

# The Griffins' Nest

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## EXCHANGE STUDENT EXPERIENCES

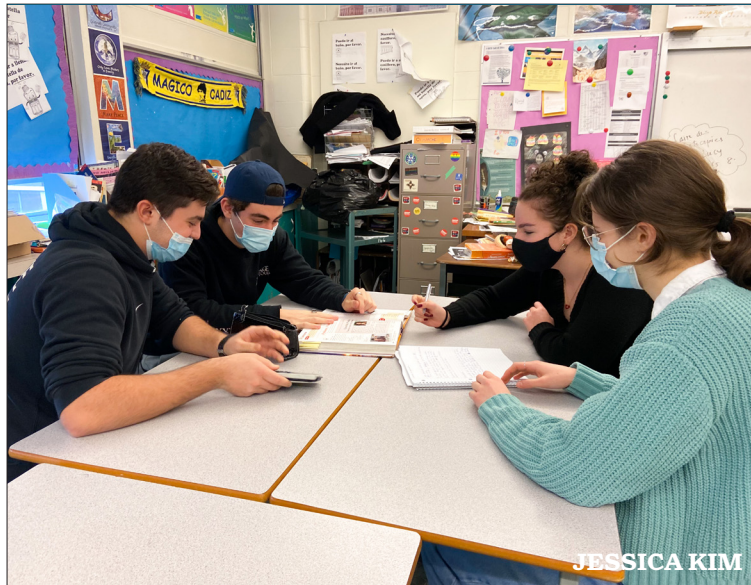
NEWS REPORT by Adelaide Guan (9)

While those who have spent their whole lives in Vancouver may not think that the city is special, Italian and German exchange students attending Hamber present a whole new perspective on the school and Canadian culture as a whole.

For many exchange students attending Eric Hamber, Canadian schooling has been different from their education back home. "In Italy, we have one class for all the 5 years of high school," explained **Simone Natale** (12), an Italian exchange student. He went on to add that in Italy, there is an additional year of high school. **Xenia Belobokov** (10), an exchange student from Germany, and **Rebecca Braga** (12), from Italy, both spoke highly of electives and the freedom of course selection. "I love the fact that you can actually choose your classes", said Braga. Both Belobokov and Braga enjoy the opportunity to focus more on their interests, which they had not been able to do at their schools back home.

The availability of student clubs and athletics at Eric Hamber were also highlighted by both Belobokov and Braga. Belobokov explained that there are activities she probably would not consider in Germany, such as Hamber's Ski and Snowboard Club. Braga mentioned that her school Italy does not typically have clubs or sports. "It's actually very different and it's my first time experiencing sports with school, and clubs," she said.

New experiences always bring surprises, and Natale and Belobokov can confirm that there are many unexpected aspects of living in Vancouver. "I didn't know that you gave this much importance and such acknowledgement of Indigenous [culture]," Natale



shared. He went on to explain that in Italy, there is not very much focus or education on Indigenous culture. Belobokov pointed out the number of days off school, for celebrating culture and professional development. She was pleasantly surprised about the time taken to recognize culture in Canada.

"When I came here, I didn't know that people called it 'Raincouver'," said Braga about Vancouver's weather. Both she and Natale didn't expect so much rain and noticed how cold Vancouver is compared to Italy. Natale says the weather is not the best, but he enjoys it when it rains at night. "I appreciate that kind of environment," he stated.

Belobokov, on the other hand, thinks Vancouver's weather is very similar to that of Germany. "It just rains a little bit more [in Vancouver].

But it does rain a lot where I live," she commented.

An important part of Hamber's exchange student's experiences are their homestays, and the students shared mostly positive views of their host families.

"I consider myself pretty lucky because I've found a very nice host family," stated Natale. "They make me feel like I'm part of the family." Natale also observed that he found some aspects of his host family's culture similar to his own because they are half Portuguese. He added that there are completely different cultural aspects that he has never experienced, such as Thanksgiving.

Braga's host family has four children, making her the fifth. "I have only one sibling back home and it's very very noisy here. It's very different,"

she revealed. Overall, she thinks her host family is kind, taking her wherever she wants to go. Something she's noticed is that at her homestay in Vancouver, shoes are never worn. "Sometimes it happens, at home, that we wear shoes. We don't take them off when we enter the house," she said.

Belobokov thinks she and her host family have a decent relationship, but sometimes the communication is not there. She says that her hosts work a lot, so it can be difficult to talk to each other. She also thinks they can be too clean, as they will go into her room and go through her belongings. "Overall, though, they're very nice and friendly and they try to talk to us," she stated. A difference she noticed was the food. "It's very nice, but it's still not your family. You're just like living at someone's house," she remarked.

There were many positives and negatives of the exchange student's experiences. Belobokov's favourite part of her time in Vancouver is the weekends. She enjoys going around and seeing nature, as well as going downtown and exploring the city. Natale's favourite part of the exchange is going to school, meeting new people, and the new experiences — the reason he came to Vancouver.

Braga's least favourite part of the experience is that the food she is used to is really expensive in Vancouver. "I also miss my family," she added. Natale's least favourite part of the exchange was the beginning when he'd just arrived. "I didn't know a lot of people," he explained. "It was kind of sad and boring because I was always staying in my room."

When asked if they would recommend becoming an exchange student, all three gave an enthusiastic yes.

## GREAT FOR STUDENTS, BUT WHAT ABOUT STAFF? Hamber Teachers on FIT

NEWS REPORT by Jessica Kim (12)



With District 39 now four months into a year with the newly implemented semester system and the inclusion of FIT blocks, teachers have noted the various benefits and drawbacks of FIT for students. Ultimately however, staff say they have suffered due to the lack of consideration and guidance from the school board.

FIT, or Flexible Instructional Time, is a 50-minute period occurring twice a week on Tuesday and Thursday.

The Vancouver School Board wrote in a statement, posted on June 1, 2021, that FIT is "designed to support personalized student learning choice," and further details "Students may participate in weekly classes, collaborate with peers, see individual teachers, or pursue learning activities that may fall outside of their scheduled classes."

Oftentimes during FIT, teachers have found students coming to their room, simply for a quiet place to work. They also noted students have been seeking out specific teachers, to ask for elaboration for schoolwork. "I also do appreciate the time to go over things in more detail with some students who may have missed a class and need some extra help," one teacher shared.

"FIT time fits really well with what I'm trying to do as a teacher for the students," communicated **Mr. A. Wightman** (Social Studies). He attributed FIT's apropos to his style of inquiry, project-based learning, as it "often requir[es] students to take their work to get assistance in research."

It was explained by a teacher that in FIT "[they] can't control who shows up". Though this may seem obvious

to those who have been working in the semester system for the preceding months, one teacher pointed out that some classes are packed during FIT time, while others are completely empty. The teacher shared that though "[there] could be all kinds of different reasons for [empty classrooms], it certainly raises the issue of workload equity." They went on to say that those teachers who didn't have students coming in were able to use the block to prep, mark, or do other work.

In addition to the possible workload inequities among teachers, a similar concern was present regarding the pupils. With Hamber's students ranging from grade 8 to 12, the practices, volume of work, and mindset of each age group is far from uniform. Five years, in adolescence nonetheless, was noted as a sizable age gap. Teachers shared the implications this had on the efficacy and productivity of students' FIT blocks.

The consensus among teachers was that as grade level increased, FIT was progressively more beneficial, coming with students' increased level of accountability. "I think as students get older, what you see is they're able to manage their time differently," disclosed one teacher. Another affirmed this, saying "I think there is more of an onus and more of a responsibility on the senior students."

Mr. Wightman testified that "students need a little bit more guidance of how to take initiative on the uses of FIT," a belief common amongst the teachers The Nest spoke to.

By far though, the most raised concern about FIT and the semester system as a whole was the lack of time for teachers, to assess, prepare, and take a break, but in particular to collaborate with their colleagues. Two

teachers specifically mentioned "barely get[ting] time to pee" throughout the day.

It was stated numerous times by those The Nest spoke to that the importance of collaboration among teachers should not be underscored. **Ms. M. Poon** (English & Studio Mini Program Coordinator) shared, "Innovation occurs when people bounce ideas off of each other. That's why collaboration time is so important. For teachers, we might exchange ideas about teaching a specific topic or how to assess in a new way. Or sometimes, it's a chance to put together special learning experiences, like Poetry in Voice and Grade 10 & 11 Oratoricals."

"From a teaching perspective, [the current schedule] is detrimental to our ability to collaborate," stated one teacher. Silent reading blocks and Hamber Instructional Planning ("HIP") days, as well as the previous 15 minute break, were all times in which teachers had the opportunity to speak to each other and work together, both intradepartmentally and interdepartmentally.

For all its benefits, it was clearly communicated by teachers that the current semester system with FIT blocks is far from perfect.

One teacher shared, "I think that if the Vancouver School Board wants to revise the schedule, so it is teacher and student friendly, they need to do a lot more consultation, and be prepared to accept and actually implement more of the suggestions that teachers and students would have to make it successful." They then asked, rhetorically, "Because otherwise, why? What is the point?"

The necessity of increased consultation from the district was stressed by many of the staff members The Nest spoke to.

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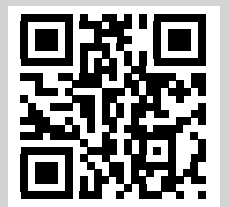
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## HAMBER AND STUDENT LIFE



## CANLEY CUP, EXPLAINED

NEWS REPORT by Greta Gibbon (9)

This December, the Vancouver District Student Council ("VDSC") hosted their annual Canley Cup initiative. Eric Hamber's Student Council, also known as StuCo, participated in the fundraiser and planned many events to help them reach their initial goal of \$4,000.

Canley Cup is the district-wide food drive initiative hosted by the VDSC, which aims every year to collect non-perishable food items and monetary donations for the Greater Vancouver Food Bank. Public schools across the VSB partake in this initiative and compete to see who can collect the most donations. On the significance of donating to the Canley Cup, Social Coordinator of Hamber's

StuCo, Katherine Keng (12) stressed, "It is an important cause that helps support families through the winter."

Last year, Student Council's goal was \$3,000, but they ended up raising over \$5,000. This year, StuCo had five fundraising events planned, hoping that they would assist them in reaching their initial goal of \$4,000.

The Holiday Marketplace, Grad Karaoke, Pictures with Santa, and Holiday Trivia are a few of the events that StuCo organized to fundraise. Students' 1-2 classes also accepted donations, with StuCo members coming by once per week to collect them. The teachers of these classes have a bag to collect monetary donations and a box for non-perishable food items. Students

also have the opportunity to donate virtually. This year, the 1-2 class that raised the most money, Mr. Scaglione's Challenge Studio Socials 8 class, was awarded a pizza party.

StuCo hopes to contribute to the VDSC's overall goal of \$30,000. "Donating is the primary way of supporting this event, as well, reaching out and spreading this awareness is huge," noted Andrew Chung (12), StuCo's Treasurer. By spreading the word, students can influence others to donate to the cause. Andrew stated, "it's a reminder for all of us to make a difference. [It's] an act of youth empowerment."

StuCo has now stated that the Hamber Community has raised \$9,263.78, in addition to 1,476 cans.

A NEW FACE AT THE VSB  
NEWS REPORT by Adrian Yue (9)

After the previous superintendent of the Vancouver School Board (VSB) Suzanne Hoffman's resignation to become the CEO of the British Columbia School Trustees Association; Helen McGregor, former Superintendent of Curriculum and Student Achievement at the District School Board of Niagara ("DSBN"), will become the new superintendent of one of Canada's most complex public education systems.

Before becoming the new superintendent, McGregor helped to ensure that school sports were reintroduced to the DSBN after the COVID-19 lockdown, according to an announcement obtained from *BP Sports Niagara*.

Besides the reintroduction of school sports, McGregor's decision to cancel student examinations in the fall of the 2020/2021 gained notable attention. McGregor told the *Niagara Review* "Students are learning differently this year, with many learning in-person for part of the week, and others learning exclusively online," speaking on the district's decision.

Upon becoming superintendent,

McGregor will supervise a school board that has over 50,000 students, 109 learning facilities, and one online-learning platform. She will be working with nine trustees and one student trustee, nine departments, and countless staff members in developing the VSB Education Plan 2026, and many other projects of the Vancouver School District.

"I am honoured to join the students and staff at Vancouver School District as superintendent," and that "I look forward to engaging with students, families, educators and stakeholders as we chart an ambitious new path to support the success of all students." The statement also said she brings expertise in "curriculum and curriculum support services, equity and inclusion, Indigenous education, provincial assessments, information technology, e-learning, alternative education and more."

A new superintendent brings a new vision. "As a board, we are excited to welcome Mrs. McGregor to Vancouver," says Trustee Carmen Cho.

HAMBER'S  
REMEMBRANCE:  
COMMEMORATING THE  
SACRIFICES

NEWS REPORT by Ruby Ellerman (9)

As in past years, Remembrance Day was commemorated at Hamber. This year, due to the ongoing pandemic, the assembly took place virtually, where students watched a video from their 1-3 classrooms on November 10, 2021.

Mr. R. Kumar (Social Studies) helped organize this year's assembly.

bly. "I have some close friends and colleagues whose families have fought in the wars," he explained. He then discussed the importance of telling their stories.

In the assembly, Mr. Kumar also wanted to ensure that a wide variety of student voices were heard, involving Hamber's International Exchange

students and Hamber's Learning Assistance Life Skills ("LALS") students. Mr. Kumar explained that the students were very eager to get involved. In particular, the International Exchange students wanted to learn more about Canadian ceremonies, such as the one held on Remembrance Day.

Staff organizing the assembly also aimed to focus on diverse representation. Mr. Kumar explained, "We felt that the stories of unsung soldiers should also be told and that is something we were able to do through the service. An example of that would be the sacrifice of Frederick Lee, one of the Chinese soldiers in 'the war no one knew about until three months ago.'"

Mr. Kumar expressed that "one of the goals for the entire school community was to develop the virtues of respect, empathy, citizenship, responsibility, and of course, gratitude among our staff and students." The

Remembrance Day assembly also brought forth creativity in Hamber's students, including a spoken word poem by Kelly Lau (10). Lau was inspired by Vancouver's maple trees, as the red leaves connected to poppies as a symbol of Remembrance.

The poem, which won the District Zone Poetry Competition, is titled "Legacy of Leaves." Rather than focusing on specific events, the poem is more about soldiers wanting to be heard and remembered. "We live in this sense of freedom and appreciation, and recognizing that is important in understanding that the future is dependent on our past," explained Lau.

Lau, who does a lot of spoken word poetry, feels that "the power of taking a concept that everyone already knows about and listening to that and taking that in through poetry is so important." The original plan was to simply read the poem aloud, but

she felt it would be more impactful to create a video.

Lau described her view of Remembrance Day as, "that mentality and understanding of recognizing all of the things from the past, all of the sacrifices from the past, all of the dark actions, all of the victories, all of the struggles to move toward building this sense of a brighter, freer future."

As there is no such thing as a "perfect assembly," next year, Mr. Kumar suggests representing more ethnic minorities such as Japanese Canadians and perhaps having a veteran speak during the assembly.

Through the inclusion of many student voices and creative aspects in the assembly, staff faced some challenges with conflicting schedules and social distancing. Especially given the short amount of time to make the video, this year's Remembrance Day assembly was nevertheless a success.

STELLAR SENIOR VOLLEYBALL  
PERFORMANCES AT CITIESNEWS REPORT by Sara  
Maya Budhiraja (9)

After numerous hard-fought games against teams from across the district, Hamber's senior volleyball season has come to an end. Playoffs decide the official ranking of teams in Vancouver, and both senior girls and boys teams placed within the top ten.

The Nest spoke to Senior Girls' Volleyball's Jamie Jung (12) and Senior Boys' Volleyball's Michael Lee (11)

about their respective teams' performance at Cities this year. The Senior Boys came in second in the tournament. Lee said, "We didn't think we'd make it this far, but everybody was proud to go this far in the season".

Jung's team, the Senior Girls, tied for seventh. "I was a bit disappointed because I know we can do so much better," she said.

As senior volleyball teams at Hamber are made up of grade 11's and 12's, some members will not be returning for next year's season. Lee noted that the team "had some great chemistry." He remarked that "everyone on the team were friends, so next season [they] might not have that." Jung shared that she "was really going to miss the people on [her] team" when she graduates in June 2022, "because those people are some of [her] best friends."

An obvious difference for the 2021 volleyball cities in comparison to previous years was the pandemic, and both Jung and Lee agreed that the lack of spectators changed the tournament experience quite a bit. For both athletes, they felt it was strange to have no friends and parents cheering them on from the stands.

Finally, Lee and Jung were asked about their favourite parts of the season. "There was this one game we had against Van Tech that was five sets where each set was won by two points. Everyone was on fire," explained Jamie. Michael said that "the best part was when [they] went to zones and played against different schools with different levels of volleyball." He enjoyed "experienc[ing] how teams from different parts of BC played."

Even with the difficulties of the pandemic, it was a successful season for both senior teams, representing Hamber well on the court.

TIFFANY'S CURSED HOLIDAY  
GIFT GUIDE

REVIEW by Tiffany Adams (8)

**Soap** - Soap is a great gift for the holiday season. Maintaining great hygiene and keeping friends and family safe during the holidays is very important, especially amidst a pandemic. Soap brings so much joy to many as there are several different variants (just like COVID). You can find soap at grocery stores like Whole Foods, but their soaps tend to fall more on the luxury end. Otherwise, you could just put "soap" into your web browser and buy some online. Local businesses along Main or West 4th are also an option.

**Socks** - Socks are great for keeping warm in the winter. Socks come in various styles and patterns. The kind of socks someone gives you may express how they see you as a person. If someone gives you Korean or Japanese socks with any sort of design on them, they are the best person to ever exist and think you are amazing. If someone gives you toe socks they are probably funny (like me) or they harbor a strong hatred for you. You can get socks at a local department store or online. If you want nice Korean socks, go to H-Mart.

**Bald Cap** - You never know when you are going to have to change your name and move to Spain. That being said, a bald cap would be very handy in the process of hiding from the IRS or, for all of you Canadians, the CRA. Why would you want to get someone a bald cap if you are not hiding from tax collectors? Well, would you not want to see what you look like with no hair but still wanted to have hair after? One can get a bald cap at an SFX store or online, but buying online would be an easier option provided you are lazy and don't need it very soon.

**Anything Tom Nook Related** - Tom Nook, Animal Crossing's so-called "villain", is entrenched with capitalistic views and is hated by many. Everyone should have a Tom Nook in their life at some point. Having a Tom Nook plush would be a constant reminder that you'll likely be in an overwhelming amount of debt at some point in your life. To find a Tom Nook, many would go to a place like EB Games or GameStop. Instead, I would recommend going to the Animal Crossing universe and kidnap Tom Nook himself.



## HAMBER AND STUDENT LIFE

## GRAD COMM INSIGHTS

NEWS REPORT by Hannah Azad (12)



With students back in school full-time, Eric Hamber's graduating class remains hopeful that they will experience an eventful and fulfilling senior year. Most excited about these circumstances is the 2021-2022 Graduation Committee, composed of **Dean Rohman** (12), **Élise Roy** (12), **Nina Louis** (12), **Rachel Dong** (12), **Hazara Sandhu** (12), and **Tarini Talreja** (12). This group of students coordinates all events pertaining to the class of 2022, setting the tone for their final year in high school.

The committee began operations promptly, inviting graduates to gather and watch the final sunset of summer break at the beginning of September. They have since organized Hamber Seniors' annual pumpkin carving competition, hosted grad karaoke, and have started organizing graduation hoodie sales. These are only a few of the many initiatives that the committee hopes to bring to the class of 2022. Graduates can look forward to flaunting their best formal-wear on GQ day, occurring in the spring, and prepare to participate in grad-exclusive spirit weeks.

The annual Prom dinner-dance

is one of the most highly-anticipated senior events at Eric Hamber. Graduates have been wishing for its return after two years of its cancellation due to COVID. Fortunately, this wish will likely be granted for the class of 2022. "We are 95 per cent sure that we're going to have a prom, so that's some pretty big news," announced Hamber's Grad Chair, **Dean Rohman** (12).

Despite being held late in the spring, Grad Committee has already begun planning the logistics of this grand event. "We kind-of have our venue set, and we don't really want to disclose it because we want it to be a surprise, but it's a very, very good venue," Rohman revealed. "We're figuring out the pricing, because we know that a lot of people might not be able to pay for an extremely expensive ticket, [but] prom is going to happen."

Alongside Prom, the committee is responsible for organizing a memorable graduation ceremony. The event has been altered in the previous two years following COVID restrictions, incorporating both virtual and socially-distant in-person elements. As it occurs at the end of June, it is

currently difficult to predict what the parting-event will look like for the Class of 2022. "We haven't gotten that far into planning it, but, given the fact that we're going to be able to do a Prom, hopefully we'll be able to have a graduation ceremony [of the] same grandeur," expressed Rohman.

With the two largest graduation events likely returning this school year, the importance of the Grad Committee's fundraising efforts have been amplified. "It's really important to be part of the fundraising, because if we don't have enough money, then we won't be able to have events. That means we might not be able to have a prom." Grad Committee member, **Tarini Talreja** (12) stressed "we want a lot of people to buy [grad hoodies]. It's our main source of [funding]."

The Grad Committee has emphasized the cruciality of graduates' participation in their activities. Not only do they anticipate it will enhance students' senior-year experiences, but their monetary contributions will help to fund the two most important grad events of the year: the Prom dinner-dance and the graduation ceremony.

## MS. MULLEN'S JOURNEY TO BRING YOGA TO HAMBER

NEWS REPORT by Adelaide Guan (9)

When **Ms. R. Mullen** (Mathematics) first started working at Eric Hamber, she was adamant on teaching a yoga course at the school. Now, five years later, she shares the inside scoop on her fight for Hamber yoga – revealing her objectives, the benefits of having the course, the challenges she faced while advocating for it, and more.

"I noticed that there were many students who could use some strategies to help support them with their mental health," Ms. Mullen shared on her inspiration behind teaching the course. She had been practicing yoga for over 20 years beforehand, and it had helped a lot with her own mental health. Ms. Mullen thinks it would be a valuable class to offer at Hamber, as yoga has many benefits tailored to students' needs. "Some students are looking for stress-reducing, some are looking for strengthening, some are looking for flexibility," she explained. "The main benefits, I would say, are mental, physical and community health."

