

the *Link*

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BCIT HOSTS
ROBOTICS COMPETITION

The Link

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ABOUT THE LINK

The Link is the British Columbia Institute of Technology's student newspaper. Published bi-weekly by the BCIT Student Association (BCITSA), *The Link* circulates 3,000 copies to over 45,000 students, faculty, and staff.

THE LINK

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PHOTO of the WEEK



LAN party participants celebrate a night of gaming, prizes, and presumably Red Bull at BCIT.

Courtesy of Futurelooks.com

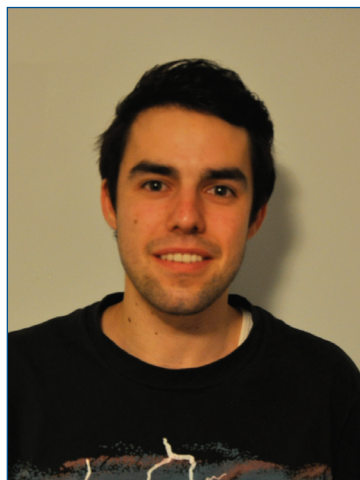
Hey shutterbugs, want to make some cash?

The Link is seeking photos related to BCIT campus life for page two of each issue. We'll pay you \$10 for each one we publish. Send your shot to link@bcitsa.ca but make sure it's less than three megabytes in size. Please include your name and a description of what you shot.



CAMPUS QUERY

What do you think of the B.C. teachers' strike?



SAM CAWKELL
Marketing

"I disagree because they know what they're getting into when they enter their career, and they get great holidays. If you take that into consideration, they're actually making a well above average wage."



JASON BRYANT
Radio Broadcasting

"Honestly, I wish it would end so the honking outside of my house would stop."



PHILIP BENMORE
Radio Broadcasting

"I think the tactics the government is using are absolutely ridiculous, as though they're innocent and the way they have treated teachers in the past is fair."



BLAIR BREAKS
Marketing

"I think the teachers should stop bitching and get back to work."

BCIT staff supports teachers' strike



BCIT Faculty and Staff Association join teachers on the picket line at Moscrop Secondary.

Paul Dayson / BCIT FSA

The BCIT Faculty and Staff Association believe the current level of education funding is inadequate

DAVID SWANSON
Assistant Editor

The B.C. Teachers' Federation's decision to strike struck a chord with the BCIT Faculty and Staff Association. On March 5, close to 41,000 public school educators left the classroom for three days in an attempt to fight the BC Liberal's three year freeze on educational spending. The BC Teachers' Federation (BCTF) held rallies in Victoria and Vancouver to voice their growing concerns regarding growing class sizes, fewer specialist teachers, and the increasing number of students with intensive needs.

Paul Reniers, head of the BCIT Faculty and Staff Association (FSA), believes the BCTF three-day strike was

effective in raising awareness about issues educators feel are negatively affecting education in B.C.

"I think [the strike] helped teachers demonstrate how important [educational advancement] is to them and how much they support their negotiators," Reniers told *The Link*. "Teachers are widely united on this... the issues they are bringing forward matter..."

“We share in their struggle for respect.”

— Paul Reniers,
BCIT Faculty and Staff Association

He believes the government's spending freeze has serious implications that are detrimental to BCIT and other post-secondary institutions.

"Public spending on edu-

cation isn't net zero: it's negative," Reniers explained. "Provincial support for post-secondary education is going down when you factor in provincial clawbacks in provincial medical services plan premiums, carbon taxes, and other charges BCIT has to pay back to the government that funds it.

"Technology doesn't stand still," Reniers continued, "It's really cost-intensive to try to keep up with changes in the industries we support. Every time the government freezes our funding, we fall behind.

In response, the FSA is running a campaign to educate the BCIT community about what educators do for schools in B.C. Reniers believes inadequate funding is forcing those with jobs in education to consider industry alternatives.

BCIT staff showed support for local public school teachers by joining them on the picket lines outside Mo-

scrop Secondary on March 6. Reniers believes all those working in the education sector are part of the same professional network, have similar objectives, share the same struggle, and need to back one another.

"Primary and secondary school instructors, professionals, and technical staff are our direct counterparts and share our commitment to students and to developing skills and knowledge. Their bargaining structure is directly parallel to our own. In our own bargaining, we have strategically looked to the teachers and their potential for breaking the government's damaging 'net zero' mandate. We share in their struggle for respect."

It is yet to be determined if the BCTF job action will be fruitful, but one thing is clear; the BCTF has cultivated strong internal education support that is focused on improving the state of education in British Columbia.

NEWS BRIEFS

Obstacle course to raise money for veterans' scholarship

The Legion Military Skills Conversion program and BCIT's Students in Free Enterprise are raising money to help returning veterans obtain a post-secondary education at BCIT.

On April 11, they are inviting BCIT students, faculty, and staff to attempt to conquer a military-style obstacle course that will test their teamwork, communications skills, and physical fitness, in order to raise money and awareness for the bursary program.

Event organizer and soon-to-be program graduate Michael Woolley says all donations will help raise money for bursaries and scholarships for future veterans who want to go through the Legion Military Skills Conversion program.

This accelerated program helps veterans earn a degree in only two years. It equates the skills acquired in the military and in the field to the skills earned in a professional diploma program. It seeks to help veteran military personnel advance their civilian careers. "[The program] is truly one of the most valuable things I've done," Woolley told *The Link*.

— David Swanson

Ford Canada reveals new technology on campus

Ford Canada gave BCIT School of Transportation students an exclusive look into their MyFord Touch technology advancements, set to be installed in future commercial vehicles. The technology includes better in-car communications systems, faster, more intuitive touch screens, and a more sophisticated navigation interface.

Last week, Ford demonstrated another exclusive advancement in driver safety and innovation: fully voice activated "infotainment" capabilities, which recognize around 100 commands a few years ago, but now responds to 10,000 commands in 10 languages.

BCIT students were among the first to test and play around with the new upgraded systems.

— Lucas Meneses-Skoda

What are your thoughts on the teachers' strike?

link@bcitsa.ca

NEWS BRIEFS

BCIT students take top market research competition

Five BCIT marketing students recently won the Market Research Intelligence Association's student competition for 2012.

Gord Newby, with group members Pauline Afrooz, Zia Hirji, Bailey McRae and Sabina Sarbu beat 12 other competitors from across the province.

Student groups from BCIT, the University of British Columbia, the University of the Fraser Valley, and other institutions submitted their projects studying market research. Newby and his group were assigned to the Canadian Power and Sail Squadrons, a national not-for-profit organization committed to boating safety and education.

Newby and his group members each won a trophy, along with \$1,000 in prize money.

"We felt great about winning the award," Newby told *The Link*. "We put a lot of hours in but it was very rewarding."

— Nagin Rezaiean

Computing students oppose mandatory P.E.

Students of BCIT's computer systems technology diploma program are opposing a mandatory course which is part of their two year program: physical education.

Although it has been part of the curriculum for a few years, students are petitioning for removal of the course by the end of the semester, citing it as stereotyping, counterproductive, and unfair. BCIT faculty staff have thus far stood by their decision, stating that it has been well-received by many students and valuable in other universities. However, they will review this requirement of the CST program in the coming weeks, based on the outcome of the petition, once it is received.

The Link will be publishing a follow up in the March 28 issue.

— Kevin Willemse

Have a news tip for us?

link@bcitsa.ca

B.C. budget calls for post-secondary cuts

Provincial government asks universities and colleges to find \$70 million in administrative savings

ARSHY MANN

CUP Western Bureau Chief

VANCOUVER (CUP) — In the pursuit of a balanced budget, B.C. is asking universities and colleges to tighten their belts.

The provincial government, in its budget tabled February 21, is calling for post-secondary institutions to cut \$70 million from their collective budgets over the next three years.

According to Finance Minister Kevin Falcon, the government expects this money to come from administrative savings.

"The province will work with universities, colleges and other institutions to help ensure that front-line programs are not affected," he said in his budget announcement. "And we believe a one per cent cost reduction is very achievable."

Funding will stay stable for the next year, with the cuts coming between 2013 and 2015.

