

Winter 2020

glue

THE OTTAWA STUDENT MAGAZINE

YAAASS QUEEN

**DRAG PERFORMERS SLAY ON
STAGE AND AT SCHOOL**

HOMESICK

**CUT OFF FROM FAMILY WHEN
KASHMIR GOES DARK**



THERE GOES MY HERO

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LOUNGE

- 8 **Swipe Left**
- 10 **The Voting Paradox**
- 11 **A Big Issue**
- 12 **Under Parental Pressure**
- 14 **Green Grades**



CHEATSHEET

- 28 **Food for Thought**
How can you beat the urge to eat out?
- 30 **Heroes of Zero**
How can you achieve your zero-waste goals?



DECONSTRUCT

- 32 **A Super Escape**
The unique medium of comics is striking a chord with younger generations.
- 36 **Cosplay Ain't Just Play**
Cosplaying might seem simple at face-value, but a lot goes into it.



BACK OF BOOK

- 38 **Love At First Flight**



FEATURES

16 **Champions of Choice**

Support is hard to find for women who decide to get an abortion, but some organizations are trying to help.

20 **Queens & Kings**

The life of Ottawa students who practice the art of drag.

24 **Stateless**

One Kashmiri student's efforts to balance life and school amid political instability back home.

26 **Finding Common Ground**

The division between Hong Kong and mainland China residents has spread to Canada's capital.

Photos of *Glue Magazine's* senior editors working tirelessly to create, edit and design the perfect edition.

Contributors



Writer

My name is Qadeer Popal. Being a writer for *Glue* is a really enriching experience. It's about finding stories that are relevant to students in Ottawa and putting it into print in a way that students will enjoy reading. It also gives me the opportunity to explore the city in ways that I haven't thought of before. Everyone has a story to tell. As a writer it's my job to find out about those stories and put them into print.



Illustrator

Hi I'm Abeer Almontser and am working with the *Glue* team. I share my work online as Thebeerz. My goal is to make my surroundings a little more fun, one doodle at a time. My work can be described as colourful and detailed, with the occasional appearance of strange little creatures. My love for art and design has poured into my studies as I'm currently in the graphic design program in hopes of pursuing a career in that field.



Advertising

My name is Jayden Williams, I am the promotions manager on the *Glue* team. I help with planning and managing promotional events around the school. I am in the Advertising and Marketing Communications Management Program. My favourite part of this experience is working in a group setting and being proud of the content we create. I've enjoyed gathering information, organizing and planning fun events for clients.



Photographer

I'm Mike Athey and I've spent a lifetime observing humans through a unique lens. When using a camera to capture the everyday, I recognize patience can be a priceless tool. That and a boatload of money for an incredible lens. I'm a former graduate of Algonquin's television broadcasting program and the former editor of the *Algonquin Times*. I try to bring all these skills together to help make *Glue* the best it can be.

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A LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

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Glue is dedicated to reflecting the experiences of Ottawa's college and university students, on their campuses and in their city. Our magazine about student life is unforgettable. Glue is published by students in the journalism and advertising programs at Algonquin College.

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I could lie and say that producing a magazine is always an easy and pleasant process.

If I'm being completely honest though, it really isn't.

Collaboration is hard, and being part of a large team with individuals who have their own personal opinions can be a real pain in the ass. With that being said, what makes the process a pain is ultimately the magazine's strength – combining a diversity of stories to create one cohesive entity needs very different people to cooperate.

And when it does all come together, it's a very rewarding feeling.

From Stephen Riccio's piece on post-secondary voter turnout to Perushka Gopalkista's feature on the life of student drag queens and kings, this issue carries the will of all past issues of *Glue*: to offer Ottawa students fresh stories that dive into different subjects of interest to the community.

When Algonquin College journalism Prof. Julie McCann and her collaborators, Robyn Heaton and Andrea Emery, started the magazine over 15 years ago, it was created as a platform for journalism, advertising and graphic design students to practice the art of magazine production. The ultimate goal was to build a brand that extolled collaboration and community service.

Well, mission accomplished.

On this note, I would like to thank my managing editor, Emily Hsueh, for showing me the editorial ropes and having my back throughout the year. I would also like to thank the whole editorial team and our crew of writers for their support and hard work.

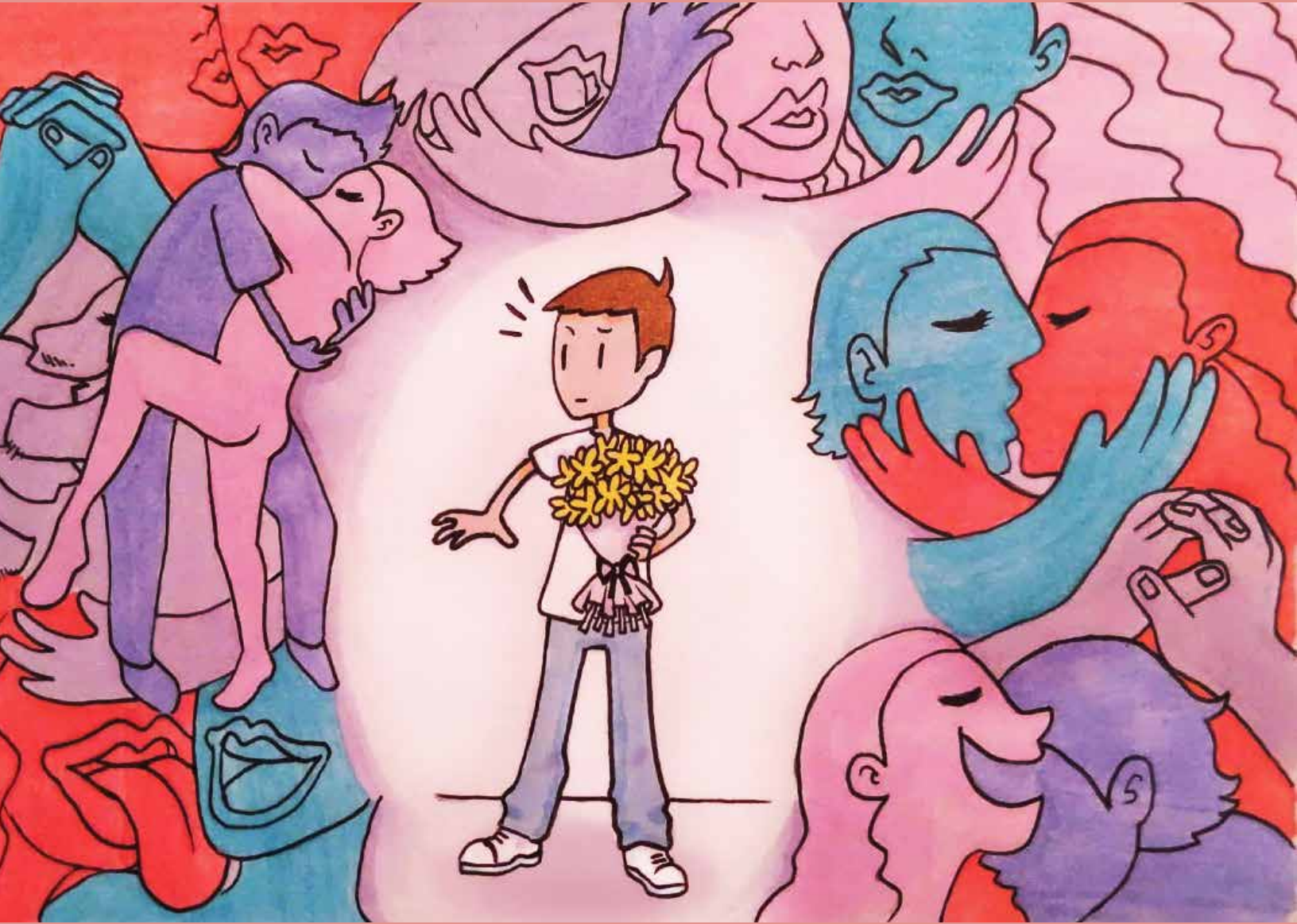
And finally, to all past *Glue* editors, writers, illustrators and collaborators: thank you and congratulations. Producing a print magazine for 16 years is nothing to scoff at, and we did the oft-aggravating work together, every single year.

Although this iteration of *Glue* is coming to an end, the essence of the magazine and its brand will live on in another form – just like a phoenix re-emerging from its ashes.

Watch for its rebirth in Fall 2020.



Glue team of 2020



× SWIPE LEFT ♥

Although dating apps are becoming increasingly popular, some young adults are choosing to approach romance the old fashioned way.

By Emily Britton

Swipe left, swipe right, hook up and lock down. That's how many relationships today are formed today. With the new era of social media and the internet, it's easier now more than ever for students to hookup.

Hookup culture is based on the exchange of any sexual relations without the ties of long-term commitments. The recent wave of mobile dating apps, such as Tinder, has contributed to how hookup culture is becoming the norm due to convenience.

