

january 2017

LINK

MAGAZINE

BCIT & BEYOND



CUPID'S CURSOR

Playing the swipe-stakes
of online dating.

BOWEN ISLAND
yoga

STUDENT SPOTLIGHT

JASON WAIT

On shooting stars

plus: 3 new consoles, Indo-Chinese cuisine & background acting

How to be

a better friend.

Getting to know the person
behind the profile.

ELLEBOX

Bunny Ghatrora is on a
mission to eliminate stigma
surrounding the cycle.

'PLAN B'

Google Lunar XPRIZE's only Canadian
team and the BCIT connection.



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#BCITandBEYOND

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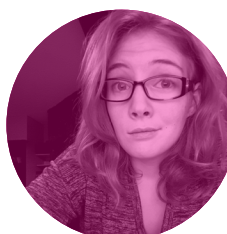
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Featured Contributors



Christina Willis
Technical Writing

Christina is a beer-drinking, noodle-dreaming introvert. She loves warm fuzzy socks, miniature vegetables and listening to records on a rainy day. If she's not at the brewery, she's probably eating a bowl of ramen. Read about her adventures at discoverybird.com.



Megan Rempel
Project Management (2016 Graduate)

Megan grew up in the city of Port Coquitlam, but spent many days in the wilderness of B.C. She's passionate about creative expression, the outdoors and sustainable projects. Her goal is to become an Environmental Project Manager that connects people in her community to bring green initiatives to life.



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The truth is out there.

on the cover:

Jason Wait gets a little closer to the stars at the top of Queen Elizabeth park.

photo maddy adams

Jason's photos:

Here: The Bubble nebula
Opposite page: Jupiter and her moons

It's weird, whenever I talk to a pretty girl I can't find my words. I don't know if it's confidence or what, but it's like I turn into a different person...

It's not uncommon to know someone who sounds like this. It might even be you. I used to be like this for the largest portion of my life. It wasn't until I heard the Hershey's catchphrase "You're not you when you're hungry" that I started to think more about myself (odd how that works) and how I am with other people. I've since realized that everyone acts differently depending on who they're with, and the shifting self can be intimidating or scary for people to face. It can lead to an identity crisis, faith challenge, or travelling around the world to face the true question: "Who am I?"

Now I'm not saying that I've solved some mystery not even Sherlock Holmes could solve; this is just my observation that I think can help those who are trying to change themselves. Try this for a moment: think back to when you were truly alone for a day or two with no internet access (it can be hard, but try). How did you feel? Did you feel truly alone? Did you feel a need to seek out other people's photos or statuses to make yourself feel better? Or were you just really bored? I tried thinking about these questions when I was travelling abroad once alone, and it really challenged my understanding of who I am when I'm alone. Turns out I can be kind of hard on myself, reflective and over-thinking when there's nothing distracting me from me. By allowing myself time to see that I control what makes me happy, and not those around me, I was able to reverse this need to appeal to others, changing my outlook on life, pushing me to seek time alone and enjoy it.

I learned to pay less attention to how others see me, so long as I was satisfied with the person I was at that moment. We all become accustomed to acting a certain way towards our family, and then other ways with friends, strangers, classmates and co-workers. The different parts of ourselves form this mosaic that alters slightly to appeal to the other person or group's vibe. Coming to terms with this mosaic self can help you realize that each piece of you is just a part of the bigger picture that stems from individual life experiences.

If you've ever asked yourself, "Who am I?" it can also be helpful to first come to terms with who you aren't. Recognizing a part of yourself that you like the most (it's hard I know, but even one thing helps) can create a deeper love that can last a lifetime. Finding that inner love will diffuse into your interactions with others, no matter how intimidating the social situation, and nobody can defeat your love for yourself. When all the pieces of you are scattered across the table, finding links to each piece can achieve a sense of harmony throughout.

Sometimes I catch myself telling others that I honestly just don't give a %\$@#, but what I really mean is, I try not to care about what other people think about me. When it comes to fully reinventing myself for this new year, I'll take a pass. But when it comes to self-reflection, self-love, and embracing who I am, I'll do that for sure.

— Jarell Alvarez
Associate Editor



Exploding Kittens

Ya we get it, you're a dog person; doesn't mean you have to go around blowing up helpless little kittens. Wait, what's that **Annie Sheng**? You're talking about a board game? Oh my bad. Guess I'll put on the Cone of Shame now.

Most Valued

The NFL season is coming to a close and it's time for **George Eliopoulos** to make the case for possible MVPs. What do you think? Should he consider Deflategate, pay attention to the stats, or throw a Hail Mary to the end zone? Help George decide; leave a comment on his blog.

Student Spotlight Extras

We're blessed to have such a talented photographer on our team with **Maddy Adams**, but cursed in our limited page counts, which means we can't print all her photos. Good thing she also exports her pics in RGB, so we can at least get them all up on our website for your viewing pleasure.

RT
#BCIT

@Geoffrey_Bird

Geoffrey Bird
@Geoffrey_Bird

Holy smokes. Quite the moon this morning.
#moon #bcit #explorebc #vancouver @lfeatbcit

#smokestack #be...

@czerwinski
"I just had to buy a 130\$ textbook. My plan to save money is to eat the chapters as I finish reading them. #BCIT #studentproblems "

@ecemixer
"Went back to #BCIT lifestyle already: 35 tabs open on my internet browser and Word doc is ready for APA references. Happy Sunday! #yvr"

@CareersAtSafe

SafeSoftware Careers
@CareersAtSafe

Our newest Safers - practicum students from #BCIT's Advanced #GIS program - are ready for action!

NEW HEIGHTS

Take a risk, put yourself out there, and try something new. You might just get rewarded.



Twitter: @Sean_McCullum

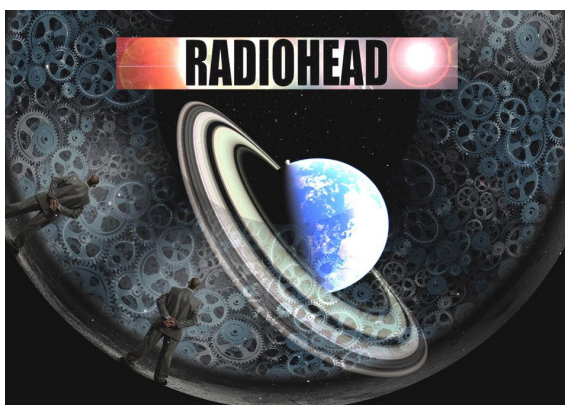
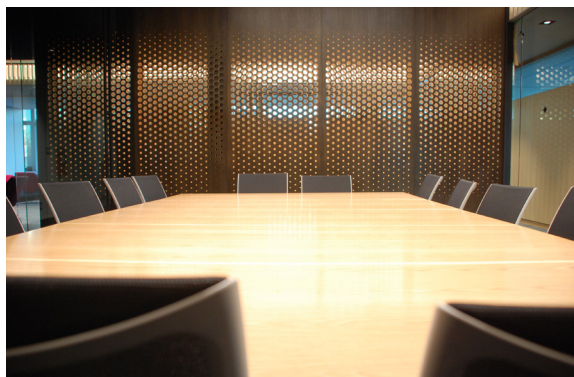
HEEEEEERE'S JOHNNIE!

One of the truly scary things about making a magazine, or art of any kind, is never really knowing if what you're putting out there is making a difference. And then comes a moment when it all seems worth it. We're so proud of *LINK* alumna Laina Tanahara who took home an national student journalism award this past month in New Brunswick, for her piece on volunteering with Syrian refugees (originally published in our April 2016 issue). "The Johnnies" are handed out annually by Canadian University Press to recognize exceptional student journalists contributing to post secondary publications across Canada. We're honoured to have one of our writers included in a long list of great student journalists, and even happier that she came out on top.

ONCE IN A LIFETIME

And you may find yourself in a beautiful office, with a beautiful desk. And you may find yourself at council meetings on a monday night. And you may find yourself in the office of the BCIT President, making important decisions. And you may ask yourself, "Well...

