

# LINK

Amine Doulfikar, MMA athlete and electrical engineering student, shares his current projects | Forever 21 hasn't been appealing to 21-year-olds for a while | A recipe for Thai peanut wraps | a bilingual poem | Comic artist & frog Zach Whitbread shares his art | *And More!*





# HAPPY HOUR

Monday - Wednesday | 6:30pm - Close

½ Price Appetizers\*

\*available on full size appetizers only

Whistler Lager Sleeve

4<sup>25</sup>



brought to you by your **BCIT Student Association**





# All the world's a stage

It was 6:30 a.m. on a Monday. There was half an hour to spare before my alarm would sound, but I had managed to wake up on my own. My smartphone was just an arm's reach away, but I refrained from picking it up. An exhausting week lays ahead of me, so I needed to savour this moment of being truly alone in the quiet.

I knew that as soon as I unlocked my phone, I had to start playing a part, one that involved social transactions. A deluge of information awaited me—texts, emails, social media notifications, and the day's breaking news. A heap of cues to this socially driven improv stage we call life.

Before I head out every morning, I have to take a few moments behind the curtain—to breathe, to think, to prepare for the world out there. People are unpredictable, and while that makes your part more challenging, it can be the most rewarding.

There are a lot of us who have a hard time winging it. Everybody is busy, and there's this creeping anxiety that you're obliged to offer something, almost as if the connections you make are social currency.

Building networks and socializing are the most viable ways to move up in life. Still, at some point, you have to stop and remind yourself that not all interactions have to be about gain or opportunity.

"All the world's a stage," (Shakespeare, *As You like It*) and there's a part for everyone to play. There's often stage fright involved, but you make do with the script however you see fit.

Ali Pitargue  
Senior Editor

# LINK

ISSN 0715-5247 (Print)  
ISSN 2562-3257 (Online)

We feature exceptional people in our community, big ideas in a changing world, and evolving social dialogue. We welcome writers, photographers and artists of all backgrounds and abilities. Our purpose is to provide a collaborative platform for student expression, and to connect you with one another's stories and experiences.

Printed editions are distributed to all five BCIT campuses & additional content is published online at [linkbcit.ca](http://linkbcit.ca)

*Link* magazine would like to respectfully acknowledge that it is printed and distributed on the traditional & unceded territory of the Coast Salish peoples.

3700 Willingdon Ave. SE2 Building, 3rd Floor  
Burnaby, BC V5G 3H2  
604.451.7191

## Have an idea? Contact us!

[editor@linkbcit.ca](mailto:editor@linkbcit.ca)  
[linkbcit.ca](http://linkbcit.ca)

## STAFF

Ali Pitargue, Senior Editor  
Lauren Edwards, Associate Editor  
Sheku Nafisi, Associate Designer  
Shaleeta Harrison, Publications Manager  
Lili Human, Advertising

## CONTRIBUTORS

Tracy Ngo, Chantel Tanaka, Eric J.W. Li,  
Zach Whitbread, Kevin Olenick, Sydney Wong,  
Sherry M. Lai, Andrew Williamson

December 2019

On the Cover  
AMINE DOULFIKAR

Photo by  
ERIC J.W. LI





## *in this issue*

**04** STUDENT REVIEWS

**06** GOOGLE THIS

**08** STUDENT SPOTLIGHT:  
AMINE DOULFIKAR

**14** A BILINGUAL POEM:  
REMAINED

**16** ART FEATURE:  
ZACH WHITBREAD

**22** RECIPE  
THAI PEANUT WRAPS

**24** A STUDENT OF A CERTAIN AGE

**26** OP-ED:  
Nothing Lasts Forever





## DISNEY+

The launch of the Disney+ streaming service was possibly the most anticipated event of 2019. Initially, I was hesitant to join the bandwagon, but I was only able to resist the temptation for two days. It launched on November 12, and ten million people had subscribed by November 14.

*You're never too old for Disney* is a common saying. The content on Disney+ gives testament to that sentiment, because it has something for just about anyone. Part of Disney's magic is awakening nostalgia in all of us, no matter which generation we're from.

The alternate universes of Marvel and Star Wars captivated the day dreamers who immerse themselves in worlds that are bigger than their own. They have Pixar for animation lovers, and they even have the Disney Channel classics that played a part in raising Gen Z. When I first downloaded it, the first thing I put on to watch was *The Suite Life of Zack and Cody*, just to appease the inner tomboy in me.

