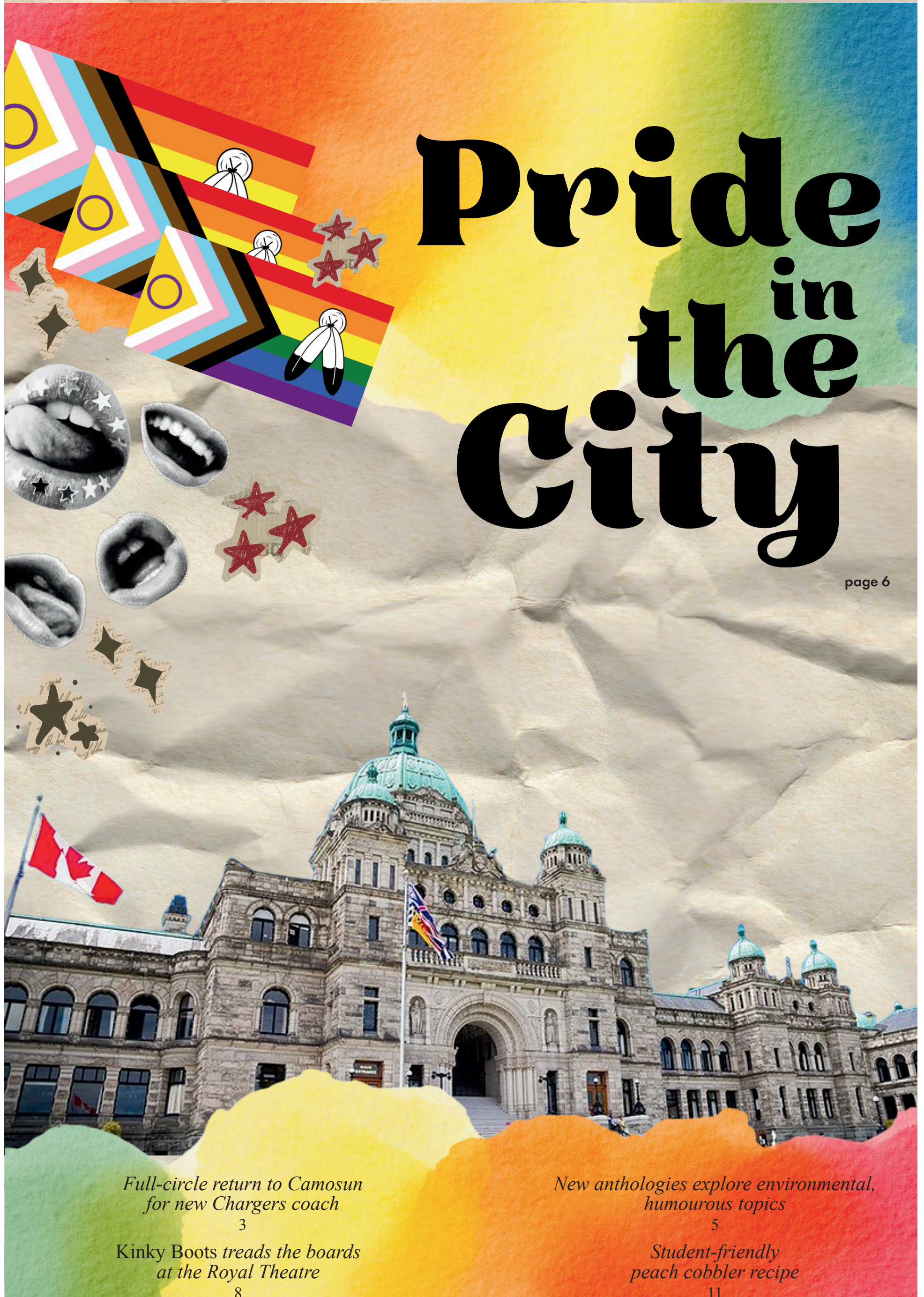


# Pride in the City

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# NEXUS

camosun's student voice since 1990  
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OVERHEARD AT NEXUS: "I've been yelling at a lot of people lately."

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## editor's letter Cottage life

While the weather may not be in agreement just yet, I'm determined to make the most of summer.

After a recent reminder I was given that life is indeed shorter than any of us know, I decided to go full-tilt-boogie into summer by heading to my cottage for a week with nought but my canine companion, and it was glorious. Coffees drunk while watching the haze of morning burn off in the rising sun; watching the sunset through a THC-induced haze of my own. Evenings spent watching hilarious '80s summer-camp slasher flicks while my dog hides under the covers; long walks in the woods with the aforementioned canine, Archie. Swimming in the dark in a full-moon flood tide, which was unpleasantly cold but nonetheless invigorating and magical; getting warm by the wood stove after.

As a gay man, I find it endlessly amusing to watch hired hands who may or may not be part of the extended community plaster over city buses and the front windows of banks with massive rainbows.

Upon returning from the cabin, I find a city gearing up for the topsy-turvy modern take on Pride. As a gay man, I find it endlessly amusing to watch hired hands who may or may not be part of the extended community plaster over city buses and the front windows of banks with massive rainbows. The Carhartt-clad men doing the work invariably look like they are attempting to look comfortable—"I'm supportive, please don't cancel me!"—while remaining distant—"I like boobs, everyone!"

The Carhartt-clad women always look like they couldn't care less.

In a month's time, it will all come back down, tucked away for the next year's gay marketing extravaganza. The companies will act like it never happened. Like it was a momentary slip in judgement, a giggle in church. We know it's just a performance, an act to bring in new revenue streams, and we are suitably inured to it, but I guess it's better than being pilloried and pelted with rotten produce.

The true Pride is not emblazoned across downtown crosswalks, but in the fact that we can talk about our experiences openly and only be met with mild hostility or (better yet) indifference; the fact that the TV has incorporated our salacious stories into its encomium of what the ravenous masses escape into; the fact that no one chases me across a drawbridge wielding pitchforks and torches anymore. Progress.

These solitary highs and cynical lows are what my summer consists of, when I do it right—when I overcome the executive dysfunction and really lock in to letting go without spiralling into self-loathing boredom.

I hope that all of you are finding what summer looks like for you, and chasing after it, because what's the point of going on if you aren't gonna at least go mild-wild?

As for me? I'm going to the cottage.

Nik Ovstaas, student editor  
nik@nexusnewspaper.com

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## open space

# Unpaid internships deeply flawed

MATIAS LI  
CONTRIBUTING WRITER

While unpaid internships are often celebrated as a young adult's first foray into the professional world, they have morphed into a deeply flawed practice that devalues merit, restricts socioeconomic mobility, and dismantles the standard university-to-career pipeline. By establishing a hard barrier that excludes low-to-average-income students while simultaneously inflating job requirements, unpaid internships deepen socioeconomic

that reinforces the insular cultures that exist in industries and favours bloodline subsidies over self-made talent.

On a macro level, the widespread use of unpaid internships has shaken the foundations of the traditional university-to-career pathway.

As institutions now have access to a pool of educated, knowledgeable, and—crucially—free labour, the economic incentive to create and fund entry-level roles has eroded. This traps students and graduates

By establishing a hard barrier that excludes low-to-average-income students while simultaneously inflating job requirements, unpaid internships deepen socioeconomic disparities and undermine the professional worth and prestige of university degrees.

ic disparities and undermine the professional worth and prestige of university degrees.

The core mechanism of the unpaid internship acts as a powerful socioeconomic filter that favours one's familial wealth over one's individual merit. A full-time student's ability to work for free while balancing home, academic, and personal responsibilities is heavily—if not entirely—dependent on their familial finances. The support necessary to keep a young adult afloat, especially one who is navigating the maze of adulthood alone for the first time, often requires a family to be in the upper levels of the income bracket.

This leaves hard-working low-to-average income students with an agonizing choice: either pass up prestigious, career-launching opportunities to take out-of-field employment or take out loans and cope with crushing stress to fund zero-salary positions.

