

LINK

BCIT & BEYOND



FEBRUARY 2019

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(LITERALLY) IN YOUR HANDS 16

FOR THE LOVE OF **VALENTINES DAY** 26



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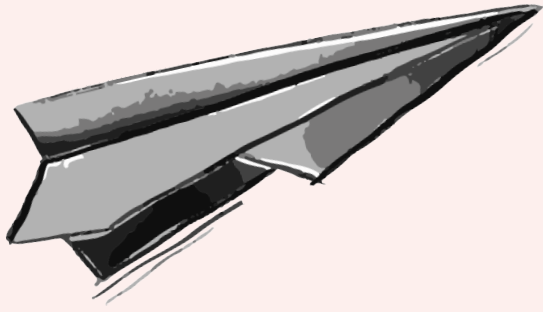
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CONNECT

WITH THE WORLD AROUND YOU

As the modern world continues to churn out new technology, it becomes more inevitable that we're heading towards an interconnected society. It makes for quite a paradox, in fact. Many lambast the loss of "human" face-to-face connections, while others thrive by forming cyber-bred relationships.

Plenty of students have been feeling isolated and disconnected from the world around them. Part of this is the weather—with the cold comes the rise of nights-in, everyone rushing home after school, frigid streets barren. We have people who need to be reminded to connect with others, who need to be shown how, or more so, why.

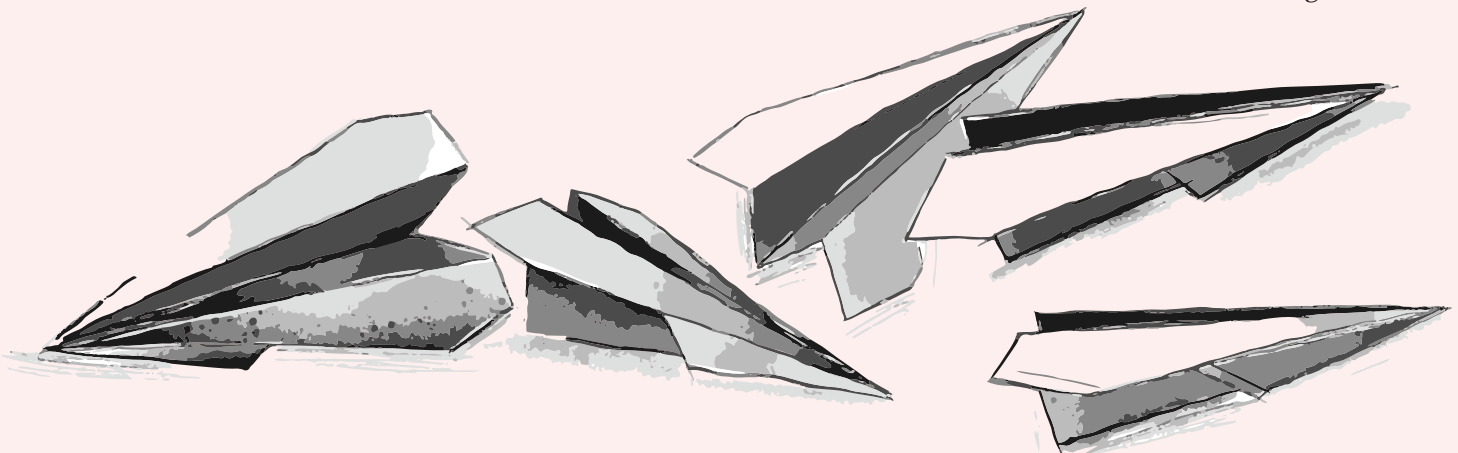
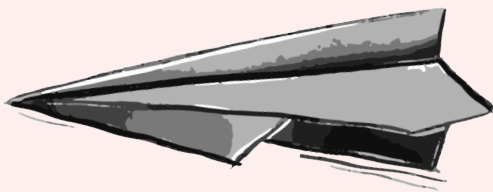
On the other hand, others are being pulled in all kinds of directions and they can't quite figure out how to balance their relationships. Part of it could be the demanding lifestyle of BCIT. It's a three-choice dilemma: good grades vs. a social life vs. a good night's rest. When it's crunch time at school, students have to sacrifice spending time with the ones they love. For them, connections are too much to handle.

Connectedness is like an endless, undiscernible tapestry to weave. You can guide threads to form your own patterns, or maybe you're stuck untangling some knots. In many cases, you're still taking the first step of unwinding the spool.

Unfortunately, it's bad news for loners, because paths to success these days require the accumulation of connections. We sympathize with those whose social anxieties and strained relationships pose an obstacle, but we hope you take comfort in the fact that new technology and rising social awareness are there to possibly alleviate your woes.

This February, *Link* hopes to point you towards some of those directions. We will explore various connections in our lives, from business contacts to human ones. Whether it's connections that are personal, professional, or possibly in-between, we hope the connections you make are meaningful and prosperous.

— *LINK* magazine



LINK

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LINK is published eight times annually by students at the British Columbia Institute of Technology (BCIT). We feature exceptional people in our community, big ideas in a changing world, and evolving social dialogue. We welcome writers, photographers and artists of all backgrounds and abilities. Our purpose is to provide a collaborative platform for student expression, and to connect you with one another's stories and experiences. Printed editions are distributed to all five BCIT campuses and additional content is published online at LINKBCIT.CA

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GOOD NEWS

1.

BCIT Preparing training simulations at BCIT's nursing school can feel like working on the set of *The Walking Dead*. Currently, nursing students practice medical procedures on dolls that don movie make-up resembling wounds and injuries. Applying makeup to these dolls can take hours, but augmented reality technology could fix that. Specialty nursing instructor Rob Kruger says he is collaborating with students from the Computer Systems Technology program to develop new augmented reality glasses for medical training simulations. When nurses-in-training put on the glasses, the makeup is virtually applied to the doll. The glasses would be able to pixelate injuries like black eyes and flesh wounds on their inanimate "patients". Kruger says they are slowly moving it forward, but more resources and support would make this initiative progress sooner.

2.

VANCOUVER High school students (calling themselves the Sustainabiliteens) rallied outside Vancouver City Hall, demanding the municipal government find solutions to climate change. The motion, introduced by Councillor Christine Boyle, was unanimously voted into action. The next step now is for city staff to find ways to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and set proper climate change targets. Part C of the motion says: "Council direct staff to establish a Climate and Equity working group to provide guidance and support for the City's efforts to transition off of fossil fuels in ways the priorities those most vulnerable to climate impacts and most in need of support in transitioning to renewable energy." Whether or not the vote was influenced by the Sustainabiliteens, it's catching on; city councilors in Halifax have reached the same conclusion.



Instagram — SUSTAINABILITYTEENS

3.

BC Sharmarke Dubow has been fleeing catastrophes since he was eight years-old. At age 35, just after he cast his first vote in Canada, he was elected to Victoria's City Council. His life's journey took him to places like Kenya and Egypt before he arrived at Victoria in 2012. After 20 years of flight, Canada was the place he chose to call home. He worked for the Victoria Immigrant and Refugee Centre Society to help others who went through similar hardships, and became a Canadian citizen in July of 2017, during Canada's 150th year. After deciding to run for the Victoria City Council, he was elected as a member in November of 2018. He remains dedicated to social and environmental justice, where he plans to make a bigger impact through municipal politics.

4.

WORLD Nepal announced that the population of wild tigers has recently increased to 235, double the record low of 121 in 2009. It may sound like a small number, but scientists say that it's a sign that their methods are producing good results. This is an effort by Nepal's Tiger Conservation Action Plan that implements new anti-poaching and protection laws. The World Wildlife Federation (WWF) commended Nepal as a global leader in tiger conservation, which has been a top government priority since the Global Tiger Initiative summit in 2010. The summit called on Nepal and 12 other countries and efforts to rebound the tiger population. They hope that the overall world population will double again by 2022.

~~don't~~ take our word for it.