How did I get here?" Now is your chance to become a BCIT Student Executive and start making a difference at this school. This month, by-election voting opens for the positions of VP Finance & Administration and VP External. And for those of you who are too busy to run for one of the positions, make sure you at least cast your vote, because these people are more than just talking heads, and you should use your voice lest BCIT just goes on same as it ever was. More details can be found at www.bcitsa.ca



HIGH AND/OR DRY

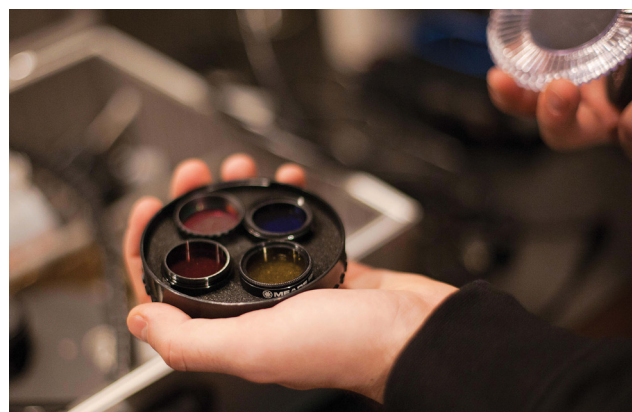
This seems like an appropriate time to remind you that BCIT Burnaby has a Planetarium. And no, it's not an Observatory, where you look at stars through a giant telescope. It's a big dome-shaped theatre that plays trippy laser shows and cool music. Last year's production of *Dark Side of the Moon* was such a smash(ed) hit, with sell-out crowds of stoners turning up each Friday to mellow out with Gilmour and the gang, that they've brought it back again this year. And they've also Just added a brand new Radiohead show (starting Jan. 13). No Surprises if this one sells out quickly. So don't be a Creep, get your tickets online at roundhouseproductionsshow.com. And no need to be a Paranoid Android about it; I doubt the Karma Police will be there.



SHOOTING STARS

Jason Wait, BCIT Engineering student and amateur astrophotographer, observes the infinite sky from his backyard and captures it through his camera. Astronomy is a massive subject to cover, but Jason sat down with me to give a momentary glimpse into deep space and why he's so passionate about it.

interview **rachel chang**
photos **maddy adams**



"It's always been an interest," Jason begins. "Growing up with an engineer father, and a nuclear physicist grandfather, there was always a lot of discussion around the table about random hypotheticals or the interesting points of views about the laws of physics. I remember as a kid, one time my dad was at the dinner table and said, 'If you had an infinitely long beam, and you took it and started to spin it around, at the ends of those beams, you would go back in time.' He was getting into the fundamental idea that because light travels at a specific speed, everything in our universe has to be coherent with respect to the consequences of actions. You see it in science fiction all the time."

Every artist (and scientist) begins somewhere. Jason, a completely self-taught astrophotographer and enthusiast of all things outer space, laughed as he thought back to where he started.

"Maybe it was listening to Neil deGrasse Tyson's podcast in the 10th or 11th grade, I decided to figure out what I would be interested in. I spent years [thinking] 'Maybe I should buy a telescope', but wondered what the point would be. I didn't just want to look through a telescope and be 'Oh, that's cool'. I wanted to be able to share what I was seeing with other people."

"[There was a point] where I couldn't even point to the North Star. I was so excited about buying a telescope, but so ignorant that I didn't know how much I had to learn before I could start finding objects in the sky, let alone taking pictures of them. I started taking totally garbage images with my cellphone." He chuckled as he pulled up his Instagram (@jasonrwait) and showed me the first picture he ever took of Jupiter. "You can't even tell what it is!"

However, with his enthusiasm and passion fuelling his hobby, Jason proceeded to acknowledge how important the Internet and the online astrophotography community was to teaching and refining the skills that he needed.

"I read a story about a 17-year-old that basically got his PhD for free, online. I'm not suggesting that I can do that, not everyone has that focus or intellect. If I can emulate that to any degree at all, then it would be a successful use of the Internet, which is such an important tool for us to use. It's amazing that we can use the Internet to do anything. There's an astrophotography Subreddit, and my goal was to post images there that would be passable images. The [community] is amazing, and [gave me] good ideas of what software to use. In general, you have to use a huge amount of programs to make this all happen. All the software I use is developed by astronomers and shared for free. I use FireCapture, which can do long exposure, incredible short exposures, and a variety of file types. Planets generally have to be in an uncompressed AVI video."

He held up a picture of Mercury's transit past the sun. "This is almost a gigabyte per second of video frames. Each of these pictures is 80,000 frames compressed into a single one. I use a German software called AutoStakkert! which rates the images on how blurry they are and chooses the better ones, averages the signals on the better ones (weighted averaging). There's [also sharpening] blur from our atmosphere, blur from inside the telescope tube – there's tons of little details to improve the quality of the images."

"It's something I'm super enthusiastic about, especially participating in this community of amateur [astrophotographers]. If I had been lucky in my

continued...



"If you're ever concerned about worldly problems, take a picture of something that's 12 billion years old."

galaxy captures, for example if a star had turned into a supernova, then I would have effectively documented that object transition, and contributed in a very, very small way to the actual science of astronomy, which is definitely the goal. The whole reason why I'm starting at BCIT is so I can work with a large telescope, or work in a particle physics lab like my grandpa did."

"In the next five to ten years we have a few really big facilities coming out. The astronomy community is pretty dead-set on everything being open-sourced and shared. There is an incredible international cooperation that takes place because of it. The principle of everything being out on the table and helping each other is so useful. When these new facilities come out, they're going to be putting pretty much all of their data online instantly, and we're going to have a problem where we won't have the software to deal with this automatically. It's going to take tens of thousands of people spending hours and hours figuring out how to compile this data into useful information. What I'm hoping to get out of taking this program at BCIT, is to try to automate [that process] somehow. A lot of the skills I've developed taking deep space images, resolving sharp planetary details from the crappiest video series, I think is going to be useful if I am to participate in all of that."

Jason's usual hunting ground is his own backyard in Vancouver. Despite the bad light pollution and freezing cold weather in recent months, he's managed to capture some stellar photos. When asked

about how he plans his shoots, he explained: "In general, you want to shoot whatever happens to be straight above in the season. Most people are shooting the same list of 15 or so targets all year round. Right now, in the winter, it happens to be the Orion Nebula. It's about 1000 light years away, which is shockingly close by for a star-forming region. I spent my whole summer shooting the Bubble Nebula, which is in the Cassiopeia region."

As he stood next to his wall-sized poster of Hubble's capture of the Carina Nebula, he remarked, "It's just crazy to think sometimes, the size and scale of the universe. It's such a relief too. If you're ever stressed, if you're ever concerned about worldly problems, take a picture of something that's 12 billion years old. Our solar system is 8 light hours across; our sunlight takes 8 hours to reach Pluto roughly, or 8 minutes and 40 seconds to reach Earth. That's the scale of our universe in our local region. It's 1.5 light seconds to reach the Moon. The Milky Way is 250,000 lightyears across. Stephan's Quintet is a few hundred million lightyears away... oh my god."

We single-filed out of warmth of his home into the cold, crisp air to shoot some photos at Queen Elizabeth Park. The sky was bright, but clear of clouds. Jason pointed up at the sky and exclaimed, "There's Venus!" And sure enough, just past the crescent of the moon, was a bright little dot in the blue expanse.

To see a full gallery of Jason's amazing astrophotography, point your telescope towards www.linkbcit.ca



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Outside the Box

Bunny Ghatrora is both a BCIT accounting student and the co-founder of her own company called ElleBox. She invited us into their swanky office to discuss why the subscription service is so important to the period positivity movement and how her success can empower young women to pursue their dreams.

interview **rachel chang**
photos **maddy adams**



What is an Ellebox? And what inspired you to start it?

ElleBox is a monthly delivery of organic pads and tampons. Each month, subscribers receive a curated package of feminine hygiene products along with tea, chocolate and self-care products such as face masks and candles. Funnily enough, the inspiration behind creating ElleBox was bacon. About a year and a half ago, my co-founder Taran was listening to a podcast instead of studying for her law school exams. The podcast was about a man who quit his job as a lawyer to begin a subscription gourmet bacon company. She started thinking about what she would want shipped to her each month, and then she realized pads and tampons are something women need every month. She called myself and Jessica, and the three of us started creating ElleBox.

What do you think has been the biggest challenge in creating ElleBox?

The biggest challenge is the stigma associated with periods. Periods are a taboo subject that almost nobody ever wants to talk about. This makes creating a conversation around ElleBox on social media, and in person, pretty difficult. We try to use humour as our method to break this barrier, for example we spoofed Jimmy Kimmel's "Mean Tweets" with "Guys Read Period Tweets," which is a series of some of our awesome friends reading real tweets from girls on their period.

How does ElleBox contribute to the period positivity movement that's been gaining traction in the last couple of years?

