

STATE OF THE ARTS



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NEXUS

camosun's student voice since 1990

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OVERHEARD AT NEXUS: "Oh, I've got a story about Hickory Sticks."

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editor's letter

Convocation considerations

Well, if you're anything like me, this has been a strange and almost spooky time.

I had the privilege of walking across the stage at the recent convocation ceremony, and I abhorred every minute of it. Maybe I'm just an old Grinch, but really, why is that a thing? It's not held on the day we actually graduate, we don't actually receive our diplomas, and it doesn't actually get said what we are graduating from.

We're dressed up like Grimace, made to wear a ridiculous little hat, and hugged by a strange man that I panicked in front of, called "Mr. President," and bowed to. (Why did I bow?)

Having successfully graduated, I got out of there as fast as possible, and met my parents at a pub down the street. I'm 39 years old and don't really need to pal around with the school board. I just had to get out of there.

Walking across the convocation stage, as the president was coming into focus and my mind was scrambling for words, all these thoughts of my past were sifting through my mind.

When I was young, at the tender age of 14, my best friend absconded from Victoria, hitchhiked to Alberta, and then hopped a freight train to the east coast. Insanely jealous, I went after her. I flew to Montreal, hopped a bus from P.E. Trudeau to Berri-UQAM in the dead of night, and then slept next to her and her giant rottweiler Lestat behind the dumpster out back.

We woke up the next morning and got drunk with homosexual french punks down in the gay village. The next day we metroed our way out to the trainyard, slept in an old U-Haul that a kind old man gave us the use of, and were hiding in a boxcar the next morning as it raced through the flatlands, Halifax bound.

Walking across the convocation stage, as the president was coming into focus and my mind was scrambling for words, all these thoughts of my past were sifting through my mind. Who was I? This nothing little loser punk from the mean streets of Montreal is trying to sneak his way into a degree? Forget this guy. But... maybe I do deserve it?

Having said all of that, I'm actually quite proud to have graduated, and I can't wait to see what the future holds for me. It's either going to be decisively and unequivocally awful, full of horrors and nightmares beyond human comprehension, or it'll be really, really good. I guess only time will tell, and terror does have a way of speeding up the clock.

Nik Ovstaas, student editor
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open space

EACS program needs work

NOAH COSSENAS
CONTRIBUTING WRITER

All post-secondary students have opinions on their assignments, instructors, and what their program has to offer. However, given how many students in the Education Assistant and Community Support (EACS) program I've talked to are sharing the same thoughts and opinions, it might be time for a change.

I enrolled in the EACS program thinking I was going to learn how to support younger kids who are struggling in their classrooms to understand what's going on. Throughout

need to learn in a post-secondary environment. It should be something a person does because they do it outside of school, even when they aren't being graded.

My classmates who have been in the program for longer than me have mentioned that some intended learning outcomes and assignments are the exact same as those from previous terms. I'd like to see more attempts to include new insights in the lesson plans that can deepen our learning and keep the course material relevant.

In this program, there are two practicum terms, but there's not

To better prepare us as students for the field we are studying, I would propose a more hands-on learning approach while also removing the parts that are just obvious common sense.

this 10-month program, however, a lot of us never really understood what was going on.

For starters, a lot of the lesson plans looked as if they were created with AI, with very wordy and unclear instructions. I reject teachers using AI, even if it might make their job easier. (The "created by ChatGPT" watermark and open AI tool tab were the giveaways.)

My classmates and I have spoken about this, and we agree that just because something is wordy, it doesn't mean it makes sense. This further becomes an issue when our teachers insist that their lesson plans do make sense—yet when we ask for clarification, they simply echo that the instructions can be found online.

For us as students, the hardest part of the assignment becomes understanding what we are supposed to do.

Assignments and lesson plans aside, the program material itself is repetitive and seems to fall under what one would consider "common sense." Myself and many of my classmates believe that using kind language to fellow staff and students should not be something that people

much preparation for these. With only two labs before the practicum semester, this seems to be insufficient training to approach the inherent responsibility tied to working with children and those with disabilities. Because of this, we don't feel as competent as we should when entering the field. In fact, we spend more time learning about mindful breathing than we do about educating or supporting the young student body. We've learned more in three days of practicum than we did in three months of classroom instruction.

To better prepare us as students for the field we are studying, I would propose a more hands-on learning approach while also removing the parts that are just obvious common sense.

It's important to recognize that while some aspects of this program are working well, some aspects need to be worked on. Furthermore, a lot of us in this program feel like the teachers could benefit by being more receptive to student feedback. Hopefully for future students, some changes will be made to make their experience in the EACS program smoother than mine.

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!

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post-secondary

Post-secondary report reignites debates over tuition, cuts, system design

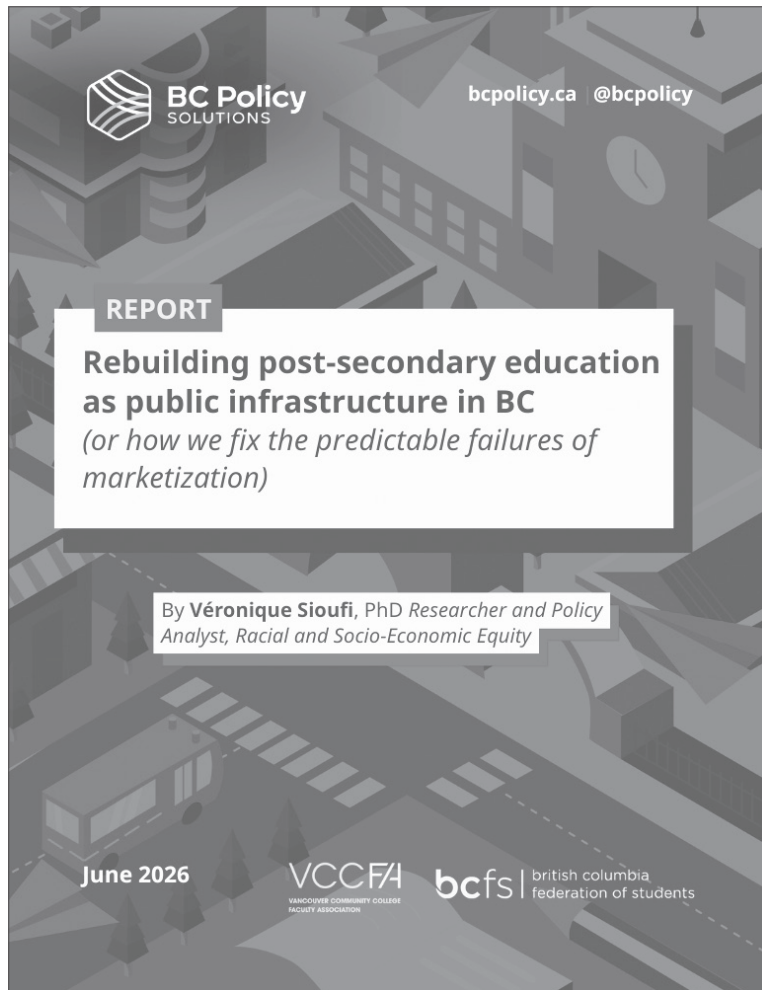


PHOTO PROVIDED

The cover of the BC Policy Solutions post-secondary report.

JASMINE WAGSTAFF

STAFF WRITER

A new report from BC Policy Solutions—a non-partisan research institute—is renewing debate over the future of post-secondary education in British Columbia, warning that chronic underfunding and rising reliance on tuition revenue are placing the sector under sustained financial pressure.

Released in June and led by policy researcher Véronique Sioufi, the report argues that decades of shifting costs from government funding to student-paid tuition have left public institutions increasingly unstable. It describes the system as one shaped by “marketization,” where operating budgets are tied

more closely to enrollment and international tuition than core public investment.

The report finds that nearly 19 of 25 public post-secondary institutions are projecting deficits, alongside widespread program reductions, staffing cuts, and service impacts across the province. It argues that these pressures are structural rather than temporary and warns that the current funding model is no longer sufficient to sustain access or quality.

Among its key recommendations is a call to restore public funding to approximately 75 percent of institutional operating costs. It also proposes stronger tuition regula-

tion, including limits on increases and a shift in how post-secondary education is treated within provincial policy, framing it as essential public infrastructure similar to health care or K–12 education.

For student advocates, the findings reflect issues they say they have been building for years across campuses.

British Columbia Federation of Students (BCFS) chairperson Debi Herrera Lira says that the financial strain outlined in the report is already visible in students’ day-to-day experiences. (The BCFS was involved in supporting the report).