The budget document asserts that savings can be found by combined purchases of equipment by institutions, cutting travel costs and through a reduction in support services.

A statement from the Ministry of Advanced Education emphasized that the budget also included a \$9 million increase for "additional medical, health and other priority seats," and that \$462 million had been set aside for capital projects over the next few years.

Michelle Mungall, the NDP critic for advanced education, said that despite the government's promises, the cuts are likely to affect students.

"We're seeing colleges report projected deficits, and that would be before the budget was released. And now with this budget, we're going to see program cuts."

She argued that institutions have been cutting back on administration for years and that there remains little left to cut.

"They've become very lean machines," she said. "And they have no choice but



B.C. Finance Minister Kevin Falcon at a press conference last summer.

Courtesy of the B.C. Liberals

to go back to students. No surprise here, when you look at the budget book, the only thing increasing in post-secondary education is revenue from tuition."

Mungall said that colleges will be hit harder by the budget cuts than universities.

"They don't have the ability to seek out research grants to top up in the same way that universities do."

Mungall also pointed to the special challenges of northern and rural institutions. She argued that schools that have multiple campuses spread over large regions, such as Okanagan College and Northwest Community College, must pay more for travel and often replicate classes at various campuses.

She went on to say that the budget also falls short on financial aid for students, and that an NDP government would reinstate a needs-based

grant program that was axed in 2005.

Rober Clift, the executive director of the Canadian Federation of University Faculty Associations of B.C., said that post-secondary institutions face greater inflationary pressures than other sectors of the economy.

"When you look at the budget book, the only thing increasing in post-secondary education is revenue from tuition."

— Michelle Mungall,
NDP advanced education critic

"Prices for things like journals, scientific equipment, laboratory supplies ... the inflation rates for those types of

goods and services increases at a faster rate than the general price index," he said.

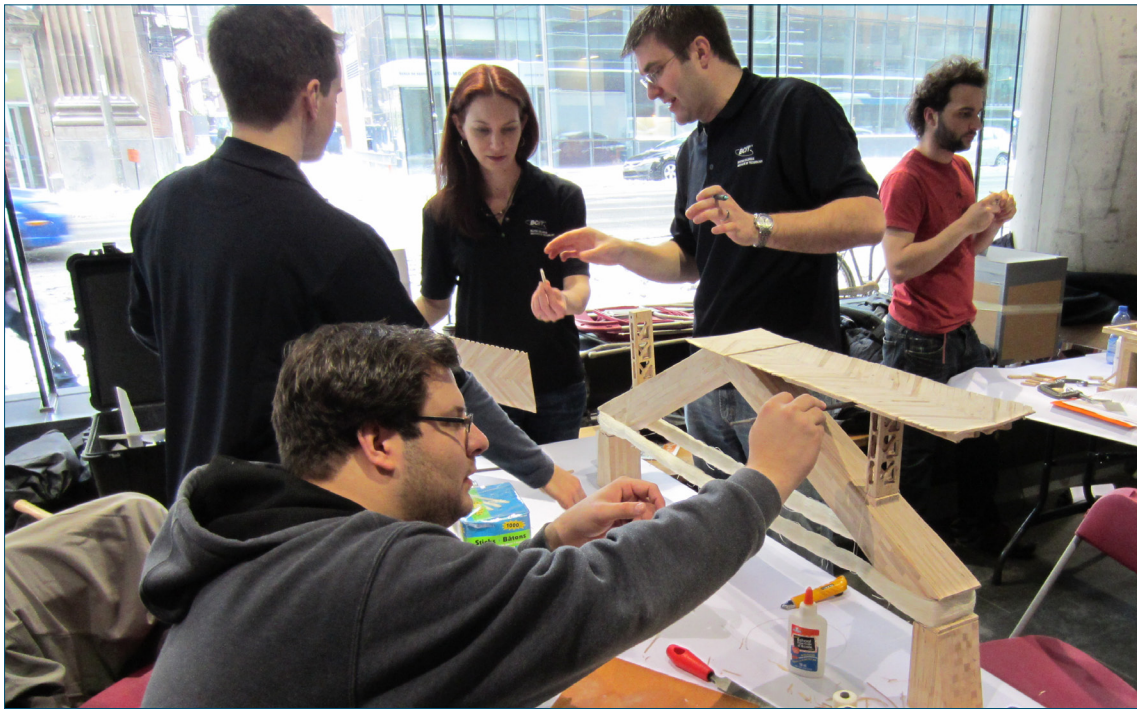
Clift was suspect of the government's claim that funding cuts won't affect students.

"They said that the cuts can't come at the expense of services to students, which is laudable, but impossible," he said. "Students are going to feel this one way or another."

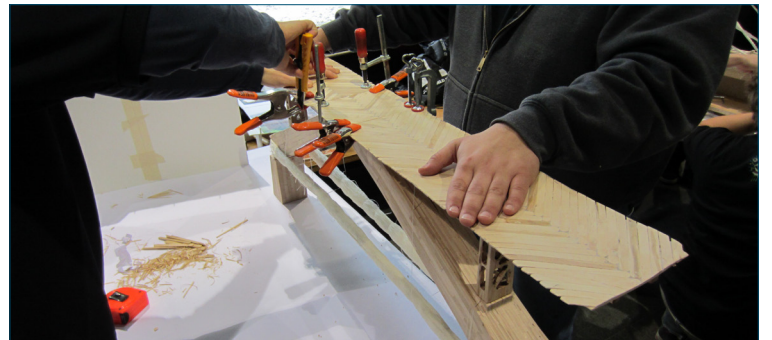
Clift went on to say that while lay-offs are unlikely at universities, one way that savings may be found is by departments not rehiring for vacancies.

"So it's not that a faculty member gets laid off, but a department that was maybe looking to hire somebody won't do that hiring now. When we can't reduce services to students, we can't cut the number of sections, so what we do [is] we try to hire sessional instructors to do that job."

Student engineers build near-unbreakable bridge in competition



BCIT civil engineering students assemble their bridge, the West Coast Express



All photos courtesy of Kevin Grant

BCIT team places third, making way for veteran engineering team

KEVIN WILLEMSE
Editor

BCIT civil engineering students joined teams from over a dozen other schools, universities and colleges in the annual Troitsky Bridge Building Competition in Montreal. BCIT's only team took third place out of 35 different teams in the competition, which celebrated its 28th year.

Allowed only popsicle sticks,

dental floss, toothpicks, and white glue, teams were instructed to construct a bridge with an open span of one meter. Their bridge was then subjected to load testing by a hydraulic press (affectionately named 'the crusher'), to determine each of the bridges' failure weights, and the subsequent winner.

This was the first year that BCIT competed, and was the only team from B.C. to take part. Their bridge absorbed a massive 2,093 kilograms — over 350 times its weigh — before deflecting (structurally bending) to the point of failure. In fact, as

fourth year student Kevin Grant describes, the performance of the bridge was incredible.

"Our bridge [exposed a fault] in the machine," said Grant, describing the way the crusher's hydraulic ram extends and pressures bridges to the point of explosion. "They were never able to crush it. Ours kept going, it was so strong it just kept deflecting and deflecting, and the ram got so extended that it just buckled out."

Grant said that they learned a few structural tweaks employed by the winning school, who had been taking part in the competition for several years.

The winning bridge withstood a 2,801 kilogram load, but Grant is confident that next year team BCIT will achieve these, if not better results.

“Their bridge absorbed a massive 2,093 kilograms — over 350 times its weigh.”

"They had the same design as us. We had better modifications, but our [tension

band] had three or four kilometers of dental floss on ours while they had eight."

Since the bridge survived the crusher and it made a safe trip back home, Grant and his team are planning a crushing ceremony in the BCIT lab at the end of March. All civil students will be invited to watch them complete their bridge's destruction in an attempt to build excitement around next year's competition.

"When it goes, it goes quite violently. It'll blow up, and in two seconds it'll be shrapnel."

We can't wait.

Rez students need school's support to go 'greener'

Despite progress, green students living residence and housing need more funds

THORSTAN GERLACH
Culture Editor

Both students and administration from BCIT's sustainability committee stressed the importance of energy conservation this past Wednesday, introducing new initiatives to help make the campus more green. The committee, guiding the School of Business' new sustainable business program, intends to develop environmental leaders within the community.

