

Groups call for more accountability, systemic change after Camosun instructor found dead

NIK OVSTAAS
STUDENT EDITOR

On Monday, January 5, Laura Gover, a mother of two and Camosun Business instructor, was found dead in her Saanich home. A man was arrested by Saanich police and charged with second degree murder; he was later identified as her ex-husband, Muhammad Ali Basar. The case has been designated as a "K file" by the provincial court system; the designation indicates cases of alleged intimate partner violence.

"She was a pillar of the community who will be missed for years to come" says Camosun College Student Society women's director Madison Huynh, "and I don't think she as a person will ever truly be replaced. She left an impact on hundreds of students and they hopefully will honour her teachings by continuing on and doing amazing things in the world."

A press conference was held on Wednesday, January 21 on the grounds of the Victoria courthouse. At first focusing on the loss of Gover and the impact this will have on her family, especially her two young daughters, the wider crises of gender-based violence and intimate partner crime were then discussed.

"We gather not only to honour [Gover's] life, but to demand accountability for the gaps that—despite years of collective advocacy—persist within the system, and to present solutions that evidence tells us will work," Victoria Women's Transition House executive director Bahar Dehnadi said while addressing the crowd at the press conference. "This is about respect, treating survivors with the dignity that they deserve. About prevention. Stopping violence before it turns fatal, and it is about public safety."



VANCOUVER ISLAND UNIVERSITY

Camosun instructor Laura Gover has been identified as a victim of alleged intimate partner violence.

Dehnadi then went on to highlight the nature of many of our judiciary systems, systems that she said are ostensibly put in place to facilitate protection of the victims of traumatic crimes but fall into a pattern of self-preservation of the status quo by being difficult to comprehend.

"Our systems have been designed around institutional comfort rather than survival, safety," she said. "Victims are asked to navigate complex bureaucracies to wait for help due to funding gaps and overburdened services, to prove themselves over and over, while those who perpetrate violence face systems built around their convenience, minimal bail conditions, little consequences for violations."

Dehnadi said the result of such failures are the women whose lives hang in the balance.

"We have made progress together, but progress is not enough when women are still dying," she said. "The gaps in our systems are not abstract policy questions. They

are life-and-death realities for the people that [Women's Transition House and similar organizations] serve." ("Women's Transition House has been in operation for 51 years," Dehnadi also said at the event. "I really hope we won't exist for 51 more.")

Bridge Transition House manager Marlene Goley also spoke at the event, highlighting the issue of victims who have come forward but not been taken seriously by authorities.

"We want women to be believed when they say they're afraid, when they say they fear for their safety," she said. "A woman's fear is a risk factor that needs to be taken seriously. We want perpetrators to be held responsible right from the time she discloses her fear. Our systems need to stop putting all the responsibility for protecting herself on the victim."

Cowichan Women Against Violence Society executive director Liza Scott also addressed the audience, saying that this ineffectiveness of authorities can have a ripple effect.

"When institutions fail to act, the violence does not stop with one woman," she said. "It moves through families, through children, and through generations. We cannot keep responding only after women are killed. We cannot keep asking why. When the warning signs were already there, prevention must happen before crises, and accountability must sit with perpetrators."

Battered Women's Support Services executive director Angela Marie MacDougall said that one of the major hurdles is that there are institutional, systemic gaps within the way various agencies interact with one another.

"It sits at the intersection of police practice, Crown decision-making, judicial discretion, and the deep, deep divide between criminal law and family law," she said. "Many women leave abusive relationships and never involve the criminal legal system at all."

MacDougall said that this systemic disconnect can overwhelm

any prescribed actions taken by the victim.

"If they have children with their abusive partner, they are forced to go to a family law system, and they seek protection orders through the family law system," she said. "They do exactly what they were told to do to keep themselves and their children safe, and they reasonably believe that once the state is involved, the risk will be reduced. They're optimistic. That risk lives in the space between systems, and no one owns that space. Police can say they did not meet the threshold; Crown counsel can say that the file is insufficient. When institutions are organized this way, responsibility is endlessly deferred, while dangers escalate."

Back on campus, the student society's Huynh says that "there definitely is a kind of quiet outrage" and adds that while there will be a larger memorial happening, there are currently smaller memorials at Lansdowne and Interurban.

"We have set up memorials on both campuses, allowing students to share their sympathies and well wishes for the family," she says. "I've heard countless stories about how she was a beautiful person. Truly an example of what a good teacher can do to raise up their students, and that's going to be missed."

A community gathering will be held from 3:00 to 4:30 pm on Wednesday, February 4 in the Helmut Huber Annex at Interurban. There will be drinks and snacks provided in Gover's memory.

For anyone experiencing domestic violence, intimate partner violence, or gender-based violence, the Victoria Sexual Assault Centre is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week at 250-383-3232; see vsac.ca for more information.



NIK OVSTAAS/NEXUS

A press conference held on the morning of Wednesday, January 21 to honour Laura Gover and demand more accountability from the system.

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NEXUS

camosun's student voice since 1990

Next publication: February 18, 2026

Address: 3100 Foul Bay Rd., Victoria, BC, V8P 5J2

Location: Lansdowne Richmond House 201

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Publisher: Nexus Publishing Society

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editor's letter

Escaping the leg-hold trap

These are turbulent times. The world seems to be teetering on the brink of something, and it ain't good.

A megalomaniacal despot is running loose to the south; the eastern hemisphere has been beset from all angles as though it were the Strait of Messina with swirling Charybdis to the right and toothy old Scylla to the left. As if that weren't stressful enough, we've lost one of our own here at Camosun, Laura Gover, by all accounts a lovely woman whom I never got to meet. It seems to me we're lost in a global maelstrom of senseless violence. When did we become so bellicose and cynical?

For now I think it's important to take small pleasures as small acts of rebellion against an increasingly horrifying world. Read a good book that makes you cry happy tears at the end; hug every dog you can get your grubby little mitts on; watch closely for the darling buds of May that are even now gathering their strength, and emulate their ferocity in refusing to let the harshness of the world stultify their small and brave attempts at beauty.

It's in this dialectic way that we can say "no, and no, and no."

I think one of the biggest issues of the day is that we as a species have become ensnared in the leg-hold trap of our own melodrama, and in our panic to get away we forget ourselves. Follow me with this leg-hold-trap metaphor: were we sensible like the woodland creatures we designed those barbaric and gruesome devices for, we would just gnaw off our leg and get on with it, we would be ambling happily along on our stump, forgetting that we used to have more feet. Instead, us humans—most rational among the beasts—at every perceived wrong perpetrated against us cry havoc and let slip the dogs of war. It has become so cyclical that now those with not enough power are killing each other on the ground while those with too much power are posturing and sabre-rattling with their fingers ever circling toward the button that will cry havoc in the truest sense of the word.

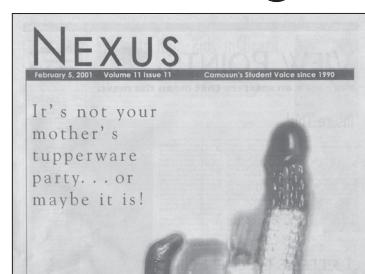
So I urge you: take a deep breath, take a long bath, take a shinrin-yoku wander, and when the impending midterm exams are over, take a nap. Good luck and Godspeed, dear friends.

And if you need something good to read, my latest foray into the academic world of anthropology has me thinking over some books I read long ago and am planning to revisit: *Wild Swans: Three Daughters of China* by Jung Chang, and *Guns, Germs, and Steel: The Fates of Human Societies* by Jared Diamond.

Nik Ovstaas, student editor
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flashback

25 Years Ago in Nexus



JASMINE WAGSTAFF
STUDENT EDITORIAL ASSISTANT

Canada spends millions to grow weed: In the February 5, 2001 issue of *Nexus*, we covered when the Canadian government paid \$5.75 million to Prairie Plant Systems Inc. to grow what was described as a literal ton of medical marijuana. This was done to help chronically ill patients and to contribute toward researching the effectiveness of medical marijuana. There was debate as to how much THC would work to help ease chronic pain for patients with cancer or AIDS. At that point, weed was still heavily stigmatized and decriminalization was still up in the air. Today, dispensaries are as easy to find as liquor stores and people smoke for reasons ranging from chronic pain to stress relief, and projects like this helped us get here.

E-commerce, the future of sales?: In this issue we also covered Camosun introducing an electronic commerce class, Business 192, which was intended to be part of the

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OVERHEARD AT NEXUS: "I'm a gay man, I walk very fast."

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open space

Lansdowne needs more on-campus food options

MIKA TURQUIE

CONTRIBUTING WRITER

It's 2:30 pm, and I'm gearing up for five more hours at Camosun's Lansdowne campus. My stomach is growling, and while there are still students hanging out in the cafeteria, it's been closed for 30 minutes. I get to my class and bring this up with my teacher, who reassures me that it's only closing early this first week of school; usually, it's open from 8 am to 6 pm Mondays

the Interurban campus has options like the Chargers Cafe, which, although pricey, does a better job at making greasy fast food, and there's a freaking salad bar in the Alex & Jo Campbell Centre for Health and Wellness. What type of protest do I have to spark up to get a salad bar at Lansdowne?