Disney+ entered the market at an opportune time, ushering in a new era that we now call the *Streaming Wars*. Its launch will give longstanding streaming services like Netflix, Crave, and Amazon Prime Video a run for their money. The entrance of Disney+ and other services like Apple TV will promote some healthy competition for better content creation.

Part of me is skeptical of how many subscribers will stay on the service; how long can this nostalgia last? How far can Disney magic take us?

We'll just have to wait and see!

—Chantel Tanaka

DOWNLOAD THIS





## BUSYHEAD TOUR – NOAH KAHAN

Commodore Ballroom, Vancouver, BC | October 26, 2019

American indie singer Noah Kahan played for an early crowd at the Commodore Ballroom late this October. The indie artist fuses the sounds of folk and pop to create a calming acoustic discography. His wit filled the ballroom with laughter, and his humour shined throughout his performance.

Kahan has a variety of fans that come to his shows. After having lined up the earliest, the most dedicated ones secured their spots up front by the barricade, where they sang along with Kahan to every word. In the middle of the dance floor romantic couples were swaying to the music.

Midway through his set, Kahan played his popular single, “Hurt Somebody,” and the quiet hums rose to a cheering roar. Showing his seductive side, Kahan began to strip his clothes during “Save Me,” the seventh track off his debut album, *Busyhead*. At one point, he threw his black denim jacket at a swarming sea of fans.

Ending the night with an encore, Kahan asked the crowd to sing acapella to the song that started his career, “Youngblood.” This symbolized how his music will always come back to him and his fans.

—Sydney Wong

LISTEN TO THIS



- 1** Thousands came together in Islamabad, Pakistan's capital city, to protest Prime Minister Imran Khan, and to demand his resignation.
- 2** For the 22<sup>nd</sup> straight week, protesters gathered in Hong Kong to demonstrate against the government and call for democracy.  
  
A car bomb went off in Tal Abad, killing at least 13 and injuring around 20.
- 3** Mass anti-government protests continued in Iraq this weekend. Security forces reportedly killed one protester Saturday and wounded 200 others.
- 5** Elizabeth May stepped down as the Green Party leader. The responsibility was passed on to Jo-Ann Roberts, who was previously a Halifax journalist.  
  
The group behind 'Wexit' is trying to become a registered political party. Its leader says the party will do "for Western Canada what the Bloc Quebecois does for Quebec."  
  
Some Canadian cities have higher levels of lead in their drinking water than Flint, the Michigan city that has become synonymous with contaminated H2O. This came to light following a study conducted by more than 120 journalists.



**6** 11,258 scientists from 153 countries have put out a declaration, saying "clearly and unequivocally that planet Earth is facing a climate emergency."

**11** Remembrance Day  
Sportsnet fired hockey commentator Don Cherry following a televised rant, where he implied that new immigrants don't respect fallen Canadian soldiers.

**12** Boeing 737 Max jets will likely resume commercial service in January after being grounded worldwide due to software issues which caused fatal crashes.

**14** There is a shortage of a common drug (Tamxifen) used to treat cancer. This is expected to continue for months. Patients are urged to ask their doctors for alternative medications.

**15** BC unveiled tough new regulations on vaping, including a 13 percent tax increase on products, and stricter regulations on advertising.

NDP leader Jagmeet Singh has laid out an ultimatum to Justin Trudeau: Either collaborate with the NDP or with the Conservatives, but not both.

Coast Mountain Bus Company (CMBC) escalates job action by refusing to work overtime. This move means many buses and sea buses will be cancelled.

**18** Indian authorities shut down a call centre that specialized in a Canadian phone scam involving social insurance numbers.

**20** Trans Day of Remembrance.

**21** A child in a 120-year-old photo looks remarkably like teen climate activist Greta Thunberg, sparking many jokes and comments about time travel.

The union that represents Metro Vancouver's SkyTrain employees has voted in favour of a strike amid stalled negotiations.

# AMINE DOULFIKAR



Professional MMA Athlete and Engineering Student ●

words LAUREN EDWARDS  
photography ERIC J.W. LI



Amine Doulfikar is a powerhouse. The fourth-year BCIT electrical engineering student actively leads two clubs, teaches mixed martial arts (MMA) and professionally competes in MMA tournaments outside of academia. The Moroccan-born Canadian not only balances it all, but he also excels.

