NEXUS

camosun's student voice since 1990

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Bring out your dead



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OVERHEARD AT *NEXUS*: "The ghosts are in the bathroom."

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editor's letter

Being a go-getter is the best way to slack off

I have one day per week when I don't have any classes and I don't go into the *Nexus* office. That day, by design, is Friday, but I assure you, it's the busiest day in my schedule. It took me years and years to learn (at least partially) that scheduling time to relax and be spontaneous is the only way I get to it at all.

My modus operandi for most of my life has been to do whatever I want all the time, while secretly worrying about the million things on my to-do list. I then fly into a panicked frenzy at the eleventh hour and try to get it all done perfectly without having a heart attack or a mental breakdown, and, let me tell you guys, that way lies danger.

The way I've organized my schedule leaves my Friday open to get as much done as reasonably possible before deadlines loom terrifyingly. This is entirely contrary to my nature, but it has done wonders for my mental health, not to mention my relationships and my grades. It's Friday as I write this, and this morning I went to the dentist at 8 am, and now I will be at my desk for the majority of the rest of the day. I get homework done, conduct interviews for upcoming *Nexus* articles, do assigned readings, what have you. I do this at a leisurely pace with an iced coffee, and getting shit done has never felt so benign.

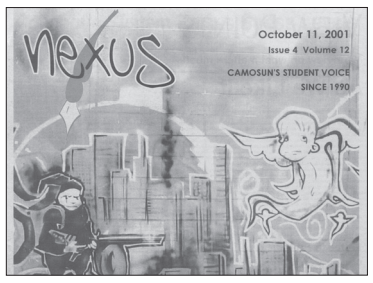
Sometimes I even get people complimenting me on how organized and together I am; little do they know I'm really a horrifying mess of a man; I've just learned through extensive trial and substantial error that doing things this way is much better for me overall, because this way I have the rest of the weekend to just hang loose.

I wish I could say that figuring this out was a magical panacea for my intense, frenetic, diabolically unhinged tendencies, but in reality, it takes constant work. I have to talk myself into going to my desk, and I usually have to bribe myself with promises of doing fun stuff later as a little reward, but the truly magical part is that those moments where I'm pleading with myself to just go do the thing seem to be getting easier and easier. This transmogrification from being a craven little creature vacillating between want and need to a strong-willed and ridiculously handsome hero of decisive action and profound accomplishment has been the progenitor of me actually enjoying the time I spend getting the work done. Since it's become more fun, it's also become easier to convince myself to get down to it. Huh.

Nik Ovstaas, student editor
nik@nexusnewspaper.com

flashback

25 Years Ago in *Nexus*



GREG PRATT
MANAGING EDITOR

Speak up: In our October 11, 2001 issue we were writing about the aftermaths of 9/11, and letter-writer Mark Redgwell wasn't pleased with how we had been doing it. In our previous issue, we had run a cartoon that Redgwell took offence to, saying that its obvious meaning—Americans are racist—was painting with as wide of a brush as recent post-9/11 anti-Muslim attacks were. "Is the *Nexus* asleep at the helm?" said Redgwell as he signed off his letter. We're not here to defend editorial decisions from 25 years ago, but we are here to say that today, as back then, we always welcome feedback, good or bad.

Spoke up: In our *Speak Up* column this issue, we asked Camosun students what they were really doing with their student loan money. University Transfer student Mike Gomian told us that, if he gets any loans, he was going to "donate every single cent to my own hydroponics research project." The ambitious student said that he intends to "manufacture and export the best bud on the planet." A quarter-century later, marijuana is legal, but did the entrepreneurial Gomian take advantage of that? If you're out there, Mike, drop us a line and let us know!

Nope: No building on Lansdowne campus elicits such confusion among students as the Dunlop House. What is it? Is there food in there? Can we actually go in it? Does anyone know anyone who knows anyone who has ever set foot in that place? Well, I can tell you that in this issue, the story "Cheers! Dunlop House opens for business" laid it all out, explaining that oops that's word count gotta go.

open space

Students should be voting in provincial elections

ISABELLE KAERCHER
CONTRIBUTING WRITER

Being a first-time voter and a post-secondary student while there are elections happening means it's easy to get lost in the riot of opinions or opt to take a seat on the sidelines of what can seem like a political storm. And of course there are a percentage of us students that are simply too young to cast a vote, although that shouldn't be a justification for a lack of interest. Making the time to observe what's happening, consume information about the elections, and understand who is on your ballot can seem impossible, but it's essential for having an understanding on the impact and importance of voting.

> Knowing why an election is occurring can be a significant help in understanding the current political environment and where you stand within it.

Everyone knows that no one can tell someone how to vote, but that doesn't mean there aren't influences on both new and seasoned voters, with social media constantly giving extreme examples of either intensifying or diminishing relevant and non-relevant issues that serve to separate yourself from peers or family. It's hard to know where to turn to or how to even begin approaching this arena.

Knowing why an election is occurring can be a significant help in understanding the current political environment and where you stand within it.

Right now our provincial election is taking place two years early. It was called by BC NDP leader, premier David Eby. Why would Eby call an election when already maintaining a majority legislature? The NDP is hoping an election would prevent an economic fallout provincially, as a result of Trump's most recent tariffs. Many agree with Eby and the NDP party that this is a time to try to keep our economy stable and the province united, while some see through this strategic plan for the opportunity to catch competing parties off guard and result in a re-election.

Having an awareness of what current politicians are offering will help you get a grasp of where you stand on issues such as transit improvements, renter's protection, minimum wage, and grocery-store profit margins, all of which affect a student's day-to-day living. So perhaps you can start there, or maybe you remain undecided.

If still undecided, take a look at what the community or society could benefit from: wildfire restoration, drug regulation, environment and energy conservation plans, community developments. It's important to be in touch with what you personally can benefit from but it's crucial to understand what the needs of the surrounding communities and local businesses are, as well as what societal demands are required, to keep a strong, united province.

At the end of the day, elections are not a big, scary event. They are here to serve those who exercise their right to take part in the democratic process. Those who do not run the risk of having their needs unmet or misrepresented.

As students, we are thunderous and powerful. Don't be the quiet one: go vote.

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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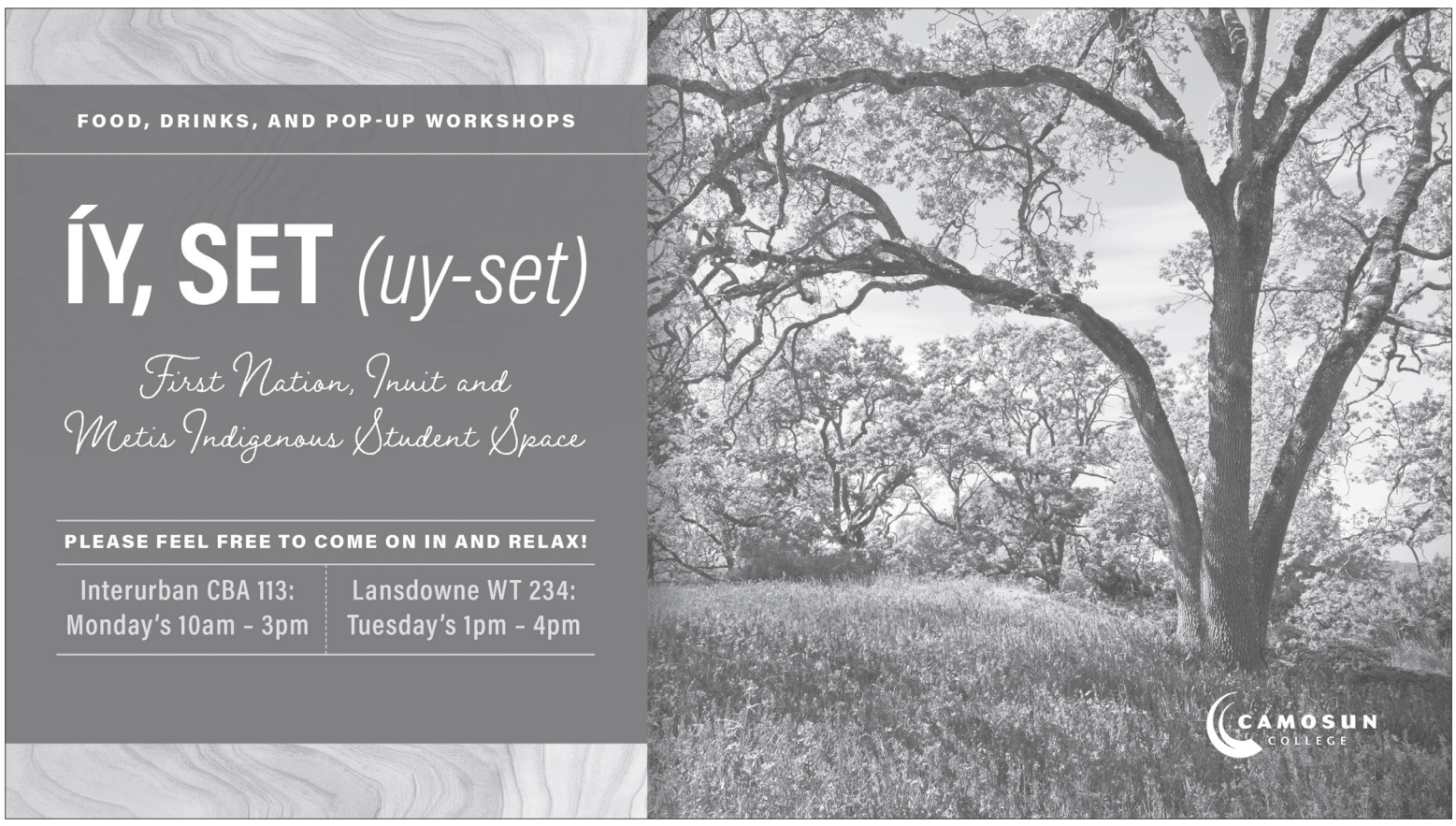


