

december 2016

LINK

MAGAZINE

BCIT & BEYOND

**WHEN PLAYING GOD
GETS BORING**
a SIMS 4 horror story

filipino
house
party

STUDENT SPOTLIGHT

CURTIS RENNING

On art and architecture

plus: the Welfare Food Challenge, locker room talk & poetry

**ESCAPING
AGRA**

New documentary shows
a fight for freedom in the
gender binary world.

**THE
SINKING
OF THE
NATHAN E.
STEWART**

STUDENT SPOTLIGHT

MAX HUANG

meet the man behind the macaron



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#BCITandBEYOND

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LINK is published 8 times annually by the BCIT Student Association and distributed free on newsstands across all 5 BCIT campuses.

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Emily Buck

Marine Engineering Officer Cadet



Emily is a marine engineering cadet at BCIT in North Vancouver. She has spent time as a mechanic and a data processing technician on research vessels. She loves wilderness, books, animals, and big machines. She was born in Central Alberta, but has never managed to stay put anywhere for very long.

Mat Hylan

Radio Arts & Entertainment



Two years ago, a friend brought Mat into the radio station they worked at, so he could go on-air for an hour. It was one of those moments where a light turned on in the back of Mat's head. He had a new passion, which led him to BCIT.



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On the upside...



INTRO

on the cover:

Curtis Renning never quite knows how to start each panting, but we're sure glad he knows how to finish them.

photo maddy adams

The night after Donald Trump was elected, I was driving with my dad. The radio was playing Tom Petty, like it normally does. Just as we crossed a bridge, out of nowhere my dad announces to me that he's been inspired by the Trump phenomenon. My dad and I don't talk about politics much. We've talked a bit about the outrageousness of the Trump situation, and the headlines-of-the-day, but really we just talk about funny things that happen to me on the Skytrain, or the day-to-day events that occur in our lives. But on that November night, my dad opened up and told me that he wanted to do better. He said he was making a personal effort to call out casual racism and people who make "harmless" comments.

This was pretty cool for me to hear. I've never considered my dad to be any shade of the bigotry rainbow, but I do think he (and a lot of other people) have reasons why they don't speak up most of the time. My dad's name is Rocky and he works in the construction industry. He owns his own business, and many years of managing large projects and employees inside the "trades" culture has made him into a "Rocky" kind of guy. However, I know him well enough to know that he is a bit crunchy on the outside, but soft and sweet on the inside.

I think everyone has their own reasons why they might not speak up about the harmful words they hear around them, and I can't claim to know what all of those reasons are. Maybe they're just too polite, or they don't want to rock the boat too much. Sometimes it seems easier in the moment to ignore it, brush it off and move on. But I've noticed a shift after the election results rang in. For a lot of people, like my dad, something about Donald Trump has changed them.

Rocky told me that he was making a personal pledge to do better, to combat the off-the-cuff bullshit he hears on the daily — little racist

remarks, sexist comments and homophobic jabs. Because it's little comments like these that snowball into larger problems. It's hard to imagine how a dumb joke that someone makes on their lunch break contributes to a culture of violence, but it does. You may laugh it off politely, but what if that joke was directed at your kid, your neighbor, or your friend? I get it though. It can be uncomfortable to call someone out when they make an off-colour joke. But you know what else is uncomfortable? 1 in 4 women in North America will be sexually assaulted in their lifetime. The degree of separation between yourself and the victims of abuse, harassment and violence, is not that large of a gap.

We all have a tendency to become passive to these statistics, but I think Donald Trump obnoxiously dominating the news for the past year has lit a real fire. People want to do better. I think now more than ever, Rockys are realizing that when they stay silent about the stuff they know in their gut is wrong, it's like saying that it's okay.

But there is good news. This situation is a reminder of a couple things. First, it's a huge reminder about the power of voice and influence. What you (or Donald Trump) say, has an impact on listening ears. Second, because of this, you can be influential and make positive change. I think Donald Trump has exposed a repulsive, hyper masculine part of our culture, and people like my dad no longer want to be associated with it, or let it carry on. So he's speaking up, which I think is a real shift away from just complaining about it. Don't like what Trump stands for? Do something about it.

— Maddy Adams
Photo Editor



Armchair Quarterback

It's rare for a team to pick up a new play caller so late in the season, but when **George Eliopoulos** became available to blog about week-to-week action in the NFL, we snatched him up. Check in to our blog every week until Superbowl, for highlights, recaps and analysis from a true student of the game.



Solange as you're listening

Mariah Millie dives into Solange Knowles' latest album and explains how *A Seat at the Table* isn't about claiming a little of her famous older sister's fame like you'd think it is, but rather, it's about black survival in 2016. Find out why the message in the music earned a 9/10.



Fight or flight

Sure, you can keep beating your head against the wall, never taking a break from the grind of BCIT, or you can be like **Christina Willis** and put the books down for a second to enjoy the finer things in life. Check out what she has to say about Luppolo — the latest addition to BC's booming beer scene.



RT
#BCIT

@gurneetksarma



@czerwinski

"The great #crow migration every night at dusk still gives me the creeps. When it's that many crows is it still a Murder? #BCIT #burnaby"

@simonesim1

"My instructors continuously lament about students' heavy workload. but then they're like HERE'S ANOTHER GROUP PROJECT SUCKERS. #BCIT"

@bcitsa



ENGINEERING A VICTORY

Championship Iron Ring has a nice, *ahem*, ring to it don't you think? BCIT's budding young engineers are looking to solve the problem of pesky opponents, by setting their theodolites on a couple of upcoming competitions.



CAME IN LIKE A WEC-ING BALL

Even though the 2018 Western Engineering Competition (or WEC for short) seems like a million years away, if you actually factor in the angle of descent against the weightload capacity of.. Oh who am I kidding; I have no idea what I'm talking about. But BCIT's brilliant young engineers do, and they usually fare pretty well against their opponents in this annual competition that pits students, "head-to-head to test their engineering skills in team-building, communication, and problem solving." Congratulations to the BCIT students who successfully bid to bring WEC 2018 to the our campus for the fist time ever, and now that we've got home court advantage, bragging rights are ours for the taking.

SAIL or MOON

Whenever I hear scientists encouraging civilians to build drones for space exploration I think: 'The final frontier? Please. 95% of our own oceans remain unexplored.' But *no*, space has that 'wow' factor. Remember when James Cameron built his own deep space submarine to explore the ocean's depths? Didn't think so. But I bet you do remember *Avatar*. I'm proud of BCIT's student chapter of the IEEE (Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers) for sticking it out with the blue planet, through their work on building an unmanned aquatic drone called SailBot. Sure, the International SailBot Competition they've got their sights set on for June '17 is kind of like a glorified RC race on water, but it's the imagination that counts, and the willingness to keep looking for answers closer to home. Besides, what's your stupid moon drone going to prove anyways? Unless of course you come back with some unobtainium or an invoice with Stanley Kubrick's name on it...



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Layers of Mistakes

With a bundle of hand-painted canvases in his hand and a world of influence in his head, **Curtis Renning** met us on the north end of campus to talk about his hobby as an abstract painter. Now in his fourth and final year in BCIT's Architecture program, the stress of school has created an opportunity for Curtis' mind to relax and for his beautiful work to materialize. We explored what goes on in his brain when he's making these fantastic pieces of art.

interview **jarell alvarez**
photos **maddy adams**

"I have to stand back and think about what the next move is."

What does "art" mean to you?

Art is the subjective part of everyday life. Art is completely up to interpretation. If it strikes emotion, or something in somebody, then it's art. It's too hard to put a label on it; you just can't... At least I don't think so. Everyone has their own opinion about art. Like you can put a chair in the corner and it can be art to somebody, or it can be just a chair in the corner.