Ms. Mullen is currently the sponsor of Hamber's Yoga Club, which meets once a week to practice together. She says that the club works differently than her course would, as its operations are primarily dictated by students. This is a quality of the club that she particularly likes. "While a class would still have lots of input from the students, it wouldn't be as student-directed," she stated. Ms. Mullen also mentioned that the yoga club does not study the level of in-depth material as she would ideally like to teach in the course.

Ms. Mullen's course would not be solely focused on practicing yoga. Although she planned to practice the

physical elements of it at least three times a week, the course would also include community outreach and teach the eight limbs of yoga. "One of them is breathing, so we'd talk about the benefits of breathing and different breathing exercises," Ms. Mullen explained. More content that the course would include are the different ways of living and how to implement them, as well as meditation and mindfulness.

The first step to initiating a yoga course at Hamber was to become a yoga teacher. "I went and did my 200-hour yoga teacher training, so that is certified," Ms. Mullen shared. Once she became a certified yoga teacher, she brought the prospective course to the school and proposed to offer it. "Once it got put in the course booklet, it was offered as a course," she stated.

However, this year, Hamber's yoga course is unable to run. "Hamber's awesome because we have so many electives," Ms. Mullen observed. "The flip side of that is [we] can't run classes with very few students." Ms. Mullen explained that although the course started off with lots of enrollments, they ended up declining. The yoga course could not operate this year because not enough students signed up.

According to Ms. Mullen, the most challenging part of creating a yoga course was advertising its benefits. "A lot of people have a certain idea of what yoga is, which may or may not be accurate," she explained. Convincing students to try it out proved to be a big challenge.

When asked when students can expect to have a yoga course at Hamber, Ms. Mullen responded that students can expect to have it once the demand is there. "As soon as students sign up for it, it will happen," she confirmed.

## COURSE SELECTION FOR GRADE 10s: A GUIDE

NEWS REPORT by Katja Radovic-Jonsson (10)

Grade 10 is an important year for students all across the district. It marks the end of an era of mandated core classes, and the beginning of an era of choice and freedom when it comes to course selection. Here at Eric Hamber, there are plenty of courses available for students to choose from as they branch off from their Grade 10 courses. That being said, it is important for students to choose the courses that tailor their passions, interests, and goals.

The course selection options for incoming grade 11 students, as per the Course Planning Booklet on the Hamber website, are outlined below:

**Math**

Starting in the mathematics department, there are a few choices for students going into Grade 11. For those who have taken Foundations of Math and Pre-Calculus 10, the next course to take would be Pre-Calculus 11. There is also the option of Pre-Calculus 11 Honours for those who have achieved a minimum of 86 per cent in Pre-Calc 10 or a 73 per cent in Pre-Calc 10 Honours. Honours courses however, are being phased out by the VSB after this year.

For those who took Workplace Math 10 this year, there is a Workplace Math 11 course that meets the Mathematics 11 graduation requirement.

**Pre-Calculus 11**

- Heavy in algebra, graphs, and trigonometry
- Catered towards students who may plan to enter a university program such as Science or Engineering

**Pre-Calculus 11 Honours**

- Greater emphasis on the use of graphing calculators

**Workplace Math 11**

- Covers personal finance, compound interest and credit, formula manipulation, rate of change, and probability
- Catered towards students entering a college or technical institute after graduating high school

**English**

The English department contin-

ues to offer a variety of courses for incoming Grade 11s. At the Grade 11 level, there are three options: Literary Studies, Composition, and Creative Writing.

**Literary Studies 11**

- Focused on the literary analysis of a variety of texts
- Encourages critical thinking about text features and literary elements

**Composition 11**

- Catered towards students who want to improve their writing skills
- Compose original texts for a range of purposes and audiences
- Learn about source citation and analysis of source credibility

**Creative Writing 11**

- Approaches the core competencies from a creative angle
- Inspires students to build on their confidence and skills through the process of writing and peer collaboration
- Catered to students who love literature and wish to respond to it in creative ways

**Science**

One of the biggest changes for students as they enter Grade 11 is the diversity of options for Science. Science courses in Grade 11 and 12 are no longer generalized and are now separated into branches.

**Life Sciences 11**

- Formerly known as Biology 11
- Covers a variety of topics such as evolution, single-celled organisms, and multicellular organisms
- No prerequisites besides Science 10

**Anatomy and Physiology 12**

- Formerly known as Biology 12
- Focuses on physiological processes, organ systems, and genetics
- Recommended (not required) prerequisites: Chemistry 11, Life Sciences 11

**Earth Science 11**

- Focuses on geological science, oceanographic science, and other earth-related science topics
- Prepares students with an up-to-date, broad understanding of the earth and its environment
- No prerequisites other than Science 10

**Chemistry 11**

- Introductory chemistry course focussing on observing chemical behaviour patterns and molecular structure
- Prerequisites: Pre-Calculus 11 (may be taken concurrently)

**Chemistry 11 Enriched**

- Covers Chemistry 11 topics at a faster pace and in greater depth
- Covers about half the curriculum for the College Board's AP Chemistry and prepares students to take AP Chemistry the next year
- AP Chemistry is equivalent to a first-year

university course in general chemistry

**Physics 11**

- Introductory physics course that provides insight into the scope, nature, relevance, and limitations of physics through a variety of topics
- Covers kinematics, dynamics, energy, DC circuits, and more
- Prerequisites: Pre-Calculus 10, Pre-Calculus 11 (may be taken concurrently)

**AP Physics 1**

- An algebra-based introductory university-level course in physics
- No prior work in physics is required
- Students must be strong in algebraic problem-solving
- Prepares students to take the AP Physics 1 exam offered by the US College Board
- More information about AP courses can be found on the US College Board website
- Successful AP Physics 1 students are prepared to take AP Physics C the following year

**Science for Citizens 11**

- For students who don't wish to specialize in one particular branch of science
- Designed for students who do not wish to take science courses beyond the grade 11 level
- A lab and project-based course that covers a variety of topics including forensics, natural resources, health and nutrition, and scientific literacy

## VDSC OVERVIEW

NEWS REPORT by Jeffery Chan (9)

You may or may not have heard of the Vancouver District Student Council, better known as the 'VDSC', and chances are, you have seen at least one member from Hamber. But what exactly is the VDSC?

According to the official website, it is "a committee of dedicated representatives from all 18 secondary schools and 22 alternative programs at the VSB," and it was founded in 1997. The VDSC provides students with an opportunity to contribute to the planning and decision-making of the district.

This year, the VDSC has four projects planned: The Canley Cup, held at the beginning of December, Alumni University Interviews, VDSC's Got Talent, and finally, the Arts Gala. The latter three event dates are still to be determined. These events are aimed to bring the students of VSB together: the Arts Gala and VDSC's Got Talent showcase student talent; the Canley Cup fosters friendly competition for a good cause, and the Alumni University Interviews inform the current students of life in university.

The VDSC has a separate committee called the Student Issues Committee. They assist in recognizing which issues are the most prevalent throughout the student community. If one has an issue or a concern they would like to bring to the attention of VDSC, they can submit it to the official site, under the page 'Students' Issues'.

At the start of each month, the council looks through all submissions, and if there is one prominent across schools, they will address first, dubbing it the 'Issue of the Month'.



## HAMBER AND STUDENT LIFE

# HIDDEN COST OF THE PANDEMIC: MENTAL HEALTH

NEWS REPORT by Elle Glen (8)

From socializing to identity development, high school comes with many challenges. The onset of COVID-19 has only amplified mental health challenges in youth across British Columbia. How is this affecting Hamber students and how can they seek support?

In her first year at Hamber, **Aliana Pink** (8) explained, "high school hasn't been as difficult as I thought it would be, but it has still been different than what I am used to. You don't know the students, school or the teachers so still school definitely causes minor stress." Many students The Nest spoke to expressed similar anxiety when dealing with schoolwork, socializing, and grades.

According to a 2006 report by the Government of Canada, up to 70 per cent of mental health challenges start during adolescence. Staff at an high school can aid students and offer mental health resources. Counselors at Hamber offer support for any problem students may face.

"The counselors are here to make sure that students feel safe at school and that their voices are heard," said **Mr. C. Smith**, Head of Hamber's Counselling Department.

If you want to talk to your designated counselor, you can set up an appointment via email or find them in the Counselling Suite.

Besides the counselors, there are numerous other resources at our school to help students with the challenges they face. Hamber has a team of grade 12 Peer Counsellors ('PCs'), who are there for support.

"We are a group of senior students who aim to make our younger students feel like they have someone to talk to in any given situation," stated **PC Gloria Rahgozar** (12). You can always find the PCs in the hallways wearing light blue t-shirts, or in the Counselling Suite or "PC Suite" during lunch hours and FIT blocks.

The COVID-19 pandemic forced schools to adapt to a new way of learn-

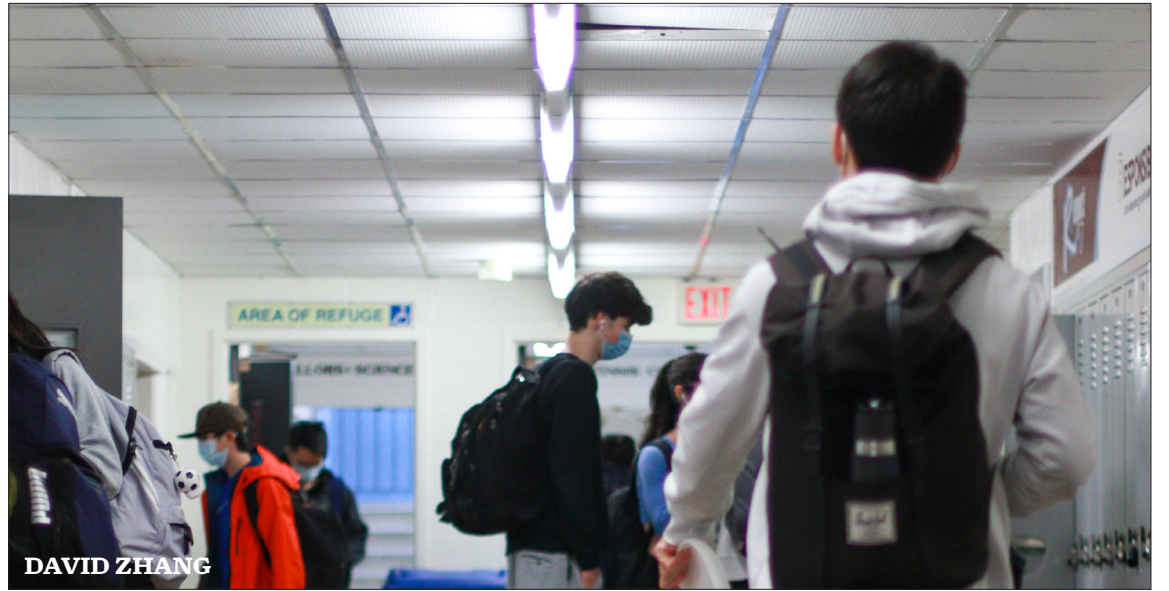
ing, but is the pandemic still affecting students? **Jamie Sinclair** (11) believes so. "High school is the time of our lives where we're supposed to figure out what kind of people we want to be and who we want to interact with. After being isolated for so long, it's hard to socialize normally."

Returning to school after quarantine has proven difficult for many students. While senior students are readapting, junior students have a different experience because they have not experienced a regular high school year. "I missed out on all the things that grade 8's would usually get to experience, like going to camp and joining clubs," shared **Dala'A Kanan** (9), who feels affected by the reintegration after lockdown.

This is supported by a study from BC Children's Hospital, finding two-thirds of children and youth in British Columbia have been struggling with mental health since the start of the pandemic. This is an increase of 33 per cent since 2019. Dr. Quynh Doan, a pediatrician at the hospital and a UBC professor, said in an interview with the *Vancouver Sun* that "Everybody's realizing that there's going to be a huge mental health cost to this pandemic." She speculates it is due to "the uncertainty, the change in [youth's] lives, the worry that they might get [COVID], that someone in their family might get it."

In addition to the support offered at Hamber, there are many out of school resources for youth mental health. These include the Kids Help Line at <https://kidshelpline.ca> or 1-800-668-6868, Vancouver Coastal Health Youth Mental Health Services at <http://www.vch.ca/your-care/mental-health-substance-use/children-youth-mental-health-services> and The Canadian Mental Health Association's BounceBack for anyone 15+, at <https://bouncebackbc.ca>.

Reaching out for help is very important. No matter how you feel, you are not alone.



DAVID ZHANG

## COVID IN SCHOOLS: How Safe do Hamberites Feel?

NEWS REPORT by Mathew Fu (11)

With the shifting school schedule in past years, there have also been many changes to safety regulations and mask mandates in schools. Previously in the quarter system, this included the establishment of cohorts, sanitizing stations, a mandatory mask mandate, and the cancellation of many clubs and sports.

However, the semester system has brought about many alterations to these protocols. According to Vancouver Coastal Health, there have been a decreased number of COVID-19 cases across all schools in Vancouver. But apart from what the numbers say about school safety regulations, how exactly do Hamberites feel about the changing safety regulations?

There is a consensus that Hamber's safety regulations are adequate and when asked, students communicated they feel safe a majority of the time at school. Hamberites think the current safety protocols are suitable for both allowing freedom at social activities and ensuring the general safety of staff and students.

**Anthony Lu** (10) states that "the current mask mandate is just right because while the virus has not disappeared and is not on a clear decline, the worst of it seems to be over." In addition, students seem to have incor-

porated the safety regulations into "the school lifestyle" as **Elena Leung** (12) elaborates. "I guess I don't really have any strong feelings about the mask mandate since we've been doing it for a year now and I'm kind of just used to it," Leung added.

Compared to last year, the change in safety regulations may also be attributed to the large number of staff and students who are now vaccinated. The number of vaccinated individuals has prompted a general sense of safety at school, where students rarely feel uncomfortable. As **Eric Li** (11) stated, "other students are also abiding to safety regulations by wearing masks and social distancing." In fact, Eric says that he prefers the semester system's safety regulations to the quarter system ones as there has been more time to implement effective safety protocols. Yet, some students have also encountered situations in which they are uncomfortable. **Nicole Wong** (11) shared, "Occasionally, I will see people without their masks on, which makes me a bit uncomfortable, but not because I feel unsafe, more that I feel that they aren't taking COVID as seriously as they should."

Some students have also encountered unsafe situations outside of school. Elena Leung described one

such experience she had while going to a doctor's appointment, sharing "On the way to a doctor's appointment by Vancouver General Hospital, there were a group of protestors protesting against the COVID-19 vaccine and it felt so wrong."

There are, however, many safety concerns about one aspect of the new school day: lunch. "I think that the mask mandate is a really good thing on the surface, but the fact that we can take them off to eat while in a crowded area, like the cafeteria for example, seems rather counter-intuitive," **Lily Kong-Waller** (11) says, "I'm comfortable taking my mask off around my friends because I know that they're vaccinated and what they've been doing, but in an area like the cafeteria where there are people I don't know, I usually am not comfortable taking off my mask." With established social circles and groups during lunch, it seems that students inevitably adhere less to safety regulations during lunch. Anthony commented on the situation further: "I find that eating lunch is one of the biggest issues right now because it requires us to remove our masks. Although that is difficult to get around, even solutions like providing hand sanitizer in Period 2 classes, right before lunch, would be helpful."

## WINTER HOLIDAYS: CHRISTMAS, KWANZAA, CHANUKKAH



FLICKR

NEWS REPORT by Willow Peterson (8)

Winter is a time to gather with family and friends. There are many different traditions held and ways to celebrate the upcoming holidays – each one of them being special.

### Christmas - December 25

A traditional Christmas dinner is celebrated with a feast of turkey or ham and mashed potatoes with gravy. Stockings are hung on the fireplace and people usually watch classic Christmas movies. Additionally, a Christmas tree is assembled. This may be a natural, fragrant pine or spruce tree or an artificial but still magical

version. Presents are stacked up high under the ornamented and string-lit tree with a shiny gold star on top.

Christmas celebrates Jesus Christ's birth, who, according to the Christian religion, is the son of God. Christmas is a combination of the two words 'Christ' and 'Mass', which mean the holy mass of Christ.

The exchange of gifts at Christmas time has a religious history. Christianity states that, when Jesus was born, the Three Wise Men travelled to Bethlehem by following the North Star. They believed that Jesus was the chosen one and gave him special gifts.

In later years, the tradition of giving gifts continued and the decoration of the Christmas tree was added around the 16th century in Germany.

The legend of Santa began in 280 CE by a monk named St. Nicholas. Santa's reindeer were first named in the poem "Twas the Night Before Christmas" in 1823.

### Kwanzaa - December 26-January 1

Kwanzaa is a non-religious holiday that was created by Dr. Maulana Karenga in 1966. It is celebrated by many African-Americans as a commemoration of their cultural heritage and traditional values. Kwanzaa is a Swahili word that means 'first' which symbolizes welcoming the first fruits of the harvest. This festival is a celebration of life.

The festival is seven days long, each of its seven nights involves a candle lighting ceremony. The candles represent Kwanzaa's seven principles: unity, self-determination, collective

work or responsibility, cooperative economics, purpose, creativity, and faith.

Kwanzaa ceremonies usually have drumming and musical instruments, libations, a reading of the African Pledge, and the above principles of Kwanzaa. A candle-lighting ritual and artistic performances may also be included.

Traditional food in a Kwanzaa festival is Cajun catfish, African creole, jerk chicken, and groundnut stew.

### Chanukkah - November 28-December 6

Chanukkah is one of the most well-known Jewish holidays. It is the Jewish festival of rededication and is also known as the festival of lights. Chanukkah celebrates the rededication of the second Temple of Jerusalem during the second century BCE.

Chanukkah is eight days long. Candles are placed on a menorah from right to left, the same direction in which Hebrew text is read. However, when the candles are lit, they are lit from left to right with the shamash, the candle in the middle of the menorah.

Dreidel is a popular children's game that is played during Chanukkah. A Dreidel is a spinning top that has four sides, each engraved with a letter of the Hebrew alphabet.

Traditional Chanukkah foods are Sufganiyot (round doughnuts with jam inside and powdered sugar on top), brisket (tender beef from lower chest or breast), latkes (potato pancakes), kugel (egg noodle casserole), and Chanukkah Gelt (gold foil covered chocolate coin).

## HAMBER'S HOPES FOR THE NEW YEAR

NEWS REPORT by Mackenzie Chung (9)

As the last wisps of autumn die down and bring forth the beginning of the winter season, the question of what happens as the clock strikes midnight on the first of January creeps up. The New Year: a time for changing, hoping, fresh starts and resolutions. It's common knowledge that after the end of December, many people often come up with a list of goals and wishes for the next 365 days. So, what are some of the students at Hamber hoping and planning for this upcoming year?

One thing that is especially important for students in the new year is the transition from the first semester onto the second at the end of January. **Zachary Lukan** (9), is looking forward to having an easier workload next semester, since three out of four of his core academics are taking place currently. The disproportionate distribution of courses has shown to be a common theme expressed by students concerning the new semester system. However, this new workload also provides an opportunity to set new academic goals and meet new peers.

But nothing feels more stressful for a big majority of grade 12 students than these next few months as university application deadlines near. One of these students, **Jenny Li** (12), talked about the struggle of juggling com-

pleting applications while still trying to enjoy her last year of high school. With how fast time has seemed to fly by these past few months, Li, probably along with most of her peers, hopes for a final hurrah to accompany the end of their high school careers, wishing for the possibility of an in-person graduation and prom for the first time in two years.

On the opposite end, grade 8 students have a similar desire for COVID-19 restrictions to ease up. **Sophie Jung** (8), expressed her wish for assemblies to take place live in the auditorium like previous years, saying, "[The online assemblies] aren't that engaging, some people are just on their phones the whole time. But I'm excited for things to hopefully seem more normal again."

And this statement might come sooner than expected. In the case of travel and entertainment restrictions, things seem to be looking up, with students and teachers alike planning for the upcoming Winter Break and the opportunity for getaway that comes with it. Another grade 8 student, **Charlize Ng**, is planning on travelling to Los Angeles over the winter break alongside her family, with the opportunity for travel opening up as vaccination rates rise.



## VANCOUVER AND THE PROVINCE

# CRISIS LINE IN CRISIS: BC'S 911 SERVICE

NEWS REPORT by Bianca Takenaka (10)

E-Comm is a 911 service and dispatching organization in British Columbia. When someone calls 911 during an emergency, they are directed by the E-Comm dispatchers to aids such as the fire department, police station, or ambulance. This is the phone line hundreds of thousands of British Columbians call when they're stuck in fatal situations.

The E-Comm union stated that the 911 emergency service is currently facing an extreme staffing shortage and is not prepared to be the frontline force that handles major emergencies. People who phone E-Comm dispatchers should be in contact with them in five seconds or less for a 911 call, 10 seconds or less when requesting police, and 3 minutes or less when requesting staff other than the police. Due to the current staffing shortage, these listed wait-times when phoning for help have extended to 20 minutes for emergency requests and a mind-blowing 5 hours for non-emergency requests.

During British Columbia's "heat dome" between June 25 and July 1, temperatures exceeded 40 °C, which challenged B.C.'s medical system and caused the deaths of over 500 British Columbians. The wait-time for emergency ambulances when phoning 911 during the heat dome surpassed an hour and a half, and answering dispatchers and paramedics said that they had over 200 pending calls daily.

E-Comm dispatcher Carrie James recalled, "people don't get into this job to sit there and listen to people in distress. When you're sitting on the phone for 10, 15, even 20, minutes

waiting to transfer someone through to the ambulance service and unable to provide any type of support whatsoever other than to say, 'I'm still on the phone with you,' when you can't give them advice, you can't reassure them an ambulance is coming – it's very difficult. It's very demoralizing." She also said that the stress of her profession begins before showing up to the office, since E-Comm requires people to work more than their scheduled 12-hour shift: "It's gotten to the point where instead of it being occasional or periodic where people are being overrun and overworked, it's very consistent. I know so many people that are actively looking for [other] work."

Other 911 dispatchers reported that they are relying on working overtime and missing breaks to meet service level. The service level for 911 facilities recommends that 125 "full-time call" staff are to be hired in addition to the 153 already employed.

Oliver Grüter-Andrew, E-Comm CEO, has confirmed that the service has been under panic for months: "We came to the internal conclusion that as a part of the problem we do not have enough funded seats to meet the current service targets in answering police non-emergency calls. I worry a lot about our staff at E-Comm. I worry about staff at other emergency communication centres, police, fire, and ambulance. The right thing to do is look at the system of emergency communication in British Columbia end-to-end and redesign and resource the system appropriately to deal with that for the sake of public safety."