2016 has been claimed as the year of the period. There are so many amazing initiatives and companies that are helping reduce the stigma and we're so excited to be part of the movement. We have two goals with ElleBox. The first is to create access to organic feminine hygiene, and the second is to change the way women experience their periods. By subscribing to ElleBox, women are using tampons that are 100% cotton – free of pesticides, bleach and carcinogens. Mainstream tampons brands are not required to disclose the ingredients they use, so we're shining a light on the health benefits of

organic. Receiving a box each month is like receiving a present in the mail, and suddenly, the time of the month that is usually dreaded is something that women look forward to.

We're also creating a 'First Period Box' for girls beginning their period. The FPB is backed by an expert committee in women's health, education and reproductive development. It includes everything a young girl needs when she first gets her period including: 100% organic feminine hygiene, comfort items intended to treat the symptoms of menstruation and an educational and empowerment guide we created: "Getting to Know your Flow: A Guide to Periods."

How did you decide what would go into the box?

We are currently offering two box options: a 'Necessities' box and a 'Comfort' box. The Necessities is exactly what it sounds like: a customizable selection of pads and tampons. This box is the perfect option for the girl who wants convenient access to organic feminine hygiene (which are not currently sold in Big Box Retailers) without breaking the bank. The Comfort Box includes the necessities, along with a couple extras to make that time of the month a little better. These extras include a new flavour of tea and chocolate each month as well two locally curated self-care items that cater to period symptoms, like a heat pack, face mask, or bath salts.

What's your favourite part of running this company?

My favourite aspect is connecting with our customers. Some mornings we'll wake up with emails or messages from customers telling us how receiving an ElleBox makes them feel. It's great to know that something we created is helping women across the country and making them feel better about their period. Women's health isn't given the attention it needs, and many women have extremely painful periods. We love that we're able to make that time of month more enjoyable.

continued...



*The Elle's behind Ellebox.
(l to r) Bunny Ghatrora, Jessica Billmer, Taran Ghatrora*

"Companies with women co-founders are often more successful and profitable than those without."

Any surprises that came with starting your own business?

Everything is a surprise. Starting a business wasn't something we necessarily planned, so every day we're learning something new. There's a lot of problem-solving involved, and a lot of doing what we think is the best option and hoping it works out. I guess one of the biggest surprises is that everything is trial and error. There's no guidebook or manual that teaches you to launch a business.

How do you think your time at BCIT has contributed towards your business?

I think something every student at BCIT can relate to is that we all get good at time management and prioritizing. Having eight plus classes and six exams in four days, really teaches you how to stay focused and meet deadlines – a skill that I think is so important in entrepreneurship, especially during the beginning phases of a start-up. I've also had several profs throughout my studies that gave me advice and continue to do so even after the semester ended. It's a great feeling knowing that there's a whole network at BCIT who are willing and excited to help us out in any way they can.

Speaking from your experiences as working professionals and entrepreneurs, do you have any words of wisdom for young women out there?

There couldn't be a better time than right now for women to start a movement, whatever it might be. Women are making headlines and getting recognized in the business world now more than ever, and studies show that companies with women co-founders are often more successful and profitable than those without. We have a long way to go until the glass ceiling is shattered, but we're making cracks and that's all that matters. Whatever it is that you're passionate about, fight for it!

What are the plans for the future?

In the very near future we are expanding across the U.S. Hopefully within the next year we will also carry our very own line of organic pads and tampons. We definitely want to continue making waves in the women's health industry and we're very excited for the future. Stay tuned!

Give us a little hint as to what's in next month's ElleBox...

There's a bonus gift in this month's Comfort Box. That's all I'm going to say.

With brilliant young women like Bunny and her co-founders leading the way to a future where women can openly discuss their periods without feeling embarrassed or ashamed, we're so excited to have a local, homegrown company gaining the recognition it deserves. Make sure to check out ElleBox at www.elleboxco.com.

I'll see you in a few days.

a new year's resolution

by joseph huang

In this day and age, where social media has permeated our friendships to the bone, it's good to take a few moments and examine the actual impact it has on our friendships. Online places like Facebook has allowed us to keep in touch with friends who live halfway across the world, and even interact with them on an emotional and fun level with the use of emoticons and GIFs. Instagram allows you to take those special moments and share them with your friends and families in an instant, while Twitter is exceptionally effective in allowing even the shyest person to voice their inner thoughts and frustrations.

Another plus side to social media is the fact that it can be used to build your friendships safely. If you don't feel comfortable hanging out with a person, you can always be friends on Facebook first and get to know each other there. If you don't feel comfortable afterwards, then you've saved yourself, and the other party, quite some headache.

Choosing your friends is important and allowing certain people to grow closer to you at a deeper level than most often takes time and patience. Social media provides a tool to get acquainted with people, and if possible, for you to show them that you're interested in being closer friends.

With the number of Facebook friends growing on your list though, it's hard not to forget that those people are more than just a list; there are real people behind those profile pictures.

How many of us have settled with liking each other's posts and comments without taking the time to inquire how the other person feels? Interacting through social media can make us complacent as it slowly phases out the personal interaction, which is what's really crucial to an actual friendship. It's frightening that the very thing we use in the hopes of bringing us closer together, can actually do just the opposite and keep us at bay from one another.

With this in mind, let's remember that the old-fashioned methods of interacting with people still exist: coffee dates, phone calls (not texts!) and occasional hangouts; doing something together without the realm of bits and bytes serving as the go-between. Listening to your friend's voice and watching them as they relay their newest experiences to you, is something that social media can never replace. There is a deeper bonding when you're together in person, which takes the friendship, strengthens it, and makes it grow just a little bit more.

So with a whole new year in front of us, let's all resolve to take the time and phone our friends, or even go on a date with them. There's no better resolution to make than to put more effort into keeping those we care about close to us in our lives. After all, good friends are in short supply these days.

**Choosing
your friends
is important**

**those
people are
more than
just a list**



LUNAR NEW YEAR

words **selenna ho**
illustration **flavia chan**

Fireworks ignited the blackened sky, leaping and dancing from one spark to another as the villagers extended their arms like catapults. A blanket of smoke momentarily covered the red paper lanterns, but their candles kept a ground-level dimness. Some quivered amongst the darkness and loudness. Some fell asleep, comforted by such. The remaining were the brave: lighting the red candles and catapulting the fireworks. After all, such actions were necessary to drive away the beast.

According to legends, a mythical beast called Nian (年) — which translates to “Year” — would come out during the night of Lunar New Year’s eve. The beast had the body of an ox, the head of a lion, and lived in the sea. Nian would prey on all that stood in its wake. Women, men, children; all were terrified of its wrath. Then one day, a discovery was made: Nian feared the colour red, fire, and loud sounds. Since then, people would launch fireworks and decorate their houses with red coloured paper. Thus the birth of Lunar New Year celebrations.

Although the traditions were born out of fear, today such activities are festive reminders of culture and togetherness.

Many other New Year customs include giving youth red envelopes with money in it (which are believed to suppress evil in children and bring prosperity), and cleaning the house to welcome the new year. The New Year’s Eve dinner is the most important dinner for those who celebrate this holiday. Historically, family members would travel great distances to unite with their families for the meal of fish, dumplings, noodles, and other time-honoured dishes.

According to the Chinese zodiac — which is based on a 12-year cycle — each year symbolizes an animal. The animals are: rat, ox, tiger, rabbit, dragon, snake, horse, sheep, monkey, rooster, dog and pig. A different element is paired with the animal each year: fire, water, earth, metal and wood. It is believed that the animal representing a person’s birth year influences the person’s characteristics and fortunes. This year, Lunar New Year is on January 28, marking the year of the Fire Rooster.

Even though Lunar New Year started thousands of years ago, most of the rituals have never changed; rather, they’ve transformed to match the unique quality of each family.

“When I was younger and Lunar New Year rolled around, I was all about the animals of the Chinese Zodiac. I would find out which animal was representing the year and read all about it. Over time, my focus shifted to the Lunar New Year celebrations my family held. I thought about the significance my relatives placed on those family dinners. It is usually my older relatives who organize the dinner, and I think it’s because they understand the importance of getting together during a time of celebration. I tried to imagine what their celebrations were like when they were still living in Hong Kong. Did they enjoy the festivities? Were they awestruck by the fireworks? Perhaps I will ask them about it at the upcoming dinner. If I have learned anything, it is that Lunar New Year celebrates the possibilities of an untold beginning, and you want loved ones there from the start.

- jordan kwong

“Almost every Lunar New Year, my family would have this big feast that had all the delicious Asian food and comforts you could dream of. We’d crack open carbonated drinks and end the day with a movie night for the whole family. Not exactly what you’d call a kosher Chinese New Year celebration, but looking back, I appreciate that these moments existed for my family. It’s hard now to get together, especially with everyone in my family – including myself – working full-time jobs with shift work. We don’t celebrate the Lunar New Year as much now; in my case, I just stopped thinking about it, letting it pass as just another day of the year. To me, the Lunar New Year never had a cultural or societal impact on my mind... it was always about my family, and without a family to celebrate it, it doesn’t have the same impact on me as it used to. It’s one of those special days on the calendar that can bring you and your loved ones together for some memories. Take advantage of it and get together because you never know what the New Year will bring.