Why does one campus get a cafeteria with real food while the other is a captive market for Aramark, a corporation totally separate

Students have to pay what amounts to a convenience tax for food that isn't convenient at all. I struggle to find things I want to eat in the afternoon (burgers and fries don't cut it for me), and the preferred options sell out early. I'm left to choose between unhealthy options I'd like to avoid and the pricey falafel or chicken wraps that I wish were more affordable.

to Thursdays, with the grill closing at 4:30 pm. On Fridays, the closing time remains at 2 pm.

The bookstore is open until 4 pm, and I get to choose between my go-to protein shake or some beef jerky. These are the only "healthy" and somewhat nourishing options I find there. I prefer my instant noodles with eggs and veggies, and avoid nuts with unnecessary seed oils. I can't really complain, because if the bookstore had been closed, I would have had to resort to the vending machines full of \$4 corn-syrup snacks and drinks.

Which brings me to my next point: pricing. I constantly grunt and sigh when I find myself buying overpriced coffee and food on campus. And that's compared to the already overpriced grocery stores and coffee shops outside of school.

Students have to pay what amounts to a convenience tax for food that isn't convenient at all. I struggle to find things I want to eat in the afternoon (burgers and fries don't cut it for me), and the preferred options sell out early. I'm left to choose between unhealthy options I'd like to avoid and the pricey falafel or chicken wraps that I wish were more affordable.

Meanwhile, while I was attending the Interurban campus, I was having lamb shank with mashed potatoes and veggies for the same price as the Sysco burger and fries I get at Lansdowne. I get it: the Culinary students are only at the Interurban campus, but even then,

from Camosun? And, yeah, I get it: the school is having financial troubles and can't do much about it right now. But still, the lack of food is not just a bummer—it's a retention issue. If students prefer online classes over going to campus, the college loses the "vibrant campus life" angle that it uses to recruit potential students.

Should the school not place greater emphasis on education and the well-being of its students rather than Aramark's shareholders' profit? Why are they prioritizing a hands-off contract over student affordability?

What happened to the student-run food truck that used to come to campus? The school may not be able to afford its own cafeteria, but it can surely afford to bring the student food truck back, or to let local businesses park on the grass for a small fee (or no fee) to provide variety.

At the moment, the solution seems to be packing a lunch, making coffee at home, and avoiding late-afternoon classes that don't leave a window for a quick trip to get food.

Students don't need a midnight buffet, but they do need the school to lower the barrier for local food trucks and vendors to give us more variety in affordability and food options. It needs to provide healthier vending options (please—anything but candy and Coca-Cola). And it needs to commit to more affordable and health-conscious food options.

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!



housing

Camosun moving ahead with Lansdowne student housing



An artist's conceptual rendering of the planned student housing to be located on Camosun College's Lansdowne campus.

JASMINE WAGSTAFF

STUDENT EDITORIAL ASSISTANT

In November of last year, the District of Oak Bay granted two major approvals for Camosun College to move ahead toward building its first on-campus housing at the Lansdowne campus. After receiving Official Community Plan and rezoning amendments, plans are underway to begin construction in the spring of 2026. The building will feature over 400 beds in a variety of unit types, as well as lounges and other spaces; it will be located where there's currently parking off Foul Bay Road.

The provincial government is contributing \$151.7 million to the project, and Camosun is contributing \$3 million.

Camosun College Student Society Lansdowne executive Regina Cervantes is very excited for student housing to come to Camosun, and she says that other students are as well.

"The students think that it's going to be a great program and it's going to be very beneficial for everyone, especially because it's so hard to afford to get housing around the campus," says Cervantes. "And there are a lot of students that have to come from far away like Sooke or other places, so we think it's going to be very beneficial."

Cervantes says that one issue that's been raised is regarding how the project will impact international students. She says that while some feel it will make finding housing easier and cheaper, others are concerned about the possibility of international students having to pay more for housing than domestic students.

"I think we are going to have to wait and see the [cost], because it's usually more for international students," says Cervantes. "I think it will be beneficial because they will have a place to stay on campus and it's going to make their life easier. I'm an international student and it was so hard trying to find housing here while living back home. It's very hard to move to a new country, so if you have it here, that's amazing. So, yeah, I think it's going to be beneficial, but we'll have to wait and see how much they'll need to pay to be there. That's the only thing that I'm afraid of, that it's going to be double or way more and they won't be able to afford it."

When asked if international and domestic students will pay the same housing charges, a spokesperson for the college said that rental costs and policies will be finalized closer to project completion.

Cervantes says that another

concern students have is over the loss of parking.

"That's one thing that students that do drive are worried about," she says. "There's parking, and it's very expensive to start with, and there's not a lot of space there. They do not like that and they're worried about where we are going to park, and they are not very happy about that."

But Camosun director of campus planning and capital projects Tyson Loreth says that he and his team have calculated that parking space shouldn't be a problem.

"The college has done a significant amount of assessment," he says, "and has determined there is ample parking and we are able to accommodate the loss of the parking spots where the building will sit."

Loreth says that he and his team have been looking forward to building the student housing for years and are very excited to get construction underway.

"The college has been trying to and looking to build student housing, all the way back to 2015, I think. And so, it has been a goal for the college to provide on-campus housing for students for the better part of 10-plus years," says Loreth. "We have been working really closely with our government partners, the college, and our local



BOTH IMAGES COURTESY OF CAMOSUN COLLEGE

"The students think that... it's going to be very beneficial for everyone, especially because it's so hard to afford to get housing around the campus."

REGINA
CERVANTES
CAMOSUN COLLEGE
STUDENT SOCIETY

ings around the college, where those 420 students would have to reside, an opportunity that could be presented to the larger community. Getting them out of basement suites or other secondary accommodation they would need, now they can be on campus."

He also says the project allows the college to have community, adding that it's also an opportunity for those who want to go to Camosun but can't because they can't find or afford housing.

"By us having student housing, we lend ourselves to students who want to live and learn in Victoria," he says, "and I think it's just a really good thing to provide and have for students in today's world."

Cervantes hopes that the on-campus housing will bring something to Camosun students.

"Hopefully it'll help and benefit all the students," she says, "so we are looking forward to it."

NEWS BRIEFS

Camosun knowledge keeper passes away

Victor Underwood, an elder and knowledge keeper at Camosun for over 25 years, passed away on Wednesday, January 14. In a statement, the college said that Underwood gave his time and wisdom to the college and was passionate about supporting Indigenous students and communities. The college lowered flags

to half-mast for seven days to honour Underwood.

Camosun brings new digital resources to Kenyan schools

Camosun's School of Business is collaborating with Algonquin College, Georgian College, and Kenyan institutions led by Kenya School of Technical and Vocational Education Training to bring online and blended learning

opportunities to young people in Kenya. This is especially helpful for girls, women, and other underserved populations to gain skills to help them find employment that they would not have had access to otherwise.

Saanich budget engagement process open to public

The municipality of Saanich is beginning its draft Financial

Plan, including the annual budget for the municipality and proposed Saanich Police and public library budgets. There's a budget survey available online until Monday, February 9, and in-person budget meetings that any Saanich resident can go to. Residents can attend and speak in person as long as they register, and all meetings are available via live webcast as well. The final Financial Plan will be adopted by Monday, May 11. Take the

budget survey at hello.saanich.ca/en/projects/2026-municipal-budget-engagement-survey.

**-JASMINE WAGSTAFF,
STUDENT EDITORIAL
ASSISTANT**

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clubs

New club seeks to bring Nintendo experience and knowledge to students



Club Nintendo aims to showcase the history of the gaming giant.

JASMINE WAGSTAFF
STUDENT EDITORIAL ASSISTANT

I'm sure I'm not the only one who immersed myself in *Animal Crossing: New Horizons* while trying to stay sane in the mess that was 2020. I've always loved the cozy vibes of some Nintendo franchises: Kirby, Pokémon, and, of course, Animal Crossing. Fortunately, there's a student club starting up at Camosun for anyone who enjoys the rich history that Nintendo has to offer the gaming industry.

Interactive Media Developer Technology student Matthew Hood is very knowledgeable about the evolution of Nintendo games and consoles and aims to share that with fellow students by starting Club Nintendo here at Camosun.

"It's not your traditional 'meet up and hang out and play video games' club. It's more, almost, exhibit," says Hood. "Really understanding the history hands-on is not something that a lot of people can do. So, my hope with Club Nintendo is to be able to bring real authentic hardware experiences to people [who are] interested so that we can all talk about them and learn from them."

Hood picked Nintendo as his focus based on the company's contributions to game development, and because it's his personal favourite.