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indigenization

ÍY, SET makes space for Indigenous students



> "So that's sort of the basis for the event, setting up a space for Indigenous students to gather, although frequently, the students have opened it up to all students."
>
> LEVI GLASS
> CAMOSUN COLLEGE

NIK OVSTAAS
STUDENT EDITOR

Camosun and the team at Eyē? Sqâ'lewen Centre for Indigenous Education & Community Connections are bringing the well-being of Indigenous students into focus with a series of pop-up events that take place on Mondays at the Interurban campus and Tuesdays at the Lansdowne campus.

The program is known as ÍY, SET, a phrase that means "to better oneself" in SENĆOŦEN, the ancestral language of the W̱SÁNEĆ people, whose traditional, unceded territories the campuses sit on. The name ÍY, SET was given to the initiative by Indigenous student support staff and SENĆOŦEN scholar SDEMOXELTEN (Ian Sam) of the Tsartlip First Nation, who helped to build the early iterations of this project last year as a way to foster community among Indigenous students.

"The idea was to have a recurring event weekly at each campus so that students could not only feel that sense of belonging, but for it to be easily added within their schedule so that once a week they knew that they could come gather, have a hot lunch," says Camosun Indigenous special projects lead and events coordinator Levi Glass.

Ultimately, the initiative is a place for Indigenous students to gather and feel comfortable, but Glass assures that no one is excluded.

"So that's sort of the basis for the event, setting up a space for Indigenous students to gather," he says, "although frequently, the students have opened it up to all students. Other international students have often come, especially as invitations from the [Indigenous] students that do come."

ÍY, SET will feature workshops focused on an array of Indigenous-focused areas, highlighting and linking themes like traditional beadwork and sustainability.

"I mean, certainly everyone's welcome for the workshops. If you think of yourself as an ally, you're certainly welcome," says Glass. "We did one [workshop] in partnership with the Metis Nation of British Columbia. Melanie Teunissen works there as a cultural coordinator, and she did a beading workshop with us at Interurban," he says. "That was beading the 'every child matters' pins in anticipation of Orange Shirt Day, and it's likely that we do another one with her just before Remembrance Day, beading poppies at both campuses... to go from the disposable poppy to a beaded, precious one."

The workshops, as well as the smaller, quieter events, are organized in such a way that even those who are unable to attend are not left out.

"Melanie has given us—and will in the next one—a bunch of kits for people who aren't there to take home," says Glass. "I know that when I was a student, my schedule was quite frantic and busy, and if I knew that something was happening weekly, I was more likely to go to it. But it's also not always a big thing; it's not always like there's such a focus. You could just come and work on your homework and have coffee and have soup and just be. Have it as your base."

With this initiative coming to life across campuses, Glass points out that there are also other ways for students to find community and support at Camosun.

"The other thing I might mention is that there's a 'request an elder' info page and graphic going out, and that's another thing that maybe students—even non-Indigenous students—could be aware of that they can access if they wanted to meet [with] an elder, whether they were doing research or were going through a difficult time. There are so many resources at the college, whether it's through counselling or student services or also through Eyē? Sqâ'lewen, with our academic advisors, our elders."

ÍY, SET's roots in the Camosun community are deep, with the ideals of one of the college's own held at its heart. The late Skip Dick was a Songhees Elder and a beloved member of the Camosun community who worked with the college to promote Indigenous education and cultural understanding in these halls for over 50 years.

"We're trying to carry the idea that Dr. Skip has talked about: the college being like a home away from home for Indigenous students, and I think that sort of idea of feeding and creating this welcoming space. We want this place to be a home away from home for everyone to feel welcome. These spaces are also for students to support other students and meet each other... It's more about us bettering each other and creating that space where we can get together and share knowledge, break bannock, sit together."

NEWS BRIEFS

Bear sighting near Interurban

Another bear has been sighted near Camosun College's Interurban campus. The college sent out an alert the morning of Tuesday, October 13 warning people that a bear had been seen in the Vancouver Island Technology Park, which is located next to the Interurban campus, that morning. A bear had previously been seen in the area on Tuesday, July 28. Students are reminded to not approach or attempt to photograph a bear if one is seen in the area; remain calm and back away slowly—do not run.

Victoria seeks poet laureates

The City of Victoria is looking for its next youth poet laureate and poet laureate. The laureates act as cultural and literary ambassadors for Victoria by creating original poems and participating in events. The youth poet laureate position is open to those between 14 and 24; both positions are two-year appointments, running from January 2027 to December 2028. The poet laureate gets an annual honorarium of $5,500; the youth poet laureate gets $2,500; they both get up to $2,000 a year for programming. For more info and to apply, go to victoria.ca/poetlaureates.

–GREG PRATT, MANAGING EDITOR

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FYI Langford learners: you can now find copies of *Nexus* at the John Horgan campus! Find us at the Connection Desk on the second floor.



clubs

InterVarsity club creates space for faith and conversation at Camosun



PHOTO PROVIDED

The InterVarsity Christian Fellowship raising awareness at Lansdowne.

JASMINE WAGSTAFF
STAFF WRITER

Students looking to talk about faith, spirituality, or some of life's other big topics can find a place to do so through InterVarsity Christian Fellowship, a faith-based organization expanding its programming at Camosun College this year.

InterVarsity operates on campuses across Canada; InterVarsity campus minister Alan Thorimbert says students don't need to be Christian to participate in its programming.

"We're rooted in the Christian tradition, but we've always tried to create spaces where people from different faith backgrounds can be in those spaces," he says.

Thorimbert says that describing InterVarsity as "faith-based" can make the organization more approachable for students who may be hesitant about participating in something explicitly religious; also, whenever possible, the group tries to meet in familiar, open campus spaces such as cafeterias rather than behind closed doors. Thorimbert says entering a private room for an explicitly spiritual or religious activity can be intimidating for some students.

> "Often on campus, to say you're religious or to say you're Christian is an immediate turnoff. But there's something in our brain that when we hear the word 'faith-based' or 'spiritual,' it's a little more chill. It feels more welcoming, which I think is good."
>
> ALAN THORIMBERT
> INTERVARSITY CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP

"Often on campus, to say you're religious or to say you're Christian is an immediate turnoff," says Thorimbert. "But there's something in our brain that when we hear the word 'faith-based' or 'spiritual,' it's a little more chill. It feels more welcoming, which I think is good."

InterVarsity has been running lunch discussions at Camosun for the past four years, with much of its programming intended to be student-led. Lunch discussions typically begin with three to five questions before participants are allowed to take the conversation in their own direction. Topics can include, for example, identity, relationships, the nature of humanity, religion, and how people understand suffering.

"We guide the conversation in some way," he says, "but it's more for the sake of having a good conversation, less of, 'I want the topic to go in this direction.'"

InterVarsity also tries to create an environment where participants can question religion rather than feeling they must accept a particular answer.

"We're not scared of critical analysis of the faith. We see that as useful and important," he says, "so we're not scared of questions or doubts or fears."

