

## THE NEST INVESTIGATES: THE QUARTER SYSTEM

### EDITORIAL

**ANONYMITY DISCLOSURE:** All interviewees will remain anonymous in accordance with CAJ & SPJ guidelines due to retribution/social discomfort concerns.

**The Editorial Board is wholly independent from Administration. Administration's stance(s) may not be represented by this article.**

In their 2021 Strategic Report, the VSB describes their vision as “[to] inspire student success by providing an innovative, caring and responsive learning environment.” Though students are stated to be an integral component in the VSB’s approach to education, the opposite has rung true in the 2020/21 school year.

The Nest’s Editorial Board believes the implementation of the Quarter System has resulted in the distortion of the needs of students, parents, and staff alike, across District 39.

The Nest spoke to 75 secondary students from across the district, gaining insight into both their individual and collective experiences with the Quarter System.

With the compressed nature of the system, students find themselves solely cognizant of deadlines and assessments rather than any actual learning. One Hamber student shared “I feel that I am remembering information to just get through the quarter and do well and that I am not retaining said information and knowledge, because there isn’t time for that.”

There is little to no time for error without the consequences to one’s grade being detrimental. Every assignment, project, and test is now weighed more heavily, discouraging growth and learning through trial and tribulation. The Quarter System deprives students of any enrichment and understanding-based learning. “I don’t have the ability to make mistakes and grow” asserted one student.

Due to discrepancies in course loads, teachers, grade level, individual skillsets, and extracurriculars, students did not have one universal stance when it came to their day-to-day workload. One overall conclusion to be drawn is Quarter System’s creation of a lack of consistency and balance. Vocalizing this, one student commented, “The Quarter System creates extremes of both work and leisure [regarding] the workload of classes.”

As stances were highly variable regarding workloads, some students found it easier to focus on two courses at once. “I find it is quite efficient to complete a course in 10 weeks as it is easier to focus on two particular courses rather than the usual eight”, one Hamber student expressed. Students who felt this way found they had more free time and their workload was eased in comparison to prior years.

Others commented on the overwhelming nature of individual courses as a result of the system. “It feels harder due to having to spend more time teaching myself material, and not being able to learn as much during my minimal class time” one student noted. Others shared that the work in any given class per day has increased significantly due to the shortened time frame.

One sentiment was overwhelmingly echoed by nearly all students: an increasingly large concern for their growth, and their capabilities going forward, following a year of tumultuous, rushed, and inconsistent learning. “In the long run, this system is not viable as students are not given adequate time to learn and grow intellectually”, concluded one Hamber student. Many students feel that their learning has been ultimately ineffectual.

“I’m doing more work than my other years and feeling the least educated.” surmised one student.

Regardless of any pleasantries, or lack thereof, in the eyes of individual students, one thing is abundantly clear. The Quarter System is unsustainable and ineffective in the long term.

Many students do not feel as though they have been placed in a system that prepares them to succeed in the future, and it remains to be seen, with time, just how the Quarter System will impact students in the years to come.

However, students were not alone in recognizing the difficult transitions, as parents have also struggled to adjust to the new order. As the year has progressed, many parents have developed concerns over exactly how well the quarter system is ensuring students’ safety and keeping educational standards.

“I’m doing more work than my other years and feeling the least educated.”

*Hamber Student*

In a regular year students are expected to attend class at the same time, whereas quarter system scheduling has proven to be highly variable. Students may have cohort A classes one quarter, cohort B classes another quarter, or a mix of the two. Counsellors have stated that few cohort change requests will be entertained.

The variability of quarter schedules often fails to consider the impact it has on how students get to school, which has had a disproportionate effect on parents with jobs and families that live further away from campus.

In light of the pandemic, many parents feel unsafe allowing their children on public transit amidst strangers. For some families, the

Quarter System has limited caretakers’ options. For caretakers with strict schedules, driving is often not feasible. “[B]ecause of the quarter system, they can’t drive us without disturbing their work schedules,” revealed a student. Many parents feel as if they have been put in a position where they must compromise their children’s safety for them to access education.

Parents further revealed that the Quarter System has impacted teenagers’ stress levels and declining mental health. A mother, whose daughter is taking two academic courses in the current quarter, believed that although the Quarter System has its COVID-safety benefits, the planning for some courses was poorly executed. “It’s far too much stress for students to take on two such courses in such a short amount of time,” she stated.

However, not all parents felt strongly about the Quarter System. Several parents interviewed were ambivalent about the effects of the Quarter System on students’ education. “My kids seem to be doing fine, so I’m not too worried,” stated a parent.

Nevertheless, students’ testimony told a different story. “I don’t think parents really understand how difficult the Quarter System is for students,” one Hamber student admitted.

Recent complaints from parents have been lodged in CBC and CTV. Seemingly frustrated, these complaints scold the school system for excessive/insufficient workloads, shortages of instruction time, content absence, and student wellbeing issues.

Many of these complaints place excessive blame on teachers. What these complaints fail to portray, is the teachers’ perspective, one often quickly discounted in Quarter System discussions.

Parents and students would likely assume that course plans for this pandemic school year were standardized and regulated by the Ministry, the VSB, or some overarching body. An understandable assumption, this was not exactly what transpired.

It was in fact individual teachers, who were given a matter of days, not weeks or months, to take their year-long courses and adapt them into 10-week lite versions.

While some teachers have evidently miscalculated what is attainable in 10 weeks, the blame for such is traceable to the apparent unsystematic and decentralized approach adopted by the district.

Teachers learned of the finalized year plans around the Labour Day weekend. “We had two days at the start of the school year”, said one Hamber teacher. When asked whether teachers had to submit their plans for review, another teacher answered “We didn’t have to submit anything, there was little oversight”.

“We weren’t given any guidance.  
They just told us to do it.”

*Hamber Teacher*

The implementation of the Q3 & Q4 variant of the Quarter System followed a similar sequence of events. Teachers learned of the changes around two weeks before the transition to the third quarter, with little time to prepare if needed. “We had no time” testified one Hamber teacher. Stances on the system variant itself were mixed, with teachers mentioning the changes constituted either a benefit or drawback depending on the class.

The VSB stated the adjustments to the system were made out of conclusions from a survey conducted in November and December. As the survey had not been made publicly available, the Nest filed an FOI request on January 27 under the FIPPA. The Nest recived the survey questions and results on February 8, and the survey is now publicly available on the VSB’s website.

The Nest spoke to a marketing research consultant, who commented that the phraseology of the survey “resulted in half of [the] questions being answered likely with bias/lead towards the [school board]”. The consultant also disagreed with the apparent “topic cramming” and “making conclusions from the results” of this particular set of questions.

It is the Nest’s position that the Quarter System’s flaws are the result of a lack of consistency and standards across pandemic-year planning, rather than the absolute fault of administrators, teachers, and/or students. The hardship faced by students and staff alike should not be entirely attributed to the actions of an individual, but rather the circumstances in which this system has placed them in.

The dilemmas directly and indirectly posed as a result of the Quarter System raise some critical questions. Where was the foresight? Where is the consistency? Where is the accountability? To all of which there is no good nor transparent answer. This is not to say that there was absolutely no planning, no foresight for this school year. There was. But it missed the mark, and the 50,000 students and 9,000 staff of District 39 deserve better than this.

### EDITORIAL BOARD

**EDITORS-IN-CHIEF**  
SPENCER IZEN  
DEAN ROHMAN

**SPONSOR**  
MR. P. SCAGLIONE

**DESIGN & LAYOUT EDITOR**  
JESSICA KIM

**EDITORIAL SUPERVISORS**  
HANNAH AZAD  
ERIKA CHUNG  
ÉLISE ROY  
EMILY SHI

### JOURNALISTIC COMMITMENT

The Griffins’ Nest aims for the highest editorial and ethical standards. The Editorial Board and Journalists should be open-minded, fair and respectful of the truth. All articles are curated by the Editors-in-Chief (with the exception of opinion pieces). Questions, comments, and concerns may be emailed to the Editors-in-Chief directly at ehnewspaper@gmail.com

The Griffins’ Nest has adopted the Canadian Association of Journalists’ Principles for Ethical Journalism, Ethics Guidelines (CAJ), and the Society of Professional Journalists’ Code of Ethics as a standard of our Journalistic Standards policies.

### ARTICLE GUIDE

**News Report:** these articles convey facts to the reader in an efficient and impartial manner.

**News Analysis:** these articles introduce context and explain a news story, often through a closer look at facts and their significance. They are explanatory, not persuasive or inherently designed to sway opinion, and are informed based on the weight of evidence.

**Opinion:** these articles describe a viewpoint on a particular news story from the perspective of the author. They represent an argument or stance that is solely representative of the author and NOT the newspaper as a whole.

**Editorials:** these articles are written by the Editorial Board. They are designed to explain the Griffins’ Nest’ Editorial Board’s stance on a particular subject under the authority of the entire paper.

Amid a fervent vaccine rollout, misinformation spreads as rapidly as the virus itself. Although nearly 180 million doses have been administered worldwide, many are still wary of COVID-19 vaccines. Vaccine hesitancy was named a top threat to global health by the World Health Organization (WHO) in 2019. It is now more critical than ever that Canadians are made aware of the legitimate, scientific facts before making judgements about the COVID-19 vaccines, and be informed of their safety.

1. How does the COVID-19 vaccine work?

The Moderna and Pfizer vaccines work by using genetic material from the virus (mRNA), which give our cells instructions on how to make the harmless virus protein. The immune system sees the protein as an “invader” and starts to fight it. When the proteins are destroyed, your immune system remembers how to fight the protein if you ever get infected again, with the help of memory T-cells.

2. Are the vaccines safe despite being made so quickly?

The vaccines are safe. If the vaccines were unsafe, vaccination campaigns would never have begun altogether.

There are hundreds of coronaviruses, such as SARS and MERS, and people have been studying them for over 50 years. While most vaccines usually take a lengthy time to develop (10-15 years), these vaccines have been made rapidly due to the overwhelming global initiative to push for a COVID-19 vaccine.

Of the millions of people who have been vaccinated worldwide, not a single person’s death has been attributed to a COVID-19 vaccine.

3. What are the side effects of the COVID-19 vaccine?

When you get your shot, you may feel pain and have swelling on your arm. Throughout the rest of your body, you may experience chills, tiredness, and headaches. These are normal signs that your body is building protection. However, if side effects cause major worry, contact a healthcare professional.

4. Why is a second dose necessary?

The second dosage is necessary in order to provide maximum protection against the virus. There has been limited research in clinical trials supporting the efficacy of a preliminary dosage by itself.

5. How effective are the COVID-19 vaccines?

Studies show that the Pfizer vaccine is 95% effective in preventing COVID-19. This level of efficacy is reached 1 week after the second dose. Meanwhile, the Moderna vaccine has been proven to be 94% effective 2 weeks after the second dose.

6. Can I get COVID-19 from the vaccine?

No, you cannot get COVID-19 from the vaccine. The vaccine only uses a piece of the virus, not the entire thing. When you receive the vaccine, you are receiving a piece of the protein that teaches your body how to make a protein (not a virus), that triggers an immune response. Antibodies are created through this process, which give you protection against the virus. Because of this immune response, you may experience similar symptoms.