- jospeh huang



CUPID'S CURSOR

Smart Phone, Dumb Dating

words **maddy adams**

illustrations **flora brodie**

I'm at that age where more and more of my friends are getting engaged. With all the elaborate surprise proposals sprinkled throughout my social feeds and wedding hashtags littering every post, it started getting to me. *Why am I single. What's wrong with me?* I'd just come out of a long-term relationship earlier in the year and decided to enter into the dating world again, but it can be very difficult to meet people while studying at BCIT, so joining a dating service seemed like a viable option. Online dating to me held such a negative reputation though. Wasn't it reserved for the desperate and unlovable? Or is finding romance online the new status quo? Wide-eyed and innocent, I entered this new scene feeling like Carrie Bradshaw from *Sex and the City* stepping off the subway – only a little less Manolo Blahnik, and a little more Sketchers.

My first venture into online dating started at a friend's birthday party. Most of my friends were already online or had at least tried it, so after a couple of beers, three of them hijacked my phone and downloaded a dating app. As a team, we swiped and swiped and swiped, through an endless stream of profiles. I'd half-expected to find only mutants online – the leftovers of Metro Vancouver – but I was wrong. Most of my matches seemed really interesting, well-educated, attractive and relatively normal. The problem for me though wasn't with the people on there, it was the environment

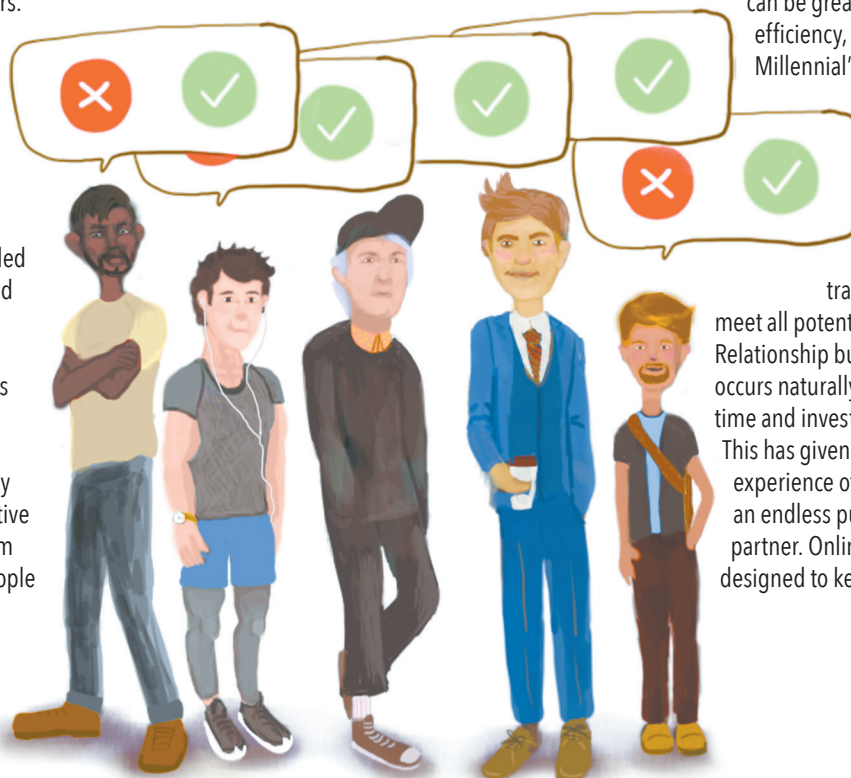
in which we were interacting. After chatting with some guys, I started to notice how impersonal and quick the interactions were. *Am I boring? Did I say something wrong?* I quickly realized that getting a match didn't mean very much, as I was probably one of 50 other matches they were chatting with. I felt like most people were simply collecting matches like trophies, without any intention to meet or talk to them. I suddenly felt the pressure to really upsell myself, and I started to overanalyze my speech. *Should I add an emoji? Should I respond with "haha" or "lol"? Do I portray the best, most enhanced version of myself, or do I present my completely organized, gets-eight-hours-of-sleep, human self?* I was in the midst of an identity crisis. I took some time to think over this new world

and came to this conclusion: being a Millennial changes the way we date, especially online.

We Millennials just love to give you our personal elevator pitch, quick to rattle off our list of diverse interests, jobs and the social causes we believe in. I think the Millennial generation was raised to believe that we can have whatever we dream of, and that we are deserving of our desires. Our Gen X parents are often described as the cheerleading generation, showering their Millennial children with compliments and an abundance of support along the way. This has created a generation of young adults who are more open-minded to possibilities than generations before them, and who have developed a mindset of: "Why *can't* I have what I want?"

This open-mindedness to change and progress can be great for shortcuts, creativity and efficiency, but it's also screwing up the Millennial's perception of relationships.

Online dating platforms emphasize the discovery of people, not developing strong, committed, and lasting relationships. In the traditional dating method, you'd meet all potential partners face-to-face. Relationship building and strengthening occurs naturally when you are spending time and investing effort in one another. This has given way though to the user experience of online dating, where there is an endless pursuit to discover the "perfect" partner. Online dating platforms are designed to keep users swiping and browsing.





This abundance of choice, mixed with the belief that Millennials can have whatever they want in an easy-to-use mobile app, keeps us on the hamster wheel, swiping endlessly through profiles.

One of the first dates I went on with someone that I'd met online was with a gentleman I'll call Mr. L. After a couple of exchanges online, Mr. L asked me out for a drink. I'd had a busy week and so I hadn't thought much about the date until I was on my way to meet him. I remember sitting on the bus and thinking to myself: *What the hell am I doing? I barely know anything about this guy. Why did I agree to an evening to him?* We met at a trendy brewery in Mount Pleasant, and as we drank craft beer, surrounded by succulents, I quickly realized that we did not have much in common. I scolded myself in my head: *I should have screened him more before agreeing to a date.* He gushed to me about his love of red meat and laughed about, "How entertaining it would

anything about each other, we didn't have anything in common, and we didn't put effort into getting to know each other. We swiped, met at a bar, and moved on. Granted, many dates will never make it past the first, however I think minimizing the shopping aspect would reduce the amount of disappointing first dates, and increase the quality of people you meet, with more chemistry and more in common.

Of course, online dating is not all bad, or at least it doesn't have to be. For certain personality types, or smaller communities of people, it can be a huge benefit. For instance, online dating has been found to be more successful for middle-aged people, marginalized groups in the LGBTQ community, or those with niche interests/kinks who may have smaller dating pools. Having control over your profile,

"We swiped, met at a bar, and moved on."

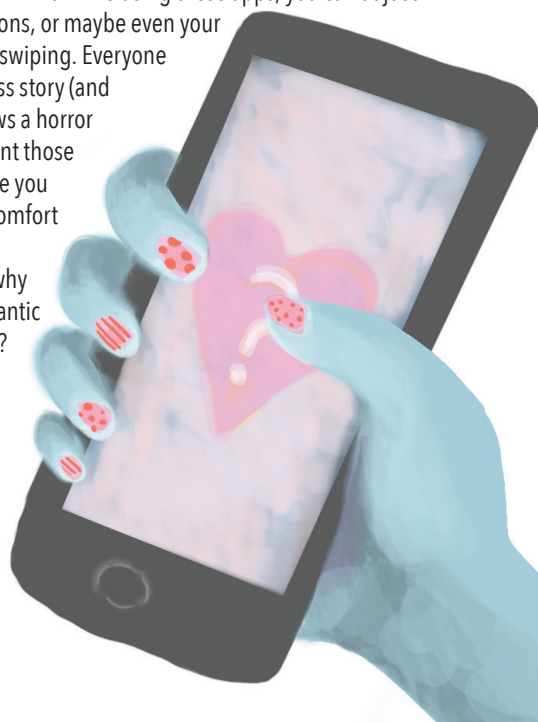
be to watch a Picador in Spain kill a bull." As a vegetarian, I tried not to look too disturbed by this, calmly trying to explain how terrible I thought killing animals for entertainment was, seeing if I could evoke some empathy from him. He chuckled like I had told him an adorable anecdote. Afterwards, I had plans to meet my friends and he offered to give me a lift. As we pulled up, I was so preoccupied looking for the entrance to my friend's apartment that I didn't notice him leaning towards me. I turned, surprised as he went in for a kiss. My response? I somehow ended up petting his head awkwardly. We were both mortified, and I hurriedly jumped out of the car. We never spoke again.