That approach extends to the group's Bible studies, which they are working toward starting, at the Interurban campus. Thorimbert says InterVarsity uses methods similar to historical, critical, and literary approaches to studying other texts, allowing students to engage with the Bible regardless of how familiar they are with it.

"We try to do our Bible studies in a way that is practical, accessible, but also intellectually rigorous," he says.

Creating a space for students from different backgrounds requires more than simply inviting them into the room, according to Thorimbert.

"No matter what we're doing, InterVarsity staff and students are always thinking about, even if it's only Christians in the room, how would we lead this in such a way that someone from any background could [not just] come and feel like they belong, but feel like they could actually offer something into the space," he says.

Thorimbert first became involved with InterVarsity as an undergraduate student in Kingston, Ontario. He was drawn to a community that allowed students to engage with questions surrounding issues such as poverty, alcoholism, and racism, as well as InterVarsity's emphasis on mentorship. Now working with students himself, Thorimbert says one of his favourite parts of the job is being present while students wrestle with questions about their identities and futures.

"I love what I do because so often it feels like I just get to be a sounding board for the big questions that students are asking," says Thorimbert. "Who am I? What do I want my life to be about? How do I relate to other people?"

Thorimbert doesn't believe students need to find immediate answers to those questions.

"Sometimes those questions can feel so anxiety-inducing. It can feel like you have to answer them immediately," he says. "So it feels like a gift to have the opportunity to be in the process of thinking about those big life questions with students in a non-anxious space."

Email icfclub@camosunstudent.org for more information on InterVarsity.

pride

Finding myself through Camosun's Pride Lounge

EVELYN MYST
CONTRIBUTING WRITER

On the Lansdowne campus, there's a quiet room tucked in the lower floor of a house on the edge of campus. By zig-zagging down from the Young building, or climbing up and down from the western edge of campus' "main street," one can find their way to the Richmond House and its cozy little Pride Lounge.

The building hosts quite a few things, such as this newspaper's office, but most dear to my heart is the Pride Lounge. With one right turn from the ground-floor entrance, you see the short passage into a colourfully decorated room; various pride flags and queer messages plaster three walls, even the ceiling, all reflected in the row of mirrors across the fourth.

I remember my time at Camosun pre-COVID, my first attempt at post-secondary learning. I spent my first few terms not knowing anywhere to study or meet people outside class, having never heard of the Pride Lounge. I was only just beginning to question my gender, and had made online connections that helped me explore my identity, but it's a scary step to take in the real world.

One day, while in the middle of that questioning period, I found out about the lounge. I started visiting regularly, finding it peaceful and reflective. The room was usually empty, but it wasn't always. Sometimes my visits would line up with someone else's; we'd usually sit in the awkward silence of anxiety, but sometimes we'd introduce one another and talk a while.

I found that the more I did this and got to know people, the more often I ended up seeing people there. I got to know when people would visit, and would get to study with them side by side in between classes or chat for hours after my school day finished. Suddenly I had peers, and even told a few others I met about the lounge, surrounding myself with queer people that I could relate to and feel seen by.

That's when I finally started experimenting with gender expression. I had been on the fence about being transgender and felt unable to try the things that I was curious about: first they/them pronouns, then feminine haircuts, then wearing dresses out, then she/her pronouns. These things helped me find who I was by trying out what I thought might make me feel more myself, with the support of people I saw day to day.



GREG PRATT/*NEXUS*

The Pride Lounge, located in the Richmond House at Camosun College's Lansdowne campus.

I remember the first time I wore a dress out of the house. I left for school that day in early fall 2019 in a red and black dress, and I expected to be terrified all day. Despite that, I found that the moment I made it to campus, I stopped being afraid. Lansdowne campus had become a place where it didn't feel like I was breaking the image people assumed of me; instead, it felt like affirming what I'd already gotten to be.

Now that I'm back at Camosun again, taking a second shot at post-secondary, I feel a little bit of that familiarity still. The comfort I felt that day is still here, even though my old friends have moved on, the lounge has new furniture, and I'm such a different person now that I've been out for several years. Things change, but the Pride Lounge is still there, and if you could use a queer friend, I hope to see you there.

spooky

Curiosities of Craigdarroch spins dark yarns in the castle

"A lot of the Dunsmuir family story itself is a little tragic. It's very dramatic. They often died young."

JULIA KASSAM-THEIM
CRAIGDARROCH CASTLE



Learn about the scarier side of Craigdarroch Castle this October.

PHOTO PROVIDED

LANE CHEVRIER
CONTRIBUTING AUTHOR

Victoria locals are no doubt familiar with Craigdarroch Castle, which was built in 1890 by Robert Dunsmuir, a wealthy coal baron. The Craigdarroch Castle Historical Museum Society often gives tours of the site, discussing its history; now, the Curiosities of Craigdarroch After Hours Tour is here, just in time for Halloween.

"Basically, it takes a look at the darker side of the Victorian era and kind of focuses on the Victorians' obsession with death using the lens of the Dunsmuir family here at the castle," says Craigdarroch operations assistant Julia Kassam-Theim. "It kind of addresses the way they would have processed death in the Victorian era, as well as some of the strange activities that would have been associated with death, like taxidermy or hair arts or mourning rituals, stuff along the lines of that."

Using the vast collection of historical archives and literature at their disposal, the Craigdarroch research team have created a series of stories that focus on the more macabre aspects of the history of the Dunsmuir family, as well as the Victorian time period within which they lived.

"It's bits and pieces of different information that all come from our own backgrounds, as well as what we know about the Dunsmuir family," says Kassam-Theim. "Our current curator, for example, discovered that the land actually was used to harvest camas bulbs, and in doing so, the Indigenous people also planted death camas, which is one of the stories that we'll try to incorporate in the story into the tour as well."

The vast and fascinating lore is what got Kassam-Theim hooked, and the mysterious and sinister stories on offer keep her engaged, bridging the gap between history and art.

"For me, death and the Victorian era are both just things that fascinate me in general," she says. "I took a photography and culture course, and one of the things that we wound up looking into was spirit and occult photography, and how that played an interest in the Victorian era. There are a lot of interesting characters in the Dunsmuir family."

Life was not all smooth sailing for the mogul family, says Kassam-Theim, and there's plenty of fascinating tragedy that the tour regales the listeners with.

"A lot of the Dunsmuir family story itself is a little tragic. It's very dramatic. They often died young," says Kassam-Theim. "We also discuss some of the lives that were rooted in tragedy as well, like Effie Dunsmuir. She suffered from mental-health issues during a time when it wasn't really understood, and we look into what that would have looked like in the Victorian era as well."

Kassam-Theim, as well as the other guides and historians involved with the tour, are huge fans of stories, and are excited to share them with a curious audience. (Audience members are reminded that the castle is not built for accessibility, and throughout the tour, listeners will have to climb up and down 87 stairs.)

"It's something that I'm passionate about," she says. "We all love storytelling. So our guides, you can really sense the passion when they go and tell you these stories as we go throughout the castle."

Curiosities of Craigdarroch
4 pm Wednesdays and Thursdays through October
4 pm Saturday, October 24
$35, Craigdarroch Castle
thecastle.ca