“This report, it basically highlights what students have been echoing for decades, that the problems that we experience today, such as underfunding, they have been occurring since the 1990s,” says Herrera Lira. “And while the federal government accelerated the problem when they restricted international student enrollment, they actually didn’t create it.”

She adds that students are directly feeling the effects of institutional cuts through reduced course availability, longer completion timelines, and shrinking campus supports.

“We have long identified that relying on international student fees should have never been the provincial government’s replacement for public funding. So, what we’re seeing today at post-secondary institutions is that they’re experiencing devastating financial deficits, and that has caused around the province, as of today, over 210 programs to be cut, suspended, or paused, over 1,300 workers to be laid off, and 13 rural campuses to close,” says Herrera Lira. “And this is why this report is nice to see additional research supporting our asks and the advocacy work that students have done for decades.”

Herrera Lira argues that without

renewed public investment, the burden of maintaining the system continues to shift onto students through higher tuition and increased debt.

Vancouver Community College Faculty Association (VCCFA) president Frank Cosco says that faculty are seeing similar pressures inside institutions as staffing and program stability come under strain. (The VCCFA provided funding for the report.)

“[The provincial government] is essentially privatizing post-secondary, and it’s time to stop and give this whole project a rethink,” says Cosco. “They shouldn’t be putting all the weight on students and their families to get this post-secondary training, which is essential for jobs.”

Cosco says that institutions are being asked to do more with fewer resources, which he argues is affecting working conditions for staff and learning conditions for students.

“We’ve been concerned for a number of years about the provincial government not funding post-secondary properly,” he says. “We’ve been calling for a real commission, a real study of post-secondary, more like where they go around the province and invite input from community groups, students, faculty, anyone concerned about post-secondary, and really rethink how post-secondary is funded because they’re putting too much stress on tuition fees.”

The report is being released ahead of the results of Don Avison’s post-secondary review. While the government now has that review, it won’t be released to the public until later this year (a Freedom of Information request by *Nexus* to get the results of that review was declined.)

That review follows earlier work completed by Avison in 2023, which was released publicly through a Freedom of Information request in late 2025. The 2023 review included

recommendations for increased government support, although critics say many of those proposals were not fully acted on.

Faculty and student groups have raised concerns that efforts to streamline programming could lead to reduced regional access and consolidation of offerings, particularly in smaller communities. Cosco says these concerns reflect broader questions about how post-secondary education is structured across the province.

“Post-secondary should be considered a strategic infrastructure project, you know, but a human one. We’re investing in people and education and transferring knowledge and skills,” he says.

Both student and faculty representatives say demand for post-secondary education remains strong, even as institutions face financial constraints. The BC Policy Solutions report concludes that without meaningful changes to funding structures, the province risks continued erosion of program availability, service quality, and equitable access across regions. Herrera Lira warns that policy responses focused on restructuring rather than funding increases the risk of shifting costs further onto students.

“In the report, one of the recommendations is to strengthen the public sector to better support student access to education and restore public funding to at least 75 percent of institutional operating budgets, while also maintaining the two-percent cap on domestic tuition-fee increases,” she says. “For [post-secondary education] to be truly a public good, we need to make sure that education is accessible and affordable for everyone. And, you know, the provincial government needs to ease the financial burden on students and their families by increasing public funding and protecting student affordability.”

NEWS BRIEFS

Centre for Accessible Learning gets new location

Camosun College’s Centre for Accessible Learning (CAL) services have moved. As of Thursday, July 2, the CAL offices and the CAL exams are located on the second floor of the Dawson Building at Lansdowne. The CAL services at the college’s Interurban campus remain in the same locations. See camosun.ca/services/academic-supports/accessible-learning for more info on CAL.

Celebrating the class of 2026

This year, Camosun College had over 1,100 graduates crossing the stage over the course of six convocation ceremonies that took place from Tuesday, June 16 to Thursday, June 18. The ceremonies were held in the Pacific Institute

for Sport Education building at the college’s Interurban campus. The theme for this year was “Your journey, your story,” recognizing that every graduate is on their own path and that learning is a process, not a destination. Also being recognized were three winners of the Governor General’s Collegiate Bronze Medal Award: graduating students Mutya Domondon Dumrique, Gayoung Yu, and Reiya Ihara. More than 2,700 students graduated from Camosun this year.

Chargers get national innovation award

The Camosun Chargers recently received the Canadian Collegiate Athletic Association (CCAA) Innovation Award. This past season, the Chargers Athletics department began clearing out a storage unit, revealing over 35 years of old jerseys, shorts, and warm-up shirts from the

basketball, volleyball, and golf teams. Looking for a responsible way to dispose of these old clothes, they hosted a Chargers Garage Sale and a Retro Night to give the clothes new homes and new lives. Some of the remaining items were donated to Camosun’s Makerspace. These efforts prevented over 1,000 jerseys from becoming landfill waste, gaining the Chargers the CCAA nod.

Monika Bhardwaj gets Promising Alumni Award

Camosun College recently named human resources professional Monika Bhardwaj the recipient of its 2026 Promising Alumni Award because of her leadership, commitment to lifelong learning, and community service. Since graduating in 2023, Bhardwaj has advanced her career across multiple industries while earning professional

certifications and advocating for inclusion. A former student leader and recipient of the 2023 Lieutenant Governor’s Medal for Inclusion, Democracy and Reconciliation, she seeks to continue championing personal growth, empathy, and leadership in her work.

Shawn Shortill receives Distinguished Alumni Award

Camosun College has named molecular biologist Shawn Shortill its 2026 Distinguished Alumni Award recipient, recognizing his leadership and contributions to science. A Camosun Biology graduate, Shortill went on to earn degrees from the University of Victoria and the University of British Columbia before building a career in genetics, cancer research, and biotechnology. Now director of product management at local biologics development

company MindWalk Biologics, Shortill continues to support the scientific community through advocacy, mentorship, and guest lectures at Camosun.

Saanich to add amalgamation question to 2026 ballot

Saanich Council has approved adding a non-binding question to the 2026 municipal election ballot asking voters whether they support amalgamating Saanich and Victoria into a single municipality. The vote would measure public support for further study but would not create an amalgamated municipality. If a majority in both communities votes yes, newly elected councils could pursue additional financial and technical analysis with the province before any future binding referendum.

—JASMINE WAGSTAFF, STAFF WRITER AND GREG PRATT, MANAGING EDITOR

exhibit

Fine Furniture program grads showcase slow, meaningful work

JASMINE WAGSTAFF
STAFF WRITER

In a world increasingly shaped by mass production and disposable design, graduating students from Camosun College's Fine Furniture and Joinery program are pushing back with a collection of handcrafted chairs that emphasize intention in material and process.

The 10-month program culminates in *Against the Grain: An Exhibition of Handcrafted Chairs*, a public showcase featuring work from 16 graduating students. The exhibit opened with a gala event on Wednesday, June 24 at the Arts Centre at Cedar Hill in Cedar Hill Recreation Centre, where visitors can view the work, attend student presentations, and take part in awards.

Each student-designed chair reflects months of technical training in joinery, design development, and furniture construction. Program instructor Sandra Carr says the capstone project is designed to challenge students to combine precision craftsmanship with personal expression.

"It really is meant to bring together different aspects of what students have been learning from the basics of different types of materials and how they work and different joinery techniques, but very much so design, furniture history, the aesthetics of design," says Carr. "So all of that really comes together at this time of year."

This year's pieces are built primarily from locally salvaged materials, including Garry oak, maple, and

horse chestnut, supplied through the Vancouver Island Woodworkers' Guild wood-recovery program. The guild supports the program by providing at a discounted rate reclaimed wood that would otherwise go to waste, allowing students to work with materials that carry both environmental and historical significance.

"The guild basically salvages urban trees that would normally get cut up for firewood or be burned. So, they have a volunteer program of taking local Garry oak and arbutus and maple and all the trees that we know and love, if they have to come down because they're dangerous or they've been blown down in a windstorm, or, for whatever reason, diseased trees," says Carr. "The guild is basically taking those trees, milling them into lumber, and they sell the material close to cost to members and to our school, and they also donate to local high schools."

According to graduating student Larissa Piva, this year's exhibition theme, "against the grain," reflects more than just woodworking—it also speaks to broader cultural and technological pressures facing artisans today.

"It's important to me, you know, to keep this tradition alive and to go back to handmade and things that are built with more care," says Piva. "It's really important for me and for, I think, everybody here, and that's kind of why our theme is 'against the grain,' because we're kind of like against that commodification of furniture and art, and like, no, let's go back to when people cared



JASMINE WAGSTAFF/NEXUS

This year's Fine Furniture students focused on cultural and technological pressures facing today's artisans.

about what they purchased and what they made."