Many students love sex, but how exactly do those who don't want to engage in the hookup culture find relationships?

Zach Moreau, a student at Algonquin College, says he doesn't judge anyone for partaking in it, but says there are better ways of spending time with someone.

"I would rather have a connection, even if it's just friendship with someone, if I'm sleeping with them, rather than someone I'll likely never speak to again,"

says Moreau. "I also think people use apps like Tinder for hookups because they're bored and in need of something to do, or just in need of any connection really, instead of actually wanting to specifically have sex with someone."

Like others, Moreau would rather find a genuine connection with someone, get to know them first, and then court them, as opposed to hooking up before the relationship. Moreau finds his relationships from people he already knows or mutual friends.

In order to form a relationship nowadays, it starts at third base and works its way to first. This is a procedure some

people don't agree with and would rather go about relationships the old fashioned way.

While it may be true there are twice as many young millennials refraining from sex compared to the previous generation, it doesn't ignore the fact that 44 per cent of people formed their relationship after having casual sex.

This is mainly thanks to Tinder, hookup culture's number one best friend and the most popular dating app in Canada, according to BBC. It is mostly because the interface is easy to use but it also makes having sex accessible without commitments — or socializing for that matter.

Students like Larissa, 19, don't like the hookup culture because it takes away the authenticity of dating and makes them feel empty.

"I don't do hookups because I'm someone who has a lot emotions and I would always expect more from it. I would leave feel-

ing used and lonelier than before," she says.

The University of Ottawa student (who asked to use her first name only) says that even though she was on dating apps in high school, she isn't on any now.

For those who don't like hookups and temporary flings, a Leger Marketing survey shows that finding love the old-school way isn't dead as the "dating apocalypse" has only swept 36 per cent of students nationally.

Although the online era has made hookups accessible, old-fashioned face-to-face dating is still alive and thriving for those who don't participate in the culture.

I would rather have a connection, even if it's just friendship with someone, if I'm sleeping with them, rather than someone I'll likely never speak to again.

The Voting Paradox

In a climate where most students advocate for higher voter turnout, student association elections are neglected.

By Stephen Riccio

Ah yes, the age-old issue of how to create a culture where eligible voters show up and vote. This challenge is a familiar one for student governments in Ottawa.

In 2019, Algonquin College, the University of Ottawa and Carleton University all saw student-voter turnout rates below 28 per cent at their student association elections. This disengagement from students has cascaded further, as uncontested election races have become all too common.

Ben King, a first-year chemical engineering master's student at uOttawa had a unique perspective during last year's student election process, and he can attest to the level of this challenge.

"I think the fact that students aren't getting more involved to try to shape the new union and their vision is a little disturbing," says King. "The lack of involvement and the apathy will just let similar people who might have not been great execs in the past, or people of that ilk, run again."

King served on the board of administration with the Student

Federation of the University of Ottawa for their final year as an organization. The academic school year of 2018-19 was rocky for the university, as a report alleged financial mismanagement by members of the SFUO executive staff.

Following a referendum, which tossed out the SFUO and brought in the University of Ottawa Student Union, the general election brought 16 per cent of students out to vote.

Lizzie Gardner, a third-year psychology student at Carleton University, says not voting in student elections comes down to lacking time and information.

"I just didn't take the time to look into it because I didn't know exactly where to go and how accessible it was," says Gardner. "I was focused on going to class."

Gardner is part of the majority, as Carleton's 2019 student association election brought 27.8 per cent of eligible students to the ballots.

"Imagine having a federal election where one party wins a super majority, and 15 per cent of the Canadian population votes," says King, referring to the nature of uOttawa's most recent election.

Zachary Robichaud is a political science and communications student at uOttawa who now sits on the UOSU board of directors as a social sciences representative. Having been engaged with the SFUO situation that dominated student politics last year, he sees a damaged trust of student movements as a cause of low turnouts.

"It goes back to the culture around student politics at U of O, because 17 per cent is the number we've been hovering around for quite some time," says Robichaud. "There is either a mistrust, or people just don't get informed on the issues and what's going on as well."

Algonquin College saw their online election for president go uncontested, while two vice-presidential candidates battled for the online votes of 8.7 per cent of 19,439 eligible voters.

Deijanelle Simon, now in her second year as president of the Student Association, believes part of the low turnout can be contributed to the timing of elections in the winter semester when many programs send students out to co-op placement.

According to those who are passionate about student politics, educating voters needs to start sooner. Robichaud sees his opportunity on the UOSU board as a chance to increase education and build trust. King sees things in a similar light.

"There will always be students that are too busy. In terms of engaging students to be more involved, you really need to start that from their first year," says King. "There needs to be greater emphasis put on what is your student government, what it looks like and why it's important that you vote."





A Big Issue

Social media and pop culture can have a huge influence on our self-esteem, but we shouldn't compare ourselves to unrealistic standards.

By Laura Nelson

Every morning, I had half a glass of milk mixed with orange juice and chugged it. It was an idea I found online about how to lose weight quickly.

After I threw up, it was time to find something to wear to school. It took me hours to choose an outfit. I looked in the mirror, nit-picking each outfit I put on for how much of my body I could see.

I based my life around the pursuit of the ideal body in hopes of the happiness I thought would come with it.

That became a more significant struggle in my life when I met my first boyfriend in 2007. At 14 years old, I thought I had found my soulmate. For the first time in my life, I felt like I met someone who saw me for who I was and not how I looked.

As I began Grade 10, and he started Grade 9, he gradually stopped speaking to me. I could not understand what I did wrong. I replayed in my head everything we had talked about and what could have happened.

It took me weeks to build up the courage to confront him. My heart was racing as I asked about what I did wrong. That is when he told me his friends kept making fun of him for being with a fat girl.

I started spending hours researching the newest diet fads. Detox teas, green tea pills and anything else I could order that had promises of quick and easy weight loss. Anything that guaranteed I would lose the pounds quickly, I would buy in hopes of one day not being fat.

As I got older, it affected my ability to have relationships. I based everything about myself on my weight. If someone told me I looked pretty or beautiful, I wouldn't believe them. How could I? I was fat, and how can that be beautiful? It affected my way of having friendships and relationships. How could they like me? I am fat, they are not.

Fat shaming can take many different forms. For Kristen Campbell, a 26-year-old sociology student at Carleton University. She sees an institutional "fatphobia" on campuses.

"Campuses are designed to be inaccessible to fat bodies," says Campbell. "Half the lecture halls have extremely uncomfortable chairs for anyone over a size 10."

"The shame associated with not fitting into a chair in a lecture hall is horrifyingly awful. Just another barrier to fat folks to be able to participate in society at large."

For Campbell, when she hears others who are smaller than her talk about "feeling fat" or "needing a diet," it upsets her.

"It is a reminder that people prefer to not look like me and that my size and shape is undesirable," says Campbell.

As Campbell has gotten older, she learned that anyone who is deliberately mean to her because of her weight is not worth her time or energy.

"Learning that it's not my job to educate and make others better was essential to healing my body from the trauma of dieting and diet culture."

A large part of the diet culture has come from social media. Celebrities are using their brands on platforms such as Instagram to sell diet items or the next fitness fad without painting the whole picture. Social media has skewed society's idea of "normal" and "healthy," and according to Campbell, "it's so incredibly damaging."

Celebrity families like the Kardashians and Jenners have been known to use their feeds to sell detox teas and waist trainers as a way to lose weight.

Among the family, they have hundreds of millions of followers. These include lots of young people who want to be like the Kardashian-Jenner clan.

They have chefs, trainers and other people to help them achieve their looks and weight.

It has set up an idea that to be beautiful, this is how you have to look.

"How do you know that picture or that image of the Kardashians or Jenners is true?" says Karen Barclay-Matheson from the counseling service department at Algonquin College.

What you see when you look at a magazine and see the Kardashians or Jenners is not the reality of what they look like.

"This is what six pounds of a filter and Photoshopping look like and here you are trying to strive for something unattainable to anyone because they do not look like that."

It is not easy to stay away from the negativity surrounding body image. Everywhere you look, someone is telling you what you should look like.

"Work out to feel good, not to keep your body skinny and chase an idea that will never make you feel better," says Campbell. "Self-worth has nothing to do with the number on the scale."

Under Parental Pressure

For some students, pursuing their dream jobs can be hindered by their parents' own views on academics. Whether it's a generational or cultural difference, students have no choice but to adapt.

By Farah Khan

Life could be easier if we did what our parents wanted. But we are our own people, and sometimes they don't understand our choices. What interests us doesn't always interest them.

"If I'm doing animation or anything drawing-related, they think I'm selling paintings," says Rio Koeswan, an Algonquin College animation alumnus.

It's easy to assume that a student truly passionate about a field would pursue it without worrying about what others have to say. However, for some students, it goes beyond what they want for themselves.