The editors of Link explore culture and the community, picking favorites and best-ofs so you can just try the good ones. From affordable dinners to Netflix specials, we have you covered.

eat this.

Phnom Penh
244 E Georgia St,
Vancouver, BC
V6A 1Z7

You know the food is good when both Seth Rogen and Chrissy Teigen are raving about it on Twitter. Phnom Penh looks like a crumbling old Chinatown restaurant from the outside, but don't be fooled. This hole-in-the-wall Cambodian establishment always has a lineup outside. Not only is the food incredibly good, but it's also really cheap. Two can dine for under \$30. The best items on the menu have to be the Cambodian Style Fried Chicken Wings, the Beef Luc Lac and the infamous Butter Beef. It's the perfect place to go for some cheap comfort food on a rainy Vancouver day.



— rajita dang

read this.

MARS BY 1980
David Stubbs
Faber & Faber

In *Mars by 1980*, David Stubbs turned an entire history of electronic music into poetry. We look at the usual suspects – Daft Punk, Kraftwerk, Pet Shop Boys, and also get a glimpse into the birth of the genre, looking at the invention of the Telharmonium by Thaddeus Cahill in 1897 (1897!). It was the first example of musical sounds generated by electronic signals. (The technology would eventually bankrupt the inventor). Stubbs also outlines Italian futurist, Luigi Russolo, and his manifesto, “Art of Noises.” Above all, Stubbs questions the authenticity of electronic music and its place in our post-modern times. *Mars by 1980* briefly visits concepts like dadaism, proto-fascism, communism and the resistance of Luddites to view electronic music seriously. But, as we know now, it's here to stay. For fans of: music.



— sean murphy

play this.

Ruiner
XBOX 1, PS4, PC, or LINUX
(Reikon Games)

The year is 2091. You're a wired psychopath with a hacker, known as Wizard, guiding (forcing?) you through the sinister conglomerate, Heaven, to defeat the creatively named final character, The Boss. Your character levels through a skill-tree to make the puzzle-based combat easier—or, at least, more entertaining. The fights are orchestrated by 80's synths patched for 2019 and include tracks from artists like Sidewalks and Skeletons, Susumu Hirasawa and Zamilska. The somber storyline doesn't really deliver what the universe promises; but that's not why we play shoot-em-up games, anyway. We don't see much of the metropolis, Rengkok, but Heaven itself serves as a stark reminder of our current corporate-run dystopia. Ruiner is a gorgeous cyberpunk game that only lightens up in neon fluorescents and only in passing. "The future is already here." For fans of: Hotline Miami, Shadowrun and the Ubermosh series.

— sean murphy



hear this.

The Twilight Sad
It Won't Be Like This
All The Time
(Rock Action)

Scottish post-punk band The Twilight Sad returns with their fifth studio album *It Won't Be Like This All The Time*, and it is their heaviest, most upbeat album yet. The band comes highly endorsed by The Cure's lead singer Robert Smith and it's clear why; the mix of mellow guitar riffs and moody synths ring all too familiar to the bare bones of '80s alternative rock. Lead singer, James Graham, said that the album tackles themes of his existential crisis, which he poignantly unleashes in the standout track, "I'm Not Here". Rhythmically, the band makes use of faster tempos as a departure from the melancholic lulls that characterized their previous releases. For fans of: Moguai, Hammock, Godspeed You! Black Emperor.

— ali pitargue



watch this.

Black Mirror: Bandersnatch
Directed by David Slade
(Netflix)

Netflix's *Bandersnatch* has sent post-modern science fiction so far down the rabbit hole that the genre will never be the same. Set in British suburbia over the second half of 1984, *Bandersnatch* is the latest installment of the network's grimly dystopian *Black Mirror* series. What separates this episode from the rest of the series is that the story has no discernible arc. This is as much a movie as a video game, with the viewer cast as 'Player One' in a celluloid rendition of Super Mario or the Legend of Zelda. Are we in control of our own destinies? Is free will a grand illusion woven into a sinister episode of Netflix we can't escape from? These and other nagging questions haunt the viewer long after the credits roll off-screen. Your cursor can't save everyone, and the episode is tragic no matter which ending you click your way into.

— laurie tritschler





Saki Serizawa

student spotlight

words **Sean Murphy**

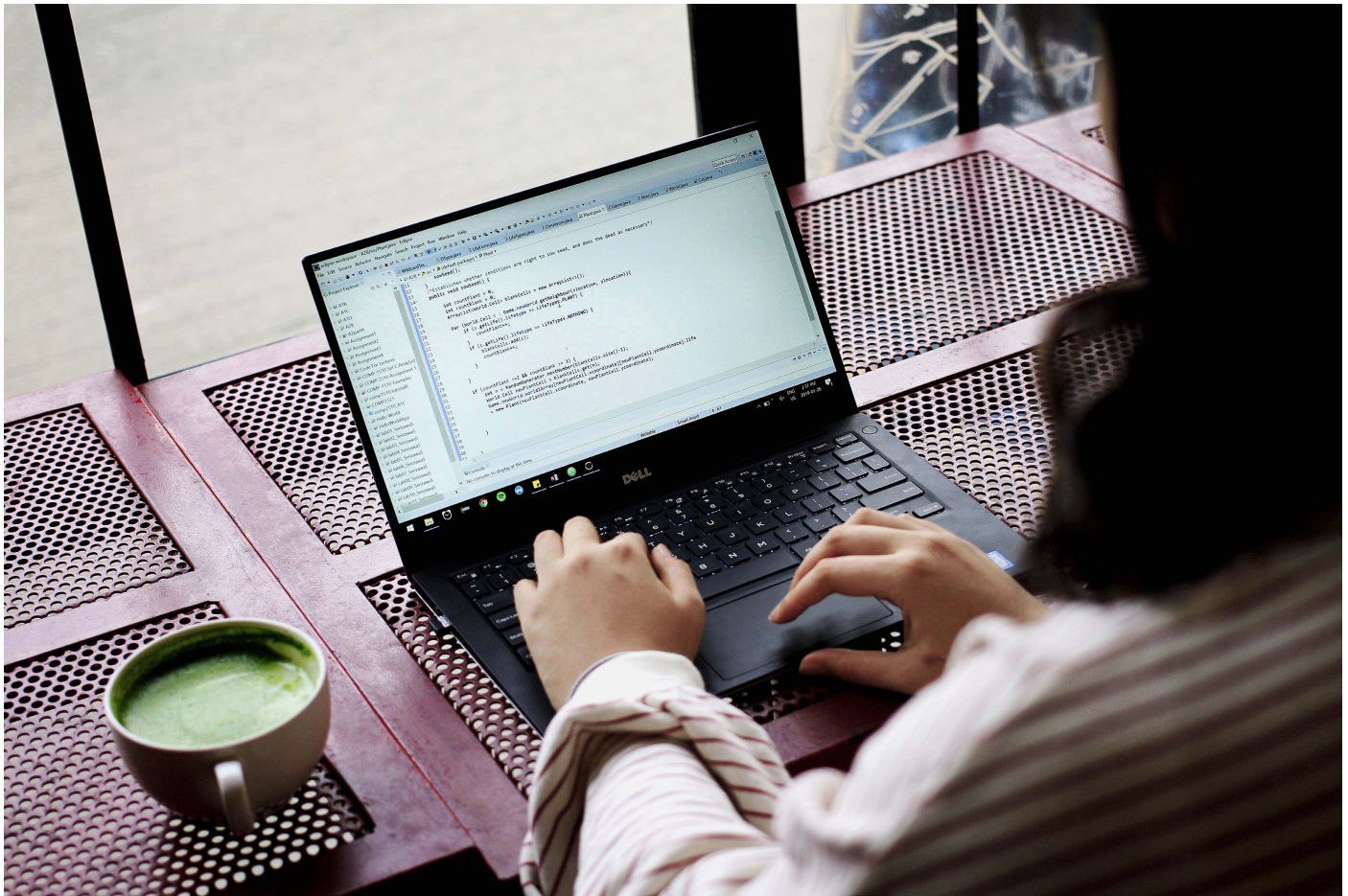
photos **Dayna Weststeyn**

A recent report found that Amazon's facial technology (that even its investors are raising concerns about) misidentifies women as men, particularly when they have darker skin. US Congresswoman Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez shared that report in a tweet, adding "When you don't address human bias, that bias gets automated. Machines are reflections of their creators, which means they are flawed, and we should be mindful of that. It's one good reason why diversity isn't just 'nice,' it's a safeguard against trends like this."