Grüter-Andrew had also made it

clear that these shortages are extreme threats to public safety as they have "a chain of cause" in the first responding system. "[Staff] are crying before their shifts, they're crying after their shifts. I know there's this extreme burden to work overtime as a regular shift is 12 hours long. It simply couldn't be further from the truth that we are adequately staffed," he revealed.

Furthermore, the E-Comm service is underfunded. Grüter-Andrew mentioned that the calls and complicated police reports that dispatchers take have increased. The municipalities that contract E-Comm to handle these situations do not have the proper funding to do so. PricewaterhouseCoopers, a multinational network of firms, wrote that "although funding is available [for E-Comm], ability to recruit and retain is challenged, resulting in significantly understaffed dispatch." Thus, the overtime cost of \$2 million is the equivalent of 22 full-time call dispatchers.

E-Comm currently has 259 call-takers and dispatchers in British Columbia, but it unfortunately still has empty seats for 70 more dispatchers. When someone calls 911, they expect instant support, waiting at most three minutes for help to arrive, not waiting hours on the phone until it is too late. Along with the people in need, the dispatchers are anxious and nervous.

Overall, dispatches are extremely tired due to constant overworking and stress. E-Comm is underfunded, understaffed, and overworked. BC's emergency coordinator desperately needs more recruits, and is currently taking in as many suitable workers as possible.

# Vaccine Mandates: Who decides when, and why?

NEWS REPORT by Julia Ling (11)



On October 5, the BC Ministry of Education composed a set of K-12 Sector Guidelines for Vaccination Policies. The guidelines consist of five steps, providing clear regulations which individual boards of education, such as the VSB, can use to create their own vaccination policies.

The first part of the guidelines focuses on gathering data, such as the amount of unvaccinated teachers and the availability of substitute teachers. This provides context on whether vaccine policies need to be implemented.

The second step is to confirm that the policy is in accordance with legal rights, labour rights, and up-to-date Public Health Orders.

The third step introduces the policy to community review, communicating with groups such as Indigenous communities and Parental Advisory Committees to analyze the policy with their perspectives.

The fourth and fifth steps finalize the decision on if a vaccination policy is truly needed, and if so, it is created and implemented.

October 7 saw the release of BC Teachers' Federation's stance on vaccine policies. In an email to all BCTF members, President Teri Mooring wrote that "the BCTF Executive Community met ... and took the position

that the Federation supports provincial mandatory vaccines in the K-12 system for school staff and volunteers."

Contrarily, the Vancouver School Board released a statement on November 4 announcing that they would not be implementing a vaccine policy.

In their newsletter, Carmen Cho, the then Vancouver School Board Chair and current school trustee, said that "[The VSB] is pleased that approximately 90 per cent of eligible youth and adults in the Vancouver Coastal Health region is vaccinated", and that "[the VSB continues] to strongly encourage everyone who has yet to be vaccinated to make an appointment." The Vaccine Policy Guidelines were followed, and the VSB evidently found the data collection of the first step satisfactory, thus, no vaccine policy was administered.

Similar to the staff, students are not currently under vaccine mandates.

Carmen Cho stated that approximately 90 per cent of eligible youth and adults are vaccinated; however, it is not a requirement to attend school in-person. The current health and safety requirements for K-12 students require a face mask at all times save when the wearer is eating or drinking, or if they are not physically able to put on and remove the mask themselves.

# BC'S EXTREME WEATHER

NEWS REPORT by  
Chloe Mayor Moure  
(8) and Lucy Samudio  
Liang (8)



July 2021 was the hottest month ever recorded worldwide. With rising sea levels, heavy winds and rainfalls, the usual weather in BC has taken a drastic turn as the Climate Crisis takes its toll on the province.

November conditions caused Environment Canada to issue its first ever red alert for BC. Red alerts are dangerous weather systems that are expected to push more atmospheric rivers into the province, according to CNN. Rainfall warnings had also been issued all over the east and west of Vancouver Island, and wind warnings had been set for several coastal areas of BC. Over the summer, rainy weather may have seemed like a miracle considering the burning heat, months later rain forced evacuations and damaged infrastructures throughout the province.

BC's weather has changed substantially over the years. These changes are primarily caused by the Climate Crisis. With rising greenhouse gasses in the atmosphere, climate scientists believe there will be more extreme heat waves in BC, as well as in other provinces across Canada. According to the Pacific Climate Impacts Consortium, the annual temperature in BC will rise by 2.5 °C by 2050, even if greenhouse gas emissions are halved. This may not sound like a big change now, but unless the government and people of BC take extreme actions to reduce greenhouse gases, the weather in this province, and Canada in gener-

al, will continue to get worse.

During the summer of 2021, BC experienced a record-breaking heatwave as a result of a 'heat dome' of ozone pollution. Heat domes are caused when the atmosphere traps hot ocean air in an area, almost as if it is being bound by a lid. An international team of climate scientists states that heatwaves are expected to become more frequent with Canada's warming, at twice the global rate and up to three times in northern parts of the country. Research by the BC Coroners Service, states there were 569 heat-related deaths from June 20 to July 29, 445 of which occurred during the heat dome. "I saw paramedics who had burns on their knees from kneeling down to care for patients with heatstroke. I saw far too many patients die in the ED as a result of their heat exposure," Jeremy Hess, a professor of environmental health sciences, global health and emergency medicine, stated during a press briefing.

The heatwave also had an impact on mental health. Many people are still struggling with trauma, anxiety and depression from this period. The more recent extreme weather events also had an impact on this, and we are even noticing what's called pre-traumatic

stress disorder, where people develop anxiety by watching what other people are going through and anticipating that they will undergo similar events. "There are pretty clear signals in the literature overall that extreme heat exposure is a risk for a number of different mental health concerns. This extends up to and includes suicide," Hess explained.

The hot weather BC experienced in the summer is not where this story ends. The heatwave also had a significant effect on the crops of Fraser Valley and Okanagan; two major fruit-growing regions where up to 95 per cent of soft fruits in BC are grown. Pinder Dhaliwal, president of the BC Fruit Growers Association, said the heatwave wrecked an estimated 50 to 70 per cent of cherry crops in the Okanagan.

The local businesses and farming crops are not the only ones impacted by the extreme weather in BC. It is shown that climate change is also threatening Indigenous communities, specifically by hindering Indigenous knowledge—a form of teaching acquired by local people through accumulated experiences and the understanding of the environment in a given culture. According to UNESCO,

"For over 350 million Indigenous people worldwide, climate change impacts are expected to be early and severe due to their location in high risk environments. This includes nomadic pastoralists living along desert margins, horticulturalists and fishers in small and low-lying islands, farmers and pastoralists in high-altitudinal zones, and hunters and herders across the circumpolar Arctic."

Prime Minister Justin Trudeau and Premier John Horgan recently announced that a joint committee of federal and provincial ministers will work with Indigenous leadership to provide support to families, businesses, and communities affected by the extreme weather events in BC.

The extreme weather in BC has used up resources, taken lives, and made significant dents in the province's economy. "It will be a growing concern in the future," said Bobby Sekhon, a meteorologist with Environment and Climate Change Canada addressing the heatwaves and other extreme weather events faced recently.

BC may have a chance to prevent future extreme weather problems if greenhouse gasses are reduced and government learns from its previous mistakes.

# FLOODING IN BC

NEWS REPORT by Teagan Nichol (9)

In November, an unprecedented rainfall and series of storms took place in BC, now referred to as a "weather bomb." The extreme rain resulted in floods, landslides, mudslides, damage to agriculture and huge loss of farm life, along with four confirmed deaths. The lasting consequences of these events are still unfolding, with a state of emergency decreed and cleanup underway.

This downpour ravaged the province and surprised meteorologists. Arnel Castellan, a meteorologist with Environment Canada, stated at a news conference on November 16, "[Cal-

culations] point toward a widespread 1-in-50 year event, with many locations seeing a one-in-100 year event. That is putting into context how anomalous this event was." According to Environment Canada, between November 13 and November 15, 24 communities in BC received more than 100 millimeters of rain. The highest amount of rain fell in Hope, with 252 mm in the same timeframe, followed by the Coquihalla Summit with 238 mm, Agassiz with 228 mm, Chilliwack with 219mm, and Squamish with 206mm.

For comparison, Hope, usually gets about 344 mm of rain in the entire

month of November in a typical year.

This "weather bomb" has left large sections of BC, specifically the Fraser Valley, in crisis. BC entered a state of emergency and commenced a cleanup to assess the damage done to the province's transportation networks, infrastructure and thousands of properties. Emergency efforts concerning the floods have involved the Canadian Armed Forces and are ongoing.

Floods have left thousands evacuated from their homes. As of November 18, 20,000 people were out of their homes and the city of Hope was hosting 1,000 evacuees.

Although highways have reopened, many roads and highways were damaged and some closed during the storm, leaving many stranded, and disturbing supply chains.

Transportation and Infrastructure Minister Rob Fleming said, "our focus is on clearing, repairing and reopening roads to connect the Interior and the North to the Lower Mainland and Vancouver Island, to get our supply chains moving."

Restrictions to save resources including limits on gas consumption have been imposed. There are also concerns on food supply, especially poultry and other foods industries specifically affected by the rainfall.

The havoc has reached the food and farming industry of BC. Thousands of farm animals have died, including cows, chickens, and pigs. According to Agriculture Minister Lana Popham, 640,000 animals have been confirmed dead. This includes 12,000 hogs, 420 cows, 628,000 chickens and

possibly 110 bee hives.

Farmers in the Fraser Valley were particularly affected by this and are trying to restore their lost livestock presently. Another pending problem for people restoring farms will be the carcasses of animals, which has been pressed by Popham for its importance.

The full damage caused by the floods and cost for fixing it is still unknown, leaving BC farmers in an unfortunate predicament.

Andreas Weigel, a weather peril lead at Swiss Re said regarding BC's current state's connection to climate change: "If you look at the German floods this [past] summer – and the atmospheric river that happened in Canada just now – we cannot say that this is climate change, but we can say that climate change makes such events more likely."



## VANCOUVER AND THE PROVINCE

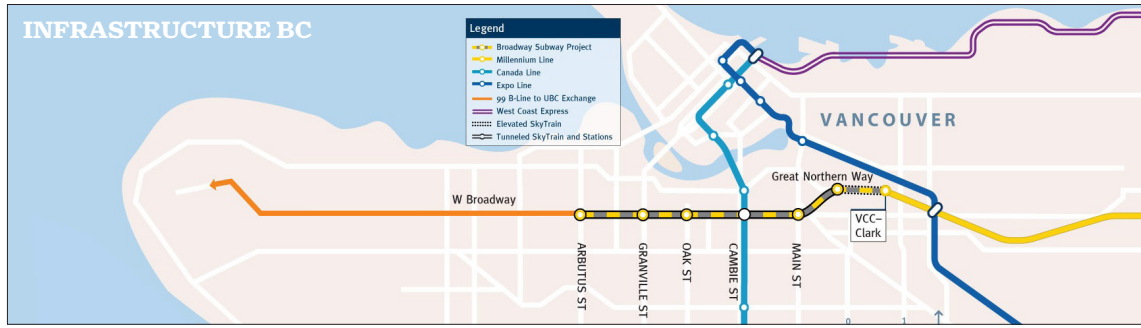
# TRANSPORTATION DEMANDS: THE BROADWAY SUBWAY PROJECT

NEWS REPORT by Alexandra Chow (10)

The Broadway Subway Project is a westward extension to the Millennium Line. Most of the stations for this extension will be located on Broadway to alleviate the growing congestion on buses. The project is a collaboration between the Government of Canada, Government of British Columbia, City of Vancouver, and TransLink.

According to the City of Vancouver's website, "Metro Vancouver will welcome 1 million new residents... over the next 30 years". This is roughly a 40 per cent increase from the current population. In anticipation of the growing number of residents, new infrastructure is being built. The trains on this line will have the capacity for three times as many people as the current demand. The extension will reduce the waiting time for passengers, create reliable schedules, and encourage the use of public transportation.

The Broadway Subway Project involves building six new train stations to add onto the Millennium Line. Currently, the Millennium Line connects



the city of Coquitlam to Vancouver's Main Street. The new stations will extend this line to Arbutus Street. The six new stations will connect to the rest of the Millennium line through the VCC-Clark station. In the future, this subway line may be extended further west to reach the UBC campus.

The new subway stations will be built underground. They will be accessible from all over Vancouver by all forms of transportation, including driving, biking, walking, and busing. Since the Arbutus station and the

Great Northern Way-Emily Carr station are close to greenways, they will have bike parkades. Crime-prevention measures such as security cameras and emergency phones will be implemented. Many stations will also feature Indigenous artwork.

This 5.7 km extension from the VCC-Clark station to the Arbutus station will take 11 minutes to travel. During the busiest times of the day, a train will arrive at each station every three to four minutes. According to the Broadway Subway Project website,

"the average transit commuter [will save] almost 30 minutes a day."

However, rapid transit can be costly. This project will cost \$2.83 billion, with majority funding coming from the provincial government.

The construction schedule began with planning in November 2020, followed by building the tunnels and stations from 2021 to 2023. Installing the tracks is planned for 2024, and testing will begin after that. The six-station extension to the Millennium Line is on schedule to open in 2025.

## Vancouver's Historic Chinatown Storytelling Centre Opens



KENNETH CHAN/DAILY HIVE

NEWS REPORT by Michelle Park (11)

On November 6, 2021, Vancouver's one-of-a-kind Chinatown storytelling centre opened its door to visitors. The intention behind the establishment of Vancouver's Chinatown storytelling centre is to highlight Chinese culture and share China's historical influences in Canada.

The centre is located at East Pender street, a four minute walk from Dr. Sun Yat Sen Classical Chinese Garden.

The storytelling centre is a cultural space that is unique and meaningful to not only Vancouver's Chinese community, but to the entirety of the city. It features art, photos, and recordings of Chinese culture developed in Canada and displaces documents on the early Chinese immigrants and their stories.

The exhibition is divided into two parts: the permanent exhibit; and the special exhibit. The permanent exhibit is called BMO Hall which presents significant events and milestones for Canada's Chinese community starting from the 19th century.

The BMO Hall voices the stories of early Chinese immigrants, highlighting the barriers of racism and discrimination that they faced. Inside the exhibit there is a theater and a photo studio honoring the memory of Yucho Chow, who opened the first studio in 1906 Chinatown. Here, visitors are able to take photos and send virtual

postcards. They are given the opportunity to gain knowledge on Chinese Canadian history by watching archival films, in-house productions, and short films in the theater space.

The special exhibit is designed to emphasize and celebrate the significant events in Chinese Canadian history. The exhibit is called "Sharing Our Firsts" and is presented by the Bank of Montreal, significant to the Chinese community as the very first financial institution that provided service in Chinatown and elected the first Asian manager.

Vancouver's Chinatown Storytelling Centre's most recent events included "Behind the covers of Chinatown news - Then and Now" and "Meet Paul Yee, Chinatown's award-winning author."

A meaningful aspect of the centre is that Vancouver citizens of Chinese descent can submit their own stories of when they experienced hardships due to cultural differences or of how they have adjusted to Canadian society. The center's interactive nature promotes diversity, emphasizes shared history, and enriches Vancouver's vibrant cultures. The ultimate goal of the opening of Vancouver's Chinatown storytelling centre is to educate Vancouver's citizens on Chinese-Canadian history and foster a more inclusive society.

## RACING RETURNS TO VANCOUVER

NEWS REPORT by Oliver Izen (10)

Since the departure of Champ Car, an international racing series, in 2004, Vancouver's motorsports community has remained relatively quiet.

That was true until July 8, 2021, when the Fédération Internationale de l'Automobile (FIA), the largest global auto racing governing body, announced that racing would be returning to the city with the arrival of the ABB FIA Formula E World Championship.

Formula E is an all-electric global street racing series, featuring single-seater open-wheel race cars. Beginning in 2014, the sport's primary focus has been sustainability through promoting the adoption of electric vehicles, testing and innovating new electronic and clean energy technologies, combating air pollution and climate change. In September 2020, Formula E became approved by the FIA as net-zero carbon footprint, the first of any global sport.

With every Formula E event comes the ceremonial Allianz E-Village, a fan festival that allows attendees to experience new road and race technologies, meet the drivers, and test their abilities in racing simulators.

The "Vancouver E-Prix" as it has been named, will be held on July 2,

2022, and will be part of a larger 3-day event, spanning from June 30 to July 2, called the "Canadian E-Fest."

The Canadian E-Fest will feature concerts from Canadian artists, an Esports tournament, and an "E-Volve" electric technologies conference, with the Formula E race being the highlight.

The race track will be along False Creek, with a similar track layout to the Molson Indy, used by Champ Car until 2004. The circuit will span from BC Place to slightly past Science World, with the Allianz E-Village directly beside at Creekside Park. Road closures are expected to last 48 hours, with the track occupying 56 per cent less streets than the Molson Indy. There will reportedly be space for up to 56,000 spectators.

Unique to the Vancouver E-Prix is the fact that the city of Vancouver will not be paying for the event. Instead, the financial burden will be placed on the organizer of the event, the New Zealand based I.T. consultancy "OSS Group". The group estimates the event will produce "\$80 million in economic value", as well as "create approximately 3,000 jobs."

Along with the race, the City of Vancouver has committed to "a legacy of \$50,000 in electric charging infrastructure" and "attracting sustainable events," according to Vancouver City Councillor Sarah Kirby-Yung. The race has also been supported by Formula E title partner and automation company ABB: "The hosting of ABB Formula E in Vancouver, Canada's greenest city, is a testament to the advancements being made to enable a healthier and more prosperous world for future generations."

## Outlook: Ski Season '21/22

NEWS REPORT by Amelia Hughes (12)

With winter right around the corner, the local mountains are getting ready for the upcoming ski and snowboard season. However, the unusual weather has caused uncertainty as to when the mountains will fully open.

Cypress has opened for the skiing season, but not all of its runs are open due to unreliable snowfall levels. Meanwhile, Seymour remains closed.

The 2021-2022 season has had a slow start in December thus far. People are still wondering what the season will hold, especially after last year's early opening to the slopes.

According to both Global News

and CBC News, it is predicted to be one of the warmest winters in decades due to the second year of La Niña, as well as the impacts of climate change. Alongside the rain that has caused many suburban municipalities to flood, many highways have been damaged and rendered impassable. Upon major highways being blocked off, people are unable to reach popular skiing resorts such as Whistler and Big White. Furthermore, some highways are not expected to be repaired until Summer 2022.

Mountains have also shown discrepancies in their COVID safety protocols. Some mountains, such as Cypress, require proof of vaccination, while other mountains, such as Seymour, only require a face covering. It is unclear how dining halls will adapt to be COVID safe. COVID-19 variants make it more crucial that skiers and snowboarders follow safety protocols on the slope.

## FIVE HOLIDAY ATTRACTIONS AROUND VANCOUVER

REVIEW by Shaan Sandhu (10)

As winter approaches, Vancouverites may be wondering what festive activities are open this year. COVID caused a dull holiday season last year, because many of Vancouver's holiday attractions were closed. This article will go over events that are reopening for the 2021 winter season, and what precautions organizers are taking to protect their guests.

**The Vancouver Christmas Market** (November 13 to December 24) is an outdoor German-themed market that opens for the holidays. It is located in Downtown Vancouver, in the Jack Poole Plaza. The market includes a wide variety of vendors that sell anything from food to small Christmas gifts. It is perfect for family photos since it has a large walk-in Christmas tree that would be the perfect backdrop. There are fun activities for children like the scavenger hunt and carousel. It is open between November 13 and December 24. On the Vancouver Christmas Market website, it is stated that the event will follow the Vancouver Coastal Health protocols, which includes showing a vaccine passport before entering.

**The PNE Winter Lights** (December 9 to December 29) is an attraction located in Vancouver's PNE. Guests don't have to leave their cars as the show is a drive-through look around of the Christmas lights. The venue is full of lights, with themed statues like reindeers and polar bears. Exclusive this year is the Festive Forest and Snow Globe Village according to the PNE winter Light's official website. Multiple food trucks will be open with hot drinks and sweets. Tickets must be reserved, and range from \$37 to \$42. COVID shouldn't be a concern to attendees, because the majority of the attraction takes place inside the attendant's vehicle.

**FlyOver Canada's Christmas Special** (December 9 to January 3) is an immersive VR experience that takes you around the wonders of Canada. To increase the reality of the experience, wind and mist are used to make it feel as if you are really flying. For the Christmas special Santa Claus and his elves will escort you through Canada, while they prepare for Christmas day. Tickets cost around \$30 for adults and \$20 for people 15 and under. Fly Over Canada requires proof of vaccination before entering the facility, and hand sanitizers are spread out throughout the area to enhance safety.

**VanDusen Festival of Lights** (November 26, 2021 to January 3, 2022) is located in VanDusen Botanical Gardens. The lights spread across 15 acres according to the City of Vancouver. The lights are wrapped around all the plants and trees creating a magical feel as guests venture through the garden. The festival is open between November 26 and January 3. Tickets cost between \$17 to \$23; it varies per date. It starts at 4 PM and ends at 9:30 PM. Vaccination passports must be shown before entry, and social distancing is recommended when walking through the festival.

**Canyon Lights at Capilano** (November 20, 2021 to January 23, 2022) will be reopening this Christmas season. The Capilano suspension bridge is one of Metro Vancouver's most famous attractions. The bridge is lit up with multicolor lights that light up the sky when it's dark. Once past the bridge, guests can adventure among the treetops of the forest which are also full of Christmas lights. The jaw-dropping Arc De Lumina light tunnel is located on portions of the cliff walk. The tickets cost \$54 for adults and \$30 for youth. According to the Capilano Suspension Bridge's official website, vaccine passports are not mandatory to enter the park.



## CANADA

## GOVERNMENT APPEALS INDIGENOUS COMPENSATION RULING

**NEWS REPORT** by *Suhani Dosanjh (8)*

For 14 years, the federal government has been in a legal battle over First Nations Child Welfare. Now, the question remains whether or not the First Nations will be given compensation for the mistreatment they were forced to endure in the immoral system.

The fight first began back in 2007, when Dr. Cindy Blackstock, a professor at the University of Alberta, filed an official complaint with the federal government on behalf of the First Nations Child and Family Caring Society and the Assembly of First Nations. She wrote in the complaint that First Nations children were heavily discriminated against, and demanded that the federal government be held responsible for the mistreatment of 163,000 Indigenous children who were in a corrupted welfare system.

A major court case was started because of it, but it has been delayed for more than a decade, mostly due to delays caused by the federal government.