Furthermore, unpaid internships also inadvertently stifle upward mobility for those that need it most. As minority and working-class communities are more likely to fall into the low-to-average income brackets, the necessity of unpaid internships restricts promising talent, cutting those with less financial backing off from the professional experience and contacts necessary to succeed in today's competitive world.

What the spread of unpaid internships has led to is a market

in a paradoxical and self-defeating loop where landing a secure, intern-proof job requires experience that can only be acquired by working for free.

As entry-level roles fade, internships have become a necessity if one wants to have a long-term career in their preferred field, as institutions don't want to take the risk and invest time and money into and sign a contract with a staff member to execute entry-level tasks that they already have unpaid interns for. Thus, hiring standards are raised, with many roles often only considering those with months or years of experience as eligible.

By forcing nearly every student to compete for an internship, organizations get a massive pool of talent that they can pick and choose from, which inflates professional entry requirements. When a student decides to devote their youth, finances, and mental capacity toward a particular degree, they're not just working toward learning abstract textbook knowledge and terminology, they're investing financial and personal capital in their own professional value.

However, when the market is flooded by countless equally qualified and determined competitors willing to give the same value away for zero dollars, the degree stops being a marker of specialized skill, grit, and prestige that commands respect and a high salary; instead, it warps into a mere prerequisite for one's free onboarding.

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!

## sports

# Elion Wong returns to Camosun as men's volleyball head coach



CAMOSUN CHARGERS ATHLETICS

Camosun Chargers men's volleyball head coach Elion Wong.

JASMINE WAGSTAFF

STAFF WRITER

Elion Wong has been named head coach of the Camosun Chargers men's volleyball team, returning to the program where he once competed as a student athlete.

Wong played for the Chargers from 2015 to 2018, a successful period for the program, and has remained involved in the sport locally through club coaching, strength and conditioning work, and athlete development. More recently, he served as an assistant coach with the Chargers women's volleyball program before transitioning into

his current role leading the men's team.

In addition to his on-court experience, Wong is also a chiropractor, something he says contributes to how he approaches athlete management and performance. Wong says his return to the program in a leadership position carries personal significance, and he's got his sights set on nationals.

"Obviously, we have our goals of coming top three in the PACWEST and qualifying for nationals," he says. "Kind of like every school, you know what I mean? But for

me, it's really about continuing to build within the same program. Just stepping into it, understanding it, and aligning with the expectations that are already there."

One of the immediate challenges for Wong is coaching a roster he didn't recruit, something he says is both a learning opportunity and a key part of the transition into the role.

"Yeah, I think there's a lot of unknowns, really, like coming into a team that, you know, I didn't recruit these guys in the program. The team has been kind of handed to me, all the recruiting has been done. Yeah, there's a lot of unknowns, for sure. And last year, you know, they had a successful season, but we look to build on that," he says. "A big part of it is just getting to know the guys and figuring things out as we go."

Fifth-year Sport Management student and Chargers men's volleyball player Jake Bolton says that he's looking forward to working more closely with Wong in the upcoming season.

"I've known him for a couple of years now," says Bolton. "He's fairly well-known in the Victoria volleyball community. I've done some personal coaching for him just on my own time for his club kind of thing. I'd already gotten kind of introduced to him briefly, but it was interesting to see him in a different light like that. He was an athlete here and now, you know, it's kind of come full circle for him."

Bolton says that Wong has already begun implementing early off-season activities before the formal start of the team's training period. Rather than waiting for the traditional late summer start, he has

initiated plans for additional court time to help athletes reconnect and build rhythm ahead of the season.

"We usually start training in either end of August into beginning of September, but he has already kind of put measures in place," says Bolton. "He sent the message... in today's group [chat] kind of stating that he'd like to get off-season training, so at least once or twice a week have the guys go to the local club and get them on court with reps kind of thing. I think it's pretty good. He's trying to get that started before getting the training in over the summer. That's on his own time, as well."

The Chargers are expected to

begin structured preparation for the upcoming season in the coming weeks, with early court sessions already underway as the team transitions into a new era under Wong's leadership.

"Yeah, I'm kind of just getting into the onboarding stuff right now," says Wong. "We've already met with the team and gone over some initial plans and expectations, things like second decking and other program standards. We'll start in the next month or so just getting a bunch of court time, getting reps, and working in alongside their summer training and conditioning programs. Yeah, just really excited to get to work as soon as possible."



CAMOSUN CHARGERS ATHLETICS

Camosun Charger Jake Bolton is looking forward to working with Wong.

## NEWS BRIEFS

### Camosun students win at Skills Canada BC

Several Camosun College Pipe Trades students recently took home awards at the Skills Canada BC competition. Sprinkler fitter Ty Lindquist got bronze; refrigeration and AC mechanic Rachel Anderson took home silver; gold-medalists Parm Singh, plumber, and Matt Stewart, steamfitter/pipefitter, are now going on to represent Camosun on Team BC at the national competition in Toronto, being held from May 26 to 30. The Skills Canada BC competition, which was held on Wednesday, April 15 in Abbotsford, are held "Olympic-style" for secondary and post-secondary students in the trades.

### Women in trades champions honoured by Camosun

The Camosun College Board of Governors has awarded The Gwen Morgan and Patricia Trottier Foundation with the Award for Innovative College Partnerships. The partnership

between Camosun and the Foundation began in 2017 with a program Trottier named Empowering Women in Trades (EWiT). The Foundation has donated \$2.91 million to support trades at Camosun, including \$2.285 million for EwiT. The award was presented at the Interurban campus on Monday, April 27.

### Programs paused at mainland colleges

The first-year Nursing intake at Vancouver Community College and the Journalism Diploma program at Langara College, also based in Vancouver, have both been paused; this is part of a larger pattern of cuts across post-secondary institutions across BC.

### WSÁNEĆ College and Camosun sign agreement

A new collaborative education and mutual recognition agreement (CEMRA) between WSÁNEĆ College and Camosun College with the aim of expanding opportunities

for First Nations-led post-secondary education was recently announced. The agreement supports accredited programming rooted in SENĆOŦEN language, WSÁNEĆ knowledge systems, and community priorities while ensuring credentials are recognized through Camosun College. The partnership reinforces WSÁNEĆ educational leadership within WSÁNEĆ territory; the WSÁNEĆ School Board and Camosun have worked together for decades. Both institutions say the agreement reflects a shared commitment to cultural integrity, community connection, and student success.

### Camosun Innovates helps with sustainable manufacturing

Camosun Innovates, the applied research division of Camosun College, is collaborating with Saanichton-based company Nature Bee to help scale up production of its concentrated cleaning tablets. The project focuses on developing semi-automated manufacturing equipment that would allow the

company to move from small-batch production to a larger operation. Nature Bee's products are designed to reduce reliance on single-use plastic bottles by replacing traditional liquid cleaners with dissolvable tablets. According to the company, full-scale production made possible through the partnership could keep as many as 2,000,000 plastic bottles per year out of the waste stream while also lowering greenhouse gas emissions.

### Clean energy funding supports Camosun collaboration

The provincial government is investing nearly \$6 million through the Innovative Clean Energy Fund to support six clean technology initiatives across British Columbia. Among the funded projects is one led by Blueforce Electrification Technologies, which is working to develop electric solutions for medium- and heavy-duty vehicle fleets where commercial alternatives are currently limited. Blueforce is partnering with several organizations on the

project, including Camosun College, BCIT SMART and Transportation Departments, the City of Victoria, Universal Coachline, DP World, and Wei Wai Kum First Nation. The initiative aims to advance the use of clean electricity in the province's transportation sector.

### Auditor appointed in student association investigation

An auditor has been selected as part of the provincial investigation into the Kwantlen Student Association (KSA), which began in March under the Societies Act. Minister of Finance Brenda Bailey announced that PricewaterhouseCoopers will conduct the investigation. The review will examine whether funds were misused or whether other improper conduct occurred within the organization. The student union, which represents students across Kwantlen Polytechnic University's five Metro Vancouver campuses, has said it will fully cooperate.

—JASMINE WAGSTAFF,  
STAFF WRITER

eyed on campus



A group of Camosun College Student Society board members and staff recently attended the British Columbia Federation of Students Skills Development Symposium, held at Sun Peaks, near Kamloops.