health

Crystal Pool closes, but students have alternatives

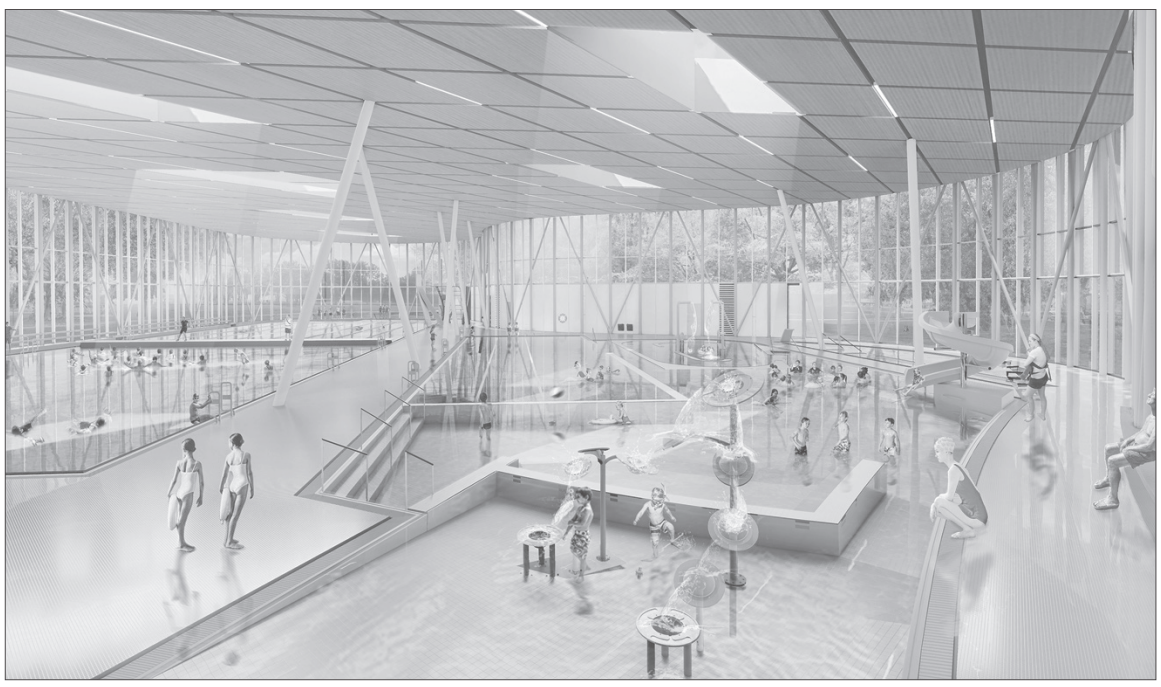


IMAGE PROVIDED

Rendering of the proposed new Crystal Pool, which has a tentative budget of $168.9 million,

LANE CHEVRIER
CONTRIBUTING WRITER

The Crystal Pool & Fitness Centre closed permanently in September in order to tear down the building and rebuild a new, modern facility. While this is a sad day for long-time patrons, and necessitates a five-year temporary service shift, the upgrading of the facility was necessary for safety, cost, and efficiency.

Crystal Pool was built nearly 55 years ago, on November 27, 1971, to replace the old pool at Crystal Gardens on lower Douglas Street. While it has become a beloved local icon, the hidden reality behind the facility is one of aging technology and high environmental footprint—it generated more than 40 percent of the city's greenhouse-gas emissions from buildings. Due to its age, the facility was built to rely heavily on fossil fuels (primarily natural gas) to warm millions of litres of water and heat the building, which costs more than $2 million annually to maintain. Deteriorating mechanical systems meant that over its lifetime, the facility became more and more inefficient, requiring more energy to maintain the same space. The glass dome skylights and archaic insulation system allowed immense amounts of heat to escape into the atmosphere, further reducing efficiency, and the leaky roof caused even more problems.

In addition to this, the facility had meagre accessibility options, since that was not a consideration at the time the building was manufactured, and total structural reengineering (such as installing a small elevator) is not always feasible if the infrastructure, and overall cost, do not support it.

Anyone used to a modern gym found a less-than-stellar configuration in the old building: cardio machines scattered haphazardly around the pool, rusting in the humidity, and two separate, incomplete weight rooms on opposite sides of the facility. This is the result of increased need without the capacity to support it, and it was pretty lame.

The new facility, with a tentative budget of $168.9 million, will feature a 50-metre pool with a removable divider (like Commonwealth pool) alongside a smaller 25-metre pool, leisure pools, play areas, hot tub, sauna, and steam room. The new facility will also feature an expanded fitness studio, a full-sized gymnasium, and multi-purpose community rooms. Accessibility—such as pool ramps, lifts, and universal washrooms—will be a central focus, with the facility targeting the Rick Hansen Foundation gold certification for barrier-free accessibility,

There will be a necessary change in services in the interim. The facility originally planned to transition directly into the old YMCA building on Broughton Street, but unexpected water damage in that building forced the transition to be delayed until early 2027. This interim facility will be renamed the Victoria Recreation Centre; it's primarily a gym facility, with access to a small pool. Not ideal for fans of the expansive Crystal Pool, but better than nothing.

There are other municipal facilities in town to access in the few months between now and the reopening of the Victoria Recreation Centre. Saanich Commonwealth Place, Esquimalt Recreation Centre, Cedar Hill Recreation Centre, Oak Bay Recreation Centre, and Gordon Head Recreation Centre are all open for business.

Users of the City of Victoria's Leisure Involvement for Everyone (LIFE) program have the option to choose either two years of unlimited access to Crystal Pool (now Victoria Recreation Centre), including 52 admissions to 14 regional partner centres across Greater Victoria, and reduced cost for registered programs, or a reduced cost (50-percent off) single-year unlimited pass to the same 14 facilities. You must be a resident of Victoria and meet income eligibility thresholds to access the program.

Those interested in the LIFE program or wondering about their options during this transition can visit victoria.ca/parks-recreation/recreation/accessibility-inclusion/life-program for more details.

BRING OUT

NEXUS GOES GHOST HUNTING

As a lifelong Victoria local, I've grown quite familiar with the city's haunted reputation. It seems like there's a ghoulish story just waiting to be told around every corner. But I can't help raising an eyebrow when I hear people talk about their haunted experiences in places like Bastion Square or Fan Tan Alley. I mean, sure, anything is possible, but you can't convince me you heard the footsteps of the dead in a high-traffic pedestrian corridor. But, that being said, I'm not so cynical that I wouldn't entertain the possibility of a paranormal experience or two, should they arise.

Now, if you're going to embark on a paranormal investigation, it's important to come prepared— and I'm not just talking about Ouija boards and candlesticks. I mean, you'd probably want to know when a ghost was near you, right? Well, for that, you'll need an electromagnetic frequency reader, more commonly known as an EMF reader. As the name might imply, this handheld device measures electromagnetic waves as they move through the environment. Typically, you wouldn't need one unless you were checking the current in an outlet, but many paranormal investigators claim that spirits can disrupt these fields, setting off the reader when they're close by.

Additionally, you could set up a thermal camera to see if any human-like figures pass by it. Or you could set up a scanning radio to see if any ghosts want to communicate with you through the endless waves of white noise.

Personally, I'm a little too deep in my student loans to make those kinds of purchases right now, so I'll be doing this the analogue way. If the ghosts of this city wish to interact with me, they're going to have to work a little harder for it. But if you get the chance to set out on your own investigation, and you have the means to give the ghosts a little extra attention, consider this a jumping-off point.

And now, without further ado: let the ghost hunt begin!

The first stop on my list was the Chinese Cemetery at Harling Point. While this national historic site has an incredibly rich past, the legend of its haunting actually stems from a property situated beside the cemetery, rather than the cemetery itself. Well, in part, at least.

The Haunted House of Harling Point loomed over the cemetery, some three stories tall, from 1914 to 1958. Back then, locals reported seeing moving furniture and hearing phantom voices from within the house. This reputation eventually carried over to the cemetery, effectively shaping how the locals perceived it. But that's not the only reason.

The cemetery itself actually predates the house by about 11 years, having been established in 1903 by the Chinese Consolidated Benevolent Association. At that time, the bodies of Chinese immigrants weren't allowed in standard Canadian cemeteries, so they were temporarily buried in the Chinese Cemetery, then stored in bone houses to be shipped back to China.

However, when WWII came and went, and the Chinese Communist Party took power, the government moved to officially ban the import of human remains. So, years later, in 1961, the bodies of more than 800 Chinese pioneers were finally laid to rest in 13 mass graves around the cemetery. If you ask me, this tragic, isolated atmosphere is far more haunting than any folklore could possibly be.

It is, however, a beautiful spot. I used to live a short distance from there and would regularly pass by on late-night walks. I can't say I've ever felt the presence of a ghost, though. So, strike one for Team Hauntings.

Just a few minutes down the road is the Victoria Golf Club, which is said to be haunted by the ghost of Doris Gravlin. In September of 1936, she and her estranged husband, Victor, had agreed to meet by the water to discuss the possibility of reconnecting. Both went missing, and days later, Doris' body was found near the seventh green, beaten and strangled.

Witnesses have reported seeing a woman believed to be Doris wandering the course along the shoreline. Now, of course, I would never trespass on private property. But if I had, I would probably tell you that the rolling hills, while vast and creepy, are not likely to yield any paranormal activity. I would assume, anyway.

It is worth noting that a stretch of Beach Drive runs directly through the course, so if you're curious to see the ghost of Doris Gravlin, you can safely do so from the comfort of the sidewalk. However, there are no street lamps, so a reliable flashlight is strongly encouraged. Which would help on the course, too. I would assume, anyway.

Approaching downtown, there are a great many locations purported to be hubs for paranormal activity. And while I'm not entirely convinced anyone is haunting Victoria more than the warm-blooded city-goers who live here, I did take it upon myself to stroll through Helmcken Alley, just to see if any spirits wanted to persuade me in their favour.

