

NEXUS

october 10, 2018
issue 4 | volume 29
nexusnewspaper.com

camosun’s student voice since 1990
student politics

Camosun College Student Society gears up for fall student elections

“It’s up to you to decide how you want to spend your time at college, because it is probably the most important time in a young person’s life.”

OLIVER SHERRING
CAMOSUN STUDENT

ADAM MARSH
STUDENT EDITOR

The Camosun College Student Society (CCSS) fall student elections are happening from Monday, October 22 to Wednesday, October 24. Aside from the candidates for the CCSS board of governors, the election ballots will include two referendum questions. The CCSS board of directors approved a motion on August 13 to hold a referendum on whether or not Camosun students should be members of the Canadian Alliance of Student Associations (CASA). The ballot will also have a referendum question about what to do with the Canadian Federation of Students (CFS) membership fees that the CCSS has continued to collect following the CFS’ June 9 decision to expel all BC member locals, including the CCSS, from the CFS. Every Camosun student paid roughly \$9 in CFS fees between June and September; students now



FILE PHOTO

The Camosun College Student Society is holding its fall student elections this month; there will be two referendum questions on the ballot this time.

have a say in what they want that money to go toward. The CCSS is asking if students would approve of the money going to a CCSS campaigns and advocacy fund, for now. At some point before December 31, 2019, the amount that was being collected from Camosun students for CFS fees will go to the British Columbia Federation of Students, which is raising its fee by the same amount that Camosun students were paying the CFS.

CCSS executive director Michel Turcotte says if students don’t want

their money to go to the CCSS campaigns and advocacy fund, the money will likely go straight to the BCFS. The CCSS would use the campaigns and advocacy fund for campaign- and advocacy-related activities and, potentially, to pay CASA fees. As outlined in the referendum question, if the CCSS joins CASA, students would not start paying CASA membership fees until January 1, 2020.

Turcotte adds that not all students necessarily know what is going on with the situations with

the CFS, the BCFS, and CASA, so for context, there will be some preamble to the two questions asked.

“Students may not quite understand that they are being faced with this choice because we are no longer a member of a federal lobbying group, and that it’s likely in the interest of colleges to lobby federally,” says Turcotte.

The number of initiatives and funding mechanisms that are controlled by the federal government that relate to post-secondary education, says Turcotte, is something that a lot of students also might not quite understand, either.

“Student loans, and student grants, and things like that are all regulated and paid for federally,” says Turcotte, “even though education is within the provincial sphere of responsibilities under the [Canadian] constitution. To ignore the federal arena is not something that would be in students’ interests.”

Second year University Transfer student Charlotte Close grew up in a household where her whole family voted; she says she intends to vote in the CCSS election when the polls open.

“I think they’re important to get the full student perspective of the college and not just the upper people,” says Close. “A girl in my history class is involved in that; she and I were talking about it, so she’s convinced me.”

First-year Mental Health and Addictions student Rachel Spall says it’s important that students vote.

“I believe it’s important to have a word and a say,” says Spall, adding that she has not looked into the voting process but will vote if she becomes more informed. “But I probably won’t if I’m ignorant to the information. I got the email [from the CCSS, about voting], I just haven’t really looked at it.”

First-year Criminal Justice student Oliver Sherring says voting in student elections is kind of like voting in any election.

“You have the power to make things the way you want them to be, and that may seem kind of selfish, but it’s up to you to decide how you want to spend your time at college, because it is probably the most important time in a young person’s life,” says Sherring.

Voting isn’t the only way to speak up about student issues. CCSS external executive Fillette Umulisa says it is important for students to become involved with the CCSS by running in the elections. Although the student society is made up of both students and non-student staff members, the majority are students; they help make everything the CCSS does possible. Umulisa says students are the backbone of the CCSS.

“People should know that the Camosun College Student Society is only going to exist if students run in the elections,” says Umulisa. “If students want to bring change to Camosun throughout their time here at the college, they need to get involved with the student society, and they need to run.”

eyed on campus




CAMOSUN COLLEGE A/V SERVICES

Camosun College held Orange Shirt Day activities on both campuses on Friday, September 28.

NEXUS

camosun's student voice since 1990

Next publication: October 24, 2018
Deadline: 9 am Monday October 15, 2018
Address: 3100 Foul Bay Rd., Victoria, BC, V8P 5J2
Location: Lansdowne Richmond House 201
Phone: 250-370-3591
Email: editor@nexusnewspaper.com
Website: nexusnewspaper.com
Publisher: Nexus Publishing Society

NEXUS PUBLISHING SOCIETY
STUDENT BOARD MEMBERS
President - Jayden Grieve
Vice-President - Katy Weicker
Treasurer/Secretary - Deniz Ünsal
Director-at-Large - Nate Downe
Director-at-Large - Adam Marsh
Director-at-Large - Renata Silva
MANAGING EDITOR
Greg Pratt
STUDENT EDITOR
Adam Marsh
STAFF WRITER
Katy Weicker
FEATURES WRITER
Fred Cameron
PROOFREADER
Juliana Cooper
ADVERTISING SALES
Greg Pratt
250-370-3593
FREE Media (national) 
advertising@free-media.com
780-421-1000

NEXUS IS A MEMBER OF
CANADIAN UNIVERSITY PRESS

CONTRIBUTORS
Stephanie Ankersen
Sunki Baek
Katrina Brooke
Nate Downe
Gwyneth Faulkner
Jayden Grieve
Bailey Legare
Renata Silva
Josiah Snell

Something on your mind? If you're a Camosun student, send *Open Space* submissions (up to 500 words) to editor@nexusnewspaper.com. Include your student number. Thanks!

All editorial content appearing in *Nexus* is property of the Nexus Publishing Society. Stories, photographs, and artwork contained herein cannot be reproduced without written permission of the Nexus Publishing Society. The views and opinions expressed herein are those of the authors, not of *Nexus*. *Nexus* has no official ties to the administration of Camosun College. One copy of *Nexus* is available per issue, per person.

SEND A LETTER
Nexus prints letters to the editor. *Nexus* reserves the right to refuse publication of letters. Letters must include full name and student number if a Camosun student (not printed). *Nexus* accepts all letters by email to editor@nexusnewspaper.com. We reserve the right to edit all letters.

OVERHEARD AT NEXUS: "He liked my face. It's fine."

SPEAK UP



OLIVIA RYAN-SEHMITT
"It'll be kind of a rocky beginning. Maybe [it should be allowed in] designated spots, but it would be tricky because you'd have to have those spots separate from designated cigarette smoking spots. Medicinal marijuana, that would make sense."



RYAN KEAREY
"Maybe in a designated area. Other than that, I don't know. If you have health issues, that makes more sense; for recreational use, it doesn't seem 100 percent necessary... As long as people aren't doing it in an area where they're going to bother someone else."



CONNY LIN
"I don't care about it because I never do it; I've never tried it, so I don't care. All my friends are doing it; it doesn't really matter for me. It's rude—impolite to other people, I guess, because of the smell. It just makes other people not so comfortable."



TAKSHACK TAKSHACK
"It's a bad thing. I don't feel like it should be allowed on campus. This place is for studying."



ASHLEY MIGNEAULT
"I don't really feel like it affects me as long as I'm not walking through campus and everybody's smoking in the main area. The best way to do it is to have areas designated for it so they're available."



ROBYN RUSSELL
"As long as it's in the designated smoking areas, I don't care. I can't blame it on that if I don't get good grades."

student editor's letter Will marijuana make sense at Camosun?

Ass. Chair. Vacant psychological abyss. Put together, that was what marijuana was in my life for years. It made me a useless lump of matter in the universe, rendering every thought unfinished, every emotion unfelt. It was the missing ingredient in my life for years and I smoked it constantly, seven or eight times a day, at least.

As I wrote a few issues ago (see "Bottom of the barrel," nexusnewspaper.com), it's been a while since I lived that atrocious life, and it's a really strange time to be in recovery, with all this chatter around about legalizing marijuana.

You might think that I'm totally against it, but I've advocated for the legalization and decriminalization of all illicit drugs—yes, even crack and heroin—for years. A common misconception people have is that it is the drug that draws the person in; this is wrong. There is no one known cause of addiction, but one thing is for sure: people are drawn to drugs; drugs aren't drawn to people.

The legal status of those drugs is not going to change that; if anything, making the drug legal is one less dangerous hurdle for people to jump over. There are always going to be elements of danger when it comes to drugs. As a society, it's a positive thing if we can make it less dangerous where we can, and not treat people who smoke too much weed as criminals.

Camosun College is trying to figure out how legalization will change its curriculum and the student experience for students. Turn to page 6 for the complete lowdown on how it's going to impact college life.

Adam Marsh, student editor
adam@nexusnewspaper.com

flashback 25 Years Ago in Nexus



GREG PRATT
MANAGING EDITOR

That went on for way too long: In our October 18, 1993 issue, the story "Permware to be reinstated" talked about how Beaver Foods, who ran the Lansdowne cafeteria at the time, were making the decision to bring non-disposable cutlery, plates, cups, and bowls back to the cafeteria. Beaver Foods had used these before, but went back to disposable ware after having too many non-disposable dishes and pieces of cutlery stolen. "We had permware in there before," said Camosun food services chair Brian Genge, not mincing words, "and it was a dismal failure."

Don't mess with Kraft Dinner: The story "Student handbook met with disapproval" in this issue detailed how some students had some

issues with the Camosun College Student Society (CCSS) student handbook that year. Student Doug McConnell said in the story that he was "upset" and "disgusted" at some items in the handbook, such as the information that the makers of Kraft Dinner test on animals and union bust. "That is just pathetic," McConnell told us. "There is no reason for that to be in there." CCSS chairperson John-Henry Harter replied to McConnell's concerns by saying "It's important for students to know who they are and what's going on around them."