On January 26, 2016, the Canadian Human Rights Tribunal, or CHRT, a quasi-judicial body less formal than a court of law that only hears cases relating to discrimination under the Canadian Human Rights Act, ruled in the plaintiff's favour. This meant that they deemed that the federal government had discriminated against First Nations children in the welfare system, and called them out for violating Jordan's Principle.

According to the First Nations Family and Caring Society of Canada, Jordan's Principle is a policy that states that all First Nations children, whether they live on or off reserves, have the right to receive equitable public services.

Then, on September 19, 2019, the CHRT ordered that the government also give out compensation of \$40 000 dollars, the maximum amount allowed by the Canadian Human Rights Act, to every First Nations child, or their family, that was affected by the discrimination.

Cindy Blackstock rejoiced upon hearing the decision, as she explained in CBC's Power and Politics program, "This is a complete win for kids. Now, the question becomes: will the federal government put down its sword and stop fighting First Nations children and treat them equally. It would be the first time in the history of the country if they ended their discrimination in

federally funded public services."

Although content in the ruling, Blackstock was still wary about it sticking, saying "[The federal government's] past behavior [suggests] that they will appeal it.

Blackstock was in fact right, as the government soon after admitted their wrongdoings, they claimed that the compensation order was an "overreach of jurisdiction." They then made the decision to appeal the court order, and they also asked for a judicial review by the Federal Court of appeal to investigate the compensation order.

A judicial review is a process where courts reevaluate the decision of an administrative body, and make sure that the reasons the choice was made were justified and lawful.

There is still a chance that the government will decide to stop their appeal on the decision, though. If they were to, the compensation would be guaranteed, and the government would be on the hook to pay billions of dollars to nearly 50,000 Indigenous children.

The federal government's reason to appeal the court was because of problems they had with the flat \$40 000 a person got. They argued that it was unfair that every person got the same amount of money, even if one person had been in the system for a month, while the other was in it for multiple years.

After the findings of 215 Indigenous children's remains outside an old Kamloops residential school building in March of 2021, the case was dragged into court yet again, where the battle ensued. It ended with the government agreeing to try to negotiate a settlement with the First Nations people.

The negotiations started up on November 1, and all court cases have been paused as the two parties have been trying to strike a deal between each other. However, if the issue is not resolved by December 2021, the Canadian government will go on with their appeal against the CHRT mandate.

Although the issue has yet to be resolved, there is still hope that the two parties will soon see eye to eye, and that the First Nations peoples will get the justice they deserve.

As December 14, the federal government has announced it is setting aside \$40 billion for compensation for Indigenous children and welfare reform.

## What to expect for Canada's Long Term Care Reform

**NEWS REPORT** by *Arabella Mew (9)*

COVID-19 has significantly strained Canada's health care system, highlighting several structural concerns that experts say need to be addressed. Long-term care was discussed heavily in the recent federal election due to the increased physical and psychological burden that was observed on Canada's senior population, their family, friends, and caretakers.

Advocates say issues in long-term care institutions, including low staffing levels and unsatisfactory care quality, have recently received overdue attention.

Long-term care is intended to be a variety of services designed to meet a person's needs to live as independently and safely as possible. When they are no longer able to perform everyday activities by themselves, it is a problem when insufficient levels of care are available in a facility such as a nursing home.

According to the Canadian Institute for Health Information, residents of nursing and senior homes accounted for over 80 per cent of all documented COVID-19 deaths in Canada during the first wave of the pandemic. From March 2021, these long-term care facilities continued to account for the greatest proportion of outbreak-related cases and deaths, according to the Public Health Agency of Canada.

Coroner Gehane Kamel, who in-



ERIC WYNNE/CHRONICLE HERALD

vestigated deaths at six long-term care homes, said that residents also died of dehydration, malnourishment and neglected hygiene. During the pandemic, care workers became sick and some were forced to look after entire floors of patients. Many of them were barely paid above minimum wage.

Before these issues were highlighted by the pandemic, there was little information collected nationally on care facilities despite approximately 500,000 Canadians living in them, according to Statistics Canada in

2016. Canada's failure to protect the residents and workers in long-term care was addressed heavily in the latest federal election, where several political parties promised to improve the quality of the facilities.

Before the election, Conservative Leader Erin O'Toole promised to create a Canada Senior Care tax credit, which would pay \$200 each month to anyone who lives and takes care of a parent above the age of 70 to keep seniors out of care homes. The Conservatives also proposed \$3 billion to be spent on renovating long-term care homes over the next three years and to prioritize immigration requests for caretakers who can provide long-term or at-home care.

Liberal Leader Justin Trudeau promised that the re-elected Liberal government would devote \$9 billion over five years to improve living conditions, train 50,000 personal support workers, and guarantee a \$25 per hour minimum wage for long-term caretakers.

The recent awareness brought to the issues concerning long term-care is a good start, but solving them will require effort over multiple years. It will be interesting to see how the minority Liberal government will proceed with this reform and whether or not the Conservative's proposals will be included.

## CANADA'S NEW HONG KONG IMMIGRATION POLICY

**ANALYSIS** by *Julien Yuen (11)*

On November 12, 2020, the Canadian government announced new pathways for Hong Kong residents to gain permanent residence through studying or working in Canada, known as the Lifeboat Scheme. This was in response to Beijing's decision to implement the National Security Law in Hong Kong and the jurisdiction's deteriorating human rights situation. The policy came into effect on June 1, 2021.

According to the Government of Canada, 4,725 Hong Kong residents obtained study permits from January

2021 to the end of September. 2021's data excludes other types of visa permits. This is an increase of 194 per cent from 2,440 attainments in the entire year of 2018, before the National Security Law was implemented.

The Chief Executive of human rights organization Hong Kong Watch, Benedict Rogers, thanked the Canadian government for its decision in an article published on the organisation's website, saying the plan is "to be welcomed."

The organization also petitioned for the Canadian Government to ensure that Hong Kongers with protest related convictions would not be barred from applying for visa routes, to provide a section in the immigration form that allows those with protest related convictions to offer an explanation, and to review the requirement for Hong Kongers to request background check from the Hong Kong Police as part of their application for the lifeboat measures.

On March 15, 2021, fourteen Canadian MPs wrote a letter to

the Immigration Minister calling for improvements to the scheme. The suggestions included allowing Hong Kongers to start the asylum application process in embassies and consulates outside of Hong Kong, ensuring a waiver for cases of political persecution and convictions are not grounds for inadmissibility to apply for asylum, establish specific initiatives to support the most politically-exposed individuals, and consider exercising legislative authority of the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act of 2002 to issue Ministerial Instructions where necessary to cover the loopholes.

In an interview with CBC, MP for Vancouver East Jenny Kwan said that the crisis in Hong Kong is escalating. She urged the government to eliminate the five year limitation of when a person graduates and the work requirement restriction. She said the question ought not to be what economic benefits can Canada get from Hong Kong people, but what support do the people who face persecution need to flee persecution.

## Canada's Clean Energy Transition: A Snapshot

**NEWS REPORT** by *Salena Sharma (8)*

"An energy transition is underway – and will continue to roll out throughout a generation, roughly between now and 2040," writes the Generation Energy Council of Canada on Canada's renewable energy transition.

Canada aims to move towards net-zero emissions by 2050. Hydroelectricity, wind, biomass, solar, nuclear, and ocean energy are renewable energies that are Canada's replacement for fossil fuels. The increase of renewable energy will be controlled across Canada by wind power while the remaining coal and natural gas formations will be nearly erased.

Canada has one of the largest oil industries in the world. The fuels from the oil industries released a lot of toxins into the environment which led

to many negative changes in the world. When these toxins are burnt, they create immense amounts of carbon dioxide, also known as greenhouse gas emissions, which, later, traps heat into the atmosphere leading to global warming. This has been done for many years and is ongoing. Canada's energy system is responsible for more than 80 per cent of greenhouse gas emissions which are derived from companies and organizations that used greenhouse gas emissions. To lower it, they must replace its energy system with renewable energies, analyses have shown.

Renewable energy is the energy that is obtained from natural processes. These processes are replaced at a measured rate that is equal to or faster than the rate at which they are absorbed. Renewable energy currently provides 18.9 per cent of Canada's primary energy supply. There are various forms of renewable energy. It is either obtained directly or indirectly from the sun, the heat made deep within the Earth, or through the process of moving water sources.

Canada's transition to renewable energy has been slower than other countries due to its large reserves of oil and natural gas. Although some private Canadian companies' transitions

are faster than other companies, there is pressure on governments to develop innovative technologies as they move through the transition.

Net-zero greenhouse gas emissions refer to the balance between the amount of greenhouse gas produced and withdrawn from the atmosphere. A report from Generation Canada showed that achieving economy-wide net-zero greenhouse gas emissions might be required to structure the global average surface temperatures at a level that will dodge the worst effects of climate change. Electricity will play a significant role in the transformation of net-zero emissions. Throughout the years, models and analysis showed that renewable energy would make an important contribution to achieving the mitigation targets.

Organizations such as the Canadian Solar Industries (CanSIA), the Canadian Wind Energy Association (CanWEA), and the Canadian Renewable Energy Association (CanREA) are helping Canada achieve its goal of net-zero emissions. On July 1, 2020, CanSIA, and CanWEA partnered with CanREA to form one voice for wind energy, solar energy, and energy storage in Canada. These technologies are slowly becoming the low-cost solution

for Canada's future electricity and energy needs.

CanREA is working to make a modern energy system through stakeholder aid and public engagement, and to provide clean energy and measurable solutions for Canada's energy obligations.

Wood or wood waste can be combusted to supply heat for industrial purposes, for space and water heating, or to issue streams for electricity generation. Canada had 70 bioenergy power plants (bioenergy is produced from biomass) at the end of 2014. Their total installed capacity was constructed around the use of wood biomass and ingest pulping liquor along with landfill gas.

Some renewable energies play significant roles in Canada's electricity and energy generation. One example is wind energy which is among the top three renewable energy sources the country, accounting for 3.5 per cent of electricity generation. Wind and solar photovoltaic energy are the fastest-growing sources of energy in Canada.

Nova Scotia gets around 14 per cent of its electricity from wind power, along with Ontario receiving six per cent, and British Columbia receiving

two percent. The third-largest form of renewable energy is biomass. Biomass is a biological material that comes in solid, liquid, or gas, that has stored sunlight in the form of chemical energy. The most common type of biomass is wood which can either be rounded or wasted from technical activities.

Models calculate a moderately small amount of electricity from biomass linked with carbon capture (BECCS). Wind energy is cheaper to assemble than biomass. Greenhouse gas emissions, on the other hand, can be minimized by biomass in places that are difficult to decarbonize such as transportation and agriculture.

Some people in the fossil fuels industry have been worried about losing their jobs as Canada transitions to renewable energies. However, they may have a job waiting for them. Clean Energy Canada provided Canadians with statistics that could improve the economy in Canada. Canada's clean energy sector employs 430,500 people. That number is expected to increase to 639,000 by 2030. Along with that, Canada's fossil fuel sector is expected to see a 9% drop in employment. In raw numbers, the 208,700 new clean energy jobs far exceed the 125,800 losses in the fossil fuels industry.

## INVESTIGATION

QUESTIONS MAY BE SENT TO THE GRIFFINS' NEST EDITORIAL BOARD DIRECTLY AT EHNEWSPAPER@GMAIL.COM

# THE NEST INVESTIGATES:

## Online Learning with the VSB's **VLN** vancouver learning network

After reviewing dozens of documents, 85 written testimonies, social media posts, board meetings, student interviews, and data obtained through freedom of information, a months-long Nest investigation of the Vancouver Learning Network reveals a set of mixed student experiences that make for an educational journey of either smooth sailing or academic shipwreck — with little in between.

As thousands of secondary students turned to VLN throughout the pandemic, most who took a course other than Career Life Education 10, a graduation-required course popular to defer online, say the program misses the mark.

The majority of students enrolled in Math, Mandarin, French, Chemistry, English, and Life Sciences voiced disappointment.

Students agree that the district needs VLN, and said they are reliant on it to fulfill their education path. But for the non-CLE crowd, it isn't currently meeting their needs.

### A BRIEF OVERVIEW

Founded in 1990, the Vancouver Learning Network is the VSB's dedicated online school, offering Ministry-approved K-12 courses taught by district teachers. VLN's website says that they offer over 90 courses and fulfill a wide variety of education needs as an alternative to traditional in-person learning.

The Nest reviewed VLN's five-year enrollment and budget data, obtained through a freedom of information ("FOI") request filed on August 27. From the 2016/2017 school year to 2019/2020, enrollment hovered between 4400 and 4700 before soaring to nearly 7400 in 2020/2021.

The bulk of enrolment is concentrated in the upper secondary grades, with 7 in 8 VLN students in grades 10-12.

Budgetary information shows a similar trend, with total revenues between \$4.8 and \$5.1 million per year from 2016/2017 onward before climbing to \$9.3 million in 2020/2021. That year was largely supported by a \$7.7 million operating grant, an increase of 83 per cent from the previous year, as well as an additional \$950,000 Safe Return to Class Grant from the federal government.

Total expenditures amounted to \$5.4 million, leaving net revenue at \$3.9 million.

The Nest requested multiple other records, including third-party contracts, through freedom of information requests. However, they were inaccessible, as the VSB charged a fee of \$220, later reduced to \$100, for processing. The VSB refused to fully waive the fee under both public interest and affordability exemptions, citing a lack of evidence that The Nest would be unable to afford it, and that the records requested were not in the public interest.

Multiple follow-up FOIs were filed and are still pending as of publication date.

A 2020 statement from Canadian education technology company D2L, provider of the popular Brightspace learning platform, announced that VLN had selected them to "deliver online summer school courses to more than 3000 students" after the VSB chose to take the seasonal program virtual. D2L's contract was one of the third-party contracts requested through FOI that was inaccessible due to the fee.

While the VSB did not answer any questions on how the pandemic challenged the program, as with nearly every educational institution, COVID-19 likely presented VLN educators with an unprecedented mandate.

### THE ONLINE LEARNING MODEL

Like most online schools throughout the province, VLN uses a distributed learning model for its courses.

The distributed learning model is a technology-based, non-consolidated, and student-led method of teaching. Course material and any required resources are available online, usually on a centralized website.

This format can have many benefits, including flexibility and convenience for students, along with self-directed and self-paced lessons.

However, experts agree that distributed learning models have many flaws.

A 2017 paper analyzing distributed learning coordinated by Stephen Downes, an online learning expert and member of the National Research Council of Canada, said the agency given to students in this model was also one of the major reasons students failed to complete their courses.

The lack of a rigid structure and explicit directions from teachers might work for university-aged students, but may fail to take hold in a high school environment, where students do not have the same sense of independence and reliability.

Without the face to face interaction with peers and instructors, students have a much harder time understanding concepts and ideas, considering the lack of instant feedback from teachers, which can convey the nuances and complexities of certain topics. The face-to-face aspect of engaging students in a classroom is seen by many educators as an important element of teaching and learning.

### WHAT STUDENTS SAID

The Nest collected 85 written testimonies from VLN students. Many outlined that they took a VLN course to add flexibility to their in-person schedules. Some chose VLN to pursue personal interests.

Primarily for students who had taken CLE 10, VLN's platform worked well. Many wrote about their ease in the course, with one student sharing "I liked how the assignments were very organized and the instructions were easy to follow."

But for those enrolled in other courses, the majority voiced the opposite.

The discrepancy that was found within satisfaction rates is cause for concern. Students said certain courses had clear, well-presented content; while others had a confusing format and content that was difficult to comprehend.

Students complained that the number of errors in VLN's content made it challenging to follow. While several commented on the frequent use of incorrect spelling and grammar, others pointed out faults in the material itself. One student grew frustrated over a math problem, stating "the question could not be answered as there were no sufficient variables."

Multiple students confirmed that they had taken quizzes and tests that contained unsolvable questions or technical errors that impacted their grades.

One specific issue raised with content were inaccuracies and insensitivities in material related to the LGBTQ+ community in VLN's Social Justice 12 course. A student currently enrolled sent The Nest screenshots of Lesson 2.3, titled "How Homophobia Affects Straight People," followed by a list of 10 reasons. The student shared they are "considering dropping [Social Justice 12]" because they "found the content to be homophobic."

The Nest showed Lesson 2.3 to Hamber's Gender-Sexuality Alliance ('GSA'), which said the lesson as presented could mislead students' understanding of homophobia's pervasiveness, as well as their understanding of gender and sexuality.

According to the Ministry of Education's standards for online learning, "the learning object [must be] socially, culturally, and age-appropriate for the intended audience."

Assignments like this could point to a lack of review and quality control in course material.

Additionally, lessons rarely sufficiently prepare students for their midterm or final exams, which often comprise over half of their final grades. "The final exam was extremely difficult and I felt as if I hadn't learned most of what was on the test," said one student. Another voiced that "the content doesn't always coincide with the work and tests." Many students echoed these sentiments.

The most common issue was that teachers were difficult to contact. One student said that while they "[learned a lot] about First Nations Peoples, the lack of support and guidance, along with what felt like never-ending content, drove [them] into a bad mental state. Another student said that their VLN teachers "were unresponsive with emails," which "affected [their] mental health a lot."

This may be due to large class sizes in certain courses, as one student points out that "the teachers had so many kids to deal with."

Though not all students felt this way. "For almost every assignment I emailed my teacher for clarification, and he got back to me quite quickly. When I handed in my assignments, he also graded them extremely fast, something I have not experienced with teachers at school," a student taking Media Design 11 explained.

In general, the vast majority experienced difficulty in communication with teachers.

At times when VLN teachers were present, some students claimed that they were uncooperative. "My teacher made a mistake marking my test. While that in itself would be fine, he refused to correct it, arguing with me for several minutes," one student, who eventually met their teacher in-person, explained, "I...[told] him I would see the principal and a couple of minutes later the teacher sent me an email saying he would correct his work." The student was enrolled in Chemistry 11.

Another student complained that their English 12 teacher had "unfair marking" for which they "did not provide proper feedback or reasoning." Those who found themselves in similar situations felt discouraged when their teachers took "days or weeks to respond" or simply ignored their requests for clarification.

Most students — including those who said they typically thrive academically — admitted that it was challenging to succeed in VLN's learning environment. One confessed, "The VLN gave me little to no support throughout my time there. I am usually a successful student and I truly struggled. I felt as though they did not care [about] student success and I frequently felt discouraged...I did not leave my courses feeling educated or empowered." They took French 10 and Comparative Cultures 12.

In a virtual setting, many issues, such as unfair marking and content errors, that occur in traditional schools are made significantly worse by a lack of consistent access to a professional educator.

Students overwhelmingly said the level of student-teacher communication was largely inadequate,



## INVESTIGATION

INVESTIGATION CONDUCTED BY MEMBERS OF THE NEST EDITORIAL BOARD (12/15/2021)

and ultimately impacted their learning. But that isn't exactly news to the VSB, or VLN.

### CLEAR COMMITMENTS AND UNCLEAR RESULTS

Nearly six years ago, the VSB identified some of the same issues that VLN students are raising today.

Coming off the heels of years of sub-provincial average performance, district management was keen to improve success within the program.

A March 2016 report entitled "Proposed Changes to the Vancouver Learning Network" made specific comments about teacher-student communication, saying "it became apparent that centralized programs where teachers are at a distance and communication is minimal tend to yield lower completion rates than those that are embedded or blended into a neighbourhood secondary schools."

The report recommended that VLN "support a blended student-learning model where students have a greater opportunity to connect with teachers from a local neighbourhood school" and "increase the opportunity for face-to-face support."

It went on to say that "improving communication and extending relationships between students, teachers and parents may also be an outcome [of a reorganized VLN model]. Overall we would expect to see increased student connectivity, the opportunity to integrate students back into a regular school environment, the ability to engage students in a variety of ways and overall, an increase in [online learning] completion rates, thus an increase in student success."

The report made direct connections between the opportunity for face-to-face support, a form of increased communication, and student success. The school board approved its recommendations unanimously in April 2016.

Whether those recommendations went on to improve student-teacher communication compared to previous levels remains unclear.

The report concluded by mentioning "District staff are committed to bringing a report forward in June of 2017 which reviews the model, provides data on student success and other relevant information," but no such report could be found. An FOI was filed in November to obtain a copy, but is still pending as of December 14, 2021.

The Nest reached out to the District Parents Advisory Council ("DPAC") for what insight the body may have into the VLN student experience, and what issues they may have seen.

"We've heard from parents that the success rate is not as high as in-person schooling, but not only is [what we know] anecdotal, it lacks detail," said DPAC Chair Gord Lau. "With many parents looking to VLN as an option, they've discovered that VLN requires a high level of self-direction from students. Many parents and students are looking for an option that includes more teacher guidance than VLN."

The Nest sought VLN's success, or completion, rates, but obtaining that information quickly became problematic.

### COMPLETION RATES?

The Nest tried multiple times both through communications staff and FOI requests to access VLN course completion data, but despite finding partial statistics in various reports and documents, the VSB had inconsistent answers as to whether or not they held that information.

The same March 2016 report discussed "Historically, VLN completion rates fluctuate in the 50-60 percent range and are below the provincial average."

With 2014/2015 data confounded by labour disputes between the BC Teachers Federation and the province, the most informative completion rates came from years 2010/2011, 2011/2012, and 2012/2013, at 56.9%, 59.3%, and 60.0% respectively, all falling 10-15 per cent below the matched provincial average. However, that data alone is too old to fully represent VLN of the present.

The report went on to make multiple other mentions of increasing completion rate as a target of the proposal, specifically saying in its aforementioned conclusion that it was "designed to enhance opportunities and increase course completion rates for students."

It was made clear that completion data was relied upon as a key success indicator, so The Nest attempted to repeat the board's method and match current VLN rates with provincial data.

Upon an FOI request for completion rates from 2010/2011 to present, which technically included years The Nest had already viewed in the 2016 report, the VSB said they didn't have that data. An FOI analyst wrote that "course completion status is not available for discrete periods of time such as a school year or calendar year. The Vancouver School Board does not track course completion rates as a data set," despite records of that exact nature known to exist within board documents.

Further research found a presentation delivered to the VSB Student Learning & Well-Being Committee in February 2021 revealing that "57% of students who started courses in [the] 2019/2020 school year have completed their courses," adding that more completions were expected between then and June 2021. Upon review of footage from the corresponding board meeting, trustees and management spent little time discussing completions, with Associate Superintendent Jody Langlois saying that the continuous entry model makes completion a difficult dataset to track.

In an email, VSB Communications reiterated what the Associate Superintendent had said months earlier about the continuous learning model, and thus could not provide The Nest with such data.