From heat savers, to reusable plastic cups, to a virtual paint

system, BCIT is striving to become a 'greener' campus, with new environmental programs and innovations being implemented in various faculties.

"The way we've designed the program is essentially to partner with industry throughout the entire program," said Dr. Mark Giltrow, of the School of Business. "We believe that in our program, we need to not only speak, but walk the talk."

BCIT has been voted one of Canada's greenest employers for the past two years, and the committee claims the Green Team has much to do with this achievement. However, while the school itself may be benefitting, the situation for students living in the campus residence is less impressive.

"We've been working with the students quite closely to effect change through different contests and through our web portal that shows how much hydro is being used in each unit," says Tom Moore, BCIT's housing and residence manager.

“We’ve reached the limit of what students are willing to change...”

— Tom Moore,
BCIT Housing and Residence

"However, we've reached the limit of what students are willing to change, be-

cause they're saying 'We've done everything we can do; we've turned the lights off, we're reducing the heat, but you guys have to spend some money fixing your crappy windows, the baseboard heaters are ineffective.' That sort of thing. The buildings are 35 years old."

Moore went on to say that students have become annoyed with all the different green contests being promoted, and patience and co-operation has been maxed out. He stressed the only way to restore sentiment is to spend "big dollars to do big things." This contradicts the BCIT residence plans, which focus more on changing the habits and behaviors of the

actual residents, rather than investing into more sustainable, efficient equipment and fixtures.

There are currently 333 bedrooms in the residence, and occupant participation remains high. Inter-house competitions to reduce energy consumption still produce positive, sustained results in terms of reduced electricity use.

However, Moore says that despite these inspiring results, the residence students' view remains the same. They do not want to be encouraged to reduce energy use until BCIT does something about structural issues such as non-energy smart windows and heaters.

The Lorax has an axe to grind

Directed by: Chris Renaud,
Kyle Balda
Stars: Danny DeVito,
Zac Efron, Ed Helms
Running time: 95 minutes

KEVIN WILLEMSE
Editor

You may be wondering why *The Link* would review an animated Dr. Seuss movie. Let's be honest, the good doctor has a knack for presenting adult, real-world issues and social commentary in a fun, convincing way.

So what is the Lorax? Imagine a furry, moustachioed orange creature which speaks (using Danny DeVito's voice) on behalf of the trees (read: nature) during times of exploitation. Enter 'the Once-ler', a bumbling, lanky character (Ed Helms) who cuts down the beautiful Truffula trees of an idyllic valley to create 'thneeds.' Now, I've seen the movie and don't know how to describe a thneed, but in terms of the movie's underlying message and its obvious parallels, you could equate it to oil, water, or even, um, trees.

Of course, demand for thneeds skyrockets and, thanks to industrialized production with little concern for the environment, Mr. Once-ler makes his millions and generally destroys the landscape, air and rivers — as well as all his natural resources, leaving him with the world's

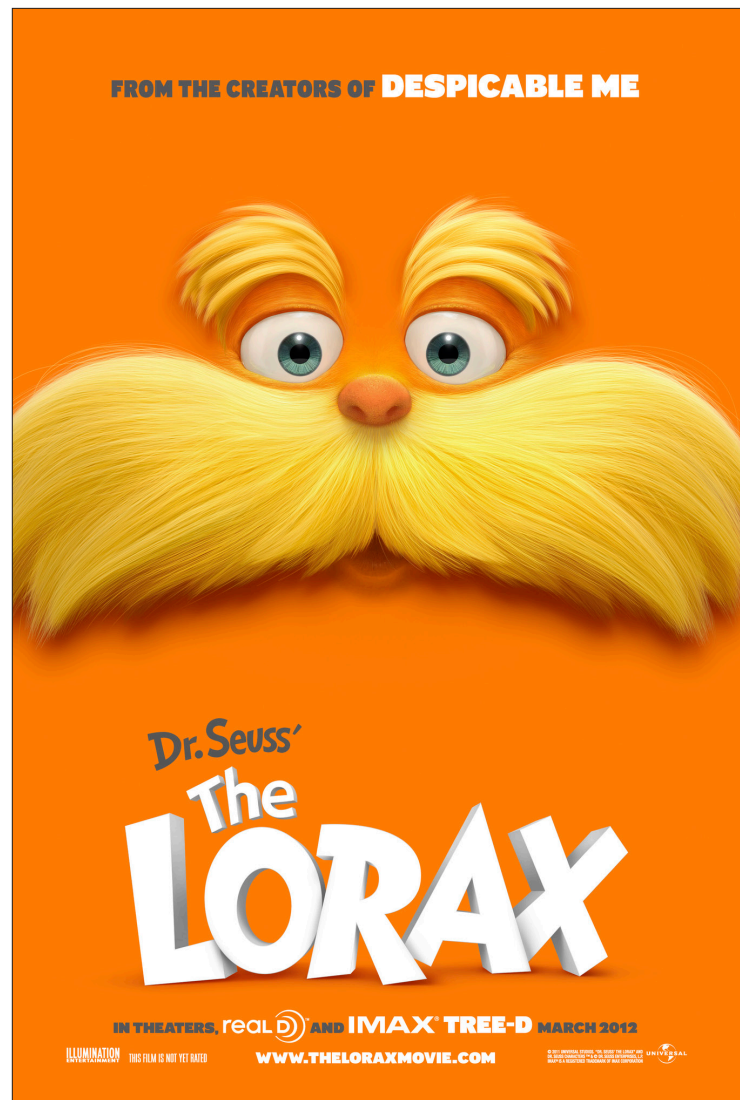
last thneed tree seed (try saying that five times fast).

The movie is largely entertaining and good for a laugh, but wrapped in so many layers of anti-capitalist, eco-friendly non-Truffula sourced wool, it becomes hard to just enjoy it as simply a comedic romp through one of Dr. Seuss' fantastical worlds of Dali-esque architecture (as was easier with *Horton Hears a Who*). The way Thneedville and the movie's characters blatantly represent the abysmal realities of modern capitalism, consumerism and ecological apathy is so apparent, it's hard to believe this, Seuss' thirtieth book, was penned over 40 years ago.

Moreover, this makes it somewhat predictable, and therefore seems to drag on a bit in places, forced along by a few musical numbers along the way; not surprising, since the original book, at 72-pages, is being stretched into a 95-minute feature.

However, the movie is far from terrible, and worth watching just for the hilarious antics of some of the peripheral forest characters (whoever thought a trio of acapella goldfish and marshmallow-obsessed bears could be so funny?), inserted more for adult entertainment than kiddie laughs.

However, this begs the question: What is the movie's target audience? Who is Dr. Seuss (and, by extension, Universal Studios) trying to hammer the green mes-



The Lorax strikes a resemblance to Tiger from 1991's An American Tail: Fievel Goes West

Courtesy of
Universal Pictures

sage into? And is it getting a message across, or is it just a bright orange romp through the brilliant mind that gave us *Green Eggs and Ham*?

The best insight of course came from my four-year-old daughter, who I took to watch *The Lorax*. I asked her what she had learned from the movie.

"I learned that trees are beautiful," she said. My heart swelled with pride, and faith in the more nurturing spirit of our future generations. "...so we must chop them down," she concluded.

Maybe not quite a bulls-eye this time, Dr. Seuss.