# Join Us!



Walk with the CCSS in the 2026 Victoria Pride Parade!

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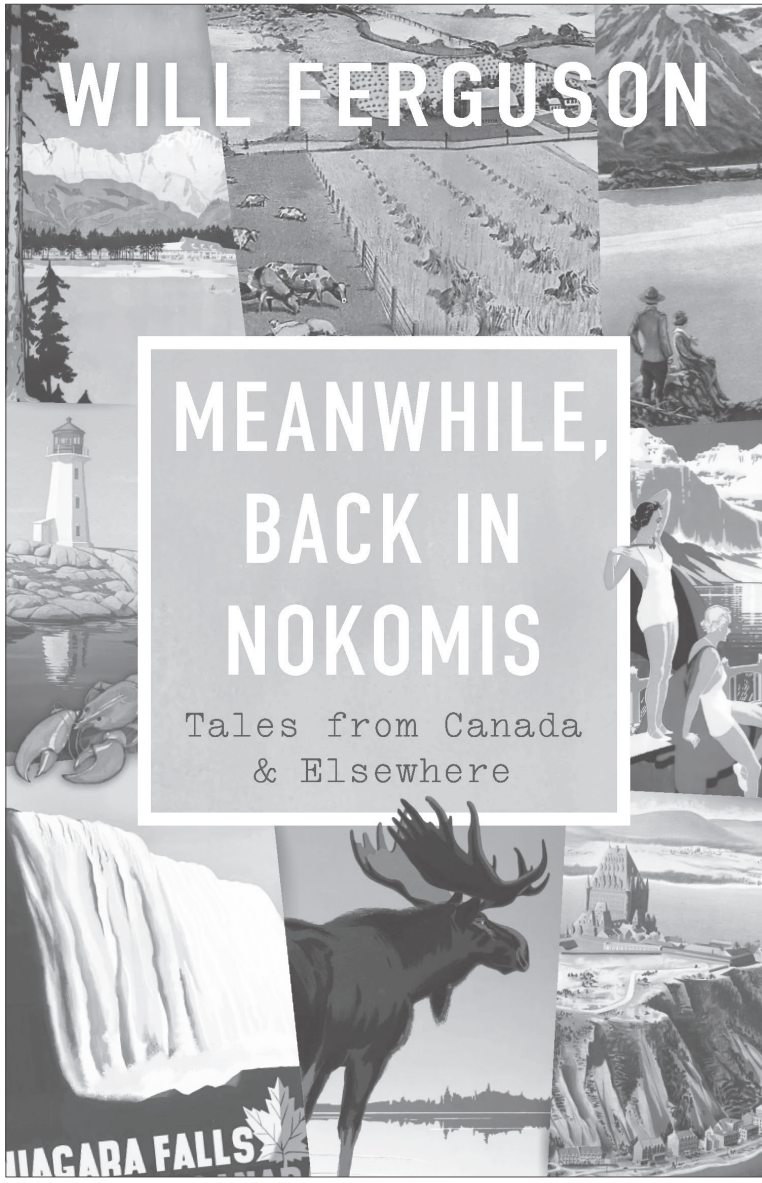
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review

## Will Ferguson delivers successful new collection of essays



JASMINE WAGSTAFF  
STAFF WRITER

*Meanwhile, Back in Nokomis: Tales from Canada and Elsewhere* by Will Ferguson is a witty, reflective, and distinctly Canadian collection of essays that blends travel writing, memoir, cultural commentary, and

humour. Ferguson began this book as a way to compile essays that went unused in his career as a travel writer and then filled in the gaps with essays he wrote just for this collection.

*Meanwhile, Back in Nokomis* is divided into five parts, which helps

This collection is like a charcuterie board: full of flavour and variety, you can grab whatever pieces look best and come back for more later.

give it more structure. Rather than following a single narrative arc, the collection moves through places, encounters, and ideas: rural prairie towns, Montreal neighbourhoods, Sable Island, New Zealand mud pools, whisky, Canadian identity, the oddities of life on the road.

The essays vary in depth and impact—some are light and funny anecdotes, others are deeply moving. The looser structure means the book can occasionally feel uneven, especially if read straight through. I really enjoyed reading one or two essays at a time, rather than trying to tackle all of it at once. It's like a charcuterie board: full of flavour and variety, you can grab whatever pieces look best and come back for more later.

Some of the funniest passages come when Ferguson tackles supposedly "important" national questions with complete seriousness. He debates Canada's most representative condiment, considers possible candidates for the national bird, and reflects on why some Canadians are instinctively suspicious of self-promotion. These observations may sound lightweight, but Ferguson uses humour to uncover larger truths about the national character.

Like all good satirists, he understands that small details often reveal more than grand political speeches ever could.

A recurring theme is Ferguson's sentimentality-free affection for Canada. He celebrates the country's eccentricities while also poking fun at its contradictions and insecurities. That balance keeps the book from becoming either cynical or overly patriotic.

One of the book's greatest strengths is Ferguson's tone. He writes with the timing of a stand-up comic but the curiosity of a seasoned journalist. Even when discussing mundane experiences, he finds unexpected emotional resonance or absurdity. Ferguson has this ability to turn cultural misunderstandings and awkward situations into genuinely insightful observations. This is most prominent in his travel essays, but it comes up in every section.

That said, the collection is not without weaker moments. As with many essay compilations, some pieces land harder than others. A few essays feel slight, more like magazine filler than fully developed reflections.

Also, Ferguson occasionally leans too heavily on the rambling

conversational style, allowing anecdotes to drift longer than necessary before arriving at their point.

Still, those criticisms are relatively minor when weighed against the book's considerable pleasures. Ferguson writes with clarity and accessibility, avoiding the inflated prose that can bog down literary essay collections. He never sounds like he is trying to impress the reader. Instead, he sounds like someone genuinely delighted by the weirdness of the world, and he's eager to share the joke.

Ultimately, *Meanwhile, Back in Nokomis: Tales from Canada and Elsewhere* is a funny, warm and highly readable collection that feels perfectly suited to readers who enjoy intelligent humour without the heavy lifting often demanded by more serious non-fiction.

And this is a book best enjoyed slowly; its essays lend themselves to reading one or two at a time. I'll often read one when I'm between classes or on the bus. It might not be your thing if you're looking for a novel to read cover-to-cover in one sitting, but it's perfect if you want something both funny and thought provoking that you can explore over time.

review

## New anthology weaves hope into cinematic warnings

AMELIA WILDE  
CONTRIBUTING WRITER

At a time when global tensions feel immeasurably high, it's easy to lose grip on environmental values. We cling to our peers and neglect the surroundings we call home, which ultimately bleeds onto the smallest creatures that exist around us.

Nadja Lubiw-Hazard reaches for this tendency and offers it a long hug. While *The Life of a Creature* may initially read as a book centred around non-human animals, Hazard asks the reader to redefine their understanding of "creature," encouraging the audience to step outside of their anthropocentrism for a moment. This resonates with the opening quote, a warning left by Hazard of how free we may be when we harmonize with the world around us—and how trapped we shall be when we abandon it.

The book starts off with a punch to the gut: a brisk short story about a veterinarian who carries pains in a similar way to her patients. It holds humans and animals on the same plane, showing how we may

struggle more similarly than we tend to think. This story remained one of my favourites throughout the anthology, and I had to pause to wipe away tears before I turned to the next page.

*The Life of a Creature* tells several unique stories about creatures with the intimacy of first-hand experience. Many themes seem strongly influenced by familiarity, or else researched with incredible depth and care toward the subject matter. One narrative evokes the dark side of abuse, how siblings find themselves holding guilt for the things they had to abandon during their escape. Another relives the experience of a boy who wandered too close toward a captive polar bear, and what the polar bear may have thought about their encounter.