"A lot of people credit Nintendo for basically saving the entire game industry. There was a point where, technologically, games just kinda

reached a pinnacle with a lot of the Atari and games from that era. And people just stopped buying them cause they were all the same, but when Nintendo launched the Nintendo Entertainment System [NES] in the '80s with *Super Mario Bros.*, that was like a revolution with games. So, they've kinda done a lot of leading the charge in terms of innovation, starting with the NES and moving through with things like the Wii, which was a huge phenomenon," he says.

Nintendo made very bizarre, specialized accessories for their previous consoles; remember the Wii Fit balance board, for example? Modern emulators for old games can't find a good way of replicating that experience, giving Hood

"Really understanding the history hands-on is not something that a lot of people can do. So, my hope with Club Nintendo is to be able to bring real authentic hardware experiences to people [who are] interested so that we can all talk about them and learn from them."

MATTHEW HOOD
CLUB NINTENDO

another reason to start this club to keep those weird *Duck Hunt* guns and Wii nunchuks alive.

"A lot of games you can easily play through emulation or different services, like Nintendo Switch Online lets you play classic games. But what that misses out on, something Nintendo really specializes in, is weird hardware. Like, weird accessories that you can plug in and they're these physical things you can use [instead of a controller]," he says. "A lot of people, they know about them, but they can't really try them. They're a thing of the past."

Preserving the past is very important to Hood, and the rise of digital media can make people anxious about losing everything in their games if, say, a server shuts down, a fact not lost on him when discussing older forms of media.

"One of the things I love the most about older games is the physical aspect. Nowadays, most games are just downloaded from a store. Which has its advantages, it's very convenient, but you lose a lot of the ownership of your games, because [when] modern game com-

panies are done with a platform, they can just shut it off. The store will close and you can't get those games anymore," says Hood. "So, the preservation angle is very important to me, making sure that we archive and document these experiences so that people can play them for years to come is really important, so that's a big part of why I'm trying to start this."

Hood says that he's excited for people to come check out Club Nintendo, regardless of their background in gaming or knowledge of development.

"Even if you're not super interested in gaming or you don't know anything about Nintendo, don't be afraid to come," says Hood. "Even for one day, just to see what it's like. These games, all games, can appeal to so many different people in so many different ways. There's no reason not to try it. You might have fun; you might discover something that is actually pretty interesting to you."

Head over to camosunstudent.org/all-groups/club-nintendo to learn more about the club.

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If you require assistance outside of our clinic hours, please contact our Quadra Street location at (250) 592-3479.

LOCATION & ACCESSIBILITY



Our Camosun Clinic is located on the third floor of Richmond House on Lansdowne Campus.

Please note that this clinic is located at the top of two flights of stairs with no access to lift assistance. If you are a Camosun student who requires accessible clinic space, please contact our Quadra Street location.

clubs

Camosun Robotics and Automation Club removes barriers, provides opportunities

ASHLEY HAGEL
STUDENT EDITORIAL ASSISTANT

Tucked away in an old supply closet, not too far from the machining shop, the Robotics and Automation Club gathers twice a week at the Interurban campus with the goal of breathing life into a humanoid robot some five years in the making. This student-led organization strives to remove the barriers of entry, encouraging anyone who's interested in robotics to come and give it a try.

"We like to get people interested in robotics," says club member Owen Brady, "so I think that, for that, you have to showcase your work, show that it's worth it, and show that what you're learning in class and the skills you're applying to robotics club are actually getting somewhere."

The club is made up largely of engineering students, although that's not the only demographic that they welcome. The objective is to make themselves as accessible as possible and lower the barriers of entry to anyone who's interested.

"There's no hard deadlines, there's no requirements," says club member Cody Pargee, "so the lack of hierarchy gives it a flexible structure. There's no interview process to come in. I mean, it's very open-source and collaborative."

Even those in more specialized areas of study are constantly learning from one another, utilizing the software and materials that are already made available to them.

"SolidWorks is a big one for modelling all the 3D printing components," says Brady. "It's an industrial-grade piece of software that we have access to for free, so we like to use that. And then there's also the machine shop, so if we wanted to actually mill or lathe or make some piece of metal, we have access to that too."

Many of the club's resources, beyond what their programs provide, can be accessed through Camosun Innovates, the applied research branch of the college that strives to make manufacturing equipment and technology more accessible to students, as well as to the broader community.

"If you're into 3D printing as a hobby, you could go in there and see a \$100,000 3D printer and say, 'Oh, so my hobby has a translation into an industrial use,'" says Pargee. "Like, people manufacture aerospace and automotive parts. So, I'm just using that as an example of transitioning our skills and enthusiasm into actual, real-world, high-paying jobs. It's a good bridge between the theoretical."

And oftentimes, the theoretical can become practical. Rob Bartnik, an emeritus member of the Robotics and Automation club, is an example of the many successes that can be found in specialized, student-led organizations such as this.

"Having the robotics club meant that I could use what I learned as part of a capstone project to raise wheelchairs upstairs," says Bartnik.

"And that then led to a co-op work term with Ocean Networks Canada—one of the country's leading research institutes—maintaining Wally, an actual Benthic Crawler; a thing that maintains networks miles under the sea. So I got to do some maintenance on that, and all of that came from a little bit of time spent working with people who just wanted to know a little bit more about robots."

As for the club's own projects, they're currently working on a humanoid robot called Alfie, which is now in its fifth year of development, alongside MARC, a modular rover which entered development last semester. And while the club has big plans for both of these projects,

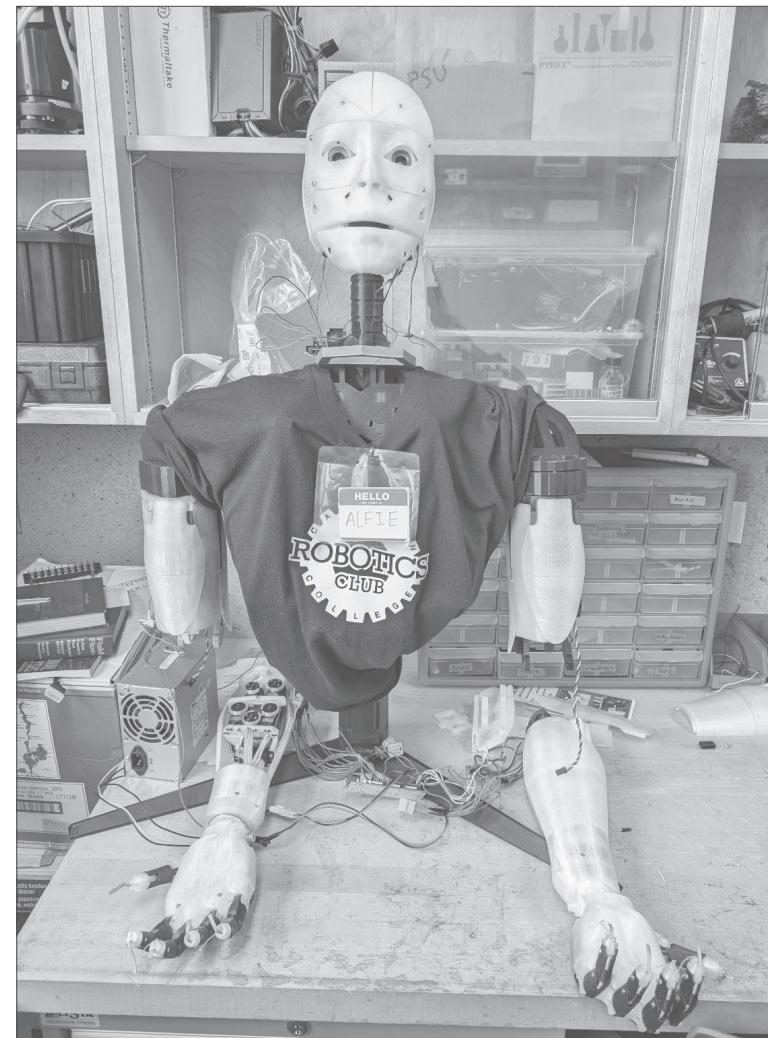
their sights have largely been set on MARC as their primary focus.

"We have another output for MARC, specifically, which is to make it sort of like an open-source modular rover," says Brady. "So we have an end goal, which is that we'd like to eventually submit an online package that people can download and build themselves. So there's an actual goal output for some of the things we do here as well."

With anyone welcome to join, the club has fostered a strong balance between learning and teaching, hoping to dissolve the fear often associated with trying something new.

"You come in here and you can see that it all starts at the very beginning," says Pargee. "It's not as impossible as you might think because you can see all the individual systems that go into it and how they're developed. It doesn't start as a finished project. There's all sorts of steps to get there, and seeing those in action I think can take away some of the fear and the 'I can never figure this out' aspect to it."

See camosunstudent.org/all-groups/robotics-and-automation-club for more info.