If diversity will save technology, how do we support that? A great place to start is with Canada Learning Code. They're taking coding out of its former dwellings (basements, garages, specialized tech firms) and into the classroom. They not only host Ladies Learning Code workshops but also have developed a K-12 framework for computer science education, and others are noticing; Amazon donated \$525,000 to support their work. BCIT have also announced a partnership with Microsoft for their Technology Education and Literacy in Schools (TEALS) program that will teach high school students the foundational framework of coding.

"We are excited and honoured that BC students and teachers are the first in Canada to be a part of this cutting-edge program," said BC Minister of Education Rob Fleming. "Our government will continue to support programs like TEALS to ensure our students have the skills they need to succeed, graduate successfully, and find good jobs in BC's booming tech sector."

Who is transfiguring technology? I met with Saki Serizawa, who is helping redefine the workforce of programmers. She is a BCIT student and Canada Learning Code volunteer. She spoke at Amazon HQ about what got her interested in coding, where it's taking her, and how she takes care of herself with a full course of CST programs on her schedule.



How did you get here?

I graduated from UBC two years ago. My experience there was really one of growth. I did First Nations studies and food studies; I graduated from faculty of food and land systems. There was a lot of opportunities I was able to participate in, like going to Nunavut and living in Mexico. I graduated and started working in settlement; helping teens and tweens get settled into the community. I worked in a community house. I loved working with such passionate people who were so invested in the growth of the city's more vulnerable populations. The youth themselves that I worked with

were also incredibly inspiring, with their ability to adapt and climazize to a new-to-them atmosphere so quickly.

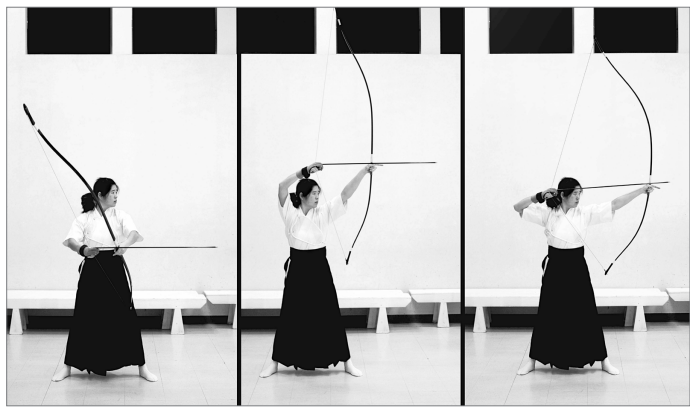
As I was working there, I eventually realised I wanted to steer my life in a more intentional way. I was worried I was going to burn out. I've always loved living abroad and being abroad.

'What's something I can do where I can take a skill with me to several different places?'

When I was in Seattle, I met a lot of software developers. Seattle is hot for tech, and they had come from all over; they seemed excited about what they were doing. I would meet

people who worked in big corporations, small start-ups, government! There was this flexibility to software development that fascinated me.

I decided to take a course with Ladies Learning Code. I did a part-time course with them. The atmosphere was great; everyone was so encouraging. It was really magical, I was creating something. That excitement brought me to the CST BCIT program."



What attracted you to coding?

“Software development is a skill I can take with me everywhere. As a naturally curious person, it’s a skill I can keep growing. It requires curiosity and consistent learning.”

“This past summer, I worked part-time to prepare for my co-op search in September. I wanted to do something meaningful—to start giving back. I volunteered with—what is now—Canada Learning Code. It used to be Ladies Learning Code when I was with them. They had multiple week-end camps for Kids Learning Code. It was super fun! Kids pick things up really quickly. It’s amazing they’re learning things I did as an adult while they’re in elementary school. The creativity and things they come up with. They also say the funniest things. I was asked to speak at Amazon when they donated \$525,000 towards coding education through Canada Learning Code.”

Do you remember your speech?

“I spoke about how excited I was about the potential of what people are working on in the industry now. Using the imagination and sparking the passion of younger people. What can they come up with? I shared my own journey on that path.”

Can you tell me about any events for BCIT Women in Computing?

“We put on a few events over the semester—the one we were most excited about was partnering with a start-up in Vancouver, Grow. We wanted to put on a technical interview night at BCIT. Speaking with the HR person, she mentioned that a lot fewer women apply—and studies done in the industry show that job postings

look more intimidating with the word choices. Women would be less likely to apply. We wanted to help women with the interview process. During technical interviews, they'll give you a question that you have to try to solve on a white board. People will watch you and assess your skill level. That can be quite intimidating to a lot of people. As students, we don't get a lot of experience doing that in the classroom. We had four other start-ups involved working with us and held the women's interview technical night. There was food and a Q&A at the end with the companies about common questions. Each company came with someone on the software developing team and shared questions they might usually ask. We got into groups of four or five with different stations to work on those questions. It was a really exciting night; the interview practice was really beneficial. It created a great and safe atmosphere where they could practice that. It was really successful; we built some great relationships.

That was a lot of what we were about with starting the club; creating a safe space, building organic social connections and gaining new skills. The registration filled up really quick. It also showed

there is a thirst for women to get out there and learn and represent."

There's so much support from faculty. People want to see more diversity. When we were connecting with start-ups, faculty, other students, they all wanted to support us. That was



a really cool thing. People are more excited about women in computing.”

What's the average day for a CST student?

If you join the program full-time, it's a heavy course load. Your every day is about managing time, when you are going to get your assignments done. All your preparation before classes start, working with your group or studying with your friends. On presentations, on assignments. There's always a lot coming at you. That's one of the differences I've noticed, going from UBC to BCIT. “

How do you take care of yourself with that much of your day being already accounted for?

“It's very tempting to 100% give yourself to school and forget about everything else in your life. It seems so pressing and important, but it's really important to keep a healthy perspective. Sure, it's important to understand what you're learning, but the key of surviving the program is balance. Everyone does that in different ways; whether that's going to the gym, gaming, or getting their eight hours [of sleep]. All those things are important for each person. Finding the balance of what works for you is important. You need to understand yourself, reflect, and figure out what's important to

you. Keeping that balance, for me, involved not studying at home. I did all of my school work at school. Maintaining important relationships in my life, so managing my time well enough so I could see my boyfriend or my friends and family. Keeping up with one or two of your hobbies, too. For me, that's kyudo (Japanese archery), I've been practicing that since high school. It helps me focus on my breathing, turning off and doing what I have to do to stay grounded.”

Is there a fair relation to compiling code and kyudo?

“I think there's the same amount of patience involved. The reward that can come from fixing a bug in your program, even if it's something small, it can be related to kyudo as a journey. It's a constant journey – but there's a sense of excitement from working on something and it finally clicks. As my senpai would say, it's just you vs the target. You can't blame it on anyone else. I think that makes you look at yourself and reflect on yourself.”

“That's a big appeal from flipping so hard from social sciences to coding, I want to be able to dabble in both. I want to understand the complexities of machines as well ideas. Damn, that sounds cool. Hopefully, there's more crossover as people from different backgrounds get into coding.

It seems like that's the case. I have a lot of classmates from different backgrounds. When there's a lot of diversity, the results can be a lot cooler.

What is next for you?