OVERALL GRADE: B-

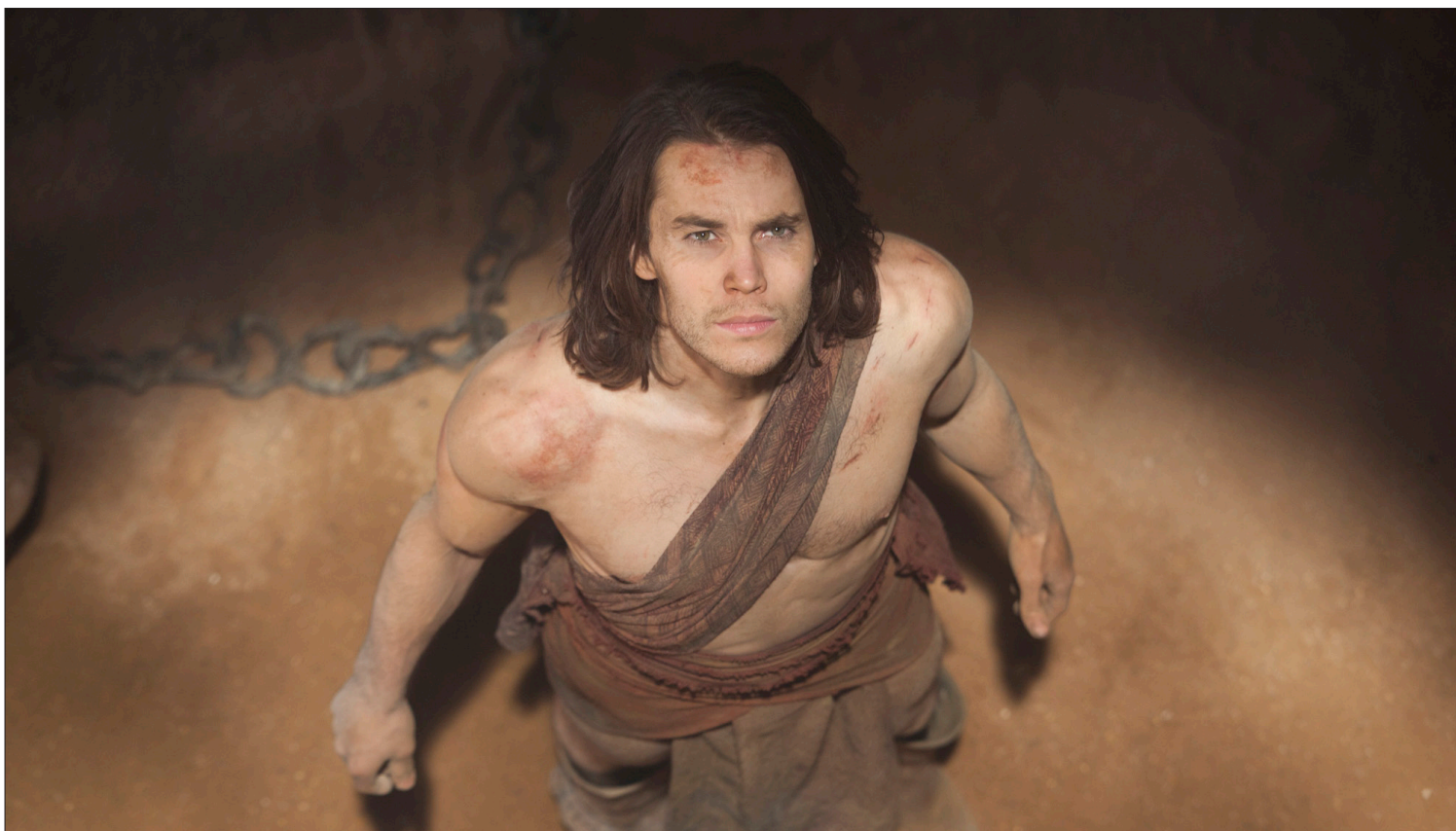


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...brah

link@bcitsa.ca



Taylor Kitsch poses as the film's title character.

Courtesy of Walt Disney Pictures

John Carter defies critics' expectations

Directed by: Andrew Stanton
Stars: Taylor Kitsch, Willem Dafoe, Lynn Collins
Running time: 132 minutes

THORSTAN GERLACH
Culture Editor

Poor *John Carter*. There was so much toxic buzz around you before you even premiered that audiences may never realize you're actually quite good.

Audiences were pissed you cost so much money to make (a whopping \$250 million) that they didn't believe Pixar wiz Andrew Stanton (*Toy Story 1 & 2*, *Finding Nemo*, *Wall-E*) could direct a live action movie. Most

of all, they all thought you were merely an *Avatar* rip-off. Well you know what? They're all wrong!

John Carter is about post-civil war veteran (Taylor Kitsch) who is transported to Mars after discovering a medallion inside a golden cave in Arizona. While on Mars, Carter befriends a tribe of four-armed green people called Tharks, and later rescues a princess (the lovely Lynn Collins) who is in desperate need of help. That's as much as I'm giving you for the plot, because there are so many twists and turns in between these highlights, it is enough to keep you on the edge of your seat.

Taken from an Edgar Rice Burroughs novel written

over a century years ago, Andrew Stanton does a marvelous job dissecting John Carter and his fragile state after the war. Stanton, along with Mark Andrews and novelist Michael Chabon, has created wonder: a wild, gung-go adventure that enraptures you from the first steps Carter takes on Mars.

Canadian Taylor Kitsch, who was great as the bad-boy on *Friday Night Lights*, brings a level of depth to the title character that a lesser actor may not have been able to do. Carter walks around with a chip on his shoulder and is certainly not your cardboard cut-out superhero. This may be Kitsch's evolution from television star to movie star.

All the actors excel in this movie; from Lynn Collins as

the defiant and headstrong Princess Dejah Thoris, to Willem Dafoe as Tars Tarkas, a menacing Thark who saves John's life. There is also sidekick Woola, who helps Carter out of a jam from time to time.

To all of you haters saying John Carter's not worth your time, my advice is to go and watch the movie. Perhaps your cynicism will be bitten off the second you meet Woola, or the moment your eyes set on Dejah Thoris.

Edgar Rice Burroughs may never have imagined that his creation would come to life like this; he may have never dreamed it. But he'd sure like it.

OVERALL GRADE: B

EVENTS CALENDAR

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 14

The Legend of Zelda: Symphony of the Goddess

Orpheum Theatre, 8pm
Based on the classic Nintendo video game, Jason Michael Paul Productions introduces the first ever video game-themed concert to feature a four-movement symphony.

SATURDAY, MARCH 17

Spirit of the West

Commodore Ballroom, 7pm
Vancouver folk band bring their blend of folk and Celtic music to the Commodore.

Brian Regan

Vancouver Centre for Performing Arts, 8pm
Self-deprecating stand-up comedian Brian Regan plays the Centre for Performing Arts.

SUNDAY, MARCH 18

Vancouver St. Patrick's Day Parade

Downtown in the afternoon
Enjoy St. Patrick's day with thousands of others as the Vancouver St. Patrick's Day Parade marches through the heart of downtown.

Magnetic Fields

Vogue Theatre, 8pm
American indie pop group promote new album Love at the Bottom of the Sea.

The Pretty Reckless

The Rickshaw Theatre, 7pm
Rock band from New York fronted by *Gossip Girl*'s Taylor Momsen.

MONDAY, MARCH 19

Pitbull & Flo Rida

Rogers Arena, 7pm
Multi-platinum artist Pitbull brings his Latin beats to Rogers in the first leg of his Planet Pit World Tour.

THURSDAY, MARCH 22

The Drive-By Truckers with Robert Ellis

Commodore Ballroom, 8pm
Critically-acclaimed Southern rockers out of Macon, Georgia play Vancouver in the second leg of their spring tour.