PHOTOS PROVIDED

Alfie, the humanoid robot (top) that the Camosun Robotics and Automation Club (bottom) is working on.

wellness

Finding a best-case scenario worth imagining

ASHLEY HAGEL
STUDENT EDITORIAL ASSISTANT

It seems that each time we fall asleep, we wind up waking to a whole new world—something unrecognizable yet oh so familiar. The shape of our society moulds like clay, being contorted by the hands of those who have no consideration for whom it belongs.

It's easy to feel untethered in times like these. Over the past few weeks, I've spoken with a number of different people all sharing the same sentiment: what's the point?

Now, I really like this question. At a glance, you could conclude that there is no point and everything is hopeless. But if you look a little closer, you might find that there is no point and everything is hopeful!

So long as we go on imagining the worst-case scenario, we should also take the time to imagine the best-case scenario. It's okay to zoom in every once in a while. The bigger picture will always be there.

Once we've zoomed in, we may just find that our lives, now more than ever, are our greatest possessions, and we have a commitment to ourselves to live each day as best we can (although that will inevitably look different for everyone). And if we are, in fact, hurtling toward a fate equal to or worse than death, I don't see why that notion should be any different.

Frankly, to be stagnant in a time of forced compliance is to turn a blind eye to your autonomy. The world in which we live today is far from free, but we cannot abandon ourselves for the sake of sensationalism. We cannot allow the waves to prevent us from also noticing the beauty of the ocean. The beauty of it all, so inefficiently balanced.

I've found, in my limited experience, that there is so much life to be lived between the serious and the unserious. There, you can find a concern for the terrible and an appreciation for the wonderful.

which somehow manage to coexist in a constant act of caregiving.

There is a balance to this. To find it, one must first be proactive in recognizing the correlation between the personal and the multi-personal. It is not selfish to care for yourself. In fact, you are far more likely to help those around you if you've already taken the time to help yourself.

You're not a bad person for appreciating what is right in front of you; for seeing stars in the eyes of a loved one or for finding God at the bottom of your coffee cup in the morning.

We have an obligation to ourselves as much as we do to each other. We are not meant to give and give until it's all gone. We are not meant to fixate on the things that keep us awake at night. We are meant to find a balance, and in that balance meaning.

It would be cruel to subject ourselves to a life of bad experiences,

I've found, in my limited experience, that there is so much life to be lived between the serious and the unserious. There, you can find a concern for the terrible and an appreciation for the wonderful, which somehow manage to coexist in a constant act of caregiving.

news clippings, and nothing more. Of course, these things matter. They shape us, but they do not make us.

There are dinners with friends, hobbies to enjoy, favourite songs, and the scenic drive home. There is a best-case scenario worth imagining.

And while life may not be pink, it is not pitch black either. You don't

have to feel bad for admiring the stars that shine just for you and everyone you love.

You can have the experience without the guilt. You can fall in love and dig your heels in and learn lessons you wish you'd never had to. It may not be the life, but it is your life. And that is the point.

Lupercalia, Tomn

A brief history of

Story by Nik Ov



*The kiss of the bottle is your heart's delight,
And fuddled you reel home to bed every night,
What care you for damsels, no matter how fair?
Apart from your liquor, you've no love to spare.*

JOHNNY EL-RADY VIA WIKIMEDIA COMMONS



As another springtime begins to thrust its courageous head forth after our (admittedly) short winter, there's yet another holiday for us to contend with. Store windows are festooned with red and pink hearts; heavily armed, flying babies; and advertisements letting us know that the only real way to show our loved ones that we care is by spending money on cheap chocolate and chalky candies emblazoned with trite sentiment. Couples will block the sidewalk to stare deeply into one another's eyes, and social media will be a cacophony of cringeworthy nonsense.

At the risk of sounding curmudgeonly, it stinks.

But while modern Valentine's Day serves primarily to line the already-bulging pockets of Hallmark and Cadbury, it hasn't always been such a saccharine lovefest.

It began, as so many of our high holy days do, as a pagan festival, this one held on February 15. Originally known as *Februatus* (Latin for “purifications,” and the root of the word “February”), it was held to purge Rome of her hibernal sins, so as to begin sinning again with a clean slate. At some point, this devolved into just getting good and drunk to start the awakening springtime off right, and they decided to involve Pan, patron god of making cows fertile, being lost in the forest, and some other things. Pan lived in a famous cave called Lupercal, so they changed the name of the festival to Lupercalia. This festival involved getting hammered and naked and chasing consenting ladies around in the cave with bits of bloody animal skin. You see, Pan was jazzed about this kind of thing and would make all the cows extra fertile. So much fun, right?

When Gelasius I, a pope who, by all accounts, was whiny and prudish, had had enough, he decided to subsume the pagans’ good time by declaring February 14, the day before Lupercalia, as Saint Valentine’s Day. This was to be celebrated by randomly being assigned a Saint from the saintly roloDEX, and spending the next year acting like them. Since most saints were big nerds, this effectively precluded any pants-less carousing. However, if he had a specific Valentine in mind, he declined to tell anybody about it, and the knowledge died with him some years later. But, more than likely, he just wanted everybody to put their trousers back on and get down to the business of fearing the wrath of God. Just to really clear up his papal to-do list, he also made this mysterious Saint Valentine the patron of beekeeping, fainting, travellers, and anyone with epilepsy—his celestial purview is so much more than just love.

Where the confusion lies is that there were actually three martyred dudes named Valentine. There was Valentine of Rome, killed by beheading for performing secret marriages for soldiers to their sweethearts, whence the soldiers were supposed to be married to their duties. Then there was Valentine of Terni, who was locked up back before Rome was converted to Christianity for being a bishop before it was cool. He then healed his jailer’s daughter of her lifelong blindness, which is a pretty neat trick, and the whole household and all their slaves gave it up to Jesus. The third was Valentine of Passau, whose *corpus vitae* basically includes not being convincing enough to convert anybody. Instead, his would-be parishioners threw rocks at him until he went away and built himself a little chapel in the Alps and converted random mountain folk until he died. Which one is the Saint Valentine we know and love depends entirely on who you ask.

Regardless of the general confusion that surrounds who the day is actually for, Saint Valentine’s Day was now a thing, and it’s been mostly bouquets of roses and heart-shaped boxes of chocolate from there. That is, except for a few brief and shining examples of how the thirst for violence in our flawed and craven little souls can be quelled but never fully quenched, and the black cloud of tragedy that hangs over our fragile lives will never be dispelled.

Let's discuss:

The Valentine's Day Massacre has been throughout our long and sordid history, b as some of the other events with that title, which USA in the 1920s, the temperance movement was there was money to be had for those with connections and one that dear old Al Capone was, ahem, making mobster Bugs Moran (so called for his propensity for himself. He started his own bootlegging outfit to put it mildly, so one fine evening, Capone sent some They lined up the seven men present and emptied and got away, dying sometime later in prison, while at his home in Florida from syphilis in his brain.

Teddy Roosevelt's Valentine's Day in 1884 enough. His wife Alice Lee had given birth two days because old-timey people loved that kind of thing, the New York Legislature. Around midday, he was that something horrible had happened to the baby, who lived with them and was inexplicably named. had just made his way downstairs to process this s died. She had been suffering from undiagnosed B thought the signs were just a peculiar side effect of guessing anytime they said anything was anything with a black X and says only, “The light has gone before returning and eventually becoming president to protect huge swathes of the American backwoods.

The Valentine's Day accidental bombing of rrors involving the navigational equipment on Uni the radars went SNAFU during a mission to bom however, just got all muddled up and headed straight cool astronomical clocks and giant gothic castles. apart. Shortly after high noon, while Praguers were on a Baroque bridge, 62 B-17 Flying Fortress bombed the unsuspecting citizenry, and headed for home. landmarks were destroyed, and 11,000 people were

The vinegar valentines, on a much lighter note, freaks of Victorian England. You see, when the freshly widowed Queen Victoria goes into a weird and fun. Long, black mourning dresses became was used to take pictures of your dead relatives; of the dearly departed; and love was out, while loa the sour taste they left in the mouth of the receiver were sent anonymously and had unflattering cari vivid colours. The words would be ones of insult a great deal of things far worse than that!” which

my guns, vinegar of Valentine's Day

taas, student editor



JACOPO BASSANO VIA WIKIMEDIA COMMONS

een a title attributed to a few episodes of unpleasantness but here we will address the one in Chicago, because it has other stuff that's interesting without being as horrendous as you may look into on your own. You'll recall that in the 1920s in full swing, which meant booze was contraband, and it was a business to get the goods. Now, this was a lucrative business, and a killing at. However, not content to sit idly by, upstart (to bug out, be volatile), decided to take a piece of the pie right there in Chicago. This did not sit well with Capone, some guys dressed as coppers to go deal with the problem. 70 rounds into them. Bugs himself was late to the party and Capone would live to get old and rich, dying much later

was not a happy one at all, although it had begun well days earlier to a daughter, their first child, also named Alice and he was blissfully content as he trundled off to work at suddenly summoned home by a messenger, and, fearing he rushed back. Upon arriving, he learned that his mother, "Mittie," had died quite suddenly of typhoid fever. He sudden and tragic loss with his wife, when she too up and right's Disease, a form of kidney failure, and doctors had of her pregnancy (doctors in those days were basically just). The entry in Roosevelt's diary from that day is marked "out of my life." He would retreat into nature and solitude, but it was this time in nature that prompted him to as national parks.