The exhibit includes a range of seating designs, each shaped by individual research into form, ergonomics, and historical or contemporary design influences. While chairs remain the central focus, the show also highlights the experimentation and evolution that takes place throughout the program.

"Chairs are just one of the most difficult objects to design and build because it has to interact with the human body," says Carr. "So, there's lots of functional requirements as well as all of the aesthetic

requirements, so it really tests what students have learned and allows them to put together a project that brings together lots of different aspects that they're interested in exploring more, or if they want to explore new things."

Beyond technical skill, instructors emphasize that the program is also about developing a design language and learning how to translate ideas into functional, enduring objects.

"I'm just so stoked to see all the finished chairs in the gallery because this is the first time I've ever been part of an exhibition

where you get to see the process of every single piece in the exhibition from designed start to produced, finished," says Piva. "It's just been an experience that I don't think I'll ever have again in my whole life. So I know it sounds kind of cheesy, but just seeing all of our projects together, holding space together, will be, I think, one of the greatest experiences I will ever have as an artist."

The exhibition is hosted at the Arts Centre at Cedar Hill, located at 3220 Cedar Hill Road, where it will remain on display, free to the public, until Sunday, July 19.

sports

Chargers men's basketball team welcomes new head coach



PHOTO PROVIDED

Camosun Chargers men's basketball head coach Craig Beaucamp.

KYLE WOLFE
CONTRIBUTING WRITER

Former UVic Vikes men's basketball head coach Craig Beaucamp has entered his first year as head coach with the Camosun Chargers men's basketball team. Beaucamp will arrive at Camosun after spending the past two seasons as an assistant coach with the University of the Pacific men's basketball program in California. Before that, however, he served 21 seasons as head coach at UVic. Under his

leadership the team compiled a 401-218 record, won five Canada West titles, and earned multiple U SPORTS championships—the highest level in Canadian amateur play.

Despite his extensive resume, Beaucamp says that he's most excited about the opportunity to work with a new group of athletes and face new challenges. An advantage Beaucamp brings to the role, he says, is his familiarity with the local community. Having spent time

coaching in Victoria, he already knows many of the Chargers' players through the sport community, even having already coached some of the players.

"I've known most of the players from my own cases," he says. "Just from being in Victoria for 20-plus years."

Beaucamp says that, for him, success starts with connection rather than tactics.

"The biggest thing is having relationships with the players," he says. "I think coaching is similar to parenting. Ultimately, your students know that you truly have their best [interests] in mind... and they believe that you care about them and their well-being."

He emphasizes a holistic approach that focuses on support both on and off the court.

"They're athletes, but they're also students and members of our community," he says.

This ethos resonated with Camosun Chargers fourth-year guard Jakob Neufeld, who says that Beaucamp's personal approach is partially what made him stand out during the hiring process.

"I really appreciate when coaches look out for your well-being both on and off the court, not just in basketball," says Neufeld. "One

"I think coaching is similar to parenting. Ultimately, your students know that you truly have their best [interests] in mind... and they believe that you care about them and their well-being."

CRAIG BEAUCAMP
CAMOSUN CHARGERS

of the things I looked for in his interview was the more personal approach to coaching rather than just the basketball side of it. Helping us be good people instead of just good basketball players."

Beaucamp believes that effective coaching is less about creating motivation and more about helping athletes develop qualities they already possess.

"Ultimately, you're trying to draw upon something that they already have," he says. "If you have to create that, it is tough."

The Chargers have been in a period of transition, as Beaucamp becomes the team's third head coach in three years following the departure of their previous head coach, Jake Wilmott.

"The boys were pretty sad when Jake got a new job, because we had

such a good year both on and off the court with him," says Neufeld. "The hire of Craig was best-case scenario and we got super lucky."

Despite the coaching change, Neufeld expects the team's culture and style of play to remain consistent.

"We have a system," he says. "With Craig it's a similar philosophy in terms of basketball and team culture, I think it'll carry over pretty seamlessly."

Though Beaucamp is entering a new league with a new coaching staff and new set of challenges, his reputation and experience have already inspired confidence within the program.

"We've already had one practice with him when everyone was here, and it went really well," says Neufeld.

innovation

Camosun Innovates helps preserve Indigenous traditions with robotics

NIK OVSTAAS
STUDENT EDITOR

The folks at Camosun Innovates—Camosun College’s applied research branch, located at the Interurban campus—have worked in many fields of study in the recent past, including medical technologies, marine innovations, and adaptive sporting equipment. Now, they’re delving into the area of cultural heritage preservation, with a technological twist.

Local Indigenous master carver and UVic impact chair for Indigenous art practice Carey Newman, Camosun Innovates director Richard Gale, and UVic Mechanical Engineering associate professor Keivan Ahmadi recently received a grant from the New Frontiers in Research Fund Exploration Stream. The grant—which is given to high-risk, high-reward interdisciplinary research going past traditional disciplinary boundaries—is being used to support the preservation of Indigenous carving traditions. With a robot.

“Wood grain has variable densities,” says Newman. “It has different directionalities, so it makes it more difficult to train a robot, or to program something to carve it. On any any given board of wood, you might, as a carver, put your knife down and you start to carve in one direction and it might be what we call the direction of grain, uphill or



BOTH PICTURES BY CAMOSUN COLLEGE

Local master carver and UVic impact chair for Indigenous art practice Carey Newman at work in his studio.

downhill. You might be going uphill, which means the knife is digging in, whereas if you reverse the direction of your cut you have control of how deep the knife goes, and it comes out naturally because it’s not that the grain is forcing it to dig in.”

However, when trying to explain all of this to a robot that has generally been used for less organic

materials in the past, the team had to figure out an entirely new approach.

“So if it’s carving a composite material or plastic, it’ll just use the amount of force necessary to create the chips that you’ve programmed,” says Newman, “but for it to be reactive or responsive to the conditions of the [wooden] material, the directionality of the grain, you

have to teach it to understand when the knife is digging in and [going] inside and [how] to do that, right?”

Cameras will be recording the visual aspects of what Newman and other carvers are doing during the process, while, simultaneously, the knife will be recording the pressure being applied, as well as the amount of material being carved.

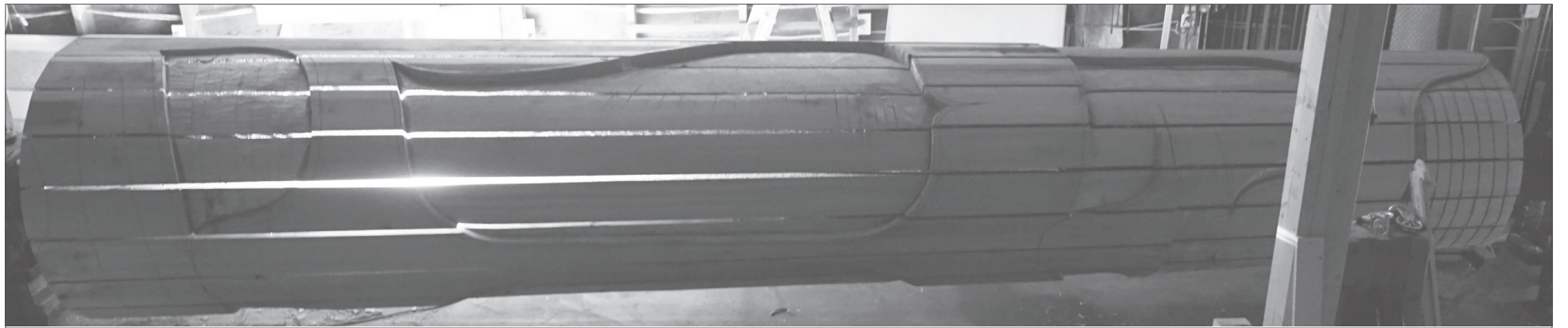
“If you’ve asked it to make a chip, and it’s not able to make the chip in the direction that it starts out, then it tries the other direction, which is kind of how we do it as carvers,” says Newman. “[In this way] we can teach a robot to sense when the blade is not doing what it’s intended to do.”

Newman says that it’s important to everyone involved in this project that this doesn’t become about replacing traditional ways of carving, and that this technology stays in the proper hands.

“One of [the ways to ensure this is done] is to... put the control of how the carving mechanism of the robot is used into the hands of community, of the First Nations community, so it’s by, essentially, through exercising data sovereignty,” says Newman. “And so, in this case, for me, it means ensuring that the ability to use a robot to carve using the data gathered from First Nations is used to benefit First Nations carvers, not to replace them.”