“So, 2019 is going to be a very exciting year for me. I'm excited to do all the learning – I'm in a co-op position and my co-op coordinator, Suzanna, was a huge help finding my job. She helped me deal with self-doubt and was really mindful and great about discouraging that kind of talk. She was a great mentor in general and helped me and a lot of other students find co-op jobs. I would say because of her I have a job right now. I'm going to be there for 8 months and working with a database that UBC has – working with their department of alumni engagement. My role there is a junior program analyst and I'm really excited to see what it's like to be out in industry and working on bigger databases than what we have in our classrooms. To learn from my supervisors and mentors and then go back to school for my third term – which is notoriously the hard term. But I'm very excited about 2019 and what it's going to bring for me.”

IxL Preview: Aanikh Kler

Aanikh Kler will be gracing BCIT's IxL conference this spring. He talked to *Link* about his plans to promote entrepreneurship among young people across Canada.



One of the first things that people will find out about Aanikh Kler is how he became a successful entrepreneur at age 15. In the years following his meteoric rise, Kler has since spent time studying at Stanford University—an institution renowned for its proximity to the heart of Silicon Valley. While there, he made a keen observation about his peers: none of them were interested in establishing start-ups in Canada. The Canadian students, in particular, did not want to return home post-graduation; they opted to stay in American tech hub cities like San Francisco and New York. Kler recalls, “I’ve realized that, unfortunately, there weren’t a lot of pull factors (to go back) to Canada once you leave to go to the U.S. in terms of high-profile companies.”

Yet Kler did just that—return home to form his start-up. He serves as the co-founder and COO of Trufan, a ‘Software as a Service’ (SaaS) web platform that connects influencers and public figures with their most integral fans. Trufan is currently based in Vancouver, and one of the company’s goals is to promote entrepreneurship in Canada. “We really want to encourage that young entrepreneurs who have maybe gone to college in the U.S. to see that you can come back to Canada and have a successful start-up.”

To promote Canadian entrepreneurship, Trufan partnered with Canadian firms like Hootsuite and Round 13 Capital. He and his business partner, Swish Goswami, became involved with The League of Innovators—a charity initiative by Hootsuite CEO Ryan Holmes to harvest entrepreneurship in Canada. They intend on changing the dialogue surrounding tech start-ups, asserting that you don’t necessarily have to set up shop near Silicon Valley to be successful.

“At the end of the day, I think anyone can be entrepreneurial,” imparts Kler. “I think entrepreneurship comes from a curiosity of wanting to solve a problem.” He says this is what he wishes to impart on BCIT students at the IxL Conference this spring.

With Trufan, he and Goswami sought to fix the problem of influencers failing to give back to their most loyal fans. “We realized that one of the best ways to actually advertise and to build brand recognition and awareness is through the people that care the most about your brand.”

If you’ve watched your fair share of Dragon’s Den, you may recall Aanikh Kler as the young ingenue whose pitch for a charitable ringtone app earned him a business partner in Venture Communications CEO, Arlene Dickinson. He successfully pitched his first app, UndrTheRadr—an app that provides ringtones that are only audible to users under 21 years of age. A portion of

proceeds from every ringtone download went to the Save The Children foundation. This innovative idea positioned him as a role model for young entrepreneurs. Fast-forward five years, UndrTheRadr is now in Kler’s past, and he says he’s done his fair share of growing since then. He recalls how he possessed a tunnel vision in terms of how the app is performing on the iTunes charts. “I was so focused on the destination that I really didn’t enjoy the drive or the road to the destination,” he admits. “I try to now, with everything that I do, try to enjoy the journey as much as, if not more, than the destination itself.”

At IxL, Kler will be participating in a panel discussion about how to turn ‘soft skills’ into ‘power skills’. ‘Soft skills’ refer to personal traits that enhance relationships with other people, such as leadership and teamwork. “One of the things I want to talk about in running a start-up is that one of the most important things is the ability to communicate effectively and with empathy to your team all the time.”

Following his involvement with Trufan, Kler and Goswami found success in luring \$500,000 worth of funding from a big-name angel investors. These include Chris Paul of the Houston Rockets, Kyle Kuzma of the Los Angeles Lakers and Davon Reed of the Indiana Pacers. Some of Trufan’s clientele includes the likes of Ludacris, Kevin Hart, and a number of influential sports teams.

This is a testament to Kler’s networking skills, or rather, the ‘soft skills’ he plans to address at the IxL Conference. Kler attributes successful networking to curiosity and openness. One tip he would like to share is to be confident about your skills and what you have to offer.

“Everyone has an expertise in something,” Kler assures. “I know it’s hard for young people to feel accomplished or that they’re an expert in something, but even just being super plugged in (to social media, music, or entertainment) can be super helpful for people and you never know when that’ll be useful. And even just offering it goes a really long way.”

Aanikh Kler will have more to say when he graces the IxL Conference in the spring. He was 15 when he first made a name for himself in Canadian tech circles, but now at a more worldly 21 years-old, he says he still continues to grow. He has dedicated significant parts of his career to encouraging innovative ideas and actions out of young people, and there are no signs of him stopping.

—Ali Pitargue

Networking

the future is (literally) in your hands

words **Rajita Dang**

illustrations **Sheku Nafisi**



After staring at the GPS and looking into my text messages for the address multiple times, I realized that I was parked in front of the right house. I was about half an hour early for the meeting, so I decided to just stay locked in my car. Everything tends to look a bit more sinister in the dark, but this East Vancouver neighbourhood seemed to be particularly run down. I started thinking about how well I actually knew this guy. The Google search I'd done on him had checked out, but at least three of the houses on this street looked abandoned.

Was this how I was going to die? Lured into an independent film production meeting by a Shapr match? I sent a location pin to several of my WhatsApp contacts. In all the crime shows I've seen, investigators hunt for the missing person's last known whereabouts. After giving my friends a heads up that I might go missing, I took a deep breath and finally got out of my car.

It all started a few months ago. We were discussing article ideas at a *Link* editorial meeting, trying to figure out what the BCIT student body really wanted to read. I was scrolling Facebook on my phone when I came across an ad for Shapr. I'd seen these ads everywhere, but the tagline really caught my eye. It said, "Imagine if Linkedin and Tinder had a baby". It got me thinking. What can networking do for you while you're still a student?

The whole curriculum at BCIT is about becoming job ready. BCIT has job fairs, networking events, internships, and co-ops. I've done my fair share

of job hunting and networking, but not many of these employers want to hire part-time. Asking potential employers to wait till you graduate isn't an option, so what do you do if you can't take a job right away? Many students, including myself, are just looking for advice and information from people that have five- or ten-years of experience in the field we are trying to enter.

This January, I attended Schmoozapalooza, a marketing and communications networking event that BCIT has been hosting for 15 years. The appetizers were amazing and there were a ton of companies in attendance, many of which brought along BCIT grads that they had hired from previous Schmoozapaloozas. I finished the event with a purse full of business cards and a belly full of hors d'oeuvres. Could I confidently say I found a good job lead? Probably not. Schmoozapalooza only gives students about five minutes with employers in the speed-dating round. The mingling portion after the speed-dating gives you more time, but the process can be intimidating; Students were circling employers like sharks. Before the event, I made a list of the top five companies that I would love to work for, but I was only able to meet three out of the five. The representatives from bigger companies like Cosette were constantly surrounded by students. I was interested in learning more about companies involved in experiential advertising, but I found myself instead talking to marketing companies specializing in email and text message campaigns. There was barely enough time to introduce myself to employers, let alone ask them about additional one-on-one meetings.

After the event, I thought even more about the Shapr ad. If our generation could find romantic relationships online, why not try to build professional relationships? I decided to spend a month connecting with people on three mobile apps (Bumble Business, LinkedIn, and Shapr) to see what was out there. .