"It was a family influence; it was really subtle," says Jith Paul, an Algonquin College TV broadcasting alumnus. "We were newly immigrated to Canada and I just wanted to thank my parents for the risks they took restarting their lives. So, I wanted a steady career path." Paul chose to go into engineering before completing his TV broadcasting diploma.

Mindsets are hard to change, and students acknowledge the differences between generations. Careers in science, technology, engineering and mathematics – also known as STEM – are often viewed as successful in some societies, whereas the arts are looked down upon.

"In Asian [culture], it's more yes to business and science. It's the thing you have to do if you want to be successful," says Christie Kosman, an international student in animation at Algonquin. "Whereas here in the west, it's more expressive, more about do whatever you love and everything is equal."

Society is a big culprit in making people feel bad about themselves. Sometimes, people are afraid to take risks because they don't know what the outcome will be or because it deviates from the norm.

"I feel like in the beginning, she [my mother] kind of felt like, 'Oh I can't really say that my son's going for animation,'" says Koeswan. "It's the society and maybe feeling a little embarrassed if the children are not where they want them to be."

What's surprising is that often our parents don't know what other jobs might entail, so they don't understand. Algonquin alumni Paul and Koeswan, who persevered and are currently living through careers as an animator and filmmaker respectively, agreed that communication and networking are key.

"If I'm doing animation or anything drawing-related, they think I'm selling paintings."

Present to your parents examples of people who had success in their fields, take steps to show them what you would do on the job and how it contributes to society in the same way they see be-

ing a doctor, lawyer or businessman a successful career.

"If you can point to specific examples, that makes for a better case for being a viable career," says Paul.

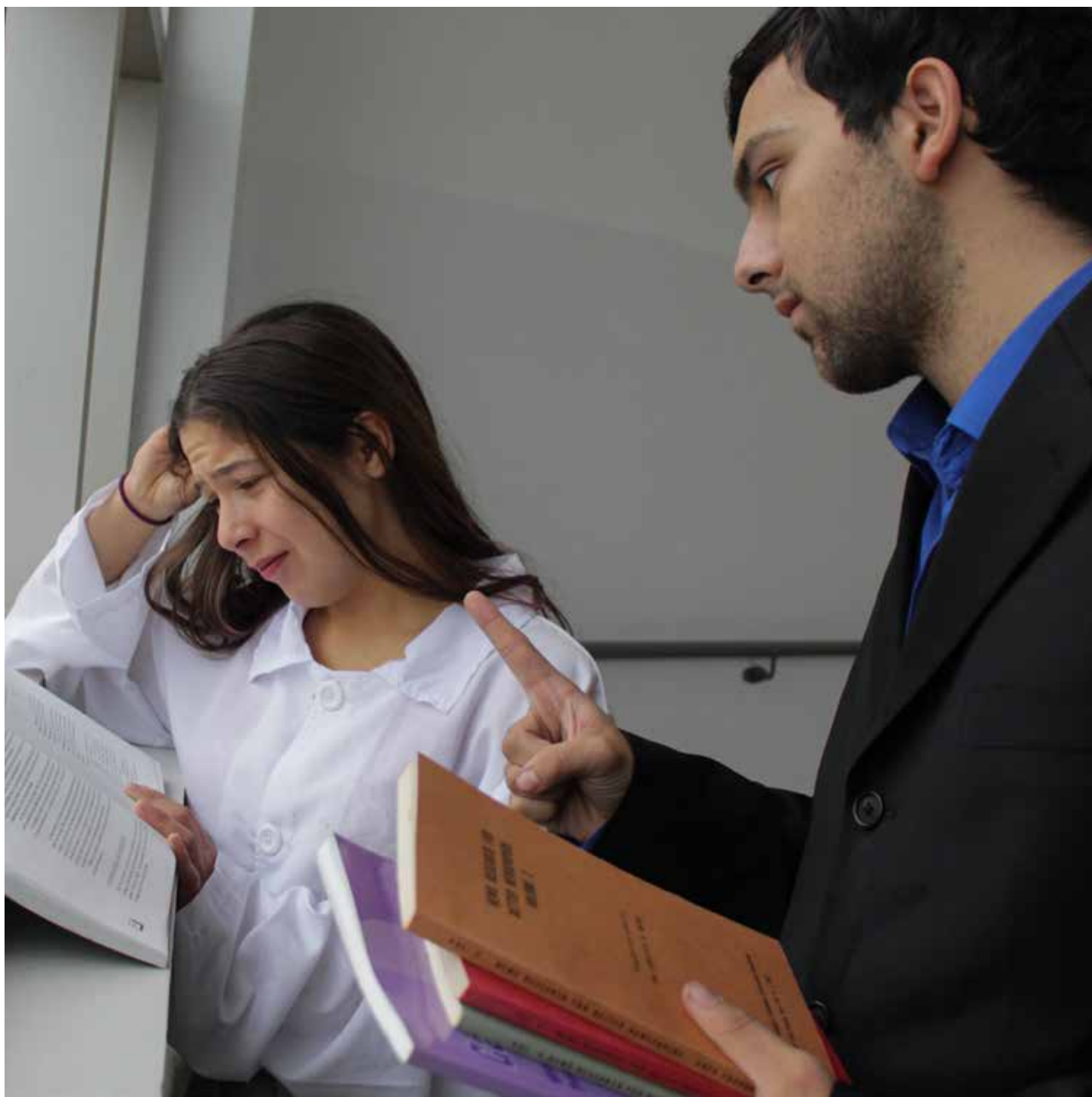
Students should speak to academic advisers or counsellors for advice, talk to knowledgeable people in the field and try to actively be involved in the field by volunteering or interning to learn more.

Consider Christie, Jith and Rio's experiences. Consistent effort to prove to your parents that your passions can lead you somewhere will surely open their minds. But, don't forget to understand their side of the story and see where they are coming from.

Maybe our parents try to live their missing experience through us, who knows? Ultimately, your education and career path should be about you.

Remind yourself why you wanted to pursue this to begin with.

"Parents will come around...my parents came around," Koeswan adds with a laugh.



Farah Khan Photo

GREEN *grades*

Students who want to pursue environment-friendly careers can look to specific programs offered by Ottawa post-secondary institutions.

By Mike Athey



On Sept. 27, 2019, thousands of students of all ages across Canada went on strike to protest the changing climate. In Ottawa, parents took their young children out of school and joined them on a march to Parliament Hill, where chants rose up demanding action.

The events were inspired by a Swedish 16-year-old activist named Greta Thunberg who is travelling the globe to warn leaders of the cost of doing nothing for the environment.

But we can't all be Greta Thunberg. For many of us, the question remains: what can we do as individuals, and where should we direct our educational efforts?

Jordan Morlidge started asking himself what he could do to help. The former Algonquin College music industry arts student had been working at St. John's Music in Ottawa performing sales, repairs and support to high school and elementary music teachers in the area. However, while talking with other musicians, he started wondering if he could do more.

“Working with a bunch of musicians who are very liberally focused and very socially conscious,” says Morlidge, “I realized that just doing the work that I was doing wasn’t making the impact that my community was worried about.”

So he returned to enrol in environmental studies at Algonquin to change that.

Tim Bowstead, the coordinator of the environmental studies program, says about half of his students want to change the world. The college focuses on finding these students a career in related industries with diplomas that lead to jobs such as environmental or forestry technicians. Most of these programs operate out of the Pembroke campus.

“There’s a difference between a career path and wanting to make a difference,” he says.

“A career path by definition means you’re not changing anything because there’s already a career established in that field.”

The forestry program is designed to prepare students for jobs in the lumber industry. Forests need replanting and the course teaches students how to do this properly, allowing them to make a difference within the industry itself.

“You have to adapt the trees you’re planting to what you think the climate’s going to be,” says Bowstead.

Carleton professor Jesse Vermaire says students entering university would take a two-year undergraduate program, probably in environmental science, and then focus on working

with specific professors in their fields of expertise.

Professors at Carleton are researching a variety of issues concerning climate. This includes: forest fires, freshwater systems, permafrost and sediment core activity.

Going to school to learn about climate change is no longer exclusive to environmental studies.

“A career path by definition means you’re not changing anything because there’s already a career established in that field.”

“If you are interested in carbon capture and storage, you can take engineering,” says Vermaire. “For society and policy, you can take a BA in environmental science and public policy.”

A new interdisciplinary science and practice program began at Carleton in 2019. The goal is to combine various science disciplines in hopes of finding

actionable solutions to climate and other complex problems.

Carleton professor Chris Burn says that it doesn’t really matter what school you go to in the end.

“The people who are being trained at the moment need to be able to think at different scales,” says Burn. “They need to be able to think about what, as an individual, they can live with...can they live without driving a car, when they can walk?”

He says the ultimate goal of education is to give students the ability and self-awareness to make informed decisions.

“Nobody’s saying when you come to a fork in the road which path to take. What we’re saying is that you should know how to make that choice. That’s the role of an educational institution.”