7. Will the vaccine protect me from new variants?

Vaccine efficacy against new variants is about the same, but the potency of antibodies against the variant B.1.351 is slightly less. However, the virus has not mutated to the point that the vaccine is ineffective. These mutations are being closely monitored and the vaccine can be updated if needed.

8. Do I need to get the vaccine if I’ve already had COVID?

It is possible to become re-infected with COVID-19. Those who have previously contracted the virus should still receive the vaccine.

9. Why do I need to get the vaccine if I can rely on herd immunity to protect me?


The exact duration and strength of a COVID-19 immune response from person-to-person is still unknown. In addition, it is currently impossible to know how much of the population is immune to the virus. The WHO explains that it is unrealistic to rely on future predictions about COVID-19 immunity until more is learned about the topic.

“I think that it’s important for everyone to understand that this massive global effort to bring vaccine within such a short time does not skip any important steps in terms of testing the vaccines for safety, effectiveness, and quality. So what has happened is normally it takes quite a number of years to develop a vaccines, but because there’s a massive investment from governments, international collaboration with manufacturers, with regulatory authorities across the world, with clinical trialists these vaccines have been brought to bear in a faster time, but they have followed all the important steps from the research to the initial preclinical trials, to all three phases of clinical trials”

Dr. Theresa Tam, Chief Public Health Officer of Canada

Every and all eligible individuals should receive the vaccine for the health and safety of the international community.

**PUBLIC HEALTH**  
**WARNING:** Pursuant to Sections 30, 31, 32 and 39 (3) Public Health Act, S.B.C. 2008, gatherings of any size outside of one's home are prohibited.



# ADDRESSING THE HESITATION FOR INNOCULATION

**EDITORIAL**





# STUCO’S START TO 2021

**NEWS REPORT** by *Adelaide Guan (8)* and *Eloise Ramslie (8)*

After Hamber’s impressive fourth-place finish in the Canley Cup, spirits are high and school is back in full tilt. The Griffins managed to raise a whopping \$5,300 for the Greater Vancouver Food Bank, touching the lives of many struggling Vancouverites this winter. Due to COVID-19, the Eric Hamber Student Council (StuCo) has been forced to be more creative with their plans.

With school back in session and a new year ahead, students are now looking to StuCo to keep spirits high. Times may be hard, but StuCo has a promise to uphold: to work harder than before to engage the Hamber community. “We’re trying to come up with ideas to better connect students through social media and Teams,” says Social Coordinator **Adam Mah** (12). StuCo recently launched several online initiatives in light of this goal - Instagram takeovers, Q&A posts, small video pitches, and even teacher TikToks. Students won’t miss anything

either since the Council is sure to keep them in the loop about any upcoming events on their Instagram (@ehstuco).

Griffins can also expect a fan-favourite in time for Valentine’s Day: Matchmakers. Students will fill out an online form, then receive a Matchmaker printout in their 1-3 class. This year, Matchmakers are free compared to the usual \$2 fee! In addition, StuCo has shifted their focus to small-scale events for more meaningful and COVID-safe engagement. “We’re working with what we can do at school,” Mah adds, “and so we’ve been organizing Canley Cup prizes, Spirit Week, Video Assemblies and other small events like the Poster Takedown Competition.”

Students can look forward to a lot of new and exciting opportunities to participate in for the remainder of the school year, including many more virtual events. We look forward to seeing what else our student council has in store this year!

# THE MISSIONS OF HAMBER’S NEWEST ADDITIONS

**NEWS REPORT** by *Hannah Azad (11)*

Each year, Eric Hamber fosters a large group of eager, ambitious and compassionate students. They are constantly searching for ways to aid the community as well as pursue their own passions and interests. Even the COVID-19 pandemic can’t decelerate the drive of these Griffins. Along with the thirty established clubs that Hamber is familiar with, nine new ones have emerged and will be operating during this peculiar school year. With the help of their own executive team members, let’s take a look at what these new clubs entail.

### STEM Sorority

“The purpose of the STEM Sorority Club is to encourage more girls to explore their interest in STEM and break down gender barriers that still exist in the field. Through offering members fun hands-on science activities and career workshops with prominent female scientists, we hope to make a career in STEM more approachable for girls. We are also designing an “Escape Room” activity (a series of puzzles) that we will distribute to Hamber’s sister elementary schools to teach young students science in an engaging way.” – **Jenny Li** (11)

### Hand in Hand

“Hand in Hand is the perfect club for those who are enthusiastic, dedicated and would enjoy helping younger students in their transition into highschool. We organize exciting projects including pen pals, care packages, and mentorship programs. We are also creating a high school guide to help incoming grade 7s and new grade 8s get to know Hamber a bit better.” – **Judy Li** (11)

### Hands of Hope

“The HOPE Initiative is a national charity with over 3000 youth members in their network. Whether providing short-term relief, or building long-term systems, HOPE believes that the best answers are global in concept, local in execution, and limitless in its ability to inspire change. While preserving the values of this wide-spread initiative, the Hands of Hope club will be bringing innovative fundraisers and mentorship opportunities to Eric Hamber.” – **Matthew Yung** (12)

### Literature Club

“Literature Club is a space where like-minded people can discuss literature in a deep and insightful way. We want to read lots of different things, including classics and unconventional literature like short stories, poems or even song lyrics. We’re putting an emphasis on creating responses, such as analysis or original stories or scripts.” – **Alanna Rudolph** (10)

### Girls Will Stay

“Girls Will Stay focuses on helping girls and women stay educated, healthy, and sheltered on both local and international levels. This is done by organizing fundraisers and community outreach events to help fight barriers women facing all around the world.” – **Jenny Lan** (11)

### First Responders

“My friend and I decided to start a First Responders club at school as we have recently become nationally-certified lifeguards and first aiders over the summer. We wanted to teach others about emergency treatment and provide anyone in the Hamber community with essential first aid skills that they could potentially apply to situations in the future. We’d also like to look into fundraising for the Red Cross and providing first aid services at school or community events.” – **Rachel Dong** (11)

### Car Club

“The Eric Hamber Car Club is for everybody, whether you’re a car enthusiast or somebody with zero knowledge of cars. Our goal is to teach every member the rules of the road, what to do in emergency situations, and how to pick their first car. We will meet both in-person and on Zoom, so students in the remote rotation can still attend.” – **Brandon Long** (12)

### Griffin’s Cage

“Similar to “Shark Tank”, our club members came up with Hamber’s version, Griffins Cage. We’re a club that promotes and educates our peers on entrepreneurship, and the importance of it. Our goal is to remind others to think out of the “cage”, and bring creativity to life.” – **Julie Vu** (12)

### Action For Animals

“Action For Animals’ focus is on helping animals living in shelters by spreading awareness about them and informing others of changes they can make on a daily basis to help. We’d also like to collect money, food, or other resource donations to deliver to shelters or hospitals. Our goal is to give people chances to extend their passion for animals and help bring a better life to the ones that are less fortunate.” – **Kathy Nguyen** (11)

The drive and creativity of these students amidst the pandemic is highly commendable. They have opened opportunities for Hamberites to experience a sense of community and make an impact regardless of this year’s circumstances. With these new additions, there is certainly something on Hamber’s diverse clubs list that is suitable for every Griffin at our school.

# GOOD THINGS COME IN THREES: TRILOGY HAMBER BUSINESS GROUP

**NEWS REPORT** by *Reya Khanna (9)*

The Griff, a place to buy snacks, hoodies and many other school-related items, closed this year due to COVID-19, but a novel thing came out of it. Trilogy Hamber Business Group was created to expand the horizons of Eric Hamber’s Business Department and rebrand the store we all loved.

The team at Trilogy is made up of six senior executives in grades 11 and 12, and ten junior members ranging from grades 9 and 10. **Ms. Lau** (Business Education), the sponsor for Trilogy, overlooks the team. The Director of Human Resources, **Jack Bremmer** (12) said “Trilogy provides an opportunity for students to become involved and learn about leadership and business.” Trilogy works and thrives on community outreach and giving back. The team has made Trilogy structured around the number three, keying themselves around their “three pillars” and core values. Trilogy focuses on people, the planet, and profit, servicing the community, and operating sustainably. “While Trilogy does not solely work towards being profitable, our means of profitability come through many avenues, which include student-run initiatives and interscho-

lastic events. A fraction of the net proceeds made during these events get donated to a charitable cause or a non-profit organization, to maintain social responsibility, and give back to the community especially during these trying times,” stated Chief Executive Officer **Ishaan Gaur** (12).

Though Trilogy is new, they have already taken initiatives to better the school atmosphere. Recently, Trilogy created a design competition in which the winner would receive a free Eric Hamber themed hoodie. Trilogy took on Holiday Door Grams — an event to “spread holiday cheer and raise morale of the student and staff population at Eric Hamber” — this past winter. **Lincoln Macdonald** (12), the Director of Communications said, “We are running a district-wide case competition called ‘Pitch It’ where students can enter in teams and compete to win a prize for the best video pitch.” All initiatives done by Trilogy Hamber Business group are a direct reflection of their three sets of three values.

Despite the fact that Trilogy came from the midst of a pandemic and due to the temporary closure of The Griff, Trilogy is



here to stay. Trilogy is now a permanent organization at school and will continue to better the community here at Hamber.



# FROM PARIS TO ROOM 125

**ANALYSIS** by *Sara Maya Budhiraja (8) and Adrian Yue (8)*

The fashion industry is more than just clothes and styling. It is creativity, passion, and love. With the raging global pandemic, the fashion industry was thrown off balance during these unprecedented times.

Packed shows and classrooms with non-stop sewing machines have all vanished in the face of COVID-19. The pandemic forced many to adopt virtual methods and changes to running projects and education.

Many infamous brands like Prada, Moschino, and Thom Browne pivoted from these star-studded, international shows to virtual runways. These virtual runways were a divergence from the norm but were hailed by critics and fans alike as poignant and captivating. Yves Saint Laurent hosted a virtual show on a desert dune and Moschino even used dolls to simulate a packed fashion show!

While glitzy clothes and accessories make or break a designer’s name, it never hurts to have a sports icon or a rap star wearing statement pieces from the designer’s collection. However, COVID-19 put an end to all (legal) parties, galas, and the regular celebrity events many were accustomed to seeing on TV. Suddenly, our favourite superstars were seen inside their homes instead of rocking a midnight blue ball gown for absolutely no reason. The exposure that aspiring global fashion brands were used to had almost

entirely disappeared. But luckily, one form of global entertainment had blossomed during the pandemic: social media. Up and coming designers were quickly reaching out to influencers from all over the globe, and their clothes were once again being placed on an international stage.

Back at Hamber, we sat down with Hamber’s head of the fashion program, **Ms. Ho** (Home Economics), and one of her students, **Victoria Chew**, (12). They both agreed that the program has been vastly different this year, especially with the implementation of the Quarter System. “Our fashion show has never been stopped before,” Ms. Ho told us, “I’ve had a heart attack, shingles, but we never stopped the show before.”