LinkedIn was the first app that I downloaded. It's the world's largest professional networking

If our generation could find romantic relationships online, why not try to build professional relationships?

platform. The site was founded in 2002, way before Facebook or Twitter got on the scene. It's one of those networking sites where you will find a wide array of age groups. Everyone from my ten-year-old cousin to my retired biology teacher seems to be on it. On LinkedIn, you add "connections" similar to how you'd make a friend request on Facebook. You converse via private message, and you have all of your professional experience and achievements laid out in a neatly organized profile to show off to other users. It's supposed to be the virtual version of going to a networking event and handing out business cards to people.

I've been on the desktop version of LinkedIn for several years, but I've never used it for networking with strangers and have only sent out "connection" requests to people I've met in real life. The only messages I've ever received have been from "sales executive" headhunters or obscure European graduate school coordinators. On occasion, I've used the job search engine, but

that's the extent of my use of this platform.

When I found out about the LinkedIn app, I had high hopes. Maybe the interface would be different, maybe there would be more opportunities to talk to new people. Turns out, mobile LinkedIn isn't all that different from the desktop version. I pushed myself to send out at least four new connection requests every week to strangers; each request was accompanied with a message introducing myself. I was hoping to spark a conversation with people in the journalism and copywriting industry in Vancouver. I sent out over twenty requests over four weeks, but had little success. Half of the requests weren't accepted, and only three people acknowledged the written note attached. Maybe, like myself, many of them expected to only get junk mail. LinkedIn's app was also frustrating because finding strangers to connect with was a complicated process. The "recommended for you" section was full of contacts that were already part of my network. These contacts were called "second connections" people with whom you share at least one mutual friend. To find people completely out of my network was difficult; it required me to individually look up the names of a media company's employees in the search engine, and comb through the results to find a match. The other downside was that many people would block users outside their network from sending messages. Only after you were accepted as a connection could you actually talk to them. Overall, I wasn't impressed with LinkedIn.

The co-creator of Tinder, Whitney Wolfe Herd, left the company in 2011 and sued the executive team for sexual harassment. After winning her lawsuit, she gathered funds for Bumble, a self-proclaimed "feminist Tinder." As CEO, Herd has taken Bumble far beyond Tinder's dating interface. She created vertical platforms, such as Bumble Bizz and Bumble Besties. The latter is

for forming platonic friendships. Bumble Bizz is far more impressive than LinkedIn as a networking app. The interface is very similar to traditional Tinder with swiping right and left, but with some added profile sections like work and education, years of experience, industry, and networking objectives (ie an internship, a mentorship, basic networking, freelance work, hiring employees, or searching for a part-time job). Bumble matches last for only seven days, so the app really pushes people to initiate conversation. For same-sex matches, either party can initiate the conversation but in matches with the opposite sex only the woman can initiate contact. While this makes sense for Bumble dating, I believe that for men on Bumble Biz this limitation can deter activity or interest from using the app often.

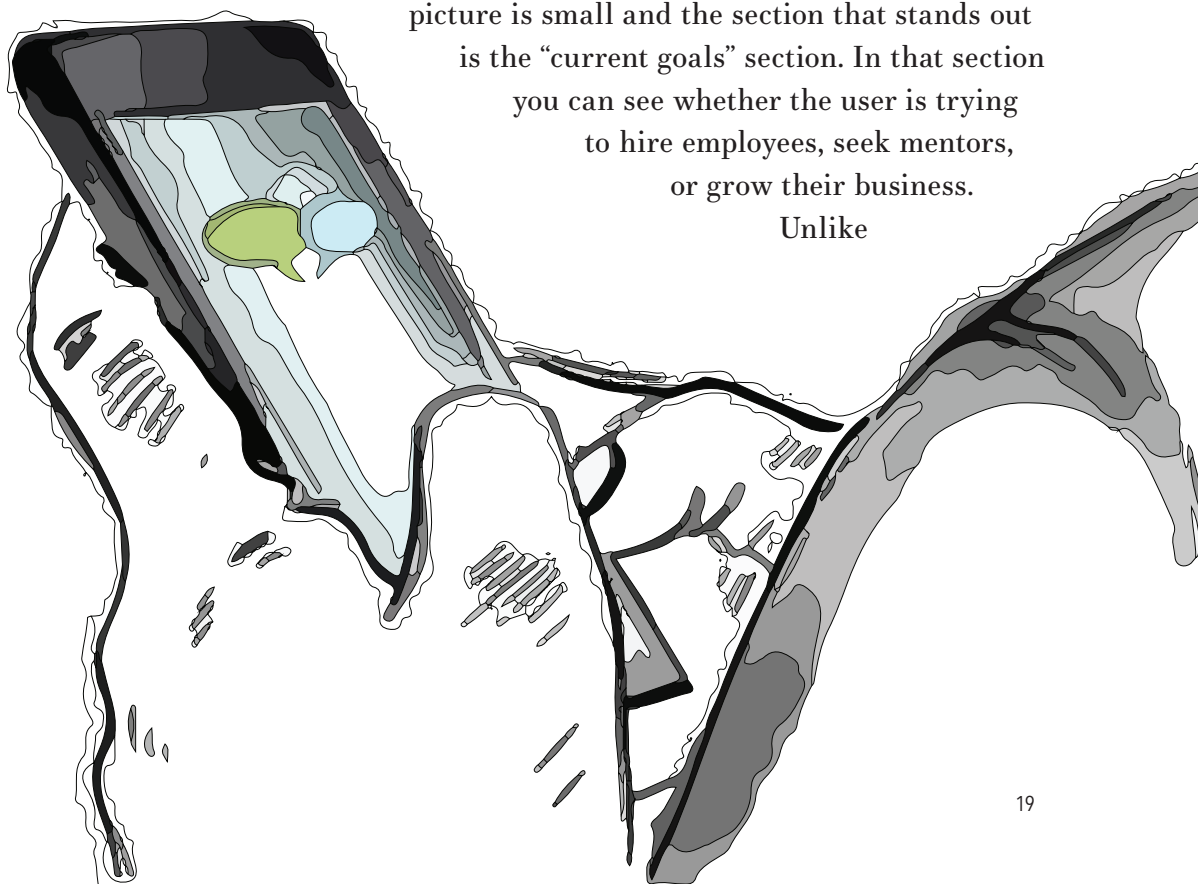
While I did keep my search age range open to anyone from the age of 18-88, I found that there weren't many experienced industry professionals, people looking to hire, or even experienced freelancers on Bumble Bizz. Most users were college students or recent graduates. This did make my pursuit to find a mentor more difficult, but I realized that any kind of networking could be useful.

I was able to meet up with one match off of Bumble Biz. She was a recent graduate and had a job working as a publishing associate at an online media company. We bonded a lot over work woes. Lamenting about tough competition in the marketing world and the small budgets we were given for digital strategy. It was nice to find someone in

the same field that could relate to work problems, and could also offer ways to enhance certain skill-sets. We hit it off so well that we actually met up a few more times to study courses in Advanced Google Analytics together. Other than that contact, I matched with a lot of creatives looking to collaborate. I talked to a Parq Vancouver chef with an interest in videography, and we've made plans to film videos for his new baking channel. I also ended up collaborating with another girl on a photoshoot at a studio in New Westminster. Overall, the app provided a lot of collaborative opportunities that I wasn't expecting.

Shapr was hands-down my favourite app, although it too had some limitations. It's the newest app to the networking market, but the user base is far more diverse. The profile on Shapr isn't as flashy as the Bumble profile but it seems to be more effective. On Bumble, your picture is the biggest component of your profile, with your work experience and your interests placed below. Swiping on faces in a networking app forces user to analyze people just based off of their appearance, which detracts attention from the purpose of networking: professional communication. On Shapr, the profile picture is small and the section that stands out is the "current goals" section. In that section you can see whether the user is trying to hire employees, seek mentors, or grow their business.

Unlike





Bumble Bizz which makes you pick one objective, Shapr allows you to pick multiple. There were way more mid-career professionals on Shapr, including users looking to hire employees and mentor others. The only real downside of Shapr is that only a certain number of profiles are available for browsing each session. After you've hit your allotted number you have to wait seven hours to continue swiping. This can get annoying, but I still think it's a great app.