In Morocco, seven-year-old Amine was deemed responsible for all of the family computer's electronic repairs. This carried on when they moved to Canada. When the time came to apply for university, he pursued his passions for electronics at BCIT.

During his studies, Doulfikar picked a CubeSat—a small satellite—for his senior capstone project. CubeSat experience wasn't offered at BCIT and he was recommended to look to the UBC Orbit team. After earning his spot amongst 61 students on the team, Doulfikar became the only non-UBC student. It was around that time he joined the BCIT Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers (IEEE) club, and would later become the chair.

The club's mission is to enhance the undergraduate experience of students. They run competitions, tours, workshops, and more. The competitions consist of BCIT, UBC, SFU, and some KPU students, giving them all chances to apply their skills.

After one year on the UBC Orbit team, Doulfikar was promoted to Team Lead in the Electrical Power Systems (EPS) sub-team. He feels it's a great way to represent BCIT. His responsibility on the EPS sub-team is to make sure the CubeSat always has power in space.

Satellite design and repair has been on his radar for a long time. Satellites have many different applications, such as providing Wi-Fi, or taking pictures of the Earth.

In 2018, Doulfikar won first place in the five-month long Canada-wide SEDS Young Space Entrepreneur (YSpacE) Competition. He presented his Space Science Applied Education (SSAE) business plan, which are hands-on projects to reignite interest students have for space and STEM.

"I went up against Masters' and Ph.D. students from top schools in Canada, and came out first place. Many people told me don't bother competing against those schools, especially since I'm not a business student," says Doulfikar.





He adds that his passion for the industry increased his chances of winning. “I decided to go for it and really put in the amount of work and effort necessary to be a strong competitor.”

But it didn’t come easy.

“My partner backed out of the competition the day before the first submission of our business plan. My two options were to also give up on the competition or do his part and continue with the competition.”

Doulfikar’s ambition will carry him through his last year at BCIT and his grad school prospects. As for now, he highly recommends students apply to different clubs and see which one fits best for them. “There could be benefits to being part of those clubs that you may not see at the current moment,” he explains.

For example, one of the engineering clubs presented Doulfikar with the opportunity to take courses in Europe for free. Initially, he hesitated. It was nearly finals at BCIT, and students across the country were applying for the two student spots available—but he got in.

“I would also recommend students to search on their own time for courses in Europe or anywhere in the world. It’s a great experience to broaden your knowledge, meet like-minded people, and learn something new,” says Doulfikar.

Doulfikar has been teaching at Gibson MMA for seven years now. He teaches kids, teens, women, and adults in his classes, and finds it a great way to give back to the community. From his experience there, he “personally believes everyone should know some form of martial arts, specifically for self-defence. It’s also great to see people at the gym work hard and accomplish their fitness goals.”

He aspires to motivate students to go out of their comfort zones, get involved in different things, make new contacts and friends, and follow their passions.

### **What are the benefits of MMA?**

I joined mixed martial arts just for self-defence. There’s a huge defence component to it. I find it a great way to join as a kid and grow up with mixed martial arts. Then, of course, there are the health aspects of it. If you’re doing sports and if you’re in it long enough and if you’re interested you can also compete, which I’m doing too.

### **Are you training for an upcoming competition?**

I will most likely compete in the summer because of the school workload and everything I’m involved in. It gets tough to get ready for a fight or competition to get prepared. You need to do a lot of training.



### Could you walk me through your training routine?

For a competition, I would try to train twice a day, morning and evening. You should be eating well, having good, healthy food. [You should be] working on your weak points, if you have any information on the opponents that you'll be going [up] against. It's always good to kind of know about him and learning what his good points are"

"When the fight gets closer, if you have to cut weight, you might have to start drinking a bit more water and cutting other food out. Be healthy. Just train hard. When it's time to compete, the main objective is for you to be confident in yourself."

### Are you working with coaches or are you self-trained?

I work with coaches. I work with Lance Gibson Sr., his son, Junior, and his wife Julia Budd. I worked with all of them and other trainers at my gym. They're really good coaches. I've been with them since I started mixed martial arts.

### Is there another competition coming for the IEEE club as well?

We're organizing a competition called "RC Classic" in January. We will start promoting it soon throughout BCIT, UBC, SFU, KPU, and hopefully, get other schools around Canada.

