

SHOPPING ALONE



ON THE DEATH OF THE DEPARTMENT STORE

6

Opinion: The CRA hates students
2

*Must-visit cafes in Victoria
this summer*
5

*British Columbia Federation of Students
meets with premier David Eby*
3

*Friends of Dorothy offers safe space
for queer culture*
8

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editor's letter
True patriot love

In the final weeks before the 45th federal election, we clung on to our flags and waved them high. In crude impulse, we ushered in the nobility of patriotism on the back of a fallen North American allyship. We called ourselves *Canadians* without flinching and called for unity where there hadn't been. We did, still do, will do, should we not acknowledge it. It, if in fact we do not check it, will carry us dangerously down the same stream. It will mask as honour. The *it* I speak of is a pervasive colonial identity which unites the few who fit into its limited criteria and washes over the most. And should we tote this spirit, we must know where it leads.

It only took three months to rally a country around the movement. Called by name for our sovereignty and dragged by our ankles to the battleground laid square within the heart of a presidential spree, we reacted in defense. We reacted, although we did not yet understand. It was the symbiosis

It only took three months to rally a country around the movement. Called by name for our sovereignty and dragged by our ankles to the battleground laid square within the heart of a presidential spree, we reacted in defense. We reacted, although we did not yet understand.

of breathing in the potent musk of US aptitudes and breathing out the prey's call. The headlines mobilized us. Ironically, of course, this identity doesn't so much oppose that of the US. Our histories share the same soil and our presents carry similar weight. But what we've constructed today of our identity attempts to counter this. We decided swiftly in the matter of three brief months that a call for a *strong* Canada is key to awaken the dormant zeal of Canadian nationalism. We agreed this method was the preferred in order to combat this looming threat.

It doesn't seem to matter then, maybe, that our deep brooks flow off the same body so long as we loudly condemn our neighbour. And so long as we double down, double impose tariffs, maybe, then we can escape the oppression we too have enforced. The idea of a united Canada is much prettier this way. Look away, we say, when we are united around a country built on subjugation.

The collective patriotism we hold claims to serve as the underdog. And, up against the brute force of American invasion, it isn't entirely false to make this judgement. But what echoes through the red and white flags now lining grocery aisles and cloaking the front steps of the Legislature building, is the call of the offence.

Lydia Zuleta Johnson, student editor
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open space
The CRA hates students

LYDIA ZULETA JOHNSON
STUDENT EDITOR

In the waning days of this year's tax season, nothing could be so dull as to reignite the topic—it isn't particularly stimulating conversation. But to many Canadians, the spring months severely disappoint pockets, and of those individuals, students are directly harmed.

It isn't new, certainly, but remains improperly addressed: unreasonable restrictions on the

for more than 13 weeks in the year unless, on December 31, you have an eligible dependent") they and their partner are ineligible. The assumption and justification of this then is that students do not work, and indeed this is false; perhaps as the cost of living skyrockets, too, this has never been so false. Approximately 40 percent of all full-time undergraduate students work. And that isn't a choice—students who are not supported by

Although the phenomena of the overworked student is increasingly common, the federal government has yet to grasp this, or perhaps has decidedly abandoned them all together.

Canada Workers Benefit (CWB) have prevented full-time students, and their spouses or common-law partners, from claiming its necessary financial support. Since 2007, the benefit has aimed at drawing Canadians into the workforce and supporting lower-income individuals. The sum of money isn't small to those who require it, either—every bit counts when living on minimum wage to sustain a one-bedroom apartment shared between three roommates. Students who work know this well. But, still, although the phenomena of the overworked student is increasingly common, the federal government has yet to grasp this, or perhaps has decidedly abandoned them all together.

Canada's non-commitment to post-secondary has been underscored in the past year, leaving students uncomfortable at the thought of their education's direction. By the decision of former minister of immigration, refugees and citizenship Marc Miller, the number of international students entering Canada was capped, leading to severe underfunding of educational institutions across the country. However, neither the provincial or federal budgets in the past year addressed the crisis.

But the apathy toward struggling working students has been clear every year for several decades. If a student is considered full-time (by government definition, "enrolled as a full-time student at a designated educational institution

other family members must find a means to fund both their education and their livelihoods.

For some, the discrimination is a deterrent from pursuing post-secondary education full time if it means sacrificing that useful bump come the end of the fiscal year. As a result, those students will be required to spend several more years completing their degrees, and more time at unfulfilling retail, service, and food-industry employment living off of minimum wage.

As I fit all these boxes, my tax return was modest this year. For the first time claiming both a spouse and full-time student status, my return, which normally offers me stability, took a major cut. And while it's unfortunate to lose money where as a worker I should be owed, my partner, who is not a student but legally my husband, also was disadvantaged from my educational decision. In short, we both missed out on what we deserve as workers, which meant pinching pennies while the affluent are given tax breaks up the yin yang.

University and college students living below the poverty line aren't a rare bunch. They require support to sustain their long-term contribution to Canada's workforce. They require the CWB not because they will one day work, but because they do work. And, instead, what they are shown is contempt by a government that chooses to turn a blind eye at the living and working conditions of an important demographic.

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

**Something on your mind?
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post-secondary

British Columbia Federation of Students meets with premier David Eby

AJ AIKEN
CONTRIBUTING WRITER

The BC Federation of Students (BCFS), who represent 14 public post-secondary institutions—including Camosun College—across the province, met with BC premier David Eby, minister of post-secondary education and future skills Anne Kang, and MLAs during its Spring Advocacy Week, from March 31 to April 2. The BCFS, who advocate for affordable post-secondary education, are lobbying for an increase in operation funding at post-secondary institutions, releasing the results of a review of post-secondary funding, and strengthening the Tuition Limit Policy. Despite economic concerns, BCFS secretary/treasurer Cole Reinbold says the discussion was productive.

“When it comes to increasing funding, that was also met with positive responses. It’s difficult right now because of the deficit that the province is in,” says Reinbold. “But most MLAs did acknowledge that post-secondary does need to be funded better, and that is exactly what our lobby ask is, that the government must restore provincial funding to our institutions to no less than 75 percent of budgets, because this is the only way to stop our institutions from crumbling.”