Prague was a pretty major whoopsie-daisies. Due to United States Air Force bombers during the spring of 1945, the German stronghold of Dresden. The Allied Forces, right for Prague, the Czechoslovakian city known for really. The cities of Prague and Dresden are over 100 kilometres presumably smooching and trading cards and chocolate. Bombers flew in by mistake, dropped 152 tons of bombs onto. The death toll came to 701 people, hundreds of historical are left homeless. A horrible and avoidable travesty of war. e, was a neat little endeavour undertaken by those lovable monarchy are basically the only celebrities to idolize, and fete of mourning, the whole country tends to get a bit tame the chicest fashion; photography, still in its infancy, people started gathering in parlours to bother the spirits thing was so in. So-called Vinegar Valentines, named for (not to mention the bitterness of the sender's heart), pictures of their intended victim splashed across them in and ridicule along the lines of "You're a nasty old cat, and was vicious slander in those days.

The world is awash with ways to show your intended that you love them. In Iraq, the Kurds decorate red apples with cloves and give them as gifts. In Germany, they bake big gingerbread cookies in the shape of hearts with messages of adoration iced onto them. In Denmark, you may receive an intricately snipped piece of paper, called a *gaekkebrev*, that has a fun little ditty written on it and is signed with a cryptic sequence of dots, and if you can guess who sent it to you, you are awarded an egg that's all dolled up in its Easter colours. Much less cryptic, but a definite timesaver, South Africans simply pin on their sleeve a piece of paper with the name of the person they'd like to take home scrawled on it. The French had a tradition where women gathered at a bonfire to get drunk and hurl obscenities at the night sky about any potential lover who had pissed them off, but it got so popular and unruly that the French government outlawed the whole scene.

So, whether you are smitten with your one and only, or intending to send a few Vinegar Valentines of your own, just remember that the day is so much more than you might suppose. It was, in fact, the prolific 14th century poet Geoffrey Chaucer who first tied the day in with romance when he wrote the lines "For this was on Saint Valentine's Day; When every fowl comes there to take his mate" in his much-loved poem "Parliament of Fowls."

Another century would pass before the first Saint Valentine's Day card would be sent, although once again, the annals of history are not quite sure by whom. One story is that the Duke of Orleans, imprisoned at the impregnable Tower of London, sent it to his wife, referring to her as "my very gentle valentine," although she would be dead before it was ever delivered.

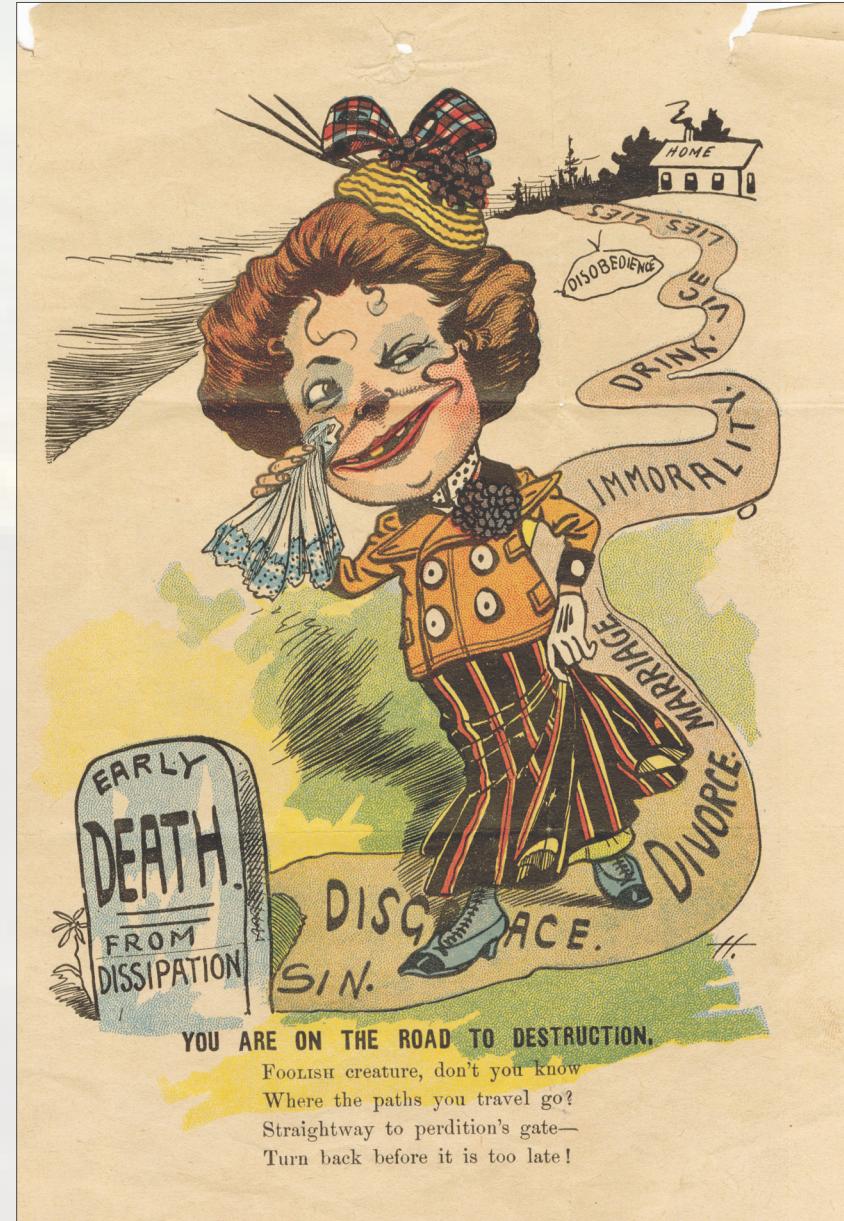
The other story is that the very first valentine's card was sent by a trailblazer named Margery Brews, who was secretly in love with someone that her family found inadequate and sent him a love letter in which she calls him "My right-well beloved Valentine." The British Library, which has no flair for the dramatic, says this is the true story. The other story, which said Library has declared apocryphal at best, is clearly a much better yarn.

It wasn't until two centuries later that Shakespeare wrote about melancholic Ophelia going to Hamlet's window and singing "Tomorrow is Saint Valentine's Day; All in the morning betime; And I, a maid at your window; To be your Valentine" that we started referring to your chosen mate as "your Valentine" in regular parlance.

Eventually, we made our way to the gaudy, money-grubbing, performative spectacle as we know and love today, with a lady named Esther Howland, from Massachusetts. Much like Bugs Moran, she realized there was money to be had and started scheming. She started mass-producing Saint Valentine's Day cards. This was in 1848, and she would begin raking in the big bucks almost immediately. She would carry on happily exploiting the ideals of love until she died a very rich woman in 1904. In 1910, after six years of no valentines to be had whatsoever, a man named Joyce Hall from Missouri started a little company called Hallmark, and the rest, as they say, is history.

Oh, and in 1969, the Catholic Church decided, since nobody knew who he really was, and he was promoting fraternization, that Valentine could still be a technical saint but removed him from all the liturgies. Canonization and beatification are much like Hotel California in that way; you can check out any time you like, but you can never leave.

So, in the end, the day may not even really exist at all, but Happy Valentine's Day, nevertheless.



INDIANA STATE LIBRARY AND HISTORICAL BUREAU VIA WIKIMEDIA COMMONS

movies

Local filmmakers show diverse movies at Victoria Film Festival



PHOTO PROVIDED

Lucid, created by two local filmmakers, is screening at the Victoria Film Festival.

MARIAN RESTREPO GALINDO
CONTRIBUTING WRITER

The 32nd annual Victoria Film Festival (VFF) is recognizing and bringing to light bold, creative films and storytelling. From February 6 to 15, the festival will run films from local, regional, and international creators. This year, the VFF will screen 91 feature films and 39 short films that will be shown in nine locations, as well as visual art installations, music performances, and special guest appearances at events.

This year's films include two projects that offer looks into creativity and finding meaning through immersive storytelling, and they both have a local connection. *Lucid*, created by Victoria's Deanna Milligan and Ramsey Fendall, follows the story of Mia, an art student in the '90s who gets kicked out of school

and is desperate to get back the life she once had. She uses a magical elixir that's supposed to give her wishes back to her, but instead it takes her into a psychedelic, mystical, and mysterious journey that plays with what is real and what isn't.

"We started thinking about how to destroy creative blocks," says Milligan, "and that sparked a storyline where Mia takes a magical elixir to release inner demons into monsters she can fight and overcome."