The students will have to design an RC car and bring it to the competition. We have different categories and they will compete. The top three teams will get awards. It's an exciting event.





**What would you advise for a person trying to improve academically but also balance everything?**

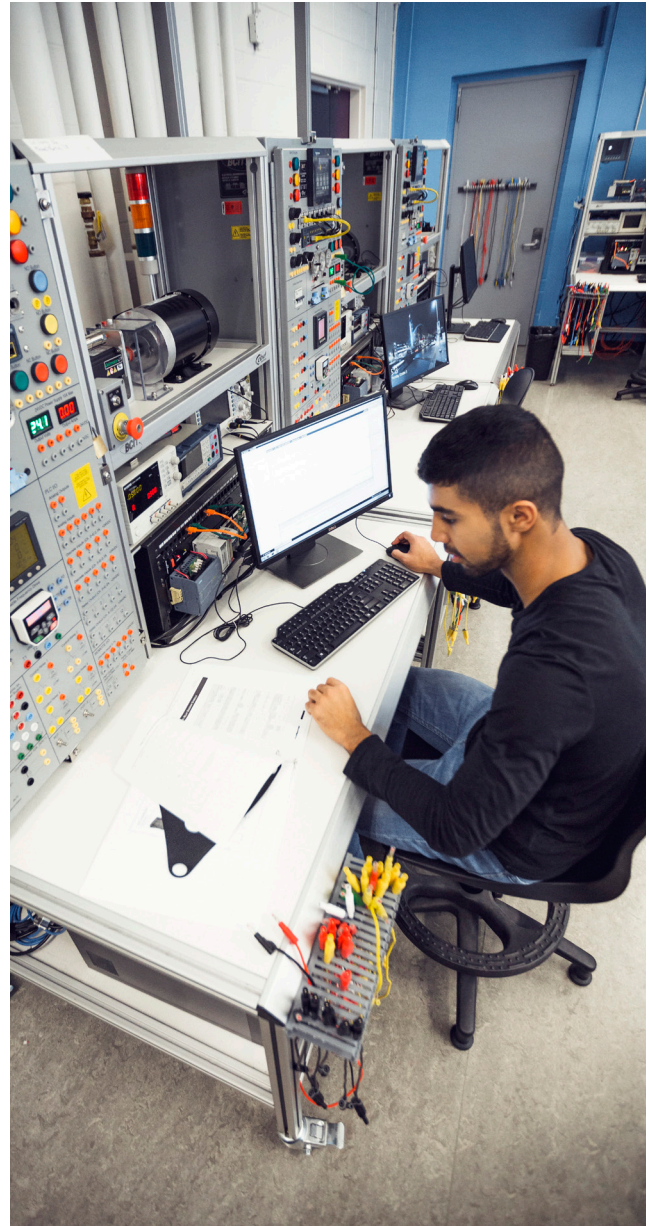
I would say, look at your goals, where you want to head and kind of what kind of grades do you need to see. I would say time management is very critical. You put in the work that you have to put in for school. From my point of view, you can find time to socialize and have fun with your friends. But [if good grades] are your priority, you have to put in the time first there.

**What made you decide to pursue electrical engineering?**

Electrical engineering seemed to be interesting because I can design those electronics and solve problems. I love problem-solving and just coming to solutions with difficult problems.

**What's the biggest lesson that you have learned during your four years at BCIT?**

Most programs are quite tough here. My view from the fourth year now is a bit different than the first year. In first-year, I was very focused academically to get into the degree program—you're not in the degree program until the second year. Once I hit the second year and I made it into the degree program, then I said "Okay, academically, I'll stay strong, but I want to get more involved." That's when I started looking at other programs. I would say try to get involved in the community. If you're in the program that you're in and you think you can manage your grades, try to get involved. Learn different things and experience different things.