Helmcken Alley is a quaint little walkway lined with brick arches, connecting Bastion Square and Langley Street. Now, as I briefly alluded to earlier, Bastion Square is widely considered one of the most haunted areas in the city. This is because, throughout the 19th century, it served as a public execution site, with many hangings being ordered by Matthew Baillie Begbie, who served as the first Chief Justice of British Columbia during the gold-rush era.

Helmcken Alley was a part of the site where the prisoners would be held and transported. As one story goes, in the 1850s, an inmate was beaten to death by a prison guard in this very alleyway, his ghost still haunting it. Additionally, some of the prisoners whose bodies were left unclaimed were buried directly beneath the prison grounds of Bastion Square, and during later excavations, not all their remains were removed, meaning some of them are still there to this day.

This alley offers a fascinating step into history and a great opportunity to imagine what things would have been like back then. It was easy to convince myself this place had an eerie feel, but I'm saddened to say I didn't run into any ghosts or ghouls on my journey. I held out hope for my next location, though: Pioneer Square.

Pioneer Square is a particularly interesting site as many historians consider it to be the most significant colonial-era cemetery in all of British Columbia. It's not exactly isolated, nestled on the edge of the downtown core, but it is much quieter than some of the other haunted locations scattered throughout the city. And because it's such an overlooked landmark, very few people are there at any given time, making for a peaceful, pleasant walk through history.

Several tombstones and memorial sites are situated throughout the square, from Scottish-Canadian war heroes to old chief factors of the Hudson's Bay Company. Streetlights pierce the tree canopy, creating an ambiance all its own. It's beautiful here, to be sure, although, if I'm honest, I'd describe it more as a serene urban getaway than a hub for paranormal activity. As far as I could tell, no ghosts are occupying this space.

Now, I think it's important for me to point out that, despite my cynicism, I am not a non-believer. I don't need to be convinced that ghosts exist; I just don't think they exist where we think they do. I mean, if you died, would you choose to haunt your burial site, or the place where you met your end? Wouldn't it make more sense to spend all eternity in a place that made you happy, where you had the fondest memories or the calmest moments? I mean, hey, that's just my thought process.

Moving right along, we have St. Ann's Academy, situated between downtown and Beacon Hill Park. From 1864 to 1908, this place served as a convent and even had a cemetery on the property where several nuns were buried. Now, to the best of my knowledge, none of their remains were left on the property, as they were eventually moved to Ross Bay Cemetery, which then served as their final resting place. However, legend has it you can still see the spirits of the Sisters of St. Ann roaming the grounds.

Some folks have even claimed to see the ghost of Emily Carr on this property, with the connection being that the Sisters of St. Ann cared for Carr's sister, Lizzie, during her final days. However, this happened in an entirely separate building across the street from St. Ann's Academy, so these claims get a little fuzzy for me.

In any case, this building now serves as a national historic site and is a pretty impressive place to explore. Growing up, I walked by this property almost every weekend, and I'm saddened to say what was true then still seems to be true now: no ghosts roam around, nor do famous Canadian painters.

The next stop on my list might actually be my favourite: the permanent married quarters (PMQs) out in Belmont Park. Now, I don't know if you've ever explored this part of town, but calling it peaceful would be an understatement. This area serves as a residential community for the Department of National Defence, lined with quaint houses and apartment complexes. Something about the quiet, lived-in nature of this neighbourhood just puts me right at ease. It feels like everyone is warm and safe in the comfort of their homes, with toys strewn across the lawns and a real sense of community hanging in the air. It makes you feel like this is how things are supposed to be—safe and calm.

Plenty of reasons lead people to believe this area may be haunted, most of them tied to family tragedies. The best-known story involves the Dunsmuir family, as the PMQs were built on their estate, which, at the time, stretched more than 500 acres.

The story goes that in 1915, Laura and James Dunsmuir lost their youngest son when the RMS Lusitania, a British luxury ocean liner, was torpedoed by a German submarine and sunk just off the south coast of Ireland on the way to France; his body was never recovered. James died shortly thereafter, with many believing that the cause of death was a broken heart.

Those who frequent Hatley Castle—the home in which Laura and James lived—have reported hearing footsteps and music coming from his study. Laura, on the other hand, who died believing her son was still alive and would one day return home, stalked the cadets' dormitories, searching the boys' faces in the hopes that one of them might be her son.

Hatley Castle only served as a dorm and mess hall for naval cadets from 1941 to 1943, so whether the presence of Laura and James Dunsmuir still remains is up for debate. As far as I can tell, they've gone on their way, but in the off chance that they are still hanging around, I don't think they'd seem malicious or violent. All they'd seem is heartbroken, and it's sad to think that those feelings might not go away after you die. I wonder what else stays with you.

On the way back into town, my partner and I stopped at Fleming Beach near Saxe Point. I've heard rumblings that this place is haunted, but I've never known the reasons why. So, curious, I figured it was worth a quick stop to see if I could experience anything paranormal.

YOUR DEAD

ON CAMPUS... AND BEYOND

Perhaps unsurprisingly, my experience was the same as the rest: wholly uneventful. ill, the atmosphere was the creepiest by far. Pitch-black water shoaling under a pitch-ack sky, with dim lights reflecting off the shoreline, surrounded by mist. It was altogether rie. We didn't stay for long as it was getting late, and cold, but what time we did spend as certainly spooky, indeed. However, as with most of these places, I think it was more mosphere-dependent than ghost-dependent.

Now, of course, I can't talk about haunted Victoria without also looking in our own backyard. As many Camosun students and staff will tell you, the Young Building is widely considered to be crawling with ghosts. In fact, the gymnasium is now here the WWII-era morgue once was.

I've spent countless late nights studying in this building (well, not so much since the hool shrunk its hours down to nothing, but that's a topic for a different day). Point being, n no stranger to hanging around these parts after hours, when it's just me, the ghosts, d the janitorial staff. And while I can see how someone could convince themselves this ace is haunted, my own experiences have led me to believe that it's probably not (or rhaps just a very light haunting).

And the same can be said for Richmond House, which is located right on the outskirts campus. Like Fleming Beach, there isn't much context for why this place is believed be haunted, but I've still heard rumblings. Now, I don't have to try very hard to get to is place because the *Nexus* office is on the second floor; safe to say I'm here pretty often. owever, despite all the time I've spent here and the vague rumours I've caught wind of, I n't say I've ever felt a ghostly presence looking over my shoulder, trying to edit my next ory (except for our student editor Nik). Honestly, I've never even heard the building eak. But at some point, a very long time ago, this was a real house with a real family in it, d I'm sure their memories still haunt this place, even if I haven't experienced anything.

I think that's the difference-maker when it comes to haunted places or experiences. cause what makes a place haunted? And is it haunted to everyone, or only to some? Why?

For me, having lived in this city my whole life, I feel haunted by 20-plus years of experi-ces, friendships, heartaches, and memories. The ghosts I see are people who I used to ow, all of whom are still very much alive, but who don't really exist in my life anymore. d it's strange to think I'll never know them beyond the last age I knew them. Some people ll always be 14-year-old ghosts, even if they're now 24-year-old people.

To me, what makes a place haunted isn't the ghosts of people I never knew, or vast stories I can read about but never really experienced. No, what makes a place haunted the experience that I have with it, the memories I find around every corner.

I mean, logistically, I know that it's different, and I don't know what makes a place truly unted. Honestly, I don't know if I'd even feel it if a ghost stood beside me, or if they'd feel e way most people do when they go unnoticed.

Honestly, I don't know if they'd feel at all.

Story by Ashley Hagel, features writer
Image by Nik Ovstaas, student editor

stage

Kintsugi examines effects of women leaving war, genocide



PHOTO PROVIDED

Anissa Agahchen, Amira Abdel-Malek, and Anastasiia Konstantynova performing in *Kintsugi*.

> "It's a beautiful play... but still the topics are pretty much severe because we go very deep into what happened."
>
> DIANA BUDIACHENKO
> *KINTSUGI*

MEL OZARD
CONTRIBUTING WRITER

An upcoming play presented by Theatre Inconnu portrays the lives of three women and one of their daughters who have fled their home countries to escape war and genocide. The name of the play, *Kintsugi*—the Japanese art of mending broken pottery with gold—is a metaphor for the shattered and rebuilt lives these women create for themselves in their new country. Written by Narges Montakhabi Bakhtvar, a current PhD candidate in Theatre Studies at the University of Victoria, *Kintsugi* is a story of how humanity can be both brutally destructive and radically uplifting. Director Diana Budiachenko describes the play as bold, beautiful, haunting, short (approximately one hour), and, importantly, healing.