This started with permware, too: Letter-writer Nick Lovejoy accused the Camosun College Student Society (CCSS) of being "a group of hypocrites who feel they have the right to throw their authority around" in the issue before this one in 1993, so CCSS external affairs executive James Atchison sent in a letter to us this issue, calmly explaining that "As Society management, decision-making is part of our jobs," and telling Lovejoy those two words any student who cares should hear now and again: "get involved."

open space Schools should be failing students

BAILEY LEGARE
CONTRIBUTING WRITER

Schools should fail students earlier than high school.

School is a place where people are supposed to learn how to do things and succeed. But I've found that the school system itself is a bit of a wreck. Not many people are prepared for life after school.

I've known people who only just made it through to high school because they weren't allowed to stay behind. They either didn't understand the material that was taught to them or they just wouldn't do the work.

Unfortunately, if you don't do well, you don't stay in a grade until you know what you need to know. A good example of this is math—

Most people don't know what it's like to fail classes until they reach high school, and by that point the impact is larger than it would have been when we were younger.

many people have a hard time with it. I've always had a hard time with math. But they push us through anyway.

To be honest, I should not have passed Grade 6. The only reason I did was because I passed some of the courses. My Grade 6 teacher got me help in that year and was the reason I made it to high school.

Most people don't know what it's like to fail classes until they reach high school, and by that point the impact is larger than it would have been when we were younger.

Now, I don't always agree with holding young students back. I do agree that it's not easy being in a class with people of a different age. And while there are different circumstances for different people,

at least half of them were held back a grade and told that it wasn't the end of the world, well, it wouldn't have been the end of the world, because they could have learned what the teachers were wanting to teach.

That course about planning was a requirement in my high school, and it was also one of the most failed classes. This class was basically several different classes merged into one. Overall, it was not a bad idea to have it set up this way, but why did people fail it? Because there was so much crammed into a one-semester class. I don't remember much, if anything, from that course. This is one reason why schools should be able to fail students earlier in their school career: to make sure they actually learn what they need to.

Frights at Craigdarroch Castle, ghosts at Camosun's Lansdowne campus, and the one and only Frankenstein... all this and more in our next issue, on stands on October 24!

literature Camosun instructor Ken Steacy collaborates with Margaret Atwood on new comic



ADAM MARSH/NEXUS

Camosun College Comics and Graphic Novels program co-founder and instructor Ken Steacy.

ADAM MARSH
STUDENT EDITOR

When the world becomes a dark, cold, and unforgiving place, people turn to what comforts them. In Canadian author Margaret Atwood's short story *Oursonette*, that comfort is comics for protagonist Al Zurakowski. Camosun Comics and Graphic Novels program co-founder and instructor Ken Steacy says Atwood's story—which is based on a style of Canadian comic books called Canadian Whites—got into him and wouldn't let him go.

"Any good piece of fiction or literature or art or movies or TV series, when it does have its hooks in you, when you leave the theatre... you're a little sad because there's a

yearning," says Steacy. "You want more."

Steacy decided to try to get in contact with Atwood after being inspired by her story; one thing led to another, and he found himself spending an afternoon with her going over character development for what became *War Bears*, his comic collaboration with Atwood based on *Oursonette*.

"Pinch me; I'm dreaming," he says with a laugh, reflecting on that afternoon.

Steacy and Atwood would exchange emails and meet to discuss the story, and Atwood would provide tweaks in terms of character development and plot. Steacy says he followed the original *Oursonette*

story in this comic adaption, and says that Atwood is a great cartoonist who is a real history buff and deeply invested in Canadian history and Canadian culture and identities.

"But this is what she chose to write about," says Steacy. "Also, people don't know this, but she's a great cartoonist. She's incredibly funny and does these wonderful little cartoons. It was just very serendipitous."

Steacy says that, stylistically and thematically, the adaption is in keeping with the original Canadian Whites. It has some black and white pages and some colour, but, first and foremost, it's patriotic, says Steacy.

"It's a very Canadian story. When I count my blessings, very

near the top of the list is that I'm Canadian. I live and work in the best country in the world. Of course, as a Canadian, you're not supposed to say that; we're much too polite," says Steacy, with a laugh.

Canadian Whites contributed to—if not completely formed—a distinctly Canadian subculture within the comic industry, Steacy says. Both the original and the adaption of the story reflected the time period the nation was in. It was total war, says Steacy.

"The entire nation—everyone—is somehow directly or peripherally involved in the war effort," he says. "Everyone was pulling together."

Steacy says Atwood's original story reflected that. It was about a boy, Zurakowski, who couldn't serve in the war. He sat at home,

ridiculed by those around him for being lazy; he found solace in comic books, and eventually they became his contribution to the war effort.

"This will be his contribution to the war. He will boost morale; his characters will encourage people to buy war bonds... he has a very pure heart," says Steacy. "The character he creates is also a reflection of his desire to show his support for our allies."

Steacy says that Canadian Whites became an integral part of the war effort in the story and boosted morale for those on the frontlines.

"It was all about fighting fascism and punching Nazis and all that good stuff," says Steacy, "but also, of course, there's a very Canadian flavour to them."

NEWS BRIEFS

Camosun instructor first to defend doctoral dissertation in traditional territory
Camosun indigenization and sustainability strategist Dawn Smith recently became the first person in the Faculty of Education at the University of British Columbia to defend her thesis off campus in her traditional Nuu-chah-nulth territory. Smith's thesis focused on epistemological collisions experienced by Indigenous professors teaching Indigenous topics to non-Indigenous students. Smith defended her dissertation at North Island College.

Camosun goes purple in support
Camosun College's Mental Health and Well-being Weeks run until Friday, October 12. Students are invited to wear purple on Wednesday, October 10 in honour of Amanda Todd, who died on October 10, 2012. The Young Building will be lit up purple from October 10 to 12 to show support for the national #LightUpPurple campaign in honour of Todd.

Camosun holds farmers market
Camosun held its first farmers market on Wednesday, October 3 from 2:30 until 6 pm at the Lansdowne campus. Local farmers brought their produce for students and the public to purchase in the interest of sustainability. The college may bring the market back as a seasonal event but was unable to confirm that at press time.

Applications for Youth Parliament open
The British Columbia Youth Parliament (BCYP) is now taking applications from youth between

the ages of 16 and 21 who would like to spend five days in the BC Legislature to help set the course for the year ahead for the BCYP. Applications are due by October 23. See www.bcyp.org for info.

\$250-million building project approved in Saanich
A building project worth \$250 million was unanimously approved at a public hearing in Saanich on Tuesday, September 18. The Nigel Valley housing plan includes supportive, market, and affordable housing. Architect Franc D'Ambrosio and Malcolm McNaughton, BC Housing's director of regional development for Vancouver Island, communicated the plans before the Saanich council; the development will be near Darwin Avenue and Vernon Avenue, close to Uptown.

-ADAM MARSH

Nexus media: we're not just a newspaper.

Head over to nexusnewspaper.com for web exclusives and to comment on stories.

We're also on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram. Join the conversation!

We also always want new volunteer writers. No experience necessary. Email editor@nexusnewspaper.com today.

know your profs
Camosun instructor Christian Lieb on the future of history

“What I really enjoy about Camosun is the collegiality of the faculty, and the small class sizes that make it possible to get to know students. The human interactions really shape the experience here, and that has been very positive.”

CHRISTIAN LIEB
CAMOSUN COLLEGE

KATY WEICKER
STAFF WRITER

Know Your Profs is an ongoing series of profiles on the instructors at Camosun College. Every issue we ask a different instructor at Camosun the same 10 questions in an attempt to get to know them a little better.

Do you have an instructor who you want to see interviewed in the paper? Maybe you want to know more about one of your teachers, but you're too busy, or shy, to ask? Email editor@nexusnewspaper.com and we'll add your instructor to our list of teachers to talk to.

This issue we talked to History instructor Christian Lieb about his love of red curry and the value of studying the past.

1. *What do you teach and how long have you been at Camosun?*
I teach history courses at Camosun, covering a wide range of topics from Canadian and American to European and world history. I also teach a couple of courses that have a narrower focus, such as Second World War and Hollywood as Historian. I started teaching at Camosun in 2016. Before that, I taught history at the University of Victoria since 2004, and I've also taught at Vancouver Island University.

2. *What do you personally get out of teaching?*
As an instructor, I have the privilege to keep learning all the time—

reading historical records, the latest research, and the daily news. I also enjoy hearing students' insights, and I appreciate the knowledge they bring to class discussions. Student contributions enrich the learning experience by allowing us to think about events in the past from different perspectives. It's equally exciting to see how students grow over time, and, in some cases, to hear what they are doing after graduation.

3. *What's one thing you wish your students knew about you?*
That I actually mean it when I say that they should ask questions in class if anything is unclear or if they would like more details on topics that they are interested in. They are also welcome to come and see me if they get stuck with their assignments—I am here to help.

4. *What's one thing you wish they didn't know about you?*
Hmm—that would kind of defeat the purpose if I actually disclosed that here...

5. *What's the best thing that's ever happened to you as a teacher here?*
What I really enjoy about Camosun is the collegiality of the faculty, and the small class sizes that make it possible to get to know students. The human interactions really shape the experience here, and that has been very positive.



KATY WEICKER/NEXUS

Camosun College History instructor Christian Lieb appreciates the knowledge students bring to class discussions.

6. *What's the worst thing that's ever happened to you as a teacher here?*

Nothing very terrible comes to mind. One disappointment was that due to low enrolment, Camosun was not able to run the American survey course this fall. Given recent events south of the border, I am hoping there will be an upswing in interest in the historic and present role of the United States in world affairs in the future, though.

7. *What do you see in the future of post-secondary education?*

It's difficult to predict what exactly is going to happen since there are a lot of different factors at play, such as student preferences, public funding, and government priorities. However, demographically, we do see a decline in student

numbers, which will put a squeeze on resources. This has certainly had an impact on the humanities, which is unfortunate, since History students learn valuable skills such as understanding the complex processes that shaped societies past and present, finding information, and interpreting evidence. All of these are transferrable skills that will serve students well, no matter what they are doing in the future.