REMAINED  
停留

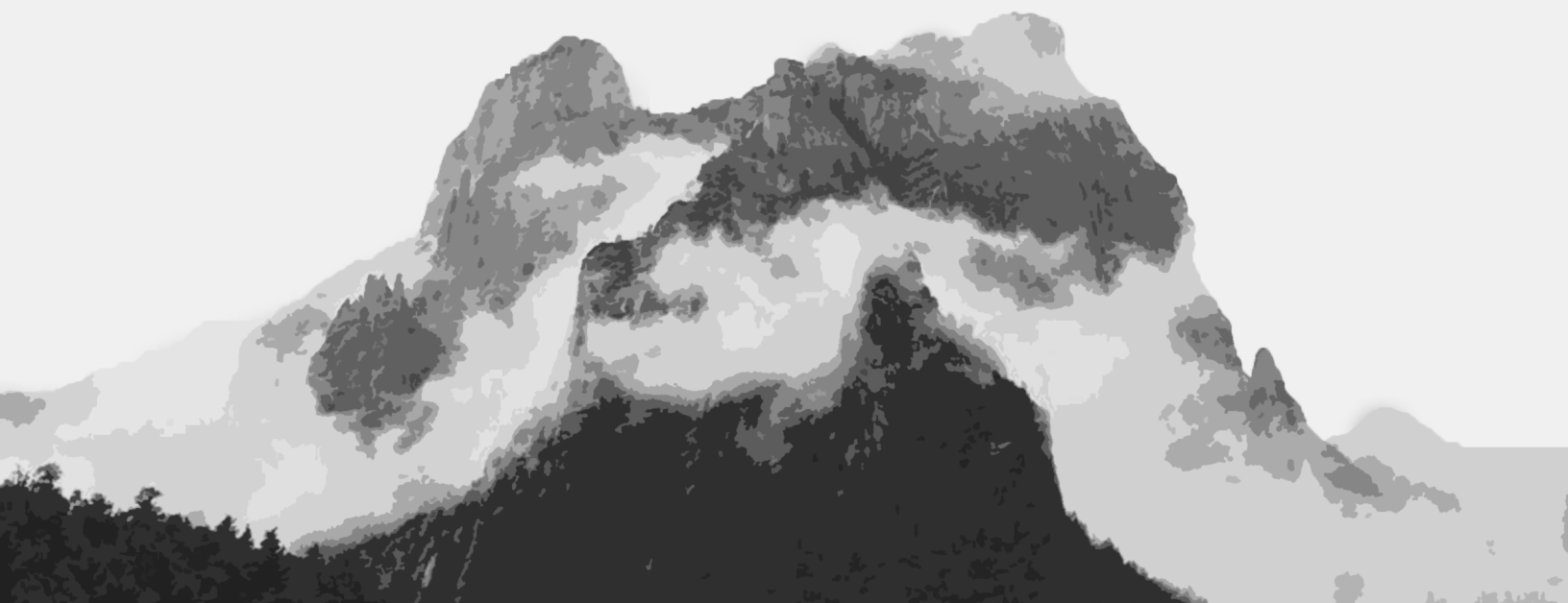




*by Sherry M. Lai*

Another midday grew to the vault of heaven  
Sparse, rainy snow tingled with my fingertips  
Hushed in the breath, dived in the nightfall  
Hauls in the round, drown into my shattered dreams

三点午后沉得像夕阳散尽的苍穹  
指尖划过了砂糖粒儿的雨雪  
经过了沉默 停留的是整宿  
也缓存犹如光伏般 层层加码旧梦



ART FEATURE

# Zach Whitbread





Zach Whitbread is a twenty-something year old frog who's a complicated mess of music, scribbles, hopes, and horrors. He's currently a fourth term computing student, but when he's not dying at BCIT, he spends his time writing, drawing, and creating. Lately, his focus is on pixel art and custom cassettes for video game soundtracks.

For a short while he worked for Nintendo, but now his focus is on (slowly) creating his comic, *Weird City*.

While his genres of work are rather scattered, the goal remains the same:  
create things that interest and resonate with people.