In this way, says Newman, it could ensure that traditional Indigenous ways of carving are held in perpetuity for future generations, and that the risk of it becoming a lost art is mitigated.

“That’s exactly how we’re positioning it,” says Newman. “When it comes to carving, the robot won’t be trained to carve; it will be trained to teach.”



opinion

Car dependency is ruining our cities

AMELIA WILDE
CONTRIBUTING WRITER

After living in the Northwest Territories for a month, I can confidently say that I’m a happy driver of my Ford F-150. I work about an hour walk away, along a dirt road with not a sidewalk in sight. Quads and side-by-sides rip around on dirt roads left and right, and the neighbours’ off-leash dog barks just aggressively enough to caution me from passing nearby. Back when I was a resident of Langford, I was not nearly this happy about my commute by car. So, what’s the difference up here?

The town I currently inhabit sits with a population of approximately 3,000, so—clearly—density and population size are key players in this discussion. With an estimated population of about 400,000 in the Greater Victoria area, transportation is in much higher demand; a small town of 3,000 usually lets you commute to work with only a

few cars in sight. As populations increase, the complexity of transportation follows suit, and municipalities must dedicate more time toward the discussion of alleviating traffic concerns. But, of course, “traffic” wasn’t always about just automobiles.

Since the post-war boom of the 1940s, suburbanites in North America have relied on cars as population density pushed them further away from city centres. This is known as “suburban sprawl,” where large plots of land are developed with lower density and less amenities in between neighbourhoods. There’s now data to show that living in suburban sprawl can be directly correlated with living a more sedentary and isolated lifestyle, since commuting takes up precious time that you could otherwise use to socialize or walk around.

As a domino effect of suburban sprawl, cities began to prioritize

car-centric designs to cater towards this wider cultural shift. This meant prioritizing multi-lane freeways and parking lots, while deprioritizing multi-modal transportation initiatives—such as bike lanes, street cars, or sidewalks. The problem with centralizing cars is that it neglects the broader picture—or, more specifically, the people who weren’t on board with cars to begin with.

One of the largest critiques of car-centric cities is the loss of accessible, convenient public transportation. Take, for example, Toronto’s subway line, which was built as a traffic-relief project for cars commuting through downtown. The city of Toronto was built around a well-developed streetcar system, but with the introduction of automobile drivers in the post-war period, streetcar traffic came under fire for taking up too much space. The subway system was then developed in 1954, although

The problem with centralizing cars is that it neglects the broader picture—or, more specifically, the people who weren’t on board with cars to begin with.

it received incredible backlash from its riders due to the poor layout and design.

When rapid transit is developed for the benefit of drivers instead of the benefit of those who will use them, it also disproportionately affects marginalized groups, who are more often socio-economically impacted and are therefore more likely to rely on public transportation options.

To circle back to my original position, I believe the point of this argu-

ment is not to outlaw cars outright. I’m incredibly grateful that I have a safer means of transportation where I’m living, and even back at home I value the freedom of my driver’s license, as it allows me to carry out a healthy work/life balance. The issue lies with municipalities being incentivized to invest in infrastructure that supports car-centric design strategies rather than equitable transportation initiatives that don’t require inhabitants spend all their savings to access.

STATE OF

HOW VICTORIA'S ARTISTIC COMMUNITIES

Story by Ashley H

Graphic by Marian Restrep

It's no secret that creative expression has been a staple of Victoria's identity for, well, what feels like forever. In fact, you probably wouldn't even bat an eye if I told you that Victoria has more artists per capita than anywhere else in the country (which, by the way, it does). On top of that, our Fringe Festival is one of the oldest on the Canadian circuit, our film and television industry generates roughly \$60 million a year, and our music industry has a GDP of more than \$500 million.

These substantial numbers have risen after being bolstered by a plan set forth by the city five years ago, meant to leverage this artistic identity into a global creative hub. The Victoria Music Strategy outlines a long-term plan to transform the city of Victoria into a destination for music and art. This plan aims to empower local artists while ensuring music becomes a part of everyday life here in the city. Sounds impressive, right? I'm not even done yet.

Earlier this year, the Chamber of Commerce Business Data Lab published a report naming Victoria the most vibrant city for the arts in all of Canada. And while this sounds like a pretty big accomplishment, I can't help raising an eyebrow at it.

In the last five years alone, we've lost countless creative hubs and music venues, including the Victoria Event Centre, Quadratic Sound, Hermann's Upstairs, and Logan's Pub. Each of these establishments occupied a key area of Victoria's vast music scene, and while some vacancies have been filled, the losses of these spaces are still felt.

For many, it had become routine to go out, grab a drink, and catch some live music with your friends. And while this is still more than possible now, it is different. With fewer venues, prices go up. And when prices go up, patronage goes down. It's a vicious cycle, one that The Little Fernwood Gallery is keenly aware of.

Little Fernwood, located in the heart of Fernwood Village, is an offshoot of the Fernwood Community and Arts Association, a non-profit that aims to facilitate connection and enhance quality of life through myriad programs and initiatives, including affordable spaces for people to play shows, hold workshops, take classes, and much more.

"The whole third-space mentality [is very important to us]," says operations coordinator Lauren Ludwig. "I think our whole board is really behind making somewhere that you can go and visit—other than your home or your work—where community can gather. And there's definitely fewer places [for that] than there used to be."

Now, to be called a third space—a location separate from the home and workplace—two boxes need to be checked. Number one: it must be accessible. Number two: it must be neutral. You can't just waltz down the aisles of a Prada store and call that a third space.

For these reasons, places like Little Fernwood can make for great third spaces. There, communities can gather, connect, and create without breaking the bank, no matter where your interests lie.

"We do a real mixture of events," says Ludwig. "We try to be a local, accessible venue for all kinds of emerging artists, workshops, musicians, and [a place for] people putting on their first show. The gallery is a lot of people's first exhibit. It's a big variety of things."

Now, of course, Fernwood, as a neighbourhood, has a well-established and highly concentrated creative identity, with The Belfry Theatre, another non-profit organization, located just a few steps away from Little Fernwood. However, while The Belfry owns its building, Little Fernwood leases from the city at a fairly reasonable rate.

"[My colleague and I] just went to this forum about how art venues can be at a real disadvantage with not owning their spaces and having to worry about the lease, and not being able to invest," says Ludwig. "Or if they do invest in infrastructure upgrades, they could be kicked out or have their prices raised."

This is a very real, very common concern for a number of venues and community hubs across the city, one that Little Fernwood has more or less been exempt from.

"We lease our building from the city, so that overhead and that insecurity, we don't have to deal with," says Ludwig. "And now that we have a very active board that has a vision for the community, we're able to keep making these improvements and feel secure and like we can offer the space. We don't have to be worried about whether we're going to stay in the space."

Unfortunately, this isn't always the case for everyone. For example, Other Guise Theatre Company just purchased their building roughly three years ago, and has already had to put it up for sale again.

"Things are looking a little uncertain in terms of the future for us," says artistic and executive

director Matthew Payne. "While we've done well last two years, we haven't raised enough to buy o

The same year the building was purchased, th

well ahead of schedule, leaving Other Guise in a
"We haven't given up trying to find the mone
can handle," Payne explains. "Because we have e
go get a loan right now, but the payments would
So, we need to find about \$750,000 right now to
that is manageable for us."

The company did receive some assistance fr
now at a standstill after exhausting all eligible gr

"The city's contributed upwards of \$300,000
structure programs, you can only go once with ea
says Payne. "So we've maxed out our public contri
be pretty challenging for us to fill with donations

In other words, they need a miracle. And whi
had successful fundraisers, Other Guise just does
truth for a number of venues in the city, because, u
not very likely to be given a lifeline, which is whe

ACI stands for Arts and Community Infrastru
prevent the closure and displacement of commun
Founded in 2024, this kind of organization has lo
with more and more venues closing their doors f
to no options (as if finding a venue wasn't hard e

"It can be really overwhelming to book space
Hannah Kozma, assistant to the operations mana
busier in just my year and a half of being here. S
making sure that we're still doing our best to ens

Booking a venue always looks different depen
But whether you're an up-and-coming band or a
a little bit difficult to find the right space in the rig
And that's what makes the ease of Little Fernwo
space enables bands—like local indie group Silver
of overplanning or blowing their budget.

"Some venues have schedules, like Little Fern
see what dates are available, which is so nice," s
places did that; it's super easy. You just go, fill ou
places, you have to email the booking person, get t
they coordinate it with you from there. That's ho

Now, assuming you don't need to book a ven
your role is in all of this. Don't worry, you don't hav
All you have to do is show up. Simple! Communi
just once in a while. Patronage keeps them (and th

"When a building is privately owned, or you're
same ethos that you carry in terms of arts and cult
to keeping spaces like this thriving," says Kozma
is just to get out there and do things."