On March 4, the NDP tabled their current budget with an investment of \$3.5 billion into post-secondary education. However, that funding only covers inflation and salary increases for bargaining units that came up this fiscal year; there is no new operational funding from the provincial or federal governments (Eby did not respond to a request for an interview for this story; Kang declined an interview request).

Currently, public post-secondary institutions’ operating costs are funded at 41.1 percent by the provincial government. In the



PHOTO PROVIDED

British Columbia Federation of Students representatives with BC premier David Eby.

’90s, institutions were funded by the provincial government at 80 percent. In 2011, under premier Christy Clark, there was a change in the funding model. In an effort to replace an aging population and increase support for local economies, Clark set a goal of increasing international student enrollment by 50 percent. Post-secondary institutions began relying more on tuition fees than the government for operational expenses. The result has been a divestment in post-secondary education over an entire generation.

In the summer of 2022, under the NDP, a review of the funding model was started; however, its release has been delayed multiple times. The BCFS has been lobbying for the funding review to be released

so all stakeholders know the status of post-secondary education. The funding model provides institutions with long-term financial stability.

“The funding review is actually more relevant now than it has ever been, because a funding review was done post COVID, and COVID really showed a lot of the cracks in our post-secondary system,” says Reinbold. “So, when COVID happened, a lot of international students couldn’t study in Canada anymore, so a lot of institutions started to see those cracks of what happens when that volatile revenue source is no longer there. And then they did the funding review.”

After the funding review was started, the federal government introduced the cap on international

student visas. As more post-secondary institutions hit a financial crisis, it’s been critical for the BCFS that the funding review be released to understand the full impact of the international student visa cap.

Post-secondary education also impacts local economies. In 2018, international students contributed \$4.7 billion in spending in BC and created approximately 53,500 jobs across the province.

“Thompson River University [TRU] contributes \$850 million annually to the Kamloops economy and supports one in every 10 jobs. And TRU isn’t the outlier here. Institutions are economic drivers for the communities that they’re in, and so when our institutions struggle, the community struggles, jobs struggle.

“Most MLAs did acknowledge that post-secondary does need to be funded better.”

COLE REINBOLD
BRITISH COLUMBIA
FEDERATION OF
STUDENTS

So without our institutions being properly funded, we can expect our local economies to also crumble,” says Reinbold.

The third ask that the BCFS brought to Eby and Kang was a strengthened Tuition Limit Policy. This policy sets out the two-percent cap on increasing domestic tuition. However, there isn’t a limit on increasing ancillary fees—colleges and universities can increase their revenue and circumvent the tuition cap by adding new ancillary fees.

“What we’re asking is that they strengthen the tuition fee limit policy to also include the addition of new ancillary fees,” says Reinbold. “This stronger policy is absolutely essential to protect the affordability and access of education to people, young people in BC, who are looking to skill, re-skill, and enter the workforce.”

Public post-secondary institutions are not allowed to run deficits without an approval from the government; however, there are six that have been approved due to lower enrolment of international students because of the new policies. The BCFS says that next year, that number is expected to go up to 17 out of 25 institutions.

“That is very troubling,” says Reinbold, “and it really paints the picture that our system is collapsing before our very eyes.”

NEWS BRIEFS

CCFA rally for transparency

The Camosun College Faculty Association (CCFA) held a rally outside Camosun College during its Monday, April 14 board meeting at the Lansdowne campus. The CCFA is calling for more transparency in the college’s budgeting process; a new balanced budget of \$171,955,297 was approved at the meeting. The college is dealing with ongoing financial concerns after government-mandated limitations on international students and has already eliminated several positions and restructured departments. The CCFA and the college are entering mediation in early May over the layoffs, the restructuring, and the working conditions taking place to make

the balanced budget happen. See camosunfaculty.ca for more information on the CCFA.

Chargers athletes, coach awarded

Camosun Chargers women’s volleyball outside Erica Bolink and men’s basketball forward David Finch were recently named the 2024-2025 Chargers Athletes of the Year. Bolink led the PACWEST in kills, with 318, and aces, with 73, and reached over 410 total points this season. Finch was second in league Player of the Year voting; he was also a PACWEST First Team All-Star, as well as a CCAA All-Canadian. Additionally, at the annual Chargers Awards Ceremony, which took place on Thursday, April 3, men’s basketball coach Geoff Pippus won the PACWEST Coach of

the Year award. Many Chargers athletes were also awarded at the event, including, among others, Eric Lees taking home the President’s Award and Lachlan Scherger receiving the Derek Twomey Scholarship for Sport.

Co-op students awarded

Camosun College Visual Arts student and *Nexus* contributing writer and artist Ray Nufer recently was awarded the Yvonne Thompson Page Co-op Student of the Year award; Nufer was also the ACEWIL Co-op winner and an honourable mention in the CEWIL Canada and Emery-Dufault Student of the Year Award. Hospitality Management student Breyn Banks was selected as the ACEWIL WIL winner; Mariana Ximena Bretado Brizuela won the Business Co-op Student of the

Year award, Sofia Marin Lavin for Technology, and Kohen Willis Dengler for the WIL Student of the Year in Sport Management.

Teachers recognized

On Friday, May 2, over 40 Camosun College instructors were named in the fourth annual Teacher Recognition Awards. The awards, which also were given to faculty and other college-related staff, were chosen by students nominating instructors who they feel go above and beyond for student success. See a complete list of those awarded at camosun.ca/news/spotlighting-exceptional-teaching-camosun-college.

Chargers coach takes position at UFV

Camosun Chargers women’s volleyball head coach Brent

Hall recently accepted an assistant coach position with the University of the Fraser Valley’s women’s volleyball team. In his eight years as head coach at the Chargers, Hall led the team to its first ever gold medal at the PACWEST championships, as well as two silvers and two bronzes, and a CCAA national championship silver medal. He was also named PACWEST Coach of the Year in 2019 and 2020.