For Milligan and Fendall, *Lucid*, which was released last year, isn't just another project they created—it's a product of years of development and thought.

"It's been the same world that we've been spending time in... the sort of '90s, punk, phantasmagorical world," says Fendall. "It's been a

really fun place to spend time in for seven years now."

Lucid is a whole realm in itself. Fendall describes it as "raw, handmade, and kind of in its own world"; Milligan says that it's "a dream-like, almost hallucinatory experience, but rooted in Mia's unconscious mind" and adds that "people have called it 'batshit crazy'—which we kind of love."

The film has travelled the world, being played in various countries, and now, Milligan and Fendall want to give homage to their hometown and share *Lucid* with the contributors and viewers.

"It's our BC premiere, and most of the performers and crew haven't seen the film yet. Showing it in our hometown is a full-circle moment," says Milligan.

"The movie could only have been made here," adds Fendall. "Victoria is in its DNA, from the streets to the punk rock scene that's existed for decades."

"We're showing what people can do when they come together, even without a Hollywood budget," says Milligan.

The film doesn't just lean toward the indie, experimental side of filmmaking and art creation—it fully embraces it. The creators want viewers to connect to the project just like they did in production, where the crew's energy and performance came alive.

"We want them to feel their way through it," says Milligan. "Not necessarily intellectually unpack it, but exist on a feeling level."

"If you don't personally connect,

there's still an opportunity to discover something in the sound design, costumes, and visuals—it's a world to inhabit," says Fendall.

Another local filmmaker is screening their documentary at the VFF this year. *Leaving Beringia*, a 2025 film by Barbara Todd Hager, explores the roots of Indigenous peoples in the Americas.

"I wanted to spend more time on the origins of my ancestors and all Indigenous people in North and South America," says Hager, who is from Edmonton but now lives in Victoria and Vancouver. "The story deserved more than just 10 minutes."

In the film, Hager travels to eight archeological sites, finding meanings through the land and the oral tradition that is carried from generation to generation.

"Beringia was this land mass between Siberia and Alaska during the ice age," says Hager. "It's where people crossed long before the ice melted. People weren't just staying in one place—they moved to find better food, shelter, and safer places. That's how communities survived and thrived. Along the west coast, from Alaska down to Chile, there are more languages than anywhere else in the Americas because people have been there the longest."

The documentary serves as a complete and structured informational piece, featuring interviews with experts and having Hager as protagonist.

"It felt spiritual," says Hager. "Standing where people lived, hunted, laughed, and loved thousands of

years ago gives a profound sense of connection to history."

Hager's background is in journalism and archeology, which ties in with her experience working with museums. An inquiry she always kept in her mind was why certain narratives were seen as lesser than or simply omitted in history.

"There's no '12,000-year gap'—that's life, culture, history, and achievements," says Hager. "Indigenous peoples have been recording history in our own ways for millennia."

The film is very significant to Hager as she feels exploring her heritage through travelling the lands her ancestors once set foot in enlightens her soul and gives her reasons as to why sharing this journey is important.

"The documentary invites viewers to look beyond scientific tools and measurements and listen to Indigenous people," says Hager. "They have something to say about their history that hasn't been heard by the wider world."

Hager says it's special for her to get to show *Leaving Beringia* at the VFF.

"Many people who worked on it live here," she says, "and it's a way to honour the land and community that's shaped me."

Victoria Film Festival
Various times,
Friday, February 6
to Sunday, February 15
Various prices and venues
victoriafilmfestival.com

review

Zombie Blizzard brings Margaret Atwood's poetry to life



THE FELDMAN AGENCY

Soprano Measha Brueggergosman-Lee put on an incredible performance.

JASMINE WAGSTAFF
STUDENT EDITORIAL ASSISTANT

Pacific Opera Victoria performed *Zombie Blizzard* on Sunday, January 18 as the final part of their Luminary Series, but this was neither about zombies nor blizzards, much to my initial relief and confusion; it's about the mess that comes with digging too deeply into the past. The songs

were written by Aaron Davis—he took selected works from Margaret Atwood's poetry collection *Dearly* and brought the words to life in beautifully composed lyrics and musical accompaniment.

The song cycle takes its title from two of Atwood's poems: "Zombie" and "Blizzard." Each song began with Davis playing a recording of Atwood reading her

poem. I really appreciate that they took the time to respect and honour their source material, with Davis using it to the letter in most songs. I've always enjoyed songs that feel like poetry, so this was something I really loved.

Soprano Measha Brueggergosman-Lee really played into the title, entering the stage in a zombie walk while wearing a blue sparkling dress. It looked as if Elsa from *Frozen* had become a zombie. Her performance was incredible: her range, her pitch, the confidence on stage. She was singing and signalling to the musicians when to stop and start through raising or lowering her arms.

The first song, "Zombie," focused on a lost lover who has passed on that the speaker can't seem to let go of; this piece sets the tone for the whole show. "Blizzard" tells the story of a woman losing her mother, hearing her mother insist on fighting the storm during a blizzard.

A major theme in the show is grief and loss, and the mess it can become. I've lost a few people in my life, and I felt seen in these pieces. I cried a fair bit in that theatre, and I couldn't have been the only one who was.

A major theme in the show is grief and loss, and the mess it can become.

Atwood also shines some light on the grief and loss felt by women. And while I enjoyed "Princess Clothing," it felt out of place; I've never liked lists in poems and this one had a long list. However, "Shadow" absolutely gutted me emotionally. The piece is about a woman who is sexually assaulted, and she describes the feeling that her body is no longer her own. She is simply a shadow of her former self. There were no details of the violence itself, just the emotional aftermath. And those descriptions also had me holding back tears because of how raw and painful she acknowledges it is.

The performance wrapped up on the namesake piece of its source material, "Dearly." The final piece feels like a grandmother flipping through an old photo album while reminiscing on all the loved ones lost. It was a slower pace than the rest of the songs, but that's what it needed to be. This tied the whole

show together, emphasized the central theme: loss. Loss of a partner, of family, of who you were before that awful thing happened to you. Grief comes in many forms and all of them are messy. You feel dead inside and stuck in a storm: a zombie in a blizzard, perhaps.

I loved this performance. The lyrics were beautifully written and worked well in song, Davis did a phenomenal job there. Brueggergosman-Lee controlled that stage, despite only standing in one place during her songs. Her voice was just so captivating. Bassist George Koller really blew me away. Watching him switch between using the bow and his fingers on the bass to maximize its range was truly incredible to see. Everyone did amazingly well and it was a pleasure to experience.

It left me feeling that now I have to buy *Dearly* and discover what else Atwood's poems have to offer.

stage

A Sudden Violent Burst of Rain explores modern themes through magic and myth



PHOTO PROVIDED

A Sudden Violent Burst of Rain director Sophia Treanor.

NIK OVSTAAS
STUDENT EDITOR

In *A Sudden Violent Burst of Rain*, playwright Sami Ibrahim aims to take the audience through a mythological kingdom where a young woman must wait outside the king's palace each day to try to be heard on matters of her immigrant status.

Ibrahim, a young writer from London, is the son of a Pakistani immigrant, and ideas about identity and one's place in society tend to inform much of his work. Theatre performer, writer, and educator Sophia Treanor is the director of the upcoming presentation of *A Sudden Violent Burst of Rain* at UVic's Phoenix Theatre. Treanor is from the US but has taught theatre in Shanghai, Vienna, and Madrid.

From these two varying backgrounds, the immigrant, outsider identity of the play's characters is one Ibrahim and Treanor both understand well. In the production, a young illegal immigrant fleeing an authoritarian regime finds work as a day labourer before getting

pregnant. The meat of the play takes place during the 18 years of her child's life, told in a way that brings the trials of our time, such as climate change and political strife, into a magical world of myth and legend.

"She's really existing at the intersection of the refugee crisis and climate change," says Treanor, "and it's told in a fable, or parable, or mythic way, so the world of the play doesn't have the same rules of reality as ours does, but the struggle and the bureaucratic burden that she's facing... It's based on a British model, but it feels like it could be Canada."

But it's not just rooted in the political miasma of immigration policy: Treanor says that the language, imagery, and set design feels like it could be a fairy tale.

"It's remarkably funny, and devastating. I think that our job is to honour that and bring that out and create an experience for people that allows them the space to laugh at the complete absurdity of the de-humanization of people who are the most vulnerable in our world, and to

"It's told in a fable, or parable, or mythic way, so the world of the play doesn't have the same rules of reality as ours does, but the struggle and the bureaucratic burden that [the character is] facing... It's based on a British model, but it feels like it could be Canada."

SOPHIA TREANOR
A SUDDEN VIOLENT BURST OF RAIN

PHOTO PROVIDED
Getting *A Sudden Violent Burst of Rain* set up at UVic's Phoenix Theatre.