ANABELLE MCGARRY/HAMBER

“I’m going to try and plan a small virtual show for June, but the motivation is definitely not there... They really don’t have enough time to process anything and teaching virtually is very hard.”

Victoria told us that time was a big issue for her. “Everyone is cramming work... There are not enough materials online like fabric, sewing machines and dress forms.”

Ms. Ho agreed, saying, “Doing this work it’s basically muscle memory, but if you’re just starting out then you don’t have it.”

COVID-19 also impacted the education of textiles students greatly as well. From grades 9 to 12, projects which were mainstays in the program had to be cut out due to the quarter system.

“The 9s would usually be making bears, a bomber jacket, pants, a dress, a skirt, plus bonus items,” Ms. Ho pointed out. “With the quarter system, we just finished the bears and the skirt.”

Repercussions of the pandemic could be felt from near and far. Whether in room 125 or Milan, Italy, the fashion industry has had to adapt to this new normal. This transition was difficult and changed many crucial aspects of the fashion world. Now, we look towards a future in which fashion can return to its former scale preceding COVID-19.



# ERIKA’S TAKES: RECENT MUSIC RELEASES

**REVIEW** by *Hamber’s self-proclaimed Simon Cowell, Erika Chung (11)*

Ten months of pandemic life has not slowed the music industry. Since then, a steady stream of studio albums have been released with varying levels of success. Social media platforms such as Tiktok, where users post 15 second clips, have been a launchpad for smash hits.

Here are some of my favourite and most notable releases (as of February 2021).



**folklore by Taylor Swift, evermore by Taylor Swift**  
**6/10**

Taylor Swift released two albums in quick succession— folklore and evermore. The soft, acoustic guitar and piano mark a departure from her previously upbeat pop albums. Her music is warm and comforting, with lyrical content telling stories of first love and loss. Both albums are extremely similar in sound, but individually, the songs are captivating and emotional. As a whole however, the albums’ sounds are repetitive. folklore and evermore are the kind of albums I would enjoy on shuffle while doing monotonous tasks, such as studying or cleaning.



**joke’s on you by guccihighwaters**  
**10/10**

Morgan Murphy’s (guccihighwaters) music is easily categorized as “lo-fi” and “emo rap”. Generally, this genre is dominated by mediocre SoundCloud rappers, but Murphy rises above this standard with his newest full length album, “joke’s on you”. As a self-described shy and socially nervous individual, Murphy titled his album in reference to the doubt of his success. The album plays heavily with themes of heartbreak, sadness and love. The album was so enjoyable that not one song could be skipped. My personal favourites are “hold somebody”, “rock bottom”, “highschool” and “catch-22”. Tastefully chosen featured artists include BC-born Powfu, Sarcastic Sounds, and convolk, who mesh well with Murphy’s style.



**Drivers License by Olivia Rodrigo**  
**4.5/10**

This mournful ballad opened 2021 with a bang. The song immediately popularized by Gen Z has since become overplayed, carving its place in teenagers’ playlists as a typical post-breakup anthem. Drivers License’s lyrics resonate with teenagers, with lines such as “And I know we weren’t perfect but I’ve never felt this way for no one/and I just can’t imagine how you could be so okay now that I’m gone”. Rodrigo’s first single chronicles the emotions of a conventional teenage love story with its relatable lyrical content and sounds reminiscent of Lorde. The single is mediocre and not ground-breaking in any way. It acts merely as a satisfactory rallying cry for those suffering from the plight of unrequited love. Drivers License does not live up to the hype.



**Thats What They All Say by Jack Harlow**  
**8.5/10**

Jack Harlow’s debut album, “Thats What They All Say” reflects on his rise to stardom while remaining true to his Louisville roots. The natural charisma and energy in Harlow’s rap is especially apparent in this album. “Lookin’ back, I gotta wonder if you would have thought/That my life would’ve changed like this/That every station in America would play my sh-/That I would do a remix and I could take my pick/Of any rappers that I wanted and they’d get on the sh-” from the song 21C/Delta discusses his rise to such fame that any rapper would work with him. Often described as having a “effortless” sound, Harlow’s is quirky, fresh and full of swagger. The instrumentals are fantastic and have a sound immediately recognizable as Harlow’s. Standout tracks include Creme, Tyler Herro and Whats Poppin Remix.

## In Other Lands, Sarah Rees Brennan

*In Other Lands* by Sarah Rees Brennan opens with plenty of common tropes—the golden hero, unknown fantasy lands, a love triangle— and explores them in new and unexpected ways. Why would someone choose to return home after their adventure? What happens to them and will they be able to lead normal lives afterward, or will they always gravitate back to a hidden world?

Although it is whimsical, *In Other Lands* contains some deeper themes. It comments on the absurdity of gender roles. While it is improbable that a fantasy species might have identical but opposite gender stereotypes and expectations, this different perspective is provocative and humorous.

In many fantasy novels, there is a heavy emphasis on violence and unrest. Can war truly create lasting peace? *In Other Lands* discusses these themes and more.

The protagonist, Elliot, is far from a typical hero. He gravitates toward diplomacy and the library. He is constantly overshadowed by his friend, Luke, the golden hero. He is also extremely sarcastic. His snarky dialogue and antics keep readers smiling. Despite the length, readers will finish *In Other Lands* in no time at all. This light-hearted read is perfect for brightening one’s mood.

**Illuminae, Amie Kaufman and Jay Kristoff**

*Illuminae* by Amie Kaufman and Jay

*Kristoff* is the first book in a unique space adventure trilogy. Citizens of a remote planet are caught between a corporate battle and now must escape an enemy warship. Not only that, but a deadly plague is mutating rapidly and the allegedly protective A.I. has gone rogue. Told in an intriguing format, this epistolary novel contains interviews, transcripts, censored emails, military files, and more.

This book is unparalleled in suspense. Readers will never expect the plot twists, yet the author’s use of foreshadowing is so skillful that the reader should have seen them coming. *Illuminae*’s fast pace and intensity make it an absolute page-turner. Luckily, there are two more books in the trilogy, *Gemini* and *Obsidio*, because this book will certainly leave you wanting more.

# QUARANTINE READS: BOOKS FOR WHEN YOU’RE STUCK AT HOME



**REVIEW** by *Alanna Rudolph (10)*



The first vaccine was authorized in Canada on December 9, 2020. As of February 15, Canada has administered 1,272,929 doses of COVID-19 vaccines. However, the number of people getting vaccinated daily is far lower than Canada’s original plan.

In recent weeks, the distribution of vaccines throughout the nation has been heavily delayed. Many have criticized the federal government for not having a solid national vaccine rollout plan.

“It just seems to be chaos right now. We know who is a vulnerable population, so we need a strategy of actually vaccinating them.” said Alyson Kelvin, a virologist at the Canadian Centre for Vaccinology,

What is causing this delay? Canada’s original rollout plan of the Pfizer-BioNTech was sidetracked, due to people starting to favour and wait for the Moderna vaccine. This is because the Moderna vaccine is more easily transportable, and doesn’t require the same types of strict storage conditions as the Pfizer vaccines.

Regarding the accessibility to these vaccines, Shore Capital analyst Dr. Adam Baker has said, “A vaccine can be as effective as you want, but if you can’t get it to people, its efficacy becomes zero.” Currently, recent shipments of the Pfizer vaccine are being stored at minus 80 to minus 60 C° in distribution plants throughout the country. These vaccines must be used within two to seven days. If they aren’t, they must immediately be discarded.

Prime Minister Justin Trudeau has expressed his feelings about the delay in distribution, saying that he is “frustrated to see vaccines in freezers and not in people’s arms.” Initially, the federal government set a goal to get 20 million Canadians vaccinated by Canada Day. However, this benchmark is being pushed further back.

The actual time when the general population will start to get vaccinated varies from province to province. Although each province and territory has its own vaccine rollout plan, there is a general idea of who will be getting the vaccinations first; senior citizens, people with serious illnesses, front-line healthcare workers, and Indigenous communities.

BC’s plan involves 4 different phases, which were developed based on guidance and expert advice from the National Advisory Community on Immunization, B.C.’s Immunization Committee and the Public Health Leadership Committee.

The first phase of BC’s plan started in December 2020 and lasts roughly to February 2021. During this time, the ones that are the most vulnerable to severe illness are the priority, which includes senior citizens, people that work with seniors, healthcare workers that may work with COVID-19 patients, and isolated indigenous communities.

The second phase focuses on at-risk populations that were unable to get the vaccine during the first phase. Seniors over the age of 80, Hospital staff, and general practitioners will receive the vaccines at this point.

The third phase is where the transition from vulnerable populations to the general public occurs. This includes people between the ages of 60 and 79, and people between the ages of 16 and 69 who have been deemed more vulnerable or susceptible to the disease.

After this can the fourth phase start, which includes the general public, and anyone that wants the vaccine. Youth and young adults would be the last to get the vaccine if they are healthy and have little to no underlying health issues.

# LOTS AND LOTS OF UNUSED SHOTS

**NEWS REPORT** by Dean Rohman (11)



The delayed rollout has faced harsh backlash from Canadians all across the board. With uncertainty about how many people will get vaccinated before the benchmarks, Canadians have expressed their frustration over things not going back to normal. The vaccines are a stepping stone to getting back to “normal,” whatever that may look like in the future. One thing is for sure however; the vaccines are here and ready, it is just a matter of getting them out there.



# EXAMINING VANCOUVER’S HOUSING MARKET IN THE AGE OF COVID-19

**ANALYSIS** by Yianna Luka (11) and Tarini Tabreja (11)

The city of Vancouver, BC is ranked the fourth most expensive city in the world to live in. The average single-family home here costs \$2.2 million. When and how did real-estate prices get so high? What does this mean for the average population in Vancouver, and what will the housing market look like in the years to come? These are just a handful of the many questions people have when talking about the Vancouver housing market.

In the past year, Vancouver housing market activity has drastically decreased. Vancouver’s average residence was valued at \$1.27 million in 2020. Condo sales were the most impacted by COVID-19. Over the lockdown, there was a greater demand for condos than previous years, as condo owners realized they needed more living space. Single-detached homes were

the most searched for and sought after. Because of this, condo prices decreased while house prices soared. In 2019 alone, 77,350 homes were sold in B.C. In 2020, 65,023 homes were sold between January and September. Overall, the market throughout 2020 faced challenges but was able to increase sales.

Easy access to beaches, the mountains, trendy restaurants, and outdoor life make Vancouver West a very popular choice for buyers. Although everyone wants to live here, the sky-high prices for small condos discourage first time buyers. With most people earning average salaries, owning a home has become increasingly hard. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, many people have lost their jobs and are unable to keep up with high rental prices. Many Vancouver residents have had no choice but to either downsize from

a single-family home to a townhouse or condo or just move altogether to satellite cities like Burnaby, Coquitlam, Surrey, and Abbotsford.

The price-sales for this coming year are projected for a 5.6% increase and another 4% for 2022. With increased living space being in demand, buyers will be interested in larger properties. Buyers are projected to strike the market and put pressure on the prices. Houses will continue to be in high demand, while condos are decreasing in value. This coming year may be more surprising than 2020, with newer and more arduous challenges.