8. *What do you do to relax on the weekends?*

I like to spend my weekends with my wife and son, ideally outdoors, hiking in places such as East Sooke Park, and taking photographs.

9. *What is your favourite meal?*
My favourite meal is a Thai red curry with coconut rice.

10. *What's your biggest pet peeve?*

As a historian, I am concerned that many governments today are operating in a "history-free zone." We see populist governments raising tariff barriers, lowering taxes, and undermining welfare systems, while also setting stricter limits on citizenship and immigration. Similar policies were put in place in the 1930s—they didn't work then and they are unlikely to be helpful today. The structures put in place after the Second World War were meant to respond to the problems of the 1930s, and now it looks like they are being dismantled without a clear plan of how to effectively replace them. As philosopher George Santayana already put it in 1905, "Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it."



2001 E Douglas St **250-380-1755**

New and Used PCs and components **Repair/Buy/Sell/Trade**

www.boomerscomputers.com



NEXUS

Call, email, stop by. We want to hear your story tips.

250-370-3591. editor@nexusnewspaper.com. richmond house 201, lansdowne.

words
Demian DinéYazhi' tackles queer and Indigenous issues in art world



PHOTO PROVIDED

Portland-based artist and poet Demian DinéYazhi' will be reading in Victoria this month.

STEPHANIE ANKERSEN
CONTRIBUTING WRITER

Portland-based transdisciplinary artist and poet Demian DinéYazhi' is making a space for queer Indigenous people within the art world, but it's proving to be a hard task.

"I think for a while I had a really difficult time having pride in my identity because it was tied so much to this border town [Gallup, New Mexico, where DinéYazhi' grew up] that is just very toxic and racist," says DinéYazhi'. "I think moving to Portland definitely made me realize how much of who I am is actually

tied to where I grew up and within that I became interested in breaking down why that place is the way it is."

Growing up in the '90s, DinéYazhi' found an identity in a newly shifting landscape of labels, which helped open up the conversation.

"I think the labels are an entry point for non-Indigenous people, but I think it's also an entry point for Indigenous people, and I think that there is a little bit of play there. I think on the one hand it's like actually talking within this western theoretical mindset and the other part of it, I think, it's also

allowing Indigenous people into that conversation."

Navigating multiple identities, DinéYazhi' is trying to find a balance between two worlds. DinéYazhi' admits that they don't feel very supported within Indigenous art communities, attributing some of this lack of acceptance to the way their art "refuses to work within this idea of traditional Indigenous art."

Similarly, they don't always find the support they are looking for within the LGBTQ+ community, either.

"I don't know how much the queer community cares or even

thinks about Indigenous people," they say. "I know there are some people within the community that do hold space for that, but within a larger context, I don't think the queer community [supports] the Indigenous community as much as it could."

On Friday, October 12, DinéYazhi' will be performing their poem "An Infected Sunset" here in Victoria. Within this piece, they examine the ways in which nature landscapes are interpreted. They "play a little bit with an alternative view of the sunset from an Indigenous perspective in a post-apocalyptic landscape," says DinéYazhi'.

Through their art, DinéYazhi' encourages us to think about the ways in which we talk about both Indigenous activism and ways of being.

"I think that word, 'activism,' is very complex and perhaps even a little problematic within Indigenous communities," they say. "I don't think that we have necessarily had any other option than to be activ-

ists, and I think our activism is tied mostly to our will and desire to both survive but also to sustain our cultures and languages. So I think it's challenging within a western perspective, because our activism is just tied to taking care of the Earth; it's just tied to basic human relationships with the planet that we live on. I don't think that within an Indigenous practice or an Indigenous mentality or philosophy those things are radical notions, but when you get western civilization and white-settler, colonial, hetero-patriarchal, white-supremacist social structures and power structures coming into direct contact with Indigenous people, then it turns into this really radical idea. But, really, it's so much embedded into our ceremony and ways of being."

Demian DinéYazhi'
7 pm Friday, October 12
Free,
Art Gallery of Greater Victoria
aggv.ca

stage
New play about motherhood has Camosun College roots

KATY WEICKER
STAFF WRITER

For actress and playwright Nicolle Natrass, the journey to motherhood was not a simple one.

"It was quite a journey," says Natrass, "because I always said if I don't have a child by the time that I'm 40 then that's okay, because I had lots of kids in my life. You know, 'happy auntie,' and all that stuff."

However, fertility issues that she discovered later in life meant that only 50 percent of Natrass' reproductive system was ever working. It was a discovery that took an emotional toll on her.

"I was really grieving in my 39th year, like, 'Okay, so am I not gonna be a mom?' This is the time where I'm going to have to let that go, and all that stuff was coming up for me," she says.

Fast-forward to her 40th birthday, and her acceptance that motherhood may not be in the cards.

"We always said, 'If you don't get pregnant by the time you're 40, then that's it,' and that's what I had accepted. But emotionally trying to accept that—intellectually, that was one thing, but emotionally trying to accept that was a big deal. I didn't do anything big for my 40th birthday. We went to a retreat and had a couple's massage and a mineral bath, and I was just kinda like, 'I wanna be by myself for this transition.'"

"Moms have so much of their experience that's going on—so much of their identity and their life—and they're in this transition that we should write down."

NICOLLE NATRASS
MAMAHOOD: BURSTING INTO LIGHT

Three weeks later, Natrass got the surprise of a lifetime when she found out her now-nine-year-old son was conceived on her birthday.

"I was like, 'Ooookay...,'" Natrass says with a laugh.

The following few years of pregnancy, birth, infancy, and life up to the terrible twos is the foundation for her one-woman show *Mamahood: Bursting into Light*—a project conceived at Camosun College.

"I pitched a course called Mama Memoirs," she says, "because when I was a new mom, I started having all these ideas, and I'm a playwright, so I'd just start writing down different ideas. And then I thought, you know, moms have so much of their experience that's going on—so much of their identity and their life—and they're in this transition that we should write down. So, I pitched a course to Camosun, and I taught the course... and what came out of that was actually—and I write about it in

the program notes for the show—I realized that I just really needed to honour my own story."

It's a story that Natrass has been able to hone over the years, a gift she doesn't take for granted. "I love being able to go back in and learn more about my performance and about the script, because we rarely get to do that," says Natrass. "As a professional actor, it's like you have two weeks, two and a half weeks—barely—now. It used to be three weeks. Now you have two weeks to mount a show and then it's done. And you may get a remount, you may not, but then it's done."

Although Natrass admits she's lost count of how many times she's mounted *Mamahood* (her estimation is around 20), the ability to revise has allowed her to craft a story she hopes will resonate with audience members, regardless of whether they have children.

"The biggest thing I hope they



PHOTO PROVIDED

Nicolle Natrass' new one-woman show explores motherhood.

take away," says Natrass, "is renewed understanding, renewed compassion, renewed empathy for what their moms went through, for what women go through during pregnancy, birth, and post-partum."

Mamahood: Bursting into Light
Various times,
until Saturday, October 20
\$16 to \$26 (student discount available), Phoenix Theatre
finearts.uvic.ca

NEXUS

HELP US DIVERSIFY.

We want a wider range of voices in the paper.

All Camosun students can write for us; no experience is necessary. Bring your view to the paper, to the college, to the students.

Email
editor@nexusnewspaper.com today!

Cannabis confusion

What does the legalization of marijuana mean for Camosun College?

By Fred Cameron, features writer

Last June, Justin Trudeau announced the official date for recreational marijuana legalization in Canada, as he promised in his election platform. Fast forward a few months, and government officials are still scrambling to make sense of it all and to find the answers before the legalization date of October 17.

What does it all mean for us at Camosun? The college is still scrambling to figure it out, too.

It's been a long time coming; we've all witnessed the gradual societal shift. In my youth, public consumption could land a person in jail, and today it generally goes unnoticed if that same person walks down Douglas Street smoking a joint at rush hour. The government decision is probably about 15 years behind public opinion on the matter.

After sitting down to read bills C-30 and C-31, I have more questions than I did before I began. I guess I'll hit the pavement and see what I can find out.

Camosun College vice president of student experience Joan Yates says that there are still a lot of questions around the regulations surrounding cannabis legalization. She says that Camosun is waiting to see what the government does before moving forward. When I ask if students will be permitted to smoke on campus, Yates says that the short answer is that Camosun doesn't know yet.

"We are still doing the work to determine what we need to do, as are most of the other colleges in the system right now," says Yates. "There is a little bit of wait and see, in large part because we don't want to be coming in too heavy-handed. We tend to develop policy work as we see what our community needs and wants from us, so we don't know that yet."

Much of the debate has already been covered in other policy areas, says Yates, adding that the issue is less about smoking and more about protecting students' personal space.

"We have a smoking policy," Yates says. "Like cigarette smoking, there is a health issue associated with it, as well as invading people's spaces. We have a smoking policy that will cover some elements of it."

The other piece is that Camosun has student and employee conduct policies about being under the influence of anything in the classroom; Yates says these policies will remain intact.

"We want to make sure that professional practice is followed," says Yates, "i.e. when you're in the classroom,

if it has an impact where people are not effective at their work because they are under the influence, that's a different issue. That's some of the debating that we're doing about usage overall."

For now Camosun is playing wait and see, but as October 17 approaches, Yates says the college is paying very close attention.

"We have done research with other institutes to see what is occurring," says Yates. "We have received legal advice about what the parameters should be. These are all important pieces, but at the end of the day, I think that most people just carry on and go to school, and smoke in the smoking section."

Camosun chair of Economics, Statistics and University Transfer Business Bijan Ahmadi says that there are still too many unknown variables at this point to know what legalization will look like.

"Of course we're not ready," says Ahmadi. "As of today, on October 17, I believe the only place that you'll be able to access cannabis in BC, is Kamloops. They've had lots of time to create a framework, but they've waited until the last minute. They haven't really created a storefront framework. Over the past five to 10 years, the pseudo-medical access providers have been opening up storefronts and creating a framework that works. They work with people in the community, they have anecdotal evidence from their membership, they have products and supply and distribution chains, and they could be on-the-ground providers if they can be fit within a framework. It appears to me that the provincial government has a bit of an issue with that, so I'm not sure that we're ready."