EVOLVING 20

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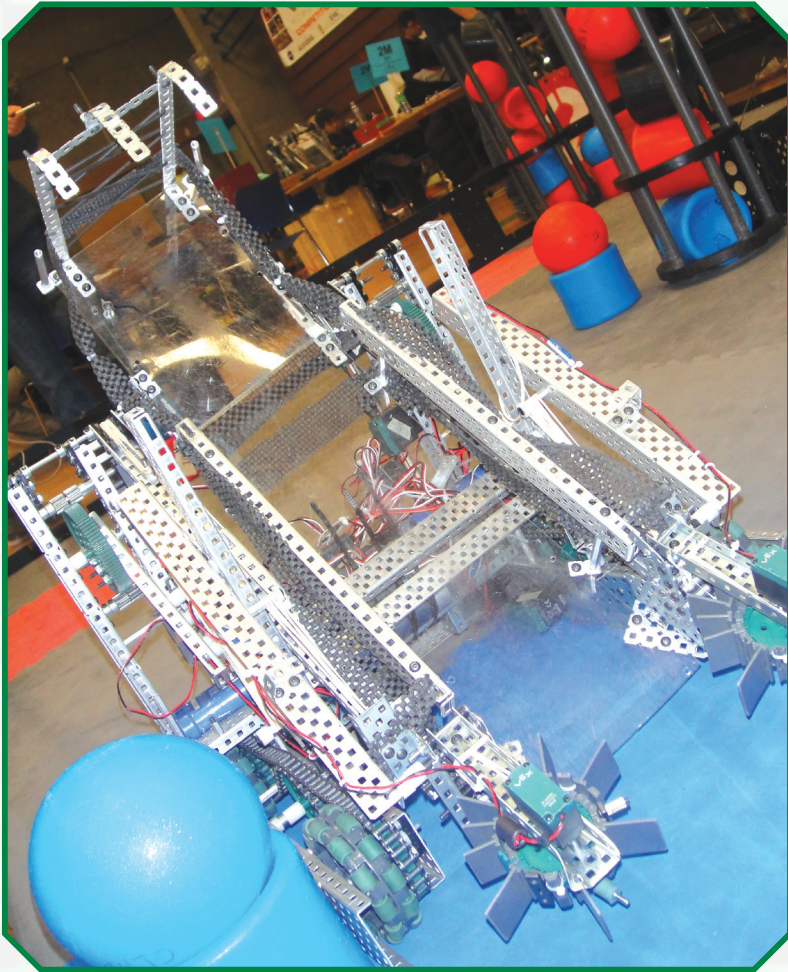
1. **The Shins** - Simple Song
2. **King Khan & The Shrines** - I Got Love
3. **Surfer Blood** - Voyager Reprise
4. **Lana Del Rey** - Born To Die
5. **Philoceraptor** - PYT
6. **Grimes** - Genesis
7. **Real Boys** - Vacation
8. **Justice** - Newlands
9. **Miike Snow** - Devils Work
10. **Bon Iver** - Towers

11. **Oh No! Yoko** - Boyhood
12. **Arkells** - Michigan Left
13. **Born Gold** - Lawn Knives
14. **M83** - Steve McQueen
15. **Sleigh Bells** - Comeback Kid
16. **School of Seven Bells** - The Night
17. **Diamond Rings** - Mellow Doubt
18. **Islands** - Hallways
19. **Purity Ring** - Lofticries
20. **Gorillaz ft. Andre 3000 & James Murphy** - Doyathing



ROBOT WARS

BCIT hosts robotics competition



Story by Kevin Willemse
Photos by Jason Brett
and Kevin Willemse

Over five dozen robots and their owners competed for top honours and a place in the world championships as BCIT hosts the latest leg of the VEX Robotics Competition.

BCIT's School of Energy hosted 64 teams from all over the United States and Canada in the regional VEX Robotics Competition. Flooding the gymnasium, all were hoping to secure one of six coveted top spots which would qualify them to compete against 20 countries in the VRC world championships, being held in California this April.

LET THE GAMES BEGIN!

The competition involved students building complex, fully mobile robots which score points by picking up and depositing objects into various goal points inside set

time frames and rules. Such a simplification does not do the challenge justice, so it's worth touching on the intricacies which makes the competition so exciting.

It's frenetic but fascinating to watch the dexterity of these machines

Firstly, the robots cannot be larger than 18 inches cubed in dormant mode, but are allowed to expand once the game starts—and expand they do, some unfolding into an intimidating five feet tall, and over two-and-a-half feet wide. The game is played on a 12-foot squared mat with various

scoring areas, zones, and strategically placed gates to navigate during the two-minute playing time.

For the first 20 seconds, the robots are fully autonomous, relying only on built-in sensors and any programmed artificial intelligence to pick up game objects (large coloured barrels and balls representing points) and place them into one of 19 scoring areas. After this, humans can manipulate the robots via remote control, helping them shoot as many hoops as possible. Tactics also come into play with special game objects which double or cancel accumulated points when played successfully.

It's frenetic but fascinating to watch the dexterity of these machines, much like a team of R2-D2s playing basketball, with malicious collisions resulting in team outcries, occasional robotic dismemberment, and any disputes settled

by referee. Like a premier college basketball match, the bleachers had shouting fans, proud parents, and flashing cameras to spare.

ROBOT PLAYERS, HUMAN TEAMS

"The students we attract don't necessarily get the experience of representing their high school through team sports," said event organizer Jason Brett. "There's a certain thrill that you get from making a smart move at the right time and having a crowd cheer for you."

Smart moves and timing are indeed key to winning, especially with four robots per round jostling and scrapping for loose game objects like sports fanatics chasing free chicken wings in a packed bar during the Superbowl.

Perennial favourite Exothermic

who competed in all divisions comprising of six high schools from the Seattle area, took top honours after more than six hours of mechanical mayhem. The team walked away with trophies and prize money, and looked forward to yet another trip to the Anaheim Convention Center on April 18-21 to compete in the world championship.

This is the third year VEX has partnered with BCIT on the competition, and is described as an “outstanding partnership” by director of the competition and Pacific Youth Robotics Society President Lance Balcom.

“[The robotics competition] is about technology for sure, but it’s mainly about communication. Putting kids together into teams and communicating technical ideas, formulating them, hearing what others have, synthesizing a better solution ... that’s really the power of the program,” Balcom told *The Link*. “Yes, it’s fun to build a robot; but building a robot in competition with others as a team, is really a compelling experience.”

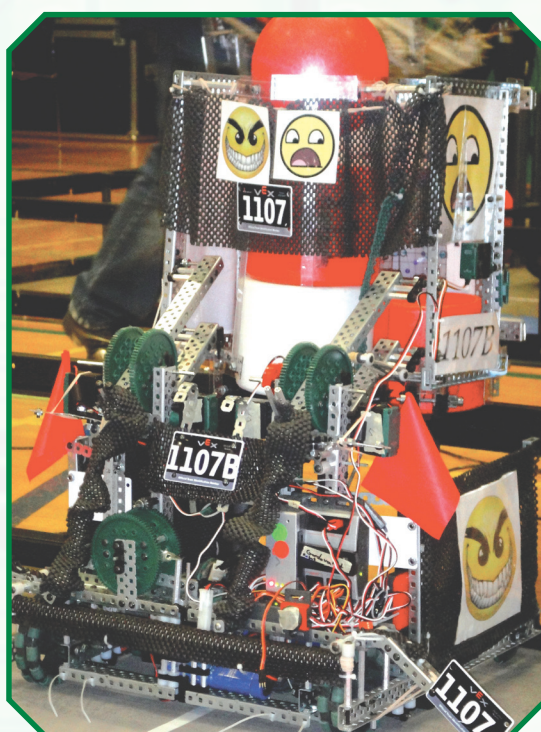
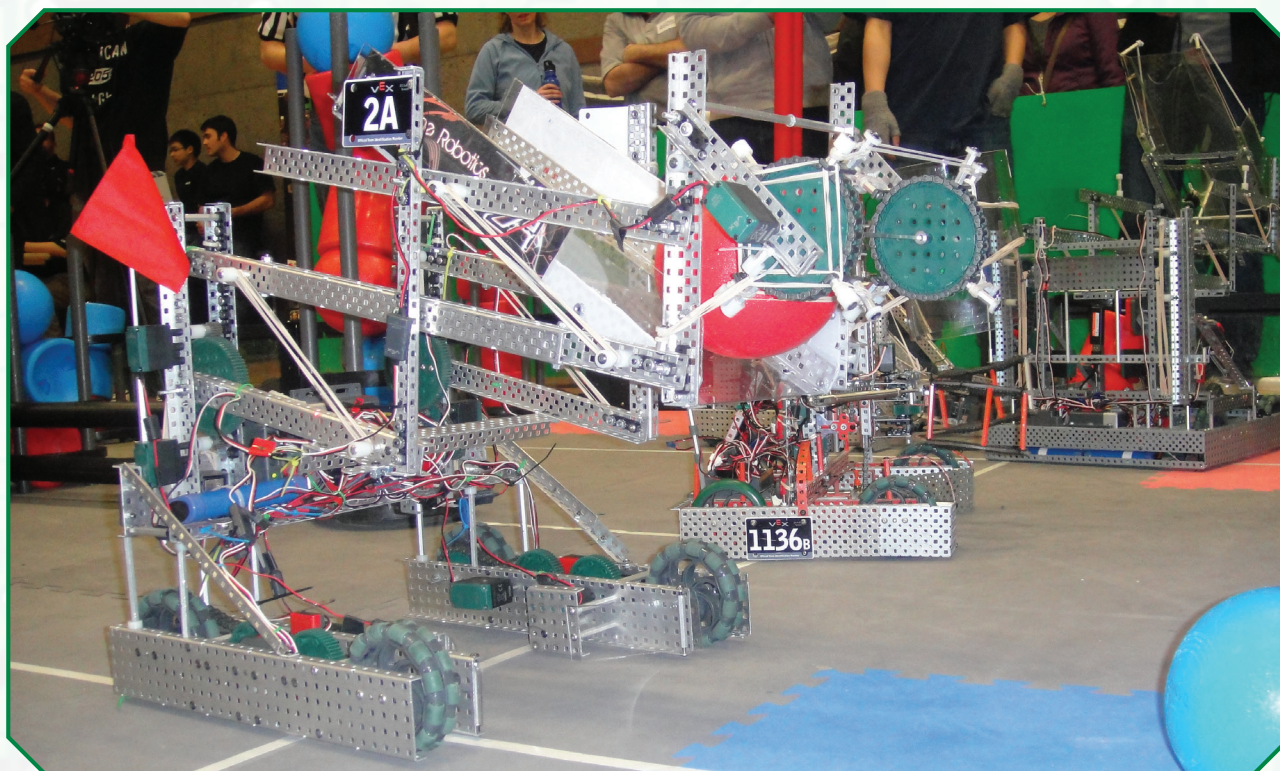
SAVING LIVES WITH ROBOTICS