Now that the expensiveness of living in Vancouver has come to light, many people are questioning whether it is even worth living in the city. However one thing is apparent; Vancouver is only getting more expensive to live in.

# BRITISH COLUMBIA’S INCOME & DISABILITY ASSISTANCE

**NEWS REPORT** by Bianca Takenaka (9)

The government of British Columbia supports its residents with numerous crucial assistance programs. These include, but are not limited to, income, disability, and hardship assistance, as well as comfort allowances and BC Senior’s Supplement for those in need. Many people know someone who uses these services, but few have given thought to who exactly is going through financial hardship or have a disability.

BC income assistance is a welfare program for BC residents that provides financial support for those who have little to no income. To be eligible for this program, you have to be unemployed or unable to work, not earning enough for basic necessities, in need of food, shelter, or medical support, or be waiting for another source of money to arrive. The BC Ministry of Health can only provide income assistance to people who meet this criterion. Individuals are advised to always look for and use all of their other financial sources and assets before applying. When someone has been approved for this program, their monthly income assistance will be based on the size of their family and their situation. For example, people that live alone can be provided up to \$760 monthly, married couples can be given \$1,077.22 if they are both qualified for assistance, and families with two children can be provided up to \$1,301.06.

Another important welfare program is disability assistance. BC disability assistance is support for people who are designated as a Person with Disabilities (PWD) and need either health or financial support. To qualify for disability assistance, one must show that they meet the expectations of financial eligibility: be at least 18 years old, have a severe physical or mental injury that is expected to remain for at least two years or more, be significantly limited in their capability to do daily living activities, and require assistance with those daily living activities from another person, or an assistance animal or device. When someone is on disability assistance, the amount of financial help is dependant on how many people are designated as PWD, as well as the size of an applicant’s family. During April of 2019, one could receive \$1,183.42 if they are single, \$2,073.06 if someone and their spouse are both designated as PWD, or \$1,609.08 if they are an independent parent with two children.

Income and disability assistance, among all of the other support programs the Government of British Columbia has to provide, have been assisting residents all over the province and will continue to do so in the future.



Now former Governor General Julie Payette resigned on January 21, 2021. Chief Justice of the Supreme Court Richard Wagner has assumed the temporary role of administrator of Canada representing Her Majesty the Queen, until the appointment of the next Governor General. Payette’s resignation came after the release of a 132-page review of allegations of a “toxic” workplace environment at the Governor General’s office.

“Everyone has a right to a healthy and safe work environment, at all times and under all circumstances. It appears this was not always the case at the Office of the Secretary to the Governor-General. Tensions have arisen at Rideau Hall over the past few months and for that, I am sorry.” Payette said in a statement regarding her resignation. The night before, she had spoken to Prime Minister Justin Trudeau informing him of her decision.

“... in respect for the integrity of my vice-regal Office and for the good of our country and of our democratic institutions, I have come to the conclusion that a new Governor General should be appointed.”

On July 21, 2020, CBC News reported staffers at Rideau Hall allegedly faced verbal abuse and bullying from the Governor General and her secretary Assunta di Lorenzo. In response, the Privy Council Office ordered an investigation into the allegations and hired independent consulting firm, Quintet Consulting, to conduct it.

Quintet interviewed 92 current and former staffers at Rideau Hall throughout their investigation. Of those 92, 43 said that they would describe the environment as



# CANADA’S VICEREGAL SCANDAL

NEWS REPORT by Spencer Izen (11)

“hostile or negative”. 26 went on to say it was “toxic or poison”, and terms and phrases such as “humiliation”, “disrespect”, and “the definition of a poisoned workplace” were also used. Numerous employees testified to acts of bullying, belittling, and berating.

“It’s almost hard to pinpoint because it’s not...it wasn’t always insult[ing] or vulgar, but there was always that level of criticism. There was, I’ll go as far to say, a victim at every meeting” said a former employee in an interview with CBC.

The July allegations were preceded by years of questioning regarding the past actions of the Queen’s representative, and whether the former astronaut-turned viceregal representative was even suited to the job to begin with.

Prior to being Governor General, Payette was Vice President of the Canada Lands Company (CLC). Owned by the CLC, is the Montreal Science Centre, where Payette additionally served as Chief Operating Officer. “A number of us were blown away when she got appointed,” a former CLC board member told CBC. “[CLC] is a Crown corporation owned by the government,” they continued, “You would have thought they’d call to check out her credentials.”

Payette left the Montreal Science Centre in 2016 with a \$200,000 severance following a series of complaints about her treatment and bullying of employees. The next year, she left her post at the Canadian Olympic Committee for the same reasons. She had a history of poor workplace conduct prior to her appointment as Governor General.

With the release of the review and in light of Payette’s past, Canadians are now questioning the vetting process applied to her when she was first discussed as a candidate for Governor General. When Prime Minister Trudeau chose Payette in 2017, he did not use the committee established by the previous Harper government, designed for selecting Governor Generals. Critics of Trudeau’s pick point to this as evidence of a loose vetting process. When asked why a more rigorous vetting process was not applied, Trudeau responded “Obviously the vetting process that was in place was followed, but obviously we’re going to also look at ways we can strengthen and improve the vetting process for high-level appointments”.

Canada’s federal political scene is currently fraught with instability, chiefly due to the disagreements over pandemic handling, vaccine rollout, and the unpredictable nature of the current minority government.

The temporary delegation of the Governor General’s duties to the Chief Justice creates an awkward judicial dynamic, according to constitutional scholars. It effectively blurs the lines between the Judicial and Executive branches of the federal government. The Chief Justice could be forced to provide the constitutionally mandated Royal Assent to a piece of legislation with the potentiality of that same legislation finding its way to the very court in which he presides over.

While the role is one of a more ceremonial and procedural orientation, and often is overlooked by the public, the selection of the next Governor General will surely capture the magnified attention of Canadians nationwide. And the pressure is on the Prime Minister to get it right.

# CANADA’S POLITICIANS UNDER FIRE FOR IGNORING COVID RESTRICTIONS

NEWS REPORT by Liliana Chow (11)



“I cannot stop you with an order (from) getting into your car or going onto a plane...But I’m asking in the strongest of terms for us to stay put, to stay in our communities and to protect our communities” Dr. Bonnie Henry, British Columbia’s provincial health officer said in a public statement.

In the months approaching the 2020-21 holiday season, health professionals displayed increasing concern for the potential increase in non-essential travel and large scale social gatherings. Canada’s Chief Public Health Officer, Dr. Theresa Tam, further urged Canadians to restrict and limit gatherings. “Christmas is not going to be having any kind of large group interactions. Even with family, you’ve got to really think twice. Avoid non-essential travel. Keep to your current household contacts as much as possible.”

Statements made by health officials were widely supported by many very prominent Canadian politicians, such as Minister of Finance, Rod Phillips, Minister of Alberta’s Municipal Affairs, Tracy Alard, and Quebecois Sen. Jean-Guy Dagenais.

“The only way we will beat COVID-19 is by following the advice provided by our public health experts. Public officials are no exception,” said Phillips.

Nevertheless, despite their previous public statements, Phillips, in addition to Allard and Dagenais, travelled abroad during the holidays, sparking criticism.

In response to the backlash over unessential travel, Phillips’ and other politicians released apologies for their previous actions. “I deeply regret travelling over the holidays,” the finance minister declared. “It was a mistake and I apologize. I am making arrangements to return to Ontario immediately and will begin a 14-day quarantine as soon as I arrive.”

However, there is some skepticism among citizens if a public apology will prevent similar future occurrences. Recent events have pushed the public to ask: are politicians exempt from COVID regulations, and above the orders of Canadian health officers? Canadians who have made many sacrifices in their social, professional, and family lives have expressed anger and frustration at Phillips, Allard, and Dagenais.

“These guys just think the rules don’t apply to them,” stated NDP deputy leader Sarah Singh.

In the aftermath of the holidays, health officials have reiterated the importance of following provincial and federal health guidelines.

“Be kind, be calm, and be safe!” stated Dr. Henry.

# LIMITED COVID PROTOCOLS IN THE PROFESSIONAL SPORTS INDUSTRY

NEWS REPORT by Amelia Hughes (11)

Coming into 2021, the COVID-19 restrictions for professional sports have become considerably more lenient, multiple sources report.

Following the global outbreak of COVID-19 in 2020, sports teams took every precaution possible to keep players, staff, and management safe. In their early responses to the pandemic, the NHL, NBA, MLB, and other professional sports leagues limited staff and athlete contact with the outside world and barred any and all public viewings of games. However, as the number of cases has increased, COVID-19 precautions in sports have not.

Multiple news sources reveal that players for Vancouver hockey team, the Canucks, are not required to stay isolated, despite only recently being given permission by BC health officials to play in Canada. The team has also allowed limited fans to come and view games. Since easing up on restrictions, the Canucks have reported one COVID-19 case, forcing the team to cancel practices. The Canuck’s actions have been met with backlash. The National Hockey League (NHL) released a statement, declaring that the Canucks were required to add more regulations to play in the upcoming season.

Yet public concerns surrounding health and safety have not been exclusive to the hockey sphere. The Toronto Raptors, Canadian basketball team associated with the National Basketball League (NBA), have faced limitations as well. Health officials denied the Raptors are not allowed to play in Canada for safety reasons, leading the team to relocate to Tampa, Florida. Similarly, Toronto based baseball team, the Blue Jays were also denied playing in Canada for their 2020 season, a trend that is likely to continue well into 2021.

Sports seasons currently in session have not met with much greater success. Vancouver based soccer team, The Whitecaps were forced to cancel a game on account of rising COVID-19 numbers.

Nevertheless, the top priority of health officials and professional sports teams in the current pandemic remains maintaining public safety.



# NOTHING TO BE PROUD OF: WHITE SUPREMACY IN CANADA

NEWS REPORT by Emily Shi (11)



On February 3, 2021, the Canadian government deemed The Proud Boys, the Atomwaffen Division, the Base and the Russian Imperial Division terrorist entities under Canadian law. They joined a list of over 80 other terrorist organizations banned from owning assets, and liable to seizure for entry into Canada.

The Proud Boys, founded in 2016 by Canadian Vice Media co-founder Gavin McInnes, is listed as a Neo-Nazi group with strong facist, racist, islamophobic and mysoginistic views. With divisions throughout Canada and the world, the Proud Boys have been known to speak out publicly against Black Lives Matter protests and support hate rallies. In 2017, former Proud Boys member Jason Kessler organized the Unite for the Right rally in Charlottesville, a white supremacist event in which far right groups openly chanted racist and Antisemitic remarks while carrying weapons. Yet the

actions of the Proud Boys are not exclusive to America. 2017 also saw two members of the Proud Boys Halifax chapter disrupt a Mi'kmaq ceremony commemorating Canada's wrongs against Indigenous groups.

The designation of the Proud Boys as a terrorist organization comes after the group's involvement in the 2021 Capitol riots that occurred in January. The government listing identifies Proud Boys leaders as having conspired and instructed other members to involve themselves in the siege on Capitol Hill.

Since their terrorist designation, The Proud Boys have denied participating in terrorism. An email sent to the Toronto chapter received a link to a website titled "Proud Boys Truths" in response, which claimed that there was "no evidence" that they are terrorists.