–GREG PRATT,
MANAGING EDITOR

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student politics

Camosun College Student Society spring election results in

GREG PRATT
MANAGING EDITOR

The Camosun College Student Society (CCSS) held its spring elections from Tuesday, April 1 to Thursday, April 3.

Terence Baluyut was elected as external executive, Daniella Quesada as Interurban executive, and Regina Cervantes as Lansdowne executive.

Benjamin Madariaga was elected as finance executive, Athena Pimentel as wellness and access director, Hannah De Guzman as sustainability director, and Madison Huynh as women’s director.

Rose Patterson was elected as Indigenous director, Angela Chou as a Lansdowne director at large, Nancy Kwong as an Interurban director at large, and Hector Compy as international director.

670 students voted in the elections. See camosunstudent.org for more info on the CCSS.



PHOTO PROVIDED

Former Camosun College Student Society pride director Terence Baluyut was voted in as external executive last month.

eyed off campus

Visual Arts students display what’s lost and found at grad show



ALL PHOTOS PROVIDED

Camosun Visual Arts students at opening night of *Lost and Found*, their graduation art exhibit, on Thursday, April 17.

spots

Must-visit cafes in Victoria this summer

It’s the time of year to go out and explore the city and what it has to offer, with friends, an engaging book, and a cold drink.

MARIAN RESTREPO GALINDO
CONTRIBUTING WRITER

Summer is a time to disconnect from routines and the rush of daily occupations. It’s the time of year to go out and explore the city and what it has to offer, with friends, an engaging book, and a cold drink. This summer, there are four coffee shops in Greater Victoria perfect for slowing things down momentarily and reconnecting with the self. If you’re around downtown, head over to Hey Happy, a lovely cafe on Johnson Street, around Market Square. Hey Happy offers a cozy atmosphere, wheelchair accessibility, and an assortment of coffee, tea, and pastries, as well as breakfast, brunch, and lunch options. The coffee at Hey Happy is roasted locally, and their staff provides outstanding customer service that will make you feel welcomed. If you want a book recommendation to try out alongside their coconut latte, *Normal People* or *Intermezzo*

by Sally Rooney are reflective and intimate stories that will complement nicely your summer afternoon. If you’re looking for a hidden gem, some place that offers a brand-new experience, then the Torch Song Cafe is what you’re after. This coffee shop, located on Government Street, has a great design, with a selection of records and books. Its breakfast, lunch, and sweets coupled with its service will simply charm and make you want to revisit over and over again. Try out their breakfast sandwich and cappuccino while reading *The Ministry of Time* by Kaliane Bradley, and dive into a warm sci-fi romantic comedy. Now, if you’re in Langford, there are two other places that you must give a try. You will not regret it—and both are close to Goldstream Avenue, where you can stroll and discover what Langford has to offer. If you are missing spring, and you crave a place of quiet, calm, and whimsical aesthetics, then give Flourish BeauTea a visit. This

photogenic location on Peatt Road offers fruity drinks, spongy cheese-cakes, and desserts that will become your new summer favourites. The welcoming ambience and the cheerful staff make it a lovely spot for reading, journalling, and studying. Support local businesses like this one by spending an afternoon there, enjoying a tea alongside a sweet. And just like their menu, a timeless classic such as *Pride and Prejudice* by Jane Austen will be a suitable match for your afternoon tea read. Last but not least, one of my favourite cafes in Langford is Coffee Shack, also located on Peatt Road. This café has everything you need, in a strategic location. I adore their delicious baked goods (especially the scones), coffee and tea selections, and snacks. The service is friendly, and the minimal and calm environment makes it unique. Try their bagel sandwich or a scone alongside an iced caramel macchiato, starting a new book such as *Big Magic* by Elizabeth Gilbert or *Book Lovers* by Emily Henry. You’ll come back soon to get it finished and try out another snack. Summer awaits us. Try out different activities, have fun, and support local businesses. Probably, your new favourite read awaits you, and so does an iced drink and a cozy cafe on the island.



PHOTO PROVIDED

Hey Happy is located in downtown Victoria, outside Market Square.

sweets

Terrifically terrible: Victoria’s best and worst chocolatiers



PHOTO PROVIDED

A sampling of some individual chocolates available at Chocolat & Co., located on Fort Street.

LANE CHEVRIER
CONTRIBUTING WRITER

Considering the recent Easter holiday, I decided this was a perfect excuse to eat far too much chocolate, for the educational benefit of my readers. So, I embarked upon a mission wherein I rated a wide variety of confectionaries from six chocolatiers in Victoria: Roger’s, Cococo, Chocolat & Co., Chocolats Favoris, Pure Lovin’, and Purdy’s. Beginning with Roger’s Chocolates, I first tried their icewine

truffle. The cognac and icewine are apparent in the aftertaste, but not particularly enjoyable. The lavender bliss chocolate has such an overpowering flavour that you’ll barely taste anything other than lavender. The filling in their vanilla cream truffle is so overwhelmingly sweet it reminds me of a cheap Halloween candy; certainly not luxurious or decadent. Their 54% dark chocolate bar is much too sweet but very smooth, and their 33% milk chocolate is surprisingly excellent.

Cococo Chocolatiers has a dark chocolate mango peppercorn truffle which is heavy on the pepper, but I couldn’t taste any mango. Their Earl Grey tea truffle contains honey, praline, and tea, and was okay, but I couldn’t taste the tea at all. The mochaccino praline truffle is delicious, and the coffee bean on top gives a great flavour and fantastic crunch. Their 65% dark chocolate was average at best, and their milk chocolate tasted like it belonged in a department-store advent calendar.

Chocolat & Co serve what they call Terrible Truffles, which were, ironically, the best of the lot.