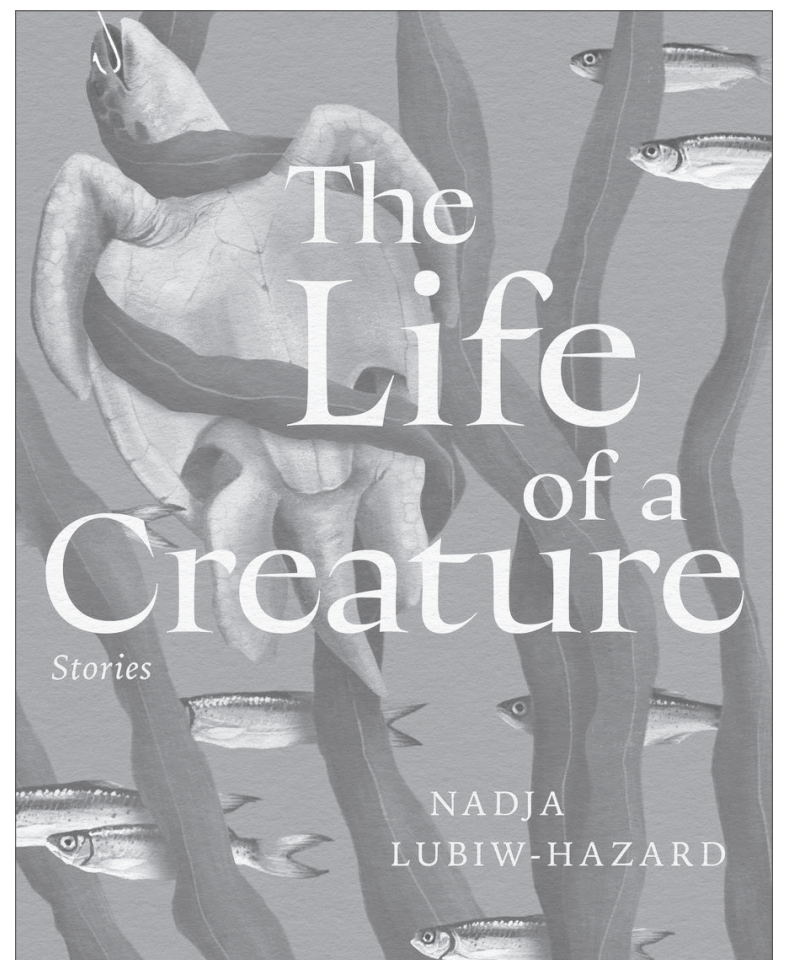
As a student of science, I appreciate the scientifically detailed language, which aligns with the fact that Hazard worked as a veterinarian for over a decade. With well-fleshed-out visuals that tend to snap the reader into a scene, her prose reads as scientific in nature yet

still crawls with imagination. It's a beautiful blend of art and science.

While I found much joy in the style and rapid pacing of the collection, I could also understand it being a drawback for certain readers. The storylines are quite short, and some were less memorable than others, although I do believe that each was written with pure respect and care for the subject matter, so even the weaker narrations didn't push me away from finishing this collection.

By touching on lingering childhood trauma, the ache of motherhood, and the inevitability of death, Hazard can reimagine our collective existence as one that breathes with the earth. We inhale the land and our generational trauma, then exhale this existence onto other living beings. But, as the plants around us fix the carbon dioxide we spew out, we too must give back to the land that nourishes us. Why not attempt to make it a little better for everything else?

With *The Life of a Creature*, Hazard opens the door for this conversation to begin.



# Pride in A look back at Victoria

Story by Ashley H  
Graphic by Marian Restrep

Every year, in the month of June, millions of people from around the world come together to celebrate Pride and honour the ongoing liberation of the 2SLGBTQ+ community. In Victoria, this will mark the 33rd annual celebration, complete with a community dog walk, a baseball game, and, of course, a parade. But the origins of Pride in Victoria actually date back quite a bit further than this. So, wash out that perm, throw on your favourite power suit, and let's head back to 1981, when Pierre Trudeau was serving his second term as Prime Minister of Canada, and the radio wouldn't stop cycling between Air Supply, Neil Diamond, and Rick Springfield.

By this point, homosexuality had been decriminalized in Canada for well over a decade. In fact, the very amendment responsible for this change was passed in the House of Commons just before the Stonewall Riots in New York City. Don't know what the Stonewall Riots are? Let's go back a little bit further.

On a midsummer evening in 1969, police raided the Stonewall Inn in Greenwich Village, a well-known social space amongst members of the 2SLGBTQ+ community. Now, this wasn't anything out of the ordinary. In fact, at the time, in every state other than Illinois, bars and restaurants ran the risk of being shut down if they were to knowingly serve gay patrons or, God forbid, employ gay workers. So, how did they manage?

Well, for starters, the bar itself was owned by Tony Lauria, a young member of the Genovese Family, one of the Five Families of the American Mafia, who dominated organized crime in and around New York City. Still do, in fact.

Interestingly enough, throughout the '60s, the majority of gay bars in Greenwich Village were owned and operated by the Genovese Family. Now, were they doing this to create positive social change? Not exactly. The truth of the matter is that the gay community was an untapped goldmine in those days, and while most establishments refused to serve them, the Genovese Family saw a mutually beneficial opportunity and took it, with Lauria even making regular payments to New York's Sixth Precinct to look the other way. Yes, it's true, monetary persuasion was a pretty big thing in the '60s. And the '70s, and the '80s, and the '90s, and, well, you get it. But we'll circle back to this.

So, that night in 1969, inside the Stonewall Inn, folks were dancing, mingling, and drinking when the NYPD suddenly stormed in. It was a Friday night at peak hours, and, unusually, the business hadn't received any warning prior to the raid. Patrons were caught dancing and flirting with members of the same sex, with some of them even crossdressing. The police, of course, responded with violence. Only, this time, the patrons fought back, and a riot ensued.

This was by no means the first instance of 2SLGBTQ+ individuals defending themselves against brutality and persecution, but it was a turning point. Exactly one year later, on June 28, 1970, the Christopher Street Liberation Day Committee held the first Pride March in Greenwich Village, commemorating the Stonewall Riots while also kicking off the city's first-ever Pride Week. Los Angeles and San Francisco followed suit, as did Canada, Australia, Germany, France, and others.

Now let's head back to 1981, when Victoria held its first-ever Pride Week. By all accounts, it was a pretty low-key affair, especially considering the mayor at the time had refused to even recognize it, claiming it was too "inappropriate." But even still, the week had been full of community events, and ended on June 28 with the Stonewall Tea Dance.

The following year, Victoria saw its second Pride Week, but the celebrations were halted shortly thereafter due to concern over the AIDS epidemic. With extremely high mortality rates, and an effective treatment not being discovered until 1987, the death toll continued to rise. With each day that passed, more and more gay men were refused medical care due to extreme levels of ignorance surrounding the disease, prompting a great number of lesbians to step up and fill those roles.

Working closely with blood banks to ensure that their blood went straight to AIDS patients, these women managed to fill critical shortages when gay men were disallowed from donating blood themselves. In addition, they regularly assumed the role of grief counsellors and would offer companionship to those in hospice as they were dying.

This is why the 2SLGBTQ+ acronym looks the way it does. "Lesbian" is before "gay" as a means of paying tribute to the love, leadership, and support they gave to their community throughout the AIDS epidemic.

Nearly a decade later, as things started settling down, Victoria resumed its Pride celebrations in 1991 with a picnic in Beacon Hill Park, and despite the two Pride Weeks held in the early 1980s, many consider this to be the

true beginning of Pride in Victoria. Roughly 200 people and before they knew it, it had become a tradition.

Not only that, but this humble event even managed 1994, when hundreds of people took to the streets—or, rather, the sidewalk? Well, simply put, they just wanted visibility. Why the sidewalk? Well, simply put, they just wanted to be seen.

Even still, they made the most of it, marching from City Hall to the waterfront. The display was actually fairly well received, prompting local businesses to offer discounts to drag queens put on a show.

And three decades later, here we are. What started as a small gathering has since grown into a full-scale event attracting nearly 100,000 people.