After requesting all general "completion metrics" from the 2014/2015 school year onward, an FOI analyst said that since the 2016 report, "the process in collecting those statistics [have] not been carried forward or maintained," and that the rates were only collected for single-time use.

The February statistic, produced in response to questions in a November 2020 meeting, was the most recent available completion data, making it a year old, and insufficient, to use as VLN's current course completion rate.

The Ministry of Education supplied The Nest with provincial completion rate data for online learning in response to a freedom of information request. Records show that the provincial average for combined public and independent schools' online course completion rates for grades 10-12, VLN's core demographic, was 68.86 per cent in 2019-2020.

Based on information from past years, VSB and DPAC sources, board documents, and data from the Ministry, VLN's current course completion rate is best described as "low," being a number estimated between 55 and 70 per cent.

In a September 2021 Notice of Meeting, the VSB acknowledged in reference to general learning measurement, "completion rate is the most widely referenced measure of system performance."

Based on what has been found through research, the school board does not have what their own management describes as an essential performance indicator, one that they have relied on in the past, for their online learning program.

The current course completion rate remains unknown, as do the rates from all years past 2016.

(Note to Readers: At several points during The Nest's investigation, our emails and FOI requests were acted upon by VSB staff who were not the intended recipients. The VSB organized two agendaless meetings with the Nest, in one where the filing freedom of information requests was discouraged, and in a second, without The Nest's prior knowledge or consent, VSB management invited their own suggested sources to answer questions sent to communications. The Nest quickly ended the second meeting before any conflicts of interest could impede independent reporting.)

### REVIEWS ARE RELATIVE, BUT TELLING

Some students have taken to the open internet, specifically, Google Reviews, to voice their VLN struggles.

While famously amplifying both the good and bad, Google Reviews are relative. VLN's further confirm the sense of disproportionate dissatisfaction compared to traditional schools students told The Nest in their testimonies.

The Nest gathered Google Reviews data for every VSB secondary school, with all schools presenting a score between 3.6 and 4.4, and district a mean of 3.91 and median of 3.90 out of 5.

VLN comes in dead last at just 2.4, well below both group metrics.

Many negative 1 or 2 star reviews posted within the last year displayed high 'thumbs-up' reaction counts, with as many as 12 users liking a review that bluntly stated "Student needs are not met. Material is poorly presented online."

On a platform like Google Reviews, where interaction from users is low, it is significant that 12 users reacted to such a message, suggesting that many more students feel the same way.

Other self-identified students wrote of the same issues found earlier: teacher-student communication delays, unfair assignments and assessments, technical errors in quizzes and resources, and large variances in study material versus tests. A sizable number of reviews go into lengthy, multi-paragraph detail that includes specific examples from the courses they were enrolled in.

Many users wrote their reason for enrollment was their parents' decision to keep them online for the duration of the pandemic.

Even when accounting for the amplification factor on review platforms, VLN's Google Reviews are telling. No other VSB secondary school had a score close to 2.4.

VLN staff appear to have previously monitored Google Reviews. Multiple replies using the sign-off "VLN" have been found in response to both positive and negative reviews, often asking for elaboration in effort to improve educational experience. It is unclear whether the VLN continues this practice.

### CHANGES ARE COMING TO ONLINE LEARNING, BUT WE DON'T KNOW WHAT THEY MEAN FOR VLN

As part of a series of large province-wide changes to the online learning model, the online learning system will undergo changes in the 2022 and 2023 years. The new model, according to the government, emphasizes an increase in certified online learning schools and "a quality assurance process that will help online schools follow and share best practices." The plan promises equal access, flexibility, quality of teaching, and support for educators.

Along with replacing all mentions of "distributed learning" to "online learning", students may only register for online learning programs in their district. To cross-register, they must attend a certified Provincial Online Learning School (POLS). As of now, it is unclear how many schools will be certified, which could severely limit access to specialized online learning programs by the students who need them most.

Multiple VLN students said that after their experience, they took their subsequent online learning needs to other programs within British Columbia, including Navigate Nides in Comox and EBUS Academy in Vanderhoof. All students who said they enrolled with these schools voiced their praise of the quality of instruction compared to VLN.

With the province's plan still in its early stages, it remains to be seen whether the specifics of this plan will resolve the problems VLN students face.

### LESSONS (RE)LEARNED

The last known comprehensive review of the Vancouver Learning Network occurred nearly six years ago, and the same issues identified then are still hindering online secondary education.

The pandemic has provided the VSB a valuable opportunity to reexamine the program's efficacy and work towards improvements. With potentially thousands of students receiving an education that doesn't meet their standards, it's clear that VLN needs a quality boost.

As of publication, half of VLN secondary students who spoke to The Nest say they would not recommend the program to their peers.

*Neither the VLN Principal nor Vice-Principal could be independently reached for comment. The Vancouver School Board declined to comment on the findings of the investigation.*

*The Griffins' Nest Editorial Board would like to thank the civil liberties lawyers who helped ensure the publication of this investigation, and thank the X-University (formerly Ryerson) Center for Free Expression, BC Civil Liberties Association, and BC Freedom of Information and Privacy Association for their support of student journalism.*



## CANADA

# Butt Dials, Board Schisms, and the BC Supreme Court: Rogers

**NEWS REPORT** by Stephen Kosar (11)

At Rogers Communications, Canada's largest telecom company, a rift has split the board of directors apart along with the Rogers family, creating turmoil in the midst of a \$26 billion acquisition of Shaw Communications.

The conflict emerged when Edward S. Rogers III, the son of Ted Rogers, founder of the company, attempted to oust CEO Joe Natale, and replace him with Chief Financial Officer Tony Staffieri.

The plot was unearthed when Natale was accidentally butt-dialed by Staffieri during a meeting on September 17, discussing the plan to remove Natale among other executives, as backed by Edward Rogers.

After informing a company director of the scheme, an emergency weekend board meeting was called, in which most board members reaffirmed Joe Natale as CEO. As a result, Mr. Staffieri left the company on the 29th of September.

However, on November 16, Natale was ousted as CEO by Edward Rogers, chair of the board. Staffieri was brought back into the company as interim CEO.

On October 21, Edward Rogers was removed as chairman, with his two sisters and mother voting for his removal. One of his sisters, Martha Rogers tweeted "Ed, what were you thinking?" She accused her brother of never telling the truth and preying on their mother, equating it as elder abuse.

Hours later, Mr. Rogers filed a shareholder's petition which unseated five board members and replaced them with his own hand-picked candidates. As the chair of the Rogers Family Trust, which owns a large portion of Rogers' class A shares, Edward Rogers controls 97 per cent of voting shares in the company, allowing him to make certain changes in the company's structure.

The Rogers board declared Mr. Roger's version of the board invalid. Regardless, the new board reappointed Edward Rogers as chair, prompting condemnation from his mother and sisters.

Mr. Rogers' version of the board was affirmed in a BC Supreme Court case, with the presiding judge calling the family drama "Shakespearean."

With Edward Rogers back in control, the turmoil at Rogers has quieted, but the Rogers' family will likely be divided for some time.

The feud comes at a delicate time for the company. With Mr. Rogers back in control, the big issue on the table is the Rogers-Shaw acquisition deal.

Rogers has been planning to acquire Shaw Communications since March 15 2021, in a move which consolidates Canada's already strained telecommunications market. With 90 per cent of Canada's internet and telephone service being controlled by just four companies, shrinking it to three will make this deal heavily scrutinized by Canadian regulators.

The telecom competitor Telus has said that this merger will "greatly reduce" competition and lower consumer choice. Amongst the power struggle at Rogers, Telus has asked regulators to not permit the deal to take place.

# REVISITING THE DEFINITION OF SEXUAL ASSAULT

**ANALYSIS** by Simone Hamilton (11)

Removing a condom, or not wearing one, without your partner's consent and knowledge or 'stealth', became illegal in the state of California on October 7, 2021. In Canada, the Supreme Court is hearing a case that could set that same precedent.

Currently, in order to convict sexual assault in a case of 'stealth', one must prove fraud, which under the Criminal Code then unifies consent. However, within this context fraud is difficult to prove in court, because 'fraud' in this case could be as simple as a lie. The possible new alternative is to legally separate consent to sex with a condom and consent to sex without a condom, terminating the difficult extra step of proving fraud.

On November 3, 2021 the Supreme Court of Canada heard the case *Ross McKenzie Kirkpatrick v Her Majesty the Queen* (British Columbia). Mr. Kirkpatrick is being charged with sexual assault. The complainant (alleged victim of the crime) claimed she insisted on him wearing a condom during intercourse. On their first encounter he complied, however in a second encounter, Mr. Kirkpatrick did not wear a condom, which was unknown to the complainant until after the act.

According to the case summary from the Supreme Court, the case was originally acquitted by a no evidence motion, the trial judge referencing section 273.1(1) of the Criminal Code

where it states "[consent means] the voluntary agreement of the complainant to engage in the sexual activity in question." As well as section 265(3) where "no consent is obtained where the complainant submits or does not resist by reason ... (c) fraud." The trial judge found no evidence of the complainant not giving consent to the sexual activity and no evidence of fraud by the appellant, Mr. Kirkpatrick.

The Criminal Code describes fraud in section 380(1) as, "Everyone who, by deceit, falsehood or other fraudulent means, whether or not it is a false pretence within the meaning of this Act, defrauds the public or any person, whether ascertained or not, of any property, money or valuable security or any service." Fraudulent behaviour in the context of sexual assault can be lying or giving false pretenses in order to obtain consent, which would then be nullified because of section 265(3), according to legal scholars.

However, the Crown appealed to the BC Court of Appeal and it was unanimously allowed. The Justices used *R. v Hutchinson*, 2014, a previous Supreme Court of Canada ruling to interpret the themes of fraud and consent. In *R. v Hutchinson*, the complainant agreed to the sexual activity, but insisted on using a condom as a contraceptive. Unbeknownst to the complainant, the appellant poked holes in the condom and this resulted in pregnancy. Hutchinson was charged

with aggravated sexual assault, solidified by his appeal to the Supreme Court being rejected.

Although a unanimous ruling, the Justices had differing thoughts on how to interpret *R. v Hutchinson* in regards to the Kirkpatrick case.

Groberman J.A and Saunders J.A concurred that the Hutchinson case majority had made a lawful differentiation between consent to sex with a condom and consent to sex without a condom. Therefore the complainant in this case had not consented to the sexual act under section 273.1.

Bennett J.A opposed, suggesting that *R. v Hutchinson* proved that condom use was to be considered under section 265(3), whether consent was impaired by fraud. Justice Bennett agreeing with the trial judge in that there was not evidence to suggest the complainant did not consent to the sexual activity. However, Bennett J.A did rule that the consent was then vitiated by fraud, because the appellant did not disclose he was not wearing a condom, therefore being dishonest, which caused deprivation of the complainant. Saunders J.A disagreed in this sense.

Justice Groberman opposed the trial judge's no evidence motion of fraud, concluding that there was in fact evidence of the appellant's fraudulent behaviour.

The Supreme Court trial has not been archived yet and the judgement is reserved for now.

# Trudeau Was Relected. Now What is Next?

**NEWS REPORT** by Suhani Dosanjh (8)

Back in September, Justin Trudeau's Liberal government was elected once again as a minority government. Since then, much has happened in Trudeau's third term.

During the 36 day campaign, the Liberal Party made dozens of promises that they vowed to keep if they were re-elected.

One of their major proposals regarding the pandemic would be their promise to put vaccine mandates in place for interprovincial travel on planes, trains, and in the federal public service. This proposal has been put into action by the Liberal government.

They also promised to reduce Canada's carbon emissions by 40-45% below 2005 levels by 2030.

They also stated that they were going to bring \$10 a day childcare to middle class families in the next four to five years working with the provinces. This promise seems to be going to schedule, as the government has already signed agreements with eight provinces and territories that have covered the childcare of almost half of the children in Canada under the age of six.

To combat Canada's housing crisis, the party has pledged that they will build, preserve, or repair 1.4 million homes in the next four years. The government has promised they will work towards this goal by directing funds to cities to entice them into increasing their yearly housing builds.

They also claimed that they will double the resources given to the National Housing Co-investment fund, which offers forgivable or low-interest loans to build new developments or affordable housing units. Additionally they claimed that they are going to double the budget for converting empty office and retail space into housing, including federal and commercial buildings. Currently, not much information has been released relating to whether or not this is being done.

They also vowed to build reconciliation between themselves and the Indigenous Peoples of Canada, to quote a line taken the liberals have stated on their official website, they will, "(take) action to confront systemic racism against Indigenous Peoples, especially in the justice system and health care" and "protect the wellbeing of Indigenous children and families.

It is important to note that there are a great deal of promises that are not covered in this article.

Moreover, in an interview with Ken Hardie, a Liberal MP for Fleetwood-Port Kells, he revealed a few things about the current happenings inside of Ottawa. To him, it is seen as "very transformational (since) cutting daycare costs in half now and down to \$10 per day within four or five years will allow more single parents (particularly women) to go back to work, contributing to a better situation for their families and improving the national economy."

On the other hand, Ken Hardie, also pointed out some negative things that he believes have occurred due to the party taking a minority government in Canada as he said, "Many have argued that our party's move to put vaccine mandates in place has offended personal rights and has divided the country. Another (negative effect) would be the growing divide between urban/suburban Canadians and those who live in rural areas."

Since their election in September, the Liberals have introduced three new bills into parliament: Bill C-4, which bans conversion therapy, Bill C-2, which adjusts pandemic supports, and Bill C-3, which would make intimidating or obstructing health-care workers or patients seeking health care illegal.

On September 30, Trudeau went on a vacation to Tofino on the first National Day for Truth and Reconciliation. Even though it had been made clear that the statutory holiday Trudeau's government set up was meant to be a day to reconcile with Indigenous Peoples, Trudeau elected to surf with his family. Many Indigenous leaders criticized this, especially in the wake of the 215 Indigenous children's remains found outside an old Kamloops residential school building in May.

With that controversy in place, an apology for the sexual misconduct in the Canadian Armed Forces was officially set for December 13 after two

years of delay. This apology was promised under the settlement terms of the class-action lawsuit that seven victims filed against the federal government in 2016.

There are also currently negotiations being held over whether or not each First Nations person will receive \$40,000 in compensation over the child welfare system that many went through and was widely seen as incredibly damaging for their mental and physical health. If no agreement is made between the two parties, the government has decided to keep appealing the court order to give out compensation.

Justin Trudeau's Throne Speech on November 23rd, 2021 outlined the Liberal's plan of action going forward. The speech summarized their general agenda, as they plan "to finish the fight against COVID-19, take strong climate action, make life more affordable, walk the shared path of reconciliation, put home ownership back in reach, create jobs, and grow the middle class."

The opposition parties mostly disagreed with the specifics of the speech and the Liberal's plans, which was made clear in their responses to the speech on November 23rd, 2021.

Erin O' Toole, the Official Opposition leader said that, "Mr. Trudeau says that we are all in this together, but Canada has never been more divided."

The NDP leader Jagmeet Singh responded to the speech, and said that it showed "a government that has run out of ideas and run out of steam,"

Unlike the other two party leaders, Leader Yves-Francois Blanchet hinted that his party, Bloc Quebecois, would still support the throne speech, even after stating that it was, "24 pages worth of empty words," and that, "it could have been written by a college student."

The opposition parties were also critical of his slow restart of parliament. According to the CBC, Justin Trudeau had yet to set up a full parliament, with no parliamentary committees assembled, and with no parliamentary secretaries decided, (the members of parliament that are part of the committees that are picked by the Prime Minister).

However, on December 3rd, Justin Trudeau finally chose his new team of Parliamentary secretaries, almost three months after the election. Even after, Parliamentary Committee members have still not been named.

# CANOLA OIL SHORTAGE

**NEWS REPORT** by Salena Sharma (8)

The price for canola oil is increasing and alternatives are now being broadly used with some families unable to afford the high-priced commodity.

Prices for canola encountered record highs as Western Canada experienced a massive heatwave. The conditions ruined the yield of the crop in early August, skyrocketing the price of canola by 41 per cent.

A report from the Western Producer suggested that most crops disintegrated because of the little rain they received, making anything that survived more precious. Some farmers told the media that most of the crops were being eaten down by pests such as grasshoppers and mice.

Canada accounts for 74 per cent of the world's canola exporting trades and produces 20 per cent of canola products. In the canola industry, there are 207,000 people employed, with \$12 billion spent on wages in the business according to the Canola Council.

Statistics Canada showed that 876,127 tons of canola were crushed this October, down by about 55,000 tons from the same month the previous year. However, it was over 100,000 tons from September. In the 2021/22 crop year, the total canola crush is 2.316 million tons through the first three months. This number is only down by nine percent from the 2.547 million tons crushed during the same time the former time. However, even with further canola being crushed, the prices for canola oil remain the same.

Canola seed and oil produced in Canada are entrusted to 50 markets around the world. China, Japan, Mexico, and the United States are generally Canada's largest import markets. This time, however, China is buying only limited volumes of Canadian canola due to low inventories and unaffordable prices. According to a China-grounded trader, China is buying most of its canola oil from Russia and Ukraine. Alongside that, Canada's canola exporter guests are now relying heavily on lower producing countries on alternative vegetable oils similar to palm and soybean oil adding to global buildup.

Grocery stores such as Superstore have increased the price of canola oil. Before October, the price for canola oil used to be around \$5.99; prices are now \$8.99.

The entire Canadian canola exports in 2021-22 are currently forecast at only 5.5 million tons by the government agency. A report in 2020-21 presented 10.534 million canola crops were exported that year. In 2021-22, the canola exports were down by half of the exports from the former time.

Canola composition in Saskatchewan is anticipated to contract 47.2 per cent to 5.8 million tons; Alberta is anticipated to contract 17.1 percent to 4.3 million tons; and in Manitoba, yield is anticipated to fall 21.3 percent to a normal of 32.6 bushels per acre.

The total ending crop in 2020-21 is 1.767 million tons which is much higher than the stocks in 2021-22 which was 500,000. This is the tightest shipment in 13 years.

Starting on August 1 the first seven weeks of the new canola crop began. During those weeks, Canada exported 388,000 tons of canola - a 71% drop from the former time.

The foodservice industry has also been affected by increased oil costs at the same time restaurants are facing a labor deficit. Some restaurants are using vegetable oils to fry some of their food.

During this time, there are numerous ways to save money when not purchasing canola oil. Choosing oil with a longer-lasting period, especially in frying applications like chicken nuggets or french fries, is one way to save money. Another way to save money is to turn to indispensable options such as vegetable oils.



## INTERNATIONAL

## COP26 Summit

**NEWS REPORT** by  
Parker Haga (12)

On October 31, 2021 the United Kingdom hosted the 26th Conference of the Parties (COP26). With a goal to accelerate climate action and finalize the Paris Rulebook, world leaders, climate experts, and activists attended the summit. Together, they focused on four main points: mitigation, adaptation, finance, and collaboration.

The first goal, mitigation, revolves around reaching a global target of net-zero. At the conference, over 153 countries placed emissions reduction targets for 2030 that align with the overarching goal of meeting a net-zero by 2050. According to scientists, the temperature must be prevented from rising above 1.5°C in order to prevent a "climate catastrophe." Possible ways countries can reduce their emissions include, but are not limited to: investing in renewables, reducing deforestation, and accelerating the rate of transition to electric cars. Canada announced that by 2030, its goal is to reduce emissions by 40-45 per cent below the 2005 levels. To keep the country accountable a new legislation called the Canadian Net-Zero Emissions Accountability Act was created.

The second goal, adaptation, focuses on community adaptation to protect communities and natural habitats at risk of the increasing impacts of climate change. Countries are being encouraged to build infrastructure that will protect habitats to avoid the loss of homes and lives. As well, countries are encouraged to create an 'Adaptation Communication', which is a report on what efforts and measures are being put into adapting the country to the impacts of climate change. Moreover, the UK co-developed the Adaptation Action Coalition which Canada joined in 2021.

The third goal, finance, is centered around holding developed nations accountable for the Paris Agreement pledge where a joint 100 billion dollars will be mobilised towards climate action each year. This capital is important in order to build the infrastructure required for the world to move towards its targeted goals of net-zero by 2050 and to protect communities and natural habitats, especially those in underdeveloped nations.

The final goal, collaboration, is important to increase worldwide cooperation to deliver. To meet the goals agreed upon, all voices must be heard. Collaboration between governments, civil societies, and businesses will be crucial to tackle the climate crisis. At the conference, the delegates focused on finalising the 'Paris Rulebook' which outlined a solution to move towards net-zero and resolve the issue of transparency and accountability when working towards these commitments. Canada has supported the efforts of climate action by joining the Adaptation Action Coalition in 2021, hosting the G7 Ministerial Meeting on Climate Change in 2018, and becoming the first Government to serve as a full member of the Ocean Risk and Resilience Action Alliance (ORRAA) in 2019 among various other contributions.

Despite the pledges and initiative countries are making, many activists remain doubtful that COP26's goals will be fulfilled, primarily the goal focused on mobilising \$100 billion. In 2019 the OECD estimated that \$79.6 billion was financed, which was under the goal. Similarly, the finances have fallen short of the targeted amount each year since 2013. As well, many people have stated that the definition of what is considered climate finances is not defined enough, which makes it difficult to determine how much developed countries have mobilised.

As COP26 has come to an end and the delegates have returned home, being accountable for the pledges made will be key to the success of COP26. The leaders will meet next during COP27 which will take place in Egypt in 2022.

## FACEBOOK INC. RENAMES ITSELF META AFTER SCANDAL

**NEWS REPORT** by Spencer Izen (12)

After years of heavy criticism and what experts say may have been the tech giant's biggest scandal yet, Facebook began a rebranding process to earn back consumer trust, starting with its name.

The tech giant changed its name to Meta amid international outcry following the leak of "The Facebook Papers", a collection of previously undisclosed internal documents, by former Facebook product manager Frances Haugen.

The Facebook Papers revealed that the company knew in many cases usage of its platform had damaging consequences for consumers and society, including amplifying mis/disinformation and the promotion of harmful body image ideals for specifically teenage girls.

Critics worldwide took the papers as confirmation of the company's profit-before-people practices and unethical activity.

Haugen leaked thousands of

documents to 17 news organizations in the United States, as well as a separate coalition of European outlets later gaining access and producing their own analyses. This was a unique collaborative investigation, as news media on both sides of the Atlantic coordinated their publication time to be 7:00 AM EDT on Monday, Oct. 25.

"Facebook Inc. knows, in acute detail, that its platforms are riddled with flaws that cause harm, often in ways only the company fully understands," wrote the Wall Street Journal, introducing their extensive investigation entitled "the facebook files". The documents offer perhaps the clearest picture thus far of how broadly Facebook's problems are known inside the company, up to the chief executive himself.