Alright, but what if you're not interested in ar
ity centre? What if you don't want to do macram
their set? Well, first of all, have some whimsy. A
there for you.

For example, you like to eat, right? Maybe ha
'bout games? You like games? Perfect! I've got a
Glitch Bar and Games Room, originating in

"I think our whole board is really behind making somewhere that you can go and visit—other than your home or your work—where community can gather. And there's definitely fewer places [for that] than there used to be."

LAUREN LUDWIG
THE LITTLE FERNWOOD GALLERY

"We've heard from some of our neighbours that they're actually seeing an increase in patronage. It's really the perfect-case scenario for us to take advantage of."

THE ARTS

S ARE THRIVING IN CHALLENGING TIMES

agel, features writer

o Galindo, contributing writer

ell and we've raised over a million dollars in the out our investor, who helped us start the project." e company's investor had to pull out of the project financial situation it could not have anticipated. y that would help us acquire a bank loan that we quity in the building, we have enough that we can be unmanageable for us... like \$14,000 a month. help us get to a place where we can have a debt

om the local and provincial governments, but is ants.

D from different programs, but with those infra-ach project. You can't keep going year after year," tributions, and so that gap of \$750,000 is going to from the general public."

le establishments like Hermann's Jazz Club have n't have that same clientele. This has been a hard unless you're a well-established landmark, you're re the ACI Foundation comes in.

tructure, and this charitable organization aims to city spaces by restoring them and stabilizing rents. ong been needed in the city of Victoria, especially or good, leaving artists and musicians with little ough already).

s, especially because we're losing so many," says ager at Little Fernwood. "But it's gotten so much So [we're always] adapting to that busyness and ure that people can book here if they want to."

nding on who you are and what you're looking for. chart-topping musician, it's always going to be ht area, at the right time, and for the right price. od so appreciated amongst local creatives. Their ware—to practice and perform without the stress

wood, where there's a calendar, and you can just says lead singer Huckleberry Flett. "I wish more t an application, and get the time. For most other them to tell you what dates are available, and then w most places do it... It's a bit of a mixed bag."

ue anytime soon, I should probably clarify what ve to man the door or set up any sound equipment. city spaces thrive on your involvement, even if it's e arts) alive, especially when things get difficult. e leasing it from someone who might not share the ure, it adds a level of, in some cases, impossibility, a. "And I think the most important thing, always,

ay of the events being held at your local commu- e and listen to some local band stumble through nd second, there are plenty of other options out

ve a fun little beverage every now and then? How great spot for you.

Vancouver, just opened its Victoria location this

spring. Now, with an oversaturated market across the pond and a local renaissance unfolding in our restaurant and bar scene, this new addition could be just the ticket.

"It's the same anywhere in Canada, unfortunately, but in Vancouver, we're feeling the pinch really, really hard," says Glitch general manager Julien Chevallier. "We've always loved [Victoria], always loved the pace out here. And when we started looking a bit more carefully into it, we started realizing there's a niche that we could occupy here."

Chevallier says the city's response to this opening has been overwhelmingly positive. From customers to city council to the Downtown Victoria Business Association, Victoria has welcomed this retro-themed bar with open arms. And other establishments are benefiting too.

"We've heard from some of our neighbours in the bar industry that they're actually seeing an increase in sales since we opened, which is really the perfect-case scenario for us," says Chevallier. "You know, we want to add, not take away."

This outcome serves as a testament to the immense benefits of an overlapping network in the hospitality and creative arts industries: the more accessible, affordable, and safe spaces there are, the more we all benefit. The more we all show up.

Now, of course, a games room won't be appealing to everyone. Or maybe you just want a little break from all the noise. Maybe you lost at *Mario Kart* for the third time in a row and need somewhere to cool off. In any case, you won't have to look very far, because beneath this lively retro bar is a speakeasy called Pour and Famous, where every cocktail on the menu is named after a former bar that once occupied the building.

"It's kind of a serendipitous story," says Chevallier. "The room hasn't been used in like 25 years, and so a lot of the original furniture and decor is all down there. The previous tenant let the liquor licence lapse, so we had to apply for a new one, which allowed us to licence the basement."

But it doesn't end there. When applying for a new licence, they were also able to add an amendment allowing minors—accompanied by a parent or guardian—to enter the establishment until 6 pm, promoting a family-friendly environment that's very well-suited to the city.

"It's been really fun," says Chevallier. "On Saturdays and Sundays, we open at noon, so we've got kids running around and playing games while mom or dad's having a beer and a burger. It's a great vibe in here in the afternoons. And then you blink, and it's midnight, and you've got 200 people in here, and the dance floor is chaos. It's one of the many faces of this place."

Another one of those faces involves—you guessed it—live music! Come on. You didn't really think I was done with that, did you? Beginning this month, local bands will take to the stage every Friday, Saturday, and Sunday, with the hopes of eventually adding burlesque and comedy shows to the lineup here and there.

And then, as fall approaches, Thursdays will become student nights.

"Thursday seems to be the day that we've identified where there's not a whole lot to do," says Chevallier. "You know, Lucky's got Monday, Strathcona has Sunday, so we tried picking a day of the week that we're not competing too directly with anybody... So Thursday, I think, is going to be the student night going forward into the fall. Old-school hip-hop, aggressive deals. That's the plan."

Now, I don't know about you, but this is all sounding very third-spacey to me. Whether you're into games or music, or you're just there for the food, these are great places to spend some time. And it's that kind of variety that makes this city so unique.

"Having these spaces is really important because, especially for the younger generations, if they're gonna go out and drink, then they can do it in a controlled and safe environment," says Chevallier. "You know, we take the safety and security of our patrons incredibly seriously... And just remembering that we have a duty of care for everyone that comes in here."

Whether it's a bar, a coffee shop, a community theatre, or an art gallery, it's important to show up for these places. It's important to show up for yourself. There's a lot more to life than getting from point A to point B, and that middle area is where art is created.

"Show up, be a part of your community, and make spaces like this wholly and totally necessary," says Kozma. "If you're throwing workshops or you're in a band or you're doing these things that bring your community together, and you need spaces for those things, you will always find a way to make those spaces. It's difficult because the world looks crazy right now, but being as involved as you can be, I think, is the best way to keep something like this vital and alive and important."

ighbours in the bar industry that n sales since we opened, which is s. You know, we want to add, not way."

JULIEN CHEVALLIER
GLITCH BAR AND GAMES ROOM

"When a building is privately owned, or you're leasing it from someone who might not share the same ethos that you carry in terms of arts and culture, it adds a level of, in some cases, impossibility, to keeping spaces like this thriving."

HANNAH KOZMA
THE LITTLE FERNWOOD GALLERY

review

Ancient Egypt: Obsessed with Life novel success

NIK OVSTAAS
STUDENT EDITOR

Ancient Egypt has long been a staple of the exhibits that roll through the Royal BC Museum, seeming to pop up every few years. This year, true to form, you can once again dive into the world of mummies, pyramids, and ancient curses; however, the exhibit is a bit more spectacular than the ones in years gone by. Thanks to a partnership with MuseumsPartner, an Austria-based company that facilitates trades of exhibit materials all over the world, *Ancient Egypt: Obsessed with Life* is now open.

Focusing specifically on the processes and trials of the newly dead (the deserving ones, anyways), this exhibit follows the narrative of someone dying, being mummified, travelling through the underworld to be judged by the jackal-headed Anubis, and off into the Field of Reeds for the rest of time. It's not just any old dead guy, either; the exhibit follows quite precisely a very real artifact found by grave robbers in 1888 in the Necropolis of Thebes. It was then sold to E.A. Wallis Budge in Luxor, who worked under the questionable directives and auspices of the British Museum. The artifact is none other than *The Book of the Dead*, buried with a royal scribe named Hunefer roughly 3,500 years ago.

Now, there have been exhibits at Royal BC that have been a little lacklustre in the past, where it just kind of feels like you're in an office

bullpen, but instead of greige cubicles, there are old things suffering the indignity of fluorescent lighting. This is not one of those. The drama and atmosphere in this exhibit are palpable thanks to the excellent and larger-than-life decor, lighting, and soundscapes, as well as the story that unfolds while following through Hunefer's instruction manual for death.

The myriad interactive elements are also highly engaging and slightly spooky.