*at the end of the day,
employers want to trust the
people they hire*

It was on Shapr that I matched with a film writer. He is a Toronto native, and he has over ten years of professional writing experience. We matched because, in his profile, he stated he was looking to mentor others. I initiated the conversation saying I'd always been interested in films, but I had no experience on film sets. He responded with a lot of enthusiasm saying that he had got his start through networking and hadn't gone to film school. He was working pro-bono as an assistant-director for a short film. He explained he was between contracts and was only spending a few months in Vancouver before moving to Saskatchewan to work on a TV series. He asked if I wanted to help out on set as the second assistant director. Within three days of matching, I got a letter from the film's producer that outlined a contract. The next week I was attending my first production meeting in East Vancouver. The whirlwind nature of this interaction made me incredibly nervous. Never before had someone been so willing to act as a guide. I couldn't bring myself to believe that someone could be so nice. Then, pessimism started to set in. I wondered if things were too good to

be true. My imagination got the best of me and I was hyperventilating before the first production meeting.

My fears were completely unfounded.

The neighbourhood that looked eerie in the dark was actually quite charming in day-light. The house was incredibly beautiful. It was a massive World War Two era home owned by the screenplay writer's family. There were floor to ceiling bookshelves and restored antique furniture. Green tea was poured for each new arrival and everyone nibbled on an array of charcuterie boards as the first table reading took place. The whole meeting was a bit surreal. After that first meeting I spoke to my Shapr match, and he said that even if I didn't end up in the film industry, at least I'd walk out of this experience with some good friends in the business.

People will do business with people they know, like and trust, so be proactive and take the time to build meaningful relationships with those in your professional network. When the time comes to search for work, you can tap into those valuable connections for referrals, job leads, and more. At the end of the day, employers want to trust the people they hire. BCIT students in the same program will become applicants with the exact same credentials on paper. The student that will get hired will likely be the one that was able to form a trust-based relationship. I'm going to set next week to shoot, and I'm so happy that I met this great crew. I've learned so much about the production process, and I'm confident that this could lead to further collaboration.



TALES FROM THE BOARD: A BCITSA RETROSPECTIVE

Members of the 2018-2019 student council reflect on their experiences serving as leaders of the BCIT Student Association.

An executive position at the BCIT Student Association comes with a number of perks. These include, but are not limited to: a monthly honorarium, an office, free part-time courses, invitations to special events, as well as discounts at BCITSA stores, at the Habitat pub, and on parking! Yet, these are mere added bonuses to a rewarding leadership role.

As a BCITSA student executive, you act as an emissary for a collective of students' interests. This means you get to have a hand in getting changes made. Representing the rights of students across BCIT can be a lot to juggle, but the current BCITSA council members can attest that it's all worthwhile.

The council members of the 2018-2019 school year come from many walks of life, but together, they contribute to a thriving ecosystem of student collaboration. We've interviewed some of the BCITSA's board members to find out more about their successes and challenges, their hopes for BCIT students, and what it takes to take on an executive position at the BCITSA council. If you're thinking of filling out a nomination package later this year, the current slate of council members are happy to lend their wisdom.



TIMOTHY DAVID

BCITSA PRESIDENT

Timothy David says he has a strange dynamic with leadership. As BCITSA President, his job heavily involves building team relationships, but ironically, he feels that the role can be isolating at times.

“[Being president] definitely strengthens your character, but it’s a heavy weight,” says Tim. The BCIT student body relies on him not only to head a multimillion-dollar student association, but also to represent their rights.

Before he assumed the presidential seat, Tim served as the BCITSA’s VP of External Affairs for two years. This allowed him to make some first-hand observations of how his predecessors, Matthew May and Sergei Bukharov, ran the show. “I got to see a different kind of leadership from both of them. From seeing that, I really wanted to seek out my own form of leadership.”

In his time at BCITSA, Tim helped pass significant initiatives, including enacting BCIT’s online counselling services, as well as launching the IxL Conference—a TED Talk-esque event where speakers share their innovative ideas. The point of IxL, according to Tim, is to get students to think about their education more broadly, beyond what they’re taught in textbooks. IxL focuses on how to build networks by developing power skills—social and personal attributes that enable effective impact and communication with

others. “You can make an impact in your own way and I strongly believe that if you want to do that, you need to be surrounded by people who are also passionate about impact.”

Tim strongly recommends anyone to run for the role of president. He says the job comes down to possessing relationship management skills. “You’re creating an environment where people can grow, and creating a safe environment where all suggestions are accepted—that’s really your role as president.”

Pre-BCIT, Tim was a collections and lending manager at Scotiabank, but he recalls that stepping up to be the BCITSA president was a different beast. He says this role can teach self-confidence, time management, and humility.

“Coming from a background of privilege,” he reflects. “Or even coming from a corporate background where you’ve been told ‘yes’ all the time, this role has taught me that there are things bigger than yourself.”

More than any of his contributions as president, Tim says that his greatest accomplishment was his team. “It’s fulfilling in the ways that you get to shape a team in the direction that you want. And not only that, you get to be able to support people, and to help them build themselves to get to where they want to be.” For him, whether it’s juggling heavy-handed decisions, presiding over executive meetings, or dealing with all kinds of hot-button issues surrounding BCIT, part of being a successful SA president is to find accomplishment in being part of successes beyond your own.

HENRY VO

VP OF FINANCE
& ADMINISTRATION



Henry Vo says “The learning curve is pretty high when you first begin.” Now a second-year financial planning student, Vo says his term at the SA has been “an amazing experience.” “You’re actually working at a real company with real numbers.” He was able to gain experience in handling budgets, producing monthly financial reports, and making sure the funds are distributed evenly. He also has a crucial role in supporting his team. On top of arranging executive and council meetings, Henry also acts as the go-to guy if any of his colleagues have questions about finance.

Henry took part in BCITSA initiatives such as opening a student association investment account and arranging for a barber to cut hair on campus. “You have to be very organized,” he advises. “You have to know what you want to do and what you need to do.” For Henry, what it takes to be the VP of Finance is having a vision and not being afraid to ask questions. He commends the BCITSA council for motivating him. In describing his dynamic with the board, he echoes an old adage—“Teamwork makes the dream work.”

SASHA VOZNYUK

CHAIR – SCHOOL OF
HEALTH SCIENCES



Sasha Voznyuk represents around 1,200 health science students at the BCITSA. Sasha gathers students’ insights and brings them forth to the many meetings and committees she participates in, one of which is the committee that oversees the construction of the Health Sciences Centre for Advanced Simulation (HSCAS).

“I’ve also been involved in several committees tailored towards health and wellness towards students,” cites Sasha. Currently, she is working on launching a new PR wellness program at BCIT.

As part of her role in the BCITSA, she also attends executive and council meetings. She gets to collaborate with students from other faculties like business, computer science, and engineering. Sasha says her busy schedule as a nursing student does not give her as much opportunity to work with the others, but she is grateful for every chance to interact with students outside of health sciences.

“Getting to know them and finding people outside my social circle has been very rewarding,” she describes. “I learn a lot from their leadership style.”

JUSTIN CERVANTES

CHAIR – SCHOOL OF COMPUTING
& ACADEMIC STUDIES



When Justin Cervantes began with the BCITSA, he set out to solve problems that plenty of students accepted as normal. As the tech industry continues to grow, intermediate-level workers are more in-demand, and this poses a huge hurdle for students looking to secure positions after graduation.

To address this, Justin presented a business proposal to the CIO of BCIT. He requested that they implement summer internships where students could obtain high-level industry experience. “When you’re in this position, you’re able to speak with people like the CIO,” asserts Justin. “They’re able to open their doors a little more favourably.”

Another concern he undertook was supporting women entering STEM fields. “The great opportunity for me and the exciting part is when I get to have these challenging discussions.”