However, Public Safety Minister Bill Blair revealed that there has been a signifi-

cant increase of violence from the organization since 2018.

"No matter the ideological motivation, they're all hateful, intolerant and, as we've seen, they can be highly dangerous," the Minister stated.

The Proud Boys were added alongside the Atomwaffen Division, the Base, and the Russian Imperial Division, all entities with ties to white supremacy and hate crimes. These new additions to the list of terrorist entities in Canada follows a 2018 statement by Public Safety Canada, voicing increased concern over the rise of alt-right wing groups in Canada.

Nevertheless, some saw these recent designations as a step in the right direction. Member of Parliament Jagmeet Singh called the designation of the Proud Boys and other Neo-nazi groups a "Victory... [for] young people, working people [and] Black, Brown, Indigenous people."

## CANADA'S ECONOMIC PERFORMANCE GOING INTO 2021

ANALYSIS by Katja Radovic-Jonsson (9)

The year 2020 and all it carried caused a severe economic downturn, both within Canada's borders and internationally. Despite the strong growth in the first few months before the pandemic hit, the Canadian economy in October was \$83.9 billion below its February levels, in inflation-adjusted terms. In November, the federal government presented its fall economic statement, projecting a deficit of nearly \$400 billion.

In their 2021 economic outlook, Deloitte Canada stated that in 2020, Canada's real Gross Domestic Product (GDP) fell by an annualized 7.3% in the first quarter. This decrease continued in the second quarter, dropping 38.1%. While this drop was unprecedented, so was its rebound. The third quarter saw growth surging by 40.5%.

The beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic brought a historic loss of jobs all over Canada. In April, 2.9 million fewer Canadians were employed compared to the previous year. This massive rise in unemployment caused consumers to become more aware of their spending habits, with aggregate household savings surging to over \$200 billion in 2020 from \$18 billion in 2019. Government support has also aided in bringing that number up. As the pandemic progressed, unemployment rates started to lower once more. By November, 482,000 fewer Canadians were employed compared to 2019, 3% lower than where it was in February, according to the Conference Board of Canada.

While many industries struggled during the pandemic, 2020 showed how important essential retail and healthcare jobs are, resulting in positive economic trends for both industries. Other

trending industries during COVID-19 include finance, telecommunications, customer service, manufacturing, engineering, technology, online gaming, and publishing. Industries that continue to struggle include business investment, and trade, and according to the Conference Board, those industries will not bounce back until the second half of 2021, when "the health risks associated with COVID-19 will have dissipated, borders [have] re-opened and households and businesses can get back to normal".

Along with the loss of current jobs, the pandemic has caused many to struggle to find new employment. The Bank of Canada's quarterly survey on consumer expectations showed that respondents believed they were less likely to find a new job if were to lose their current one during the pandemic.

Locally, the pandemic has created and worsened issues for small business owners. A survey conducted by the B.C. Chamber of Commerce in May 2020 indicated that 75% of respondents had challenges with attracting customers, with 49% of respondents identifying challenges around having enough operating cash for expenses. As a result, 31% identified challenges around having enough cash to meet and implement safety standards. As part of their \$1.5 billion economic recovery plan, the B.C. government is allotting about \$400 million to help these business owners with initiatives such as recovery grants.

The COVID-19 pandemic has truly caused a cultural reset, letting us rethink our priorities and find our true selves. Perhaps the same can be said about the economy during these strange times.

## A CLOSER LOOK AT TRUMPISM AND EXTREMISM IN CANADA

ANALYSIS by Teagan Nichol (8)



With the end of the Trump administration comes the lasting effects it will have on the global political climate. Throughout Trump's four years, the world saw a rise in outward, public white supremacy, right-wing populism, and bigotry. The misinformation and distrust promoted in media and the government finally climaxed on January 6 as a mob of Trump supporters, white supremacists and members of several alt-right groups stormed the Capitol building intending to overturn the results of the 2020 election.

When talking about extremism and Trump is it important to acknowledge that Trump is not the cause of these ideologies. Or outright declared his support for them rather a product of them and a figure upholding those views. His lack of action to condemn white supremacy and extremism has emboldened people with those ideologies. These problems run deep in both Canada and the United States.

Among the several high-profile Canadian hate crimes, one of the most extreme was the Quebec City mosque shooting on the evening of the 29th January 2017. A 27-year-old man brought a long gun into a mosque during prayers and killed six worshippers and injured 19. This man was described by his friends as a moderate conservative, but in the past year, he had turned to extremism and been openly expressing

xenophobic and racist views. He also expressed support for Trump. Another example is from November 14, 2016, on a Toronto subway. A white man verbally attacked another man using racial insults. The man was seemingly proud of his actions, with a simple response of "Go Trump". The man defended his actions by saying the man he had insulted had punched him; a claim not supported by witnesses. These are only a few among many of the publicized anti-Muslim, anti-Asian, and anti-Black, Antisemitic, and Homophobic hate crimes to occur in Canada.

Although these events could be brushed off as isolated incidents, trends indicate that hate crimes in Canada rise in conjunction with the rise of hate crimes in the United States. Canada has seen a gradual rise in hate crimes since 2014. Police-reported hate crimes rose from 2014-2019. American statistics exemplified a similar trend. Hate crimes progressively rose from 2014-2019, with a jump in 2017. It is not surprising that what happens in the US is reflected in Canadian politics. They are one of the most powerful countries in the world and one, if not our closest ally.

Beyond a rise in extremism, the impact the Trump Administration has had on the political parties in Canada. Some of the most recent displays were in the past month by the Conservative Party. After

Andrew Scheer failed to give the conservative party a win in the 2019 election, the party elected a new leader, Erin O'Toole. Some of O'Toole's recent actions seemed to reflect the growing influence of Trumpism within the party. A January post on the Conservative Party posted website featured the statement "Justin Trudeau is rigging the next election in his favour". The post was removed several days later. In another instance, one of O'Toole's promotional videos ended with the slogan "Take back Canada". Now, Erin O'Toole is trying to shake this presence of Trumpism, saying that the Conservative Party "no place for the far-right". Furthermore, he condemned his former-coworker, MP Derek Sloan, for accepting a donation from a white nationalist. Sloan had previously been a source of public outrage before the donation when he was accused of being racist toward Dr. Theresa Tam, the Public Health Officer of Canada.

However, there are differences between the respective American and Canadian situations. Erin O'Toole's dismissal of the far-right, Trumpism, and expulsion of white nationalism from the Conservative party is significant. The past four years, especially the past month, have reignited the movement to condemn hate groups and for more far-right extremist groups being considered terrorist organizations.



# PROTESTS IN INDIA: FARMING REGULATIONS SPARK MASSIVE DEMONSTRATIONS

NEWS REPORT by Parker Haga (11)



Tens of thousands of farmers have assembled in the streets of New Delhi, India, in protest of three agricultural laws that were enacted by Prime Minister Modi’s government on September 20. Without consulting farmers, the government passed three bills, reshaping the agricultural industry of India, affecting over half of India’s 1.3 billion people. Agricultural workers are the biggest voter block in India, making the topic a significant political issue.

On September 20, Prime Minister Modi’s government passed three farming bills, claiming they will make it easier for farmers to sell their produce directly to private buyers— in hopes that these private sector investments will promote economic prosperity. Despite government claims, farmers argue these laws will deregulate crop prices and make it easier for corporations to exploit agricultural workers. Farmers worry these changes will also cause the government to remove their safeguard, the Minimum Support Price (MSP). The MSP is a fixed price at which certain produce is obtained, designed to protect farmers from fluctuating markets and natural uncertainties.

Farmers from the states of Punjab and Haryana have been peacefully protesting the laws since the beginning of August when the farm bills were first publicized. When their demands were not met, they began burning their fields in protest. Despite their actions, the government continued to

ignore them since demonstrations were confined to the northern parts of India. Weeks later, farmers from all over India made their way to the country’s capital – New Delhi.

Amrinder Singh, a young farmer of India said, “When we started our march, we felt we were going to our capital, but they treated us like terrorists.” Travelling by foot or tractor, protesters were forced to weather tear gas and water cannons, and push past obstacles such as trenches and barricades, set up by government forces. Despite these challenges, protesters were not deterred and continued to advance their way to the capital.

Situated on the outskirts of New Delhi, farmers have blocked major roads into the capital by setting up encampments made up of thousands of parked tractors and trailers. With outdoor kitchens, laundries, pharmacies, and public toilets set up, protesters have declared they are prepared to demonstrate until the government repeals the three agricultural laws.

On November 26, coinciding with India’s Constitution Day, the world’s biggest coordinated strike occurred. As 250 million Indian workers, students, and civil society groups went on strike to stand in solidarity with the farmers. The 24-hour strike halted various industries such as retail, public services, and construction. In addition to protesting the three farm laws, many workers protested other proposed labour laws. On January 26, otherwise known as In-

dia’s Republic Day, the protests escalated to new heights, as clashes with the police arose near the ITO metro station and demonstrators stormed the historic Red Fort complex. Initially, it was set to be a peaceful rally where farmers would follow a pre-approved course by authorities; however, it quickly turned violent when hundreds of protesters broke away from the planned routes. Demonstrators on foot, horseback, and tractor breached barricades and drove through roadblocks, overwhelming police forces. At the Red Fort complex, demonstrators scaled the walls, climbed its ramparts, and hoisted flags alongside India’s national flag.

Aiming to ward off protesters and prevent them from breaking barricades, police were seen holding assault rifles, carrying sticks, and firing tear gas at protesters while farmers attacked with metal bars and sticks. The scuffles left one protester dead and 86 police officers injured. Police claim the protester died due to his tractor overturning, however, protesters claim he was shot.

Since the beginning of December, the government and the farm unions have had 11 talks, all of which were unresolved. In response to the protests, the Supreme Court of India has placed a stay order on the three farm laws for 18 months. However, farmers have expressed that they will only stand down when the laws are repealed leaving both the farmers and the government at a standstill.

## KEYSTONE CANCELLATION YIELDS RANGE OF REACTIONS

NEWS REPORT by Jessica Kim (11)

On January 20, 2021, following his inauguration, one of President Biden’s first executive orders was to rescind approval for the Keystone XL Pipeline. This came per an earlier campaign promise made May 2020. In anticipation of this order, construction had been halted earlier in the day. The decision stirred a range of responses and reactions across Canada and the USA, indicative of the ongoing controversy surrounding the pipeline’s construction.

The Keystone XL Pipeline was designed to transport approximately 830,000 barrels of crude oil daily, from Alberta, Canada to Nebraska, USA. Originally proposed in 2008, the pipeline was to span a total of 1,897 kilometers or 1,179 miles with the aim to increase the flow of oil originating from Canada. The increase of importation from Canada would subsequently decrease the United States’ reliance on oil from OPEC. The Keystone XL pipeline would mirror pre pre-existing Keystone pipeline, but take a more direct route across the two countries.

Calgary-based TC Energy Corporation, formerly TransCanada, was responsible for the construction and operations of Keystone XL. This is not to say it was entirely funded by the independent corporation. The Alberta government’s investment to advance to the project included \$1.5 billion in equity investment through 2020 and a \$6 billion loan guarantee in 2021.