Chocolat & Co. serve what they call Terrible Truffles, which were, ironically, the best of the lot. I tried their caramel, earl grey tea, buttercream, orange brandy, and hazelnut flavours, but their most impressive feature is the creamy, rich, melty ganache they put in most of their truffles. Their 43% milk chocolate had an odd aftertaste, and their 57% dark chocolate was also oddly sweet. Chocolats Favoris, on the contrary, was almost entirely disgusting, with truffles tasting like corner-store candy, with waxy, cheap-tasting chocolate. The best explanation is that they tasted mass produced, not decadent. However, their 35% milk chocolate was very good, and their 60% dark was quite sweet, but smooth. It’s bizarre that the quality of the chocolate seemed to differ between the bars and the truffles. Pure Lovin’ chocolates are all vegan, but are weirdly inconsistent. Their toasted coconut caramel bar doesn’t represent caramel, with a weird liquidy texture, but is certainly coconutty. I thought that being made vegan affected its consistency but found later in my journey that that’s not necessarily the case. A standout for them was

their peanut butter cup, which tastes like a high-quality Reese’s cup would, with luxurious chocolate, and natural, low-sugar peanut butter. Their milk chocolate tasted a bit off, probably because of the vegan oils used, but it’s still enjoyable. Their dark chocolate was the best of the bunch, because the cocoa content was quite high, and had that strong, bitter flavour that I prefer in dark chocolate. Purdy’s Chocolates is a bit inconsistent, with their best truffle being their Hawaiian black salt caramel, which is vegan, chewy, and delicious, which invalidates the thought that maybe vegan caramel just has to suck. Their hazelnut truffle was decent, but some of their white chocolate blended truffles tasted more like cheap confectionaries than proper chocolate. Their 70% dark and 38% milk tasted awful, with the milk far too sweet and the dark tasting like dollar-store chocolate. Overall, the best truffles were Terrible, with decadent ganache, and the worst were Chocolats Favoris. The best milk chocolate was made by Roger’s, and the best dark by Pure Lovin’, while the worst of both of these was Purdy’s.



SHOPPING ALONE

ON THE DEATH OF THE DEPARTMENT STORE

On each floor of the Hudson's Bay department store, luxury goods stale under fluorescent light. It prides itself on DKNY and Calvin Klein. It offers Levi's and Breville and the Wonderbra. They stew in uninhabited air and have mildewed. They wait for buyers who never show. A scuffed white hue, presumably pampered many decades ago, cloaks the linoleum, the drywall, the furnishings, and the formerly manicured accessory displays. It is the oldest corporation in North America and shows its age unforgivingly. The Bay, as it is likewise known, swelled its colonial empire unto 80 multi-level commercial spaces, but by mid-June will liquidate its entire miscellaneous inventory to vacate all locations come the end of the month. By July it will join Sears, Zellers, and Nordstrom in their undoing.

The department store, as it was in 1796 for Harding, Howell & Co's Grand Fashionable Magazine at 89 Pall Mall in St James's, London, catered itself to the everyday fashionable white woman. By design, it afforded her room to meander out of the home, where she could shop without men's company, tended after only by familiar middle-class sales associates. Shopping, ergo, fused with the social space—she sees perfume samples and knows she's in good hands. But it was only by the turn of the 20th century, shaped by the standards of the Industrial Revolution, that the status of the department store was made official to its brand: this was the most efficient manner to shop. The five-, six-, sometimes eight-storied palaces not only offered things, the kind that one needs to maintain the home and one's self, but stuff, the kind of excess.

But it isn't the efficient way now; the numbers disprove it. The excess we're after isn't found at Sears or Zellers or even The Bay, we figure, and its accessibility is outmatched. Asked why they believe The Bay has been forced to close its doors, final wandering customers insist the department an outdated model. The store, they say, just didn't keep up with what is now the demand. The demand, of course, being efficiency. The accusations of an archaic institution aren't wholly false, of course; Karen Scott doesn't very well mimic what's in fashion at the rapid pace trends cycle, and the worn escalators undeniably cannot supply the same comfort of one's own home. The gaze for efficiency finds desire elsewhere: the internet, and the internet doesn't require gas to reach. Indeed, the internet requires very little of a consumer and the consumer is omitted entirely from the operation. By its claim, and what's been collectively assumed of it, online shopping is the newest, fastest, frictionless way. This is why we use it instead of finding parking, we are giddy to say.

Still, most times, we must wait many days for our *stuff* once the order is placed. Surely the department store outdoes its competitor there: faster. Surely, then, we must see the value in making the trip, paying none for shipping. But, even so, that still doesn't agree with our standard of efficiency; what we are after is not the productive convenience of accessing goods but the convenience of forgoing the ritual. The convenience we now seek, some centuries later, extends not only to the immediate five-metre radius, from the hand to the iPhone, but to the practicality of alienation.

It is easy, undemanding, to shop without a knowing conscience. Feeding the internal informed buyer sacrifices the cultural tradition of mass consumption. Feeding, instead, the detached buyer, the one who is too naive to consider child labour or environmental costs to choose their consumption wisely, allows us the rash freedom we cherish to purchase without guilt. With a conscience we set limits, do what we must to reduce our harm. The experience of the department store disobeys this principle—it begs us to confront the tradition we strongly uphold. On my farewell visit to Hudson's it is glaring, it is a crime scene of capitalist merchandise. On a rack of clearance dresses, one of many dozens, dazzling neon colours tightly squeeze against one another as to save

room on other stands for more sporty-looking button-ups and denim of all shapes. The fabrics line up like contorted bodies waiting to be relocated. It begs for my repentance, and to hide one must find what isn't there: a functioning elevator.

We remove ourselves easily when online. And most times the interface for shopping websites (Amazon, Temu, Shein, et cetera) succeeds well in hiding the very tangible warehouse behind trendywear. When the product is streamlined, sometimes even "picked for you," there is no need to see the 150,000-square-foot assemblage of stock. That is preferred, of course, for both the consumer and the corporation, as to see the mounds of polyester, silicon, spandex (plastic) is to see the number of tired bodies and oceans desperate to rid themselves of the *stuff*-manufacturing industry. Within this newest shopping arrangement, there are only smiling models, rather than these exploited figures, to do the bidding.