Now, it's important to mention the work of the Victoria Pride Society, which provides support for the city's 2SLGBTQ+ community and works to make the city a better place to live for everyone. Established in 1991, the society organizes the Pride Parade, Pride Festival, and a number of other events throughout the year.

So, Pride has always been a complicated subject, right? It's about visibility, acceptance, and promote self-expression. Sounds terrible, I know.

I think it's fair to say that some things have gotten better in recent years, a wide range of identities have been rightfully recognized, goes, everyone has different views and opinions on the way to the same community, because, despite our commonalities, finding that degree of separation has become not just a challenge, but a necessity.

With the origins of Pride largely stemming from police brutality against gender non-conforming, and racialized individuals—many of whom were in the mouths when they notice a visible police presence at the scene.

Victoria Pride Society has noted this and aims to hire police officers who are trained to handle police presence to an absolute minimum. Additionally, within the Canadian Armed Forces, officers will not be permitted to march in the parade.

While this feels like a step in the right direction, it's not perfect. We still feel a little bit differently about it. Honestly, it's political, having begun as a protest against the military's presence in these circumstances, it can be hard to figure out where we're going.

My take is that as long as morality—a markedly undervalued concept in our society—legality, we're probably always going to be at odds to some degree. We're always going to take issue with those who don't fit their own mold. We have everything else in common. And I think that's part of why we keep showing kindness to others. Especially in today's world.

Canada has come a long way and, in 2016, solidified a national stance by recognizing the Pride flag and raising it on Parliament Hill. The United States has yet to match this endorsement, and, honestly, that's just one more reason why we keep showing up.

It's not enough to boast about social activism if there's no real change. We can't police intention, and there is value in visibility, but if we're always showing up, as it so often does, then where do we go from there?

The Mafia wasn't pioneering gay bars so people could be seen. They were pioneering gay bars because they wanted to take control. They less succeeded in doing. It just so happens that, in the process, they paved the way for some real, positive social change.

Now, in today's day and age, we have an endless onslaught of visibility.

# the city 's history with Pride

agel, features writer  
o Galindo, contributing writer

gathered around for some barbecue and great company, to pave the way for the city's first-ever Pride Parade in either, the sidewalks—to celebrate gay pride and demand couldn't get the right permit. City Hall to the Parliament Buildings. And, to their surprise, local shopkeepers to line the streets and cheer as a handful of a couple of hundred people marching down a sidewalk of 70,000 people.

the Victoria Pride Society, a non-profit organization that community while mitigating oppression and making the finished in 2005, they're also responsible for organizing the events that we'll talk about later. But first, I'd like to reflect on what I mean, the whole point is to build community, confidence. Just walk with me for a moment. After, but there's still so much we need to be cognizant of. In fully recognized, although not all of them stand alike. As it they think the world should work, even those belonging to it, no two people are exactly the same. However, in light of this, it's noticeably more difficult.

the brutality against the gay community—specifically queer, any parade-goers have been left with a sour taste in their mouths. Some have even taken to boycotting altogether. As many traffic personnel as possible so as to keep that parade on schedule while this year's parade will feature participants from the parade in a military formation or carry weapons of any kind.

tion, there's no doubt in my mind that everyone's going to be. I think that's to be expected because, at its core, Pride is about the criminalization of 2SLGBTQ+ individuals. And the lines cross and where lines end.

decided concept—is lumped under the same umbrella as to some degree. And why is that? Well, because people are not a perfect image of the perfect person, even if you seem to be. It's the reason why Pride is so important. It's good practice, it's a

sharp legislative contrast to the United States by federally. Now, despite being the birthplace of modern Pride, the honestly, I wouldn't expect it to any time soon. But, hey,

it's nothing to back up the things that you say. Of course, but if that visibility gets revoked at the end of the month,

could think of them as some far-left, grassroots operation. to turn a profit and solidify their control, which they more or less process, they helped to liberate an entire group of people around the world. So it kind of balances out, doesn't it? The thought of predatory corporations that fill their storefronts

with colourful imagery and half-baked slogans— but only for the month of June, of course—all the while actively engaging in unethical business practices, as if the Pride movement wasn't built on a desire for fair treatment and equality for all (that would just be silly).

But, of course, like clockwork, these companies band together and parade themselves around like they're some progressive, politically conscious entity that you should be putting your trust in, without actually giving you any real reason to trust them. And this is a pretty calculated move on their part.

You see, if every company says the same thing at the same time, then the backlash is naturally minimal. So, that's what they do. They increase shareholder value while still retaining their usual clientele, and by the end of the month, they get to write off a huge success. It's the classic Pride Month profit pit. But what about the rest of the year?

Well, the honest answer is that to risk a portion of your customer base by saying something that might be disagreeable is far too frightening a prospect for these corporations to even try. And why would they?

In circumstances like this, consistency is key. Because if these issues truly mattered to them the way they say they do, then they should be spotlighted all year, not just for one month.

Now, I'm not saying you shouldn't buy that cute new sweater just because it's June and somewhere some billionaire is making a profit off it. That's true all the time! (Just maybe check the label to make sure you're not paying for plastic.) What I am saying is that it's important to remember that these corporations don't value you or the community that you belong to. They care about the numbers. And you are so much more than a number.

**F**or this reason, I think it's a great idea to support your local businesses and charities instead. For example, The Coda just hosted a Queer Line Dancing night near the end of May, and Capital Ballroom is hosting a Pride Beach Party on Saturday, June 20. Oh, what's that? You're hoping for something a little bit smaller? Well, Paul Phillips Hall in Fernwood is hosting its Pride Eve Dance Party on Friday, June 19. Trust me, it's a pretty quaint venue.

Saanich will be hosting its fifth annual Pride in the Park on Wednesday, June 17, so if you'd rather spend some time outdoors, there are options for you, too. In fact, there are a bunch of great Facebook groups, including Queer Outdoors, Queer Exchange Vancouver Island, and Creating Connections Victoria, to help you find your way.

Now, remember those Pride Society events I mentioned earlier? Let's dive into those a little bit more. On Wednesday, July 1, Vic West Park will host the Memorial Drag Ball Game, where drag queens and drag kings compete in a friendly game of good old-fashioned baseball. This event dates back to the mid '90s, when a group of friends—many of whom were drag performers—got together for a game of baseball in hopes that, even just for a few hours, they could forget about the hardships of their daily lives and just have fun. And it's been a tradition ever since. Each year, more and more people show up, set aside their differences, and express themselves (rather theatrically, might I add).

Then, on Saturday, July 4, the Victoria Conference Centre will host Pride in the Word, a literary event showcasing 2SLGBTQ+ writers, authors, and speakers. And, quite frankly, if you've made it this far, you're probably someone who enjoys reading. So, who knows? This might be right up your alley.

And, of course, the Big Gay Dog Walk will take place in Banfield Park on Wednesday, July 8. This event, which is a regular fan favourite, brings the community together to celebrate diversity and connection, and to vote in a bright, bashful dog costume contest. What more could you want?

On Sunday, July 12, the Pride Parade will march through downtown, followed by the Festival in the Park the same day in MacDonald Park, complete with activities, food, drinks (including a sober bar), and more than 100 local vendors for you to scope out.

Now, if you find yourself on campus with a little bit of time to spare, you can also check out the Pride Collective, a student-led organization that strives to cultivate a safe and welcoming environment for 2SLGBTQ+ students and their allies. In fact, if you're on the Lansdowne Campus, you can even visit the Pride Lounge, located in room 103 of the Richmond House. It's a great community space that's open to everyone, and the only requirement is that you be respectful and considerate. Easy!

Now, before you run off to enjoy one of the many events we just chatted about, I want to leave you with this. Pageantry should always come second to progress, and as we move through the month of June, it's important to pay attention to who is actually making that progress.

After all, Pride didn't begin as a parade—it began as a riot.

stage

## *Kinky Boots* treads the boards at the Royal Theatre

“This cast has been such a gift because I’m just getting to soak up all the knowledge that is surrounding me, because lots of our cast members have been on several tours. It’s been a great learning process.”