Where do you grab inspiration from the most?

I would say that most of my inspiration comes from studying architecture, as far as composition and patterns. My inspiration comes from different artists on Instagram, like Eric Jones and Matthew Ryan Herget. I love landscape, since it's all around you, but generally I would say studying different mediums from different artists would help me explore techniques, or contrast and composition.

What's your favorite colour?

That's too tough. I like the pink and reds a lot, but every colour goes so well with another color. I have this one canvas that's just a swash of different colours and all in all, it looks really good from far away, but up close, it's for opinion. It's interesting that the colour palette doesn't always matter, but often you screw up and use the wrong colours, then they clash.

How do you start a piece? Do you have any rituals?

I like to throw on my playlist of the month, or the week, by any kind of artist and sometimes I throw on shuffle. Generally the music affects the mood, and the mood affects the energy that's put in. With abstract, you pretty much start mixing a colour you like. Afterwards, I walk up to a blank canvas and do one motion. I have to stand back and think about what the next move is. It's kind of like discovery in itself, which is interesting, but when you make the wrong move, you mess something up that was going well.

What is the main theme you like to convey in your paintings? What's "the thing" you want your audience to see?

I like the idea that from far away, it looks like something familiar, but up close you realize it's just a big mess of random lines and splashes and scrapes. I don't know if that's conveyed in my paintings... Some of them have direction and some of them are just layers of mistakes that end up looking okay. I'm not really trying to accomplish anything from it, but I do it because it's enjoyable and it's a hobby for me. I like the end result. It gets to something that's enjoyable, but also kind of frustrating, because you sometimes run around in circles. I would also want people to see the abstractions of every object around you.

continued...

**"We're
always
adapting
and slightly
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but I think
we always
revert back
to similar
things"**

Is there something you learned about yourself recently, or are you still learning who you are?

I think we're always learning about who we are... but we kind of already know who we are. We're always adapting and slightly changing, but I think we always revert back to similar things that's compiled over years of growing with those around you. For me, BCIT changed a lot of my life. It made me more of an introvert, which in the end, I appreciate. Introverts are underappreciated in some aspects, since they don't express what they think, but that doesn't mean they're not thinking of profound kinds of things, or have a lot to contribute. It's also diminished my social aspect, but that can change when I get out of here. It's definitely made me appreciate more of my artistic side.

What artistic superpowers would you want?

The ability to project whatever you are thinking into an image without having to do the work. [I would love to have] all the drawings for my architecture done so I wouldn't have to spend hours drawing it!

Are you looking to sell your art soon, and if so, why?

I actually have sold a piece to an exchange student from my program last year. I would happily sell my work, but I don't know how to appraise it [chuckles] I feel like I should have somewhat of a collection of similar styles before I market my work.

See more from our shoot with Curtis, online at www.linkbcit.ca and be sure to check out more of his work on instagram @cjrenning

FAMILY FOOD

words **jarell alvarez**

Hapag Ihaw-Ihaw

5432 Victoria Dr.
Vancouver

I bet everyone has that one Filipino friend you hang out with, and if you've ever visited their house, you instantly became a part of their family. Nearly every time I bring my friends over, my parents "force" them to try our delicious cuisine. Vancouver has an abundant population of nearly 80,000 Filipinos, yet our cuisine is not as known as other cultures with an even lower ethnic population. I've been on the hunt for the best, and I think I've found it.

Filipinos first immigrated to Canada in 1931, bringing along a wealth of culture and diversity to the country. The cuisine that was carried over is a mixture of many cultures, dating back more than 300 years when the Spanish first touched the shores of the small Islands of the Philippines. Their food was very fresh and simple back then, finding whatever they could while boiling, roasting and broiling over an open fire. New spices started arriving from cultures like the Malaysians, Indonesians, Arabians, Indians, and Chinese.

Some of those cultures planted their routes there, integrating their styles and flavours which eventually became the cuisine you see today. Many of the staple Filipino foods you might try are infused with Chinese, Spanish and North American influence. Filipinos began integrating noodles and rolls from China, rice-meat dishes and elaborate desserts from Spain, and sweet spaghetti and pizza from North America. If you weren't sure if something was Filipino or not, a good indication is anything with "adobo" on the menu, which features a spicy dish or sauce in chicken or pork that's stewed in vinegar, garlic, soy sauce, bay leaves and peppercorns.

Filipino breakfasts are comprised of eggs and rice, along with your choice of beef, fish or pork sausage called "longaniza" that is either spicy or sweet. I prefer having a

dish called "*longsilog*" that comes with fried eggs that gently coat the garlic fried rice, while tiny chunks of longaniza coat your palate with delicious sweet and salty tastes. As for dessert, you can expect to eat dishes that are rice or coconut based which shouldn't come as a surprise since the Philippines is a tropical country after all. My favourite dessert has to be "*pandesal*" that was freshly baked from Aling Mary's near St. Patrick's school, which became a tradition of mine growing up. After my basketball games I'd plead: "Dad let's order two dozen, and can I get a side of grape Crush?"

So the final question is, where can you get your hands on good Filipino cuisine? A few places, but if you're looking for something truly authentic, Hapag Ihaw-Ihaw (Table Grill Grill) is the best I've had yet in Vancouver.

Alfonso Namujhe has owned the restaurant for nearly three years, coming from humble beginnings as a farmer with zero culinary training, to making a short, precise menu with high quality food. Namujhe saw a gap in the Vancouver food market, where Filipino cuisine is hardly recognized, and made it his mission to fulfill it with his best-selling, mouth-watering thin and crispy skinned *pata* (pork). His restaurant is along East 38th Avenue and Victoria Drive, and even if you live far away from there, authentic and succulent Filipino cuisine is definitely worth the trip.



NEXT ON THE MANTEL

words **jordan kwong**

The holiday season is wonderfully chaotic. It starts on the parking lot battleground with fellow frazzled gift seekers. Then soon shifts into the many dinner parties to attend (don't forget the one or two you're hosting) where your alcohol tolerance and cooking skills are stretched to the best of their abilities. There is so much happening during the holidays, but it's all a part of a shared experience that is both personal and universal; our traditions may be different, but the loving energy remains the same.

I was born in Vancouver and had a fairly typical suburban childhood. When December rolled around, I'd get caught up in the excitement, along with all of my friends. We made popsicle stick reindeer in school, decorated the Christmas tree at home, and sang along to carols. My holidays growing up were full of good fun and good spirits. My parents are from Hong Kong, and they carried their Eastern traditions over to the holiday seasons. They were also, by all accounts, heavily influenced by Western culture. It never really crossed my mind until I look back on it now, that my experience of the holidays growing up as an Asian-Canadian were an encapsulation of blended traditions.

One of my earliest Christmas memories is of shopping for presents with my father when I was about five. I wanted to buy a nutcracker, just like from the ballet. I don't even know why I wanted one, I probably thought his outfit looked cool, but nonetheless, I did. So the nutcracker joined our expanding collection of Christmas decorations. He stood on the mantel, next to a dancing Santa and some traditional Chinese figurines. To me, it was never a jarring juxtaposition, but rather, a familiar contrast that somehow fit together.

My family and I exchanged gifts as usual with Western celebrations, but in addition to that, they also gave red envelopes. Red envelopes are a Chinese monetary gift, symbolizing good fortune. Even in Hong Kong, where the holidays have also become Westernized, red envelopes remain a common part of celebrations. As much as I appreciated them, the red envelopes never gave me the same thrill as the gifts I had to unwrap. At the time, I didn't consider the red envelopes as a tradition to be carried forward.