Among the areas to explore, there's even a "scent station," so you can sniff the various incense and balms surrounding the various rituals. This includes myrrh, which was so important to the Egyptians that many arduous journeys by ship down to the Horn of Africa were undertaken to source it. Those crafty Egyptians figured out that the tree sap resin wasn't just useful for burning in an effort to please the multitudinous gods, but was also a powerful antiseptic and could be rendered into an embalming fluid. Tricky!

Through interactive cartoon videos placed around the exhibit, you will follow one of Hunefer's children, Bebe, through the more worldly rituals of grieving, embalming, and entombment, as well as making sure that dear old dad has all the bread, beer, beer-bread, and tiny stone slaves called Ushabtii. You will learn from the erstwhile Hunefer himself that he may find need of ephemera such as these



ROYAL BC MUSEUM

Ancient Egypt: Obsessed with Life runs until January 3, 2027, at the Royal BC Museum.

when traversing the lands of the dead to have his heart weighed against a feather by the seemingly ever-present Anubis.

This is the very first time that this collection of artifacts has ever sat on the soil of the Americas. In fact, they have only left the Moes-

gaard Museum—located in Højbjerg, Denmark—for short trips around Europe and Africa. This fact imbues the whole experience with a sort of sacred feeling of discovery. Not just any old hum-drum, run-of-the-mill ancient relics, these.

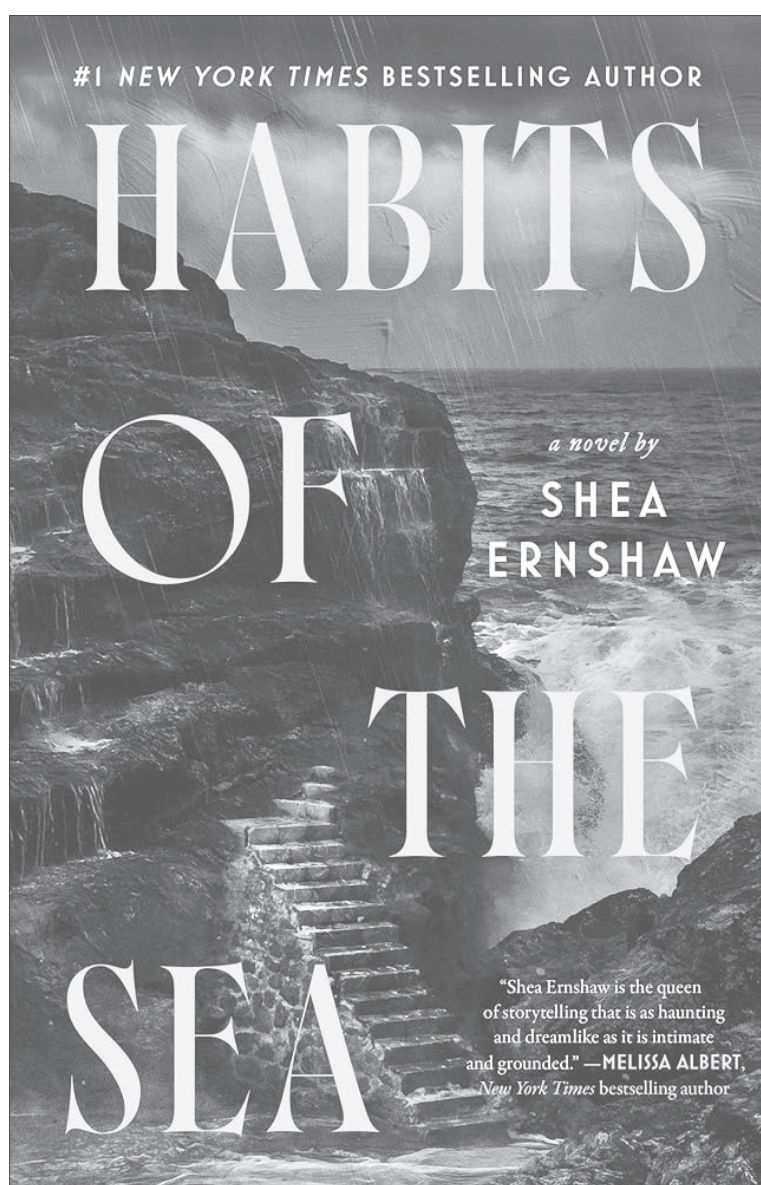
This fun and well-executed ex-

hibit, which runs until January 3, is done in such a way that it's entertaining and informative for kids as well as older folks, as long as the kids (or adults, for that matter) have some mortality salience, and no Egyptophobia.

Highly recommended.

review

Habits of the Sea beautifully written, soulful, erotic read



Habits of the Sea is a tale of loss, self-discovery, love, adventure, and an appreciation of the simple things that give life meaning.

TEAGAN SCOTT
CONTRIBUTING WRITER

Readers step out of time and into a romantic tale in *Habits of the Sea*, written by Shea Ershaw. It's the story of Eleanor Mills (called Ellie for short), a woman who's been haunted by the events of her childhood after she discovered an impossible island when she was 12 years old.

A storm roared across the Nova Scotian coast that kept Ellie awake through the night; as she laid there attempting to count the paper stars strung from her ceiling, she heard an awful scraping like a ship run aground. Fuelled by curiosity, Ellie crept out of the house and over to the cliff. The dark and lashing rain obscured her vision, but she could see a light bobbing in the distance. Without much thought for her actions, Ellie borrowed her grandmother's boat and rowed out to the mysterious dark mass, an event that would completely reshape her life.

Habits of the Sea is a tale of loss, self-discovery, love, adventure, and

an appreciation of the simple things that give life meaning. It's part magical realism, part romance, and very much a story of the soul. Ellie's character is complex and dynamic with a strong character arc as she learns to dispel the self-doubt and fear that has prevented her from listening to her own needs and wants.

Years later, the story goes, Ellie finds her thoughts still drift back to the island she stumbled onto that night—no matter how hard she tries to forget. She chides herself as foolish, a girl with too big an imagination that made up the entire event. After all, islands don't float around the sea like a wayward raft. But, a fisherman has told stories of a piece of Scotland breaking off in a storm that roamed the Atlantic, with a man that never aged and who lived in a little white house. Therapists, however, all said it was just that, a story, a folk tale for the modern age. If it was just a story, then why did it feel so real? Ellie saw the island, the little white house, and the man; she could never prove it, though. Even-

tually she let go, accepted that it was a hallucination or a bad dream, anything to move on for a normal life—or so she kept telling herself.

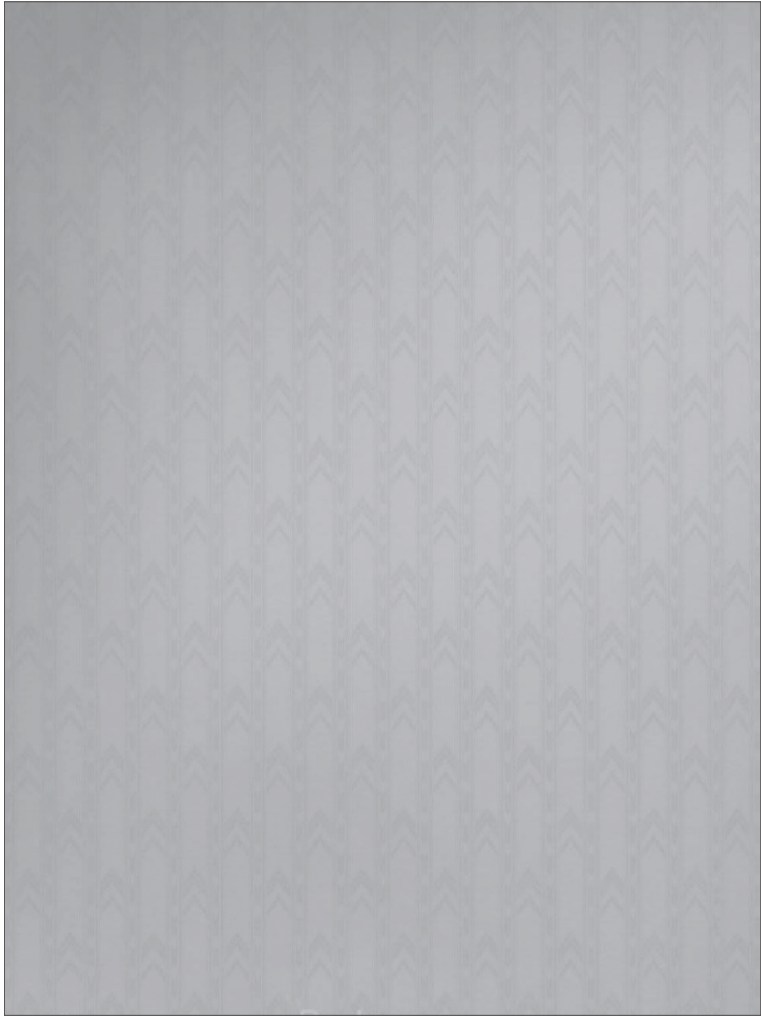
She built her practice as a therapist, helping children overcome their own anxieties and traumas. Then the reports came in. A small island had suddenly appeared, one that wasn't on any map, and on it was a small white house. As if caught in a spell, Ellie finds herself inextricably drawn to the island. She leaves everything behind, her home, her career, her possible fiancé, all of it, and boards a plane in search of a fable.