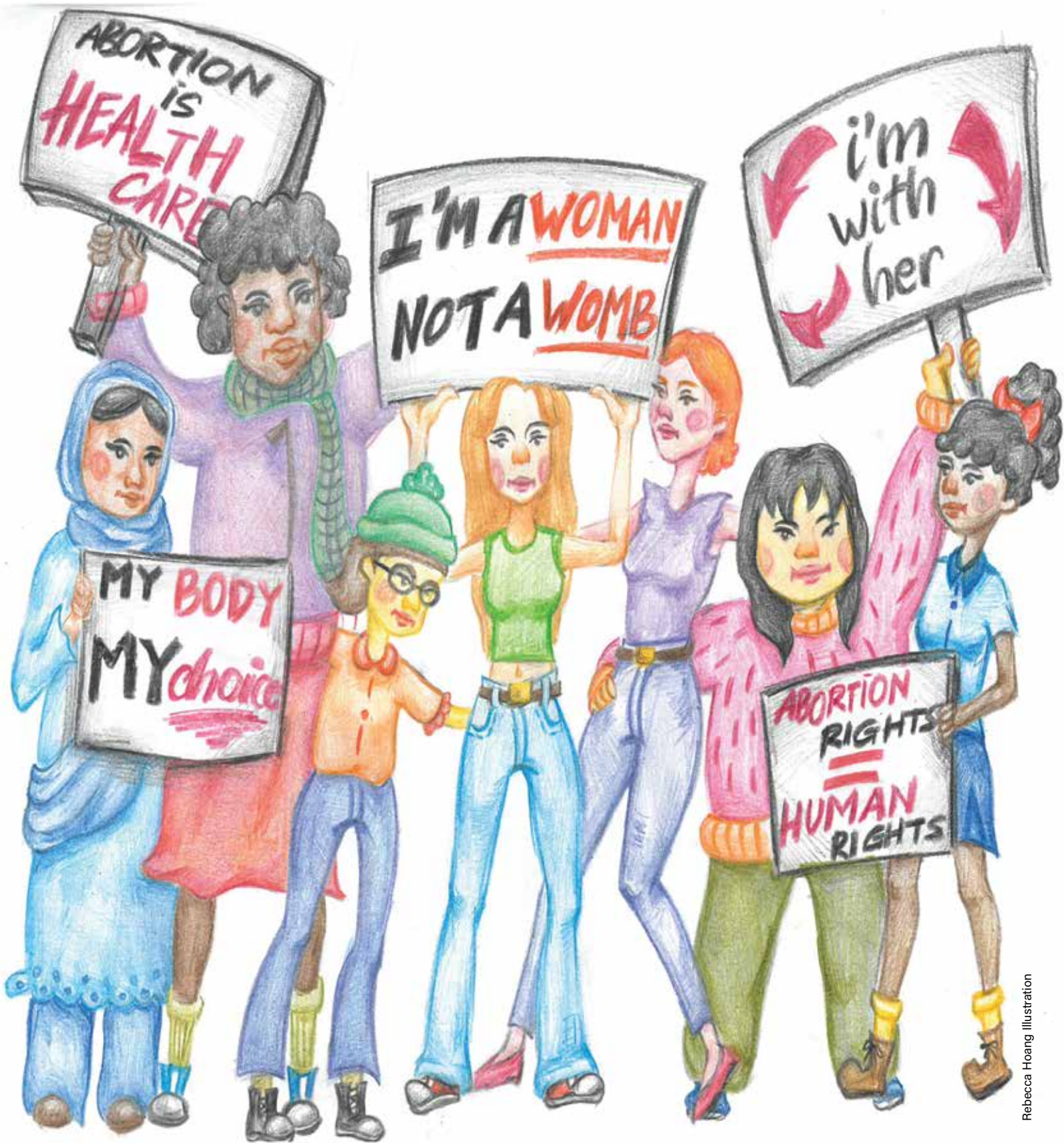


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CHAMPIONS OF CHOICE

While some organizations are offering guidance, accessibility to abortions and abortion-related services are still hard to come by in Ottawa and throughout Canada.

By Jessica Alberga

Imagine walking down a straight and narrow path, which then begins to disappear and crumble beneath your feet. What was once a firm and solid foundation has now gone and vanished into thin air.

Panic starts to overwhelm, and the few ways leading back to peace of mind are hazy and unclear.

The news of pregnancy can evoke more than one emotion. And for some, deciding on what to do with that news can be difficult, especially if they need to decide it on their own.

One in three women in Canada will choose to have an abortion, according to a 2012 report in the *Contraception Journal*.

Yet right now there are limited medical resources for women seeking support on and around abortion, especially if they can't turn to friends or loved ones in fear of shame or judgement.

There are simply not enough providers to perform abortions to fit the need of Canadians across the country, especially in smaller communities. According to abortionincanada.ca, only 16 per cent of Canadian hospitals perform abortions.

Due to stigma surrounding abortion, some doctors may choose not to perform the procedure at all, in fear of being labeled and stigmatized themselves. Fear of backlash and anti-choice groups could also play a role in the lack of willing providers.

Abortion itself is a health care choice that doesn't have to equal trauma. Seeking support and reaching out to people can be the challenging part.

More times than not, women choose to hide what they're going through rather than risk shame and judgement from family and friends.

Because some women have problems locating a willing practitioner, the time it takes to wait for a procedure pushes further into the gestation period, forcing an unwanted pregnancy to carry on further than intended.

Not only do the insecurities continue to grow, but the mental toll can be detrimental to some.

Shannon Hardy, of Nova Scotia, knew there was a significant need for these women out there and felt obligated to help. After six years as a birthing doula, Hardy's knowledge on women's reproductive rights grew, and so did her passion to want to change things. This was true especially when she realized the lack of abortion coverage in most provinces, and that Prince

Edward Island hadn't started performing abortions until 2017 over 34 years since the last one had been performed.

Much like a birthing doula assisting women in giving birth, an abortion doula serves women going through an abortion. The role is to become a support system before, during and following the process. Each job is specific to whatever the client needs, whether it be a phone call for support, locating a service provider or help in arranging appointments.

Hardy co-founded the Nova Scotia Doula Association and she founded the Abortion Support Services Atlantic in 2012.

"All I could think was how are people accessing [services], or how are people getting to Halifax or Moncton [if they need to travel out of province to get the support]. How do people navigate that? That's ridiculous," says Hardy. "Somebody needed to do something, and my mom used to tell me I was somebody, so I just did it."

A research study was conducted in 2017 by the University of Ottawa regarding women seeking post-abortion support. It found that there was a disconnect between women's desires for said services and what is actually offered. Women consistently reported difficulties in accessing low cost or free, non-judgmental, and confidential support.

"We are all facing the same issues around access," says Hardy. "Regardless of what province I'm in, we all talk about the same things. We get to talk about the access problems across the country and they're all the same."

"I do trainings in both Corner Brook and St. John's, N.L. Corner Brook is where all the nurses go to school, they have beautiful new facilities, it's where people have their babies."

Although they have the equipment and staff needed to provide abortions, women have to travel roughly seven hours across Newfoundland to go to the one clinic in St. John's.

This past summer, a group of volunteers took steps in Hardy's directions and decided to open their own collective of abortion doulas in Ottawa.

The Ottawa Abortion Doula Collective, a volunteer group of seven women, launched in May 2019. The goal was to be the first point of contact for those looking for support in the Ottawa area. They know from experience which providers are best to go to and they know the process inside out. Their hope is to be a top hit on Google when searching for abortions in Ottawa, despite having no federal recognition or government funding

"If someone's pregnant and they know they want to get an abortion, where do they even begin, where do you start?"



Founder of Abortion Services Atlantic and co-Founder of the Nova Scotia Doula Association, Shannon Hardy has been a driving force behind support for women around abortion. Hardy travels across the nation teaching sessions and training new doulas.

Vautour believes there's a gap in the services offered and the actual support that someone may need. It's the little things that one wouldn't know about until they're in that position themselves.

"If someone's pregnant and they know they want to get an abortion, where do they even begin, where do you start?" says Vautour. "It's so complicated."

The majority of the people who have sought the Ottawa doulas' help so far have been those who have had no support system, or person(s) to lean on at home.

In most cases, family physicians and gynecologists often act as abortion providers. However, training for abortion is rarely considered routine in most educational programs. Most doctors seek outside guidance and mentorship for learning how to perform abortions.

"Stigma is deeply rooted in the medical system itself," says Hardy. "If you're a doctor and you want to learn abortion procedures, it's generally not taught in medical school."

Abortion is not always talked about in high schools, post-secondary institutions and, remarkably enough, even in medical schools.

"Somebody could go their entire school lives and not hear anything about abortion, in health class or sex-ed," says Hardy.

"At St. Martha's, here in Nova Scotia, in Antigonish, you aren't allowed to talk about abortion if you work there, it's a Catholic hospital," she says.