Each of the women portrayed in *Kintsugi* come from countries with wars in different decades (Bosnia, 1992; Iraq, 2014; Ukraine, 2022). Their devastating experiences of war and the challenges they face as war refugees creates a timeless and often-hidden story about the effects of war on human bodies and the resilience it takes to start over. The story speaks to the deep bond that can develop from adversity.

"They all bond because they're all connected, because they all experience similar situations in their own countries," says Budianchenko about the play's characters. "And they're all traumatized. The play itself does not shy away from difficult themes."

By design, all of the roles are acted by women (although staff and crew are not limited to women). This is a reversal of the long-past tradition of having men play all roles in a production, and it helps to rebalance the power in a play about the horrific aspects of war that are unique to women. *Kintsugi* includes the depiction of war crimes against the female leads, and this choice creates a safer space for both the actors and the audience.

"There are four female main characters but we also have male characters... played by women intentionally because... let's say they're bad people in the play ... [and] by casting women we create a bit of a distance," says Budiachenko. "I'd say it's more enjoyable to watch. It's a beautiful play... but still the topics are pretty much severe because we go very deep into what happened."

Using movement and creative imagery, *Kintsugi* hopes to capture the audience's attention in a way that isn't graphic or gory. Much attention is given to portraying the story with with the fluidity of movement that reflects both the activity of war and the women's experiences within it.

"I'd say that the play, even though [it] talks about very difficult themes, I think it's done in a way that most of people would find artistically beautiful," says Budiachenko. "Hopefully this will, for those who are curious...show how lives of some people, and in particular women, unfolded during the war invasions or genocides."

And this topic hits close to home for Budiachenko: she moved to Victoria from Ukraine due to the ongoing war. She says she "finds great connection" with the play and cast, and says she wants the audience to be wowed by it.

"It will definitely make them think, but I don't think they will feel very down after watching this play," she says. "We've tried to make it very serious, [and] at the same time beautiful and engaging to watch."

Kintsugi
7:30 pm Friday, October 23
2:00 pm and 7:30 pm Saturday, October 24
2:00 pm Sunday, October 25
$15, Paul Phillips Hall
1923 Fernwood Road
theatreinconnu.com

review

Tradition finds modern voice through Skerryvore



PHOTO PROVIDED

Skerryvore brought the sounds of Scotland to the McPherson Playhouse on October 6.

> What I hear in Skerryvore's music is an invitation to hold on to where we come from and carry it with us into where we're going, and who we're becoming.

CHLOE UNGER
CONTRIBUTING WRITER

Skerryvore is a Scottish band formed on the small Hebridean island of Tiree, exposed to the wild Atlantic and the windswept west coast of Scotland. Their island roots are central to their identity, where traditional Scottish music meets modern pop and rock, carrying the sounds of the ceilidh and the pub onto the international stage. Here in Victoria, the band performed on the stage of the McPherson Playhouse on Tuesday, October 6.

Skerryvore's music blends traditional Scottish instruments like fiddle, accordion, and pipes with contemporary rhythms to create an atmosphere that's as lively as it is rooted in place. The band describes its origins as stretching from small West Coast pubs and halls to the international stage, and they say they come alive in front of a live audience. And they do. Their music evokes a strong sense of community, cultural identity and belonging, merging familiar traditional tunes with a modern sound. The sounds are strongly rooted in the whimsy of the Scottish landscape, providing belonging to somewhere and something, which is essential to our well-being. It offers grounding in a world of constant change and uncertainty, countering that uncertainty with a sense of connection to something older than ourselves.

What I hear in Skerryvore's music is an invitation to hold on to where we come from and carry it with us into where we're going, and who we're becoming.

And when the concert began... oh boy, what a show it was.

The stage was awash in the blues and greens of the Atlantic, fading from blue and green into reds, transporting us underwater to a world of coral and water horses. The melodic tunes coming from the fiddles and accordions, accompanied by the piercingly haunting bagpipes, kept us trapped in time, surrounded by the majesty of the Hebrides and the mystery of ancient Druid circles.

Each of us has a story and a desire to belong, and Skerryvore captured this desire beautifully through their weaving melodies and high-paced, concert-worthy dance songs. Their upbeat party hits got us on our feet, while their traditional jigs took us back to the breathtaking beauty of Scotland. The band's mix of traditional lilts transported me to the windswept shores of the Hebrides, creating an evening that felt both distinctly Celtic and surprisingly universal.

I've long been a lover of Irish jigs and Scottish reels because they tether me to my own Celtic roots through rhythm and familiarity, a sign of a truly good piece of music. Although Skerryvore's music comes from across the Irish Sea, something about it felt immediately familiar that night. Sitting in the audience, listening to fiddles and accordions lilting through the air, I found myself back in the Ireland of my ancestry, with its cozy old pubs, leather benches, sloping green hills, traditional music, and warmth of community.

stage

William Head on Stage gets bespoke with *45 Years in Orbit*

> "Interestingly, most of the guys that we work with are lifers. A good 50 percent of the guys we're working with are guys that have been in for a long time and are in for a long time [to come]."
>
> RICK WAINES
> *45 YEARS IN ORBIT*



PHOTO PROVIDED
A performer during a previous William Head on Stage show.

NIK OVSTAAS
STUDENT EDITOR

William Head Prison sits on a desolate peninsula of rock, surrounded by dense forest on one side and the fathomless depths of the Pacific Ocean on the other. Despite this lonely setting—or perhaps because of it—the inmates locked inside have found a way to bring escapism, community, and creativity to life in the facility. Through their long-running William Head on Stage (WHoS) program, which began in 1981, they perform shows the public can attend—provided they buy a ticket and pass security screening. The annual stage productions range from classics like *Macbeth* and *Waiting for Godot* to more absurdist fare like Albert Camus' *The Stranger*.

This year, the production is *45 Years in Orbit*, a bespoke piece written by playwright Rick Waines at the inmate's request. The plot takes place on planet Kalgon, where there's never been any crime—until now.

"[The] first thing I thought of was *Bill and Ted's Excellent Adventure*," says Waines. "We have a planet named Kalgon that has had millennia of sort of utopian civilization, where no one has ever broken any laws. Until Josh breaks 'the orb' and chaos ensues on Kalgon, and the Kalgonian council has to figure out what to do with Josh, so they decide they've heard about this other blue orb a long way away that has a lot of experience with orb breakers, and so they decide to come to Earth."

As fun and silly as that may sound, there are darker, more meta themes afoot, themes that the prisoners can relate to and had asked Waines to incorporate.

"I wrote them a script which they have contributed to by helping me to write something that makes as much sense to them as it did to me; for example, I put in lots of references to [Samuel] Beckett and [Bertolt] Brecht," says Waines. "These guys were kind of like dramaturges, and that's how the [writing] process went [...] They wanted a break from the personal storytelling [of previous years], and while I don't know that that was necessarily universally desired, generally speaking, people wanted to have a more light-hearted show."

It makes sense that the inmates would want to have more say in the process. The men are responsible for all of the background organization of the shows, and the operation of the WHoS non-profit board that secures funding for the plays. William Head is now a minimum-security facility, which has created higher turnover, with inmates serving shorter sentences. It wasn't always that way, and some inmates are not merely in for a petty crime.

"Interestingly, most of the guys that we work with are lifers," says Waines. "A good 50 percent of the guys we're working with are guys that have been in for a long time and are in for a long time [to come]. The stability of the William Head [inmate] board is a little bit less. There's a lot of turnover each year, for the past five years."