One person who can definitely appreciate the real world application of robotics is Christopher Ngan, an robot surgery (using robotics to assist with surgery, that is) expert who works at the University of British Columbia and Vancouver General Hospital. Ngan brought with him one of only three da Vinci laparoscopic surgical platforms in B.C., and was offering onlookers a crash course in minimally invasive robotic surgery using his three million dollar machine.

“It’s important for kids who are technically inclined to see where their future could lie ... the extent of the work that they do [during the competition] can lie in much bigger things.”

The da Vinci most definitely is the bigger thing. After only a few minutes, while looking into a high definition 3D headset, I was able to deftly pinch, swipe, and twist my hands in the air. My movements controlled a series of robotic arms on a nearby platform while cameras conducted microsurgery on a mock patient. If ever anyone competing in VEX needed validation that what they were doing was more than a game, all they need do is spend five minutes with this awesome fusion of advanced robotics and modern surgery.

“A demonstration like this really shows the clinical impact of a real device that came from students who may have come from programs like this,” Ngan explained.



Education so good you'll pay twice?

Charging students for courses they have already taken at other schools is unfair

DAVID SWANSON
Assistant Editor

The thing that separates BCIT from other post-secondary institutions is the practicality of most of its programs. Few will disagree that BCIT is a technology-driven school focused on generating hands-on experience that will help increase students' likelihood of finding a job soon after graduation.

The curriculum is also less abstract than the material taught at larger universities like the University of British Columbia and Simon Fraser University. While BCIT students still attend lectures and read text books, the majority of learning happens in practicums. Unfortunately, BCIT also expects students to pay for education they did not provide — it refuses to refund tuition fees spent on courses students have already received credit for at other post-secondary institutions.

I am currently enrolled in BCIT's School of Business in the radio broadcasting program. Before I entered the program in September of last



The lack of an honest course exemption refund policy just doesn't make... cents

Courtesy of Canadian University Press

year, I spent my previous six years at SFU earning a joint bachelor's degree in business and communication.

I was exempt from taking certain BCIT courses because the School of Business felt that classes I took at SFU gave me sufficient knowledge to warrant credit. I guess they thought the skills I acquired writing all those anti-capitalist, left-leaning, conspiracy theory papers would help me compose persuasive corporate memos.

In sum, I was charged for courses from which I was exempt, despite not having taken advantage of class resources, not having required

instructors' time to grade assignments or exams, and not even warmed a single chair in the classroom.

I am effectively being charged a second time for knowledge and training I received from a different school.

According to the admissions page on their website, "You can... apply for course credit after you have been accepted into your chosen pro-

gram. If credit is granted, your program tuition likely will not change, but your course load will be lighter. This could be an advantage..."

Yes, my course load is lighter in comparison to my peers, but my tuition definitely isn't. So far, I have received exemption for four classes worth a total of nine credits. Including future classes for which I expect exemption, you can add another five credits to that total. BCIT values a business credit at \$157, meaning the estimated 14 credits for which I am excused is worth a total of \$2,198.

My diploma, excluding

books and supplies, will cost me roughly \$11,000. This means approximately 20 per cent of my tuition will pay for instructor, administration costs, and program resources that I didn't use. I am effectively being charged a second time for knowledge and training I received from a different school.

This financial exploitation shows absolutely no regard for student welfare and represents a blatant cash-grab by BCIT that is either at best ignorant or at worst malicious.

Our school slogan is "BCIT works." I think a more appropriate mantra might be "BCIT works for itself."

Scarlet Letters

A biweekly sex column by BCIT's own Scarlet de Sade

Dear Scarlet,

I am an 18 year old guy but I've never had a girlfriend. I am starting to get frustrated, how do I meet girls?

— Recovering Warcraft Addict

Dear RWA,

Congratulations, RWA, and welcome back to the world of dating! Something tells me that at 18, you haven't spent a terrible amount of time actually talking to women or exploring the scene. You seem to like games, why not try an online dating site for gamers? You'll be able to practise speaking with women who enjoy the same hobbies that you do and it's a comfortable environment for you to be yourself.

Speed dating is also a rela-

tively quick and painless way to meet women without the pressure of a regular blind date.

Hang in there, RWA, you're young and have the rest of your sex life ahead of you!

— Scarlet

Hey Scarlet,

My boyfriend wants to try anal sex but I am afraid it might hurt. I love him a lot and I really want to try new things, I guess I am just feeling nervous. Do you have any suggestions that might ease my nerves?

— Puckered Up

Dear PU,

This all depends, are you ready for anal? Anal sex can

be a lot of fun for both partners, but it's important to keep some key points in mind.

Be sure to use a condom, especially with anal. Anal sex is riskier than vaginal penetration so safe sex is extra important.

Make it clear that you make the rules. You have to make it clear to your boyfriend that if you decide it's time to stop, he has to respect that.

Lube, lube, lube. I cannot stress how important it is to lubricate when preparing for anal sex. If not, you run this risk of injuring yourself and that's not fun for either of you.

Ease into it! Foreplay is key. Start small and make sure you can relax and you know what you expect. Don't move on to

full penetration until you feel ready.

Finally — and this is important — don't double-dip! Our orifices are not interchangeable orifices, so make sure you change condoms if you decide to go from anal to vaginal penetration. Otherwise you risk a nasty infection.

Now you're ready! Don't forget to be safe!

— Scarlet

Dear DD,

You don't know, DD, and the only way to find out is to go get tested. Seriously, most sexually transmitted infections do not have any warning signs, so until you get checked, you won't know.

Do yourself and any partners (past, present, and future) a favour — get tested and start carrying condoms with you! Drunk dick is no excuse.

— Scarlet

Hi Scarlet,

I was drunk and slept with a girl without a condom and now I am worried. How do I know if I have a sexually transmitted infection?

— Drunk Decisions

Do you have a question you would like to ask Scarlet?
Email her at:
scarlet.letters.bcit@gmail.com

The robo-call controversy is overblown

Even if no robo-calls were made, Conservatives would still have a majority government

JOSH SCHMALTZ
University of Alberta

EDMONTON — So, what has the Canadian government been up to for the last two weeks? Have they been churning out legislation and fairly representing the views of all Canadians? Hell if I know, because all any of us have heard about has been the storm over “robo-calls.”