From its proposal to current day, the Keystone XL project has been subject to an uncertain future. It has faced regulatory complexities, legal battles, protests and demonstrations, rejection, approval, and again, most recently, rejection.

President Obama’s administration had declined the project’s development, yet in 2017, President Trump later overturned this decision, announcing “TransCanada will finally be allowed to complete this long overdue project with efficiency and with speed.”

Even with the uncertain future of US leadership leading up to the 2020 election, and then-candidate Biden’s stance on taking action to stop this pipeline, construction for Keystone XL began April of last year.

In Canada, the proponents of the pipeline are predominantly those in Alberta and Saskatchewan, the primary beneficiaries of a thriving Canadian oil industry. The pipeline was also supported by Prime Minister Justin Trudeau. Those in favour of the pipeline, whether they be Canadians or Americans, enjoyed the prospect of economic benefit. Those in favour held an influx of jobs in the construction sector in high regard. Through the construction of Keystone XL around 2,000 construction jobs were created, though it was found they would not be sustainable long term. It was estimated in a State. Dept. study that only 35 permanent and 15 temporary US jobs would be created by the project. With the increased supply of oil, many believed it would decrease the price of oil for consumers across the US. The supply of oil from a stable ally also was discussed as a benefit.

Alternatively, a variety of groups and individuals, ranging from Indigenous groups, scientists, environmental activists, and farmers and business owners located along the route have advocated for the permanent suspension of all Keystone XL pipeline efforts.

Concerns about the pipeline have been voiced consistently for the past 13 years, mainly pertaining to the environment. More specifically the dependency on fossil fuels, risk of oil spills damaging natural ecosystems, and increase of greenhouse gas emissions were issues those opposing the pipeline saw as major. Another point of contention with the pipeline was the risk to local communities and the rights to the land the pipeline would be built on. In Canada, Indigenous groups from Northern Alberta have taken legal action on the federal and provincial level for damages caused by oil sands development they were not consulted on.

The aforementioned groups ultimately commended the cancellation of the pipeline, whereas various leaders of Canadian western provinces were left reeling with the decision.

With Biden’s most recent action to revoke the Presidential Permit for Keystone XL, it remains to be seen if this is officially the conclusion of the 13 year long vacillating, heavily debated effort. A way around the loss of support from the USA appears unlikely, but Alberta Premier Jason Kenney continues to call for consequences and compensation, expressing his belief that “the government of Canada must impose meaningful trade and economic sanctions in response to defend our country’s vital economic interests.”

## A JOURNEY TO GLOBAL VACCINATION

ANALYSIS by Matthew Fu (10)

From the beginning of the pandemic, nations around the world have shared a common goal: creating a vaccine for the COVID-19 virus.

In early 2020, the United Nations assembled the Access to COVID-19 Tools Accelerator initiative (COVAX) as a collaborative effort between 190 nations to accelerate the development, creation and distribution process of vaccines. Since its inception, COVAX has aimed to identify the most suitable and effective COVID-19 vaccine candidates, while maintaining equal access to COVID-19 tests and treatments. The initiative promises to have 2 billion vaccine doses available for distribution and 1 billion syringes procured by the end of 2021. In collaboration with COVAX the United Nations International Children’s Emergency Fund (UNICEF), has become the single largest vaccine buyer in the world, becoming a leader in the vaccination process against COVID-19.

In the process of developing and identifying an effective vaccine, many vaccine candidates have undergone testing including the Pfizer/BioNTech, Moderna and Oxford-AstraZeneca vaccines, which have been approved for use by a number of national regulatory bodies. On December 21, 2020, the World Health Organization (WHO) approved the Pfizer/BioNTech COVID-19 mRNA vaccine (BNT162b2) for emergency use, making it the first vaccine to receive validation from WHO since the beginning of the outbreak. Concurrently, over 200 vaccines have also undergone development and many have begun the process of being tested as well.

Though the vaccination effort is predicted to persist for a few years before widespread vaccination is achieved, the

emergence of a possible solution has become a popular area of discussion for many. In recent months, the newly developed COVID-19 Moderna and Pfizer vaccines have come to be viewed as a solution to the current worldwide pandemic. However, with the completion of the vaccine, numerous questions have arisen about the timeline for distribution.

Several factors have been shown to affect distribution, including but not limited to: location, profession, and age. The different rates at which various countries are currently developing, testing and manufacturing vaccines have played a significant impact on the speed of the vaccination process. In Israel and the United Arab Emirates 30% and 20% of their populations respectively have received vaccinations. In comparison, the US has a 6% rate of distribution, while Canada has reported a rate of 3%. Differences in distribution speed also come as a result of countries’ differing dates of government approval for certain vaccines.

The likelihood of being vaccinated is also dependent on an individual’s job position or health condition. In almost every country, front-line health care workers have been given vaccine priority, as they are continually exposed to COVID-19 when tending to patients in their workplace, despite the use of PPE and adequate safety measures. Similarly, teachers and individuals working in social settings are likely to receive the vaccine before much of the general public, due to the high risk of outbreaks.

Age and medical background are an additional factor in vaccine distribution. In most countries, high risk individuals receive vaccination priority.



# INCITEMENT, INSURRECTION & IMPEACHMENT: THE STATE OF THE UNITED STATES

**ANALYSIS** by *Spencer Izen (11)* and *Dean Rohman (11)*

“Whoever incites, sets on foot, assists, or engages in any rebellion or insurrection against the authority of the United States or the laws thereof, or gives aid or comfort thereto, shall be fined under this title or imprisoned not more than ten years, or both; and shall be incapable of holding any office under the United States.”

## 18 U.S. Code § 2383 - Rebellion or Insurrection

On January 6, 2021, a violent mob of insurrectionists stormed the Capitol building attempting to halt the certification of results of the Presidential election, in one of the most striking and symbolic attacks on democracy the United States had ever seen.

At around noon, crowds of a few hundred had begun to form outside the Capitol building, demonstrating against the counting Electoral College votes pursuant to the 12th Amendment. At the same time, President Trump had just started a speech to supporters in Ellipse Park, roughly two kilometers away from the White House.

17 ½ minutes into his speech, the President encouraged his supporters to march toward the Capitol.

“Now it is up to Congress to confront this egregious assault on our democracy. After this, we’re going to walk down and I’ll be there with you. We’re going to walk down. We’re going to walk down anyone you want, but I think right here. We’re going to walk down to the Capitol, and we’re going to cheer on our brave senators, and congressmen and women. We’re probably not going to be cheering so much for some of them because you’ll never take back our country with weakness. You have to show strength, and you have to be strong.”

The speech further contained numerous references to combative action and was preceded by months of perpetual lies regarding the election.

Before the rally ended, supporters left and headed for the Capitol, at the direction of the President. By 1:30, the Capitol was on lockdown, after explosives were discovered in both the DNC and RNC buildings. Near the eastern side of the Capitol building, the mob proceeded to breach metal barriers and climb walls to get closer.

At 2:11, the Capitol had been breached after windows were smashed and rioters stormed through the doors. Minutes later, both the House and Senate went into recess and some lawmakers were evacuated. Rioters quickly overwhelmed Capitol Police and violently forced their way into the building, at times coming within feet of lawmakers.



The Capitol was besieged for another 3 hours before it was declared secure and safe for lawmakers by the sergeant-at-arms.

Since the day of the insurrection, more than 250 people have been arrested. The exact number arrested continues to grow as law enforcement identify and charge more individuals. The general public has been heavily encouraged to come forward with information on any rioters.

President Trump’s potential culpability soon became a focus of the post-riot debate. Both during the speech he gave that day and his “stop the steal” rhetoric that had persisted since after the election.

On January 12, House Democrats released their resolution to impeach President Trump, containing the single article of impeachment, “incitement of insurrection”. The House passed the resolution in a January 13 vote, making Donald Trump the first President to be impeached twice.

After the passage of the House resolution, the conviction process was initiated in the Senate. The Senate trial began on February 9 and over a period of 5 days, with the House Managers (prosecution) and the defence team arguing their respective cases before the Senate.

The House Managers expectedly had the votes of all 50 Senate Democrats, and would need an additional 17 republicans to meet the 2/3 threshold for a conviction.

Following closing statements on February 13, the Senate voted 57 - 43 finding the former President not guilty after coming ten votes short of the required supermajority. The 50 Senate Democrats were joined by 7 Republicans who voted to convict the President.

Many members of Congress and Senators shared their accounts of what it was like to go into lockdown. In a recent Instagram live, Congresswoman Alexandra Ocasio-Cortez talked about her own experience during the breaching of the capitol, and how some Republican lawmakers were rumoured to have helped the insurrectionists. She “feared for [her] life,” and thought they “would create opportunities to allow [her] to be hurt.”

The January 6 Insurrection, and the subsequent second impeachment of former President Trump, will go down as one of the darkest periods in U.S history. From incitement to acquittal, this period of mass malfeasance leaves the United States in a State fraught with questions of constitutionality, historicity, and the meaning of the words “We the People”.



# AT LAST, BREXIT DEAL APPROVED AND ENFORCED

**NEWS REPORT** by *Hannah Azad (11)*

Since the United Kingdom’s withdrawal from the European Union

On January 31, 2020, both sides had spent months negotiating a deal that would regulate their future affairs. The approval of the agreement by the EU member states, UK parliament, and European parliament in December of 2020 allowed for its enforcement starting January 1, 2021. This new partnership introduced distinct social and economic changes, impacting the lives of those in Europe today.

Firm guidelines were established in the agreement to regulate travel between the UK and the EU. Before Brexit, the process of entering the EU was fairly quick and easy for UK citizens. Since then, border formalities have become stricter. They must now undergo thorough airport checks, use a separate lane from EU, EEA, and Swiss citizens at the border, and no longer have guaranteed entry into the EU. Additionally, UK citizens may only visit the Schengen area for up to 90 days during 180 day periods. Anyone who would like to exceed this timespan must apply for a long-stay visitor visa. To cross borders, passports must have a minimum of six months left and they must have travel insurance with health coverage. The European Health Insurance Cards are valid until their expiration date, but will be replaced in the future with health insurance exclusive to the United Kingdom. People with UK mobile phones may also be charged for roaming when travelling to the EU. As well, the new deal introduces duty-free purchases of alcohol and tobacco in British airports to be brought to EU countries.

The UK and the EU had agreed that there will be no taxes on or limitations to the goods traded between them. However, the trading system between the two parties still follows an elaborate process. Ad-

ditional evaluations such as safety checks must be conducted at their borders. Custom declarations, which involves detailed paperwork, must also be made at this time. In order to be exported and imported, certain types of goods, including animal and plant products, drugs, and medical devices, require licenses or certification. The newly rigorous process has caused frustration among many. Recent difficulties and delays have been experienced at UK ports, threatening the success of businesses across the country.

As of January 2021, the UK will also no longer be a part of the highest court in the EU, the European Court of Justice. The departure from this court was highly requested by Brexit proponents. Asserting full control over their own legal system contributes to their newfound independence. Any unresolved contention between the two parties will be heard by an independent tribunal. Additionally, the United Kingdom has been removed from Europol, the EU Agency for Law Enforcement Cooperation, and is no longer expected to follow the standards they impose.