The documents showed that Facebook's senior management, including CEO Mark Zuckerberg, knew with evidentiary proof of a constellation of harms their platform was causing

globally. Authoritarian crackdowns in Vietnam. Violent anti-Muslim rhetoric in India. Mis/disinformation in the 2020 American presidential election. Facebook and its executive staff knew how the platform was weaponized, but instead of doing something to curb these dangers, they went along with it.

The papers also revealed the personal implications of using the platform. Facebook's researchers found that 1 in 8 users exhibited use behaviours that impacted their careers, sleep, and social and family life. The company said they give users the ability to take control of this with built-in mechanisms to monitor their use.

"I used to work at Facebook and joined because I think Facebook has the potential to bring out the best in us. But I am here today because I believe that Facebook's products harm children, stoke division, weaken our democracy and much more." Haugen told members of Congress in her October 4 testimony to the US Senate

Sub-Committee on Consumer Protection, Product Safety, and Data Security.

"The company's leadership knows ways to make Facebook and Instagram safer and won't make the necessary changes because they have put their immense profits before people." Haugen continued, going to call for congressional action to reign the company in, and defend her coming forward as an effort to help, not harm, her former employer.

"When we realized tobacco companies were hiding the harms it caused, the government took action. When we figured out cars were safer with seat belts, the government took action. And today, the government is taking action against companies that hid evidence on opioids. I implore you to do the same here."

After weeks of heavy public outcry, the company followed in the footsteps of many corporations facing PR disasters and rebranded itself "Meta Platforms", doing business as Meta.



## Italy Rejects LGBTQ+ Protection Law

**NEWS REPORT** by  
Carlo Chiarentin (12)

Three years after its first presentation to the Italian Chamber of Deputies, Italy's Senate voted against the ddl Zan, a law intended to protect LGBTQ+ minorities, on October 27, 2021.

The ddl ("disegno di legge" translated from Italian as "bill" or "draft/proposed law") Zan, named after the Democratic Party's deputy Alessandro Zan who presented it back in 2018, was an amendment to Italy's hate crime law that would add gender, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity and disability protections. The law also introduced a national day against homophobia and transphobia (collectively known as homotransphobia in Italy), coinciding with the International Day Against Homophobia and Transphobia on May 17, and the allocation of €4 million (CAD \$5.75 million) for non-profits that organize educational activities and events.

The ddl Zan was presented around October 2019 and July 2020, then discussed in the Chamber of Deputies, modified and approved on November 4, 2020 with 295 votes in favour from the Democratic Party, Five Stars Movement, Italy Alive, Free and Equal and many independent MPs, but 193 votes against from the right wing coalition of the League, Brothers of Italy, and Italy Forward. It was later presented to the Senate's justice commission (led by a senator from the League) and marked as a non-priority.

The most peculiar episode in the ddl's development occurred on June 17, 2021. The Vatican intervened with a formal diplomatic complaint written by the Vatican's Minister of Foreign Affairs, expressing the Catholic Church's concerns towards the enactment of the ddl Zan. The Church cited the Lateran Treaty, an agreement between the Church and the Italian state, which was first signed in 1929 by Pope Pius XI and Italy's PM Benito Mussolini.

The treaty was then revised in 1985, where it is stated that the Church has the freedoms of thought, press, speech, assembly, and protest in Italy. The Church said the ddl Zan was a threat to these freedoms but represented, according to critics, the first case of direct intervention of another state in Italian internal policy.

After this episode, more discussions moved to the Senate, where the vote was delayed two times. On October 27, the rightmost parties, League and Brothers of Italy, asked for a secret vote.

Secret votes are generally called when a party believes that an opposing party's deputies may vote against their party if votes are cast anonymously.

The right wing was hoping to allow religious, socially conservative Catholic lawmakers within the Democratic Party and Italy Alive to vote against their party platforms. The Senate then rejected the law with 154 votes against and 131 in favour.

Proponents of the law argued about the need to recognize homophobia as a problem, to educate the present and more importantly the next generations, and to quantify the number of attacks and aggressions on LGBTQ+ people. The arguments against the approval of the law criticized its perceived uselessness, since violence in general is already criminalized and critics saw no need to categorize it as homotransphobic. Critics said protecting LGBTQ+ minorities imply that they are superior to others, and that the law is against the freedom of speech and is part of LGBTQ+ propaganda. Left-wing critics accused the Democratic Party of promoting a barely sufficient law in order to gain consensus.

Since homophobia-motivated crimes do not currently exist, there are no official statistics of the crimes. There are many lists of aggressions made by different associations that are partial and often not in agreement with each other, but they average about 120 incidents per year.

Homophobia is significantly more prevalent in Italy than in Canada. A survey made by Istat (Italy's National Institute of Statistics) reports some data on this. The survey showed, 59.1 per cent of the population agree with the possibility for a man to be in a homosexual relationship, 59.5 per cent for a woman, 43.9 per cent agree with the possibility for a homosexual couple to marry, but just 20 per cent agrees with their right to adoption, 41.4 per cent doesn't agree with the possibility of an LGBTQ+ person being a elementary school teacher, 28.1 per cent to be a doctor and 24.8 per cent to be a politician, only 20 per cent of those in the LGBTQ+ community came out to their parents, 24 per cent felt discriminated at school and 22.1 per cent on the workplace.

## THE COST OF AMAZON ON THE ENVIRONMENT

**NEWS REPORT** by Alice  
Deyell (8)

The e-commerce platform, Amazon, had an explosion in business these past few years, causing tremendous growth, but consequently affecting the environment.

Experts say the company's low prices, fast shipping, and easy purchasing methods encourage consumption. Amazon must actively restock their inventory to keep up with this demand. Making these products takes a large amount of mining and processing, which disturbs ecosystems. To get rid of products once they are eventually thrown out, massive landfills and incinerators are needed.

This cycle of making, consuming and tossing products is called consumer culture. However, companies are not going to simply stop using this business model as it would lower their profits.

Amazon harms the environment substantially when it ships out products. This impact has been amplified by the pandemic, which has caused people to resort to online shopping. Driving, flying and shipping products to various locations uses a lot of gas, and thus pollutes the earth. Transportation of any kind of merchandise relies fundamentally on oil, and Amazon is the monarch of shipping – they will ship anything anywhere fast. Consumers take advantage of this feature, which is why Amazon is so popular, but they may not consider its environmental consequences.

Amazon had emitted 44.4 million metric tons of carbon dioxide in 2018, which is more than the entire country of Switzerland did in that same year. In 2019 it increased to 51.17 million metric tons – more than Hungary emitted that year. Finally, in 2020, Amazon emitted 60.64 million metric tons, which is more than Austria.

The company dedicated USD \$10 billion in 2020 to fighting climate change. Jeff Bezos, the founder and executive chairman of Amazon, has earned more than this dollar amount in the past two years. His fortune has increased by \$75.6 billion.

Amazon is also hurting the planet with their energy sources for their computing and internet business. Amazon Web Services, which include the Amazon website, Prime streaming, and more, brings in half of the company's income. It is said to be the world's most comprehensive and broadly adopted cloud platform, offering over 200 fully-featured services from data

centers globally. It competes with tech giants such as Microsoft and Google for this position, which showcases its true enormity. The more people that use these services, the more equipment Amazon needs to keep them running. The problem is that Amazon doesn't use clean energy for its operations.

Amazon has said on its website that it is working to lower its effect on the planet through its Climate Pledge. The Amazon Climate Pledge states that it wants to achieve net-zero carbon emissions by 2040. Other goals on the pledge include having 100 per cent renewable energy by 2025, 50 per cent of shipping at net-zero carbon by 2030, and 100,000 electric vehicles by 2030. To start this off, Amazon contributed \$2 billion to developing decarbonization technology and donated an additional \$100 million to assist in reforestation and climate mitigation.

Amazon is trying to be a pioneer in this by spreading the pledge to many countries and companies. So far, they have over 100 signatories, from across 25 industries and 16 from countries.

During COVID, Amazon has worked on this pledge and made significant progress in reducing carbon intensity. So far, they have reached 65 percent renewable energy, which is up 23 percent from 2019. Their absolute carbon emissions increased by 19 percent in 2020 from their boom in popularity, while their overall carbon intensity went down 16 per cent.

Amazon's sustainability scientists help the company work on its pledges and figure out how to continue reducing its negative environmental impact. They have spent years developing models, metrics and tools to measure the carbon footprint. They have made several discoveries, one of which being that shopping online generates less carbon than driving to a store.

They have five models that work together to view their full carbon footprint: finance, transport, electricity, packaging and devices. Finance prioritizes where to invest, transport measures emissions from shipping, electricity checks the energy used in offices, packaging looks into materials and processes, and devices is viewing device manufacturing.

Amazon is on a good track to improve its carbon footprint, but they have already contributed heavily to our planet's environmental problems that are far from being fixed.



## INTERNATIONAL

# ASTROWORLD: WHAT WENT WRONG?

**NEWS REPORT** by *Katie Hoo (10)*

Travis Scott's third annual Astroworld Festival at NRG Park in Houston, Texas, turned tragic on November 5. The condensed crowds left 10 audience members from 9 to 27 years-old dead and dozens injured.

The concert environment had many concerns prior to the show itself. According to a security-plan document obtained by The New York Times, the layout of the performance site did not meet the needs to control potential evacuation, prevent incidents relating to alcohol and drugs, and prevent mass casualties in threatening situations.

As the entrance gates opened, excited fans charged past security checkpoints. Local news teams caught this all on film, capturing concert-goers' distress as they watched others climb over those who had toppled by the entry.

Many other problems occurred during the show, such as "crowd crush". "Crowd crush" occurs when a large group of people push each other towards a certain direction, which was the case when audience members at Astroworld rushed in the direction of Scott's stage. People experienced pressure against them as fans tried to move closer to the stage. The intensity of this increased as the show's count-down progressed. Some struggled to breathe as they were pushed from all sides with nowhere to escape, and a panic arose. Unconscious bodies were crowd surfed towards security or made notice of when found, whereas others got lost in the waves of people.

Compacted conditions, a dense audience of about 50,000 people, exceeding the venue's intended limits, and barriers keeping everyone within the concert grounds led to the tragedies that transpired.

YouTuber Jacoury Goode shared his experience at the festival in a video, stating "once one person fell, it was like a domino effect. Everyone [started] falling." He described the crowd as a stampede as people fought against being trampled and jumped over.

Lack of medical staff, equipment, and security control added to the stress of the situation. In an interview with FOX 26 Houston, ICU nurse Denise Middleton discussed how she assisted the medics after she had fainted twice and was lifted away by the crowd. She explained to the news outlet that some of the medics had

little-to-no experience with situations similar to the one that had unfolded at the concert. Middleton recalled instructing many staff and providing medical care as unconscious bodies were transferred to their area. "There were other civilians trying to help do CPR who didn't know how," she described, "Travis acknowledged that something was happening in the crowd. He acknowledged that there was an ambulance. He acknowledged that someone had passed out and then just continued the concert."

Audience members have shared their stories of disappointment and frustration in how the concert turnout was handled. Many people who had been in the crowds called out to security, cameramen, and Travis Scott to alert them of the crisis, and chanted to stop the show. Two individuals were filmed trying to alert a camera operator at different points of time. Both attempts to stop the show were waved off and the performance continued.

Travis Scott had paused twice during the show: once when noticing an ambulance in the audience and again during a song to notify security of an unconscious person. However, he continued and the show was cut by about 20 minutes.

On Instagram, Scott shared a video sending his condolences to the victims' families, and explaining how he would have stopped the show if he knew about the dangers in the crowd.

There have been mixed reactions to his response. Some believe that it was insincere and forced, due to his lack of personal accountability and because he had not apologized for the incidents that occurred. In the past, Scott encouraged wild and unsafe behavior at his concerts, causing a number of fans to believe that his decision to continue the show was irresponsible. Other fans expressed how Scott may not have known about the casualties while performing.

Any legal actions currently have not been made public. As of November 11, according to the LA Times, the Houston Police Department ("HPD") is in the process of conducting a criminal investigation. HPD Chief Troy Finner, has arrangements with the FBI to discuss the possibilities this is a case of manslaughter. Although the public suspects Scott may face charges, as of December 14 this is simply speculation.

occurred at the same time as the last harvest before winter. Indian businesses continue to consider Diwali as the first day of the fiscal new year.

With the five days of Diwali, there are different celebrations that occur each day.

The days are: Dhanteras, Choti Diwali, Diwali, Padwa, and Bhai Duj. On Dhanteras, people clean their homes and buy a gold or stainless steel item. On Choti Diwali, people decorate their house, often with string lights and decorate their floor with intricate rangoli designs made from coloured rice, flower petals, powder, or sand.

Diwali, the third day, is the most celebrated. On November 4 this year, clay lamps also known as diyas were filled with mustard oil with cotton inside to be lit, and the worshiping of idols was performed. Many go to temples for worship, though it is also done at home. Flowers, fruits, and sweets are also offered to the Goddess. In India, sweets are made at home and bazaars are full of sweets, weeks in advance, and people buy new clothes. In addition, families get together.

Padwa is the celebration of the love between spouses, and Bhai Duj is dedicated to the bond of brothers and sisters.

## Why are Meat Alternatives Gaining Popularity?

**NEWS REPORT** by *Cara Rudolph (8)*

Meat alternatives have rapidly gained popularity over the past few years. The sales of the foremost company in the industry, Beyond Meat, have grown 25 times since 2016.

Business magnates including Bill Gates have invested in Beyond Meat and other vegan producers, such as Impossible Meat. This has helped the companies to gain recognition and attract more customers, as well as fund their expansion.

Research suggests that producing plant-based meat substitutes is better for the environment than growing livestock. Almost half of the world's habitable land is used for livestock agriculture, including grazing area and area for growing feed for livestock. Growing plants for meat alternatives uses much less land than growing actual meat.

Additionally, growing plants requires less water. According to the Good Food Institute, a US-based alternative protein advocacy and

research group, plant-based meat substitutes use 72 to 99 per cent less water than traditional meat.

Meat alternatives have also been found to release less greenhouse gases. Livestock release methane that contributes to global warming, while producing meat substitutes emits almost no methane, and smaller amounts of greenhouse gases.

According to the United States Department of Agriculture, there are more health benefits to plant-based meat substitutes. The department found that while ground beef has 6 grams of saturated fat per 100 grams, Beyond Meat's recipe has 4.4 grams of saturated fat for the same portion.

These alternatives also reduce the risk of foodborne illnesses such as salmonella, which can come from uncooked poultry. Since the meat is made of plants, it can be eaten raw, though it is not advised.

Meat alternatives do have a much higher salt content compared to traditional meats. However, the colour and texture are appealing to consumers.

Meat substitutes may have a lesser impact on the environment and may be a healthier choice, while still tasting, smelling, and even cooking the same way meat does. This makes it easy to switch to eating plant-based meat.

Other meat alternatives such as tofu and chickpeas have been around for a long time, but getting the flavour and appearance of meat without consuming it has a certain allure.

## ASIAN MEDIA AND WESTERN CULTURE

**ANALYSIS** by *Derek Chau (9)*

With the current influence of Asian media in Western culture, it is hard to imagine a life without anime, K-pop, Wuxia media, and K-dramas.

Contrast this to 84 years ago in Hollywood. The 1937 romance film "The Good Earth" was released starring German actress Luise Rainer and Austro-Hungarian actor Paul Muni. This was an adaptation of a popular novel with the same title by Pearl S. Buck. Both the novel and the film dramatize the life of a poor, working Chinese man with his wife.

Although the film was based on the life of a Chinese person, two white actors were cast as "O-Lan" and "Wang Lung," the main characters, despite an actual Chinese actress who wanted the lead role of "O-Lan". That Chinese actress was Anna May Wong, and she was not unknown at the time. She starred in prior cinematic hits such as *Toll of the Sea* (1922), *Piccadilly* (1929), and *Shanghai Express* (1932).

Based on her experience and ethnicity, casting Wong as O-Lan, the wife of Wang Lung would have made logical sense. Yet she was turned down because White actor Paul Muni was already cast as Wang Lung. In the 1934 industry-imposed Hays Code under the "Sex" heading, "miscegenation [was] forbidden," meaning that interracial relationships were prohibited on set. The role of O-Lan was then handed to German actress Luise Rainer, who won an Oscar for the role.

The *Good Earth* is not the only culprit for controversial casting decisions. *Dragon Seed* (1944) starred Katherine Hepburn as the Chinese character "Jade Tan" when Katherine was English. *Ghost in the Shell* (2017), the live action remake of the 1995 anime, starred White actress Scarlett Johansson as the Japanese main protagonist "Motoko Kusanagi". The live action film *The Last Airbender* (2010) had most of its characters misrepresented, starring White actors for the Asian protagonist characters.

White actors are criticized for their yellowface role, defined by Cambridge University as "the practice of white actors changing their appearance with makeup in order to play East Asian characters in movies, plays, etc."

It has been difficult for Asians to sway casting decisions to their favour, but progress has been made in recent years. Films such as *The Joy Luck*

*Club* (1998), *Crazy Rich Asians* (2018), and *The Farewell* (2019) featured all Asian casts. But take *Shang-Chi and the Legend of the Ten Rings* (2021) as an example.

Directed by Destin Daniel Cretton and written by David Callaham, *Shang-Chi* marks a step forward for Asian actors. With a predominantly Asian cast, Marvel's first Asian MCU film applauded for its representation and defiance of stereotypes, earning \$29.6 million on opening day and claiming the title of the third-best opening day during the COVID-19 pandemic according to Screen Rant.

*Shang-Chi* was not originally made to break stereotypes. The moics were the product of Marvel fitting into the 1970s craze over Asian martial arts, creating a stereotypical hero in a martial art style without considering actual Asian culture in the character itself.

Though the main fighting style of *Shang-Chi* in the film continues to be martial arts, *Shang-Chi* has at least made the fighting styles accurate to Chinese wuxia media.

When asked about Asian stereotypes during the planning process in an interview conducted by *Variety*, screenwriter David Callaham commented: "To me, that is when stereotypes are broken, when you see yourself in a character."

Marvel reintroduced *Shang-Chi* with a new portrayal into Western media that is generally representative and accurate of Asian culture. They have made casting decisions based on authenticity with a majority Asian cast, unlike *The Good Earth's* controversy or even Marvel's own movie *Doctor Strange with British actress Tilda Swinton* playing "The Ancient One," a Tibetan character in the comics.

With the growing popularity of Asian shows and films such as the Oscar-winning *Parasite* (2019) and Netflix's top show *Squid Game* (2021) accumulating 111 million views in its first month, it is important to know how Asian actors and directors have fought through over a century of discrimination to have a role in the Western-centric entertainment industry. It is also important to consider the ethnic representation when future stories of a different culture are being created or planned for a film adaptation, as to not create another caricature that slanders a whole race.

## TEN ICONIC POP CULTURE MOMENTS FROM 2021

**NEWS REPORT** by *Natalie Kosar (8)*

### 1. Donald Trump banned from Twitter

Former President Donald Trump, has been known to spread mis/disinformation on the social media platform Twitter.

### 2. WandaVision

In January, Marvel released a show featuring characters Wanda Maximoff and Vision. By its last episode, in early March, fans were left reeling. The series has an engaging plot, and each episode is set in a different era with the appropriate attire and decor.

### 3. Kim Kardashian Files For Divorce From Kanye West

In February 2021, after seven years of marriage and four children, celebrity Kim Kardashian filed for divorce from rapper Kanye West. After the iconic couple's split, fans were left wondering whether Kim would change the name of her line Kim Kardashian West ("KKW") Beauty.

### 4. Prince Harry and Meghan's Interview With Oprah

In an interview with the Duke and Duchess of Sussex, Prince Harry and Meghan Markle opened up about mental health challenges, racism within the royal family, and prejudice against Meghan. The royal family of England almost never shares family affairs, especially not in a public interview.

### 5. Joe Biden's Chocolate Chocolate Chip Ice Cream

When President Biden went to an ice cream shop on May 27, he was swarmed by reporters. They shouted questions about his political policies. Biden held up his ice cream cone and responded, "Eat some chocolate chocolate chip." You go, Joe.

### 6. Friends: The Reunion

The cast of the hit American television sitcom *Friends* reunited to revisit the set of *Friends* for the first time in 17 years. They recalled old memories, iconic scenes, and answered questions with talk show host James Corden.

### 7. Sunisa "Sunni" Lee Wins Gold In Women's Gymnastics All-Around Olympics

18 year-old Suni Lee became the first Asian-American to win gold in the women's gymnastics all around at the 2020 Tokyo Olympics. It was her first time competing in the Olympics, and it is no small feat to win gold.

### 8. Red (Taylor's Version) Rerelease & All Too Well Ten Minute Short Film

Taylor Swift is re-recording all her albums prior to *Lover* (released in 2019). This November, the re-recording of her album *Red*, was released along with a ten-minute version of the song *All Too Well*. This song was accompanied by a short film, rumoured to be about Swift's relationship with Jake Gyllenhaal.

### 9. Britney Spears Conservatorship Ended

The conservatorship that controlled pop icon Britney Spears' life and money for nearly 14 years finally ended in November after a five-month legal battle. Her father, who was her conservator, no longer has any power over her, giving her freedom.

### 10. Spiderman: No Way Home Release

The highly anticipated third *Spiderman* movie was released today, December 17. The end of "Spiderman: Far From Home" was a cliffhanger, and fans have been waiting for two years for the next movie. No spoilers allowed!

## DIWALI

**NEWS REPORT** by *Reya Khanna (10)*

Diwali is a yearly affirmation of good over evil and light over darkness, celebrated by Hindus, Sikhs, Jains, and Buddhists. Coined as the festival of lights, the lights are symbolic to welcome the Gods and Goddesses into homes. It is celebrated over five days, marking the start of the Hindu New Year. The dates change each year due to the changing positions of the moon, it was celebrated from November 2 to 6 this year.

The story of Diwali varies in origin and beliefs amongst all these religious groups along. On this day the Hindus worship the Goddess Lakshmi, the Goddess of wealth and good fortune. The Hindu deity, Lord Rama, returned to the city of Ayodhya on this day after 14 years of exile after a victory over King Ravana of Sri Lanka. The people of Ayodhya lit their houses on his arrival to welcome him, and began to celebrate this as a festival of lights.

During the early agrarian society in India, the celebration of Diwali



## INTERNATIONAL

## Violations of Human Rights in Ethiopia's Tigray War

**NEWS REPORT** by Max Von Dehn (10)



For more than a year, Ethiopia has been at war within its own borders. Once seen as a cornerstone of stability on the Horn of Africa, the country now threatens to set off that stability in the rest of the region.