Is this online dating? Meeting strangers and seeing if you get along? Throwing a dart and seeing what sticks? I thought the whole experience was unnatural, spending time with near-strangers to see if anything sparks. Had Mr. L really felt chemistry between us, or was he just as lost as I in this whole online dating world?

I think I should have spent more time getting to know Mr. L before agreeing to an evening with him. We didn't put any effort into laying the groundwork and getting to know one another. Traditionally when you meet someone, you chat for a bit, then only if you get along and have some things in common would you agree to spend more time together. When meeting online, a lot of the pre-screening takes more effort, and I think is often skipped or minimized. I got caught up in the online dating race, talking to and meeting many people in quick pursuit. But in reality, Mr. L and I didn't know

who you meet, and who you interact with gives you a lot of control in your romantic life, which can be really radical for someone who may be tired of waiting to meet someone "organically." Being in full control of how you portray and market yourself also allows you to meet people you may have never crossed paths with traditionally. Online dating can be a great advantage for people who are shy, or have a hard time meeting people in person. With less self-awareness involved compared to in-person communication, you can get to know each other more comfortably, quickly, and form deeper connections faster than you would have otherwise.

I think if you keep the inherent flaws of the online social environment in mind while using these apps, you can adjust your expectations, or maybe even your attitude while swiping. Everyone knows a success story (and everyone knows a horror story*), so flaunt those Sketchers while you step off your comfort curb, and ask yourself this: why *not* find a romantic partner online?



*Got a Tinder Tale you're just dying to spill?
Post it on our Facebook wall. We'd love to hear it.
www.facebook.com/linkbcit



instagram: @discoverybird

NAMASTAY ON BOWEN

words **christina willis**

December is over, the hustle and bustle of the holidays have slowed, and a new year is upon us. Most people, whether they admit it or not, have resolutions and goals in mind for 2017. From new hobbies, to new jobs, to new workout schedules, we're all out to make a change and improve our lives for the better. Our health and wellbeing are such an important part of our happiness and fulfillment, and are essential to personal improvement. Sometimes all it takes is a relaxing weekend getaway to hit the reset button and to feel rejuvenated and excited about all that is in front of us this year.

Relaxation: such an important part of life. Relaxation allows space for so much growth. It allows space for us to unwind and to feel peace. We need to relax to restore and strengthen, and not just our physical bodies, but also our minds. There's an important balance between both body and mind. I visited Bowen Island this past November, seeking some time and space for myself to relax, and wow did I find what I was looking for.

Bowen Island – a small island in Howe Sound off the coast of the Sea to Sky highway – is just a short 25-minute ferry ride from Horseshoe Bay and has that slow island tempo where time just passes a little differently. The people on Bowen Island seem less rushed, friendlier and more connected; a refreshing break from the city. We are lucky in B.C. to have so many quiet and quaint places to visit that are full of spirit, health and belief. For those of us who live in Vancouver, Bowen Island might be the closest place to get that quality relaxing retreat, and the island has so many ways to tap into the spirit and power of healthy balanced living.

Bowen is covered in walking and hiking trails, including a few longer hikes that lead to mountain viewpoints, lakes and waterfalls. Crippen Park is located in Snug Cove and offers great trails of various levels and lengths. It's one of those B.C. parks that inspires youthful feelings as you explore the earthy trails and their scattered roots. It feels awesome to be absorbed into the green-saturated forests.

Nature is a surefire way to feel calm, to tap into an inner solitude, peace and sense of gratitude. Being surrounded by nature is possibly the best way to balance the body and mind. But there is another way to achieve balance, a way that us Vancouverites have come to know well: yoga.

Bowen Island is home to an incredible bed and breakfast yoga retreat at Nectar Yoga B&B. Owner/instructor Andrea, and her partner Sat, live on the 1.5-acre property in the forest neighbourhood of Miller's Landing, about a 45-minute walk from Snug Cove. Andrea and Sat live in the main house but have also built two cottages for guests, as well as a Yoga Dome for practice and meditation. They have a great philosophy for their business: "Our goal is to provide a healing space... a space that is easily accessible from city life, yet totally disconnected. A space that is simple, sustainable, conscious. We offer yoga and meditation or you can just stay in our Nectar Loft Cottage and read, relax, explore."

Meditation is a powerful technique to finding balance and harmony in life. There is a stillness and relaxation in meditation that is wholly and completely cleansing. It feels good to cleanse, to let things go, to lighten and to rest, and meditation is always accessible. The Yoga Dome at Nectar Yoga makes the power and release of yoga and meditation so much easier to tap into. Bowen is home to many great yoga instructors and their guidance is a blessing.

The Nectar Loft Cottage is a sweet little house with great space and layout. Think of those brilliant tiny homes you've seen, or the instagram feed of #homesweetvan. That's the warm, cozy, conscious feeling you get while staying in the loft. And the Yoga Dome? Wow, what a beautiful sacred space to be in, to practice in. It's easily the best place I've been to practice yoga, meditate, and release.

Nectar Yoga B&B includes breakfast, daily yoga and meditation, and is a great space to chill out. Be good to yourself and take advantage of a BCIT student discount that Andrea and Sat are now offering for any bookings in 2017. The promo code is BCIT2017 but will expire Feb 28th. Visit nectaryogabnb.ca to book your next retreat.



A JOURNEY DOWN THE FRASER

words **megan rempel**

Megan sits at the front of her canoe, taking in the epic scenery of the mighty Fraser. (photo: David Tracey)

Envision this: a 25-day adventure down the longest river in B.C., each day surrounded by breathtaking scenery, from ancient rainforests, deserts and grasslands to sage brush and floodplain. In July 2016, I travelled by water from Mount Robson to Jericho Beach and re-connected with nature – where all of us come from.

The Sustainable Living Leadership Program (SLLP) inspires students to build community projects during a getaway in the B.C. wilderness. The SLLP is offered to anyone living in B.C. who wants to be involved in community-level environmental change. Although there is an emphasis on building leadership skills, the SLLP is more than just an educational trip; it is a spiritual journey.

On the first day, I woke up in a campground near the border of Alberta, surrounded by small tents filled with strangers who shortly became family. The headwaters of the Fraser River outside our camp were a cloudy aqua blue that I never expected, showing how little environmental knowledge I had about my home. Not only would it be the beginning of a physical expedition, but it would also be the beginning of my spiritual connection: learning to open my eyes and my heart.

By day we paddled as a team in the voyager canoe, stopping for meal breaks or educational sessions. By night we set up camp along the river bank, gathered beside the fire and reflected on how we could work together to bring our project aspirations to life. I have never felt stronger than when I was on the river, living simply, only worrying about getting to our next destination before nightfall. When I fell asleep to the sound of water rushing beside where I lay, looking up at a

network of stars against black sky, I was inspired to do my part in protecting my own environment. The connection is more than staring at scenery and resonating with its beauty – it's feeling powerful, knowing that as people, we are a part of our environment and it is an integral part of us.

All of the individuals on the trip contributed towards my growth and ambitions for a future without environmental destruction. I joined the program to meet individuals who shared my passions and values, but the person I connected most with was myself.

On the final day, I left with renewed determination to make change at the community level. Because of the SLLP, I possessed the means and support to be successful with my project. I strongly encourage anybody interested in environmental sciences, sustainable energy and resource management to take this program. Travelling down the Fraser River has changed the way I view my life – the life of human beings on this planet.

Learn more about the Sustainable Living Leadership Program online at: www.rivershed.com

BEGGING FOR CHANGE

Humanizing the homeless starts with moving from awareness to willingness.

by selenna ho

You can hardly walk through any bustling street in Vancouver without noticing them. They're wrapped in stained, scratchy blankets, their pupils are dulled. They're holding cardboard signs that plead for your attention. You see them – at least in the corner of your eye – and for a moment you want to pause and reach out a helping hand. But then you look straight ahead, with slightly increased momentum, and move on. *One person can't do enough for them... What if they put me in danger?... It's not my problem.*

By the time you've crossed the street, they've left your mind. Their experiences are invisible to you, and you feel comfortable. And that's the important part right? That *you* feel comfortable? I guess that's why you felt the need to push the humanity out of them; out of yourself.

But ask yourself this: is it fair to judge homeless persons as unsafe and irresponsible? Or is it just something we do to convince ourselves that the person on the streets could never be us?