Perhaps most crucial to the decline of the department store's allure, however, is the willingness and impulsivity we have to opt out of all interaction with one another. Shopping in excess while alone there are no checks or balances to weed out the rabbit-shaped ice trays or the illuminating shower heads or the beer-themed briefs or the boho-chic recliner chair that we may feel, by its novelty, eager to buy. In the department store, you are watched and then recorded—if not by a sales associate with a keen eye, then by security with its camera. Your purchase, however intimate, attracts assumptions. Entering Hudson's Bay alone, I was addressed and considered; my existence there, unlike what could be of the AliExpresses of the internet, was extracted from the scuffed white hues and neons. And as I kept to myself, maintaining the alienation we have decided is now world order, friction between my consumption and the sales associate's pay cheque, which seeks commission to provide sufficient income, chafed loudly between our small talk.

Indeed, it is this way that the department store model is, as the Baby Boomers roaming the home-goods floor had said, outdated. Our pull to exist indoors, in solitude from others, has swiftly increased. To exit the home, we are forced to pay our dues: make the small talk, look one another in the eye and say, *Yes, that is all*. The idea that these interactions lay the foundation for humanizing our community seems never to be addressed. The department store, in its large stature, leaves little to humanize but those inside. And so the question is not why The Bay will close this June, but why we've decidedly left the institution to decay.

Depending on whoever you talk to, it either was or wasn't predictable. The North American temptation for individualism, shaped by the Industrial Revolution, has bred new generations of buyers who fear the stranger. Our desire for isolation conflicts with the very origins of the department store: the social space to commune. Of course, today's department stores don't maintain this same glamour and hospitality. Almost on purpose it seems that The Bay closed down. The unkempt and unattended stretches between sales counters—all that is now left—is not new to the store's look. It's understandable, then, why many assert this as one reason for dwindling turnout. But while that may be true, its cause is not simply a natural progression—our draw elsewhere, where to be social isn't standard, manufactured its demise.

Travelling up and down the escalators a month from Hudson's permanent closure I saw that clearly. I waited for a voice but heard only the curated radio until reaching the highest floor. The woman behind the Chanel counter asked how I was, in formality, but I couldn't be too sure what state I was in. In The Bay, it is always mild. On this day, however, the tone on the fifth floor required my sensitivity. The institution has been beaten by the ubiquitous urge to consume in private. The impulse to abandon our conscience for material fulfillment has never been so frictionless. In formality, I asked her the same.

Story and graphic by Lydia Zuleta Johnson, student editor

venues

Friends of Dorothy offers safe space for queer culture

“It’s a unique space where anyone can come and appreciate and experience queer culture in a welcoming environment.”

DEREK BROUGHAM
FRIENDS OF DOROTHY

ACACIA TOOTH
CONTRIBUTING WRITER

In 2019, a little gay lounge appeared on Johnson Street. Friends of Dorothy, known for its Kelowna location, had appeared in the heart of Victoria. Celebrating the inclusivity of 2SLGBTQIA+ individuals and allies, it offers another stage to enjoy our local talents and those from out of town.

Friends of Dorothy event manager Derek Brougham says the lounge is different from other places in Victoria.

“It’s a unique space where anyone can come and appreciate and experience queer culture in a welcoming environment,” says Brougham.

With Pride on the horizon,

venues like Friends of Dorothy offer a comfortable space to celebrate with one another.

“There is lots of allies,” says Brougham. “Its queer specific, but important to have and invite allies and friends and to share community.”

Some performers who have hit the stage at Friends of Dorothy include Vancouver’s Mina Mercury and local king Sylvester Stalletto.

“Burlesque and stripping is brand new to FOD and not something you see in this city,” says Stalletto.

Stalletto says that one of the best parts of having a space in town like Friends of Dorothy is the ability to curate a show specific to sharing sex-worker rights and art.

“I’m grateful to get to hear how bringing queer pole dancers and burlesque performers has such a profound impact,” says Stalletto.

Brougham, who also performs as Decathlon Queen, says it’s important to be open to new events and says that what may be lacking in the city are competitions. He’s on the heels of hosting the most recent competition for clothing design, and he says that the future has more in store.

“The next event will be the Lip Sync Assassin of Dorothy, a drag- and queer-specific competition featuring six contestants,” he says, adding that the judges lined up for the event include local queen Ket Bush and Virgin Radio morning show hosts Bailey Parker and Johnny Novak.

While Friends of Dorothy has offered the space to explore, the experiences that come from having a stage and voice continue to have lasting impressions. Stalletto says that their experience with venues hasn’t always been positive.

“I struggle[d] as a trans Latinx drag king to feel I was valued when [a] cisgender hetero white audience didn’t respect me,” says Stalletto. “I was able to take my skills and power into my own hands to create my dream experience for myself, my performers, and my audiences.”

You can keep up with Friends of Dorothy at @fodvictoria on Instagram.



@LEOSLOOSELENSES

Friends of Dorothy prides itself on being a welcoming environment.

review

On Hold skilled but bewildering performance



HELENE CYR

On Hold was inspired by the experience of being on hold on the phone.

The dance numbers were interjected by actual on-hold music and a voice telling us to please wait, because our call is very important and will be answered shortly.

LANE CHEVRIER
CONTRIBUTING WRITER

Music and dance may be the oldest forms of human emotional expression. Strong rhythm and melody are powerful forces that make us want to move our bodies in sync, to feel the vibrations flow through us. The expression is raw and unfiltered.

Broken Rhythm Dance Company’s *On Hold* was performed at the McPherson Playhouse on Friday, April 4. Its namesake and theme were inspired by the experience of being on hold on the phone for insufferably long periods of time and how our minds wander in a way to cope with unimaginable boredom.

The show uses a good deal of humour, with dance numbers interjected by actual on-hold music and a voice telling us to please wait, because our call is very important and will be answered shortly. During these times, a dancer is shown splayed listlessly in a chair, fidgeting and awaiting the end of her endless tedium. The dance numbers themselves are sometimes flowing,

often frenetic, and are an impressive display of choreography by skilled performers who, during the show I saw, maintained a 75-minute performance with no evident mistakes. The style reminded me of a combination of controlled dance such as ballet and more freeform street dancing, while the music varied from using traditional string and wind instruments and drums to strange contemporary sounds with a strong pulse and electronic mixing.

