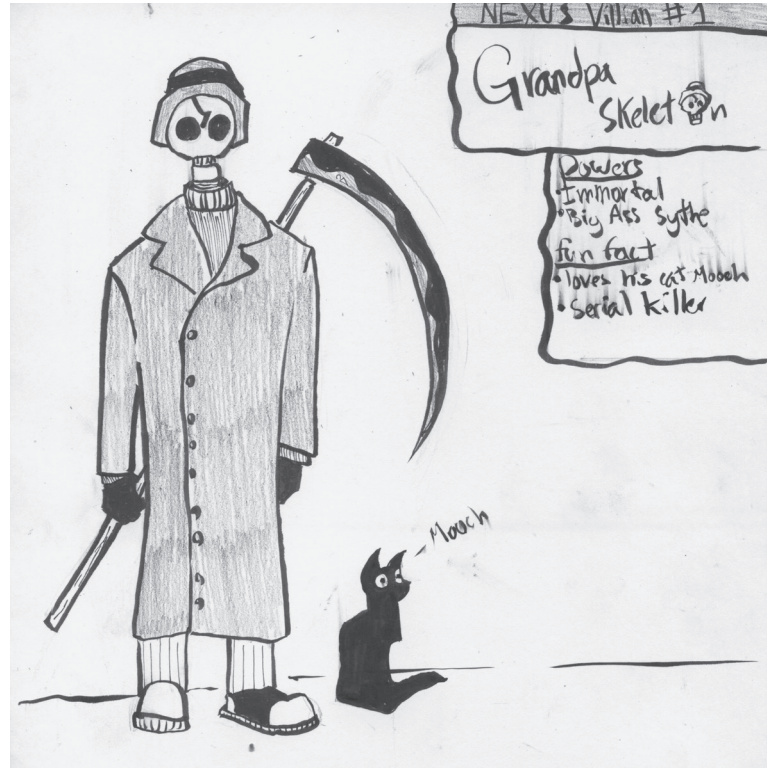
Localtoast: The Daemon That Lives at Localhost - Ben Belland



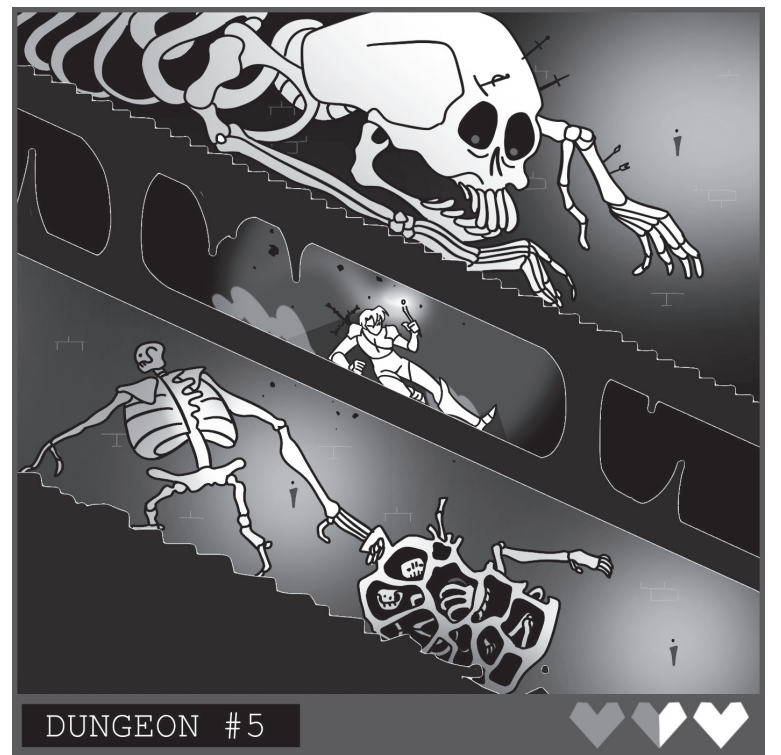
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LYDIA'S FILM CRITIQUE

BY LYDIA ZULETA JOHNSON

Real Life

As one would suspect, the production does not turn out, and filmmaker Albert Brooks falls further into egomaniacal madness.