Addressing the job market, ensuring safe spaces for women in STEM, and representing his faculty at the BCITSA is a juggling act. Justin advises that time-management is key, and that accepting this role involves plenty of sacrifice.

CHRIS SAMRA

CHAIR – SCHOOL OF TRANSPORTATION,
CONSTRUCTION, & THE ENVIRONMENT



Chris Samra’s main goal at the BCITSA was to increase sustainability. Some of his initiatives include installing more charging stations for electric cars and implementing courses in passive design, where students can learn to design buildings that produce as much energy as they are consuming.

Chris’s role requires him to advocate for students’ rights. He says the most common grievance has to do with strained student-instructor dynamics. These ordeals are not unique to trades students, but as their representative, Chris makes sure that their voices are heard. “There is room for improvement (among instructors), but word still has to get to that professor on how to improve.”

In order to successfully tackle his role in the student association, Chris stresses time management and efficiency. He does not hold back when he describes his role as a tough balancing act, but it can also be rewarding.

“My biggest complaint going through school was that I didn’t have a voice,” says Chris. “This position helped me get changes made.” This is what made him run in the first place.

FOR THE LOVE OF VALENTINE'S DAY

It's February, and the question,
"What are you doing for Valentine's Day?"
is likely to be hot on people's lips.

Now, put the question on its head.
What is Valentine's Day doing for you?

words **Laurie Tritschler**
illustrations **Sheku Nafisi**

Take a loveseat, grab some bon-bons, and let's see what's behind that Hallmark façade. In this feature, we delve into the University of British Columbia philosophy professor Carrie Jenkins' self-styled "metaphysics of love project." I read Jenkins' book, *What Love Is and What It Could Be* (Basic Books, 2017), and I find her concept of "the romantic mystique" sheds badly needed insight into a holiday I've always insisted is cheap and spiritually deadening. Jenkins is equally compelling in interview, especially where she explains why many of us subject ourselves to Valentine's Day knowing it will make us feel sad and lonesome.

In the meantime, beware controversy ahead. We'll be confronting provocative ideas about gender, race, and human sexuality, challenging our assumptions about romantic love ('love' hereafter) and its role in society. These are touchy subjects, and I ask that the reader acknowledge their personal biases as they crop up—and they will. As Jenkins explains in *What Love Is*, the idea that we should hold out for complete objectivity hampers our ability to think about complex issues. Jenkins writes:

We bring our humanity and our experience to all our intellectual pursuits...The real risk is not that this will happen but that if we ignore it—if we downplay the involvement of the personal and the cultural in the intellectual—we are ignoring some of the most powerful factors that shape the work of scientists, philosophers, and everyone else.





Let's start by looking at the emotional capital on the line. Year in, year out, we try to make every Valentine's Day more special than the last. Queue long lines of dudes at florists, chocolatiers, and lingerie departments, followed by romantic dinners-for-two and, hopefully, a night of unbridled passion. That reflects my privileged perspective as a straight man in a happily committed relationship. Yet, even then, my Valentine's Days past have been typically underwhelming.

Beyond disappointment, there's also plenty of financial capital at stake. Valentine's Day is so lucrative a cash cow, The National Retail Federation (the biggest retail association on earth) predicted Americans would spend \$19.6 billion on last year's love fest, and fully \$2 billion of which was expected to buy flowers.

It's always worse if you're single. After all, "one is the loneliest number," or so the old song goes: Enter throngs of young singles grinding up against each other aboard sweaty, booze-soaked harbour cruises. Sometimes, the lonely are led to believe they've found the 'real thing,' only to wind up swindled, heartbroken, and humiliated. According to a February 2018 study by the Better Business Bureau, victims of "romance scams" in the US and Canada were bilked of nearly \$1 billion over the previous three years by an estimated 25,000 online fraudsters. The study describes people preyed upon as "male or female, young or old, straight or gay." They're groomed by predators posing as hopeful 'matches' on digital dating platforms like Tinder and eHarmony. Once hooked, their victims are

taken by the romantic equivalent of the Nigerian Prince scam: "Just wire me the \$1,000 I need to fix my car and then I'll drive out to meet you, baby," or something like that. The common factor among these unsuspecting dupes, writes the BBB, is this: "They believe in true love and they believe they have found it."

This is wonton consumerism mixed with depraved exploitation, all of it fueled by an unthinking need to emulate a pre-packaged idea of love. So, why do we do it?

Bear with me if I've struck a nerve. I'm not suggesting love isn't real, or that Valentine's Day is the asbestos of non-statutory holidays, insidiously poisoning 'the children.' Buying those little valentines for your kids doesn't make you a bad parent, and looking forward to a special evening with your partner doesn't mean you're basic. At the same time, this is a difficult subject to write about.

There's a wide body of scholarship on the subject of romantic love—the object of Valentine's Day—but precious little on the holiday itself. The standard narrative makes for a boring, lily white view of love—one that privileges the hoary dogmas of Enlightenment thinkers often with misogynist and homophobic agendas. A twenty-first century example is Jean-Claude Kaufmann's *A Curious History of Love*, in which the author (a sociologist at the Sorbonne) claims, "[s]tudies show... many women derive no sexual pleasure from penetration but still want to be penetrated. This is because sexuality symbolizes the reality of married life, and because the absence of sexuality signals that the relationship is in serious trouble." Kaufmann doesn't cite these studies, leaving it for the reader to decide if their female subjects are responsible for preserving marriage or for ruining the institution, or both.

It's also worth asking if love, and Valentine's Day along with it, can be meaningfully understood at all. Why interrogate love if love is blind? This brings us to the "romantic mystique" that Jenkins

sees clinging to conventional notions of love. It's the popular myth that love is a universal force of destiny that we can represent artistically, but never really understand. In Jenkins' playful summation, the "romantic mystique" simply reassures us "lovers gonna love," hence the richly sappy metaphors in my favorite love jams: Queen's "Crazy Little Thing Called Love," Foreigner's "I Wanna Know What Love Is," and Haddaway's "What Is Love?".

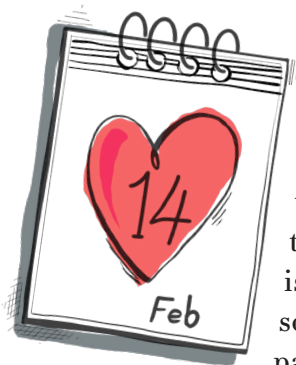
But, where Jenkins' titular allusion to Haddaway makes us laugh, her nod to Betty Friedan's *The Feminine Mystique* (1963) warns us in *What Love Is* that, "things that motivate us not to think are dangerous." For millennial readers unfamiliar with second-wave feminism, substitute the word "feminine" for "romantic" and it's easier to spot Friedan's point that American housewives had been collectively frustrated by their inability to live up to a totalizing yet somehow unknowable feminin-

ity. The feminine mystique idolized a wonderful, magical notion of the 'true woman' who was docile, sexually pliant, and whose chief ambition in life was to take care of children. This constellation of assumptions was so prevalent at the time, it went largely unquestioned even by most women. Friedan labels their combined unfulfillment "the problem that has no name."

Here, Jenkins underlines the reality that our conceptions of love have the same power to

Figure 1.1: Flowering of love over time





structure (and harm) society as our views about gender. The only difference is that, where we condemn misogyny, the standard model of love is so deeply ingrained in our social values that we scarcely pay attention to how it rules our lives.

Cutting through all this subtlety, science tells us love is a biological function, and Jenkins agrees. But that's not the whole story, Jenkins points out that love is also socially constructed whether we admit it or not. To reiterate, the author doesn't suggest our bodily experience of love is 'made up.' Rather, in her analogy, love is a bit like political parties or sports teams in the sense that all three are shaped by commonly understood

Ultimately, the reader is left with the unsettling realization that love is plenty more complicated than it first appears. And there are moral implications to how, in Jenkins' words, we "literally romanticize romance." Worshipping an idealized expression of love perpetuates hurtful stereotypes because not everyone experiences love in the same way.