I did struggle to find meaning in most of the pieces, though. Many of them seemed to be nothing more than creative movement to a beat, and I felt awash in a sea of formless expression with no narrative through line. For some, this may be totally fine, but I found myself wishing for some sort of story that the emotion of the dance could emphasize.

This was underscored by the one piece that I could actually discern a story from. Two dancers were shown representing a complex romantic relationship where two people feel both love and contempt for each

other, shifting rapidly between a desperate desire for closeness in one moment and literally pushing each other away in the next. This was such a powerfully relevant expression of the intricacies of human relationship that it brought tears to my eyes.

However, it was the only part of the performance that seemed to have a cohesive narrative identity, and consequently the only part of the performance that invoked an emotional reaction in me. Most of the time I was just bewildered, wondering, “What does this mean?” This kind of performance relies on a visceral connection with the music and dance that supersedes intellectual understanding, and I anticipate this limiting accessibility to a large portion of the audience who enjoy music and dance but need an emotionally poignant story in order to connect with it.

On Hold is a powerful performance by skilled artists who put a great deal of passion and dedication into their craft, but its neglect of narrative cohesion leaves it feeling rather exclusionary and elitist. It seems like a situation where an artist is performing only for the people who are fortunate enough to “get it” rather than creating an experience that can appeal to a wide audience, and I hope that the next performance we see from Broken Rhythms considers this.



Pieces of Performance

by Acacia Tooth

Decathlon Queen running for gold in design

The multi-talented Decathlon Queen has made a name for herself in the past three years of drag. From Ottawa to Vancouver Island, this decathlon-runner-gone-drag-queen has something to prove.

“Sports is the main reason I got into drag... My name is the track-and-field event I competed in up to a national level,” says Decathlon Queen.

A self-proclaimed pride queen, she is sure to keep you in check and outdo everyone when it comes to preparing an outfit. Sewing until the last minute some days, she says what drew her to patterns and pins was influenced by other drag queens.

“Season two of *Canada’s Drag Race*... Icesis Couture inspired me to buy a sewing machine and teach myself how to sew.”

Being a newer queen in Victoria, she has brought her passion for sports and community with her.

“Every year in the month of June, any money that I make through my drag is put towards a scholarship for a queer varsity athlete,” she says.

So far she has helped three athletes get closer to reaching their goals of balancing school and sport.

“Having a career in human kinetics, something that I am very passionate about is getting people

“Having a career in human kinetics, something that I am very passionate about is getting people moving, trying new things, trying to find something you enjoy to keep [yourself] active.”

DECATHLON QUEEN
DRAG QUEEN

moving, trying new things, trying to find something you enjoy to keep [yourself] active,” she says.

Reflecting on her past research on masculinity and homophobia in sports, one quote from a participant in the research group rang true.

“When asking what we needed in sports,” she says, “they responded with, ‘We need more acceptance in sports, we need a screaming queen to come out and say, ‘I’m going to kick your ass.’”

And with that, the athletic screaming queen Decathlon Queen was born. With movement on the mind, she has put together a wide range of shows, from design competitions to heels and wall climbing. At her first-year anniversary show in Ottawa, she shared the magic of bouldering and drag at a local bouldering house. In Victoria, she recently took over and hosted at Boulder House Langford.

“We partnered with GOATS, which is a queer rock-climbing organization. We had two headlining queens... It was just packed full of people,” she says.

Decathlon Queen says that it’s been difficult being the only one publicly queer in her athletic community.

“Growing up in the sports world as a queer person, it was not the best environment,” she says. “[But] I was fortunate in the sense that things were getting better [with] the physical and verbal assault.”

While having found safety within the community, when you present ideas that can be met with excitement and joy, that can be all the steam you need to stay creative. The Taylor Swift fantasy being one idea: *The Tortured Drag Department* is a show shared with Aria Okay and Drew Scarywhore on May 8 at Friends of Dorothy.



KATIE ZEILSTRA PHOTOGRAPHY

Decathlon Queen climbing the rocks; sports is the main reason she got into drag.

The feeling of pride in winning cannot be beat for Decathlon Queen; she’s sharing her love of competition by hosting a variety of drag events that encourage skill building, playful banter, and a safe stage to try new things.

Friends of Dorothy will host the next competition, *Lip Sync Assassin of Dorothy*. Six competitors. One winner.

You can follow Decathlon Queen at @decathlonqueen and at @mugdevents.



New Music Revue

Tumble
Lost in Light
(Echodelick Records)
4/5

This Canadian band is a breath of fresh air when it comes to new music. Tumble, a heavy psychedelic rock and proto-metal trio from Toronto, recently released their debut EP, *Lost in Light*. It’s the first of a promising and hard-rocking career. The trio, which consists of Liam Deak on guitar and vocals, Tarun Dawar on bass, and Adam Guerra on drums, produces music that’s a wonderful alternative to the pop songs of today.

In only 20 minutes Tumble manage to piece together five unique

tracks that will reel you in. In fact, you will want to stay in the boat and savour every note. Every track is high energy and I cannot wait for them to release a full-length album.

“Laid by Fear” starts off the EP with an 80-second instrumental intro. It slowly seduces you with its sultry psychedelic grooves and delivers satisfaction with the rest of the song.

It also has some interesting transitions that made me wonder where they were going, and I looked forward to finding out. Following a short but delicious guitar solo, Guerra drops a standout funky drum beat. It’s a taste of how talented he is.

Deak plays the guitar like he was born with it in his hands. His guitar solo on “Dead by Rumour” is delectable to the ear. Influences from bands like Black Sabbath are heard throughout the album, especially on the final song, “Wings of Gold.” Dawa’s bass line feels like it was directly inspired by classic tracks like “War Pigs.”

If *Lost in Light* was a box of chocolates, each song would be a different flavour, and none would be left uneaten. It will keep your head bobbing the whole time.