During the last federal election, numerous people received anonymous calls from a computer directing them to wrong or non-existent polling stations on election day. Many of those on the receiving ends of these calls also happened to be Liberal or NDP supporters. According to Liberal Interim Leader Bob Rae, “It contributed to the defeat of a number of candidates.” The concern that can be extrapolated from this is that the election may be invalid.

No one has come forward to admit guilt for these phone calls. And the House of Commons apparently hasn’t accomplished anything useful since these allegations came forward, because based on the amount of finger pointing and name-calling that has been going on, Parliament Hill has become Canada’s newest school playground.

Elections Canada is now investigating more than 31,000 complaints of harassing calls received by voters during the 2011 election campaign. It turns out that people also received harassing phone calls from individuals pretending to be associated with the local NDP or Liberal candidate. People were called late at night, early in the morning, on religious holidays, and — gasp! — even while driving.

The issue here is that many believe these calls made a difference in the outcome of the election. Let’s run some numbers. So far, there are reports of harassing phone calls in 57 ridings. Let’s assume there are 62,000

Liberal and NDP supporters — double the actual number of complaints — who did not get to vote due to alleged dirty tricks last election. Dividing this evenly, we get 1,088 sabotaged voters per sabotaged riding.

Only six of the ridings won by the Conservatives out of the 57 in question were decided by 1,088 votes or fewer. Taking those six seats away leaves the Conservatives with 159 seats, which is still enough for majority control of the House of Commons. Turns out it was the Liberals’ own incompetence that lost them the election. They didn’t need any help from the idiots with a cell phone registered to a “Pierre Poutine.”

Like every other political controversy in Canada, the robo-call scandal is probably more than 90 per cent hot air.

So, who goes to jail? We’re dealing with politicians here, so probably no one. Faking calls from Elections Canada is illegal, so the legality of the robo-calls depends on the exact wording of the recorded message. The candidates targeted by the harassing live phone calls to voters may have grounds for defamation lawsuits, but like every other political controversy in Canada, the “robo-call scandal” is probably more than 90 per cent hot air. If things get exciting, perhaps one or two nobodies will do some hard probation for masterminding the scheme. Maybe.

The real problem here is the distraction created by this fiasco. Members of Parliament are elected to govern our country. Instead, we get things like robo-calls and Vileaks. You can hire quite a few professional clowns on an MP’s salary, so if we’re declaring the election invalid, we might as well save a few bucks next time and get some entertainment on the side.

ROBO-CALLING



Taylor Gayowsky / The Cord

What do you think about the robo-call scandal?

link@bcitsa.ca

Minding the (interpersonal) gap

Modern technology and western ideologies are creating a divide between people

DAVID SWANSON
Assistant Editor

I'm sure you've noticed that most people on your commute to and from BCIT are plugged into their smartphone, busy surfing the Internet, texting, or listening to music (probably all three). I know I spend my travel time reading news online and catching up on some email correspondence.

If I were a betting man, I'd wager your public transit routine is similar. This shoegaze performance has become all too common. Our strong dependency on modern technol-

ogy has helped produce a self-induced state of atomization that has disconnected us from one another.

Social atomization is the collapse of community linkages that originate from a common motivation or a shared social environment. It stems from our cultures emphasis on the importance individuality and has been intensified by recent technological innovations. Technologies such as iPods and smartphones have created a society of hyper-customization that has allowed people to alter their environment to fit their preferences.

For example, before portable music players people often listened to music in groups. I don't mean a record was playing in the background during a raging keg party, I mean

records were consumed in a group much the same way we listen to music on our iPod. It was an emotionally stimulating ritual that generated a thoughtful musical critique. It was a shared experience that generated discussion. Now, innovations in audio technology have transformed this interaction into a largely solitary event.

This development has built barriers that hinder us from making meaningful interpersonal connections with others and, because we are limiting our face-to-face interaction with people, we begin to view them as static objects. It has somehow become more difficult to relate to one another and it seems like people aren't making an effort to empathize with each other.

In comparison to past gen-

erations, the majority of people today are overwhelmingly apathetic. They are content to live in a world where their personal comforts are met but they are largely disengaged with issues that do not directly impact them or are morally abstract.

Our ability to choose the information we consume is at an all-time high. Online media is strengthening an already highly individualized western culture that places individualism as one of its mantel piece priorities. Of course, having access to this pool of knowledge has immense value. Increased access to information leads is liberating and is the foundation of a more egalitarian society, not to mention we have easier access to alternative news sources that make us

less susceptible to biased news sources like those offered by the Fox Corporation.

Unfortunately, the Internet also helps perpetuate an intense focus on the self (just take look at our obsession with Facebook) which makes it more difficult to achieve communal goals. This is probably why such a small portion of eligible Canadians choose to exercise their right to vote or why it is hard to build a coalition, gain consensus and create positive social change.

So, maybe the next time you're on the bus, take out your headphones, postpone texting for 20 minutes, seek out someone who has done the same and strike up a conversation. Who knows, you might actually enjoy the experience.

Is the VPD using dogs dangerously?

Brutal bites breed lawsuit, backlash

COLIN SPENSLE
Capilano University

VANCOUVER (CUP) — As Scott Philippo rode his bicycle home in the early hours of Oct. 3, 2010, he was attacked by a Vancouver Police Department (VPD) German Shepherd police dog. Philippo had been incorrectly singled out as a bike thief. Unfortunately, this case of mistaken identity ended with bites to Philippo's abdomen due to the police dog not being able to "bite and hold" properly. The handler was able to keep the dog inches from Philippo while handcuffing him, luckily.

Despite training, German Shepherds can be unpredictable, just as policemen can make mistakes. Because of this, Vancouver citizens should be critical of VPD policy surrounding police dogs.

In another incident in January, an East Vancouver construction worker was bitten by a police dog as he left the scene of a crime on his skateboard. He sustained injuries to his legs that required medical attention and 100 staples to close. Images of his ravaged legs and thighs are not only gruesome; they are perhaps just what the public

needs to see to fully grasp the severity of this issue.

Christopher Evans, who was arrested after vandalizing a bus with his skateboard, plans to sue the VPD for damages inflicted by the dog attack with the help of PIVOT Legal Society, a not-for-profit legal aid. Philippo is also suing the VPD with help from PIVOT.

Mistaken identity ended with bites to Philippo's abdomen.

In response to claims made by PIVOT Legal Society, Vancouver police Chief Constable Jim Chu has released a statement justifying the current use of police dogs. His statement points to the need for a clear definition of what sort of criminals should be pursued by police dogs, but he doesn't actually provide any definition. Chu states, "There are several issues to be addressed such as: defining what is a 'serious offender'; whether to limit the use of VPD police dogs to only apprehending 'serious offenders'; the apprehension of armed suspects; and suspects for which there is a reasonable belief has the poten-

tial to cause harm to the officer, themselves or others."

The delineation of who should warrant pursuit by police dogs might be unclear, but surely it shouldn't include the 16-year-old minor who fled from police in the early hours of Jan. 28, 2012. The youth and his accomplice had broken into a gas service station and stolen approximately 40 energy drinks.

As they fled from RCMP pursuit, one youth was dragged down from a fence and sustained a broken nose from the fall. A police dog then began to attack the boy causing severe but non-fatal injuries to the boy's face. The boy's parents have requested the handler be reviewed by the RCMP and the police dog under question be destroyed.

PIVOT has called into question the K-9 Squad's "bite and hold" tactic of detention. PIVOT claims another model called "find and bark" would greatly lower the number of injuries caused by the unpredictable behaviour of dogs trained to bite and hold.

However, in the same statement by Chief Constable Chu, he cites a study by the U.S. Department of Justice that stated, "Under the current model, 'bite and hold,' officers make the decision when the dog is to bite and potentially injure the



Tyler Hughes / The Capilano Courier

suspect. Under 'bark and hold' techniques, the canine makes the decision when they should bite and when they should not."

Vancouver's "bite and hold" policy places the responsibility of these attacks with the dog handler, but as demonstrated earlier, we shouldn't really trust their judgment, either.