As the civil war approaches the capital, Addis Ababa, government forces are becoming less and less likely to win.

The conflict began in November of 2020 when the Tigray People's Liberation Front, or TPLF, seized a military base in the Tigray region situated in northern Ethiopia. The Tigray People's Liberation Front was originally a paramilitary organization, however once in control, they became the government ruling party. They claimed their seizure was a preemptive measure, as central government troops landed nearby. Almost immediately after, Prime Minister Abiy started a military offensive in the Tigray region.

This civil war was not unforeseen; there has been tension between the TPLF and Prime Minister Abiy's government from the moment Mr. Abiy was elected, considering the recent history of Ethiopia.

In the 1970s, the ethnic minority Tigrayans formed a rebel group that would topple the standing government

in 1991. The group would go on to control Ethiopia for another 27 years, during which Ethiopia grew economically, and backed American troops in battle.

However, the government was far from perfect. Freedom of speech was a luxury provided to few, especially not political rivals. Torture was frequently deployed on those detained by the government. People were severely beaten on several occasions, including those who took part in anti-government protests.

This authoritarianism built up to large protests in 2016, and eventually, Prime Minister Abiy getting elected in 2018. He would then go on removing power from the TPLF. When Abiy began to build a new government, it was without TPLF members, who refused to join his coalition.

Since then, Abiy had continued to have a strained relationship with the northern region of Ethiopia. Tensions rose in September 2020, following repeated altercations with the central government, such as when the Tigray region went ahead with elections, despite a standing order not to. Because of their strained relationship, Abiy took no time to respond to the TPLF's seizure of the military base.

The TPLF's takeover prompted Mr. Abiy to order the military into Tigray, and begin a military offensive. He also blocked cellphone connections, along with declaring a state of emergency in the region. The region erupted into conflict, with Tigrayan officers within the Ethiopian army causing more conflict through their infighting.

Despite early military victories, the Ethiopian forces have been forced to retreat from the region, and TPLF forces now march towards the capital.

The conflict has been marked with atrocities on both sides. This ranges from the killing of civilians, sexual and gender-based violence, and what many are calling ethnic cleansing. The UN Human Rights Office has stated that both sides have committed acts that are violations of human rights, and in some cases, war crimes.

Human Rights chief Michelle Bachelet said the UN has received "multiple and severe reports of alleged gross violations of human rights, humanitarian and refugee law."

Additionally, because of the conflict in the area, millions of people have been left without proper food; and supplies meant to help these people often get looted by soldiers.

Effects of the civil war are not just limited to Ethiopia. Due to the conflict within its borders, Ethiopian peacekeepers have been forced to shrink their numbers in Somalia, which could cause Somalia to break out into violence as well.

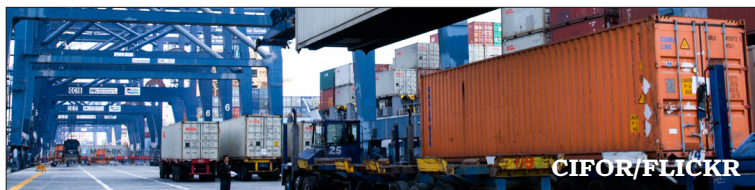
This conflict has undermined much of Ethiopia's, and especially Abiy's reputation. Abiy was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 2019, for his peace agreement with Eritrea, a country once at war with Ethiopia. However, after Ethiopia's declaration of war in Tigray, many have suggested that his prize should be revoked. It also seems that Abiy's peace deal with Eritrea had more strings attached than it initially seems, as Eritrean forces stepped in to assist Abiy's troops with the conflict.

Abiy's reputation has continued to plummet as the crisis continues. To date, he has shut down the internet and arrested journalists, tactics which are widely considered to be anti-democratic. He has also failed to deal with bouts of ethnic violence throughout Ethiopia, further putting his peace-making skills into question.

Ethiopia now stands on the edge of a full on war with itself, with no end in sight.

## SUPPLY CHAIN STRUGGLES HIT THE HOLIDAYS

**NEWS REPORT** by Alanna Rudolph (11)



The holiday season is here, but buyers may be finding empty shelves and inflated prices in place of gifts for friends and family. The pandemic, among other factors, has wreaked havoc on global supply chains, leading to shortages of anything and everything. There are delays at every single step, and experts say some issues may not be resolved for months or even years.

The problem starts right at the beginning of the supply chain. South Asian countries, which manufacture a large portion of goods for American brands, were hit hard by COVID-19. Factories were closed and workers sent home as outbreaks spread. In Vietnam, the government shut down factories from July into September to prevent upsurges in cases, and it may take months for them to return to their previous levels of production. Brands such as Nike, Under Armour, Michael Kors, and more produce much of their goods in South Asia.

Once the goods are made, they have trouble leaving Asia. The ports of Shanghai and Ningbo-Zhoushan in China are the first and third largest ports in the world, respectively. Both have had closures in recent months and will need time to return to their previous efficiency.

COVID-19 is a major cause of disruptions; for example, a terminal at Ningbo-Shan Port closed for two weeks in August after a worker tested positive. When Typhoon Chanthu reached China in September, ports were closed for three days due to the extreme weather. Additional disruptions due to power shortages and subsequent electricity rationing have added even more delays to factory production and deliveries.

According to Project44, a supply chain visibility provider, it is estimated that 40 per cent of the world's container trade passes through China. In October, there were 386 ships around Shanghai and Ningbo waiting to enter the ports. Rollover rates, referring to ships that are unable to sail on

schedule, are at 36 per cent at Ningbo, 41 per cent at Hong Kong, and 37 per cent at Shanghai as of September. This is signalling the lack of progress being made on clearing backlogs.

Ships that are able to leave Asia find there is no space to unload on the other side of the Pacific. According to Marine Exchange, 179 ships are in or around the ports of Los Angeles and Long Beach, a record high. These ships are enormous, carrying up to 20,000 twenty foot equivalent units (TEU) each. In October, the White House announced that ports would be open around the clock in an attempt to reduce delays. By November 15, shipping companies were being fined \$100 a day per container left on the docks. American Shipper estimates that fines were applicable to nearly 60,000 containers in the ports.

These measures may not make much of a difference, as the problem is not a lack of motivation on the part of carriers, but rather a shortage of dock workers and truck drivers to move containers out of ports.

The American Trucking Association estimates the US is in need of another 80,000 truck drivers. Without more drivers, cargo gets stuck at ports and there isn't space for ships to unload. The California's Labor and Workforce Development Agency is attempting to solve this by increasing job training and encouraging more people to get a Commercial Driver License (CDL). However, there is a large number of people with valid CDLs that aren't currently driving. Why? They don't want to.

Trucks wait hours in line at ports before receiving their cargo, and drivers are paid by the mile. They get nothing for time spent waiting, so as ports got busier, wait times longer, and driver positions more crucial, there were fewer and fewer people willing to take on these jobs. Solving this shortage will require better benefits for this essential link in the supply chain.

There's also the matter of empty

shipping containers. 15 per cent of all containers at the Port of Los Angeles are empty. That's 55,000 containers, according to American Shipper. There isn't enough space to store all these empty containers, to the point that they're being abandoned in the streets surrounding the Los Angeles port.

Why don't carriers want to make the return trip and bring those containers back to Asia? According to freight transporter Hillebrand, carriers earn 66 cents per 40 foot container per nautical mile from Shanghai to Los Angeles, but only 10 cents on the way back. It's more lucrative to simply leave the containers on the US side of the Pacific. Meanwhile, more containers are leaving China than being returned, creating yet another shortage.

There isn't any more space to store goods in warehouses, either. In Southern California, there are vacancies of 1 per cent or less, according to Bloomberg. Warehouse owners are one of the few groups benefiting greatly from the backlogs in the global supply chain. According to CBRE Group Inc., rent for industrial spaces is at a record high price of USD \$8.92 a square foot.

At home in British Columbia, there are even more factors at play. After the devastating floods and mudslides that destroyed highways and railways, it's next to impossible for goods to travel from ports inland. Vancouver is the fourth largest port in North America, as supplies from Asia must move through here before being transported to Eastern Canada. The infrastructure that was destroyed won't be repaired for months, and so there will be shortages across Canada for some time while bridges and roads are rebuilt.

How did things get to be this bad? The global supply chain usually runs close to 100 percent capacity, and is heavily based on the just in time model. This means companies rely on supply chains to deliver stock as it's needed, rather than keeping large inventories. This is advantageous in the sense that companies can spend less money on storing materials, but it also means they are very dependent on their supply chains. If there's a small hitch in any one step, the entire production line is delayed. Any slight issue has a ripple effect, and a backlog in one stage leads to backlogs everywhere.

When the pandemic started, lockdowns caused there to be fewer workers at docks, warehouses, and driving trucks. Now, pent up demand and lasting effects from the first wave mean companies are struggling to keep up. The omicron variant may become the next big challenge, as restrictions return to stop the spread of a potentially more infectious strain. Whether or not the situation gets worse, it's clear that the effects will continue to be felt in the months to come.



## WHAT HAPPENED TO ROCK?

**ANALYSIS** by Nigel Goto (10)

In the past century, many genres of music have risen to prominence and become staples of their respective eras. One of these genres is rock, popularized in the late 1950s and gaining a mainstream following in the 1960s. However, unlike its siblings such as jazz and R&B, the output of new rock has faded in today's music landscape, with the most relevant rock musicians barely keeping the genre alive. When the output of rock music in the 80s and 90s is compared to that of today, it is clear that rock has faded from today's music scene. Why is this?

To understand how rock has fallen, one must understand how rock rose. Rock's creation is hard to pinpoint, as it slowly progressed in popularity during the 50s and 60s. It was derived from blues and jazz, starting as a much more subtle and understated genre. However, it quickly diverged from its roots, with a more blunt and overstated style than its predecessors led by musicians such as Elvis Presley. This new style caught the attention of many listeners across the globe. One of which was radio DJ Alan Freed, who would promote the music and eventually labelled it "rock and roll."

Rock's longtime prominence is largely due to its different phases, in which new variations rose to the forefront. These redefined what rock truly was, and provided something fresh to catch the attention of the public. Some of these rebirths of rock are jazz-rock, progressive rock, indie rock, and punk rock.

Rock's fade from mainstream appeal happened slowly, but may be attributed to two main movements in the music industry: hip-hop and electronic music. Hip-hop's birth and rise occurred in the second half of the 1980s, during rock's time of dominance, and quickly expanded in the decades following until it surpassed rock to become the most consumed genre in the US in 2017, according to Nielsen's 2017 Music Year-End Report.

While hip-hop can be credited with dethroning rock, the introduction of electronic equipment also played a key role in rock's exit from the public eye. Rock musicians started to embrace the new possibilities that it brought. The two genres coexisted for decades following the electronic genre's upbringing. However, over time, the integration of electronic elements overthrew rock itself. This was mainly

due to the wider diversity of sounds and stylistic choices that electronic equipment offered.

In today's music landscape, the outcome of this integration is clear. New rock music released does not chart very high, being topped by pop and hip-hop artists such as Drake and Imagine Dragons. The latter of the two is labelled a rock band, but defines themselves as the fusion between electronic and rock, with its electronic elements more prominent than the rock aspect. The last definite rock song to peak at #1 on Billboard's Hot 100 is Nickelback's How You Remind Me, in December of 2001.

Hip-hop introduced sampling, or manipulating and integrating parts of previous music (such as rock) for a unique sound. This has also been done in other genres such as electronic to emulate rock sounds of the past.

Additionally, sampling makes bridging this generational gap easier. The technique of sampling for a nostalgic effect is now a widely used and extremely popular method of music-making.

Another element in music that has been finding its place over the past decade is nostalgia. Nostalgia is often seen in mainstream music, popularized due to the powerful memories and emotions it can invoke. Its prominence in music in recent years is best seen in pop music drawing from sounds from the past, such as in Silk Sonic's recent album.

Rock's influence is apparent in hip-hop, pop, and electronic music. This is seen especially in the pop songs charting today.

Lately, we have seen some rock music resurging with the likes of Machine Gun Kelly, leading punk rock on a slow yet steady incline. More pop acts show rock roots, such as in Olivia Rodrigo's "Good 4 U" and Billie Eilish's "Happier Than Ever." However, the new rock music we see charting does not take too radical of an approach compared to its previous re-inventions.

Though rock has a strong influence on today's music, the genre has strayed away from the limelight. However, nostalgia's increasing role in music and rock's growing undertones in pop music may change that.

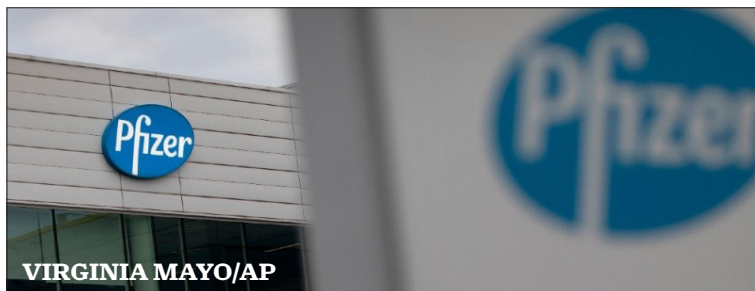
This small yet noticeable resurgence does raise the question: could rock make a return to the mainstream?



## INTERNATIONAL

## ORAL ANTIVIRAL PILLS: A new force in the fight against COVID?

**NEWS REPORT** by Ryan Cheng (11)



In early November, Pfizer, developer of the BioNTec-Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine, announced the results of the clinical trials of Paxlovid, a newly-developed oral antiviral pill.

Based on two components, a molecule called PF-07321332 and another pre-existing drug called ritonavir, Paxlovid primarily serves as a protease inhibitor. As protease inhibitors, Paxlovid blocks the enzyme protease, which serves to cut apart long, non-functional strands of viral proteins into smaller functional proteins; essentially deploying viral proteins into use. Together, the PF-07321332 serves to block the protease, while the ritonavir serves to prevent the immune system from destroying the PF-07321332 molecules.

Results from placebo-controlled trials, although coming from a relatively small sample size, have been overwhelmingly positive. One trial consisted of approximately 1200 adults from around the world with a confirmed COVID-19 diagnosis. Each individual was given either a dose of Paxlovid or a placebo pill every 12 hours for five days to control error stemming from

placebo effects.

In those treated with Paxlovid, only 0.8 per cent (3 of 389) were hospitalized within 28 days compared to 7 per cent (27 of 385) of those with the placebo. Overall, there were no deaths recorded among those who were treated with Paxlovid and ten deaths recorded for those who were treated with the placebo medication.

In mid-November, with the positive test results in hand, Pfizer sought emergency use authorization from the FDA. Although Paxlovid has yet to be approved by the FDA, they have approved another similar oral antiviral COVID-19 pill called Molnupiravir by Merck.

Molnupiravir, a polymerase inhibitor, operates in a slightly different manner to Paxlovid. Rather than preventing viral protein from splitting into functional proteins, Molnupiravir acts by causing viruses to be more prone to mutations, ultimately creating so many mutations that the virus is unable to survive. The approval of oral based antiviral pills presents a promising future in humanity's efforts against COVID-19.

# MIGRANTS STUCK IN THE MIDDLE OF EU, BELARUS CONFLICT

**NEWS REPORT** by Liliana Chow (12)

Cornered between the Polish and Belarus borders, thousands of migrants are stuck in the middle of rising tensions between the European Union and Belarus.

The catalyst to the crisis was Belarus' national election in August 2020, in which President Alexander Lukashenko — in power since 1994 — won with 80 per cent of the vote. Many Western countries, including Canada, have called the election fraudulent, calling on Lukashenko to step down. International observers have called Lukashenko's regime a dictatorship.

In retaliation, the international community has pressed sanctions, such as travel bans and freezing assets, on high-ranking government officials and people with power. The United States and the European Union (EU) even went as far as to not recognize Lukashenko as the official ruler, imposing more sanctions in November and December of 2020.

Tensions increased when Belarus intercepted a flight carrying a prominent critic of Lukashenko, Raman Pratasevich, detaining Pratasevich for months. Furious, the EU banned Belarusian aircraft from their skies and limited imports of Belarusian products.



LEONID SHCHEGLOV/GETTY IMAGES

Wanting retribution, Lukashenko publicly declared that he would no longer be keeping with an illegal migration policy agreed upon previously by both parties. Until then, Belarusian officials have been flying migrants into Belarus and assisting them in illegally crossing the Polish border. This has led to an influx of illegal immigrants in Poland and other neighbouring countries, straining their border system. Polish border officials have been meeting people trying to cross at the border with violence and illegally

denying asylum applications. Both of these violate international law.

Belarusian affairs expert Valery Karbalevich said that "as a minimum, Lukashenko wants to take revenge against the EU, and as a maximum he aims to soften the European sanctions that have dealt a painful blow to key Belarusian industries," before continuing on and saying, "Belarusian authorities have tried unsuccessfully to persuade the EU to engage in talks and bargaining, and migrants are just an instrument in a hybrid attack."

## RITTENHOUSE TRIAL

**NEWS REPORT** by Teresa Chen (11) and David Zhang (11)

On August 25, 2020 — the third night of a Black Lives Matter protest in Kenosha, Wisconsin, 17-year-old Kyle Rittenhouse, who travelled to Kenosha from Antioch, Illinois, shot three men; killing two and injuring one. Rittenhouse testified "he shot out of self-defense" and "didn't do anything wrong." He has since been acquitted on all charges.

Rittenhouse began his testimony by stating he went to Kenosha to "clean up graffiti" and to "provide first-aid." He stated that he had no intentions of causing trouble and was only there to protect local businesses. Since Wisconsin law forbids minors to legally carry handguns, but allowed rifles, Rittenhouse decided to have his friend purchase an AR-15 for him since it "looked cool." Later that night after being separated from his group, Rittenhouse's first of many events followed.

A shot rang out from the crowd amidst the protest at around 11:40 PM. People then began lunging at Rittenhouse after seeing that he was carrying a firearm. He subsequently fired four shots back into the crowd.

Of the three victims from that night, Joseph Rosenbaum was the first. Rittenhouse testified that Rosenbaum had threatened him with malicious intent and would kill him "if [he caught] any of [them] f\*\*kers alone."

Rosenbaum was seen in footage from protesters chasing Rittenhouse around a Car Source dealership and throwing a plastic bag at him. Rittenhouse claimed he only pointed his gun at Rosenbaum because "he kept running at [him] and [he] didn't want [Rosenbaum] to chase [him]," given that Rosenbaum had threatened to kill him earlier that night. As Rosenbaum lunged towards Rittenhouse, he was shot four times — once in the head, killing him.

The second victim was Anthony Huber, a 26 year-old skateboarder.

Footage from nearby protesters show Huber attempting to take his gun and put an end to the situation. As Rittenhouse tripped and fell to the ground, Huber took his skateboard and "struck him in the head." As Huber tried to strike again with his "other hand [going] for the gun," Rittenhouse shot him in the chest.

The last victim was 26 year-old paramedic Gaige Grosskreutz, who was injured but not killed. Grosskreutz was originally at the scene to provide first aid to the protestors. He believed Rittenhouse was the active shooter, explaining that "people were pointing out the defendant, saying he had just shot somebody". He pulled out his handgun and pointed it at Rittenhouse. Though he did not fire, Rittenhouse then shot Grosskreutz in the bicep. Grosskreutz has since undergone several surgeries and lost 90 per cent of his bicep.

Following that night, Rittenhouse was charged with first-degree intentional homicide, first-degree attempted intentional homicide, first-degree reckless homicide, two counts of first-degree recklessly endangering safety, failure to comply with emergency order from state or local government, and possession of a dangerous weapon by a person under 18 years-old.

On November 1, 2021, the trial began, and after four days of deliberating, Kyle Rittenhouse was acquitted of all charges. Five of the seven charges involving homicide and endangerment were dropped, as his actions were deemed in "self-defence".

The charge of failure to comply with emergency order from state or local government was dropped due to the lack of evidence offered by the prosecutor.

The last charge, possession of a dangerous weapon by a person under 18, was dismissed as it was considered legal. Wisconsin bans possession of handguns by people under 18, but permits possession of long-barreled rifles for hunting. Since Rittenhouse's rifle had a barrel longer than 16 inches, his charge was dismissed.

Many public figures and politicians were very disappointed in the results of the trial. The President, Joe Biden, even stated that "many Americans [were left] feeling angry and concerned, [himself] included."

## Taylor Swift "Begins Again" with New Recordings

**NEWS REPORT** by Olivia Gowans Hoar (8) and Alanna Rudolph (11)

Taylor Swift is re-recording her first six albums to gain back the rights to her master recordings, after they were bought by Big Machine Records in 2019. Swift signed to Big Machine in 2005 and released six albums with them before her contract later expired in 2018.

The master rights to a song are usually owned by the record label and allow the owners to distribute or license the song to third parties, such as film, television, commercials, and more. Artists who own their masters receive the entirety of profit generated by the music, while when record labels own master rights they typically pay artists royalties of 10-20 per cent.

In 2019, Big Machine Records was bought from CEO Scott Borchetta by Scooter Braun, along with the master rights to Taylor Swift's first six albums. Borchetta remained the CEO after Braun's purchase of Big Machine for USD \$300-350 million, according to The New York Times. When Swift signed to Big Machine back in 2005, her contract stated that the company owned her masters. Therefore, with Braun's purchase of Big Machine, he gained Taylor Swift's masters. Swift claimed that she had been asking to buy her masters for a long time, but was denied the opportunity. In response to her requests, Big Machine instead proposed an alternate agreement.

In a 2019 Tumblr post, Swift stated, "For years I asked, pleaded for a chance to own my work. Instead I was given an opportunity to sign back up to Big Machine Records and 'earn' one album back at a time, one for every new one I turned in. I walked away because I knew once I signed that contract, Scott Borchetta would sell the label, thereby selling me and my future. I had to make the excruciating choice to leave behind my past."

When Swift's contract with Big Machine ended, she signed with Republic Records. Her agreement with Republic Records stated that she would own the master recordings of the albums she released with them. Swift announced her plans to re-record her past albums, originally recorded with Big Machine, with her new label in 2019.

In the fall of 2020, Swift's masters were sold without her knowledge for a second time to Shamrock Holdings, an investment company. At the time, Swift was actively trying to buy back her masters, but claimed that she was asked to sign a Non Disclosure Agreement ("NDA") before she was permitted to negotiate. The NDA required that she never say anything negative about Scooter Braun again, which made her feel that she was being silenced. Swift decided to give up on her old masters and instead re-record the albums.