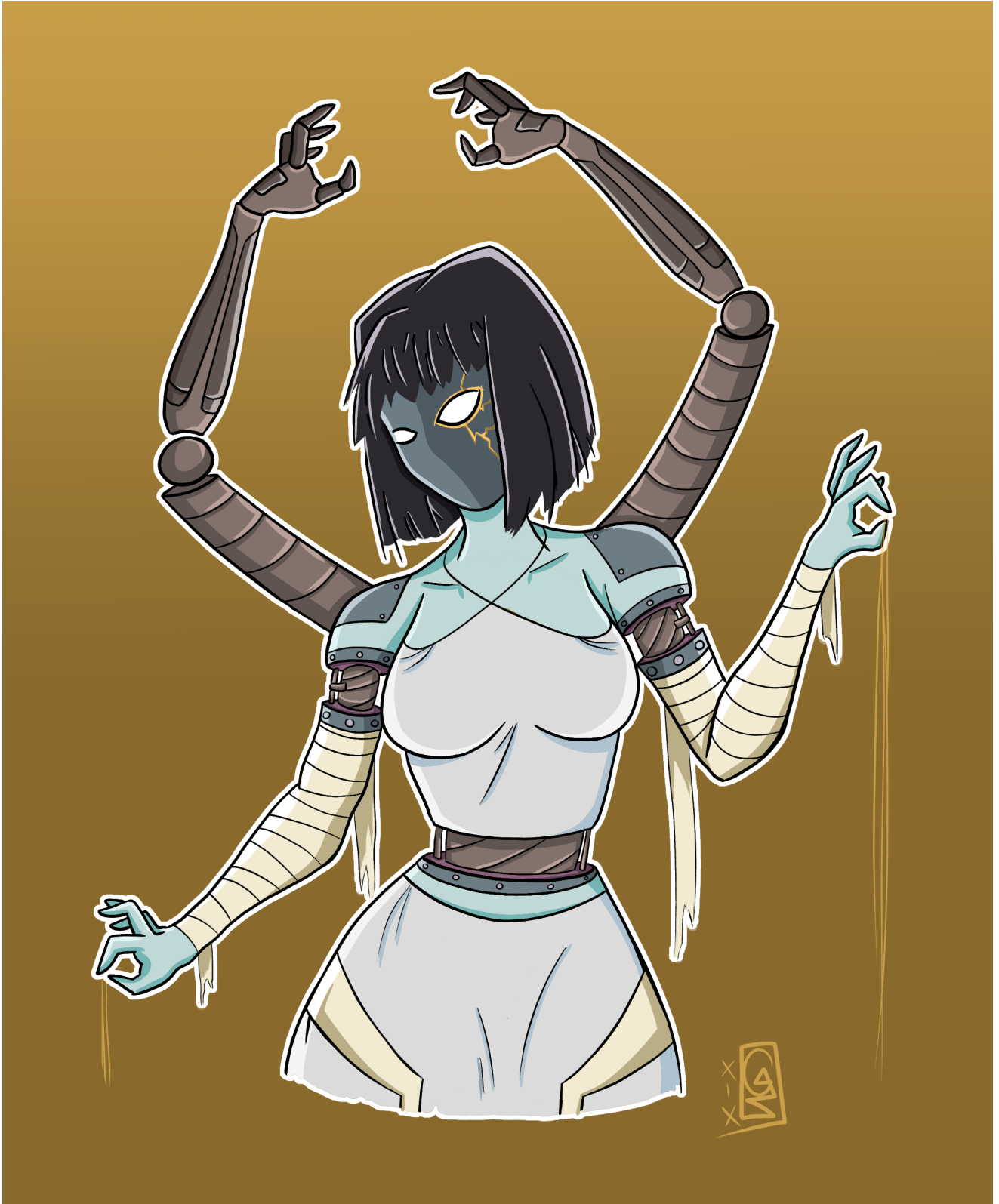












# THAI

## PEANUT WRAPS

These are great to eat throughout the week, but since we use wheat wraps instead of rice, they also freeze quite well. Doubling the recipe is a great idea if you want to throw half in the freezer for later. The peanut satay makes a nice dipping sauce, and can be doubled or tripled and thrown in the fridge for the future. It takes time to make, but it is well worth it considering how many wraps you get out of it.

The rice has added coconut milk, fat and salt; having more flavorful rice goes a long way in wraps. I recommend using brown rice, because it adds texture and is healthy. Same goes for the wraps, whole wheat is best.

recipe **ANDREW WILLIAMSON**

page design **TRACY NGO**





## INGREDIENTS

- 2 cups of uncooked rice
- 1 can of coconut milk (400mL)
- 2 cups water
- ½ tsp of salt
- 1 tbsp butter or oil
- 2 blocks of tofu, or your choice of protein (chicken or prawns would be great)
- 1 head purple cabbage
- 1 English cucumber, halved lengthwise and then sliced
- 2 carrots, grated or julienned
- 1-2 diced bell peppers
- cilantro (optional)
- 1-2 package 7-inch flour wraps

### Rice

Using your rice cooker, add 2 cups of uncooked rice, one can of coconut milk, 2 tbsp of butter, and some salt. Turn it on before you begin the rest of the recipe. Once it finishes, allow it to cool for 5-10 minutes before adding it to the rest of the wrap.