Although effective, this method puts the public at risk, innocent or guilty. Unfortu-

nately, Chu claims that no changes need to be made to current K-9 training model. In his conclusion he states, "It is recommended that no change to policy is required as a result of this Service and Policy complaint and that the complaint be dismissed."

His tune may change with the results of the lawsuits against the VPD and RCMP in the coming months



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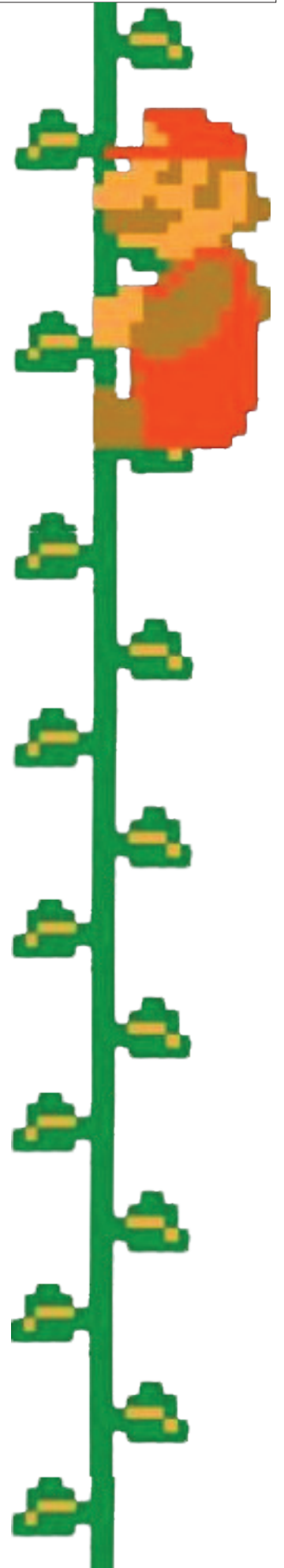


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BCITSA Info & News



BCITSA ELECTION

The BCIT Student Association (BCITSA) general election is taking place soon. Election packages will be made available at the BCITSA General Office as well as online on March 19, at which time the nomination period begins.

Positions available:

- President
- VP Finance & Administration
- VP External
- VP Student Affairs
- VP Campus Life

Chairs:

- School of Business
- School of Health Sciences
- School of Energy
- School of Computing Science and Academic Studies
- School of Transportation, Construction, and the Environment
- School of Aerospace Technology

Contact your BCITSA representative, set rep, or watch this space for more information.

UPCOMING EVENTS

- March 19 **BCITSA election nomination forms available**
Go to the General Office in the Great Hall in the Burnaby Campus or check BCITSA.ca to get more information about running for office.
- March 20 **Crash Course Cookin'**
Learn how to make all sorts of delicious for free and keep the food!
- March 29 **Professor Mugs Karaoke**
Come sing your heart out or just watch some friends! Either way, it's sure to be a good time, so don't miss karaoke at Professor Mugs!

Go to facebook.com/BCITSA for more details!

Executive Weigh-In



A message from BCITSA School of Energy Chair Amy Erskine

Well, it's that time of year again! People are starting to show a bit more skin, flowers are blooming, birds are chirping, slushy rain is turning into real rain. I'm not talking about spring — it's election time!

I never thought I would become involved in student government, but this past year has been the best year of my decade in post-secondary education. That being said, it is surprising that many of the positions on student council do not have any competition for the position. I believe this is because people don't really know what it's all about.

Here's the deal — you personally have the chance to make things better around here. Tired of something? Want a new program or event on campus? Join council and make it happen. It's a paid position, takes about 10 hours per week and the bit of power you get is nice, too!

In my time as chair of the School of Energy, I have changed BCIT policy, aided countless frustrated students, and helped create a mentoring program for my school.

As an elected representative, you get access to part of BCIT you might not even be familiar with. I was even allowed to sit in the airplanes at ATC and got to see a show at BCIT's planetarium!

Not only have I had a lot of fun, but I feel I've grown over the past year. I am now officially a leader and my resume can now state that with authority. In this intimidating job market, you need every possible advantage to help set you apart from the competition.

If you need a job next semester, why not pick one that is flexible, close to class, looks good on the resume and is a lot of fun? Run in the BCITSA election!

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- be a BCIT student, resident, or faculty member
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- be a married couple without dependents with a combined income of \$25,000 or less

You are not eligible if you:

- own your own business
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- are claiming capital gains
- have major investments, RRSPs, stock, mutual funds, or RESP's have filed for bankruptcy
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Roommates enter fourth month of chore stand-off

Damage deposit feared to be long lost by now

JOHN MORRISON III

Not autobiographical, I swear

BURNABY, B.C. — Tensions remain high in Burnaby, B.C. as three young men continue one of the longest chore standoffs in the history of their apartment complex.

The conflict began in the wake of a Halloween party hosted by the trio and has resulted in a complete avoidance of cleanliness not seen since the series premiere of *Hoarders*.

The festivities, which left the suite covered with empty alcohol bottles, pizza boxes, and spilled keg beer, have made the three-bedroom apartment only slightly more unkempt than usual. Despite this, disagreement over the division of clean-up duties has resulted in an ongoing refusal of responsibilities.

After months spent in increasingly filthy living quarters, the rapidly aging — but never maturing — twentysomethings have long-since run out of clean dishes and cutlery. The result has been a series of progressively more creative and disgusting dining practices.

One roommate, David Proctor, told *The Link* that at this point he sees no other choice, but to move out.

"I just want to be able to walk across the apartment without stepping on black mould," pleaded Proctor, colloquially referring to the dark fuzzy growth that initially developed in a puddle of spilled beer. Clad in a large garbage bag he had fashioned into a makeshift smock, Proctor says he's sick of the extreme measures he's been forced to adopt in order to stay healthy.

Things are not looking up, however, based on a statement by roommate Graham Templeton: "I dunno, man, I kind of like it. It's relaxing."

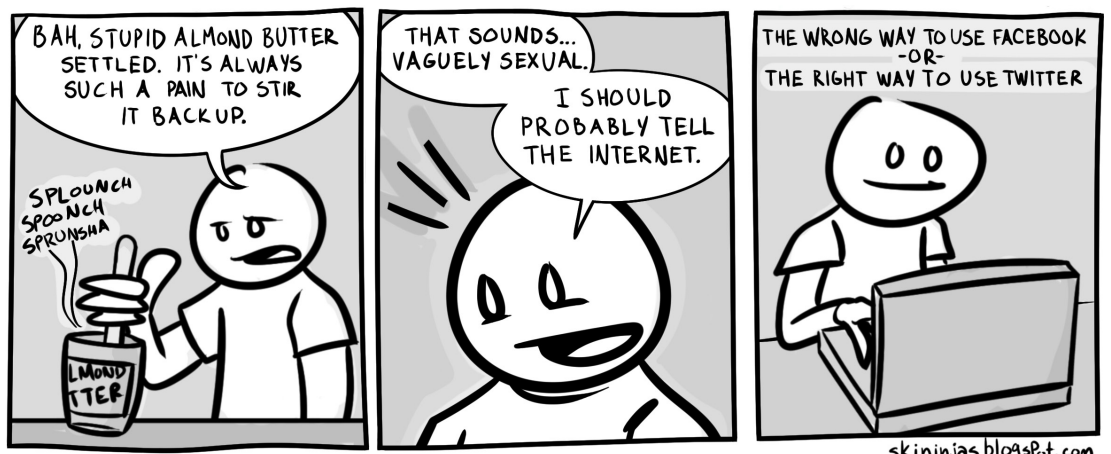
I just want to be able to walk across the apartment without stepping on black mould.

"At this point you just need to embrace it," said a third roommate, who wished to remain nameless. "Besides, I washed two of David's saucepans in the second week of October, so it's only a matter of time before he comes to his senses and picks up the slack."

Friends of the trio believe this weekend could be a turning point for the roommates' motivation, as Templeton's long-time girlfriend has informed him that they "need to talk."



Ski Ninjas - Kyle Lees Benjamin Nay (Argus University)



skininjas.blogspot.com

Awesome Sauce - Benjamin Nay (University of Alberta)



Pop and Ice Cream - Lance and Evan Mudryk (University of Alberta)