Doctors employed at Catholic hospitals in Canada are not allowed to perform abortions. Discussion around abortion is

to back them.

"In Canada, it's not like we're pioneers, but almost," says Ottawa Abortion Collective doula Julie Vautour.

"Abortion is health care, it's not an alternative way, it's not a contraceptive method," she says. "Abortion is health care.

"We need to keep talking about how you're taking responsibility for your health by getting an abortion," she says.

looked down on. One in every 10 Canadian hospitals is Catholic.

In Canada, it's up to each province to come up with its own mandated policies for hospital and medical staff, as per the needs of each province's citizens.

In Ontario, the nursing profession has been self-regulating since 1963.

The College of Nurses of Ontario gives guidelines to all nurses who work in the province. Those guidelines provide standards for maintaining nursing practices, conducting reviews and establishing the competencies required for the nursing practice.

The guidelines consist of 79 entry-level competencies summed up into five categories. The words abortion or termination are not mentioned once overall.

However, how to maintain a proper social media profile can be found in *Foundations of Practice*.

For nursing students at Algonquin College, the topic of therapeutic abortion as a surgical procedure is not discussed since students don't attend placements in that specialty area, says nursing professor Susan Eldred.

"The topic of abortion is used as just one of many examples to frame discussions about values, conflict, ethical distress, nursing accountability and responsibility and conscientious objection," says Eldred.

Sophia Bigras, nursing professor at the University of Ottawa, says she also doesn't cover abortion specifically in her lectures.

"I do have one case study related to that issue that we discuss during group discussion," says Bigras. "We might spend 20 minutes on that case study. The girl is a minor who gets pregnant. Her parents were aware that she had a hereditary condition but never told her, thinking she was too young to get pregnant. Now that she knows, one option she faces is abortion."

Whether it be more discussion in school settings or in everyday life, the talk surrounding that choice should empower the woman making it.

It would help the one in three Canadian women who makes that choice to feel less alone. **g**



Julie Vautour is one of seven volunteers who started the Ottawa Abortion Doula Collective that launched in May 2019. The goal for the Collective is to become the face of abortion services in the nation's capital.



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Devona Coe is the host of the Bourbon Room as well as multiple drag brunches and dinners at Vanitea Room.

Queens & Kings

Balancing student life and drag is not easy. The following queens and kings are grinding to make their dreams a reality.

By Perushka Gopalkista

On a blue tray, her collection of makeup lies in little storage containers. She sits upright and looks into the face mirror that rests on her table. She grabs her thick brown dreadlocks and pulls them behind her head in preparation for her first step: setting the foundation to transform into a performer with charisma, nerve and talent.

Once the transformation is complete, Ace Aspie the drag king is ready to lipsync on stage for the audience.

When people think of the aesthetics of drag, *RuPaul's Drag Race* might be the first thing that comes to mind.

If you're a drag queen or drag king in Ottawa, a small stage with a dance-track backdrop and a supportive audience is all you need.

Now, add in the aspects of being a student: the constant reminders of financial struggles like paying bills on time, along with assignments, deadlines and bed-times.

The life of an Ottawa drag queen is a job that requires time and energy, which consists of piecing together outfits as well as sacrificing time to perform at late hours of the nights. Some drag queens and kings have the ability to successfully balance their school life with drag, while others dip in and out, struggling to find a way to perform drag on a dime.

November 2017 was when Devona Coe first set foot on stage as a drag queen. She had never performed drag nor touched makeup before. Two years later, she is the host of Bourbon Room in downtown Ottawa and the drag queen that many look up to in the local drag community.

Coe is a 22-year-old advertising student at Algonquin College. She is one of the drag queens who is able to balance her schedule by using the fundamentals of her program to keep her drag and student life organized.

Aside from the Bourbon Room, she is also a host of the Van-itea Room in Centretown, preparing drag brunches and dinners for multiple occasions.

Her view of drag is different from the way other queens may perceive it.

"I look at drag as an art form and a business," says Coe. "Whenever I organize an event, I look at all of those things as businesses in themselves. So, I use skills that I've learned in advertising to directly impact those aspects of [my] life."

Celebrating her two-year anniversary of being a drag queen in Ottawa, she says the process wasn't easy, but that the feedback she's gotten from audiences has made it all worth it.

"That's partly why I do drag now is because I see a difference in what I do," says Coe. "I see teenagers following me and thanking me for making a difference in their lives and making them feel included."

The drag performance spaces in Ottawa weren't always so popular, however, according to Coe.

"When I started doing Bourbon Room, it was originally a straight club, and

I brought up the idea of [it] becoming a gay club," says Coe. "When we first started, there were like, 20 people in the club."

The turnout for her weekly event now attracts about 60 people. The only other problem was creating a space for drag kings.

The difference between drag kings and drag queens is that kings appear in a variety of men's clothing portraying different scales of masculinity. Whereas drag queens are typically men who exaggerate feminine qualities through makeup and costuming.

Drag queens already had a growing reputation but, according to Coe, drag kings were not always welcomed.

"Drag kings have existed for a long time and it's just that you don't see them as often because we're not the ones that are



Ace Aspie, a uOttawa criminology student, started doing drag in April 2019. By day, she goes to classes, by night Aspie transforms into a drag king where she performs roughly once a month.

going to be put on TV,” says Cameron Rose, a human rights and social justice student. “You’re not going to see a drag king unfortunately on *RuPaul’s Drag Race* and if that’s their only idea of what drag is, then [they’re] not going to understand what it means to be a king.”

Rose, who performs as Boy Vey, is a drag king who started performing in September 2019. After considering performing drag six months prior, she decided it was finally time to try it out.

“I’ve really just been enjoying myself, I just keep trying to take on new opportunities so that I can be a well-known performer in the community,” says Rose.

Though performing drag serves as a creative outlet for Rose, late-night shows are something that she has to work around.

“My first show that I ever did was at Swizzles Bar and the show didn’t start until 10:30 at night, which is ridiculous,” says Vey. “I’m lucky that I didn’t have class the next morning.”

Another student who works hard to transform into a drag king is 21-year-old University of Ottawa criminology student, Ace Aspie.

Aspie started doing drag in April 2019 and has a set idea of what she wants people to take away from her act.

“I want people to watch my drag and think, ‘Hey, this is somebody who’s doing male drag, but who isn’t necessarily conforming to a gender binary,’” says Aspie.

Because she’s a student and performs drag twice a month, money is always an issue. Finding ways to reuse makeup or invest in reusable costumes are ways she becomes cost-effective. Some makeup she says has been with her for a long time, such as her Kylie Jenner eye shadow collection.

“I’ve definitely been using most of this makeup since high school because my mom bought it for me when I was going to prom,” says Aspie. Reusing makeup is the best option since buying new makeup is so costly.

She says that drag kings are not held to the same standards as drag queens.

Aspie said if criticism toward drag kings is not directed at their clothing, it’s directed at their aesthetics. Though she is new to the drag community and still trying to find her style, the main critique directed at her so far has been her makeup.

“I always get critiqued on my harsh contour and people can go fuck themselves because that’s the point,” she says.

She decided that she would do her own thing rather than being turned off by the pre-conceived

idea of what a drag king actually is. She doesn’t care what people think of her style.

Scheduling drag with school and work can be a conflict for Aspie as she often envies other drag queens who have fewer time restraints.

When Aspie is not in drag, she works at the Writing Centre at uOttawa and volunteers at the Pre-Law Society, all while working with Innocence Ottawa (where they review wrongful convictions). So trying to perform for the 11 p.m. shows at drag venues is sometimes a struggle.

Regardless, she knows that performing as a drag king is a way to show audiences that not all drag kings are the same.

Aspie, along with the other drag performers, hopes that with the increase of inclusive spaces, there will be more incentive to join the drag community in Ottawa.

“I’ve always promoted inclusivity and tried to bring drag kings into my shows and making

sure that I’m making a space for everyone,” says Coe. **g**

“I see teenagers following me and thanking me for making a difference in their lives and making them feel included.”



Cameron Rose a.k.a Boy Vey performing at Venus Envy. Boy Vey is a drag king who started doing drag in September 2019.



stateless

One Kashmiri student's efforts to balance life and school amid political instability back home.

By Qadeer Popal

Most students spend their summer worrying about school, finances and OSAP. Not so for Zubair, the Kashmir native who seemingly had it all laid out for him.

His co-op was going well, he was accepted into an Ontario university and even won a scholarship.

Everything was going well until Aug. 4, 2019, the last day he spoke to his family.

Zubair, whose name we have changed due to safety concerns, is not unfamiliar to instability.

Indian-administered Kashmir, claimed by both India and Pakistan, had seen its share of conflict since it became a state in 1947, following the partition of British India which divided the land mass into two separate nations.

In fact, the Indian Constitution even had a special provision for the Indian-administered Kashmir, Article 370, which granted the region autonomy over its own internal affairs.