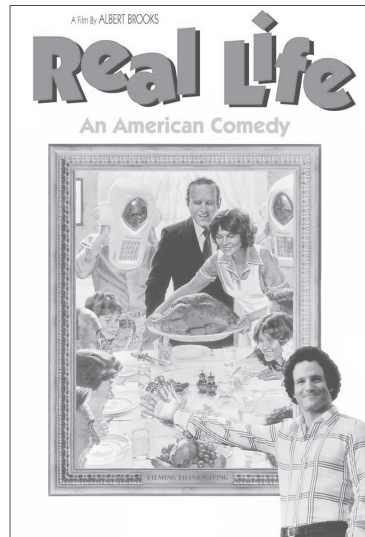
Somewhere between PBS' *An American Family* and E! network's *Keeping Up With the Kardashians* there emerged a widespread interest in observing the private mechanics of the nuclear family, and when that became tired, we were left with endless spinoffs and remarketing to redirect our time from our own families. But before anyone had the chance to be shocked that the housewives of Anytown may not be as real as they claim, filmmaker and comedian Albert Brooks took to uncovering the production behind the production in his 1973 faux-documentary production *Real Life*—the next step in reality television, the opening title prepares its audience.

While the television genre may be called "reality," it's well understood by now that entertainment does not come from the mundanity of the human experience like it does from the manipulation of money-grubbing producers—the camera and investors just don't appreciate tedious routine as much as they do catfights. And entertainment, of course, is what Brooks, playing a more immoral, narcissistic version of himself, struggles to fabricate when he's given the opportunity to film an Arizona family.

But the concept is groundbreaking, we're informed early on: Brooks has attempted not only to document the life of a real family but also the people who came to film them and how they influence one another. With access to the sophisticated resources of the National Institute of Human Behavior, Brooks reveals, thousands of interested potential American families were whittled down to the Yeager family, a four-person household made up of a veterinarian father (Charles Grodin), a weary mother (Frances Lee McCain), and two whiny children (Lisa Urette and Robert Stirrat). As far as Brooks understands, he's a shoo-in for an Oscar, and even a Nobel Prize.

Unfortunately, the father comes off as unsympathetic and is later filmed accidentally killing a horse while performing its surgery. And the children aren't getting the screen time they'd like. And the mother isn't having it. And all hope is lost. As one would suspect, the production does not turn out, and Brooks falls further into egomaniacal madness.

Real Life has, most of all, its deadpan humour to thank for its success, as the film may not have



the most developed characters or the strongest pacing. But in its language of small glances at cameras and unnatural behaviour, there could be nothing funnier. Bulbous helmet-like cameras worn on the heads of the fictional cameramen pop in and out of frame in an almost perpetual jump scare. It is a wonder the family even got to day 52.

Brooks reimagines quantum mechanics by offering the observer effect as an American satire; as he and Werner Heisenberg understand, no reality can exist in front of a cameraman. And he acts as a time traveller to a 1970s audience unknowing of what their TVs may be stuffed with in 50 years time. Although no Oscar or Nobel Prize was achieved, Brooks' brilliance behind and on screen is an accurate depiction of real-life fake life.



FELLAS, LET'S FIGURE IT OUT

BY JAXSON SMITH PETERSON

Supplements: cop or drop?

If the advertisements for fat burners and testosterone boosters seem too good to be true, that's because they are.

With the start of a new year come new ways to self-improve. For many of us those goals are health and fitness related. As a Kinesiology student, I want to use this platform to educate Camosun students on one of the most misinformed topics in health and fitness: supplements. Here are a few I recommend and a few that aren't worth the squeeze.

Creatine: Cop

One of the most well-researched supplements, creatine helps to increase muscle mass and strength when combined with weight lifting as well as an improvement in high-intensity-short-duration exercise. There has also been some emerging research that shows creatine may have cognitive and neuro-protective benefits; however, more research is needed to confirm this. Buy creatine monohydrate—any brand is fine—and take five grams a day, every day. That's it.

Fat burners and testosterone boosters: Drop

If the advertisements for these products seem too good to be true, that's because they are. Fat burners and testosterone boosters only come with a high price tag and minimal to non-existent results—leave these on the shelf. Instead, focus on lifestyle changes to make the changes you want to see.

Vitamin D: Cop

This is one that I've talked about in the past and is vital for men's health, especially during the dark months of the winter. Find one with minimal fillers, and aim for 600-800 IU a day.

Greens powders: Drop

I learned this one the hard way. Besides almost throwing up every morning I drank these, I noticed no results in the way I felt or performed. These aren't worth the \$40-plus a month you'll be dishing out. You're much better off just buying fresh or frozen vegetables.

Protein powder: Cop

While not absolutely necessary, protein powder can help you get enough protein in without being too calorie-dense. It's also convenient when you're on the go. If you can, try to avoid the really cheap stuff and get a middle-of-the-road brand in a flavour you'll enjoy.

Finally, a word of caution: before you go and spend your whole paycheck at the supplements store, it is important to know that consistent exercise and quality nutrition is what will get you 90 percent of your results. Focus on those big rocks. Supplements are just a helpful add on for that last 10 percent.

Happy exercising.



REASONS TO LIVE... IN VICTORIA

BY ALEX HANUSE

Belfry and Stage Wine Bar a fine pairing

I recently saw and reviewed *Mom's the Word: Talkin' Turkey* at the Belfry Theatre in Fernwood Square. A mom myself, I jumped on the opportunity to abandon my husband and our two-and-a-half-year-old under the pretense of a writing assignment.