I spoke to Judy Graves, who worked with the homeless population for over 33 years as the City of Vancouver's Homeless Advocate, and though she retired in 2013, her passion for ending homelessness has led her to continue her work in other ways.

"As far as I can remember, working with the homeless has been a part of my whole adult life... The stigma and label disappears when people start listening to the individuals, and understanding the situations that cause them to be outside."

According to the Union Gospel Mission's (UGM) 2016 report, homelessness happens when structural factors (eg. cost of living and income) interplay with systemic failures (eg. discharge from hospitals without housing) and life circumstances (eg. job loss, family violence). Currently, shelter occupancy is at 97%, with women in shelters growing from 28% to 32% in the last three years. Yet despite the great need for help, income assistance has not increased in nine years while the average market rent *has* increased, every year since 2010.

Graves empathizes with homeless persons' unique personal backgrounds and vulnerabilities, and she takes brave steps to stand up for what she believes in.

"When I was in my late teens, we were going through the Vietnam War. Soldiers would flee to Canada, saying, 'I was not born to kill women and children.' If they went back to the States, they would be court-martialed... Among my group of friends, we'd take [the homeless] to our place to sleep on the floors when it was really cold or rainy... We were young people and they were young people. Right from the beginning, I was aware of the political nature of homelessness. It's selective."

Homelessness disproportionately impacts those who are already marginalized in our society, with about one third of all homeless persons identifying as Aboriginal. Homelessness is more likely to impact those with mental illnesses and those

who have economic challenges. Moreover, there are more males than females who are homeless, all of whom are equally susceptible to sexual exploitation.

Homelessness can affect even those least likely to expect it. Peter Thompson (Nlaka'pamux nation) worked as a carpenter for decades before a workplace accident broke his leg, causing him to lose his job. With the job loss and other personal crises, Peter found himself homeless and battling alcoholism. Lucky for Peter, he found others who acknowledged the barriers of homelessness and wanted to help him. Through Vancouver's *Megaphone* magazine, an organization dedicated to helping homeless persons become entrepreneurs by selling magazines written by such persons, Peter was able to thrive in a new career.

During the Christmas season, we allow ourselves to be more aware of the homelessness crises and initiatives around us. But what happens to that energy and passion once the festivities are over, and the new year starts? It dissipates, and once again the responsibility falls into the hands of those begging for the change.

Even though the steps to rebuilding a home outside of the streets are slow, at least it's happening. But it takes dedication, time, and most of all, people who are willing to help them; to humanize them.

"stigma and labels disappear when people start listening to the individuals."



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FUSING FLAVOURS

words **tanushree pillai**

Pan-fried noodles? *Check.*
Boiled and sautéed vegetables? *Check.* Choice of chicken, eggs or prawns? *Check.* Large portions of soy sauce, vinegar and chili sauce? *Check.* Unhealthy amounts of oil? *Check.* Chinese cuisine? Maybe not.

Welcome to the divine world of Indo-Chinese cuisine where the colour, the ingredients and the taste have mostly nothing to do with authentic Chinese cuisine. And yet, Indo-Chinese cuisine is as real as it gets. It's spicy, mouth-watering, and makes you reach for a pack (or two) of tissues while you inhale a gallon of water.

While the original Chinese cuisine was brought to India almost a century ago in what was then the capital of the British empire, Kolkatta (formerly known as anglicized Calcutta), an amalgamation of Indian spices and some Chinese ingredients led to the birth of the Indo-Chinese cuisine.

The primary reason for the invention of this cuisine was probably the vegetarian lifestyle that majority of Indians lead (due to religion or choice). Authentic Chinese cuisine is carnivorous. Indo-Chinese cuisine, on the other hand, is largely vegetarian; however, variations of chicken and seafood (largely prawns) do exist. For those who straddle between the two, there are many varieties offered by the humble egg.

In Vancouver, with its large population of Indians, Indo-Chinese cuisine is a go-to comfort food: the pretentious flavours make our mouths salivate. Common spices include cumin, coriander seeds, dry red chilis (whole and ground), black pepper (peppercorns and ground) and believe it or not, even turmeric in some cases (mostly roadside street food kiosks who have zero knowledge of the authentic cuisine but oodles of passion).

Indo-Chinese cuisine uses a fiery dose of ginger and garlic. Common vegetables include: shredded cabbage, julienne onions and capsicum, cauliflower, maybe even mushroom and carrots in some places. Our love with all things dairy takes Indo-Chinese cuisine to the next level, when we add paneer (cottage cheese) to all the courses. This gives us our daily dose of calcium and makes us believe we are eating a vegetarian version of chicken. But tofu is now becoming a big thing in India and so is soy – both are vegetarian 'meats.'

Condiments include: the omni-present soy sauce (without which Indo-Chinese cuisine wouldn't exist), vinegar, chili sauce, and the unbelievably fiery Schezwan "chutney." This thick paste is made using dry red chilies, garlic, ginger, onion and lots of salt and oil to give it a thick texture.

Unlike the real "Sichuan," "Szechuan," or "Szechwan," Indo-Chinese cuisine spells it as Schezwan and pronounces it shey-z (American 'Z')-wan. A somewhat new entrant is the dim-sum, also locally known as 'momos,' which can be found in these versions: veg (with lots of boiled cabbage), chicken, and mutton. It's then served with a hearty dose of the Schezwan chutney and lots of tissues! Some places do a deep-fried version, rather than the usual steamed variety. The momo is a staple of the Tibetan and Nepalese cuisine and is similar to the Chinese 'baozi' and 'jiaozi.' For reasons unknown to mankind, we associate all of this with Chinese cuisine. But please, whatever you do, don't tell us Indians that it isn't.



IN THE BACKGROUND

by jarell alvarez

We backgrounders live our lives one frame at a time. Screenshots from my appearance in AMC's Fear the Walking Dead.

Extras in the background – you know, those blotches of colour behind the main actors. I bet you never considered just how much they fill every scene with pride and confidence. They weren't just drawn into the business by some ridiculous radio ad to star in a Disney show. They make TV great; they are the unsung heroes, and I am one of them.

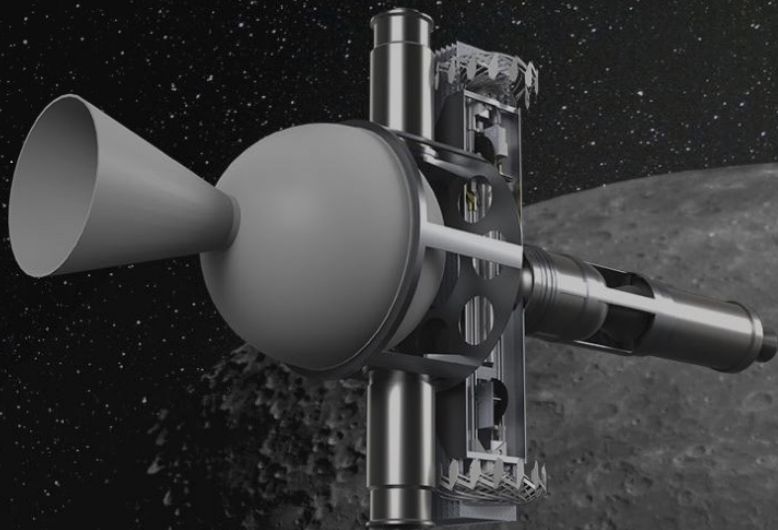
You get the text you've been waiting for the whole day and they want you to confirm pronto. You don't know what it's for; all you know is the time and possibly the place. Your agent sends you the details late at night, giving you minimal time to prepare a bag of all the goodies you know the wardrobe will love and appreciate you for. Don't forget to bring three complete wardrobe options for them to look at, including shoes and accessories to change days on set. You check the time and it's super late, but you must shave until your face is as smooth as they day you were born. The call is a super early one in North Vancouver at 4:30am, and as you load in the background shuttle that will take you directly to set, you set up survival strategies on how to survive the day in your half-asleep state.

When you arrive to set, the first and most important thing to do is scope out a location to sit. If you see friends, then go to them immediately before lining up for check-in, otherwise you'll need to find friendly people that you may be stuck with the rest of the day. After you wait in the endless line for check-in, you immediately go to hair and makeup, then wardrobe. If you brought a laundry list of items in your bag, and they say that your current outfit is perfect, then you know you've just aced their inspection and will be comfy for the day. Once you sit down and relax in your seat, make sure you start bringing out your ice-breaker games to keep you, and hopefully the whole table, playing and bonding. Once you bring out a deck of cards, everyone around you will immediately know what's going down, so buckle up for a long day of Cheat, Big Two, Spoons, or Crazy 8's or anything else. Bonus points to whoever brings Cards Against Humanity – you are the unsung hero on set.