Circling back to Valentine's Day, the expectations we put on ourselves to find Mr. or Mrs. Right easily bleed into that horrible feeling of emptiness many of us will fill with chocolate and red wine if, come February 14th, we find ourselves single and lonely. As Jenkins told me in an interview, "Valentine's Day...shines a big spotlight on those [pressures]." And for those making reservations for Valentine's Dinner, there are probably some servers out there who might

love is a bit like political parties or sports teams in the sense that all three are shaped by commonly understood rules and expectations.

rules and expectations.

The ironies would be amusing if they weren't so grindingly sad. The combined expectation that love is yoked to marriage while true love 'is forever' ignores the cold, statistical fact that most marriages will end in divorce. Still, Jenkins observes that many believe falling out of love is a personal failure. Next, it's taken for granted that love and marriage are the exclusive preserves of scrupulously monogamous couples even though it's an open secret that people cheat all the time. And where we choose to believe true love doesn't enter into polyamorous relationships, we can't help but recognize the same logic in the outmoded view that same-sex love was somehow less precious than the old-fashioned straight kind.

feel tempted to spit in the entrées of people like Jenkins who are openly polyamorous.

In fact, the author's sexual orientation is often a lightning-rod for people who take exception to her scholarship on love. "People send very, very hateful stuff my way," she explained, calmly adding, "It's hard to say what, exactly, it's for some of the time." Other times it's decidedly less subtle. Neither of Jenkins' partners are white, and her most strident critics react to her ideas with racist invective.

So, now what? Do we kill Valentine's Day? Is there nothing that can be salvaged from this patriarchal festival of exclusion? Calm down. No one is suggesting that, least of all Jenkins. There's

but one passing reference to VDay in *What Love Is*, and even then, Jenkins uses it only where it speaks to love more generally. When I asked her what she felt about the holiday, she told me “Plenty of it’s innocent and cute.”

Having said as much, some readers will roll their eyes at this point and dismiss this feature as a self-consciously liberal screed against the way things have always been and ought to remain. To this, Jenkins writes in *What Love Is* that validating “out-groups” isn’t about inverting heteronormativity until ‘everyone is gay.’ As Jenkins elaborates in *What Love Is*, it’s very difficult to imagine what that would look like. No one is out dump onto heterosexuals the same slights, insults, and abuses society heaps onto the LGBTQ community.

For those, like myself, who are straight and happily committed to one partner, Jenkins explained over the phone:

The risk is not in people deciding that they enjoy Valentine’s Day and would like to get some chocolates or some roses from their partner. The risk is to all of the other people who don’t want to do that and feel threatened.

In other words, people are free to celebrate VDay if they choose, but we’re probably heading for disappointment if we blithely submit to the ritual of it. Find yourself outside the fairy-tale image of everlasting love, and the occasion is likely to bring you down. Worse, you might be harassed or physically bashed if, like Jenkins, your vision of love doesn’t fit society’s mould at all.

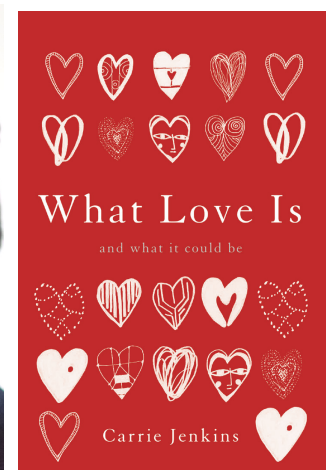
At the same time, the cult of romance swirling around Saint Valentine has become an orgy of capitalist overspending. This isn’t just crass, and Jenkins’ insight here recalls the sad example of the heartbroken victims of “romance scams” we met above.

“A lot of the problematic features of Valentine’s Day are coming at us from... corporations that are trying to make money,” Jenkins pointed out. “They’re trying to sell you something, and the problem,” she added, is this:

One of the best ways to sell people something is to make them feel bad about themselves currently, so that they will pay some money for a product, or whatever, that will improve that situation and they’ll feel a little bit better.

Speaking in the same breath, Jenkins’ adds, “Valentine’s Day is that on speed.” It’s hardly surprising that people would fall prey to romance scams when society reinforces the expectation that everyone is destined to fall in love and live happily ever after. At the same time, that pressure to conform is so strong among couples, the merchants of love don’t have to work very hard in conning us into feeling a certain Valentine’s angst—that inner monologue we subject ourselves to that insists, in Jenkins’ words, “if you don’t go out and buy...the ring, roses, the chocolates, you’re a bad boyfriend, [or] a bad girlfriend. So, go and spend money.”

At the end of the day, my girlfriend and I won’t be celebrating VDay. Nor will we stand in your way if y’all want join in the festivities. Let’s own our choices, either way.



CARRIE JENKINS—WHAT LOVE IS, AND WHAT IT COULD BE

Student
ELECTIONS

2019 Nomination Period
Feb 25th 9:00AM - March 8th 2:00PM

Dear Student,

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The newly elected student executives will serve a term from June 1st, 2019 – May 31st, 2020. During this term, they will receive student executive benefits including an office, discounts at all BCITSA retail stores and pub, free part-time courses, invitations to special events, a discount on parking, and a monthly honorarium.

To learn more, please visit our website for election updates and to download your nominations package.



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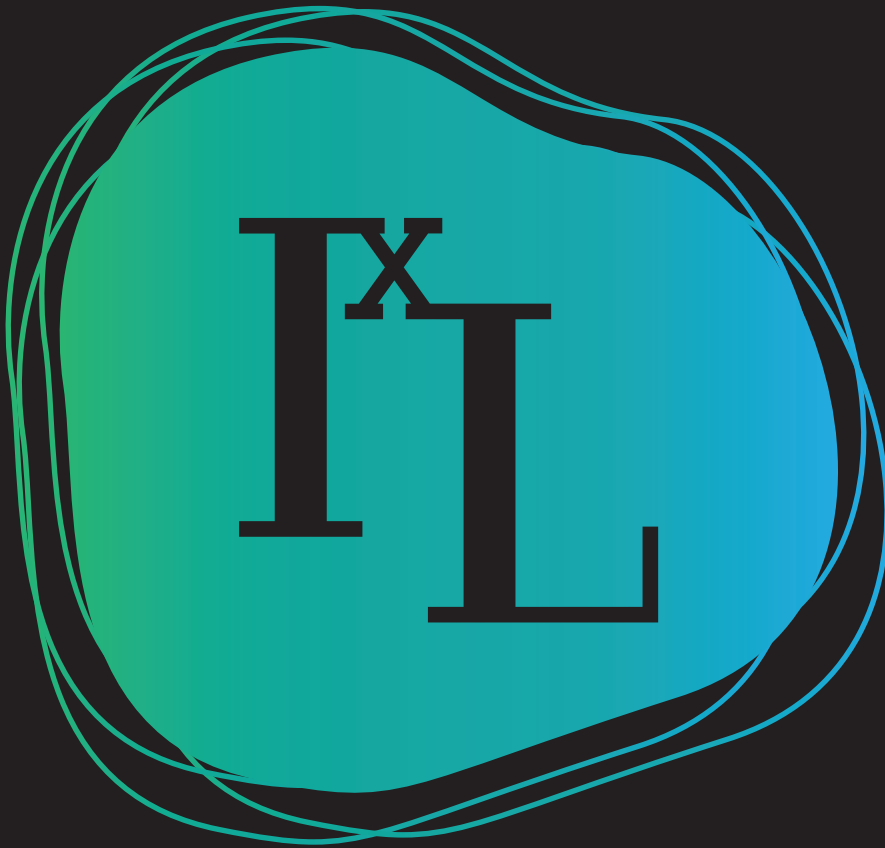
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PHOTO: A technologist from Hydrologica Environmental Consulting collects a water quality sample near the Red Chris Mine, south of Dease Lake, BC.

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