The Belfry Theatre is a small and welcoming space in the heart of Fernwood—one of Victoria's most eccentric neighbourhoods. I had once before attended the theatre to write a review of a play for an English class. It was a wonderful experience, so I put on real clothes and braved the public once again.

Boasting a ton of character and a heritage designation, the Belfry Theatre occupies an immaculately restored 19th-century church. In line with the ideals of its unique neighbourhood, the Belfry is an open-minded, community-driven theatre proudly focusing on Canadian plays and artists. A pay-what-you-can option is offered for tickets, which is great for students on a budget.

A trip to the Belfry Theatre isn't complete without first stopping at Stage Wine Bar. Situated across from the square at 1307 Gladstone Avenue, Stage is the official watering hole for theatre-goers. This Fernwood-famous joint offers inspired but laid-back French food,

A trip to the Belfry Theatre isn't complete without first stopping at Stage Wine Bar. This Fernwood-famous joint offers inspired but laid-back French food, wine, and cocktails in a dark and handsome atmosphere.

wine, and cocktails in a dark and handsome atmosphere. My sister-in-law, who's also a mother, was with me and is equally motivated by cocktails. Luckily, we secured two seats at the bar just in time for the pre-theatre happy hour. Generously offered until 6:30, happy hour includes a small list of food items and drinks. Enjoy a glass of bubbles, a glass of white, or a glass of red for \$9, a draft beer for \$6, or an excellent cocktail for \$10.

From the menu, we ordered the Crispy Rockfish with Chip Shop Curry. The large portion of fish was perfectly fried and served in a shallow bowl of spiced gravy, covered in a blanket of chives. We also tried the beef tartar, which, although inventive, I found too sweet and rich. The bread we ordered to accompany it, however, was to die for.

My sister-in-law had the Hyp-

notic Sour, which was an exquisite shade of cloudy blue. Gin, passion-fruit, and root beer bitters combine to make this exceedingly sexy cocktail.

The star of the show was the Sloe Night, a divinely refreshing, frothy pink drink made with sloe gin. The sweet, red liquor is made by infusing gin with the dark, bitter berries of the blackthorn bush. This fresh and fruity cocktail is very easy drinking, but don't let it fool you. Stage doesn't mess around with their pours, so take your cue from the name and go slow.

If you're looking for the perfect date night, this is it. With pay-what-you-can theatre tickets and Stage's happy hour, you can have a sophisticated and magical evening without breaking the bank. You're welcome. Another excellent reason to live in Victoria.



DROPPING THE NEEDLE

BY SANTIAGO VAZQUEZ-FUERTE

Winners and losers of 2024

Last year was full of ups and downs in the music industry. It was marked by major comebacks, mainstream artists' beefs, album flops, and much more that kept music fans on their toes. Here are the top three biggest winners and losers of 2024.

Biggest winners:**3. Charli XCX**

Charli returned as a mainstream artist after dropping what is undoubtedly the best album of 2024, *BRAT*. The record is a dance-pop masterpiece that reminded everyone of Charli's immense talent and ambition.

2. Kendrick Lamar

The American rapper got into a rap beef with Drake that had the fans buzzing. They threw heavy lyrical shots at each other, including serious allegations. However, Lamar came out victorious after dropping one of the best singles of the entire year with "Not Like Us." He gained a lot of popularity after being absent from music for a couple of years and ended the year with an announcement that he would headline the Super Bowl and be dropping his latest album, *GNX*, which is one of the best albums of the year. In 2024, Lamar established himself as the best active rapper.

1. Taylor Swift

Who else would it be? Not only did she have a successful ending to

her record-breaking Eras Tour, but she also dropped a new album, *The Tortured Poets Department*. While not her most artistically ambitious, the album did great numbers either way. The popularity she's gained over the last year makes her the biggest winner of 2024.

Biggest losers:**3. Kanye West**

West had yet another year full of controversies and he put the cherry on top by releasing the worst album of the year, and the worst one in his catalogue, *Vultures 2*. His rapid and dramatic fall from grace continued throughout 2024 and it has no signs of getting any better.

2. Katy Perry

Perry tried to make a comeback in mainstream music with her new album, *1432*. This album fell quite flat and failed to generate any excitement. Her retirement from music cannot come soon enough; however, she'll always be a pop legend.

1. Drake

The Canadian rapper had his worst year yet and it does not look like 2025 will be any better. Responding to Kendrick Lamar's bait and engaging in a rap beef against him proved to be a big mistake. His reputation is down to the floor and his music doesn't seem to be getting any better. It will be interesting to see what Drake does to come back from 2024.



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