DARGAN COLE  
KINKY BOOTS

NIK OVSTAAS  
STUDENT EDITOR

The instances are few and far between that Victoria is favoured over Vancouver for touring Broadway productions, with it usually falling to our local theatre troupes to put on a local reproduction of the material. However, with *Kinky Boots*, local theatre company Broadway in Victoria have managed to land a big one. This fun-filled musical is based on the 2005 film of the same name in which Chiwetel Ejiofor played the towering drag queen Lola. The source material was then reworked by none other than the gravel-voiced Harvey Fierstein (remember how much he loved a good musical number in *Mrs. Doubtfire*?) and had its music and lyrics penned by the inimitable Cyndi Lauper, whose song “Girls Just Want to Have Fun” has been a mainstay of drag queens for decades.

“*Kinky Boots* is a story for everyone,” says actor Dargan Cole. “It’s about this guy named Charlie,

whose family owns a shoe factory, and basically Charlie’s dad ends up passing away, and so it is his responsibility to upkeep and run the shoe factory and, unfortunately, things don’t start going so smoothly, and he’s in a bit of a pinch. To save the factory from closure... he meets this drag queen named Lola, who, basically, is in need of help of trying to [find] a shoe that can uphold him. The two form a relationship and they work together to solve each other’s problems, and they sort of realize that they’re not so different from each other, and it’s just really a really heartwarming story, and it’s quite a ride.”

The cast is led by New York City drag queen Scarlett D. Von’Du in the role of Lola, the formidable drag queen who’s here to save the day. Playing opposite her is Broadway alumnus Noah Silverman as factory owner Charlie Price; Silverman is known for his turn in *The Book of Mormon*. While the cast does boast some bigger talent such as these, it’s

also a launch pad, a sort of incubator for theatrical newcomers like Cole who have proven their merit, and now just need to build their name.

“It is unbelievable, actually,” says Cole. “I come to work every day and I’m just stunned by the level of talent, [as well as] just the level of kindness. It’s my first tour. This cast has been such a gift because I’m just getting to soak up all the knowledge that is surrounding me, because lots of our cast members have been on several tours. It’s been a great learning process.”

On top of being, by all accounts, a rollicking good time at the theatre full of uplifting songs and acrobatic choreography, *Kinky Boots* is also a timely message of acceptance and understanding.

“I think it’s really important, especially during 2026,” says Cole. “You know, the story has been being told for many years now. It was on Broadway for quite a time, it’s been touring for quite a time, and the fact that it’s still relevant just means that it needs to keep happening. So that’s what we’re doing, and it is a joy to help change people’s minds. As it says in the finale, ‘You change the world when you change your mind,’ and I really do believe that, and I am really proud to say that to everyone now, on stage.”

*Kinky Boots*  
Various times, Tuesday July 7  
to Sunday, July 12  
\$78.25 and up, Royal Theatre  
rmts.bc.ca



MATTHEW MURPHY

*Kinky Boots* runs from July 7 to July 12 at the Royal Theatre.

review

## Brahms’ *Requiem* decent but underwhelming performance



JON MARK

The Victoria Choral Society performed Brahms’ *Requiem* on Sunday, May 24.

LANE CHEVRIER  
CONTRIBUTING WRITER

A requiem is a religious ceremony or song composed to honour the deceased. In 1866, when legendary composer Johannes Brahms was 33, he started seriously writing *Ein Deutsches Requiem*, which he intended to write not as an expression of mourning, but a requiem for the living, to provide comfort.

On Sunday, May 24, the Victoria Choral Society (VCS) presented *Renewal*, a performance of Brahms’ *Requiem*, as well as *Marble of the West*, a modern piece composed by Iman Habibi, conducted by VCS artistic director Brian Wismath and featuring the soloist talents of soprano Jennifer Turner and baritone Nathan McDonald.

As a professional production,

*Renewal* was competently arranged, conducted, and performed, showcasing the talents of about 50 orchestral artists and around 140 choral performers, and creating a stirring auditory landscape in UVic’s Farquhar Auditorium.

However, I found that I enjoyed this show less than others I’ve seen from VCS, and the reason has to do, in part, with its scale. For me,

Victoria Choral Society did not exactly do a poor job in its performance of *Renewal*, which could be considered objectively decent, but try as I might, I could not lose myself in the magic that I so often cherish about live music.

the most compelling part about live music is observing the musicians, and discerning how their performances come together to create the music on offer. As listeners, we’re used to a piece of music existing as a whole, without the opportunity to see the magic unfold before us.

Live music gives people an opportunity to disassemble the score as they’re listening to it, identifying individual instruments or voices from the musicians and bearing witness to the expression of talent and skill in real time. In *Renewal*, this concept was adeptly illustrated by the solo performances of Turner and McDonald, whose striking voices rang clear and powerful throughout the space, and, for me, were the highlight of the afternoon.

Yet when it comes to productions that employ an army of choral performers, individual sounds and voices become indiscernible, and

what we are left with is a heavy wall of sound leaning upon the audience. In sublime cases, the vocal control of dozens or even hundreds of choral members can harmonize in a way where the whole is greater than the sum of its parts, eliciting the sort of visceral awe that sends a shiver down the spine, but this is a difficult task. If done poorly, it results in an aggregation of voices that takes on the characteristics of a crowd of people all talking at once, rather than exquisite vocal choreography.

Victoria Choral Society did not exactly do a poor job in its performance of *Renewal*, which could be considered objectively decent, but try as I might, I could not lose myself in the magic that I so often cherish about live music. The performance didn’t come together as I had hoped, and I found myself leaving disappointed. Perhaps *Renewal* was a requiem of stronger performances of the past.

## music

## Shari Ulrich reflects on a changing industry

CHLOE UNGER  
CONTRIBUTING WRITER

Bowen Island-based folk singer Shari Ulrich has had a decades-long career in music, acting, and television. Born in California, the two-time Juno Awards winner moved to Canada with her family in 1969 at 18, following the Kent State shootings and growing unrest surrounding the Vietnam War. Ulrich attributes the experiences of these turbulent times of protest with shaping both her artistic identity and her relationship with music. She remembers the energy that surrounded the live performances at the start of her career, and the learnings that came with it.

"I wasn't an artist when I came here [Canada]. I didn't know music was going to be what I did," says Ulrich, who is performing at this year's Victoria Folk Music Festival alongside Chantal Kreviazuk, The Sadies, The Deep Dark Woods, Barney Bentall, and others. "I'm not the best musician in the world... but I had this epiphany at some point that I just had to take myself on stage."

A multi-instrumentalist singer/songwriter, Ulrich describes her craft as a weaving of her gathered life experience and her artistic growth. She says that she has the need to constantly rediscover both herself and her voice.

"I still didn't know who I was," she says. "I was still really young, and I didn't have my own music yet, so I intertwined life and songwriting."

Looking back on her five decades of career in television hosting, acting, composing, as well as her music, Ulrich says that each creative

"It probably helped that I got dropped by the record label because I realized I couldn't base whether or not I continued being a singer/songwriter on whether or not I could make a record label enough money."

SHARI ULRICH  
MUSICIAN

path grew from the same artistic foundation.

"All these things came out of music," she says. "Always serve music first, not your success... [Have] confidence in yourself to get there. I'm in a position where I'm so established in a grassroots kind of way that I know I can keep doing this... At least we can affect those people in front of us."

Ulrich says that rejection and uncertainty are not just unavoidable but are defining characteristics of the entertainment industry and working in the arts. She says that she had to rebuild her career after her first record deal collapsed, allowing her to refocus her music and career path.

"It probably helped that I got dropped by the record label because I realized I couldn't base whether or not I continued being a singer/songwriter on whether or not I could make a record label enough money," she says. "I knew the audience was there, so I had to go grassroots."

Ulrich says that vulnerability—especially while performing live—was essential to her becoming the artist she is today. That vulnerability

has given her the confidence and self-worth necessary to navigate the competitive entertainment industry and empowered her to remain true to her artistic vision. For Ulrich, authenticity matters more than perfection.