One of the biggest questions, says Ahmadi, is who will be producing the product a year from now.

"Because it is an emerging industry which is constantly changing," says Ahmadi, "I don't know where that's going to go. When the new regulations came out, as distributed from the Canadian government to the provinces, they were held under the idea that the government still permits licensed producers. I believe that the model from the medical market has transitioned over to the recreational cannabis market. Now what you have are firms that have to have enough start-up and run through the hoops to get certified. The hoops on the medical side were quite significant, as far as security and testing. It really meant that only large companies could survive. The new market model, which isn't quite in place, appears to be one with a number of large commercial distributors that all sell, in BC, to an office or cannabis control board, a pre-packaged and prepared product for sale."

All markets represent new opportunities, says Ahmadi, so it does represent a new opportunity for Camosun students.

"There will be more programs involving cannabis as a part of their framework," says Ahmadi, "because it will no longer be as taboo to talk about. We'll see that opening up. In a sense, I don't think there will be new employment opportunities. There is only transfer of employment. The companies are already out there in an illegal market... It's shifting from cash to credit, and becoming part of our mainstream market. The creation of the industry, the framework behind it, and all of the legwork took years to develop, and the people who have been doing that are ingrained within it. In a sense, it is really just another marketing opportunity for yet another good that is being produced."

Ahmadi says that this could have happened years ago, but the taboo with cannabis is such that people didn't want to talk about it.

"Even on October 17 there will be a taboo between people who smoke and people who don't," says Ahmadi. "It's not that significant. Five to 15 percent of people regularly use cannabis, five to seven percent for daily users, and 15 to 20 percent are using occasionally. They had a big voice when they were oppressed, but as oppression lifts, their voice will drop. If you are no longer marginalized you don't need to have that same voice. We talk

"We have done research with other institutes to see what is occurring. We have received legal advice about what the parameters should be. These are all important pieces, but at the end of the day, I think that most people just carry on and go to school, and smoke in the smoking section."

JOAN YATES
CAMOSUN COLLEGE

about what cannabis is going to bring to society, and all of the coming changes, but I think it's going to be an unceremonious fizzle."

As the smoke clears, Ahmadi says we will adjust and carry on.

"I'd argue that next year there is a store, and if you want to smoke cannabis, you just go to the store and buy it, and the question of whether it was produced by an artisanal producer or not, or whether the certification agency was authorized by the provincial or federal government, or any of those other things won't enter your mind any more than where Labatt is brewed, or what is in a Coors Light," he says. "Most people will just buy the product and consume it."

With a very large student base, Camosun campuses host a spectrum of viewpoints. I took the time to wander Lansdowne and ask a dozen random students how they felt about cannabis legalization, and how it might affect life as a student at Camosun. What I encountered ranged from students who don't care and declined to comment to those with very strong opinions, both in favour and against legalization. Kenneth Cottrell, who is currently studying general arts and sciences, is strongly opposed to the legislation. "They're not legalizing it," says Cottrell. "They are controlling and selling it, while they amp up the ramifications for illegal behaviour within the marijuana industry. It's not legalization. I am not for it, at all."

Cottrell says that the changes to laws in BC are flawed at every level and do nothing to improve the situation.

"I don't know why they are trying to change it," he says. "It's awesome now. You can easily access a good product in a non-dangerous situation. I think the major issue, moving forward, is that the federal, provincial, municipal governments are all involved, and there is a lot of confusion between the departments as to how to actually do it."

Cottrell says that new limits around what products can be sold are actually going to take us backwards in terms of medical cannabis use.

"They are taking away things like distillates and extracts that a lot of people are using as medicine," says Cottrell. "Some of those products work better for some people than smoking the plant. There will be no distillate pens. Some people don't smoke but use marijuana for medicine. They may have to switch from distillate pens, which are much better for your health, to combustible plant products. That is going to be detrimental to people's health. That is totally backwards."

Cottrell says that the confusion, created by the lack of certainty and the approaching legalization date, has legitimate companies unsure of what to do next.

"People who built up businesses around marijuana don't know what to do yet," says Cottrell, "and the government isn't being very clear about it. If you operate a dispensary, and you're open one day after legalization, you can be fined, and once you've been fined, you can't ever operate a marijuana dispensary. Every single dispensary is going to have to shut down. Of course some people will go with it, and shut down on the 16th, which will be the end of business for them. Who knows how long it will be before they are actually able to procure marijuana after that? It's going to put a lot of people out of work who are currently in the industry. As it stands, there is one store in Kamloops set to open on October 17. Growers and producers are liquidating, just trying to get rid of everything, because they don't know what to do."

continued on page 11

2018 Elections Student Society

Make YOUR Choice

Voting opens Online from

October 22nd 12:01am to

Wednesday 24th - 11:59 pm

Jordan Johnson
Lansdowne Executive



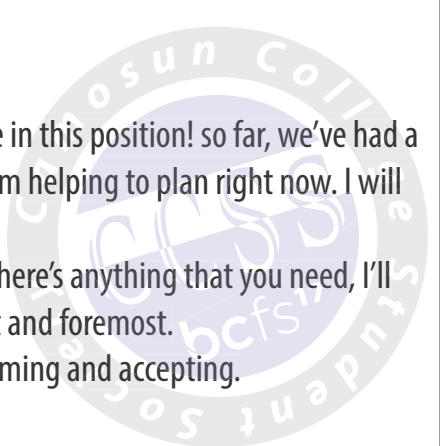
No Statement at time of publication



Sacha Christensen
Lansdowne Executive



Hello potential voter! If you've seen some idiot running around campus in a tie, looking like he's from a 40's musical, then you already know something about who I am! If it wasn't nauseatingly apparent, I'm a political science student here at Lansdowne, and am proud to be running for the CCSS! As a left wing activist, political organizer, and obnoxious person on your doorstep during election season, I believe I can bring an experienced, progressive voice to the CCSS. I believe in shaping the role of the CCSS to be one that does a better job giving back to students. I understand the financial burdens we all face with post-secondary education, and will work tirelessly to lighten that load. We as students deserve better, and I hope to be able to give you that, as a member of the Student Society. If you wish to get in contact with me about anything, be it life, exams, teachers, politics, lack of friends, I'm always reachable at sacha.christensen@gmail.com. Thank you very much for taking the time to read this, and I hope I can count on your vote!



Angela Chou
Pride Director



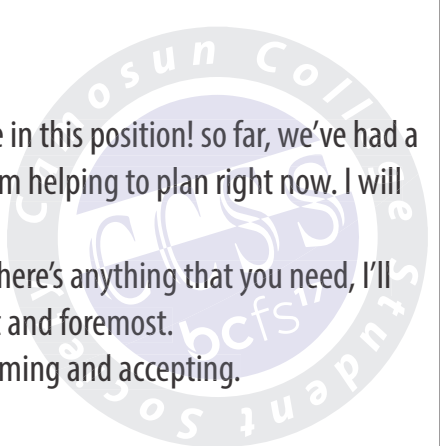
Hi, my name is Angela Chou and I would love to continue to be your Pride Director!

These past six months have been amazing, and I hope that you choose me to continue in this position! so far, we've had a couple of fun events, like the Pride Parade! As well, there are some workshops that I am helping to plan right now. I will also be providing opportunities to other fun events as they come up! If there's anything that you'd like to do, I'll do my best to help you make it happen. If there's anything that you need, I'll do my best to help you with it, or get you to somebody that can. I'm here for YOU, first and foremost. I'd love to continue to work with you to make Camosun College campuses more welcoming and accepting. I'm here to listen, I'm here to talk, and I'm here to help.

Dylan Bysted
Pride Director



Dylan Bystedt is a 2nd-year Information and Computer Systems student at the Interurban Campus. He's served on the Student Society for the past year, as an Interurban Director. While in that role, he was elected by his fellow board members as Co-Chair of the Board. Recently, he joined the College's newly founded Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) Student Policy Advisory Committee and the EDI Events, Education, Awareness, and Training Planning Committee. Here, Dylan works to ensure that students are represented and remain at the forefront of the College's decision-making process. Over the last few weeks, he's worked on a campaign with the CCSS to engage students on their issues and educate the student body about the upcoming elections and referendum. Before returning to post-secondary Dylan became involved within his union and the broader labour movement. Where he received training on equity, and decolonization at UBC. With this knowledge, he worked to ensure his union had a presence in the Victoria Pride Parade. He was successful in that campaign. Dylan cares deeply about the student body and equity issues. He takes action and creates change. Vote Dylan Bystedt for the CCSS Pride Director position.



you're acting professionally, as a student should. That includes not being under the influence. The rules in that area are much the same as with alcohol. I think that is really more of a concern than smoking... imagine a trades student getting high and working with heavy equipment, or a nursing student."

Yates says that the debate as to where and when students can smoke is not as complicated for Camosun as it is for some institutions, such as the University of Victoria.

"The difference is that we don't have residences," says Yates. "Many of the campuses that are most embroiled in this have people living there as well as studying. There is lots of work being done right now to figure out where people can go to undertake a now legal activity. Many residences have parameters around liquor as well."

While smoking seems to be at the forefront, there are a number of questions that need answering, says Yates. What if, for example, people are taking cannabis for medical reasons?