For me, the best part of the holidays are the big feasts. Followed in as a distant second is getting together with loved ones. I'm (mostly)

joking, but it's true that the food, no matter the cuisine, is always delicious. I have enjoyed everything from my aunt's Hong Kong-inspired stir-fried shrimp, to my mom's Western shepherd's pie. Both Chinese and Western dishes were often served at the same time, which made me look forward to Christmas dinner even more. Food represented an amalgamation of East and West; it was harmonious, and all I knew.

A childhood holiday memory that stands out to me quite well is an elementary school performance. Not only because my class gave a spectacular performance worthy of a standing ovation (this is how it played out in my mind; don't tell me otherwise), but also because the song we sang was for Kwanzaa. Another class sang a song for Hanukkah. This was significant, as my school had a fairly multicultural student body. Those who didn't celebrate Christmas, or those who did but deviated from the norm like myself, weren't criticized, though sometimes went unrecognized. My teachers chose to acknowledge, embrace and extend the message of diversity throughout the concert. I learned that it isn't about one culture rising above another; it's about achieving and celebrating a togetherness beyond mere coexistence.

December is here again, and some traditions have faded. I am not home to decorate the tree, and we lost the nutcracker a long time ago. But some traditions have held steady. I will still engage in Christmas shopping madness. My parents will still give me red envelopes. This time, I will receive them with greater understanding. Maybe one day I will pass them on too. There will be another decoration on the mantel, next to the dancing Santa and the traditional Chinese figurines. I don't know what this decoration will be yet. But I know that I will welcome it with the enthusiasm that December brings out in all of us. Because some traditions, and what they represent, should never fade.



FILIPINO HOUSE PARTY

photo: jarell alvarez

words jarell alvarez

That moment your mom tells you that have eight parties in seven days, you know you're in for a normal Filipino Christmas week. The adventures of grabbing gifts for each third and fourth cousin, the last-minute meal preps for all the potlucks, and the sniffs of shanghai lumpia (meat spring roll) in the air means it's Christmas. There's always excitement when you see those family friends or cousins for the first or second time this year. You got to prepare for your whole year in one night. Christmas for Filipinos are very special, and coming to our houses for celebrations usually means four very important things: food, delicious food, karaoke, and family.

Every person that's ever attended a Filipino-hosted party are guaranteed to eat, be late, or "just on time" in Filipino hours. It doesn't matter if you are just a passerby, random friend, or ate an hour ago, rules are rules. After you've contributed food to the party, it's time to say hello to everyone. It doesn't matter if you're a stranger to them, things like saying hello or introducing yourself to each *tito* (uncle or close family friends father) or *tita* (aunt or close family friends mother) is required. Never forget to *mano po* (bless) your *lolo* (grandpa) or *lola* (grandma) by grabbing their hand and putting it on your forehead, or else it can be tried as a criminal offence!

Once introductions are over and everyone's satisfied by seeing your beautiful, year-older face, it's time to break off into age groups. Finding your age group will be key to having a great night – you don't want to be surrounded by toddlers running around every room, screaming their lungs off while you scrounge for a last-minute invite to your friend's party. If you are lucky to have a group that is around your age, try to find ways to pass the time that doesn't require alcohol. Some would disagree, but cousin time is meant to enjoy each other's company, getting drunk over laughter, not alcohol. My suggestions range from playing Cards Against Humanity, trying new party games, or hogging the Xbox from the kids all night. It's good to realize that any drama from the past is always forgiven during Christmas time, because stale grudges are useless under the upcoming excitement of Santa coming to town again.

Parents break off to see the host of the party, quenching their thirst with wine or beer. Uncles are usually seen discussing basketball or Pacquiao away from the women, carrying a beer in one hand and barbeque tongs in the other. Aunts usually catch up after not seeing each other for awhile. You can hear their loud laughter amidst controlling their "possessed" children.

Later in the night, when all stomachs are satisfied – especially after being yelled to "*Kain pa!*" (eat more) every five minutes, it's time for karaoke. Every drunk tita will sing ABBA's *Dancing Queen* together and begin line-dancing for whatever reason. At midnight, dessert and more food will miraculously reveal itself. After the umpteenth time gorging yourself, your parents will yell at you that it's time to go. You say good bye to 21, 313 relatives, who end up talking at the entrance for another three hours. Under the weight of all the *baon* (leftovers) and Christmas presents you've helped gather, your food coma begins as the cold night air seeps into the car.

The next day, you realize that the parties are over and you can't wait to see your friends and family again. Luckily you have a week or more of parties still to come.



Do you have a special cultural holiday tradition? Share it with us by posting it on facebook.com/linkbcit

LOCKER ROOM TALK

What do women talk about when men aren't listening?

words **mat hylan**

This past November, I took part in the 16th Annual Women's Conference, and even though events like these aren't typically put on for men to attend, I walked away with a brand new outlook on issues that affect my daily life. The whole time that I sat quietly at the back of the room, I felt like a fly on the wall in some secret club. The discussions that night certainly weren't directed toward me, frequently touching upon the discrimination and harassment that women face every day, but I knew in my gut that what I was hearing was important, and something that I, and other men, needed to hear.

The night kicked off with former CTV news anchor Pamela Martin and BC Premier Christy Clark having a fireside chat, and wow it was it powerful. The ability to hear the stories of what these women have had to endure in their careers, and still have to navigate because they are women, really made me take a step back. I suddenly found myself empathizing with a person I am usually so politically opposed to.

The Premier spoke about how her male colleagues call her "Christy." Why is that important? Because these same men address other male members of her cabinet by their correct official title. This might not seem that important at first, but then you realize how it's an attempt to assert power over her, and is a direct act of disrespect. She loves it though, taking it in stride and using the subtle digs to motivate her. I mean hell, it's clearly working. Not only is she a successful single mother, but she is also the longest serving female Premier in Canadian history.

Now before you start thinking I'm just the latest person to jump on the Christy Clark bandwagon and support her political views, I can assure you that's not the case. But I have gained a new appreciation for her, because she has shown me the massive divide that women face today and made me realize that the higher up you make it, does not guarantee you are immune to all forms of gender-based violence.

The 16th Annual Women's Conference was organized by Maureen McGrath, host of CKNW's *Sunday Night Radio Sex Show*, and together with Jody Vance, she led what was the highlight of the night for me: a discussion around "locker room talk." The talk focused on US President-Elect Donald Trump dismissing his now infamous *Access Hollywood* video as just "locker room talk." As a successful sports anchor, Jody Vance is no stranger to locker room talk, so she began by sharing one of her own locker room stories. Vance was one of the first female sports broadcasters ever allowed into the

"I just kept thinking: 'this conversation needs to be bigger, and happen in a lot more places.'"

Vancouver Canucks locker room. In one of her first visits, an incident occurred wherein a player (who she did not name), decided to drop his towel and thrust his hips at her. But Vance's story comes with a twist. As it turns out, this kind of behaviour is an ill-advised move when Trevor Linden is your captain. Captain Canuck got the attention of the entire team and then made it clear that Jody, and any other woman who entered that room henceforth, were to be treated with the utmost respect. An apology from the hip-thrusting player came swiftly. So no Donald, it isn't normal and accepted behaviour in all locker rooms; it depends on the leader.

Hearing some of these personal and intimate stories left me feeling a little uneasy, and at times, even a little guilty. I thought about times in my own life that I could have done something to help, but instead just stood there and let it happen. You do hear about this stuff, but I guess I never realized just how pervasive it is in the daily life of women—in their jobs, in public, even at home. Throughout the conference I just kept thinking this conversation needs to be bigger and happen in a lot more places, especially with a misogynist pig about to become the most powerful man in the world. I used to scoff at Justin Trudeau calling himself a feminist, but now I get it. Men can be feminists, and in fact we need male feminists. We need them to lead by example and show others that we take pride in the equal treatment of the other half of our population. We all know that when women are in positions of power and influence it has a positive influence on those around them.