So when he called his family on Aug. 4, as was his near-daily practice, it wasn't unexpected that he would hear about some of the issues that plague the region.

His family informed him that there had been an increase in the number of Indian troops sent to the region and all non-Kashmiris were ordered to depart the region by the Indian government.

"I was completely shocked and worried that something really wrong was going to happen," says Zubair.

And if something wrong had happened, Zubair wouldn't have known.

The following day, the Indian government implemented a communications blackout in the disputed region and he had no means of contacting his family.

In the days that followed, Zubair would come home from his co-op, head to his room and frantically try to get in touch with his family.

However, when the line connected, it wasn't the familiar voice of family greeting him on the other side. Instead, it was a pre-recorded voice saying: "The number you are trying is switched off right now, please try later."

Sometimes in English, sometimes in Urdu and sometimes in Kashmiri, but the same message nonetheless.

WhatsApp, Facebook, cellphones and landlines — nothing worked.

Furthermore, the Indian government announced that nearly all of Article 370 of the Indian Constitution had been revoked, effectively stripping Kashmir of its autonomy and adding to Zubair's concerns.

Zubair tried desperately to contact his family over the next several days, to no avail.

"The first few days, I used to send bulk messages to all my relatives," he says. "I ended up with a high bill, but nothing. No reply."

The lack of news from his family affected his focus, his concentration and his emotional well-being.

While driving to his co-op, thoughts about his family would crash down on him.

BEEEEEEEEEP. The horn of a car coming behind him temporarily brought him back to his current situation. He had almost crashed. In fact, he had several more near accidents that week.

As time went by he became more desperate, looking for different means to contact his family, including sending a message through a person who traveled to the region.

“Someone traveled to Kashmir, I sent him my voice note on WhatsApp and told him to share it with my family and get a voice note from them, but I don’t know anything,” says Zubair.

“He didn’t return anything so far, it’s been two weeks already.”

His worries took a toll on his academic planning.

Despite being accepted into his school of choice and receiving a scholarship, he decided not to attend the fall term.

He just wasn’t in the right state of mind.

“I can’t do anything. I can’t focus on anything. It’s always in my mind, ‘Are they ok?’” says Zubair, while explaining how his worries have prevented him from further pursuing his academics.

“It’s so depressing,” says Zubair. “I try to sleep. I lay down at 1 a.m. and I fall asleep at 5 a.m.”

Zubair’s work life was also affected. He would sit in front of the computer in his office trying to complete his daily task. As he stared at the screen, thoughts and images of his family would fill his mind, overpowering the images on the monitor.

Jobs that he used to be able to complete in two hours now took four. Jobs that would take four hours now took eight, and so on.

When possible, he would do conferences over the computer to avoid human interaction.

“I’m still in my co-op. My manager, I explained to her the situation. She is flexible with me,” says Zubair, adding that she allows him to work from home some days.

There are many others in Canada that face situations like this.

Stuck in a legal limbo with nowhere to go and hostile situations in their native lands, they are essentially stateless.

Though refugee, humanitarian and compassionate grounds claims provide an avenue for some people in these situations, there are often obstacles in the way.

In Zubair’s case, he doesn’t want to leave his family behind.

He doesn’t speak openly about what is occurring for fear of being deemed as “outspoken” and the repercussions such an action would have on his family in Kashmir.

He also worries about the risk of having his passport revoked, as travel documents for people from Indian administered Kashmir are issued by the Indian government.

For others, seeking to make Canada their permanent home by applying for status via refugee or humanitarian and compassionate grounds is a viable option.

It is easier said than done.

According to *Statelessness in Canada*, a paper researched and written for the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, humanitarian and compassionate grounds applications can take 18 to 24 months to process and even longer in some cases.

“If they’re awaiting determination of status, there is uncertainty and anxiety that comes with that,” says Fareed Khan, human rights activist and director of advocacy and media relations for Rohingya Human Rights Network.

In the case of Zubair and the fear of repercussions, Khan says that such cautions are not unwarranted in many situations.

“That’s a very real concern of people, whether people in Kashmir, Uyghurs and others,” says Khan. “People who speak out, they speak out anonymously.”

Compounding on the feeling of uncertainty is the fact that, according to *Statelessness in Canada*, applications based off of humanitarian and compassionate grounds are discretionary and, “While statelessness is one factor in consideration (among many others, including establishment in Canada, family ties, best in-

terest of children, admissibility issues including criminality), statelessness is not determinative of the decision.”

With no guarantee of acceptance, an everchanging political climate in his home country and concerns for his family’s well-being, Zubair has taken solace in isolation.

“I spend time by myself, or I read Quran,” says Zubair. “I like to code. I take the frustration out on coding, which is not productive at all, but I’m not seeing anyone [counsellor etc.]”

This is something that education professionals say is common for people in these positions.

“Mental health is one of the biggest challenges refugees and people coming from troubled regions face upon arriving to Canada,” says Nadia Alakoozi, an ESL teacher who has taught people from many war-torn and struggling nations.

“A lot of times people from conflict-ridden areas carry unseen wounds from the trauma they’ve experienced, or the instability they’ve lived through.”

She also says that culture can sometimes be a barrier to seeking treatment.

“In some cultures there, things like this are taboo to talk about. There’s a stigma attached to it, so unfortunately people suffer in silence.”

And for those willing to seek treatment, including students, their immigration status may be a barrier to treatment.

According to *Statelessness in Canada*: “Stateless persons without a permanent residency, and thus no access to health care, may be forced to resort to ‘back alley’ treatment, or perhaps treating themselves or not receiving any treatment.”

Khan acknowledges this as well, stating that for newcomers to Canada without permanent residency or citizenship, sometimes the only support comes from their respective communities and community organizations.

This is something Zubair is aware of.

“Members of my local community always support me. Some brothers invite me for food, but I don’t like to go. I like to be by myself,” says Zubair.

He says that the stress from the situation has impacted his social life to the point where he ignores messages from friends and avoids social gatherings as much as possible.

For him, he won’t feel better until he knows his family is ok. “I don’t think anyone can imagine what I am going through. I can’t express that in words.”

This is how Zubair spent his fall semester. During a time when other students are buried in books, he was buried in worries. Instead of studying for classes, he was researching methods to get around a government-implemented communications ban without help, guidance or a country of his own.

Stateless.

Since the time of writing this article Zubair has been able to get a hold of his family. On Oct. 14, 2019, the Indian government restored some service to cellphones in Kashmir, though Zubair states he sometimes has to call 20 times before the call connects.

He adds that he would like to attempt to start school in the winter semester, but the situation in Kashmir is still unstable. The Jammu and Kashmir Reorganization Act, 2019 took effect on Oct. 31, 2019, and effectively redrew the boundaries of Indian-administered Kashmir. Zubair says if there is another communication blackout or increase in instability he will have to put a hold on his academics, yet again. **g**

Finding Common Ground

The Hong Kong protests have put a strain on the relationship between mainland China and Hong Kong residents. What seems worlds away, has an impact close to home.

By Joseph Wang

Pro-democratic Hong Kong protesters and the nationalist pro-China protesters confronted each other on Parliament Hill on Oct. 2, 2019.

Dozens of Hong Kong protesters held signs with slogans such as - “Ottawans stand with Hong Kong”, “Hong Kong stay strong” - while the pro-China demonstrators unfolded a large Chinese flag and sang the Chinese national anthem. When the Hong Kong protesters attempted to march down O’Connor Street, they were swarmed by a group of pro-China protesters. A man yelling obscenities in Mandarin broke away from the pro-China group and moved towards the Hong Kongers.

Police officers monitoring the protests stopped the man, yet tension from each side continued to build. As dozens more Chinese protesters poured into the street, Hong Kongers found themselves rapidly outnumbered. They searched for help from police, who ended up flanking them. Officers kept the distance between the two groups and cleared a path for Hong Kongers. The pro-China protesters all glared at the Hong Kongers as they marched by.

The gap between the residents of Hong Kong and mainland China has become wider since the day the democratic movement in Hong Kong began in March 2019. The movement keeps growing and has spread beyond their borders. Some major cities in Canada, Australia and the United States have also been pulled into the battles where Hong Kongers and mainland Chinese confront each other. Mass protests from both sides have occurred in Toronto and Vancouver. Now they have happened in Ottawa.

Hong Kong was a former British colony. In 1997, it was returned to China, which the island originally belonged to. Hong Kongers feared a totalitarian Chinese communist regime and some of



them fled abroad. To calm Hong Kongers, China made Hong Kong a special administrative region with a high degree of autonomy for 50 years, setting Hong Kong apart from mainland China until 2047. It also granted Hong Kong with the Basic Law, which was supposed to guarantee Hong Kongers their universal suffrage, independent legal system and other rights.