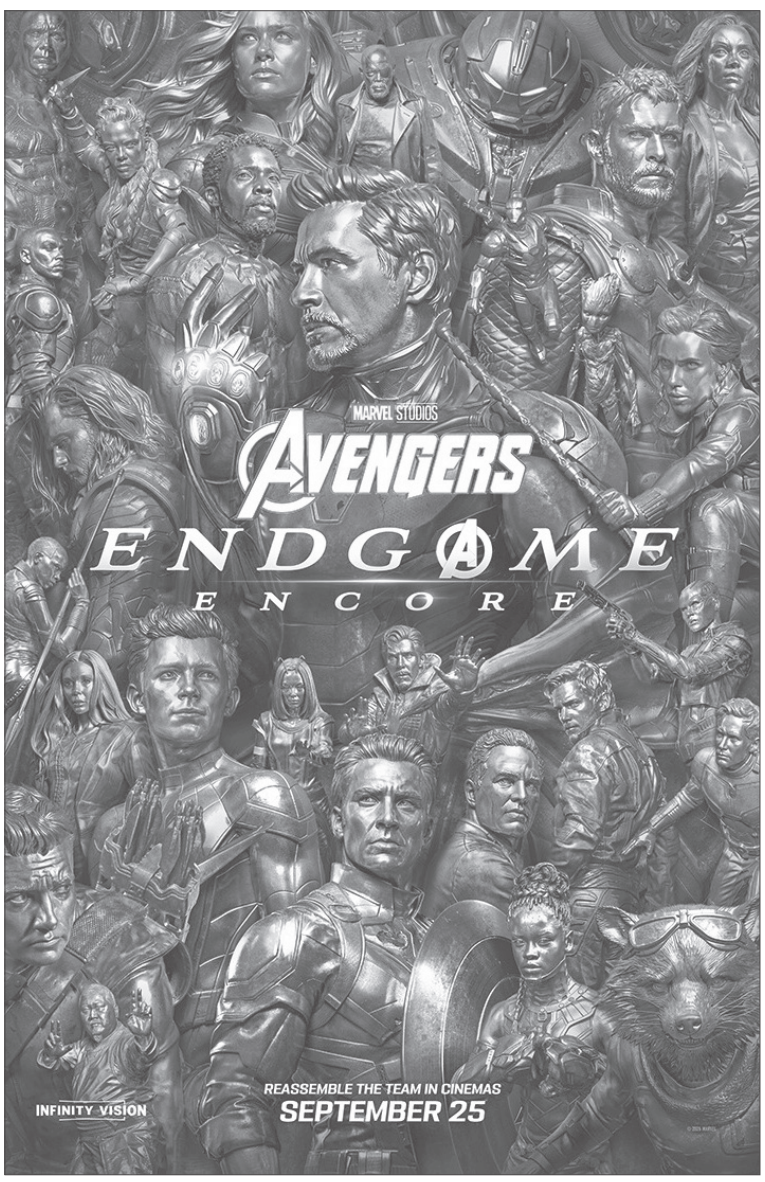
This is where another non-profit has stepped in to lend a hand and keep the momentum going.

"Full Spectrum Arts Society has been supporting William Head to coordinate their schedules, help them with choosing what they want to do each year," says Waines. "We help them with the grants that they write to raise some money, and then, of course, there's the third party, which is William Head Institution, and we've been blessed with wardens who have seen the value of it and allow and support us to continue our work."

45 Years in Orbit
7:30 pm Friday, October 23
and Saturday, October 24
Sold out, William Head Institution
whonstage.ca

review

Marvel tries to resurrect MCU with *Avengers Endgame: Encore*



LANE CHEVRIER
CONTRIBUTING WRITER

There was recently an unexpected rerun of Marvel's *Avengers: Endgame* at theatres. *Avengers Endgame: Encore* adds a few scenes designed to prime viewers for *Avengers: Doomsday*, releasing in December.

I was more than happy to see it again. This film is the second to last of Phase Three of the Marvel Cinematic Universe (MCU), what a friend of mine called "the last good era." What followed was a bizarre fall from grace with the introduction of the Multiverse Saga. Suddenly, there were no stakes anymore, because in the multiverse, anything can happen, and it often did, in the most bewilderingly poorly written ways.

When stakes are removed and plot convenience becomes the driving force behind a narrative, lazy writers thrive. Plots no longer need to make sense because the multiverse is *wacky*, man! Events can be strung together with the flimsiest of thread, with zero accountability. We saw this in the likes of *Doctor Strange in the Multiverse of Madness* and *Shang-Chi and the Legend of the Ten Rings*. Stories became convoluted and messy, and viewers became tired of it.

This fatigue was compounded by the fact that after *Endgame*, many of the MCU cast took their leave. Beginning with *Iron Man* in 2008, the MCU was driven by staple characters such as Thor, Captain America, Iron Man, The Hulk, and Black Widow. In *Endgame*, Captain America literally retired, and Iron Man and Black Widow died. The group had disbanded.

What followed was a series of weakly written spin-off sequels receiving lukewarm response. Marvel had entered their "quantity over quality" phase, desperately hoping to stoke the flames and draw in new viewers, now that everyone who grew up with The Avengers had lost interest and moved on.

The MCU also went through a shift towards politicising stories to align with the popular narratives of the time, such as the Girl Boss era, in which writers championed feminism (with no understanding of the concept) by creating female characters who coldly and victoriously display all of the masculine traits they apparently loathe, while having no faults (or personality) and doing no wrong. Some notably awful shows and films in this era are *Captain Marvel*, *Ms. Marvel*, *Eternals*, *Thor: Love and Thunder*, and *She-Hulk: Attorney at Law*.

Writers appeared to forget that what makes stories compelling is not unrealistic, perfect characters who act like angry robots, but real, relatable people with flaws. When a character begins with weaknesses and has to overcome them and grow, they create a dynamic story, which doesn't exist if they begin perfect and end perfect.

Endgame: Encore marks yet another act of desperate flailing by Marvel Studios, hoping to stoke the flames for *Doomsday* (which brings back series favourite Robert Downey Jr. to play Doctor Doom, clearly trying to capitalize on nostalgia).

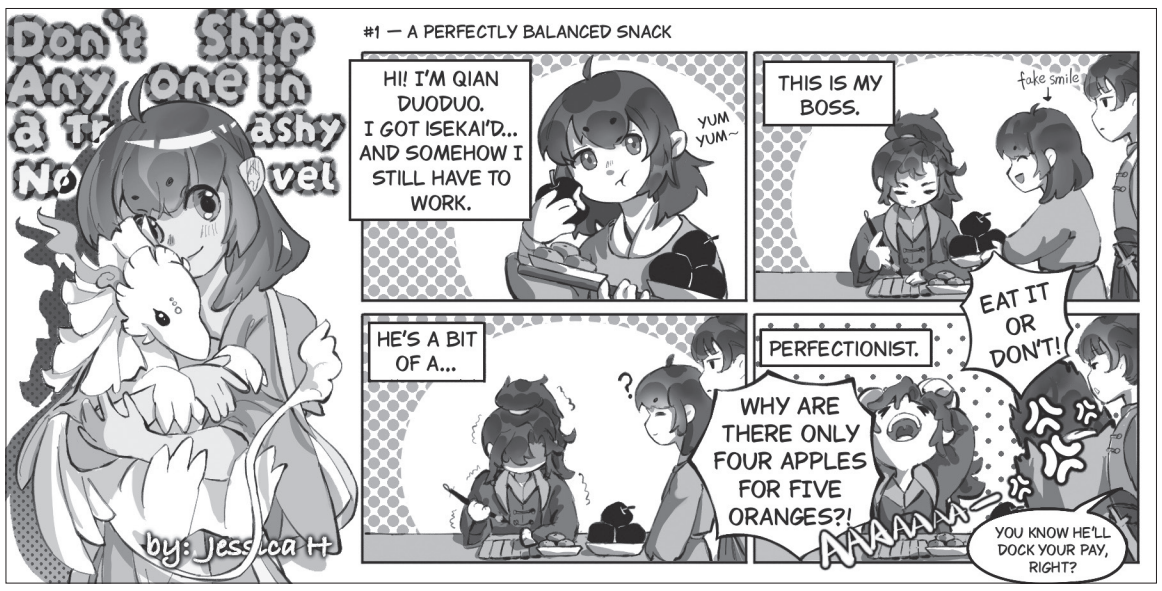
I like a lot of Marvel movies, and there is nobody who wants *Doomsday* to succeed more than me. Movies like the new *Spider-Man* series and *Deadpool & Wolverine* show that Marvel can still produce good films when it finds writers and directors who are not lazy or politically motivated. I'm cautiously optimistic that *Doomsday* will be an unexpectedly great film, but I certainly don't think it will be a resurrection for the MCU. Sometimes, stories need to be allowed to gracefully die, before living becomes a forced and pointless struggle.

I hope that *Doomsday* will be the final entry in the MCU... but I know it won't.