The time is now guys. Be the man who helps to empower women and be proud while doing it. Don't stand by if you witness even the tiniest inequality! Feminism isn't about "man-hating," it's about equality in our society. Become known in your circle as the guy who puts women first. This isn't just about holding the door open, or picking up the check. This is about changing the way we treat women in our society.

HUNGRY FOR CHANGE

She put her money where her mouth is, now one BCIT student is calling on the province of B.C. to #RaiseTheRates.

words **anita shen**

Any other day of any other week, and I'd be lingering in bed, pressing snooze until the last possible moment. This week is different. My body is buzzing each morning and I find myself waking up at 3 or 4am, feeling anxious and confused. I'm hungry, but not in the way you feel hungry after a good workout – a healthy hollow feeling, like a leather drum booming out, "Feed me, feed me." This is a sickly feeling; a cold-fingered, stressed-out, can't-think-straight sensation that makes every day stretch into a night spent worrying about what I will eat tomorrow.

- More than 180,000 people (or 4% of the BC population), currently rely on social assistance.
- 1 in 4 British Columbia children live in poverty.
- The \$610 rate for a single person has not been increased since 2007.

For me, it's Day 5 of the Welfare Food Challenge. This week, I've been limited to spending just \$18 on food (or \$2.60 per day), which is roughly the amount a person on welfare in BC has left from a monthly cheque of \$610 after paying for rent (\$479), a phone (\$25), and basic hygiene supplies (\$10). That doesn't include clothes, internet, bus tickets, or out-of-pocket medication costs.

I jump out of bed a little past 4:30, even though my alarm hasn't gone off yet. Before I can do anything else, I have to eat. For lack of better options, I heat my ginger tea from last night and pour it onto rice and kidney beans. It's spicy, starchy, and should last me until lunch. There's no chance my nerves could handle coffee, besides, I can't afford it.

I spent \$12.90 on Sunday on a big bag of rice, discount vegetables, and nearly-expired chicken and tofu. Later in the week, I bought beans, pasta, an egg, and a little cup of pudding. Yesterday, I broke into a sweat calculating if I could afford two oranges. I currently have \$1.65 left. Realistically, most people on welfare get help from friends, family or food banks. For the Challenge, I'm not allowed to accept handouts, in order to get the full experience.

The Welfare Food Challenge was started by the anti-poverty coalition Raise the Rates in 2012. Initially, this coalition of thirty organizations called on MLAs (provincial politicians) to try and live off of \$610 for a month. I heard about the challenge while working in a provincial government office last year. I spent my teen years in foster care, and I currently live near the DTES. Many of my friends and neighbours live on social assistance. I chose to do the Challenge to show solidarity with my community and raise awareness of an unjust policy that keeps thousands of people in poverty every day.

Back at my apartment, I pack a bag of food for my shift at the hospital. I'm lucky, because many people on welfare

"Every day is a unique challenge when you're living meal-to-meal."

don't have access to a full kitchen like I do. They might be living with a toaster oven or hot plate, with no fridge to keep food from spoiling.

I've given up many things this week: caffeine, sleep, exam munchies, meeting my classmates at Tim's, having dinner with friends. I no longer have the energy to ride my bike, so I take the bus, and then walk a few blocks. The bag full of food feels heavier in my hand with each person I pass sleeping on the streets. I count seven figures: two in the doorway of a church. "ANYTHING HELPS" reads the sign propped beside one man's face. It's an important reminder as to why I'm doing this, and brings with it a slew of emotions. I'm angry, because no one should be homeless or hungry in a developed country. I'm worried, because it's a wet, chilly October. I'm sad, because despite having a bag of food in my hand, I have nothing to give. Finally, I'm relieved, because any of these people could've been me.

Every day is a unique challenge when you're living meal-to-meal. Here's what being hungry for days feels like: anxious, overly-sensitive, dizzy, lethargic, dry-mouthed, easily distracted, and difficulty focusing. Some foods changed my mood entirely; from depression to elation, or manic energy to the need to just lie down and sleep.

I have enormous respect for those who struggle to live on government assistance. To those who are living on below-poverty wages – you deserve better. We will fight together for a BC in which no one is forced to go hungry.

If you'd like to help, please keep the pressure on Christy Clark's Liberals to #RaiseTheRates by tweeting @ChristyClarkBC and @RaiseTheRates. Also, this holiday season, consider donating to a food bank or volunteering for a Christmas dinner. Find your nearest food bank online: www.foodbanksbc.com/find-a-food-bank/

PHOTO FEATURE



What inspires me most are the people around me that enrich my life. In today's culture we take a thousand pictures on our phones, but when you take out an analog camera, sometimes only with ten shots available, the subject feels that this image is special. A film negative, with the light burned image, that you can see and touch, is something much more real than a digital file in my opinion. Instead of taking your phone out to capture every moment, sometimes it's just as important to know when *not* to take a photo. With film, you slow down and try to create the story with the limited amount of shots you have. Many instances you have the camera out, see the scene you want to capture, take all your light readings, only to realize it doesn't feel right, and you put the camera away.

- joel laurino





THE STEWART *and* THE STEWARDS

by **emily buck**

It's a trip she and her barge have made several times a month for years now. In the early morning of October 13, 2016, while the American flagged tug Nathan E. Stewart was sailing South from Alaska, pushing an empty fuel barge ahead of her, something went wrong. Like many tug and barge arrangements which work along the B.C. coast, these two vessels are classified as an articulated tug and barge (ATB). The barge of an ATB is notched on one end to accept the bow of a tug and when the tug noses into the notch, the two are mechanically coupled together. To stay on the charted safe track through the Inside Passage, the southbound ATB must make a turn to port to enter the Seaforth Passage, headed for Bella Bella. On that morning, she didn't make that turn. The Nathan E. Stewart ran her barge into the rocks, holed her hull, and sank. Her crew evacuated safely, but they could not prevent 107,552 litres of fuel and 2,240 litres of lubricants and hydraulic oils escaping from her tanks into the water.

These waters support the traditional and still current food and income source for the Heiltsuk First Nation of Bella Bella. The crew of the lifeboat Cape St. James was on the scene before the extent of the emergency was known and first responders floated oil absorbent booms in concentric rings around the sunken tug, creating a barrier in front of the clam bed beaches. But it wasn't enough. Bad weather and a tumultuous sea state made containing the spill impossible with the resources on hand. The clam beds have since been closed pending the results of contamination studies.

Soon after the spill, local photographers began documenting the response efforts as well as the harm to wildlife. The story was reported on both social and conventional media. Finally, after the local government and the company which owns the tug had been working for weeks to contain the spill and raise the tug, the provincial and national governments came to Bella Bella to see for themselves. Since being elected in 2011, BC Premier Christy Clark has been talking to Ottawa, working on a plan to put a better coastal emergency preparedness system in place. Concerned citizens, mariners, and various levels of government have known for years that something like this could happen, and there have been a lot of close calls.

A few weeks following the incident near Bella Bella, Prime Minister Trudeau arrived in Vancouver with his announcement of the Oceans Protection Plan, which had been in the works for months already. He and his Minister of Transport, Marc Garneau, stood in front an assembly of uniformed service men and women at the HMCS Discovery in Stanley Park on a drippy Monday morning, addressing a small crowd and a bank of flashing cameras. As a cadet mariner in BCIT's School of Transportation, Marine Campus, I had been following the story with close concern. I was able to attend the announcement and hear for myself Mr. Trudeau's plan of action. Although the Oceans Protection Plan addresses concerns on all three of the coasts, it was clear to me that Trudeau was thinking about



the Nathan E. Stewart disaster when he opened his speech with, "First Nations are always our first responders." He went on to discuss elements of his plan which emphasizes the strengthening of our pan-Canadian coastal first response abilities. In BC, he promises new Canadian Coast Guard Auxiliary chapters, more emergency and enforcement officers, more lifeboat stations, more environmental response depots, and more designated roles for communities with navigation management, incident command, environmental response, and search & rescue. His plan also shifts more of the burden for prevention onto ship owners and increases the severity of the consequences should there be an incident.