### Peanut Satay

Add all the ingredients into a bowl and then microwave for around 30 seconds. Give it a stir and then microwave again for 30 seconds. Give the mixture a final stir, you just need to make sure that the peanut butter is melted.

### Tofu or other Protein

If you are using tofu or chicken, cut it into cubes and fry it in a pan or wok with two tablespoons of oil. You will want the pan to be on at least medium-high heat, as you will want the protein to be golden brown on all

## PEANUT SATAY

- ¼ cup soy sauce
- 2 tsp Sambal Oelek or Sriracha (add more if you want it spicier)
- ½ cup peanut butter (doesn't matter if it's smooth or crunchy, but natural peanut butter doesn't work well, I suggest using something like Kraft)
- 4 tbsp ketchup
- 4 tbsp orange juice (optional)
- 2 tbsp honey or sugar
- 3 tbsp lime juice
- 2-3 minced garlic gloves
- 1 tsp grated ginger



sides. This should take about 5-10 minutes. If you are using prawns, shell and fry until just cooked, about 5 minutes. Let it cool 5-10 minutes before proceeding.

### Wrapping it Up & Storing

While waiting for the rice and protein to cool, you can chop the vegetables. Lay one square sheet of aluminum foil on your workstation, topped with a wrap. Set up several of these at once, to make the wrapping process easier. The order and amount of toppings aren't important but don't overstuff. Once filled with your chosen ingredients, wrap it up, and enclose it in the tinfoil. They can be refrigerated for 3-4 days, or frozen for 3-4 months.





# A Student of a Certain Age

words KEVIN OLENICK

My name is Kevin.

I'm 46 years old, and I'm in my first year attending the Radio Arts and Entertainment Program at BCIT.

I know what you're thinking:

OK Boomer.

Technically, I'm not a Boomer, I'm Gen X, and I don't care if you're on my lawn. The only two requests I have are:

- a) Bring your dog so I can pet them, and
- b) Clean up after your dog's mess

At my age, I have to be one of the oldest students at BCIT, if not the oldest.

Now, it may seem to some that I'm in a young person's world. Maybe I'm in the way. I certainly may not fit the mold of what is generally perceived as the "cool" demographic, but I'm here.

It also may seem to some that I don't belong. I'm different than everyone else.

And you know who thought that the most?

Me.

When I started the program, there were definitely some "culture shocks." The workload was different, the class was larger, and people seemed to know each other.

I didn't know anyone. I felt alone and stressed and disconnected.

When you haven't been in school for a while, coming back is an adjustment. You experience déjà vu and get triggered by things that may have happened the last time you attended high school. (Yes, they had high school "back then.") You get reminded of similar issues you dealt with back then, like acceptance or rejection. Everyone in class may start out as strangers on the first day, but eventually you notice cliques forming. You could find yourself eating lunch alone, or your invite to a cool party may have "missed you" somehow. If you're lucky, you could also end up clicking with a few people on campus, age difference or not.

When I returned to school, three things happened:

The first was when one of the students in my program asked me how old I was.

I felt a little awkward, but I answered. 46.

He said he was 30. There, we felt a connection. At least I wasn't the only adult in the program.

The second instance was from my counsellor. He had a similar journey where he changed careers when he was 40. He went from engineering to counselling.

Huh, I'm not the only one.

The third came from an 18-year-old classmate. He reminded me that I have 25 years of experience that the others can learn from.

Also, true.

From these three moments, I took away two valuable lessons:

First, I'm not alone. It's getting more and more common for adults to go back to school. Not just at BCIT, but across Canada. The average person will change careers 5-7 times, and to succeed in your career change, you will often have to include some education.

The second lesson is this: it doesn't matter if you are old or young—if you are open, you can learn. Wisdom comes from different places and in different ways. Have I given wisdom? Maybe. But I would argue that I have learned more.

There are still things to adjust to. I'm ten weeks into a two-year program, so there is still a lot I don't know.

But I know that in the Spring of 2021, I will graduate with the rest of my classmates.

And I will be proud.