Record contracts commonly include a re-recording restriction, meaning the artist can't make a new version of the old sound recording until a certain amount of time has passed. In Swift's case, she is required to wait five years after the initial release. Because of this, Swift's 2017 album *Reputation*, the last album she recorded with Big Machine Records, will have to wait until November 2022 to be re-recorded. Until then, she's free to re-record any of her other albums.

Swift released her first re-recording in April 2021: *Fearless (Taylor's Version)*. The 26 song album included the original 19 tracks from *Fearless Platinum Edition*, plus seven previously unreleased "vault" tracks. According to MRC Data, it sold over 867,000 album units and accumulated nearly 600 million streams, more than four times what the original *Fearless* sold in the same period of time.

Though *Fearless (Taylor's Version)* was a massive success, it was dwarfed by the release of *Red (Taylor's Version)* on November 12, 2021. The album has 30 songs, 20 from 2012's *Red (Deluxe Edition)* and nine vault tracks, including the much anticipated 10 Minute Version of "All Too Well". *Red (Taylor's Version)* smashed records, with Spotify announcing it became the most streamed album by a female artist in one day and made Taylor Swift the most streamed female artist in one day, at over 90.8 million and 122.9 million streams respectively.

Why is it important for artists to own their own work? In 2019, not owning her masters created trouble for Swift. At the time, she was being awarded Artist of the Decade, performing at the American Music Awards, and was in the process of creating her Netflix documentary *Miss Americana*. She wanted to include a medley of songs and old material in the performance and documentary, but claimed Big Machine Records and Scooter Braun were preventing her from using it. Scooter Braun denied this, and Swift was eventually able to perform her older music at the awards show.

For up-and-coming artists, Swift's story is cautionary tale to be sure to read the fine print. Record contracts are legally binding documents, and anything signed early in an artist's career may affect them years down the road. Swift's impact is already showing; 18 year-old Olivia Rodrigo ensured that she owns her masters from the beginning of her career, something she attributed to Swift's influence.

What might future record contracts look like? After so much public attention on artist ownership, artists will be paying more attention to the terms of their contracts and could negotiate for different rights. Re-recording restrictions will likely be extended for longer periods of time in the future after the success of Swift's re-recordings and devaluing of the old versions. Swift, in a 2020 interview with *Variety Magazine*, wondered whether contracts should be shorter, or if steps need to be taken to make it easier for artists to buy back their own work. She hoped that the attention on her story would lead to greater transparency between musicians and labels when it comes to ownership.



## OPINION

# Victoria's Secret is Ditching Their Angels. Why?

OPINION by Simone Hamilton (11)

The views expressed in this article are the author's alone. Responses or comments may be sent to ehnewspaper@gmail.com



On June 16, 2021, after more than two decades of creating and setting impossible beauty standards, Victoria's Secret launched their newest campaign: VS Collective. A press release from the brand described it as "an ever-growing group of accomplished women who share a common passion to drive positive change." This was a desperate grasp at detached consumers in a changing culture of womenswear. Victoria's Secret's CEO, Martin Waters, said it best, "We lost relevance with the modern woman."

Victoria's Secret Angels were an iconic and unique category of supermodel. Not only did their contracts include runway shows and photoshoots, but also brand events, promotions, and talk shows. There are many Victoria's Secret models, however only a few "Angels." The Angels took on an ambassador role critical to the popularity and fundamentals of the brand.

It is no secret, (Victoria), to what one might associate with an Angel. Most obviously they are skinny, then drop-dead gorgeous, and if you wanted to think critically, oftentimes white. Victoria's Secret proudly promoted and used extremely narrow beauty standards to sell their product. With those marketing strategies still in the rearview mirror, why should consumers allow such a drastic turnaround.

The downfall of the Angels may then be seen as positive to many: if Victoria's Secret is becoming inclusive isn't that a good thing? However, do we as consumers want inclusivity as a last resort to a plummeting brand? According to Business Insider, between 2016 and 2018 Victoria's Secret's US market share dropped nine percent, and by 2018 same-store sales were down three percent. Inclusivity was not implement-

ed into the brand out of activism, it was a superficial business saving grace.

In November 2018, the then Chief Marketing Officer of the parent brand to Victoria's Secret, L Brands, Ed Razek, told Vogue in an interview, "so it's like, why don't you do [bra size] 50? Why don't you do 60? Why don't you do 24? It's like, why doesn't your show do this? Shouldn't you have transsexuals in the show? No. No, I don't think we should. Well, why not? Because the show is a fantasy."

The tone-deaf comments led to major clapback from critics, many wanting Razek to step down, however it was the female CEO of Victoria's Secret, Jan Singer, who resigned a week after the controversial interview. Her replacement Jon Mehas was left with a mess and some angry shareholders.

In March 2019, major shareholder Barrington Capital sent a letter to the Chairman and CEO of L Brands, Leslie Wexner, saying "Victoria's Secret's brand image is starting to appear to many as being outdated and even a bit 'tone deaf' by failing to be aligned with women's evolving attitudes towards beauty, diversity, and inclusion."

This was an undeniably defining moment. Victoria's Secret would not have survived if it did not adapt. Time was of the essence and they stepped up their modern-feminist image.

Within a year the brand appointed two more female board members, hired a 'body-inclusive' model and a transgender model. Additionally, Ed Razek stepped down as CMO of L Brands, and model Shannia Shaik told the Daily Telegraph in Australia that the annual fashion show was cancelled.

However, these positive changes left a sour taste when Leslie Wexner and Victoria's Secret were linked to

convicted sex offender Jeffrey Epstein. A lawsuit filed by lawyer William Uroch states that Epstein allegedly used his connection to the brand to lure 16 year-old Maximilia Cordero into his mansion in New York City, promising her a modelling career. Wexner said about his relationship with Epstein at an investors meeting: "Being taken advantage of by someone who was so sick, so cunning, so depraved, is something that I'm embarrassed I was even close to. But that is in the past."

This emotional address was not convincing however, as by February 2020, L Brands announced that Wexner would be stepping down as chairman and CEO, yet staying on the board of directors. Then came the Pandemic which caused a 55 per cent stake deal with private equity firm Sycamore Partners to fall through. Sub-brand PINK was on the brink of bankruptcy. The empire was falling, and what was there left to do to save it?

That is what set the stage for the Angels' to get the boot. Scandal after scandal, loss after loss, the brand had to be reinvented. Leslie Wexner and Ed Razek had built the brand to what we have always known it as: steeped in misogyny and exclusion. With the changing times and no strong leadership, Victoria's Secret collapsed.

This complete deconstruction is evidence of the deep-rooted misogyny and exclusion in the brand. Victoria's Secret did not 're-brand', they toppled down and were forced to build themselves back up to something palatable to current consumers. The final jenga block of the Angels shows their criticality to the previous branding. This begs the question: is inclusivity and empowerment as a last resort enough?

## HAMBER'S CAFETERIA FOOD: UNDERRATED?

SATIRICAL REVIEW by Ryan Cheng and Noah Yu (11)

The views expressed in this article are the authors' alone. Responses or comments may be sent to ehnewspaper@gmail.com

It is a common bias that cafeteria food is low-budget, unhealthy, and unappetizing. Although in some cases this may be true, it is certainly not always the case. As Twilight Sparkle from My Little Pony once said (S1E9), "never judge a book by its cover." Therefore, as an open-minded community, students of Eric Hamber should not be afraid to explore cafeteria food despite its seemingly unappealing nature. Shockingly, many items on the cafeteria's menu are astonishingly and breathtakingly pleasant to consume. However, knowing that there are individuals who prefer to "play it safe," provided below is a guide to Hamber's cafeteria food for the cowards who are too fearful to try anything new.

BBQ Chicken Leg and Mac and Cheese

REVIEW: ★☆☆☆☆

Is barbeque sauce a liquid? Apparently not the sauce served on these BBQ chicken legs. The strange brown, semi-solid barbeque sauce congeals on the chicken legs, leaving suspect streaking, brown stains. Thankfully, upon a closer taste, the brown stains are indeed barbeque sauce and...not something else. Oh and look! A pool of macaroni and cheese! A faint yellow, the cheese sauce exhibits more properties of cream than actual cheese. This meal is certainly a strange experience.

Hamburger and Fries

REVIEW: ★★☆☆☆

Fries - Just as crispy as dried leaves on a sidewalk during a warm autumn afternoon, except the leaves are slightly more edible.  
Burger - Two chunks of grain with a slab of unknown butchered meat in the middle. Could be considered a "brain food" because it may cause one to question and think - "why did I buy this?"

Bacon Cheeseburger and Fries

REVIEW: ★★★★★

Fries - The familiar texture that we all know and... um...love...  
Bacon Cheeseburger - When the entire burger sticks to a single bun, defying all laws of gravity, something doesn't add up. All is well though, since the gravity-defying meat and superglue sauce is covered by the taste of bacon cooked in a salt mine.

Chicken Chow Mein

REVIEW: ★★★★★

Cooked noodles bathing in an excessive amount of sweet spring roll dipping sauce. Beyond the copious amounts of sugar and artery-clogging quantity of sodium, the chicken is served generously and is quite flavourful (possibly due to the excess of spring roll dipping sauce, but that's just a hunch).

Wraps and Rolls

REVIEW: ★★★★★

Be prepared for the exquisite, explosive tastes. Also be prepared for the not-so-exquisite, explosive aftermath.

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## LET'S TALK ABOUT SEX (EDUCATION)

OPINION by Marissa Lear (12)

The views expressed in this article are the author's alone. Responses or comments may be sent to ehnewspaper@gmail.com

Every student graduating from the public school system should have received a sexual education class at some point throughout their time in high school. While the education we receive regarding this subject is tolerable, it is in no way sufficient and does not address issues that many students will face or have already faced. Our system has failed to provide information that best suits the daily lives of 21st century teens. Educators must consider implementing these changes in order to guarantee that the lessons taught in classrooms best equips students for the realities of sex and all aspects encompassing it.

1. **Consent:** While consent is discussed in the majority of classrooms, it is not explained in a way that deals with real life practicalities. With forced scripts and "no equals no" lectures, the majority of teens leave those discussions believing consent is a one time thing, and verbally asking for it is a mood killer. In actuality, many things equal no and real life applications of consent can stray from the binary

model students are taught. Neha Vyas, an intimacy coach, believes that consent works on a spectrum as it can travel from yes to no and back again. Depicting consent as simply black and white limits communication and can often lead to confusion. Schools need to delve deeper into this topic and help students reach an understanding of consent as a spectrum.

2. **Emotional Aspect:** Teenagers are always taught about staying physically safe while being sexually active but the emotional aspect of sex is rarely brought up in classrooms. Talks often focus on what not to do like getting pregnant or contracting an STD, so much so that the signs of a healthy relationship are completely forgotten. Sex educators like Guli Fager suggest that lessons branch out from physical safety to include topics like deciding if the time is right. While preventative measures are important, by overly concentrating on them, sex is depicted as something to fear and lessons don't educate students on all aspects.

3. **Birth Control:** Birth control is

discussed in classrooms, however, it is done in such a limited way that girls especially, feel tricked when they try to use contraceptives like hormone pills. Simply explaining what it does is not satisfactory when the medication is responsible for a plethora of side effects. Hormone pills are also used for numerous other health reasons besides sex. These uses should be included in lessons as well. Not only that, but the narrative of birth control is angled specifically towards girls. Schools need to start teaching young boys that sex safe is equally their responsibility. This narrative translates into bigger issues as men are completely ignored regarding the topic of birth control later on in life, leaving women with the sole burden of avoiding unwanted pregnancies. By starting these conversations early on, we can bridge this gap so men feel included and women feel less taxed.

4. **Double Standard:** Teens are no strangers to the double standard of sex. Especially since the language used in school halls perpetuates this standard. Dividing classrooms further instills that there are two different messages regarding sex. Language like "she lost her virginity" and "he scored last night" perfectly depict the very real double standard. It enables a sense of entitlement in young boys and can lead to further ramifications like the rise of gender based violence in post secondary institutions. Co-ed classes can reduce this double standard. Bonnie J. Rough, a renowned

author and reporter, said in a Washington Post perspective article that co-ed classes allow peers to "hold one another accountable" as they will all be learning the same information about consent and other important issues. Therefore it will erase the two separate messages boys and girls receive regarding sex. These crucial lessons act as practice grounds for the type of communication students will be having in their daily life as Nicole Cushman, executive director of a sex ed program at Rutgers University said. In turn, it will decrease the amount of discrimination targeted specifically towards young women based on their sexual choices, or what many teens call "slut shaming." Calling out the double standard surrounding sex will help create awareness around this issue and cut it off at its source.

5. **Sexual Harrassment:** One would think that sexual harrassment is an integral part of sexual education given that it is bred out of a lack of understanding and education, but it is hardly ever mentioned. The current system fails to acknowledge that it is responsible for changing the narrative surrounding sexual harrassment. Girls grow up learning about special safety precautions they need to take while young boys are kept in the dark and are rarely even given the opportunity to be included in these conversations. We need to start these discussions in the classroom to develop a sense of compassion to break the cycle

of harassment. Our society is teaching future generations that it is a "women's issue". If we started these conversations at an earlier age, schools could start creating solutions to the statistic that "one in four woman experience sexual violence".

6. **LGBTQ+:** The spectrum of sexuality and safe sex for non-heterosexual couples need to be included in sex ed classes. Our system and educators must address these topics with language that does not "other" those that belong to the community and provide tools for safe sex in the same ways that they do for heterosexual couples. Every student has a right to education regarding safe sex and all the topics surrounding it. This should not be ignored for same sex couples. The topic of sexuality is another necessity for sex ed classrooms as adolescence is an important time for figuring out one's identity. Sexuality plays a key role in that. Our education needs to reflect the student population and all the communities that exist within that. Biases can often originate from classrooms and educators have the power to change that by using inclusive language and straying away from stereotypes. These classes especially must be a safe space for all teens.

Our education system holds the power to change the headlines we see in the news everyday. The system needs to change and it needs to change now. Let's start talking about sex. In every which way.



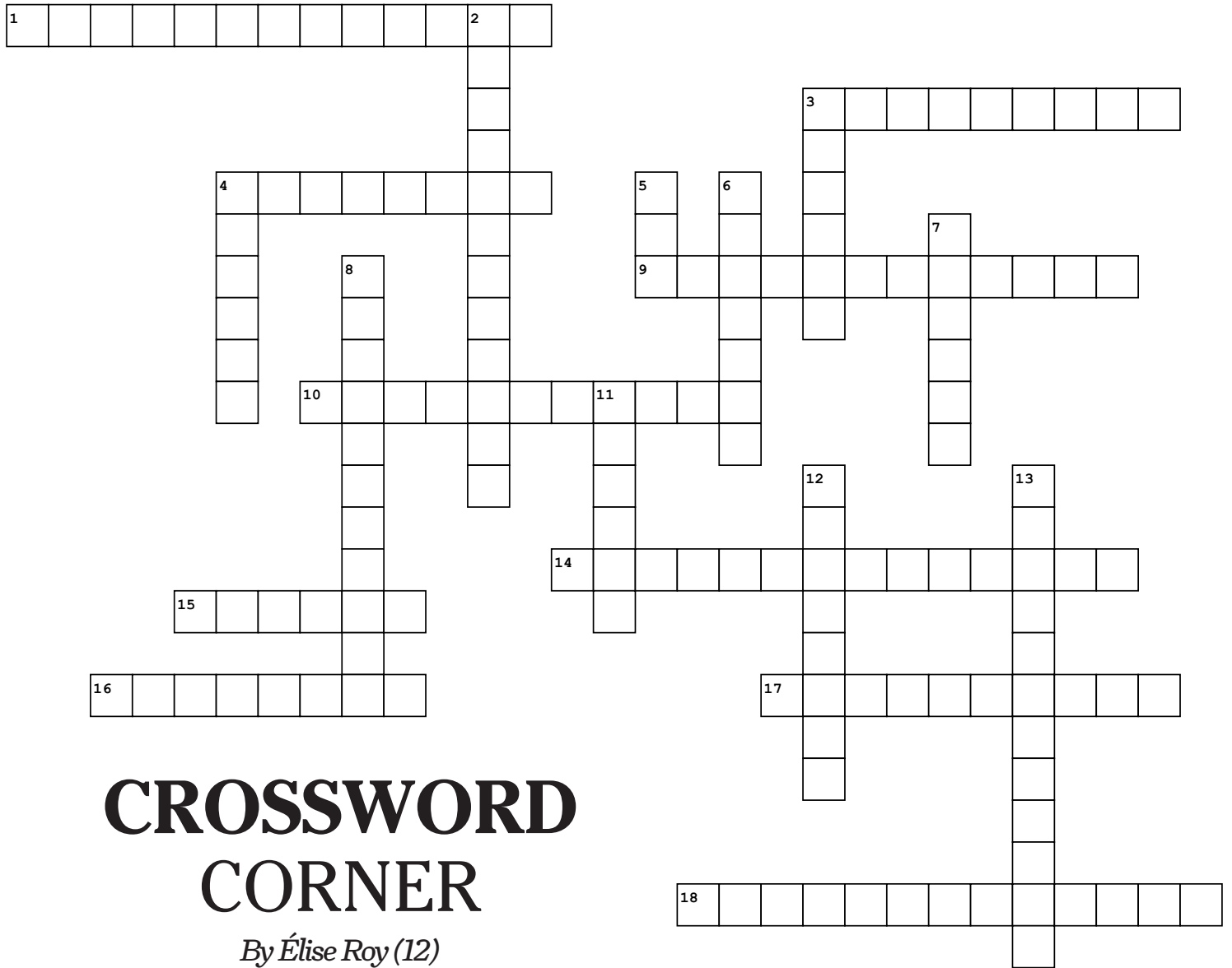
# HAMBERGUR

## ACROSS

1. An individual specializing in the study of birds
3. Villain in A Series of Unfortunate Events
4. Ship depicted on the Canadian dime
9. (1) City in British Columbia; (2) Eldest child of Prince William and Catherine, Duchess of Cambridge
10. Actor for Dwight Schrute on The Office
14. Recently released Wes Anderson film
15. (1) Name of the world's largest rain-forest; (2) Internet based company selling goods such as books, houseware, and electronics
16. Dairy Queen's ice cream dessert that famously holds its shape even when flipped upside-down
17. Vancouver Island born singer-songwriter whose records include Salad Days (2014) and This Old Dog (2017)
18. An individual specializing in the study of snakes

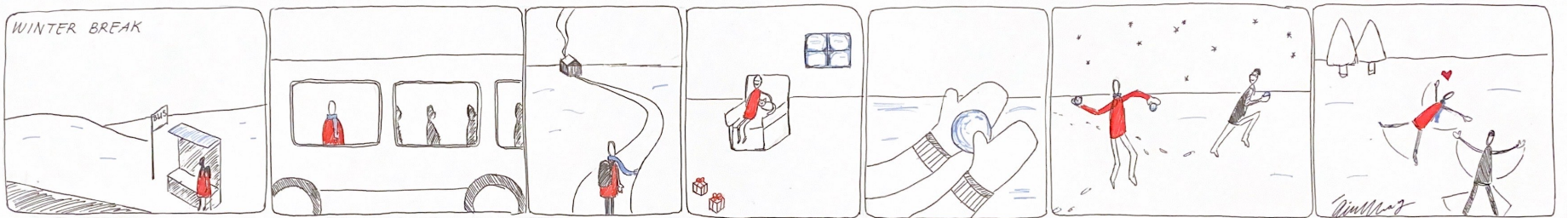
## DOWN

2. Last name of Edward, a sharp-fingered character played by Johnny Depp in a 1990 film.
3. Business establishment that sells food, furniture, and clothing in bulk, and often offers free samples.
4. Fruit high in potassium
5. (1) Lemon-lime soft drink; (2) children's game in which players heads are lowered
6. Host city of the 2022 Winter Olympics
7. Despicable Me villain who sports an orange jumpsuit
8. Editor-in-chief of Vogue Magazine since 1988.
11. Art museum in Paris, home to the Mona Lisa
12. This singer wore the infamous "Meat Dress" to the 2010 MTV Music Awards.
13. SNL Comedian whose most recent romance is with Kim Kardashian.



# CROSSWORD CORNER

By Élise Roy (12)



**COMICS**  
by Élise Roy  
(12)

## ASK THE NEST

**Q:** I feel very awkward in class when I am the only person taking notes. Do you have any suggestions?

-Nervous Note-Taker

**A:** Dear Nervous Note-Taker,

Own it! School is here for you, so take those notes. They will most likely help you in the long run! I assure you that other students don't give it a second thought. If anything, they might start to wonder if they should be taking notes too. Hold your pencil with pride!

-The Nest

**Q:** Morally, is it wrong to not do an assignment at times? Or, at least, to fumble it and spend more time maintaining wellbeing? Please give advice on how to be more positive towards homework and school. Jokes aside, the struggle is real and I can't bring myself to say "I like school."

-Sour Student

**A:** Dear Sour Student,

You are not a bad person if you miss or fumble an assignment. If you need to take care of yourself, that is the best usage of your time. I sense that, at times, you feel guilty due to a lack of motivation. My advice to you is to do your best. Make small goals, like learning five definitions for a quiz. At the end of the day, you can think about all your "wins" and celebrate these.

-The Nest

**Q:** Even in the lower grades, I feel so pressured to choose a university degree/program but nothing stands out to me. What do you suggest?

- Pressured and Stressed

**A:** Dear Pressured and Stressed,

Boy, do I relate to you. Start by doing research. Look at various university websites and spend time reading up on programs that are of interest to you. Also, university program websites often have lists of their alumni. Taking a look at the possible career paths can be inspiring and gives you some real-world insight into different fields. Finally, don't stress too much! You have time to decide. University is about determining your interests. You can even switch programs later on, when you are at a school!

-The Nest

**Q:** I get so stressed out due to all the homework from my classes that I don't have time to care for my mental health because it'll waste valuable time. How can I find a balance between self-care and doing my homework?

-Pressed for Time

**A:** Dear Pressed for Time,

Maintaining good mental health makes studying that much more effective. Set aside a certain amount of time to relax and take a break—just 30 minutes can be enough. In that time, do something that you know will boost your mood, like talking with family, playing with your pet, or going for a walk with a friend. Finally, remember that sleep takes the top priority: if you find your eyes glazing over, it's time to hit the hay!

-The Nest

Seeking advice? Reach out to The Nest anonymously via the form on our website [www.ehnewspaper.ca](http://www.ehnewspaper.ca)

If your question wasn't answered, please write to us again: you may be featured in issues to come!