-Miles Patterson



New Music Revue

Horrenda
Think on Your Sins
Fiadh Records
3/5

Originally released independently last year, Horrenda’s EP *Think on Your Sins* is being reissued by Fiadh Records. On the EP, the Dublin-based extreme metal group brings us a thrashing depiction of Dante’s “Inferno,” one that, unfortunately, doesn’t quite bring the heat.

The five songs, averaging about four minutes each, don’t feel like enough to really deliver in this case. The album moves through at rapid pace, ultimately shuffling along before it can truly make a place for

itself and stake its claim in your heart.

“Canto I: Descent” opens with haunting strings and welcomes you in, while the next three tracks blend this into the harsh intensity of thrashing chords and a screamo sound. While the guitar work is masterful, the vocals leave much to be desired. Despite being iconic of the genre, the lyrics are never clear enough to make out the themes promised, making the collection of songs more an instrumental journey than anything else. That said, this alone is worth the listener’s time, as the rhythm of each song is an exciting fusion of blackened metal’s breakneck pace with chords evoc-

ative of the Irish soundscapes the band aims to bring to distant shores.

While the narratives and meaning itself become lost in the resonance, this isn’t necessarily a bad thing. Even without words, the auditory experience delivers the band’s intended result of a chance to reflect on chaos and consequence, inward and outward.

This EP is beautifully haunting, mildly confusing, but, overall, exciting. *Think on Your Sins* is a surprisingly warm welcome to an underworld mosh pit, and an invitation that seasoned metalheads are sure to accept.

-West Carter

Natural Selection - Emily Welch



word search



After you read student editor Lydia Zuleta Johnson’s feature story on page 6 on the death of the department store, find the related words in the above word search.

- Liquidation
Perfume
Shams
Rings
Miscellany
- Watches
Pyjamas
Trinkets
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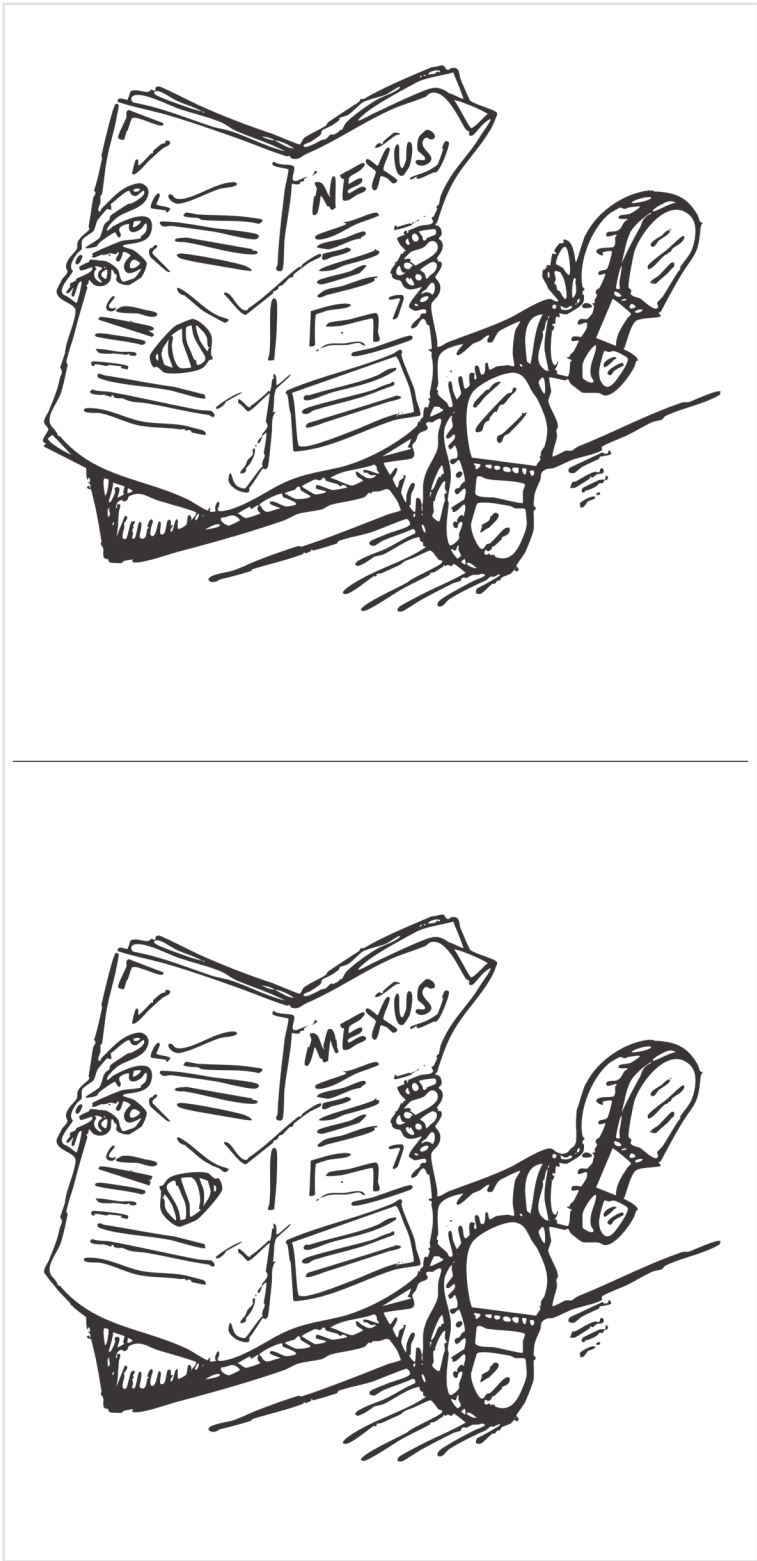


GREG PRATT/NEXUS

We’ve hidden this copy of our last issue somewhere at the Lansdowne campus. Bring it in to our office to claim a prize from contest sponsor Arsenal Pulp Press, who have donated an assortment of books for you to choose from. *Nexus* HQ is located at Richmond House 201 at Lansdowne.

spot the differences

Can you find the five differences between the two drawings of a loyal *Nexus* reader below?