"I play with people who are way better than me sometimes, and I feel good about my songwriting... because I write from that very authentic place," she says. "If things went wrong during a performance... I would bring humour into it, and then it became people's favourite parts of the night. I think it's partly because I take my ego out of it, and I feel so honoured to be able to make it, create it, and perform it. And it really isn't about me."

Ulrich sees social media changing expectations for young artists, creating pressure to constantly remain visible online.

"There's a lot of pressure to be a content creator, and I don't want to do it... As the demand is more, I do less, and I'm so grateful my daughter and I didn't grow up on screens, so I really support the non-linear."

Ulrich says art and music are universal forms of human connec-



PINK MONKEY STUDIOS

Shari Ulrich is playing at this year's Victoria Folk Music Festival in July.

tion. She emphasizes that those same differences can help to bring people of all walks together.

"Your uniqueness," she says, "is your superpower."

Victoria Folk Music Festival  
Saturday, July 4  
\$89, Royal Athletic Park  
vicfolkfest.com

## review

## Mortal Kombat II combines fatalities and forgettability

LANE CHEVRIER  
CONTRIBUTING WRITER

In 1992, the world was blessed with *Mortal Kombat* on the Sega Genesis and Super Nintendo systems. At the time, this hyper-violent beat-'em-up played into growing fears of the burgeoning video-game industry, which was considered the means by which children would become shiftless degenerates and serial killers. This was on every news station and was the talk of every church group, feeding into the Satanic Panic of the time. In fact, the controversy surrounding *Mortal Kombat* is what led to the ESRB rating system.

*Mortal Kombat II* is the sequel to the 2021 reboot of the '90s duology. The story behind every *Mortal Kombat* game and movie is more or less identical: reality is split into multiple realms, including Earthrealm, where humans live, and Outworld, which is a dark magical realm ruled by tyrannical despots such as Shao Kahn who seek to dominate Earthrealm. The *Mortal Kombat* tournament is a series of one-on-one battles between special-

ly selected champions. If Outworld wins, it consumes Earthrealm. If Earth wins, it lives to fight another day, safe for the time being.

The format of the games is simple: two characters fight on a side-scrolling screen against a simple backdrop of a memorable location, like a spike pit or an acid pool. The two warriors fight to the death, often "finishing" their opponents using dramatic, gory "fatalities."

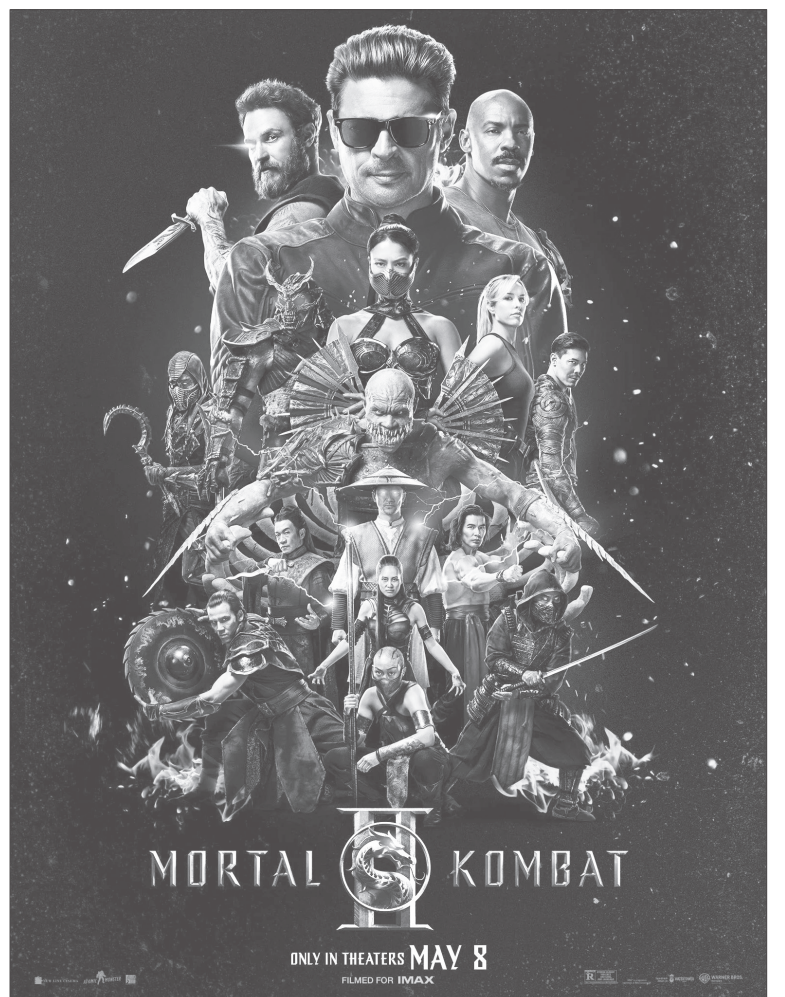
The problem when it comes to adapting a film to such a simple premise is that there is very little story to work with. The *Mortal Kombat* movies are entirely based on fan service. Each of the films revolve around selecting warriors, overcoming evil, and having badass fights. The only people who watch them are the players, dying to see their favourite characters, moves, quotes, and locations represented in creative and flashy ways.

However, there is an uncomfortable tension within the film. It appears to both take itself too seriously and not seriously enough. On one hand, it is trying to be a proper

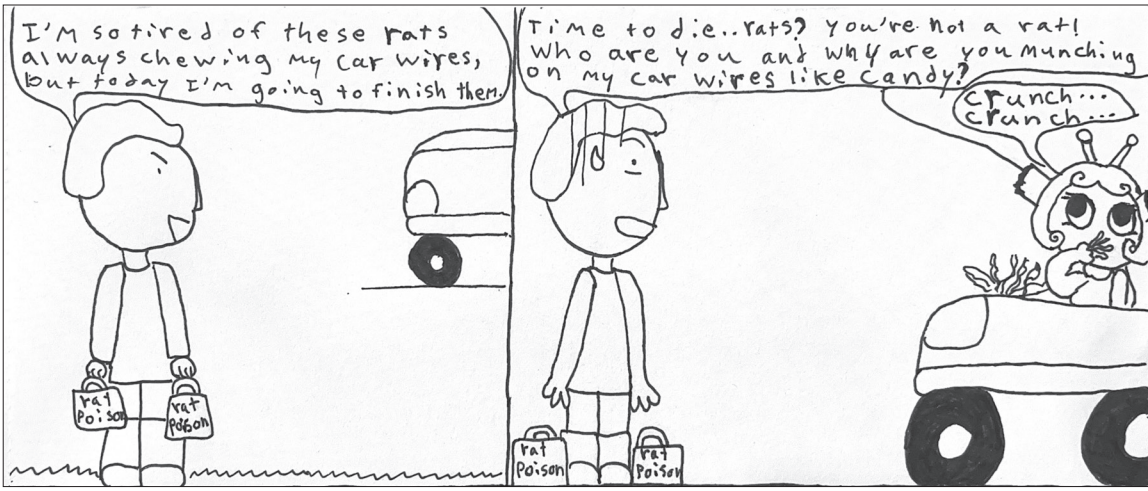
drama with actors who are doing their best to evoke an emotional reaction. On the other hand, it's all campy and ridiculous. Nobody will ever care about a handful of faces that appear one moment and die the next, despite the Herculean efforts of the orchestral soundtrack to get the viewer invested.

The best part of the film was a two-minute demo reel of washed-up Hollywood star Johnny Cage, played by Karl Urban. It was produced and filmed to resemble action movies of the '90s, with silly acting, choreography, and dialogue. The filmmakers did such an excellent job satirizing their very inspiration that I can't help but wonder why they didn't lean further into this throughout the film.

If *Mortal Kombat II* committed to embodying the spirit of its predecessor, doing away with any pretence of a serious emotional drama and instead embellishing the absurdity of the project, this would be a decently enjoyable film. Instead, it's nothing more than mildly entertaining but thoroughly mediocre trash that will soon be forgotten.



Evie the Alien - Jazmyn Hodges



Wild World of Wendland - Huxley Wendland



word search



Want to learn about the local history of Pride Month? Read feature writer Ashley Hagel's story on page 6, then find the words in the story to the right above.