"They have been permitted to do that up until now," Yates says, "and we probably wouldn't change that. But

Dylan Bysted
Education Council Interurban



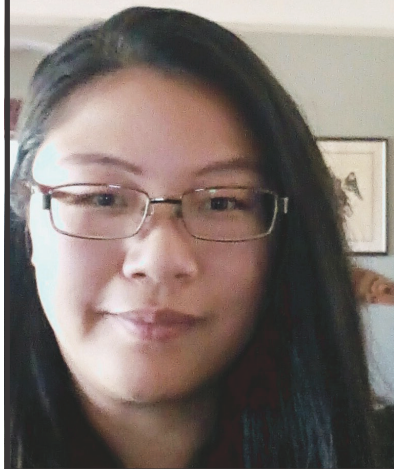
Dylan Bystedt is a 2nd-year Information and Computer Systems student at the Interurban Campus. He's served on the Student Society for the past year, as an Interurban Director. While in that role, he was elected by his fellow board members as Co-Chair of the Board. And over the last few weeks, he's worked on a campaign with the CCSS to engage students on their issues and educate the student body about the upcoming elections and referendum. In May, he joined the College's newly founded Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) Student Policy Advisory Committee and the EDI Events, Education, Awareness, and Training Planning Committee. Here, Dylan works to ensure that students are represented and remain at the forefront of the College's decision-making process. In this role, Dylan has gained relevant experience liaising with faculty to accomplish a common goal. He hopes to use this knowledge to bring common-sense reforms to educational policy, to return fairness and sensibility to the academic evaluation process. Dylan cares deeply about the students. He takes action and creates change. Vote Dylan Bystedt for a Student Position on the Education Committee.

Shayan de Luna-Bueno
Women's Director



Advocating for education on prevention of sexual violence and sex ed, bringing pap smears available on campus and being the local woman of colour: support for all people identifying as women

Hayley Lamb
Interurban Director



My name is Hayley Lamb and I was one of your previous Interurban Directors for the Camosun College Student Society (CCSS). I am a student at the Interurban campus, but I may have been seen at the Lansdowne campus, completing a first year art class, and attending meetings with the Student Society and the college. I am a business administration student working towards that CPA life. If I am voted into the CCSS, I will continue to put my time and effort into the college policies and into student affairs. I plan to keep engaging with current and new members, and have events organized to help the all of you (the students) have a great experience at Camosun College. Thank you for reading, and have a great semester! Sincerely, Hayley Lamb

Max Walther
Interurban Director



My name is Max Walther and I am a student in the Computer Network program. I am hardworking and honest, with a passion for democracy and freedom of speech. I am familiar with Robert's Rules of Order, and plan to attend every meeting held by the Society. I consider my ability to see issues from a variety of viewpoints one of my personal strengths. I enjoy helping others and am a dedicated polemicist. Thank you for reading my statement. I hope I will earn your vote.

Gurpreet Singh Bhollar
Interurban Director



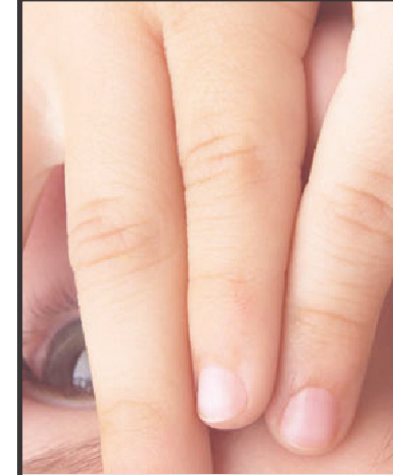
Hi my name is Gurpreet Singh Bhullar and I'm standing in the election I have always been extremely passionate about bringing people of all races. As a second year student at Camosun college in the General Business Administration Diploma. I am determined to make this year incredible for all of us. Camosun College continues to inspire me to be the best version of myself in this leadership role I'd love to share my positive energy with everyone around me. I will always encourage my fellow students to talk to me we can all contribute and enhance our experience.

Gagandeep Baath
Interurban Director



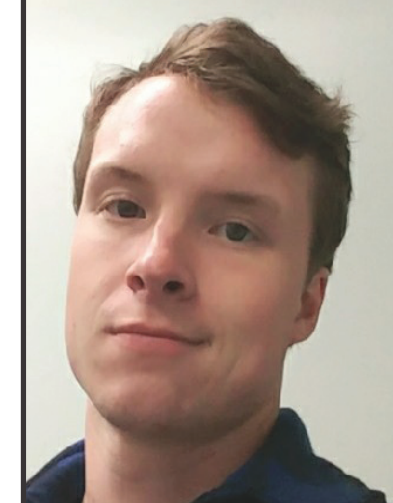
I believe strongly in a Student Council that promotes changes on campus to make students' lives easier and address any challenges identified by the students. One such challenge is the difficulty in activating bus passes each September at the Interurban campus. As an Interurban Director, I will push for installation of a functional activation machine outside the Interurban library (similar to Lansdowne) so that students have more flexibility in how and when they can activate their passes. I will also urge the Camosun administration to look into changes to make the bus pass systems more efficient and reliable for students. I will also push for extended tutoring hours – in particular, many students want the Math Tutoring center to revert to previous years' hours of operations. As Interurban Director, students can rely on me to fight for the issues they care about. So Vote for the GOAT.

Elvin Khankisbiev
Lansdowne Director



No Statement at time of publication

Malcolm McLaren
Lansdowne Director



Hello I'm Malcolm McLaren and I would love your support for the position of 2018-2019 Lansdowne Director. I'm currently a U.T. Bio/Psychology student who volunteers with the Camosun Psychology Club and at other local CCSS events. I will address issues like the lack of Nutritional choices in the Lansdowne Cafeteria or the shoddy wifi connections across Campus. I will work with the college from the policy drafting level all the way up to insure the voices of Lansdowne students are heard and respected.

Nishant Harmilapi
Lansdowne Director



Nishant Harmilapi, running again for the position of Lansdowne Director to Continue Working with-the CCSS. Through my time at Camosun, I have created close ties with-the community through raising awareness for Women in Need (WIN) and advocating for Fairness for International Students with support from the British Colombia Federation of Students. As I do my best to attain a study, work, and life balance, I seek opportunities and scope for progression within the college. From campaigning for Proportion Representation for the Municipal elections to doing my best to get that assignment in on time. As we work hard for good grades and greater jobs. Hence it's our responsibility to support and guide, working harder to make it happen. Bringing to the table, my years of hospitality experience in managing and organizing events, now for Camosun and CCSS. From leading a 16000ft climbing expedition to 21k's, it has all spearheaded me to this. Utilizing the duties and responsibilities of the Campus Director position, I am confident in enhancing the lives of students at Camosun.

Keeping It Real, Thank you: Nishant

Yara Abaza
Lansdowne Director



My name is Yara Abaza and I am running for the position of Lansdowne Director for the Camosun College Student Society. This is my first semester at Camosun College and I have so far, felt lucky, welcomed and part of a larger and greater community. I enjoy outdoor activities like hiking and rock climbing and as such will make it my mission to make sure student involvement and engagement on campus increases through the existing CCSS clubs. It is my absolute desire to make sure that student voice is heard and valued. If I am elected I will work to my best ability to make sure that every student is made aware of the important events and opportunities. If you would like a more fun, and involved student body Vote for YARA ABAZA for Lansdowne director online on October 22nd to 24th.

continued from page 6

CCSS Referendum Question #1

The Camosun College Student Society (CCSS), and many other student societies in British Columbia, were expelled from the Canadian Federation of Students (CFS) in June 2018. Because the expulsion from the CFS happened after the CCSS informed Camosun College about fees to be collected, CCSS members are currently being assessed a CFS fee of \$1.14 a month for an organisation they are no longer members of.

The British Columbia Federation of Students (BCFS), of which the CCSS is a member, is taking over many of the responsibilities of the CFS and consequently the CCSS has both agreed to and is required to increase their membership fee by the amount of the current CFS fee levy no later than December 31, 2019. Because of those actions, the CCSS Board of Directors is proposing the temporary allocation of the current CFS levy (\$1.14 per month) to a special fund to be used for campaigns and advocacy until December 31, 2019 as well as the temporary payment of the Canadian Alliance of Student Associations membership fee should members approve joining that organisation in the separate referendum question. Following December 31 2019, the CFS Fee (\$1.14 per month) would be converted to the BCFS fee.

Are you in favour of allocating the current and existing Canadian Federation of Students (CFS) fee levy, and any fee amounts that have been previously collected but not remitted to the CFS, to a special Campaigns and Advocacy fund until December 31, 2019 and thereafter to the British Columbia Federation of Students to meet the CCSS's obligations under the bylaws of that organisation?

CCSS Referendum Question #2

The Camosun College Student Society (CCSS), and many other student societies in British Columbia, were expelled from the Canadian Federation of Students (CFS) in June 2018. Although provincial governments are directly responsible for post secondary education in Canada, the federal government provides money and other supports to provinces and educational institutions as well as the majority of student grants and loans to students. The CCSS has previously engaged in lobbying the federal government through alliances with other student groups and believes that continuing to lobby with other student allies is the most effective means to ensure that the voices of Camosun's students are heard by government officials and the public.

Are you in favour of joining the Canadian Alliance of Student Associations, a national alliance of student groups, in order to lobby the federal government and others on issues important to students at a current cost to CCSS members of \$0.42 per month and with the collection of the new fee levy commencing in January of 2020?

As Cottrell sees it, the laws are set up to send the industry back underground.

"We are likely to see big companies who produce sub-par dope for prices that are not accommodating for people who like to use marijuana," says Cottrell. "For anyone who looks outside of that system, the potential to go to jail is much higher. They want 15-year sentences for people involved in the transporting. It is the opposite of legalization. Basically, I think the black market is going to come back, big time."

Cottrell says that the government is set on the date because of financial commitments, and he doesn't think there is enough time to straighten it out.

"Why don't they just step back and slow down?" he says. "There is so much money wrapped up in this that even though they are nowhere near ready, they still have to do it. They are going to roll out this framework that is broken in so many ways. I would rather see them wait until they have got it figured out. They are rushing it, and it certainly isn't for the benefit of the people who use the plant."

As a student, Cottrell says that he believes that his peers should be given the choice as to where and when they consume cannabis.