Outside the gates of the HMCS Discovery, a group of protesters held signs and chanted, "Stop Kinder-Morgan. Save our Oceans." Some believe that this Oceans Protection Plan is an appeasement measure that can be leveraged to allow heavy oil pipelines to cross the province. Indeed, the plan says, "Canada is putting the proper safeguards in place to move natural resources to global markets, improving economic prospects for all Canadians." In a response to the plan's announcement at a press conference held later that day, Premier Clark denied that this plan meets the requirements for approval of the proposed pipelines, saying: "this looks like a proposal that will meet the needs that we have today, because it's no secret to British Columbians that we don't have the Coast Guard response that we need right now," and insisted that there is still a lot of work to do before approval of Kinder Morgan's pipeline could be considered.

I called up Reg Moody, the Executive Director of the Gladstone Reconciliation Office in Bella Bella, which advocates for the Heiltsuk Nation's fisheries. I asked him about the importance of maritime training to his community. He told me that 400 people in Bella Bella were working in the fisheries last year, but he added, "this is not just a Bella Bella issue. The overall economy of B.C. is at risk. It is absolutely essential that training be top of the line. A lot of good-paying jobs [in emergency preparedness and response] are going to outsiders." The list of unmet training needs is a long one.

Among the items sent to Ottawa by our Premier and the provincial Ministry of Environment, was the request for improved maritime training here in BC, with a special focus on training pilots and First Nations people. The provincial Ministry of Environment said, "B.C.'s marine training institutions require adequate funding to ensure that B.C. provides a centre for excellence in marine training on Canada's west coast," and "additional resources are required to update simulator training to world-leading standards, and to ensure that seating in required courses is expanded to meet the need. Consideration should be given to a dedicated labour force, with an emphasis on First Nations training." The request goes on to ask for money specifically for an upgraded simulator at BCIT, an annual investment to make BCIT a competitive training provider, and money for the training of more pilots.

A spokesperson from the David Suzuki Foundation that I spoke to, pointed out that, "People working on the water along British Columbia's coast are the 'eyes and ears' for marine stewardship.

Mariners need to have the best education available to ensure this stewardship is effective." I listened carefully to the PM's announcement of the Oceans Protection Plan, I read the plan itself in detail, and I listened to the Premier's response to the plan, but I didn't hear anything about improving the training resources, expanding the seating for students, or reaching out to recruit First Nations students into the cadet programs. I contacted B.C.'s Ministry of the Environment, to enquire about the status of these ideas. A representative of the BC Environmental Communications Office got back to me right away and referred me to the Premier's statement

**"We need
our people
trained here and
employed here."**

from which I quoted above. I pointed out that the Premier had not answered my question in that statement. The representative declined to answer further and I'm wondering

what the silence means. Could it mean that the request to support maritime education in B.C. will be a casualty of negotiations between the federal government and the provincial government?

If we are serious about preventing marine spills and accidents, and not just mitigating them, if we are serious about respecting local communities' wishes about how their traditional waters are used, if we're serious about growing our opportunities for employment; then training is not a throw-away issue. We need our people trained here, and employed here. We are the ones who suffer when something goes wrong and we are the ones with the feeling of stewardship for our coast. Reg Moody said, "This is 'gwiilas.' It means to uphold the laws of our ancestors. As mariners on the coast... our responsibility has been passed down from generation to generation to keep the marine ecosystem intact. Our elders always told us that we are stewards."

Our politicians love to point out their deep connections to the landscape, because they know that we will like and trust them when they express the values of which we are proud. It's part tactic, but it's also part truth. We do feel a certain way about our coast (one of the most beautiful in the world), and that makes us uniquely motivated to be the stewards of its protection. 'Eco' is a root derived from a Greek word meaning 'home.' Give us the training we need as mariners to take care of our home, both the ecology and the economy. We can have a world-class system here, and we don't have to choose between creating jobs in energy and transportation and being responsible stewards.

That is why we must insist that training is not a point of negotiation.



TO HELI & BACK

words **tanushree pillai**

Escaping Agra

dir. Pallavi Somusetty
www.escapingagra.com

Naveen and partner Madi kiss outside on a sunny afternoon

(photo by: Pallavi Somusetty/Escaping Agra)

Imagine a world _____

in which your parents send you back to your country, hold you prisoner in your own home and then confiscate your passport. You have no phone, no Internet and none of your friends know where you have disappeared to. The reason? Your parents refuse to accept your choice to identify as non-binary (neither male nor female), because for them, you were born female and that is how it should be.

Now imagine having to go to court to fight for your own freedom and a chance to go back to college and reclaim your identity.

Escaping Agra is a documentary film that follows the life of Naveen Bhat as they battle with their family to get back to the U.S, where they are currently studying. (Naveen's gender pronouns are they/them and he/him.) I sat down with director Pallavi Somusetty, to find out more about her film.

Below: Director Pallavi Somusetty films Naveen and Madi at their home in Davis, California

(photo by: Vanessa Walker/Escaping Agra)



"What happened to Naveen is so much worse than getting sent away for bad grades."

Tell us a little about your film.

Escaping Agra is a twenty-three minute documentary about Naveen Bhat, who is trapped in India after his parents find out about his gender and sexual orientation. The film shows their journey to battle them in court and piece their life back together. The film wrestles with important themes, including familial support, gender and sexual orientation, Indian and Western cultures, post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and young love.

How did the idea of *Escaping Agra* come about?

I first got in touch with Naveen after watching their plea on YouTube. They were seeking assistance to get home to California, after escaping their family home in Agra. I wanted to help Naveen get home, and reached out to offer support and see if they'd be interested in telling the story on camera. I was thinking about going to India while Naveen was there, and follow them back home. By the time Naveen responded, the Delhi High Court judge in India had already ruled in their case, and they were back in California. We met for coffee and *Escaping Agra* bloomed from that initial conversation.

In the South Asian community I grew up in, we were always threatened about getting sent to India if we misbehaved. We never thought it would happen to us, but the threat always loomed. And yet it does happen! It happened to Naveen, and it actually happened to me, too. When I was a young teenager, my parents took away my return ticket during a summer vacation in India. I spent a couple of years there, though I never experienced the level of abuse or homophobia that Naveen did. My experience could not be characterized as an international hostage situation, as I would say about Naveen, because they were an adult at the time of their experience. I have no regrets about my own life and the way that it turned out, and I'm not angry about what happened to me. In fact, I became so close to my cousins that I consider them to be my sisters now. And I was a minor and my parents had every right to send me to India. But I think there's a part of me that has always wanted to document some aspect of getting sent back to the motherland, whether it's the rejection that the person feels when they are in India and their family stays behind in the country they immigrated to, or the culture shock they experience, or the transformation that occurs. What happened to Naveen is so much worse than getting sent away for bad grades. Working on *Escaping Agra* felt deeply personal to me because of my own experience. I hope that the film shows people that this kind of experience can be so much more traumatizing for LGBTQ+ youth.

What insight does the documentary provide about Naveen in particular?