Lydia's Film Critique

by Lydia Zuleta Johnson

Buffalo '66



The film's sort of magical realism works better without the concrete.

Vincent Gallo's Billy Brown is pathetic. He whines and shouts and contorts in frustration. He moulds his expression into a man-child tantrum in an abrasive defense to care. He entered prison this way and he exits it the same. Volatility was learned and loneliness is the by-product. Indeed, Billy needs what he isn't owed: a tender embrace.

In *Buffalo '66* (1998), Layla (Christina Ricci) is mandated to act this part of an adoring wife. Hours after being released from his five-year sentence, Billy kidnaps her. Walking in during a tap-dancing class to use the washroom, he snatches her to play make-believe for his parents. He had lied to them, of course, that he had a beautiful woman, and that in his sudden five-year absence was not locked away but was a real deal CIA agent—a cover that functions as well as his temper. She must go along with this if she wants to live, he says.

Yet, Layla seems still in control.

She pities him, really, and performs with gusto for his parents regardless of their interest. At Billy's family home, sitting at the table in the middle of a room shrouded in Buffalo Bills merchandise, dad (Ben Gazzara) is just as volatile and mom (Anjelica Huston) is too invested in the Bills game to find much care for his return home. She wishes she never had Billy, she says, because that way she wouldn't have missed their only championship win in 1966. In the abundance of bobbleheads, jerseys, trophies, and football helmets, there is only one photo of Billy tucked away. We begin to understand Billy's insecurity and where it derives—he is malnourished of any love.

The film pours with a creative flair unique to director and actor Gallo. Flashback scenes obscure the present like patchwork. They cover the frame with excuses for poor conduct when we zoom in and out of a young Billy. We see his dejection. We see why he went

to prison: in a naive whimsy he bet \$10,000 that he did not have on a Bills win. And just like every year since 1966, they didn't. The bookie arranged a deal. Hence, prison. We notice, perhaps, a humility that has since disappeared.

Interpretations of the film are in multitude—a meditation on Stockholm syndrome, a love story, a tale of profound loneliness only bettered by the kindness of a graceful woman. They all clash, but they all have opportunity for validity. It doesn't so much matter, anyway—the film's sort of magical realism works better without the concrete. The ending is just as discursive (although less so than Gallo's *Brown Bunny*, of course) at leading the narrative beyond the screen. Are her eyes open because she is content with their mutuality or because she no longer finds the relationship enthralling? Is she frightened? Has his hostility been treated and cured? How *Buffalo '66* mesmerizes its audience is its lack of answers.

Signing off with Pride

Terence Baluyut, CCSS Pride Director 2024-2025

Two years ago, when I moved to Canada, if you had told me I'd one day serve in a leadership role advocating for the 2SLGBTQIA+ community, I wouldn't have believed you. Pride advocacy was something I had never been exposed to in my home country, the Philippines, nor in the Middle East. That's why coming to Canada and seeing all the efforts and initiatives for my community has been such a gift. These are things we've long been deprived of elsewhere. And, honestly, there's still so much I don't know about my own community.

I first heard about the Pride Director role at the Camosun College Student Society through Polly, a former director who had taken on many roles in the organization. At the time, I wasn't sure how I'd do in the position. As someone still finding my footing, I didn't know if I could really represent the community well. The 2SLGBTQIA+ community has endured generations of discrimination and continues to fight for visibility and equality. We're in a time now where every 20 steps forward we've taken seem to be met with pressure to take 10 back. I wasn't sure I was the right person to stand firm in the face of that.

Eventually, I decided to run, and was given the opportunity by our students to serve from May 2024 to April 2025. Even after winning, I carried some inner doubts about how well I could serve. But with the incredible support of my friends and our former Pride Director, Emily Lam, I was able to start strong. During Pride Month 2024, our Pride constituency hosted one of its most vibrant celebrations yet, with more events than ever before. Alongside our annual Victoria Pride Parade, we partnered with Camosun Running to hold our first-ever 5K Pride Run, and hosted Rainbow Reels, a film screening series in the Pride Lounge featuring queer stories. We also strengthened our ties with the broader community, becoming recognized partners of the District of Saanich in the push to make public spaces safe and inclusive for 2SLGBTQIA+ people. We participated in the Community Pride Swim and helped make Saanich's first-ever Pride in the Park event a success.

Throughout the year, we also led important advocacy work. For Trans Awareness Week, we launched a social media campaign and held visibility tabling events to show support for trans students, share resources, and raise awareness of the support systems on campus. We also

began raising concerns about accessibility at our sexual health clinic at Lansdowne, and the lack of a clinic at Interurban, to make sure students at both campuses have equal access to care. And we partnered with the Camosun Chargers to host our first-ever Chargers Pride Night, a bold and colourful celebration aimed at creating safer spaces in sports for 2SLGBTQIA+ folks.

It was also an honour to serve as the sole student voice on Camosun's new Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Committee, where I worked to ensure students are represented in decision-making. We supported focus groups to assess where we stand and where we still need to go.

I'm proud to say this past year has been full of firsts. So if you asked me again today if I could see myself in a leadership role for the 2SLGBTQIA+ community, I'd say, "Yes, absolutely." That confidence is because of the unwavering support of my friends, fellow board members, the CCSS staff, and my community. It's proof that things are possible when we work together. That is how Pride endures. We rise together, hand in hand.

Now, as my time as Pride Director comes to an end, I want to say thank you to everyone who stood beside me, believed in me, and helped carry the



PHOTO PROVIDED

weight of this work. This role was never about one person. It was about all of us: fighting, celebrating, growing, and showing up for one another.

To the students who came to our events, who shared their stories, who asked questions and offered ideas, you reminded me why this work matters. To the community partners and allies who gave us space and showed us love, your solidarity gave us strength. To my fellow queer and trans students, this

has always been for you. And even as I step away from this role, I will never stop fighting for you, learning with you, and standing with you.

As I move into my next chapter as External Executive, Pride will always have a place in my heart. I'm leaving this role with more love, more hope, and more purpose than I ever thought possible.

This is Terence, your CCSS Pride Director for 2024-2025, signing off.

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