Being a background performer is different than any other job out there. I've been in the industry since the good old days when The Rock was filming *Tooth Fairy* in Vancouver back in 2008, and have been working every now and then since. Your days have no strict start time and work can begin at any moment, unless it's continuity work a few days. Days can range from being busy on set all day and having to perform then wait, to periodic shifts, or if you're lucky, 20 minutes on set or nothing at all. It's a lot of fun seeing yourself or your friends on tv in the latest episode of *Lucifer* or *The Flash* and taking a screenshot so all your friends on Facebook can see and be jealous. There is a huge boom in the film industry in B.C., with film and TV production increasing by 40% from 2014 to 2015. That means a ton of jobs and locations that need background performers and crew to work. Many of the Hollywood talents love the convenience of staying in the same time zone, which is a packaged deal that B.C. gives them for tax credits and a strong US dollar to help. Huge streaming networks have also shot here, like Amazon and Netflix, alongside major movies such as *Deadpool* and *Star Trek*.

Whether you want to do background full time and join the union for good pay, move into acting/stunt, or make a rise in the production scene, there's not many drawbacks here. Getting yourself a background agent with a simple email, investing in good headshots and choosing your working days that work best for you is just the start. Just remember to fill up on unlimited crafty snacks, amazing free buffet or food truck food, and to bring some cards with you on your next 12-hour day.

Looking to break into the biz? Try these top background agencies: Dallas Talent, Local Colour, In Motion, Lucas Talent, Boss Management, Inspirational, Showbiz.



SHOOT FOR THE STARS

interview **dan post**

Concept art for Team Plan B's lunar lander.
courtesy: www.teamplanb.ca/

In 2007, Google launched the Lunar XPRIZE offering \$20 million to the first privately funded team of entrepreneur innovators to send a spacecraft to the moon, have it travel 500 meters, and transmit HD video and images back to Earth. Canada entered but one team into the race – Team Plan B – led by BCIT alumni Sergei Dobrianski and his father Alex, who also recruited current BCIT student **Saf Dewji** to help raise funds for the team. I spoke with Saf recently to check in with Plan B's progress and find out more about his extraterrestrial extracurriculars.

[Editor's note: An earlier version of this article contained errors. Corrections: Sergei Dobrianski is the son of Alex Dobrianski; the interviewee referred incompletely to Plan B's workspace and operations; the interview referred imprecisely to specific teams competing in the XPRIZE]

What does the name "Plan B" mean to you?

To me personally, with everything that's going on with the planet – from political tension to overpopulation, resources declining, global warming – it's the notion that we could potentially move to a different planet and set up shop. I've always been interested in that. I always wanted to be an astronaut. And that never really dies. Before coming to BCIT, I was interested in going to [military school] because a lot of astronauts graduate from military school... Pretty much every day, as soon as I park my car at home, I'll look up at the sky and just think about all kinds of different things – from the possibility of extraterrestrials, to how long the stars have been burning, the expansion of the universe... even just our timeline as humans; we're just a speck on the timeline of history. With the possibility of setting up shop on another planet, I'm just curious, and this was the closest I could get to going to space. For now.

What are your thoughts on this new movement we're seeing toward more civilian-led innovation?

I think it's great. The best thing about the XPRIZE is that it was open to the public... to incentivize space entrepreneurs to see just how cost-effective we can do this. I think it's exciting in that way. Look at Sergei and Alex, who initially started working out of their apartment in Yaletown, then on the other end there are teams that have facilities with engineers working on it full time. So even in that contrast, it's so cool to see we're all going for the same goal and we can have the same shot at it.

Look at Elon Musk and everything he's done with SpaceX, and how he's been able to achieve things at a fraction of the cost that otherwise NASA and other big companies have taken years to do, with a large amount of money. In the past, you'd need a nation. Look at the 60s, with the space race between Russia and the US. Those were nations competing for a common goal to get to the moon. And now you can do it on a more private scale. There's been advances in technology to be able to facilitate things like that. So really, what's behind Plan B's overall mission is using off-the-shelf components, putting them together, and trying to reach that goal.

Where is Plan B at now and what are your next moves?

So unfortunately we weren't able to secure a 2016 launch contract, but Plan B continues to work on its technologies in getting to space. The crowdfunding has been postponed, but the cool thing is though, we're still the only Canadian team trying this, and I'm literally asking Canadian citizens to help Team Canada get to the moon. And right now, even though we didn't secure a launch contract, we're still working on it. Sergei was like, 'This is what I'm doing for the rest of my life.' It's the reason he wakes up in the morning. And even though they started late, and they were the last entry in the race, Alex has had this childhood dream, and even though he's a little late getting to it, he's doing everything he can to make it happen. And I want to do everything that I can to help them make that happen. It's been super exciting to be honest, and I'm just so grateful to have had the opportunity.

Not What it Seems (Pt.3)

"The pills make me forget the sad things..."

by kurt tadeo

Dear Diary,

When I woke up, I smelled something good in the air. It smelled like pancakes, my favourite! I went downstairs where mom greeted me as she was placing a plate of fluffy pancakes on the table. I was really hungry since I didn't eat anything last night, so I ate a lot. It was delicious. And mom said she was glad that I liked it. I finished preparing for school early today so I was able to say hi to the dog next door again. At school, I understood the math lesson and it made me feel really proud. Ms. Robinson praised me because I did well today and that made me happy. Afterwards, I played a lot with my friends. We played tag, dodgeball, soccer, and raced each other. I was so tired near the end but it was a lot of fun so I guess it was worth it. When I went home, I went straight to my bedroom and lied down on my bed. I was so tired I could barely move. I closed my eyes and thought about how today was a fun day.

But when I opened my eyes, I realized something...It was just a dream. The pancakes, the math lesson, the tag... they were all just a dream.

And that's not all. I remember yesterday, and the day before that. I remember everything. The pills that I've been taking helped me be happy. Mom called them "anti-depressants." She said it helps stop my sadness so I can smile more every day.

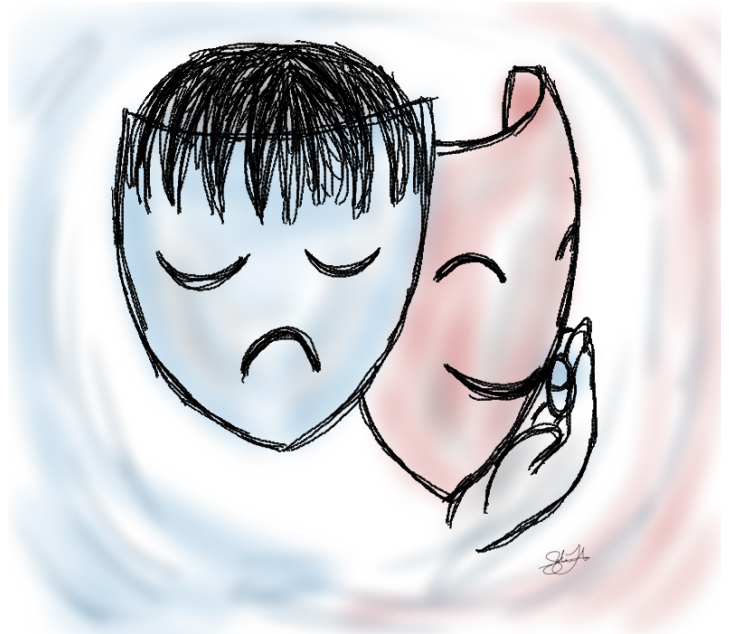
The neighbor's dog doesn't like me. It barks every morning because I walk past him. When I went to say hi to him one day, he didn't come to me so I got mad and threw a rock at him. When he came to me, he bit my arm and that's where the scratches came from. They weren't from the fence like I thought they were.

In school, Ms. Robinson talks to me after class because I get bad marks...She says she's worried about me and my grades but I just ignore it and play with my friends.

And worst of all, I don't have any friends. Me playing with friends and having fun were just daydreams. They don't actually play with me, they ignore me and call me names. When I try to join them when they're playing tag, they push me away and I get scratches on my body.

It's the pills. The pills make me forget the sad things, and makes me see good things instead. When I take the pills, it makes my day happier and makes me happier. When I didn't take them yesterday, I started seeing what was really happening. Now that I haven't been taking them, I remember now why I hate everything and why I take the pills. Everything makes me sad, and everyone hates me. Why did we have to run out of pills? Why didn't mom buy more for me? Does mom hate me too? I think she hates me that's why she stopped buying them for me. She doesn't want me to be happy. I hate mom. I hate the dog, and Ms. Robinson and my classmates at school. None of them care about me so I don't care about them.