In *Habits of the Sea*, the prose flows with steady pacing, rich descriptions, and an emotional narrative that keeps the pages turning. I found myself relating to Ellie more than I have to any other character I've read, even when the flaws and weaknesses were exposed. It's a slow-burn romance, but gradually culminates into erotic passion. There were several rather explicit scenes in the final third of the book; they were well written and handled carefully. However, they're easy enough to skip through for those uninterested in eroticism, without taking away from the story.

Habits of the Sea is a beautifully written story that's well worth the read.

review

Backrooms destroys Hollywood



BILL MAGRITZ

The original photo that inspired the “backrooms” concept, posted on 4Chan in 2019.

Backrooms is a perfect example of how modern Hollywood is being challenged by independent creators.

LANE CHEVRIER
CONTRIBUTING WRITER

Hollywood is having an identity crisis. Ever since the advent of television and movies, the power over what is shown to the public has been held by wealthy corporations. This is what gives us the fleshy bloated corpse that is the MCU. It’s why Netflix has produced thousands of original properties, most of which are entirely forgettable.

Back in 2005, YouTube broke the internet, and what started out as 480p clips of people singing badly in

their bedrooms has now become a platform with 2.7 billion users. YouTubers have been making movies for years, but rinky-dink films like *Fred: The Movie* (2010) and *Smosh: The Movie* (2015) have recently been outshone by truly professional films.

This phenomenon caught my eye in 2022 with *Talk to Me*, produced by RackaRacka. More recently came *Iron Lung* by Markiplier, *Obsession* by the channel that’s a bad idea, and *Backrooms* by Kane Pixels, all released in 2026. These

films had a combined budget of over \$18 million, and (so far) a combined worldwide box office of over \$752 million.

The “backrooms” concept originated from a single picture posted on the Paranormal thread of 4Chan in 2019:

“If you’re not careful and you noclip out of reality in the wrong areas, you’ll end up in the Backrooms, where it’s nothing but the stink of old moist carpet, the madness of mono-yellow, the endless background noise of fluorescent lights at maximum hum-buzz, and approximately six hundred million square miles of randomly segmented empty rooms to be trapped in. God save you if you hear something wandering around nearby, because it sure as hell has heard you.”

Anyone unlucky enough to fall into the backrooms dimension becomes lost in an eerie maze con-

taining a creature made of twisting fungus and human body parts, which mimics the final screams of its victims, hoping to lure new prey.

From this unassuming post came a massive online community. The most prolific and memorable contributions came from a 16-year-old creator, Kane Parsons, who created a disturbingly realistic series of found-footage videos soaked in VHS artifacting. In 2025, Parsons was given full creative control in a feature-length A24 backrooms film, now in theatres.

As a fan of the low-res VHS series, I was concerned that a Hollywood production would polish the unsettling terror completely out of the film, and studio interference would prioritize mass-market appeal, creating a shallow, corporate product.

I needn’t have worried. While not quite a masterpiece, *Backrooms* is certainly Parsons’ magnum opus,

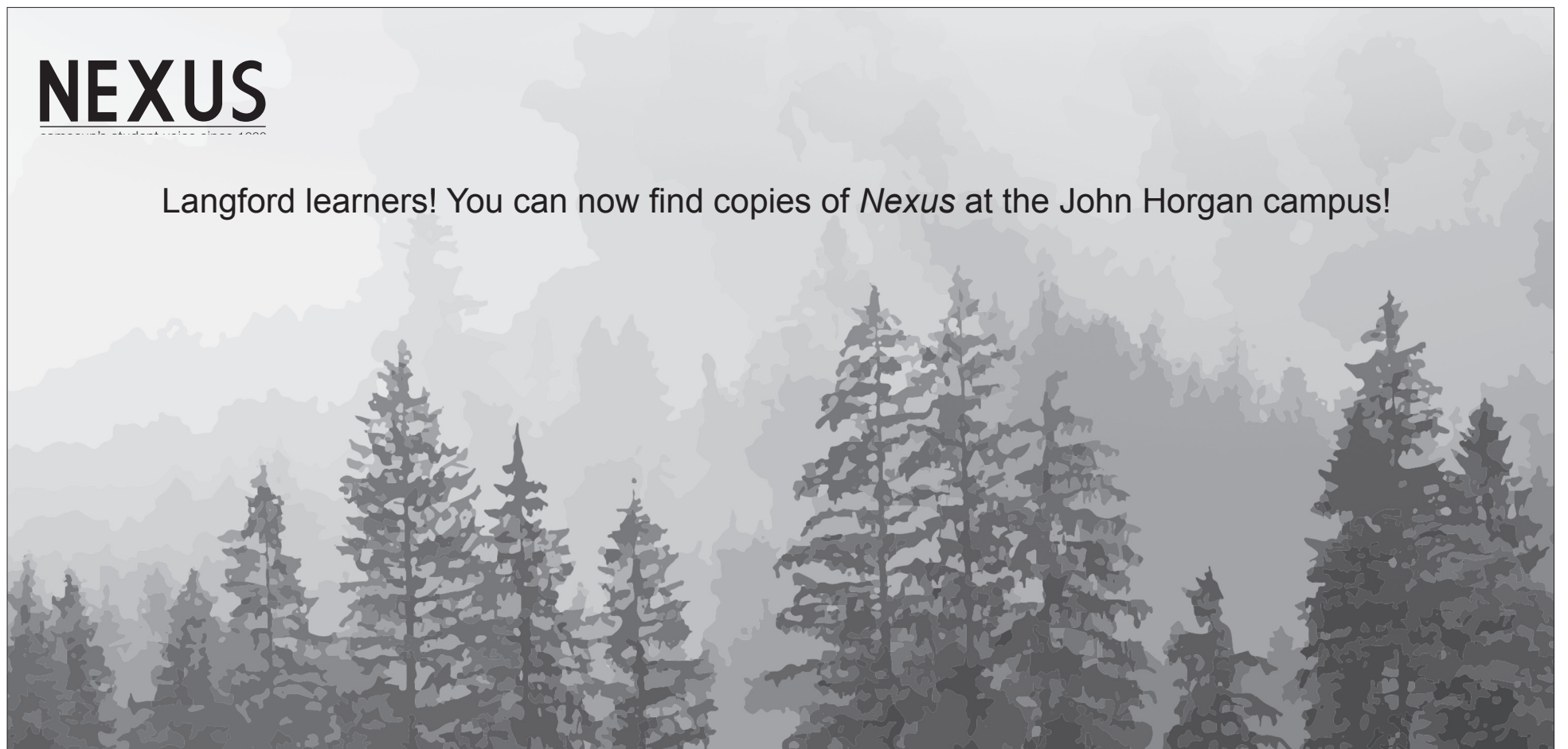
and he holds the title of youngest A24 director yet, 20 years old at the time of production.

Although most of the film is in high-def, it frequently utilizes the VHS style fans love. The story admittedly collapses into some overdone horror tropes in the third act, but it’s still a stupendous achievement from a guy who previously used Blender on his bedroom laptop.