Boycotting  
Stonewall  
Kindness  
Pioneering  
Progress

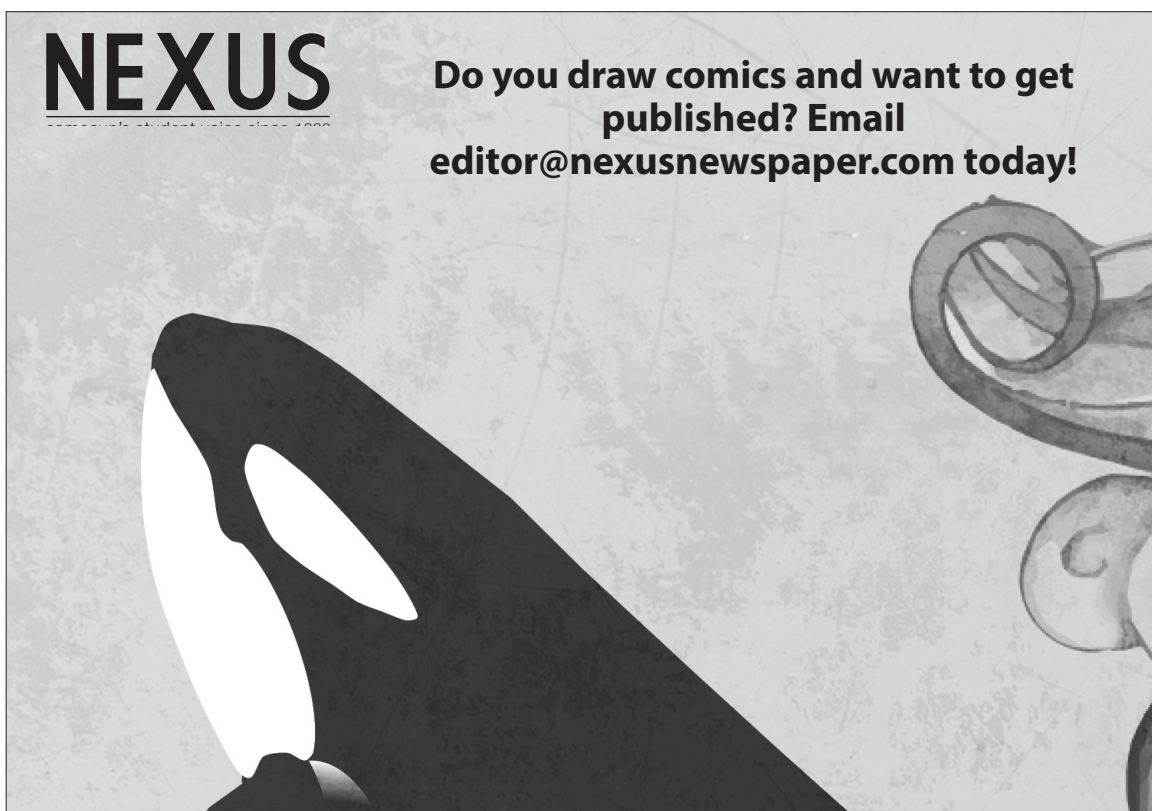
Parade  
Equality  
Pride  
Mafia  
Riots

Telescopic Penguins - Michael Erwin



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 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.



Trillium's Recipes

by Trillium McNabb

## Peach cobbler: an easy-to-make sweet summer treat

**Ingredients:**

- 10-12 large whole peaches
- 1/4 cup brown sugar
- 2 cups white sugar
- 4 cups all-purpose flour
- 2 cups quick oats
- 1 tsp cinnamon
- 2 tbsp vanilla extract
- 1 cup margarine

As the days get longer and hotter, fruits like peaches start coming into season. Here's a vegetarian recipe for a sweet summer treat that's easy to make. First, preheat your oven to 350 F. Peel and remove the pits of your peaches. Then, slice your peaches into chunks that are about 5 millimetres thick. Be careful when cutting the peaches; they're going to be slippery.

Line your baking tin with parchment paper and sprinkle about 1/4 cup of brown sugar on the bottom. Gently lay your peach slices on top and evenly across the brown sugar. Let your peaches bake for about 30

to 50 minutes. The peaches should be very soft, with a syrupy bottom. Take the peaches out of the oven for the crumble.

For the crumble topping, grab a medium-sized bowl. Measure out the 4 cups of flour, 2 cups of quick oats, 2 cups of white sugar, 1 tsp of cinnamon and put it all in the bowl. Give the dry ingredients a gentle mix. Measure out 1 cup of margarine and put in a microwave-safe bowl. Melt the margarine at 30-second intervals until completely melted.

Carefully pour the melted margarine into the dry ingredients in parts, mixing the crumble together with a fork. Then pour in 2 tbsp of vanilla, mixing in between each addition. The crumble should have a sandy texture with larger clumps about the size of a bean; it should keep its shape when squeezed in your palm.

Increase the oven temperature

to 375 F. Drizzle the crumble evenly on top of the peaches, making sure to get the corners. Place the peach cobbler in the oven for about an hour or until the top is golden brown. Let the cobbler cool for at least 30 minutes before serving, then enjoy.

The easiest way to peel peaches is to make a single shallow cut on the skin. Then place the peaches in a pot of boiling water for 30 to 60 seconds. Remove the peaches from the boiling water then place them in an ice-cold bath. The skin then should slough off easily.

You can also use canned peaches for this recipe, but make sure to thoroughly drain or pat the peaches dry. When baking, the brown sugar is going to pull out a lot of moisture from the peaches—draining or patting the peaches dry will help prevent a soggy crumble.

When placing the crumble on top of the peaches don't compact it. If you compact the crumble it will



PHOTOS BY TRILLIUM MCNABB/NEXUS

Fruits like peaches are coming into season; here's a delicious recipe for them. prevent the steam from the fruits syrup rise and spill around the edges to evaporate, which will make the onto the crumble, making it soggy.

## Message from your student board

### CCSS and student advocacy: what you should know

Most students know that the Camosun College Student Society (CCSS) is responsible for hosting events and leading initiatives on campus. What students need to know, however, is CCSS' role in federal advocacy in Canada. Through its partner organizations, CCSS sends student leaders to represent student voices across Canada. Our student leaders act as the voice for students, advocating for their needs and rights in issues such as affordability, funding cuts, and course availability.

While students take their summer break, the CCSS is busy preparing for upcoming government conferences. One example is the upcoming Advocacy Week Conference in November, hosted by our partner the Canadian Alliance of Student Associations (CASA). Throughout the summer, our student leaders are sent to conferences to be trained in skills such as government relations, policy development, and media relations. This training ensures that our leaders are successful in student advocacy during meetings with elected government officials.

Student advocacy directly connects to the federal political environment. Student societies, like CCSS, have first-hand experience of the struggles that students face. We provide valuable insight of our needs to our political leaders. This is how CCSS influences policy-making in Canada.



In May, CCSS joined forces with roughly 70 organizations across Canada to send a letter to prime minister Mark Carney. This letter addresses the upcoming plan to end National Pharmacare. National Pharmacare is a federal

program that covers the costs of specific prescriptions, like diabetes and contraception medication.

Our women's director, Madison Huynh, took initiative to join the Pharmacare fight. In her words, "students are already stretched thin by the rising cost of living. Expanding access to essential medication through a National Pharmacare plan means fewer students will have to make impossible choices between their health, rent, groceries, or tuition. Now it's time for the federal government to keep its promises and continue building a better Canada."

In the past, the CCSS has been involved in many successful campaigns. One of our biggest wins was being part of the campaign that helped influence the decision to eliminate provincial and federal interest on student loans. Our track record of successes proves that our student advocacy makes a real difference.

While the CCSS continues to make Camosun an enjoyable experience for its students, larger actions are always ongoing in the background. Camosun students should know of the important role that the CCSS plays in student advocacy, ranging from our campuses to our federal government.

Emma Jones  
CCSS external executive

## NEXUS

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