However, Hong Kong’s freedom is shrinking. Administration and legislative council of Hong Kong are controlled by China’s central government. In September 2014, they refused to meet Hong Kong’s demand for reform to allow them to elect the city’s chief executive. This led to pro-democratic demonstrators occupying Hong Kong’s financial district. The movement was quashed by police on Dec. 15, 2014, and China’s control over Hong Kong’s elections remained unshaken.

Two years later, three Hong Kong booksellers were abducted and taken back to China by Chinese secret police, because of books that accused Chinese president Xi Jinping of having mistresses. This intensified fears that China would eventually strangle Hong Kong’s freedom of speech.

Hong Kongers’ sense of insecurity accumulated and finally erupted. On March 15, 2019, the pro-democratic Hong Kongers initiated the largest one-day protest in the city’s history.

According to Ng Andrew Yan To, a Hong Kong student who studies ophthalmic medical technology at the University of Ottawa, protests in Hong Kong were first launched as an initiative against an extradition bill proposed by Hong Kong authorities.

“The law by itself would have allowed the [Hong Kong] police to arrest anyone and directly transfer them over to the Chinese government,” Yan To explains. “Since the Chinese government

doesn't have a very good record with human rights, no one knows what would happen after extradition. I feel like they are just trying to seize power."

Jeremy Paltiel, a Carleton University professor of political science, specializes in China and east Asia. He explains why the scale of the current movement is much larger than the one in 2014.

"The umbrella movement of 2014 was focused on the direct election of the Chief Executive of the Hong Kong region," says Paltiel. "What's happening in 2019 is that the introduction of the draft legislation on extradition touched the nerve of Hong Kong people, who are worried that the freedom they have already enjoyed would be taken away by the mainland [Chinese] government."

However, the movement has not gained much support from the rest of China, since a great portion of mainland Chinese tend to be nationalists. They believe that China should always be a unified country, and they simply see Hong Kongers' struggles as riots that aim to separate the city from China. Some of them have therefore begun protesting against the Hong Kong movement.

Since the conflict mainly consists of young people, the tension between the two student communities has been fuelled up.

Yan To says that the hostility between Hong Kongers and mainland Chinese is not something new. It goes all the way back to 1997 when China reclaimed Hong Kong from Britain, and since then their relationship has been strained.

In fact, even before the current face-offs, slight conflicts happened occasionally in universities in Hong Kong between some Hong Konger and Chinese students. What is happening right now is just a reflection of the already accumulated distrust.

Although some mainland Chinese students choose to support democracy in Hong Kong, it does not change the fact that a majority of mainland Chinese are against what Hong Kongers are fighting for.

"Hong Kong students generally support the civic movement in their hometown, whereas Chinese students mostly side with the Hong Kong authorities in suppressing the movement," says Yan To.

Paltiel says that one of the key factors that has contributed to the divide between Hong Kong and Chinese students is that both sides that have engaged in the protests are attacking each other's identity.

"Many protesters back in Hong Kong are using some very insulting language to refer to the Chinese identity, so there's a directly anti-Chinese aspect in these current movements," says Paltiel. "The so-called patriots of mainland Chinese feel that their identity is being disparaged."

In the same way, Hong Kong protesters are feeling that their identity is being erased by the mainland Chinese protesters, who

are convinced that instead of being an independent group, Hong Kongers are also part of China and that they should not launch movements against the Chinese Government.

Yan To believes that mainland Chinese students fail to understand Hong Kongers because they have not heard, or do not want to hear, Hong Kongers' demands.

"I think that the Chinese government is giving their people false information," says Yan To. "That is why they cannot sympathize with the Hong Kongers' struggle for freedom. Plus, most Chinese people trust their government, so they don't really understand the whole situation."

Yan To says he has seen a video of a reporter interviewing mainland Chinese students about their attitude towards the Hong Kong issue.

"They don't like the pro-democratic movement," says Yan To about the mainland Chinese students. "That's apparently because of how mainland China brainwashed them."

Michelle Yuan, a mainland Chinese student who studies biology at the University of Ottawa, shares a similar opinion. She says that a lot of mainland Chinese students are receiving one-way information.

"Google, Wikipedia, YouTube, Instagram, Facebook, Twitter, Snapchat — they are all blocked in China," says Yuan. "When you only have government as a source of information, you'll naturally believe in every word they tell you over time. When the government tells them to hate the Hong Kongers' movement, they do so without any doubt."

Even when they are free from all the restrictions in a country like Canada,

many of them still embrace the Chinese government's stand on the Hong Kong issue.

"Multiple reasons have caused this to happen," says Yuan. "First of all, they have been immersed in official propaganda for so long that they refuse to listen to anything different."

Yuan adds that cultural barriers also contribute to the divide.


"Because of language issues, a lot of Chinese students only make friends with their fellow Chinese," says Yuan. "That's why they fail to learn some of the basic values, such as democracy, in western society."

"Most Chinese students who grew up in China never get to exercise their civil rights and freedom... They can't put themselves in Hong Kongers' shoes."

Yuan says the best way to heal the tension would be on a student level and government level.

"I think both sides need to respect each other," she says. "As for easing the standoff, the best way might be China not forcing too many policies on Hong Kongers."

Yan To is not sure that the relationship between the two groups can be recovered, since he thinks some Hong Kong and mainland Chinese students are turning against each other.

"It seems like that is happening," says Yan To, "and it can't be helped." 



Protesters holding signs supporting pro-democratic movement in Hong Kong on Parliament Hill on Oct. 2.

Food for Thought

Finding time to cook can be hard for students, so what can they do instead of ordering take out?

By Bradley Legault

You awake from a wondrous night of dreams and adventures, get out of bed, and start prepping for the day ahead. However, as you step inside your kitchen, you begin to relive the nightmare from the night before.

Pots and pans everywhere, glasses half-filled with juice and milk and the oven is still on. You skip breakfast and tell yourself that eating out is the only way to go because there is no way you will ever be seeing your kitchen like this again.

According to a study done by Bethel College School of Nursing in Mishawaka, Ind., students have a hard time keeping a healthy eating lifestyle.

In short, they found that while most students are aware of healthy nutritional diets and know the steps needed to reach them, the food choices that they end up making are not necessarily the healthiest.

But you know what most students don't think about, and maybe don't care to? Food.

Not just food but healthy food. Is that even possible? The fact that you're reading this and not snacking at the same time right now is incredible. Or are you?

According to the study, it was indeed convenience that trumped all, with students finding that it is just easier to dine out and spend cash at a fast food joint.

University of Ottawa students Josh Dawson and Anthony Capy - both human kinetics students - agreed that eating healthy can be a challenge.

"It's definitely challenging, but it's for sure doable," says Dawson.

Capy is eating out three to four times a week and struggles to find time to prepare meals for the days ahead. However, he does try to keep meals as healthy as possible.

"We have to pack a lunch in the morning," says Capy. "Again, we can do it, but we just have to set up a time for it.

"I try to choose healthier foods, just because I feel better. I care about how I feel, how I look," says Capy. "I wouldn't eat out if I didn't have to."

Dawson finds that because he is on campus for seven to 10 hours at a time, roughly three times a week, it's just easier for him to eat out.

"It's also tough when you're on campus for 10 hours, you need more than one meal," says Dawson. "You can bring one meal but then have to go out for a second."

Charlene Kennedy, a registered dietitian and owner of Kennedy Nutrition, operates as a nutritional coach and helps her clients daily to live healthier lifestyles.

"For the most part, start looking at meal-planning and trying your best," says Kennedy. "[by doing that]

You're minimizing those unexpected take out options at a restaurant."

She recommends a cookbook for those who want to budget while eating healthy. *Good and Cheap* by Leanne Browne is full of tips and tricks for a healthy but affordable meal plan.

Kennedy knows that it's sometimes hard to manage eating well with scheduling and just the general life of a student. She encourages students to get into habits and reinforce healthier eating.

"It doesn't matter what they're cooking at home as opposed to getting them into a habit and learning the skills and building up their cooking skills," says Kennedy.

Opportunities to eat healthier lie around us and are easy to find if you are motivated to do so.

If students take the time to prepare meals and fit this into their schedule, what's stopping them from developing a healthier lifestyle?

More importantly, what's stopping you?

The fact that you're reading this and not snacking at the same time right now is incredible. Or are you?



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Danielle Hammond, shown here with a reusable jar, is new to the zero-waste lifestyle.

HEROES OF ZERO

In order to better the environment, some students are leading zero-waste lifestyles by making simple changes.

By Camilla Sola

By 2050, there will be more plastic in our world's oceans than fish.

Some might brush off that fact, but others take it upon themselves to try and make a lasting and positive impact on the world.

Going vegan, using a bike, joining climate change protests; there are multiple ways that students can raise their green thumb for the Earth.

In fact, there are individuals that live a lifestyle that's dedicated to not creating any waste around them.

This lifestyle is aptly called zero-waste.