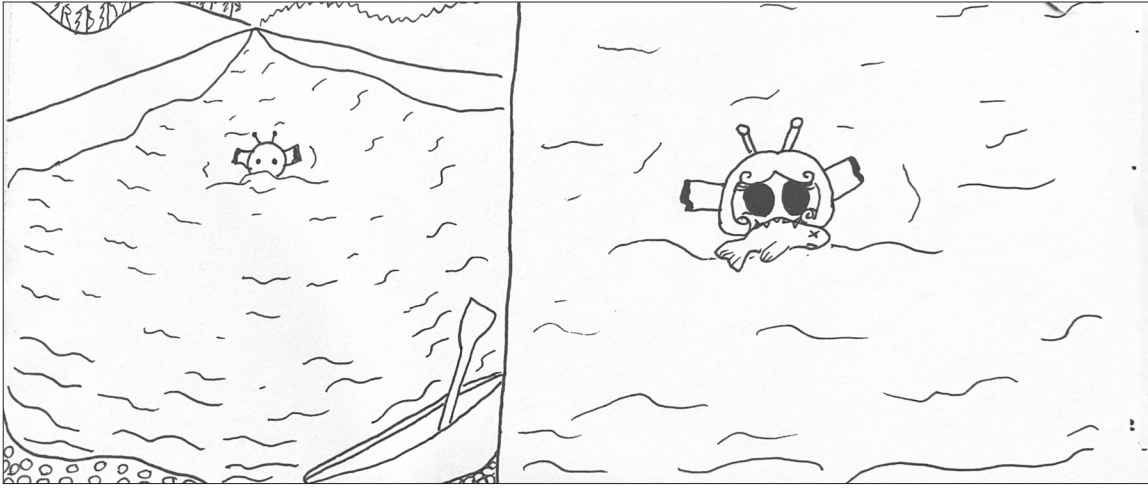
Backrooms is a perfect example of how modern Hollywood is being challenged by independent creators. No longer must viewers be beholden to movies surgically designed by hundreds of board members as a calculated bid to gain as much revenue as possible. The landscape and historical trajectory of film has been irreversibly altered. Small creators are making interesting films just for the hell of it, which, when it comes down to it, is really the point of filmmaking anyway.

NEXUS

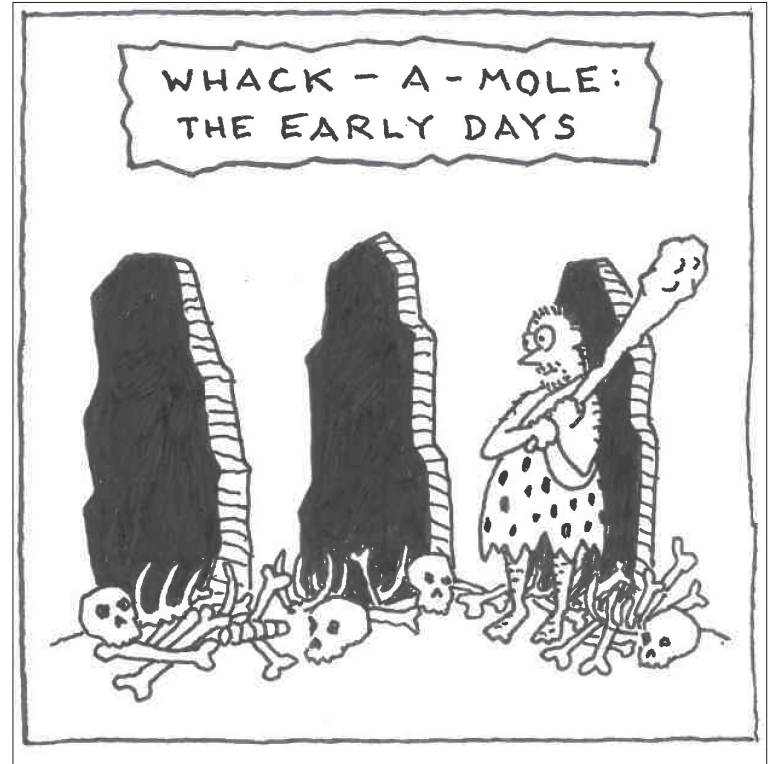
Langford learners! You can now find copies of *Nexus* at the John Horgan campus!



Evie the Alien - Jazmyn Hodges



Telescopic Penguins - Michael Erwin



word search



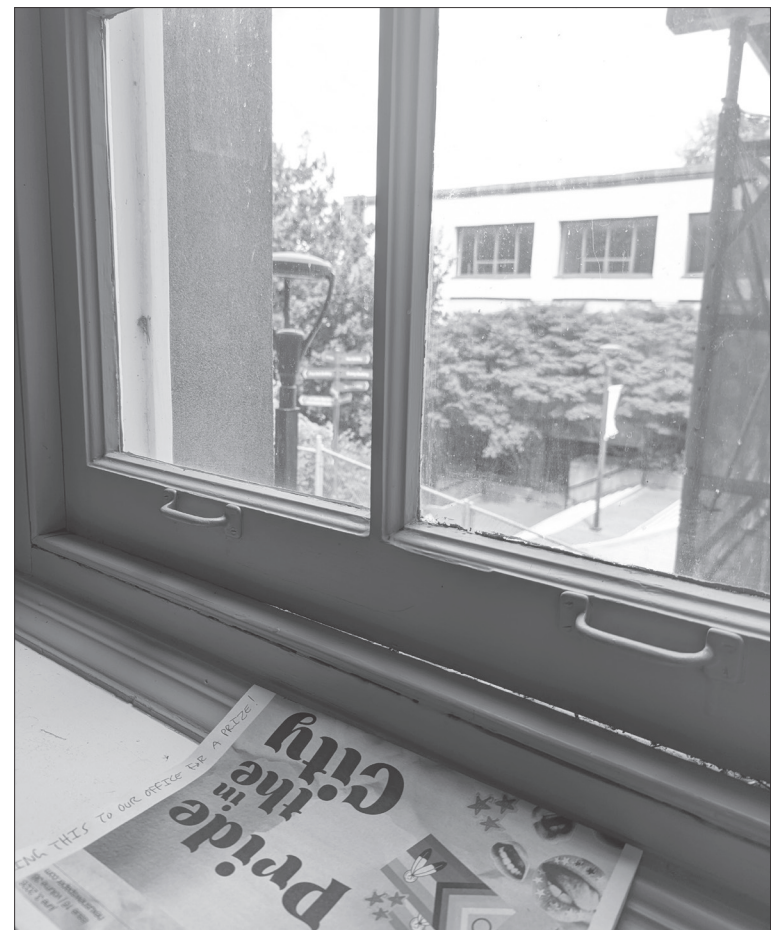
Read feature writer Ashley Hagel's story about the local arts community thriving in tough times on page 6, then find the words in the story to the right above.

Thriving
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Budget
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GREG PRATT/NEXUS

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Trill's Recipes

by Trillium McNabb

Vanilla ice cream

While this recipe does take a little while to make, I can confidently say the results are worth it. All you need are basic ingredients, some elbow grease, and patience.

Ingredients:

- 1 cup milk
- 1 1/2 cup cream
- 1/2 cup sugar
- 1 tsp vanilla
- 1 pinch salt

With the days getting long and hot, I often crave a cold sweet treat. Here's a vanilla ice cream recipe that doesn't need any fancy equipment, and is a great base for chocolate or fruit to create your own custom flavours. While the recipe does take a little while to make, I can confidently say the results are worth it. All you need are basic ingredients, some elbow grease, and patience.

Start with pouring in 1 cup of milk and 1 1/2 cups of cream into a small pot or saucepan. Then add in the 1/2 cup of sugar, pinch of salt, and 1 tsp of vanilla extract. Set your stove on medium or medium-high. Gently stir the mixture as it comes to temperature—it's ready to take off the heat when all the sugar is dissolved and there's a light foam

on its surface. When you're heating this mixture, don't leave it unattended; milk and cream can bubble a lot when heated too fast, which causes it to overflow. To prevent this, gently stir your mixture and turn the temperature down if it starts to boil.

Take your mixture off the heat and stir periodically—doing this will help release water vapour out of the mixture. The more water released now will help prevent ice crystals from forming in the ice cream. Put the mixture in the fridge to cool the rest of the way for at least 30 minutes.

While your mixture is cooling in the fridge, put your large and medium stainless-steel bowls and metal whisk in the freezer. It's important for these tools to be as cold as possible for hand churning the ice cream.

Fill the large metal bowl with ice and a pinch of salt. The salt conducts the cold into the smaller metal bowl. Then, once done, place the smaller bowl into the larger frozen bowl and

make sure the ice goes three-quarters of the way up the side of the small bowl. Pour the mixture into the smaller bowl and whisk. You'll feel the mixture thicken to a point; when it stops getting thicker, put it in the freezer for 15 minutes. Mix in short bursts then put the ice cream mixture back into the freezer for about 10 minutes before mixing again. Keep doing this until you get your desired ice cream consistency. Personally, I stop at a soft-serve consistency.

It's at the soft-serve-consistency stage when you can add anything you want: fruit, chocolate chips, crushed-up cookies—let your imagination run wild. Use a spatula to fold in your additives, then let set in the freezer for at least 10 minutes before serving.

Remember to make sure that your bowls, tools, and mixture are as cold as possible before you start hand churning. Otherwise, it can take three times as long for the ice cream to thicken.



TRILLIUM MCNABB/NEXUS

When making ice cream, you'll want to use a smaller bowl inside a larger bowl.

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