Watching Naveen's present day successes and struggles gives you an idea of what it takes to move forward from an international hostage situation. I hope the film conveys that trauma is not something that survivors can just get over easily, but that these types of abusive experiences can stay with you for the long haul. My personal takeaway from the documentary is that Naveen was cheated of a family that loved and accepted him unconditionally, but maybe family is not just determined by blood.

Could you enlighten us about the concept of binary?

The gender binary refers to strict gender identities and roles when it comes to gender, as in, man/male/masculine and woman/female/feminine and no other options. When someone is non-binary it means they probably don't fall in line with those strict definitions. I say probably, because you should ask someone who identifies as non-binary what it means to them, as non-binary seems to be defined differently depending on whom you're speaking with.

Would you have rather made a fictional LGBTQ film than a documentary?

I'm not transgender or non-binary, and if there is a fiction film about Naveen's experiences, I would hope that the project originates from Naveen or another person whose gender and sexual orientation are more closely matched to Naveen's. Non-fiction storytelling is where my heart lies, because it allows me to step back and let the people I'm filming to speak for themselves and to voice their own stories.

Do you think cultural heritage has something to do with how the LGBTQ community is seen across the world? (Would Indian parents view this differently compared to their western counterparts?)

There's certainly a lot of internalized homophobia and transphobia in the South Asian community, but I see that shifting in the diaspora in which I grew up: the San Francisco Bay area.

What about the parents? What role do they play in the lives of these youngsters?

Parents play such a crucial role in the development of LGBTQ+ youth as healthy, happy individuals. They hold such power. I hope the film encourages parents and guardians of LGBTQ+ kids to give their children unconditional love without abusive judgment. The consequences of not doing so are dire; in the film you see that Naveen continues to suffer from the trauma of their past at the hands of their family. There are statistics saying that trans and gender nonconforming people are 10 times more likely to attempt suicide than the general population. As a mother, if my child were to come to me about something like this, I hope that I would keep my child's health, safety and happiness at the forefront of my mind as we begin those conversations. Instead of parents thinking about their dreams and wishes for their children, let the children share their own dreams with their parents.

Will our society ever reach a point where "gender" would cease to be a category to differentiate people from each other?

I hope it ceases to be a category that causes people to withhold basic human rights from others.

You are a student director. Were there some challenges?

Filming any documentary is a challenging endeavor. I found it difficult to connect with Naveen's parents. I wanted to understand where they were coming from. Unfortunately, Naveen's mother has made it clear to me multiple times that neither she nor her husband wish to speak with me about their family, either on or off the record.

Finally, tell us what happened to Naveen. We want to know how and when they finally escaped Agra.

There's a happy ending for Naveen, in that they did escape Agra and received their passport and travel documents after the Delhi High Court judge ordered the mother to return them. Naveen flew home to California and is attending school. I'll leave it to Naveen to tell you whether they are happy. I think the PTSD from this experience has probably been a real challenge for Naveen but you should confirm with them.

*Interested in what you just read and want to know even more?
Head over to www.linkbcit.ca for Tanu's exclusive interview with
Naveen Bhat about their experience as the focus of *Escaping Agra*.*

CHEF MAX

A portrait of a young man with dark hair, a mustache, and glasses, wearing a blue sweater. He is smiling slightly and looking directly at the camera. The background is a dark wooden surface decorated with several round macarons in various colors like white, pink, and brown.

Inside Max Huang's Vancouver apartment, the scent of freshly baked macarons still lingers in the air. Students of BCIT Burnaby lucky enough to have come across Chef Max selling his famous creations on campus for various fundraisers, will already know what all the fuss is about. For Maddy and I, this is our first, and he's made us a special batch of holiday flavours: eggnog cheesecake and s'mores. So we sat around the kitchen, nibbling on these delicious treats, and got to know each other a little better.

words **rachel chang** photos **maddy adams**

Let's talk about your history. How'd you get into baking?

Well, it started in high school cooking classes. Then I went to VCC during my Grade 12 year. I moved out to Vancouver, and worked at a couple of restaurants: Cactus Club, West End Hotel, Executive Inns, Raincity, and Railtown. That's how it all started.

How did that transition into pastries and confections?

[Those were] my favourite sections of my cooking classes, actually. I think I got 99%. The teacher was even thinking, "Why don't you go into pastries?" I didn't actually get a chance to do it full time until 2012, when I worked at Raincity. They made me pastry cook, and within four months, they made me pastry chef. I was there for a year and a half, and then they brought me to the other restaurant. I did everything, I was sous chef, pastry chef, catering.

What made you want to start your own business?

[Sweets and Confections Co.] was sort of a passion project of mine. After working long hours for so many years in the restaurants, I sort of fell out of love with it. So this was me trying to do it in my own time, do what I love, and just try to love it again. And I'm starting to, so it's working.

Have you had any challenges?

I started in April, and then I got accepted to school, so that was a challenge. No time! But it was great, being able to contribute to BCIT MA (Marketing Association) and Enactus with my skills. It's great to meld your past with your present.

What makes a successful entrepreneur?

Definitely networking. Knowing your value, and portraying that to the people that you network with. I've met so many people at social events and they will come up to me, wanting me to do an event, or they'll put me in touch with someone who can do my packaging, stuff like that.

What made you want to go to BCIT?

My brother and two of his best friends also went to the program. One was in the Communications option, one was in [the entrepreneurship] option. They did warn me! They said, "You're not going to see your friends. You're not going to have time. You're going to be so tired, but it's definitely worth it." They all have great jobs now.

What made you want to get involved at BCIT?

Coming from cooking, you know that schoolwork is not all that matters. In the culinary industry, if you don't have experience, you're nothing, no matter where you went to school. That's how I thought about it. I'm here for two years, let's do it right, let's join some clubs and get involved! Set myself apart from the other 200 people in my program.

What's the next step for you?

I have my internship coming up, so I'm looking into something that'll blend business marketing and food. I'm looking into hotels, smaller companies that do mealshare, [like] Foodie and Tango. Just trying to mesh everything that I love.

Do you have a favourite flavour of chocolate?

It has to be passionfruit habanero. My mom's friend is from Panama. She gave me a jar of passionfruit jam, and it had a little bit of habanero in it. It was just so good, so I tried to recreate that.

Finally, what's your favourite macaron flavour?

Definitely Red Velvet. Anything with cream cheese, I'm down.

Shining appliances, beautiful artwork, and jars of various ingredients are all a part of the environment that inspires Max.



**See Max's
recipe for
eggnog cheesecake
macarons online
at www.linkbcit.ca**

Connect with Max on instagram: [@chefmaxhuang](https://www.instagram.com/chefmaxhuang), or check out Sweets & Confections Co. on [facebook/sweetsandconfectionsco](https://www.facebook.com/sweetsandconfectionsco). Watch out for your next chance to get one of his macarons at BCIT's Schmoozapalooza (January 17th at the Roundhouse Community Centre). Trust us, they are absolutely delicious.

PLAYING GOD

a SIMS story

words **rachel chang**

illustrations **flora brodie**

Their eyes were wide with horror, mouths contorted into garbled screams as the fire slowly crept its way across the room. The living were already mourning the dead; faces buried in their hands as they grieved, knowing they will soon face the same fate. They wailed, they begged, they reached out for me: their god, their puppet master, their all-seeing prophet. I could have saved them. I should have saved them, but I just couldn't bring myself to exit the saved file.

*What have I done?
I whispered to myself.
What on earth have I
done...*



As a long time Simmer, I can assure you that everybody starts out with good intentions. We build a house, we create a nice family to fill that house, we get them good jobs and we send the kids to school. They make friends, make babies, and maybe those babies will have more babies. But that one inevitable day will come. The day that we get bored.

This is the story of the worst thing I've ever done in *The Sims 4*...