A Sudden Violent Burst of Rain
Various times,
Thursday, February 12
to Saturday, February 21
\$18-\$34, Phoenix Theatre, UVic
phoenixtheatres.ca

New Music Revue

The Cribs
Selling a Vibe
(Play It Again Sam)
3.5/5

The Cribs are a British rock band that first showed up to the public in 2001 with their four-song demo *Feelin' It!* They're still going strong 25 years later with the release of their 10th album, *Selling a Vibe*.

The Cribs have done a great job with the playing on this 12-song album. However, the feeling of the voice in each song sounded old-fashioned; it seems like they have not moved on from the past and have stayed the same with their singing style. Although the vocals sounded off, the band did

a great job of catching an exciting feeling through the playing of their instruments.

Selling a Vibe is great after a hard academic study session. If you're a student in high school, college, university, or any other academic setting, this album's great for stress relief and easing your mind.

The songs show the band's dedication to their art and are great examples of perseverance. Their hard work points to their love of music: a lot of rock bands give up after a few years because they find no hope for their creative art, but The Cribs are still dedicated to their music.

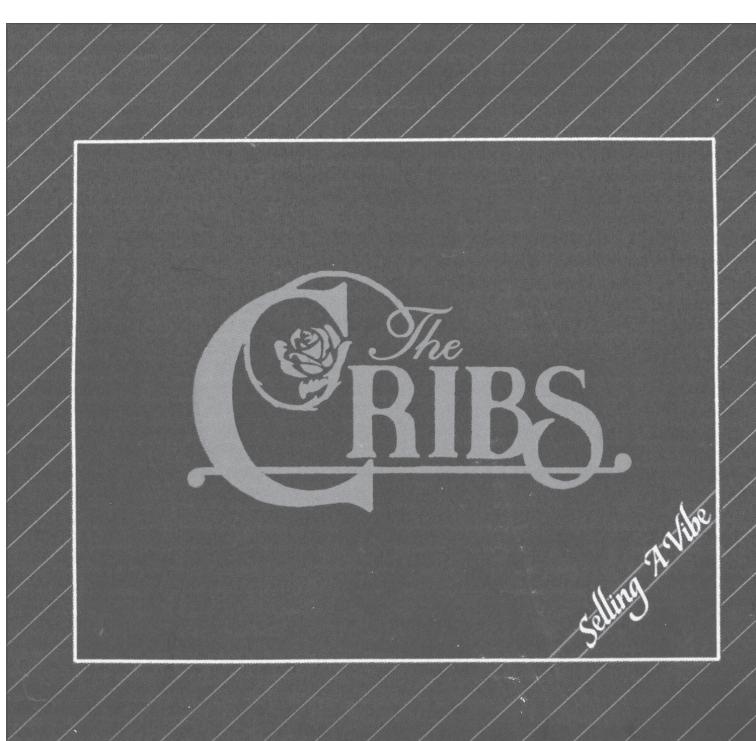
Even though I'm not the hugest

rock fan, the Cribs still impressed me with their take on the genre. The way that electric guitar, drums, and other sounds can be heard is a great feeling for the busy mind of a student.

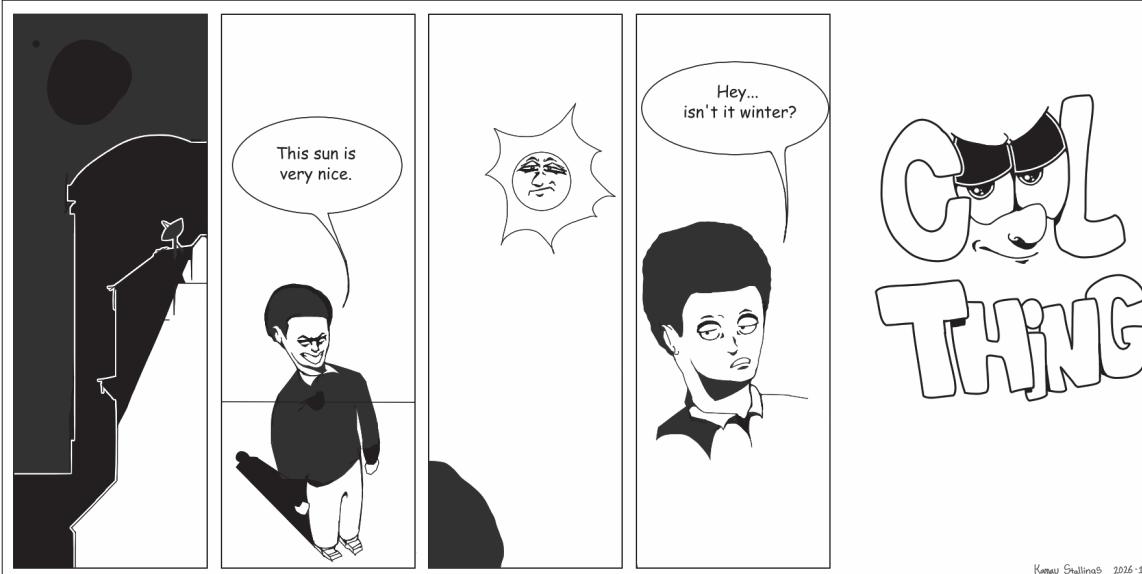
The Cribs usually release an album every three years or so—from that we can tell that they have put careful work into each song, which shows that they truly care about their art.

While I found their lyrics lacking meaning, their performance on their instruments was fabulous, and it shows their individual personality as a band in rock music today.

-Pasha Korabelnikov,
contributing writer



Cool Thing - Kamau Stallings



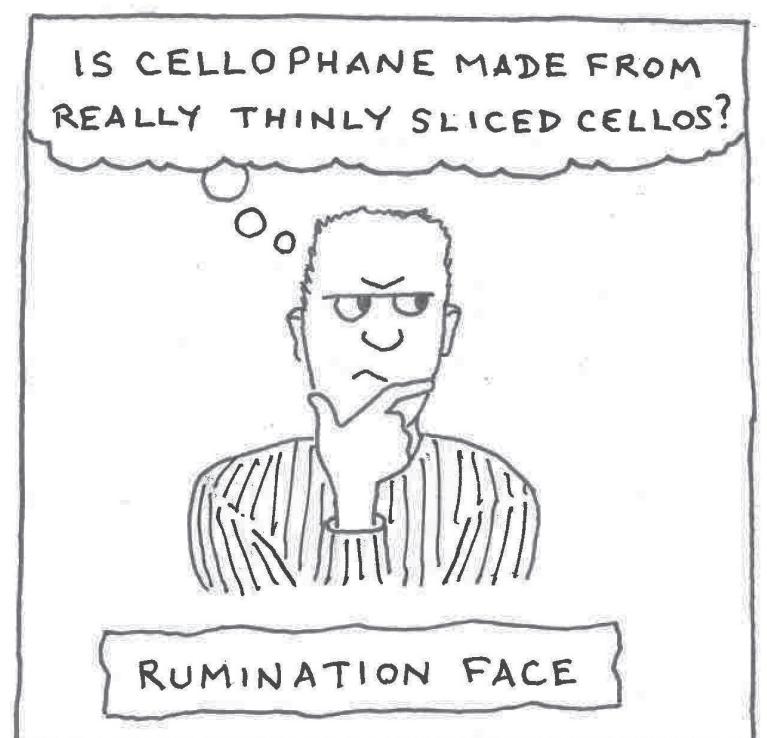
Evie the Alien - Jazmyn Hodges



mr. andy - Sofie Mott



Telescopic Penguins - Michael Erwin



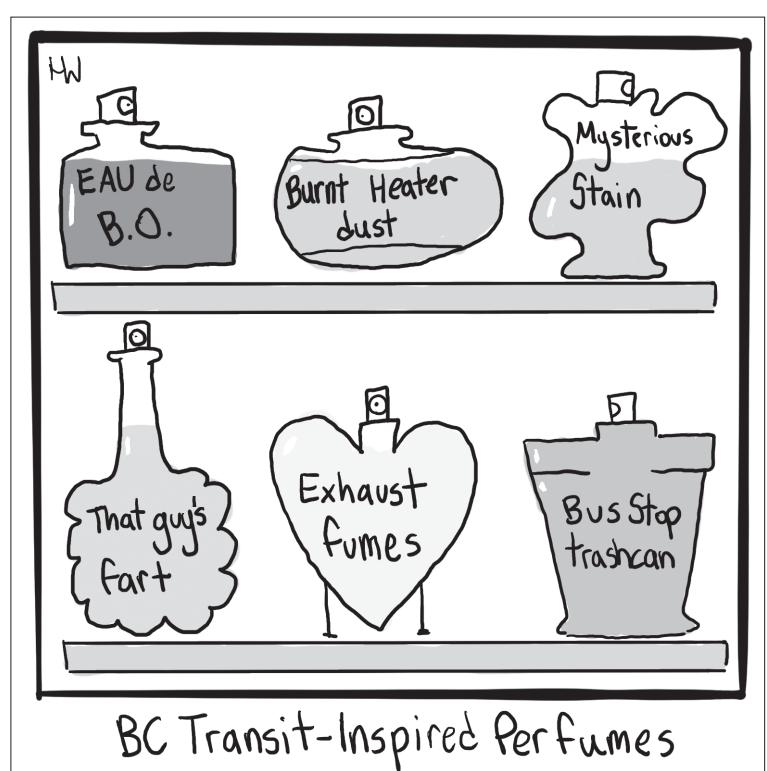
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Wild World of Wendland - Huxley Wendland



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Look for our next print issue on stands
Wednesday, February 18!