The Brexit agreement put into effect in January has already impacted the UK and EU distinctly. Along with putting a halt to the economic uncertainty following the UK’s departure from the EU, it has changed the way many Europeans work, live, and travel. Additionally, it brought clarity to the reformed relationship between the two parties. Brexit supporters have expressed their satisfaction with the UK’s independence from the EU following the implementation of the agreement. However, whether the benefits of the deal outweigh the detriments is a question that can only be answered in the months to come.



# THE INAUGURATION AND INITIATION OF THE BIDEN ADMINISTRATION

NEWS REPORT by Spencer Izen (11)

At 11:49 AM on January 20, now former President Donald J. Trump's four years in the Oval Office came to a close with the inauguration of President Joesph R. Biden and Vice President Kamala D. Harris. The transition of power came at a time preceded by months of bitter partisanship, a raging pandemic, and more recently, a violent outburst of sedition.

The inauguration was held on the heels of the January 6 Capitol riot, the most serious security breach the building had seen since it was burned by British forces during the War of 1812 (actual burning occurred in 1814). The riot was met with nearly domestically bipartisan and global condemnation, viewed in the eyes of many as an attack not only on a building but American democracy itself.

The consequences of such riot were striking, with nearly 25,000 National Guard troops deployed to secure the inauguration and quickly deal with any issues. President Trump's inauguration saw 8,000 service members deployed four years earlier. DC had been transformed into what resembled a conflict zone, complete with security fences, curfews, military vehicles, and travel restrictions.

The heightened security concerns were echoed beyond DC following FBI warnings regarding potentially armed protests at all 50 State Capitols.

President Trump did not attend Biden's inauguration, opting to fly south to his Mar-a-Lago residence in the State of Florida, marking the first time an outgoing American President skipped their successor's inauguration since 1869.

In his inaugural address, Biden spoke of six crises facing the nation, "We face an attack on our democracy and on truth, a raging virus, growing inequity, the sting of systemic racism, a climate in crisis, America's role in the world." He continued, "Any one of these will be enough to challenge us in profound ways."

Hours after his inauguration, Biden made his first moves as President in the form of 17 executive actions, targeting his predecessor's legacy on climate change, immigration, racial equity, and management of the pandemic. Enacting the first elements of his agenda, Biden brought Trump's border wall construction to a standstill, terminated the travel ban placed on certain Muslim-majority countries, withdrew approval for the Keystone XL Pipeline project, affirmed the US' intent to rejoin the World Health Organization and the Paris Climate Accords, and issued numerous domestic and agency policy directives.

Vice President Harris took in the historic moment of becoming the first female, first Black American, and first South Asian American to reach her office by initiating her Constitutional duties in the Senate. A (now former) Senator herself, Harris read her Senate resignation in the procedural transfer of power. Harris later swore in the three new Democratic Senators — Jon Ossoff and Raphael Warnock, both of Georgia, and Alex Padilla of California. Padilla being Vice President Harris' replacement.

Over its next two weeks, Biden's presidency, while short in duration, featured a historic amount of executive initiative. In his first two weeks in office, Biden signed 28 executive orders. Franklin D. Roosevelt, widely regarded as a highly consequential President, signed 30 in his first month in office.

Coronavirus relief is at the forefront of the economic policy agenda, with the administration making

a notable push for the passage of their proposal. The "American Rescue Plan", unveiled on January 16, is a \$1.9 trillion stimulus package with a range of provisions. Included in the plan are \$1400 stimulus cheques, which when combined with the federal government's last round of \$600 cheques, reach the \$2000 amount pushed for by Democrats near the end of the last administration. Further contents of the plan include unemployment aid, eviction assistance, tax credits, school aid, and small business aid. Lawmakers turned their attentio the the deal following the impeachment proceedings.

In the realm of foreign policy, Biden's January 27 call with Russian President Vladimir Putin reflected a differing stance on Russia than former President Trump. On the call, Biden raised issues regarding Russia's election meddling, foreign activities, and treatment of domestic dissent. On February 4, Biden ended American support for Saudi-led intervention in the Yemeni Civil War, a conflict he called a "humanitarian and strategic catastrophe". The President again displayed his differing stance on the policies introduced by his predecessor, who by contrast often sided with authoritarian states.

While only a few weeks in, one thing is clear: this administration differs vastly and profoundly from the last.



## COVID VARIANTS EXPLAINED

NEWS REPORT by Max Von Dehn (9)

The COVID-19 disease that has impacted all of our lives stems from a virus called SARS CoV-2. That being said, the recent release that new SARS CoV-2 variants have mutated into existence is both frightening and confusing. The question is, what do these variants mean for our future, and how can we prevent them from taking hold?

Although people have directed their focus on the current strain of the coronavirus, several new variants of it have recently been found, most notably in the UK and South Africa. These variants are mutants of the SARS CoV-2 virus with changes to how the body reacts to them and how easily they spread.

The variant from the UK has been noted to be a more contagious version of the SARS CoV-2 virus that we are familiar with. Another variant from Brazil has properties that make it more difficult for antibodies in the body to detect it. This means that even people who had gotten the virus before may be susceptible to it. For the most part, these variants only differ slightly from the original virus. However, due to these differences, they still pose a threat to

vaccines and the people who already have immunity. On top of that, these variants could potentially become more lethal. With all the different forms of the virus, it is difficult to know exactly which one someone has contracted and how their body will respond to it.

These variants of the coronavirus will unfortunately not stop here. All of these variants were caused by viral mutations. These mutations have also helped develop every living thing on this planet, gradually helping them adapt and change. When an organism makes an error copying its genetic code, its offspring will inevitably differ. Usually, these changes are minor and present little to no advantages or impairments to the organism. However, in some cases, these mutations can benefit them, throughnatural selection, these modified individuals will continue to thrive.

This same process has happened with the coronavirus, and it is the reason we are seeing these new variants. This explains how the more contagious variant was able to thrive and spread with more ease.

However, even as more variants emerge, there is good

news to be found, in both our response to them and the possible future of this virus. A theory developed by epidemiologist, Paul Ewald, called the "Theory of Virulence" talks about the evolutionary paths a virus can take. There are two major options for any given pathogen: virulence, or how severe a disease might be, and transmissibility, or how easily it is transmitted.

If the virus is very virulent, then it will immobilize its victims before they can transmit it. On the other hand, the more contagious a virus is, generally the less virulent it is. The way that SARS CoV-2 variants have progressed so far seems to lend credibility to this. As vaccinations increase, herd immunity begins to develop, and variants move towards transmissibility over virulence, this virus could end up like the common cold.

These variants will take time to fully understand and follow, which is essential in dealing with them. All the public can do at this moment is hope that the variants do not increase in virulence and trust that the vaccine will be effective in preventing them.

## MASKS AND THE ENVIROMENT: A CONCERNING DYNAMIC

ANALYSIS by Teresa Chen (10)

With the COVID-19 pandemic continuing, people have been highly encouraged to wear masks when out in public, as it is proven to help limit the spread of the virus. These facial coverings are now essential parts of daily lives. However, with this temporary solution to the pandemic comes threats posed to the environment. In March of 2020, the World Health Organization estimated that 89 million disposable masks were needed globally per month to combat COVID-19, and more recently, that number has risen to 194 billion, according to a joint Portuguese - Canadian study. Hospital staff, medical personnel, and regular citizens use disposable masks daily, but not many have realized that PPE might be doing a lot more harm to the planet than we think. There is a range of issues with masks and the environmental concerns surrounding them, but the two biggest aspects are that people are not being taught how to properly dispose of used masks, and that masks are essentially just sheets of plastic. A couple of years ago, youth were campaigning about how climate change was affecting not only humans, but also plants and animals globally. All of the events that happened back then got people to cut back on the amount of plastic used, transitioning from disposable to reusable straws and cups, and began to make an impact on our planet.

As not everybody is aware of the proper way to dispose of used masks, masks are ending up in the ocean, harming not only marine life, but also birds and plants. Some animals cannot tell the difference between what is edible versus what is not, so oftentimes they end up choking on pieces of plastic laying around. Even if they do not choke on the plastic, it will still fill their stomachs, leaving them malnourished and deprived of essential nutrients. In addition, there is the issue of mask straps. A little-known fact in regards to mask etiquette: it is vital that mask straps are cut in half prior to disposal because it has been found that birds, turtles, and other animals can get themselves entangled in these straps.

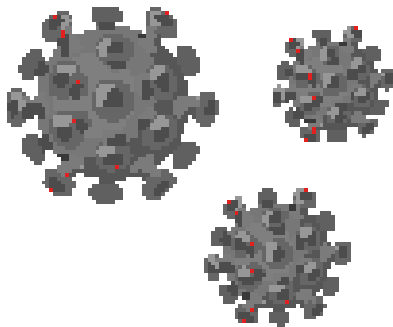
The second major concern with disposable masks is that they are (usually) made of polypropylene, which can take up to 1000 years to decompose. One mask a day may not seem like much, but, when they are made of three or four layers of plastic, and how many a person uses in a single week, that's a lot! When plastic breaks down, it first breaks into microplastics, then into nanoplastics. As the particles are so small, they may not be visible to the human eye. This allows these polymers to survive for a long time, meaning they can accumulate in food chains, spreading bacteria and chemicals, which could eventually find their way into humans through various methods—including through consumed seafood.

Fortunately, there are ways to combat these issues. The easiest and most effective one so far is having citizens purchase reusable and washable fabric masks. These masks are not only more environmentally friendly, but they are also more cost-effective in the long run. In addition, some fabric masks are also biodegradable, such as those made of wood pulp or bamboo fabric. If more people purchase cloth masks and leave the disposable masks for medical personnel, another crisis could be averted.



# DIM-WITTED DINING: THE RISK OF EATING IN AT RESTAURANTS

OPINION by Cameron Leong (11)



The views expressed in this article are the author’s alone. Responses may be sent to the Editors-in-Chief at ehnewspaper@gmail.com

Under Phase 2 of BC’s Restart Plan, restaurants were able to open for dine-in service from May 2020. Ever since then, most restaurants have resumed regular table service, albeit with safety measures like plexiglass screens, capacity limits, and distanced tables. For the most part, restaurants have not contributed to large outbreaks of COVID-19. However, that does not mean that dining in comes with no risk.

Obviously, any interaction carries some risk of you contracting COVID-19, and certain activities carry higher risk than others. In this case, when you choose to eat inside at a restaurant, you put yourself at a considerable amount of risk relative to other dining options. Tables, menus, and other surfaces in restaurants are high contact areas that many people may have touched. Since all customers are eating, they won’t be wearing masks and neither will you.

COVID-19 also transmits easier in enclosed or indoor spaces, since smaller respiratory droplets can remain in the air for much longer. Additionally, these droplets are easily transmitted along airstreams like those produced by air-conditioning units. The quality of a restaurant’s ventilation system is often unknown to diners. A poorly ventilated restaurant can result in transmission of COVID-19 even between people who were not directly in contact with each other. In simpler terms, just because you aren’t within six feet of other diners doesn’t mean you won’t get sick.