Her name was Victoria Underwood. She had dark auburn hair, piercing green eyes, and curves in all the right places. She was mysterious, alluring, and very evil.

One afternoon, she ran into a man at the local coffee shop. His name was Bjorn Bjergsen. Though a married man with a good heart, Bjorn could not resist the temptation of the seductress. Within a day, he was wrapped around her little finger and the "Convince to Divorce Spouse" option popped up in the menu.

Bjorn's wife Clara was blessedly unaware of her husband's involvement with the femme fatale, until she came home one day and caught them WooHooing in their bed. She burst into tears and alternated between slapping him in the face and shouting obscenities in Simlish [ed. The Sims official language]: "How could you do this to me?" she probably screamed. "You bastard! We have two kids together!"

However, nothing could change Bjorn's mind. It was too clouded with his love for Victoria, who stood by, smiling smugly as she watched Bjorn divorce his wife on the spot. Bjorn, while deeply in love with his new woman, grieved for the loss of his marriage, and eventually lost his job because he was too depressed to go to work. That just wouldn't do for Victoria.

// The first daughter, Elsa, took three full Sim days to perish in the backyard pool //

Now, at this point in the story, I could've moved Clara and her two daughters out of the house. That would've been the humane thing to do. But I, their almighty Creator, decided that it'd be more entertaining to murder the two Bjergsen children in front of their already devastated parents. However, it proved much more difficult than I had planned.

The first daughter, Elsa, took three full Sim days to perish in the backyard pool. She had gotten in for a leisurely swim one afternoon, then for some mysterious reason, couldn't find any ladders and instead found that a four-foot wall had been erected around the perimeter of the pool. She was effectively fenced into her doom.

Her energy bar ticked slowly into the red, and soon enough, her little body gave out. It floated to the top of the pool, just as her father entered the backyard. He fell into hysterics, flailing his arms about and begging for the Grim Reaper to not take her soul. But alas, she was gone.

The house was plunged into a black sadness for several days. The parents were inconsolable as they wandered around the house, mourning their daughter's urn that I had ceremoniously put in the center of the living room as a constant reminder of the gaping hole in their hearts.

But it didn't stop there.

Sofia's death was much more difficult than I had planned. I ran a cheat code that would increase the Sim's chances of spontaneous combustion. She would inexplicably burst into fire going about her day, but would immediately be extinguished by her watchful mother. I started to get frustrated. I ran the cheat code another time, but this time, locked the door to her bedroom. She was sitting on her bed when she exploded into flames. Her mother, horrified and utterly helpless, wailed on the other side of the door as her daughter slowly disappeared from the user interface.

"I should stop playing this game," their Supreme Leader (me) mumbled. I removed my

headphones and heavily contemplated deleting this save game and starting anew.

I felt miserable. I satisfied my need for blood, but at what cost? The Bjergsen's were no more. The parents had become empty shells, bursting into tears at random intervals throughout the day. Victoria kicked them both out of the house, renovated it, and got herself two young boyfriends. Bjorn ended up marrying his maid and had three more children. Clara continued her career as a caterer, but she was never the same again.

I'm sure most BCIT students can agree with me when I say that school is hard. Ever since my program start in April, it's been a downward spiral of lost control. It's great fun and we learn so much for the most part, but there are times when I find myself thinking, "It would feel really good if I could just unleash my frustration in an entirely inconsequential way." There's something amazingly therapeutic about playing *The Sims*. Maybe it's the cartoonish interactions between Sims that could never happen in real life. Or the cheat codes — because who wouldn't want to "rosebud" their way to the top?

Or perhaps it's the inner sadist in all of us; to watch these pixelated beings obey your every command. To create a life, then wipe it from existence. To laugh maniacally when they get stuck between a couch and the wall. And what does all that say about us? Are we not all Sims in this massively cruel game called life? Could we possibly all be under the control of an omniscient being who thought it would be really funny if you were stuck at school for ten hours a day, and lived on a diet of pizza and coffee?

For now, I'll just take comfort in the knowledge that I can bring a dead Sim back to life. Maybe the Bjergsen story doesn't end here. Maybe I'll get them all to high five each other until they're one happy family again. Who knows what could happen?

FILM



9/10

Arrival
dir. Denis Villeneuve
(paramount pictures)

Arrival explores the myriad of responses humans display when 12 massive UFOs touch down on the surface of the planet one afternoon. The public goes into full-blown panic mode. With riots, protests, and mass suicides pressing down on their heads, the governing powers of the world struggle to keep diplomacy in check. Distinguished linguist, Dr. Louise Banks (played by the wonderful Amy Adams), is enlisted by the US army to decipher the alien language. After all, "language is the first weapon drawn in a conflict."

Aided by adorably dorky physicist, Ian Donnelly (Jeremy Renner), the duo start breaking down one of the most complex languages they've ever seen. Despite the pressure from the higher-ups and the communications breakdown between countries, the team discover groundbreaking revelations that could change the face of humanity forever.

After the film, my friend Marie and I sat in stunned silence as the credits started roll-

ing. Our minds were blown, and our palms were sweaty from the incredible experience we had just been through. The story is simply astounding, with progressively more shocking reveals that made our head spin. The movie stayed with me long after I left the theatre, and I found myself teetering on the edge of a science-driven existential crisis for several days afterward.

It's easy to forget that films can be a great medium of art. *Arrival's* cinematography was breathtaking, with each shot visually conveying the atmosphere of the scene. The music brought terseness with the high points, and plucked at our heartstrings during the low points. Each event is deliberate and takes its time, but the payoff is substantial. Nothing is wasted, everything matters.

If you haven't seen this yet, I am incredibly envious. This is one of those very few films that I would love to experience for the first time, over and over again. But do yourself a favour, don't read any spoilers, don't watch any trailers. Just go and experience it.

- rachel chang

GAMES



GWENT: The Witcher
CD Projekt RED
(Windows, PS4, Xbox One)

"Are you f%\$!#* kidding me?..."

I stare in disbelief at the card played by my enemy. As I hover my mouse over the exit button, ready to concede to my opponent, I ponder over the life choices I've made so far. Should I have saved that card I played a while ago? It could've won me the game.

Gwent: The Witcher card game has finally been released for closed beta after months of waiting and teasing from the game's developers. I was fortunate enough to be selected for beta testing and immediately jumped on the game.

Gwent plays similarly to most online card games such as *Hearthstone* or *Card Wars - Adventure Time*. Players clash in a three-round game, using decks built from a variety of factions and cards, in order to triumph in the battlefield that is the card table.

It's a beautiful sight to see your card combos connect so perfectly that the board essentially becomes yours. As an example, the Monster deck focuses on spawning multiple copies of monsters to the board until you can't even count how many cards you have played - a strategy that I can't get enough of. As the enemy surrenders to my overwhelming advantage, I laugh behind my screen as if I was becoming one with my evil Monster deck.

Win or lose, it's always a learning experience. *Gwent* has a lot to offer and I've barely scratched the surface. Whether you're competitive or casual, *Gwent* is sure to keep you hooked with its beautiful art styles and complex strategies.

Now if you'll excuse me, I've got a keg of cards to open.

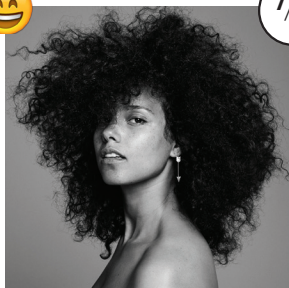
- kurt tadeo



9/10



7/10



Alicia Keys

Here

It's safe to say that the girl we knew before is taking a shift, introducing several personalities through the album. Trading her soft keys and classic training for rougher, hip hop and church-inspired sound, plays to her diversity of talent. Taking an honest and socially conscious route, there are more songs that play to these personalities that show insight into Keys. My favourite songs are "Girl Can't be Herself" and "Cocoa Butter." Despite her tenacious words and sultry voice, there is still a little confusion as to who Keys is displaying in the album.