Trill's Recipes

by Trillium McNabb

No-crust apple pies

This recipe is an easy solution if you don't have the time or don't know how to make crust. It's also great to scale up and make big batches and freeze for later.

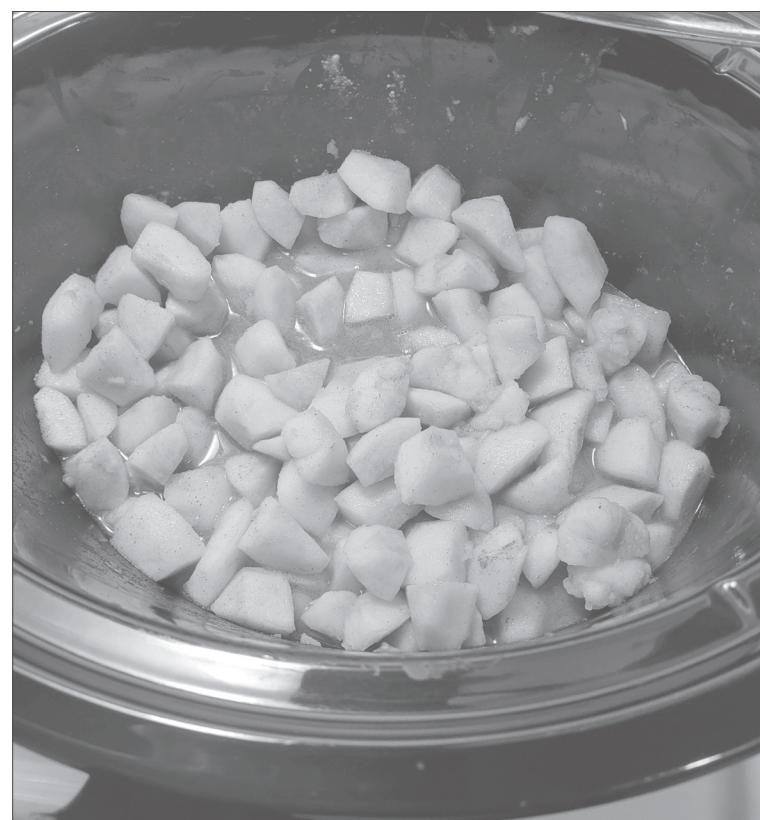
Ingredients:

- 2 medium-sized apples
- 1 tsp cinnamon
- 2 tbsp sugar
- 1 pinch salt
- 1 tsp vanilla
- 1 1/2 tsp butter or margarine
- 1/2 tsp lemon juice (optional)
- Two slices bread

I'm an apple pie girl, but I have yet to master making pie crust. This recipe is an easy solution if you don't have the time or don't know how to make crust. It's also great to scale up and make big batches and freeze for later.

Peel the two apples and cut out the cores. Then chop the apples to roughly the same size. Put your apple chunks in a bowl, then add the cinnamon, sugar, salt, and vanilla. Mix together until the apple pieces are completely coated.

Pre-heat your pot to medium heat and melt your butter. Pour your



apples into the pot carefully and cook slowly; make sure to stir once in a while to prevent scorching or burning the apples. When most of the apples are soft and tender, and when you see areas that have the consistency of applesauce, take it off the heat to let it cool a little.

The apple filling has cooled enough when you're able to make a streak on the back of a spoon. Take two slices of bread and flatten it with a spoon, cup, or rolling pin. Remove the crusts, scoop out the

filling, and place it on one of your flattened bread pieces. Take the slice and place it on top without pressing down. Use a round cookie cutter or cup to make the pie. Make sure to not overfill your pies so you have enough room to be able to cut around the pie, and so that the applesauce doesn't break through the bread. Once you've cut out your shape, use a fork to press around the edges. Pressing around the edges will help further seal your pie.

Next, heat a pan with a little



PHOTOS BY TRILLIUM MCNABB/NEXUS

bit of butter on medium-high heat. Place your pies in and turn down the temperature to medium and toast both sides of the pie. Sprinkle on extra sugar and cinnamon, then enjoy.

If you are planning on making a large batch, I recommend putting your peeled and cut apples in a large bowl or pot with some ice water and lemon juice. This will help prevent your apples from going brown and

soft. To store your large batches, put all the ingredients in without mixing in a bowl first. Seal the bag then shake to mix the ingredients—this means less dishes to clean later.

If you have multiple types of apples in your kitchen, don't be afraid to use them. I like using sweet and tart apples together for my filling. The tartness helps cut through the sweet flavour and makes the filling more interesting to eat.

Message from your student board

The Camosun College Student Society offers access to mental health and wellness supports designed to meet students where they are.



In George R.R. Martin's *A Song of Ice and Fire*, later known to many through *Game of Thrones*, House Stark carries a simple but unsettling warning: "Winter is coming." In the series, the phrase signals uncertainty and hardship. It reminds people to prepare for what lies ahead, even when the danger is not yet visible.

Thankfully, living in Victoria means our winters are far gentler than most. We do not face extreme cold or endless snowstorms. Still, winter leaves its mark in quieter ways. When I first moved to Canada, I was warned about the "winter blues." Shorter days, less sunlight, and long stretches of grey can slowly drain your energy. Motivation feels harder to find, and even simple routines can begin to feel heavier.

I used to wonder why we only get a semester break during the winter term and not in the fall. One of my instructors once explained that late winter is often when students feel the most exhausted and disconnected. It is when stress piles up, daylight is scarce, and burnout quietly creeps in. The break is not just time away from classes. It is a chance to pause, reset, and reconnect with what matters most, including yourself.

As February approaches and reading break gets closer, this is your reminder that you matter. Your well-being matters just as much as your academic success. If school,

exams, or life in general feel overwhelming, you are not alone. The Camosun College Student Society offers access to mental health and wellness supports designed to meet students where they are. These services are confidential,

accessible, and focused on helping you feel supported throughout your academic journey. Asking for help is not a weakness. It is a form of care.

Beyond support services, the CCSS is also focused on bringing warmth into the winter months through connection and community. Our Pride Collective, led by pride director Acacia Tooth, is organizing monthly bingo and trivia nights across both campuses. These events are meant for a chance to take a break and connect during a heavy season. More events are planned throughout the semester, and students are encouraged to stay in the loop by following @camosunstudents on Instagram for updates.

Winter may be coming, but it does not have to be faced alone. As the Queen of the North, Sansa Stark, once reminded us, the lone wolf struggles, but the pack survives. We are in this together. Take care of yourself, stay connected, and if you need support, reach out. You are part of this community, and we are glad you are here.

In solidarity,
Terence Baluyut
CCSS external executive

eyed on campus

Lansdowne memorial for Laura Gover



GREG PRATT/NEXUS

Memorials for Laura Gover (see page 1) are up now at both Lansdowne and Interurban campuses; this is the Lansdowne memorial, located in the main floor of the Fisher building.

contest

Find the hidden Nexus and win



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.

word search

K Z E K G R J J T H N L T K L I J W R H
 W W A V R L C Y X V K O L U U I Y I L J
 A L D M Y E X F V Q K F V U C N Q G W X
 W O K P Z M N A S P S T N C J A Q A A M
 F N O P E R F O R M A T I V E D J E K S
 Y Q S U B T E M J W G I M T V E F K C Z
 R S G A N G S T E R S T W G P Q C K U S
 I H B E A T I F I C A T I O N U F E K M
 I N N W E X X H H B M K F J D A E B E O
 L K E Y K Z L X W V L J N V S T B R W O
 Q Q Y X G Q X A V Z I X J I Q E R E W C
 Q Z K J P O X Z F Z F I T N T O U V Z H
 Q Y Z V U L U Z W P H S B E W V A J N I
 V M A Q X A I X I Q P Y E G W R T S P N
 G W J R J W U C Y L X A P A V O U Z A G
 F E S H S L N M A U Z A C R D D S S E O
 V O G I D A V U E B B Y A P Q W O A Z G
 K M Q K K K B V C W L U V V R Z O A C O
 X O W W Y Z U W E U Y Y J V F J I L O J
 X H M P U C A N O N I Z A T I O N O A P

Just in time for the most romantic holiday of the year, we have a really weird feature story on page 6; find the words in the story to the right above.

Februator
Gangsters
Inexplicably
Smooching
Vinegar

Gaekkebrev
Inadequate
Performative
Canonization
Beatification