Evie the Alien - Jazmyn Hodges



Don't Ship Anyone in a Trashy Novel - Jessica He



Selah - Lauren Dellebuur



contest

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NIK OVSTAAS/*NEXUS*

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Trill's Recipes

by Trillium McNabb

Spicy meat chili

Ingredients:
2 pounds ground beef
1 can diced tomato
2 cans tomato paste
1 can chipotle in adobo sauce
2 cans of corn
3 onions
3 green jalapenos
1 red bell pepper
1 orange bell pepper
2 yellow bell peppers
2 tbsp vegetable oil
1 tbsp and 1 tsp of chili powder
1 tsp salt

As the semester continues to get busier and the weather continues to get colder, I want something warm and easy to grab. This chili recipe takes a little while to make, but once it's made it can be portioned and put in the freezer for a quick and easy hot dish.

First, preheat the oven to 450 F. Take a casserole dish and put in the ground beef, then add 1 tsp of chili powder and 1 tsp of salt, sprinkling the seasoning evenly across the meat. On the bottom of the casserole dish, press the meat flat and even. Bake in the oven for 35 minutes. Take the meat out of the oven and skim as much fat out of the pan as you can, then broil in the oven for 5 minutes.

Dice the onions, bell peppers, and green jalapenos into about 1-cm chunks. Drain the adobo sauce from 1 can of chipotles into a dish, to be used later to your spice preference. Chop the chipotles to the same size as the rest of the vegetables.

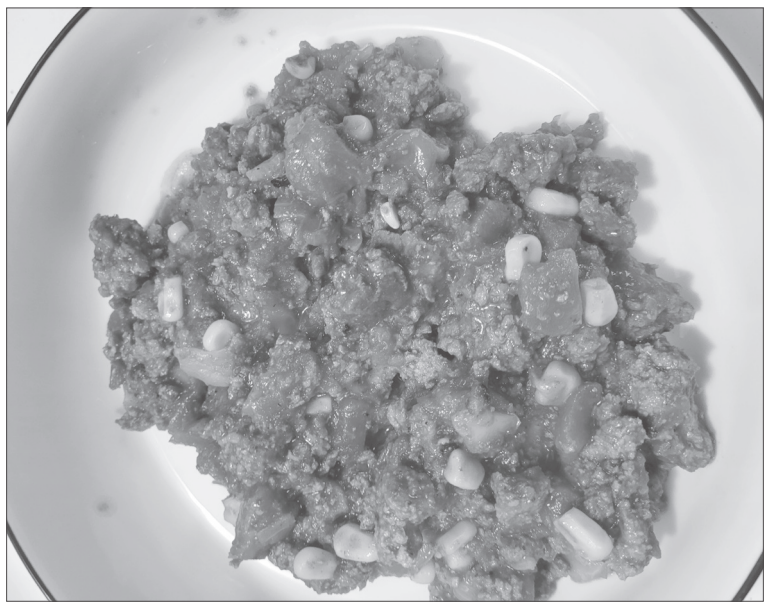
In a large pot, heat 2 tbsp of vegetable oil on medium-high heat. Transfer your diced onions, bell peppers, and jalapenos to the pot, adding the drained can of corn. Cook until the onions start to become translucent. Using a spatula, break the ground beef up into large chunks and add it to the pot with the vegetables, stirring thoroughly.

Add the can of diced tomatoes to the pot and mix thoroughly. Let everything simmer for a few minutes. Add the 2 cans of tomato paste, stirring thoroughly between each addition. Put in 1 tbsp of chili powder and let simmer for a minute. Finally, add in the chipotles, then turn the temperature down to low. Continue to simmer for 45 minutes, making sure to mix the chili every 10 minutes.

Make sure to taste test your chili; add 1/2 tsp of salt if needed. If you like your chili spicier, add the adobo sauce 1 tsp at a time until you reach your preference.

This recipe can be eaten right away on top of rice or roasted potatoes, with cheese on top; however, as I mentioned before, you can also portion and freeze the chili for up to three months. To store the chili, let it cool completely and pour it into large plastic bags. Shimmy it flat and seal, then place in the freezer. When you take it out, thaw the frozen chili by placing the bag in the sink with hot water. When you can easily press and pinch the chili in all parts of the bag, transfer the chili into a pot. Heat the chili on medium-high until it starts to simmer.

Remove from the heat and it's ready to eat.



TRILLIUM MCNABB/*NEXUS*

As the weather gets colder, recipes like this one for chili become more enticing.



A Student's Guide to Local Politics

by Amelia Wilde

Trash bags and governing bodies

I've been thinking a lot about the power of "them" in my life. The faceless, nameless entity we ascribe the burden of our problems onto.

I was driving to school the other day when I noticed a trash bag sprawled out on the side of the road, the same one that had been collecting burned rubber for well over a week. "Why haven't they done anything about that trash yet?" I thought to myself, as I quickly swerved around it. It took me a moment to realize that I had played a role in its continued status by not stopping to do anything about it. I realized that in a moment, "they" could have become "me," "myself," or perhaps even "I."

In the constant demand of our fast-paced lives, it's easy to get lost in pointing fingers and playing the external blame game, especially when it comes to problems that personally inconvenience us. My recent revelation indicated just how easy it can be to fall into this trap, regardless of how much I've researched and involved myself into local political matters—although I will say that amidst a sea of people who I swear have never merged lanes in their life, I'd argue that it was understandable to stare vengefully at this pitiful trash bag for a brief millisecond.

The bigger picture of this trash bag is reflected in many conversations I've had with my peers about recent political tensions, especially since there are currently two separate elections happening simultaneously in BC. I hear people argue about how "the government" is acting, when I'm not truly convinced they know which government they're even mad at.

This isn't to say that their claims aren't justified, but since many have ritualized endless, fast-paced content into their lives, it seems that people are increasingly becoming more outraged by misguided factoids (looking at you, generative AI) rather than researching or acting upon these beliefs. It's way easier to shake your fist and yell at an unnamed entity for not picking up the trash than it is to take a moment to consider who's responsible for the mess—and think about how you could change your situation.

The most direct force of change you can act upon right now is showing up to vote, and this upcoming provincial election is stacking up to be of paramount importance in our lives.

The BC provincial government oversees many vital factors in our lives, including housing, health care, climate action, transportation, and education. As a student myself, I can recognize how hard it is to spend time researching every politician individually, especially when reports feel so divisive and reactive. I would encourage you to simply pick one of the factors mentioned above that you feel the strongest about and take five minutes to explore how each party feels about that topic. You'd be surprised how much you'll learn.

You may even find some trash bags to clean up along the way.



Mindset Matters

by Feya Rose

Rest without "earning it"

I'm sure we can all understand the excitement (or anxiety) of starting new projects, whether it's at school, work, or home. We want to prove to others, and maybe even ourselves, that we can complete everything set before us in a timely manner.

In a society where we're often pushed this concept that our worth is tied directly to our capacity and productivity, it's easy to forget that we're allowed to rest. In fact, we need to take time to rest. This unspoken notion that you need to earn rest is pushed upon us: you need to complete all your tasks first and then you can take a break on the weekend. But allowing yourself to rest is an integral part of that productivity. I know it sounds a bit backwards, but hear me out.

The comparison I like to use is machines. Machines can go a long time without pause, however, even they need to rest—to power down and have maintenance done to keep running smoothly in the long term. In effect, short-term breaks lead to long-term functionality. This ensures the machine functions for longer before being replaced.

The parts of your body are like the components of a machine. Your organs and muscles? They need rest to recover after use. If you don't maintain regular maintenance for your body, just like a machine, parts will fail or break. However, we aren't remotely as durable as most machines; we can't run nearly as long before we break. So, if even machines need pauses or breaks, why wouldn't we afford ourselves the same consideration?

Don't get me wrong, though: rest doesn't just mean sleep (although sleep is critical to the maintenance of your body's inner workings, as it's the primary time you can heal and rejuvenate). Rest also means just doing things that are low energy, low stress, and low impact.

Do you enjoy watching a movie or reading a book? Going for a swim at the beach or lake? Spending time with your best friend? Playing video games? While these may engage parts of you, the demand is minimal and therefore they still allow rest.

Your body needs this kind of rest; it will not run forever without it. I consider it up there with oxygen, food, and water—we cannot survive long without these components. And if you're still not convinced, then here's a hard truth: the recovery period from letting yourself reach injury or burnout is much longer than if you just gave yourself 15 minutes here or there. If you let yourself hit that point, your body is going to make you rest, regardless of whether or not you want to.

So, if you're the type who struggles to let yourself slow down, consider this your permission slip. You don't need to earn it; you have the right and the need to rest.

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eyed on spooky campus



GREG PRATT/*NEXUS*

The Liz Ashton Campus Centre building at Camosun College's Interurban campus looms in the background during a recent spooky, cobweb-filled October night

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