- jarell alvarez



10/10



Chance the Rapper

Coloring Book

Get ready for your blessings because Chance sure is ready to give them. Coming from a person who rarely enjoys an album from A to Z, *Coloring Book* is one of my exceptions. Chance displays every ounce of himself in the album. Through his style and songs, you can tell that he's a happier person who's in love with his religion. Each song feels like a stand out single, while creating a beautifully complete package. With Chance's energy and earnest attitude towards rap and life, I can always count on *Coloring Book* to cheer me up.

- jarell alvarez



9/10



Norma Jean

Polar Similar

Hey Norma Jean, why don't you tell me how you *really* feel? "The Planet" sets the album's fatalistic tone early with the unambiguous opening scream, "I hope you burn," and subsequent tracks like "Everyone Talking Over Everyone Else" and "The People" make no bones about our ongoing self-destruction as a species, and actually looks forward to our deserved reckoning and the post-apocalyptic aftermath. Pepper in a healthy dose of entropy and digital detritus throughout, plus a "Synthetic Sun," and you'll be dreaming of electric sheep long after this album's prophetic conclusion.

- dan post



8/10



Metallica

Hardwired... To Self-Destruct

Let's not pretend that metal hasn't always been griping about how shitty human beings are, but I'm starting to see a trend here. With even more planet-burning, self-destructing, end-of-days eulogizing than Norma Jean, the good 'ol boys seem just a little more inclined to hope. But I guess we have to believe a band that has already survived one catastrophic event (*St. Anger* anyone?) and come out the other side stronger than before. *Hardwired* is (awesome) vintage Metallica, but I'm not convinced that going back to our same old tricks is the best way forward.

- dan post



7/10



The Naked and Famous

Simple Forms

Simple Forms came after the painful romantic breakup between the band's lead vocalist and lead instrumentalist. Although the album has a few stand alone favourites, including "Higher," "Laid Low," and "The Runners," majority of the songs released have an inhibited presence that seem to prevent the album from reaching its full potential that their previous albums broke through. Perhaps it's a result of the changing dynamics and tensions within the group. Nonetheless, still a recommended listen to those avid indie-pop fans.

- selenna ho



9/10



Kings of Leon

Walls

A mixture of upbeat anguish and raw desire, the emotional vulnerability of *Walls* is more mature compared to KOL's previous albums; the darkness has been lightened with personal understanding. At the same time, there's still the questioning of reality and craving for compassion. My favourites include "Muchacho," "Conversation Piece," and "Over." Give it a listen if you crave emotionally-infatuated alternative rock.

- selenna ho

POETRY & PROSE

Not What it Seems (pt 2)

by Kurt Tadeo

Dear Diary,

I woke up late today. I guess I was so tired last night that I ended up sleeping in. There was a note on the table with my breakfast. It was from Mom. She had to leave early today so she couldn't wake me up. Darn. It's too late anyway, so I just decided to eat my breakfast and head to school. When I went to get my vitamin pills, I noticed that I ran out. Mom said to take it everyday since it's good for me. I was going to be late, so I decided to leave and just take some later when my mom gets some more.



As I ran down the street, the neighbour's dog started barking at me again. I wanted to pet him just for a bit. I'll do it quick, then I'll be off to school, I thought. When I walked towards him, he started barking at me, like he was angry. That scared me, so I pulled my hand back. But why did he look so angry? I noticed the scratches that I got on my arm the other day. That's weird. They look more like bite marks than scratches, but how? I got a headache when I tried to remember and I hated it. I decided to head to school and worry about it later.

When I arrived at school, I was already late. I shouldn't have gotten distracted, then I wouldn't have been so late. Ms. Robinson asked me why I was late. There was no special reason, so I just told her that I overslept. Ms. Robinson told me to be seated and to see her after school. When I went to my desk, I noticed that my friends were snickering at me. I guess they found it funny that I was late and that I probably looked silly. Normally, I would think the same thing, but today, I was just not feeling it. Maybe I would feel better during lunch, once I start playing with my friends, but for now, math again. Ugh.

When I found my friends during lunch, they were already playing tag. I noticed they were playing regular tag instead of the game we played yesterday. Did they not like it? They looked like they enjoyed it yesterday. Whatever. I decided to jump right in and just have fun.

Not long after I joined the game, Rob, one of my taller friends, pushed me from the side and I fell to the ground. I grazed my elbow and it hurt. I asked Rob, "What gives?" and he said to me, "Stay away from us you smiling creep!" I was confused. Why did he push me? What did he mean by smiling creep? And why did he look so angry? We were all playing together yesterday, so why were they acting like I did something wrong to them?

My friends moved away from me and continued their game of tag. I went to wash my elbow in the bathroom. I hated this. My elbow hurt, I had a headache, and my friends seemed mad at me.

When school ended, I headed straight home. I was supposed to meet Ms. Robinson but I didn't care. I looked all over the house for vitamin pills to stop this stupid headache. But where was Mom? Why was she so slow? I needed my vitamins, so why didn't we have any? I made a mess of the house, but I didn't care. I just wanted to stop this headache. I went to my room and sat on my bed. Today sucked. I'm going to sleep and Mom better have my vitamins when she gets home. Ugh. I can't wait for tomorrow.

Because We Were

by Jordan Kwong

The clock lives a life
We cannot see.

Days leave us behind.
Or maybe
We stroll on by.
They create the spaces
In our empty time frames.

Everything is there.

The time salvation
Was a drifter's mission.
The time you didn't turn your back
On yourself.
Each time laughter was the answer
You didn't realize you asked.

The person who was a verse
You understood.
The moment that made you believe,
The impossibly beautiful
Was right in front of you.

We cannot see our gallery of time frames.
It is imprinted
With the footsteps of reflection.
The collection is second hand,
Buried and lost.
Until an old frame is repurposed
A new frame is made.

Everything is here.

Because we are.
We work and dance,
Leap and stumble.
We shake in fear,
Are steady in resolve.
We let anger fall at our feet

And stress lines crack our mind.
We journey everywhere
And find destination in a smile.

We move forward again.
It remains nothing will change.

Except everything.
Our gallery of time frames is made
Of transformation,
Of imperfect comfort.
Our regret, our rejoice;
They are ours.

We create spaces
Until they leave us behind.
Momentum sways away from days.
Nothing is linear
Yet we charge ahead
Beside one another.

Because we strive to live a life
The clock cannot deny.



We asked students at BCIT:
**What is one of your
stand-out holiday
memories?**

One time my parents gave me what I thought was an iPod, 'cause it came in an iPod box. I was maybe 13 and inside the box was an electric razor. To this day I still can't use the electric razor. It was such a let-down.

– Graham
Architectural and
Building Technology

My family is really into wine, so my mom got me this wine lock that you can put on top of the wine bottle to close it, and it has a combination code to open it.

– Lauren
Marketing Management

One time, me and my brother were so excited for presents and Santa that we got up in the middle of the night and changed all the clocks forward three hours, so that we could wake up and open presents earlier. The clocks went from 3am to 6am, then we woke up our parents and convinced them it was morning, even though it was still pitch black. We opened presents and had so much fun. Until our parents turned on the TV to watch the Santa Claus parade and saw that it was three in the morning.

– Jason
Radio Arts & Entertainment

One year for Christmas my family went to The Empress hotel in Victoria. I was probably 7. Everyone was having a nine-course meal and I just got a grilled cheese and fell asleep under the table.

– Ross
Architectural and
Building Technology

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