I hear footsteps coming to my room and mom knocked on my door. She wanted to come in and asked if I could open it. Why should I? I hate mom and she doesn't care about me. She kept calling for me but I shouted at her to leave me alone. I don't want to go outside today, I just want to stay in my room and sleep and dream. At least in my dream, everyone likes me. In my dream, I can be happy.



artwork: selenna ho

Get caught up with Parts 1 & 2 online at www.linkbcit.ca and look for the conclusion in next month's issue.

THE FUTURE OF GAMING

We are about to see some interesting shifts in video games with VR, mobile, 4K, Augmented Reality, and the lifespan of consoles modeling a new direction. Until now, we've been happy with consoles sticking around for about seven years before we had to spend money on new hardware and compatible software. But with Nintendo Switch appearing only after 4 years of the launch of Wii U, and now Project Scorpio slated for the 2017 holidays, both companies have boasted a big change to the whole concept behind consoles. So let's take a look at what's coming from the Big 3.

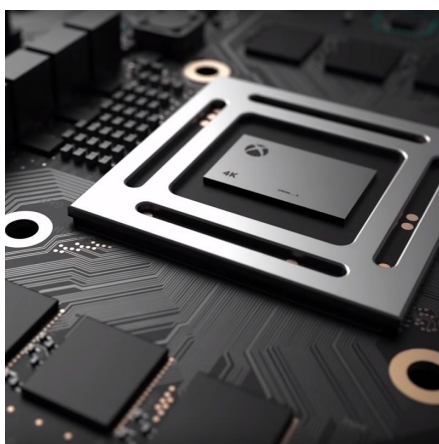
words **diego gonzalez**

SONY: THE SMART

PS4 Pro is not a new console per se, but rather a PS4 on steroids. Included in the new specs for Pro will be 4.12 TeraFlops (a measure of computer power equaling 4 trillion equations per second), and 4K Upscaling (*huh?*). Let's take a closer look at that one. First off, 4k means 4,000:2,000 pixels (most of the gadgets now are 1,080p) and upscaling is simple: it means mimicking 4K resolution without the original source being 4K. Why not native 4K? Because Sony is a mass market consumer electronics manufacturer, but also 4K televisions are still too expensive and there is no 4K content yet – we don't even have everything on HD. Therefore, the biggest share of the pie is still 1080p, and that is what Sony is targeting.

No UHD Blu Ray Drive either? Well, when was the last time you rented/bought a UHD movie? People are streaming now; we don't even rent Blu Ray and sales are declining for the DVD market. Again, mass market; that is what Sony wants.

The big advantage of Sony: PlayStation VR. We still don't know how big VR will be. It could even be like 3D technology that came out and died. But Sony is taking smart steps with it. There is no clear VR market leader that is more mature, plus the entry price of an HTC Vive is around \$1000 CAD, and you need a powerhouse gaming PC (and we know, those don't come cheap), so we are talking around \$2000 CAD if you are lucky enough and good at researching. With around \$500 you get the headset for the PSVR, and for \$200 more the PSMove gear. This will give Sony a big advantage. We just need to see if there is enough content and users to make it worthwhile.



MICROSOFT: THE FOLLOWER

Scheduled to come out in time for the 2017 holidays, Project Scorpio (this won't be the final name) is more powerful than the PS4 Pro, boosting 6 TeraFlops of power, 8 GPU cores, and true 4K gaming. Native 4K gaming will be the standard for the next generation consoles, that is a given, but maybe it's a bit of a bold move doing it before anyone has 4K televisions. Still, Microsoft is ready for the future.

There is also something very important about Microsoft. Although there are increasing rumors that it may leave the console industry, there is a bigger rumour yet with even more bets laid on it: Transition from console to PC. Microsoft may be ready to embrace the migration of gaming away from the console, to devices that consumers already own. And if they host it, they will be like Apple and iTunes. My prediction: Xbox Play Anywhere will be big and could shift how we perceive the console world. While Xbox One sold even less consoles than Wii U (that means a lot), Xbox One S has so far been well-received, so we will see what happens with the new project.

NINTENDO: THE UNIQUE

Nintendo realized that their biggest market is handheld consoles so they're shifting towards mobility with their new console: Nintendo Switch. The first rumour said that the Switch will have graphics a bit better than the PS4, but we're now hearing that it won't. However, it will be an upgrade to both current systems (3DS and Wii U) and will merge them into the new console. There is no much information on the Switch specs other than it is powered by NVIDIA Tegra.

The important part here is whether or not there will be third party support. Nintendo has the best exclusive content by far: *The Legend of Zelda* (since *Link to the Past*) has an average of 93% with six games, and *Super Mario* has an average of 87% with 13 games since the release of the first *Super Mario Bros*. Every new game comes with rave reviews and along with *Smash Bros*, *Mario Kart*, *Pikmin*, and *Splatoon*, people buy their consoles to play a specific game. But let's not fool ourselves. If Nintendo wants to stay relevant in the console world, it cannot depend on its own content. They don't publish content often enough and there is not enough quantity to survive. The question here would be if there is enough third-party support. And if not, the new question would not be if to buy a PS4 Pro, a Scorpio or a Switch. It would be: buy a Switch or not.



Which of these consoles are you most excited about? Tweet us @linkbcit

FILM



Assassin's Creed

dir. Justin Kurzel
(new regency pictures)

As most know, video game movies have large expectations to live up to. There are few video game movies that can be labeled good; a horrendous trend started by 1993's *Super Mario Bros*. They've been getting a bad rap ever since. I've loved all of the early *Assassin's Creed* games, starting with *Altair* and my favourite being *Ezio*, and this movie didn't disappoint me as much as I thought it would.

Right off the bat we are introduced to the main protagonist Cal who's been condemned to death for a murder he committed. Next we're introduced to Abstergo and given the long rundown as to who they are, what they're trying to achieve etc. I found that Cal was a lot more bearable than Desmond; he tries to take control over his life rather than follow his blood decree. Many of the other characters felt uninspired, wrapped in explaining what they're trying to achieve rather than any real motivations other than science and world peace.

I wish this movie took more advantage of being in the animus (a machine to access past DNA), as the scenes in the past were both very authentic and beautiful. The action was superb, albeit short, and there was no story or character-building while in the animus. Amidst the Wikipedia-like storytelling, there were great bones in place that will help the next *Assassin's Creed* movies flourish despite the rocky start.

6.5/10

GAMES

- jarell alvarez

A brief history of video game adaptations:

Mortal Kombat (1995)

Three years after the game that had every mom saying "Definitely not" came the silver screen adaptation that had every kid shouting "Finish him." Highlights include: an iconic theme song and Goro getting sacked.

Lara Croft: Tomb Raider (2001)

Angelina Jolie as one of video games' most vivacious vixens surely satisfied the drooling teens who spent far too much time in their bedrooms growing up. Fun fact: it also stars her real-life dad, John Voight.

Resident Evil (2002)

Once again proving that all you need is a sexy female lead to make a successful jump to the big screen, Mila Jovovich and Michelle Rodriguez bring a decent vibe to one of the greatest horror titles ever. Red lasers anyone?

Silent Hill (2006)

With perfectly adapted live-action renditions of those sketchy nurses and everyone's favourite Pyramid Head, this one is much scarier than its cousin, *Resident Evil*, and puts more emphasis on the story.



Stellar Overload Cubical Drift (steam)

9/10

You wake up in a peaceful village greeted by your neighbour, fitness nerd Joe, then as you try to find your brother to speak to him, you learn he's missing. I first heard about this game during its early years on Kickstarter going by the name *Planet3*. The premise being: a voxel-based world that promised interactive NPCs, beautifully cubed worlds, fully customizable space vehicles and more. Years later the game changed names to

Stellar Overload, and many of these promises during the campaign were fully realized with more updates to come before Christmas.

The music is the first "stellar" characteristic which either creates a comfy atmosphere or a feeling of urgency. The colours and views are a sight to behold upon my hoverbike, showing vast voxel imagery and worlds across the distance. The mechanics largely differ from similar games like *Minecraft*, allowing huge placement customizability rather than the standard one block. Many of the in-game mechanics, like fighting, are solid and well

thought-out, providing a great tutorial system that allowed my story to begin. Multiplayer also came very naturally, as a friend popped out of nowhere while I was adventuring and we teamed up together.

Voxel-based games that weren't *Minecraft* have always felt like copycats, but I feel that *Stellar Overload* is a completely separate entity. It's well thought-out story, visuals and mechanics, have created an addicting experience that pushes me to explore the cubed worlds nearby.

- jarell alvarez



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