"I personally don't smoke marijuana before class," says Cottrell, "because I'm paying to be here, and I don't personally need to use it. But, do I think students should be able to use it? 100 percent. If people are using it for pain management, and they can't get through class without it, then yes, go for it. I see students here smoking marijuana. I couldn't do that, but that is their prerogative. If they are able to get through class, and give their teacher respect and attention, then go for it."

Kirstin Currie is currently upgrading to meet the prerequisites for the Dental Hygiene program; she says she thinks that decriminalizing cannabis is a good idea.

"I don't really understand why it was criminalized in the first place in Canada," says Currie. "We are pretty lenient about marijuana already. I don't know why there are such strict punishments around it. There are positives and negatives to everything. There are huge medical benefits, and possible tax benefits, but there are always people who take advantage of the situation and abuse it, but that should be left up to the individual."

Currie says that she thinks cannabis use is treated unfairly. "It has definitely been demonized," says Currie. "Alcohol is way more harmful, yet it is legal. People go out on the weekend and get blackout drunk, but if someone smokes a joint we put a label on them."

As a student at Camosun, Currie says that she has no concerns with students using at school.

"It's not like people will be lighting up in the classrooms or anything. It doesn't really bother me. There are rules around smoking, so it won't be right outside the doors."

Second-year Psychology student Richard Williams says that he is all for legalization.

"I don't know what to say, because it just seems like common sense," says Williams. "There is a lot of money spent fighting it which could be spent researching its uses and dangers and educating people rather than just saying, 'This is bad.'"

smoked, so kids aren't exposed to it. It's definitely safer when it's government regulated."

While that all sounds good in theory, McGregor says that it may not go quite as smoothly on the ground.

"Right now we are all speculating as to how it's going to look," says McGregor. "Once legalization rolls out, we're going to have to adjust to see what's working and what's not. The biggest concern is what isn't going to work, and will we be ready?"

There is good and bad with everything, and McGregor says he has some concerns as a student.

"I think it's fine after classes, but it's a distraction if people are using before classes," says McGregor. "They won't pay attention. I think we should keep it off campus so people can do their work. It's a matter of opinion, and I'm sure there are people who would argue with me, but I'd say keep it off campus. Save it for after class. It's just easier for everyone. If they do smoke, please keep it in the smoking areas."

Camosun director of Continuing Education (CE) Janice Hanna says that marijuana legalization represents a rare opportunity, as it's an industry that has flown under the radar for so long and is now coming to the mainstream.

"In order to participate in this industry," Hanna says, "whether you're raising capital, running the books, or hiring people, you still need to know about the product itself. There has to be an awareness about what it is that you're putting out there. People need to understand the history, and the space within which the industry operates. It's like the end of prohibition in some ways."

The goal, Hanna says, is to launch into the subject area as a responsible provider of community education.

"We're in partnership with Kwantlen Polytechnic University [KPU], which has been one of the curriculum development leaders in cannabis education in BC," says Hanna. "We are the only college that is offering cannabis education through the CE delivery area. We are in good partnership with KPU to deliver really well-researched and scientifically sound curriculum to anyone who enrolls in our classes. We aren't embarking in research at the college. We are relying upon a great partner to provide us with a really good curriculum."

The college launched its first marijuana-related class, Growing Cannabis for Professionals, in April.

"The purpose of that course is to introduce professionals into the industry of cannabis," says Hanna. "That course is giving a general overview of the science behind cannabis and the plant itself. It's an introduction to the history of cannabis. It really gives professionals who have taken accounting, business, or horticulture an idea of what the industry is all about."

There is a second course, Cannabis Operations, that Hanna says will start in January 2019.

"That's a course for people who are looking to do a managerial job with a licensed producer," says Hanna. "Management jobs, supervisory jobs, operations and processing jobs, accounting, human resources will all be required for a large operation. It's for someone with a little bit of management experience who would like to learn a little bit about the operations of a licensed producer. We talk about the plant itself, what kind of environment is required, the type of lighting, and the end-to-end processing, from seed selection to cultivation. It gives someone interested in a supervisory or management role an idea of what it's like inside a cannabis growing operation."

Acknowledging that there may still be stigma toward cannabis in the greater community, Hanna says there will be more debate to come.

"If I step back and ask, 'What is the role of a public education institution in a community?' it's to be able to have discourse and open some dialogue around these issues. Of course there are two sides to the story—that's why we have the type of free speech and dialogue that we do in colleges and universities. For us, it would be negligent not to be involved in a responsible way with an industry that is getting so much national and international attention."

"We are the only college that is offering cannabis education through the [Continuing Education] delivery area."

JANICE HANNA
CAMOSUN COLLEGE

From a health-care perspective, Camosun Health and Human Services dean Cynthia Smith says that legalization will make medical marijuana readily available to the public.

"Right now people can only go to the dispensaries for medical marijuana," says Smith. "With the legalization of it, mainstream retail outlets like Pharmasave and Shoppers Drug Mart will be offering medical marijuana. From what I understand, it's not going to happen overnight, but availability will be more widespread."

Smith says cannabis education, to some degree, is in most of the health programs, adding that there are unique aspects to it that are important to different areas of education.

"A Dental Hygiene student is going to be educated on smoking and the impacts it has on the mouth cavity," says Smith. "Then, of course, in the Mental Health and Addictions program, we talk about the potential of cannabis to exacerbate mental illness, and how it is used in the treatment of mental disorders. In Nursing, we talk about how it's used to treat people with cancer, as well as how it is used to treat pain and arthritis. Then there is the matter of informed consent—making sure that if a patient is exhibiting any kind of psychotropic effects of drugs that their informed consent to be a patient is addressed, regardless of what field our students are learning about. Understanding what the drug can be used for, and the impact on patients, and how could that affect practitioners."

Smith feels that as it becomes more available, it's gaining more interest from students and becoming more integrated into the curriculum. From a personal standpoint, Smith says that she's generally optimistic, but she stresses the importance of continuing research and education.

"I recently read a Canadian survey, interviewing both health and social service practitioners, and what came up was that there were more questions than answers, and there were a lot of misconceptions. I think there is a lot more that we can do in terms of educating ourselves as health practitioners and then informing the public. There are a lot of misconceptions around it being a gateway drug, not understanding that many of the medicinal forms of cannabis don't have the mind-altering effects. Some of the research points to benefits of medicinal cannabis for arthritis, and multiple sclerosis, and various other ailments. We need to make sure that we are informed of the current research, and that we share that with students."

Smith points to further research that she says suggests that increase in use, once it gets legalized, will predominantly be among 18- to 24-year-olds.

"The concern there is about safe use, just like it is with alcohol," says Smith. "I think we have done a good job in Canada, and internationally, around designated drivers, and not drinking and driving, and now we need to do that with cannabis. There is concern about the age of use, but I think aligning it with the drinking age is appropriate. The fact that we are going to remove the criminal aspect is just so much healthier."

Camosun College Student Society external executive Fillette Umulisa says that she is happy that the government "has decided to stop fighting a losing battle."

"They will stop wasting money fighting against people," she says.

Two weeks ago I sat down at my computer with the goal of making sense of the new marijuana legislation. I thought I was getting close. The legislation doesn't make sense, but I thought that I understood it. That all changed two days before deadline, when I ran into Kenneth Cottrell again in the courtyard. After exchanging pleasantries, Cottrell asked me if I had heard that Canada had just signed on with Mexico and the US for a renewal of the war on drugs...

I think we have reached a tipping point, as a society, agreeing that the drug problem should be treated as a health issue rather than one for the prison system. I take legalization, at least partly, as a token gesture from our government to let us know that they walk with the people.

I don't know how to end this story. I guess I'll have to write a sequel.

music

Toronto singer/songwriter Ben Kunder connects through carpentry, music

“I feel like, especially right now, we all have a hard time being open and honest because of technology and social media. We’re all sort of hiding behind the facade we put out into the world.”

BEN KUNDER
MUSICIAN

JOSIAH SNELL
CONTRIBUTING WRITER

Since he was a little kid—stumbling over his dad’s old college guitar in the basement and teaching himself to play it with Bob Dylan songbooks—music has played a vital role in Toronto singer/songwriter Ben Kunder’s life.

“We always had music in the house; we had a pretty expansive record collection, and [my dad] always took me and my brother to a lot of concerts from a really young age,” says Kunder, who has spent time living across the country, including in a cabin on Salt Spring Island. “He sort of opened the door for me to experience music in a lot of different ways and create my own opinions from an early age.”

That early love of art has followed Kunder through his life, showing itself not only in his music but also in his years as a stage actor and as a carpenter—the work that currently occupies his time when he’s not busy making music. Regardless of what project he’s

pouring his considerable talent and passion into, the one thing that never changes is the value Kunder sees in being able to connect with others through his work.

“It’s all about building relationships and connecting with people, to sort of create something, or help them, or be a part of their lives in some way. It’s not the prettiest job, but it’s necessary,” says Kunder of his work as a carpenter. “So yeah, I like it.”

Although he brings many of the same qualities to both his music and carpentry, it’s the contrast between the two that gives his music a particular strength and clarity. It’s partly this, Kunder says, that keeps him—and his music—grounded.

“I think it’s just sort of kept me honest; it’s kept me somewhat humble. My hands get dirty and I build things,” says Kunder. “I work pretty hard when I’m not on the road and not making music. I’m working full time doing that work. It feels good. It just adds to who I am. It keeps me honest.”



MEGAN MCISAAC
Toronto-based singer/songwriter Ben Kunder has lived in various places across Canada, including Salt Spring Island.

It’s this honesty that makes Kunder’s new album *Better Human* such a profoundly—occasionally bordering on uncomfortably—personal work. With songs that muse nakedly on family, love, and loss, Kunder says he’s striving now more than ever to communicate with his audience on a deeply emotional level.

“As personal as it is, it’s meant to be a universal message,” says Kunder. “I feel like, especially right now, we all have a hard time being open and honest because of tech-

nology and social media. We’re all sort of hiding behind the facade we put out into the world.”

Many artists struggle to tour with such deeply personal work. Spending night after night exposing your fears and doubts to strangers is enough to wear anyone down, but Kunder—currently finishing up the last leg of his Canada-wide tour before heading off to Europe—sees it differently.