Ever since November 7, 2020, social gatherings of any kind out of your immediate household have not been allowed. I would like to reiterate that your immediate household only includes those you live with, and not any close friends or significant others. Core bubbles only apply to those living alone, and even then can only consist of one or two people. Despite this clear restriction and the previously-listed risks, many people seem to think that group dining at restaurants does not classify as a social gathering and proceed to have meals with their friends. This rule was imposed

specifically to protect people from contracting COVID-19, not for people to find a loophole to socialize. Restaurants are not exceptions to this rule. It is selfish to prioritize your desire to socialize over your social obligation to stop the spread of COVID-19 and protect those in your community. I understand that it can be tempting to go try a new restaurant or spend time with friends, but based on the circumstances, it’s only logical to find safer alternatives.

I haven’t gone to a restaurant for a meal ever since quarantine started in March 2020, since I’m not comfortable with the above risks of dining in. Wearing a mask has become so normal for me that I wouldn’t be able to imagine taking it off in a public space. In light of the recent spike of daily COVID-19 cases and new provincial health orders, going to a restaurant to eat is the last thing I would consider doing. All it does is put yourself and those close to you at risk. However, this does not mean you should avoid eating out at all costs. I’m aware that many families or individuals may not be able to cook their own meals. If eating out is your only convenient or feasible option for dining, I urge you to proceed with caution. If alternative dining options are available to you, like takeout or cooking a meal, I highly encourage you to opt for those for the safety of yourself, your family, and friends.

Just because we shouldn’t be dining in at restaurants doesn’t mean we can’t support them. Almost all restaurants offer some sort of takeout service, and many have signed up with delivery services. Platforms like Doordash, UberEats, Fantuan Delivery, have provided restaurants an opportunity to serve customers that may not have otherwise considered ordering takeout. These options carry much lower risk than dining in and eliminate potential exposure scenarios mentioned earlier. The more we follow the restrictions put in place to keep us safe, the quicker we can get back to establishing some sense of normalcy.

# IS MY SAFETY TOO MUCH TO ASK?

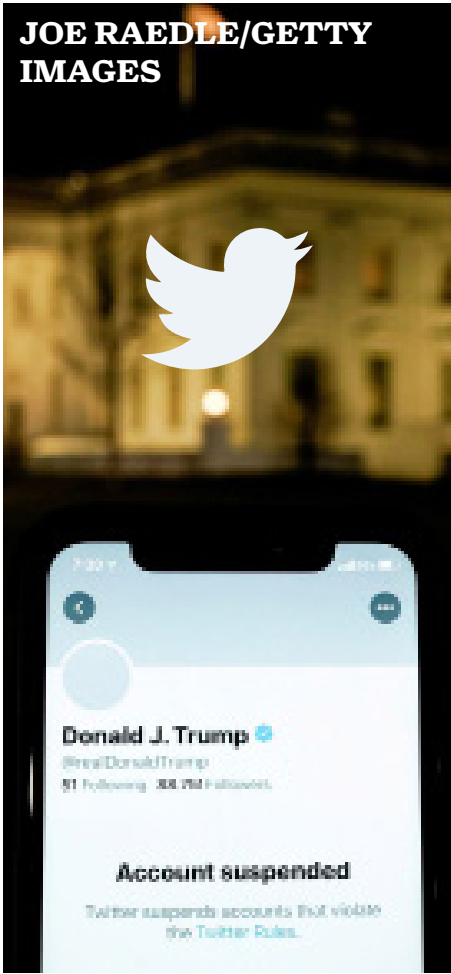
OPINION by Marissa Lear (11)

The views expressed in this article are the author’s alone. Responses may be sent to the Editors-in-Chief at ehnewspaper@gmail.com

Masks. We see them on the news, around the world, and hopefully, in our schools. They are the thing that just may save our lives. On February 4th, 2021, masks became mandatory to wear in all areas of school except for at students’ desks. This is not a full mask mandate. Why is that? Dr. Bonnie Henry has stated several times that social gatherings of any kind are restricted to those who are in our immediate household. However, students must go to class where the people around them can jeopardize their safety by not wearing a mask. This contradicts every health announcement that we have been hearing. People across the country are being disciplined to limit their bubbles and stop this global pandemic. Why is this not expected in schools? The potential absence of masks in schools places stress on students who already have enough to deal with due to the pandemic. Worrying about the safety of their family should not be a burden that teens must deal with. Education Minister, Jennifer Whiteside, has repeatedly said that keeping schools open and ensuring students are confident

in their safety guidelines are a priority. However, while there is open communication between schools and health officials, there seems to be little with students. If we are the main demographic being affected by these guidelines, why aren’t we being consulted more often? Why are students forced to go to the media to have our voices entirely heard? If the main goal is to keep schools open, what is preventing a complete mask mandate? The internet has been filled with the concerned adults saying that they hope students can be confident in these guidelines, but many of us aren’t. The enforcement of a simple mandate would make schools at this time feel safer. While many believe that the cohort system was the answer to these concerns, it is still possible for students to socialize after being dismissed from their separate classes. A solid mask mandate in classrooms would ease the concerns that still exist despite having cohorts. The February mandate implemented new precautions in PE and music classes. Drama and dance, which operate similarly and would benefit from the same requirements, were

excluded from these protocols. Classes such as these take place in spaces that may not have windows, make it difficult to stay six feet apart, or require students to directly face one another. If a student feels uncomfortable in their class because their peers are maskless, they are powerless. Now more than ever, it is up to the teachers to enforce this guideline. How they preface their class greatly impacts a student’s attitude towards the use of masks. However, this should not solely be a teacher’s responsibility. A universal mask mandate would enforce the use of them at once and reduce uncertainty during this already stressful time. Although it is needed, schools are not allowed to act alone in this matter. We must wait until Dr. Henry makes this choice. However, it has already been too long of a wait. A student’s job is to learn, not to worry about the safety of their family, where their peers have been to last, or if people at school are following safety protocols. A mask mandate in classrooms would relieve students’ stress and prove that their safety is, in fact, the number one priority at school. Is my safety too much to ask for?



# TRUMP’S TWITTER TANTRUM

OPINION by Emily Shi (11)

Political Satire: The views expressed in the satirical content of this article are the author’s alone. Responses may be sent to the Editors-in-Chief at ehnewspaper@gmail.com

**January 8, 2021**  
@therealdonaldtrump becomes the first president to receive a 12-hour ban from Twitter for inciting violence ( the Capitol riots) and spreading misinformation. Woohoo for a career milestone!

**Approx. 6:39 PM**  
Trump decides to call Twitter a “radical left platform” and tweet from his campaign account, @teamtrump. The account suggests that Twitter is Communist. What could possibly ever go wrong! Oh, wait...

**Approx. 7:04 PM**  
@GaryCoby, Trump’s digital director, changes his profile picture and user name to Donald J. Trump and offers to let him tweet from his account. 5 minutes later, his account also gets suspended. Wow. It’s like a Twitter ban really means you are BANNED from Twitter. Huh!

**January 8, sometime at night**  
The ban lifts and @therealdonaldtrump goes right back to tweeting about election fraud and asking people to #stopthesteal. Three guesses as to what happens next. A permanent ban, a permanent ban, or a permanent ban?

@therealdonaldtrump is permanently banned from Twitter! Clearly an individual who has learned from his past mistakes, Trump decides to use the @POTUS and @whitehouse handles to talk to his 88 million Twitter followers. Twitter releases a statement saying that all tweets by Trump from these handles will be removed immediately. Guess Donald forgot they could do that.

Facebook, Instagram, Youtube, Shopify and Twitch also all ban Trump! Sorry Donald! Better luck next time...oh wait - there won’t be one because Democracy still (mostly) works.

Twitter reports misinformation has dropped 73 percent since banning @therealdonaldtrump



1

2

3

4

5

6

7

8

9

10

11

12

13

14

15

16

17

18

1

2

3

4

5

6

7

8

9

10

11

12

13

14

15

16

17

18

Down

1. This word has tv

3. Author of The H

4. Name of the Mic

5. Seven-letter wor

6. Because of this s

December 16th an

7. Upon entering h

calculator in order

9. Donald Trump v

10. The number of

11. This colourful c

13. The Lunar New

16. American rapp

## ASK THE NEST

### ANONYMOUS ADVICE: ALL HAMBER’S MOST BURNING QUESTIONS ANSWERED

Dear Nest,  
How can I choose a field of study if I don't know what I'm interested in? It seems as though my classmates know what to pursue post-secondary. I, however, am completely lost. Do you have any advice?  
Sincerely,  
Inexperienced and Uninspired

Dear Inexperienced and Uninspired,  
The first step is to get your foot in the door. Take every free workshop or program that you come across (ask your counsellor, or check online)! Find volunteer opportunities: this is a great way to make connections within your community. Now is the time to try as many new activities as possible. This way, you can discover what you like and dislike about various fields. Don't be afraid to sign yourself up for virtual webinars detailing post secondary options (available from local universities such as UBC and SFU).  
Cheers,  
The Nest

Dear Nest,  
Though I'm only taking two courses at a time, the workload and pace this school year have been overwhelming. I can't keep up with all of my assignments! How can I manage my time and stay motivated?  
Sincerely,  
Burnt Out

Hey Burnt Out,  
Though you may feel you have too little time, it is important to take breaks if and when possible. Going for a short walk or jog allows a return to the task at hand with a fresh, clear mind. Make small goals for yourself. Get your work done a little at a time and be kind to yourself. Put away your phone, while you're at it! Just know that after a certain point, staying up late to study can do more harm than good: you can't work efficiently when you're about to crash! Take your studies day by day. It will feel so rewarding when your hard work has paid off.  
Best of luck with your studies!  
The Nest

Dear Nest,  
I'm crushing on a girl, and I think she feels the same about me. We walk to school together, and talk all the time. We've even gone on a date! I'd really like to express my feelings, but don't want to be overly eager and scare her away. What's the next move?  
Sincerely,  
Crushing and Confused

Dear Crushing and Confused,  
Don't be scared to show your crush that you care. If she feels the same way about you, any expression of your feelings will bring her joy! Surprise her with flowers or with her favourite Starbucks drink. Small gestures of kindness make the heart grow fonder. Trust us: putting effort into your relationship and treating her with kindness is the best thing to do.  
Cheers,  
The Nest

Hello Nest,  
With the new cohort system along with Covid restrictions, I rarely see my friends. I miss them a ton and am afraid that we'll drift apart since we can't hang out. How can I prevent that from happening?  
Sincerely,  
Cheerless Companion

Dear Cheerless Companion,  
Since the holidays are approaching, show them you care with thoughtful handmade gifts! Or, stop by their house to drop off cookies. Thoughtful gestures remind your friends that you're thinking of them. Be sure to Facetime your friends and text them often. It's crucial to reach out to your friends to provide love, support, and laughs. Before long, restrictions will be lifted and you can resume hanging out in person!  
Cheers,  
The Nest

Have questions you would like answered in the next issues' Ask The Nest advice column? We would love to give you advice. Please send them to **ehnewspaper@gmail.com**. All questions will be kept confidential!