OP-ED

# Nothing Lasts FOREVER

words SHERRY M. LAI



My first ever online purchase was a white lace bodycon long-sleeve dress from Forever 21. That was back in 2012 when Instagram was still growing, Justin Bieber was in trouble (as always), and Forever 21 was reaching its peak, not its downfall.

After filing for bankruptcy on October 3, 2019, Forever 21, the brand which once embodied fast fashion, will be closing its stores in Canada.

How did it all go this way? What does Forever 21 closing its stores in Canada mean?

## Same!

My friends and I used to play this hallway game in middle school, where we categorized people based on their clothing labels. We got the 'Urban Behavior Sweats,' 'Garage Plaid Shirts,' 'American Eagle Jeggings,' 'Vans Squad Swag', and my personal favourite, 'The Bloggers.' The bloggers, whose hair had the flawless curls, and the perfect bounce; their nails were fresh and always done; their outfits were 'to die for.'

Desire stimulates action. I woke up at 6 am to take the train to Vancouver on a weekend morning, just to carry two big yellow shopping bags at the end of the day.

Forever 21 was one of the first companies to specialize in fast fashion. It quickly turned runway looks into affordable products, and people could not get enough. I was one of those people. I was proud to wear their clothes, so I could say *same!* to The Bloggers.

Forever 21 was my Pinterest back in the day, it was where I could draw myself into look books for hours.

## Sure.

In high school, Forever 21 wouldn't pop into my mind unless I needed an inexpensive dress. I was in the dance program, so I needed a different outfit for each of the shows—sometimes a half dozen each year.

"Just get 'em at Forever 21," was heard before each show.

Years went by, and I noticed the stores had become less crowded. Less crowded meant more fun, though. All of us got to play around and try on more clothes in an emptier space.

It's hard to say if fast fashion itself is going to die. People are more informed and are choosing sustainable options. For Forever 21, the twenty-one-year-old core consumers of a decade ago are different from the ones today. The price point is no longer the only consideration.

One competitor, Zara, has expanded tremendously over the past decade. The company creates products that meet people's demands while maintaining decent quality. They insert pop culture into the retail environment and uniquely structure their store.

If you're not a fashion guru, you might go to Uniqlo for the essential, classic, and straightforward options.

Meanwhile, instead of keeping up with target consumers, Forever 21 turned into storms of cheap, misfired products. The over-extended aggressive retail chain has been left behind.

Sure, I did shop at Forever 21 sometimes, since it was a prominent tenant at big malls—easy to reach, approachable. At one point, I thought, is it just me, or is everything starting to look the same? I wasn't some Youtuber who could afford a new shopping haul every three weeks and having stretched or faded clothes was—and is—a severe problem for me. Though the products at Forever 21 are affordable, the quality isn't there.

"Hey, you wanna just wrap it up at Forever 21 for the beach party?"

"Okay."

"Actually, do you want to go somewhere else instead?"

"Sure."

## **Smh.** (*shaking my head*)

The growing pain of Forever 21 was not just the rise of sustainability culture among consumers, but also its controversial lawsuits, and the lack of awareness of its target demographic. Forever 21 closing its stores in Canada symbolizes a shift in consumer taste.

Frankly, Forever 21 ran as an outdated retailer that did not embrace change and innovation. Younger shoppers are more environmentally cautious, they have a higher awareness, and feel a responsibility towards climate change. Most of Forever 21's clothes were made overseas, and many workers were not being paid a living wage. This isn't sustainable on an environmental or a humanitarian level.

Also, the style of visual merchandising in its retail stores didn't keep up with the taste of its target audience. The last time I shopped at Forever 21 was three years ago, and the products were overwhelming and featureless.

With the closing of Forever 21, roughly 20,000 people will lose their jobs. Smh. Guess nothing lasts forever.



# COFFEE & LOAF COMBO

Available at The Stand  
South and Central



THE  
stand

# TOASTMASTERS



# WHERE LEADERS ARE MADE



## **Toastmasters Will Help You:**

- ▶ Become a better speaker and presenter
- ▶ Communicate with confidence
- ▶ Develop your leadership skills
- ▶ Listen effectively

**JOIN US! GUESTS ARE WELCOME FREE**

**WEDNESDAYS 3:00PM - 4:30PM**  
**SE6, Room 108**

For more information contact Larry Jung  
Ljung@bcitsa.ca | 604.432.8278