“By being brutally honest about struggles that I have and then singing about them, and having some of

Ben Kunder
8 pm Sunday, October 14
\$12, Copper Owl
copperowl.ca

stage

Beethoven’s freedom fight on display with new performance



DAVID COOPER
Pacific Opera Victoria founding artistic director Timothy Vernon.

KATRINA BROOKE
CONTRIBUTING WRITER

Social justice meets opera with Pacific Opera Victoria (POV)’s contemporary production of Beethoven’s *Fidelio*, which may just challenge your perceptions of the human condition.

Bogotá-raised multidisciplinary artist and filmmaker Monica Hernandez has joined with director Wim Trompert and designer Nancy

Bryant to create an on-set memorial to resistance and freedom fighters that is “extraordinarily expressive,” says conductor and POV founding artistic director Timothy Vernon. A projected screen will help create the backdrop for the performers, streaming images and scenes haunted by shadows and stark reminders of the costs of war.

“It sounds very dark, and in a way it is very dark,” says Vernon.

“It sounds very dark, and in a way it is very dark. It is about the capacity of human beings to oppress one another.”

TIMOTHY VERNON
PACIFIC OPERA VICTORIA

“It is about the capacity of human beings to oppress one another.”

Although oppression is one of the central themes of this piece, so too are the ideas of freedom and individual responsibilities. Surrounded by soldiers and prisoners, one woman leads the charge against tyranny, disguising herself as a man so she can enter the prison where her husband is a political prisoner sentenced to death.

“In lesser hands, it might be just a sappy rescue drama,” says Vernon, “but in Beethoven’s hands, it becomes something monumental because he thought monumentally, and because his music has a reach and a vision and a strength that made it pretty much imperishable.”

The piece is performed in German, with surtitles that Vernon assures will be “just like going to see a movie with subtitles.” It’s also one of few operas that has both dialogue and song, although the dialogue has been cut down to a bare minimum for the benefit of those audience members who

takes on the role of the imprisoned Florestan.

“It’s not just about who is going to sing it well,” says Vernon, “but who is going to work well in an ensemble. Because it is an ensemble event and you need not just cooperation, but you need trust and reliance. Performers rely on each other on stage to a great degree and I think it’s important to try to find that harmony when you’re casting, when you’re putting the show together. We’ve had a very cooperative, positive, safe working space for people.”

There is the promise here of an experience that transcends language and culture, lifting its audience into the ideals of the human condition that so fascinated the German enlightenment philosopher in Beethoven. The young musician and his friends grew up in Bonn, a hotbed for the enlightenment movement of 18th-century Germany. “This is a universal story,” says Vernon. “We’re trying to show that Beethoven is thinking about freedom, about democracy, about individual strengths, and that is very contemporary, too.”

Fidelio
Various times,
Thursday, October 11 to
Sunday, October 22
Various prices, Royal Theatre
rmts.bc.ca

stage

Unpacking *A Doll’s House* for a second time



TIM MATHESON

A Doll’s House, Part 2 examines issues of relationships and inequality through a modern lens.

KATY WEICKER
STAFF WRITER

When Henrik Ibsen wrote *A Doll’s House* in the 1870s, he raised shockingly progressive and controversial questions about marriage, motherhood, and women’s societal roles. When the central character, Nora, chose to leave her marriage and children at the end of the play, it was a door slam for gender equality.

In 2017, playwright Lucas Hnath brought the characters back in *A Doll’s House, Part 2* to examine the aftermath. The second part of the story takes place 15 years after the original, and, according to director

Michael Shamata, audience members don’t have to have seen the first play to understand the second.

“It’s recapped, in a kind of way, during the show. There’s enough exposition in the first scenes that the audience would kind of figure out what would happen,” says Shamata. “But the main thing is, at the end of *A Doll’s House*—the original—Nora, the wife, realizes that she and her husband don’t really have a real relationship, they’re both kind of playing roles, and she realizes that she needs to leave, and find out who she is, and find out what the world is really all about. So, she leaves her

husband and her three children, and walks out.”

The Belfry chose *A Doll’s House, Part 2* for many reasons to be its 2018-2019 opening production, one reason being Shamata’s love of the script and appreciation for Hnath’s work.

“[Hnath] felt like the conversation had not been completed, that the conversation that Ibsen started about marriage, that there was more conversation to be had,” says Shamata. “So, he brings Nora back after 15 years of being absent, and partly she confronts the damage that she created—the mess that she

“What’s really exciting is when it feels like people talking like people who have a lot of history, but haven’t seen each other for a long time.”

MICHAEL SHAMATA
A DOLL’S HOUSE, PART 2

left behind by leaving—to the three other characters in the play.”

The fact that the complexities and nuances of marriage are as true now as they were in the 1800s is one of the most exciting aspects of the play for Shamata, who says that the original ending of Ibsen’s play was deemed too shocking and changed in several countries because in the 1800s people couldn’t fathom the idea of a woman leaving her children; Shamata believes this notion still holds true in today’s society.

“The idea of a woman abandoning her children is still considered... It’s just not something that people do,” says Shamata.

This blending of two time periods allows *A Doll’s House, Part 2* to examine the issues of relationships and equality through a modern lens.

“That’s exactly what the playwright set out to do—write a play that’s in period costume. The language to a certain extent feels modern, feels contemporary, and the issues feel totally contemporary, but it could be a period piece,” says Shamata.

A Doll’s House, Part 2
Various times, to Sunday,
October 14
Various prices, Belfry Theatre
belfry.bc.ca

review

Langham Court delivers spirited season opener in *Blithe Spirit*



PHOTO PROVIDED

Langham Court Theatre’s *Blithe Spirit* kicks off Langham’s 90th season.

KATY WEICKER
STAFF WRITER

Believe it or not, Victoria’s Langham Court Theatre has just celebrated the opening of its 90th

The set was a visual smorgasbord of colour and style; the costumes were stunning and elaborate; the special effects (yes, you read that right) were breathtaking.

is the company’s fifth rendition of the play).

Given that it’s such a well-crafted piece of work, it’s easy to see why Langham keeps coming back to this classic. The writing is strong, the story is spooky, witty, and hilarious—to the point that even I, the confirmed feminist, will forgive the slightly sexist ending. But really, if the only negative thing I can say about a play (written in the 1940s, I might add) is that it’s a little dated, I can’t really complain.

And, honestly, despite the dated ending, it was a joy to watch. The set was a visual smorgasbord of colour and style; the costumes were stunning and elaborate; the special effects (yes, you read that right) were breathtaking.

Also, the acting was solid across the board. For such a hearty show, it has a modest cast size, meaning there’s a lot of heavy lifting from its principal actors, something lead Alan Penty handled brilliantly. He was engaging and electrifying as

Charles, giving charm and warmth to a potentially unlikeable character.

Penty’s counter-balances Kate McCallum Pagett and Jackie Rioux both delivered solid performances, and Elizabeth Whitmarsh had me in stitches as the eccentric Madame Arcati—particularly in a few instances of technical prop difficulty, which she improvised her way through like a champ.

A word of caution: the show is marketed for all ages, but there were a few moments that made me jump in my seat, and the late start time meant that it didn’t end until about 10:30.

Blithe Spirit is a perfect, spooky way to start the fall, a triumph for Langham, and a delight to watch.

Blithe Spirit
Various times, until Saturday,
October 13
\$23 to \$25,
Langham Court Theatre
(student discounts available)
langhamtheatre.ca

New Music Revue



Slash
Living the Dream
(Snakepit/Roadrunner Records)
4/5

Slash does not need to rely on a reunion with Guns n’ Roses to be one of the best guitarists to ever live; he’s doing just fine on his own. In his third collaboration with Myles Kennedy and The Conspirators, he proves once again that his rock songs are nothing shy of intense, knee-jiggling, auditory poetry that will pump listeners full of energy.

The opening bars of “The Call of the Wild” roped me in in such a way that I found myself frequently skipping back just to hear them again. Things slow down a bit with “Lost Inside the Girl”; “Sugar Cane” is blissful heaviness; “The Great Pretender” carries a methadone weight.

The new addition of Frank Sidoris’ rhythm guitar work is a nice touch for continuity, allowing Slash to focus on the riffs that are the pulse of the legendary rocker.

This album is tight, decisive, and more together than the group’s last two.

-ADAM MARSH

STR8TS

No. 210 Medium

6

8

4

8

5

3

2

5

7

3

6

3

8

7

9

1

9

5

Previous solution - Easy

How to beat **Str8ts** – Like Sudoku, no single number can repeat in any row or column. But... rows and columns are divided by black squares into **compartments**. These need to be filled in with numbers that complete a 'straight'. A **straight** is a set of numbers with no gaps but can be in any order, eg [4,2,3,5]. Clues in black cells remove that number as an option in that row and column, and are not part of any straight. Glance at the solution to see how 'straights' are formed.

You can find more help, tips and hints at www.str8ts.com

SUDOKU

No. 210 Very Hard

4

7

6

3

7

2

4

5

7

6

3

6

4

1

9

2

7

1

2

9

5

3

1

Previous solution - Tough

To complete Sudoku, fill the board by entering numbers 1 to 9 such that each row, column and 3x3 box contains every number uniquely.

For many strategies, hints and tips, visit www.sudokuwiki.org

If you like Str8ts check out our books, iPhone/iPad Apps and much more on our store.

Can I do your makeup?

Uh, I guess

This seems excessive

Just remember it's what's on the inside that counts

By Jayden Grieve

october word search

Well, hello there, October. Nice to see you, and all that comes with you, again. Things are crisp, things are spider-y, things are oh my god there are spiders everywhere. Anyway, we put together a bunch of October-related words to create this issue's word search.

Find the words on the left in the puzzle on the right; as always, stop by the *Nexus* office (Richmond House 201, Lansdowne campus) if you complete this puzzle to pick up something from our pile o' prizes.

ACORN
BLANKET
CHESTNUTS
CHILLY
CIDER
COLD
COZY
CRISP
FIRE
HALLOWEEN
ORANGE
PUMPKINS
RAIN
SCARECROW
SCARY
SPIDER
SQUASH
SWEATER
WEB
WET

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

contest

Find the hidden Nexus and win

Let's see if you can find this copy of the last issue of *Nexus*, which we hid somewhere at Camosun College's Lansdowne campus.

The first person to find this copy of the paper and bring it in to our office wins themselves a free prize!

Last time, the issue was hidden on top of some lockers on the second floor of Fisher.

Who will find this hidden *Nexus*? Bring it to us once you find it; we've got gift cards, shirts, and more for the winner to choose from!

NEXUS Web Exclusive

What's happening at nexusnewspaper.com

Week of October 1, 2018, top five most read stories:

1. "Langham Court delivers spirited season opener," September 28, 2018
2. "10 things you didn't know about Camosun: Lansdowne edition," March 1, 2016
3. "Freedom of speech on campus in 2018," September 26, 2018
4. "Know Your Profs: Stephen Fielding hypothesizes Young Building is haunted," September 12, 2018
5. "Potted Potter tells a whole lot of Harry in a short amount of time," September 26, 2018

Plus, head to our site to check out web-exclusive stories! Check it all out at nexusnewspaper.com, and find us on Instagram, Twitter, and Facebook today!

NEXUS

You draw comics.

Get them published.

Submit samples to: Nexus, 201 Richmond House, Lansdowne campus, or email editor@nexusnewspaper.com

Let's Talk?

by Katy Weicker

On privacy, the pharmacy, and gender expectations

As woke as I am, I am also desensitized to the daily chip-aways I experience as a woman. Even when they happen, I don't speak up as much as I should. This was brought to my attention recently when I went to the pharmacy with a friend to refill a prescription.

I walked to the drop-off counter, where there was a little sign asking patrons to maintain a respectful distance for the privacy of others. Fair enough. I mean, who wants Joe Blow behind them knowing they need their hemorrhoid cream refilled?

So, I stood there, and the pharmacy assistant sat at a desk about 10 feet away from the front counter. He looked up at me and, without getting up, asked—in full voice—what I wanted. I told him I'd like to fill a prescription. He asked—loudly enough that I questioned the point of a sign asking for space for privacy—for my personal info: my last name, first name, date of birth, which I provided with my best “class presentation volume level” voice, despite the butterflies in my stomach.

After I clarified from across the abyss of the desk that I indeed go to Camosun, and yes, sir, I had paid my tuition, he asked what prescription I wanted to fill.

Now, I'm not one to care about these types of things, but having to project across a pharmacy that I needed to refill my prescription for birth control seemed like a gross invasion of my privacy—plus, come on! Sign!

He clarified an aspect of my prescription with the pharmacist, who was even further away from us—but don't worry, the assistant said it loud enough for the pharmacist to hear without having to get up from his desk.

After being informed that I could pick up my prescription in an hour, I shuffled out of the pharmacy. Once out of earshot, I hesitantly asked my friend if he thought the pharmacist's behaviour was inappropriate—the

not-so-colourful version of his answer was “yes.” Yes, he did.

He wanted to know why I didn't say anything. I should complain; it had to be a violation of some kind of code of ethics. He said I should say something or he would. I, very uncharacteristically, shrivelled into myself and assured him I would.

I never did. Because the reality is, if he—being a cis white male—said something, he would be assertive and probably get an apology.

If I did—if I hollered back across the counter that I wasn't comfortable shouting my information, if I suggested homeboy get off his booty and come talk to me at the desk like he's supposed to—I would be labelled as “difficult,” and probably be referred to as the “crazy lady customer” for the rest of the day.

I wish it were different. And maybe one day it will be. Maybe the pharmacist will read this, and realize that just because someone holds power doesn't mean they should abuse it.

Communication Error

by Nate Downe

Why you're not alone

Whether it's your first semester at Camosun or your second (or your third), you may feel as if college is not the right fit for you. And, if I must say so, you may just be wrong. Please, allow me to illustrate and entertain the idea that continuing at college can be far more beneficial to you than leaving for paying work. You may be disinterested in your classes or finding it difficult to stay conclusions and review them with the “should have, would have, and could have” attitude that only comes with the ending of events. That is to say, to finish college isn't success; to continue working lower-skilled (and lower-paying) jobs isn't failure. Rather, to move toward success is to fail. The more you succeed the more you fail. Success is failure. To want something is to already not have it.

To move toward success is to fail. The more you succeed the more you fail. Success is failure. To want something is to already not have it.

Unpacking the Bags

by Renata Silva

Making the biggest step possible

Many people ask me what led me to leave my country, my family, and my culture behind to come and live in Canada. The truth is that every international student has a different answer to why they made that decision; in my case, I left my country in search of better opportunities in the labour market. For me, because the curriculum is better, getting a diploma or certificate abroad is a better choice than getting it at home, regardless of if I'm returning to my home country or staying in Canada after I finish school.

For most students, living in another country represents a possible change in their professional career. Therefore, it's quite common to see people who come in search of courses that are completely different from ones they did in their country of origin. This might even have cultural influences. For example, in Brazil, a career change is not always seen positively. On the other hand, if this change is made in another country, this shows the determination and courage of the professional. Therefore, an education abroad can be extremely beneficial. While also aiming for a career improvement, other students seek in a new country the opportunity to learn a new language and live with a new culture.

Another quite common response to justify living abroad is “because I want to explore the world.”

Many students want to see with their own eyes the countries they studied in high school, meet people from different cultures, and broaden the worldview they have. This can bring many professional and personal benefits.

Finally, I've also seen many students who are fathers or mothers of families and risk everything to offer their children better living conditions that could not be offered in their home country.

I say that every international student brings with them a whole world.

No matter your motivation, leaving everything behind will always be difficult because it's basically getting as far out of your comfort zone as possible.

But we face all the challenges because we hit our new country with a determination to fight for something better, and we are confident that this step will bring positive results.

Tech Talk

by Sunki Baek

5 note-taking apps for college students

While a pen and paper always work great in a school environment, sometimes you want to digitize your notes and memos. Let's take a look at some good options for electronic note-taking.

Google Keep (for Android, iOS, and web, free)

Google Keep aims to do one thing and to do that one thing better than anyone. With Google Keep, you can take simple notes on Android and iOS devices, and the web, effortlessly.

- Pros: Great for short notes and to-do lists
- Cons: Hard to organize notes once you have a handful of them

Notion (for Android, iOS, Mac, and Windows, free with paid options)

The goal of Notion is to do everything in one place, so you can build your simple database, collaborate with other people and track their changes, and use simple annotations to style your notes.

- Pros: From a database to simple notes, you can keep everything in one place
- Cons: Easy to hit usage limit in the free plan

Notability (for iOS and Mac, paid version only)

Notability supports new iPads with Apple Pencils, giving you a similar experience to using a real pen to take notes. It also supports PDF templates, so you can write on PDF-exported presentation files during classes.

- Pros: If you have iPad with Apple Pencil support, this is a must
- Cons: Only works on Mac platforms

OneNote (for Android, iOS, Mac, and Windows, free)

Being part of Office suites, OneNote provides the widest range of functionality, with the familiar UI of Office. You can also use it without purchasing Office (which is free for Camosun students anyways), so it's more approachable.

- Pros: Very close to taking and organizing notes on paper
- Cons: Feels a little heavy and slow if all you want is simple note-taking

EverNote (for Android, iOS, Mac, and Windows, free with paid options)

Once the most popular note-taking app, EverNote is still around. EverNote used to be one of the popular choices for clipping web contents and making notes; it now provides many more functionalities.

- Pros: Easy to clip web pages
- Cons: Paid plans can be a bit too much of a burden for students

You can't go too wrong with any of these options. Most of them provide a trial or free plan, so checking them out before committing is always a good way to start.

The Periodic Column

by Gwyneth Faulkner

Gene-driving out of control

A huge breakthrough in the world of gene editing is a tool known as CRISPR, or “clustered regularly interspaced short palindromic repeats.” CRISPR guides enzymes to certain places in a genetic code where they can cut the DNA. Then the cells repair the genes, or other pieces of genetic code can be inserted.

Another recent development is a tool called a gene drive. Usually, when an animal reproduces, there's about a 50/50 chance of one parent passing on any given gene. If an animal has a “gene drive” gene, when the egg and the sperm fuse, the gene drive takes over. It finds the unaffected section of DNA for the same gene from the other parent, uses an enzyme to cut the DNA, and inserts a copy of the gene drive, which makes the chances of passing on this altered gene close to 100 percent.

So far, gene drives have only been used in labs. How can this technology help us?

Kiwi birds are a flightless bird species native to New Zealand. Kiwis are a famous New Zealand icon, but they are critically endangered. Kiwis evolved with few natural predators, and when Europeans settled in New Zealand they brought rats and stoats to the island. These invasive species are one of the main threats to kiwis.

Some scientists have suggested using gene drives on these invasive species that are threatening kiwi birds. One of the suggested mutations is to make the rats infertile. Eventually, the populations will die off without harming the individual rats. Rats reproduce quite quickly, so altering the genes of every rat in New Zealand would take as little as several years. Sounds great, right? No more rats! Happy kiwis! But rats come from somewhere, even if they're invasive in New Zealand.

Rats are really good at stowing away on ships; it's how they got to New Zealand in the first place. The risk is that one of these gene-drive rats travels somewhere where rats are a native and necessary part of the ecosystem, reproduces, and spreads these gene-drive genes to the native population. The risk is that something like this could kill off a native rat population and completely mess up another ecosystem.

That's an outcome no one wants.

Another question scientists are asking is whether or not humans have the right to do this at all. Do we have the right to completely wipe out a species forever? And who gets to decide?

by katy weicker

**The content doesn't end
in the paper.
Find web-exclusive stories at
nexusnewspaper.com.**