Danielle Hammond, a 21-year-old business marketing student at Algonquin, is fresh to this lifestyle. Her journey began a couple of months ago when she heard about the Amazon's forest fires.

She started to implement certain sustainable practices in her life – one of them being thrift shopping.

"In my everyday apparel, I'm always wearing one thrifted thing," says Hammond.

It takes 2,700 litres of water to create one cotton shirt. With that amount of water, one person could drink for 900 days.

While her journey is very recent, Hammond hopes to be more than 50 per cent zero-waste by the end of 2019.

For students trying to find some easy ways to reduce their waste output, some post-secondary institutions have resources and information to offer.

Brigitte Morin, a waste diversion coordinator at the University of Ottawa, teaches students how to be more mindful of the waste they create around them.

One of the easy ways she suggests students to do so, is to use a reusable mug.

This can easily eliminate the usage of single-use cups that usually get improperly thrown out.

"One of the biggest mistakes people make is with coffee cups,"

says Morin. "People think it goes into [the] paper [bin], but it actually is a compostable item."

Because of the leftover coffee in the cup, it doesn't belong in the paper bin. To further complicate things, the lid doesn't go in neither, which makes it difficult for cups to be recycled properly.

uOttawa also offers a shop called Free Store, where unused items are donated for any of the university's students to pick up.

Even with such resources at the students' disposition, adapting to a zero-waste lifestyle can be difficult. That wasn't the case for Amy Springle.

At the beginning of her four-year zero-waste lifestyle, the Algonquin interior design student noticed the amount of waste that she and her boyfriend were making. One of the problems was paper towels. Springle had enough and started to replace them with cloth napkins.

"It kinda escalated from there," says Springle.

That simple switch inspired her to do more and she slowly started working her way to creating less waste by buying containers, reusable bags and a bamboo toothbrush.

Going zero-waste might seem like a daunting task for a person to take on alone, so a group effort can also be used to maximize effectiveness.

Kelsey Drummond, a 20-year-old law student at Carleton University, decided to go zero-waste with the help of her roommates. With proper communication and organization, they are striving to become a zero-waste household.

Drummond was in the process of going zero-waste, as was one of her roommates who is also environmentally conscious.

"It kind of rubbed off on everyone else because we both moved in and we're like 'Yes, no plastic,' and we do our Bulk Barn trips together, so everyone else was like 'Yeah okay, we'll get on board,'" says Drummond.

From buying reusable items to thrift shopping, there are many methods that students can employ to make a difference.

The background features a large, dark vinyl record at the top. A stylized electric guitar, colored in vibrant purple and blue with yellow accents, is positioned diagonally across the center. The logo 'CKDJ' is written in a large, bubbly, purple font with a yellow outline, and '107.9 FM' is written below it in a bold, black, blocky font with a yellow outline.

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A SUPER ESCAPE

Whether it's a way to escape the troubles of everyday life or simply an appreciation for a unique storytelling medium, students are constantly attracted to the art of comic books.

By Joshua Ambar



Each flip of the page will keep you on a constant adventure. The art speaks to you, the colour sets the tone and each word tucked in between the action lines will tell you what you can't already see. This is a comic book.

The typical comic nerd, who lives in his mother's basement, is a stereotype of the past. All types of students have turned to the medium.

Tyler Tran, a communications student at Carleton University, believes that comics give students someone to look up to. In times of wacky politics, climate change and heightened sensitivity, everyone can use a hero.

"I want the character to be as heroic as possible, a hero I can relate to," says Tran.

He says that there is a large community of comic book readers who all share strong feelings for comic characters and are motivated by them.

Not only does Tran read western comics, but he has also grown fond of Japanese comics known as manga.

"Characters like Goku, Luffy and Naruto make you dream big and I think students need that," says Tran.

According to past articles from Harvard Graduate School of Education and Insider.com, comic books are as popular as ever before. Comics have grown to be highly anticipated in the educational realm for students. But, what about this type of storytelling speaks to young adults?

Aaron Kurtzer, manager at the Comic Book Shoppe on Clyde Avenue, believes the popularity for comics books among stu-

dents has to do with the fact that it is a visual medium.

"People often go for the written material for [the] story, but movies for action sequences and comic books are the half way point," says Kurtzer. "They say a picture is worth 1,000 words, but then you got speech bubbles on top of that."

Sean Moreland, an English professor at uOttawa who taught the course on comics and graphic novels, describes the class as "hugely" popular as all types of students from different disciplines take the course. The class has been at capacity — 150 students — every semester since it began in 2015.

"It's the way images are used in sequence and the way images and language are used in conjunction with one and another," says Moreland. "It is a very unique kind of synthesis of images and language."

Even comics that have little to no text can be understood by the viewer because of the way images are sequenced, which is only possible in that medium.

"You can tell stories in a way with comics that you can't with film," says Moreland.

Kurtzer says that back in the '80s, if a character was introduced that wasn't a white male, it was treated as a novelty. Nowadays, millennials and Gen Zs are drawn to diversity in characters.

"There are higher levels of diversity, and comics are finding some level of success with them," says Kurtzer.

For young people, there is so much more material out there that doesn't have to do with the traditional superhero. These

new comic genres are finding an audience among students, clarifies Moreland.

"If you look at stories being told in comics now, there's a lot more out there. There is a lot more variety and diversity in terms of the form itself and kinds of stories and characters being created," says Moreland.

Tran says that students read comics as an escape from school, life and work. It gives people a way to escape reality.

"It's a stress reliever, but at the end of the day it is just a hobby," says Tran. "People love comics because it makes them happy just like anything else." **g**





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COSPLAY AINT JUST PLAY

By Emily Hsueh

A knight clad in heavy, golden armour trudges through crowded halls, dragging his glowing greatsword beside him. He hears whispers and feels the stares of the people he passes by, and turns away the ones brave enough to approach him. He had just had an unfortunate run-in with Batman, who broke off a large spike on the knight's armour when they bumped into each other.

The warrior continues through the sea of people, refusing to stop until he reaches his destination. For the knight is on a mission, not to save a princess or slay a dragon, but to find a hot glue gun to stick that pesky spike back onto his foam pauldron before his big moment on stage.

This is cosplay, a growing trend in the pop culture world where fans dress up as their favourite characters to attend conventions and show off their love of their fandoms.

So you might be wondering, is this just an out-of-season Halloween costume? Cosplay is just people dressing up and nerding out, right? To an extent, yes. But for many cosplayers, every set of armour, every dress or every sword hides a journey that could have spanned hundreds of hours and cost thousands of dollars.

“Really, it’s a form of expression that comes through clothing, wigs, makeup,” says Gabriela Nobear, 20, a third-year computer science student at the University of Ottawa. “It’s really just being able to step in someone’s shoes for a brief amount of time or even just explore yourself artistically in costume design and makeup.”

Cosplay is a portmanteau of the words “costume” and “play” which was first coined in 1984 by Nobuyuki Takahashi, a Japanese film producer who attended that year’s World Science Fiction Convention. While dressing up as characters from manga and anime was already an established activity in Japan, Takahashi gave it a name that was quickly adopted worldwide.

While dressing up and embodying pop culture characters is a

big part of the ever-growing hobby, there is much more to it than simply putting on a costume.

Nobear, also known as GabaTheGeek, has gained many skills and a following of almost 4,500 Instagram followers as a result of the hobby.

“My first real hint at sewing was my mom just putting me in front of a sewing machine, showing me the pedal and going, ‘Sew a straight line.’ And that was the year that I started [cosplay], and now I’m trying different things. I’m self-taught in everything I do,” says Nobear.

“In the six years I’ve done cosplay, I’ve probably made 30 costumes. My favourites are definitely the ones I’ve been able to create myself and explore new sewing methods, makeup tricks, the bigger projects.”

These costumes are not just something as simple as a bedsheet ghost (though it could be). It is not surprising to see fictional characters wearing unconventional armour or garments, or donning brightly coloured hair that spikes in all different directions. Cosplayers see the challenge and face it head on; they want to get all the details, as outrageous as they may be.

To achieve the desired looks, cosplayers arm themselves with a unique arsenal of tools, materials and skills. One might think cosplay artists spend most of their time and money at the craft store, which isn’t wrong. But heavy equipment such as knives, rotary tools and sanders, liquid rubber and heat guns are must-haves in any cosplay workshop. High-level cosplayers also learn 3D modelling and printing, and coding for lights, smoke and

animatronics to bring their costumes to their final forms.

There is even a material called Worbla — a sturdy, moldable thermoplastic that becomes malleable under high heat — that was developed specifically for cosplay armour and props. It comes in six variations and can run from \$20 to \$120 per sheet. But cosplay doesn’t have to run your wallet dry.



Gabriela Nobear, known online as GabaTheGeek, poses in a cosplay of an original elf character. Nobear, a computer programming student at uOttawa, has been cosplaying for six years and has learned many skills along the way.

“Most of the armour I’ve made to date is using EVA foam,” says Alain Purney, a graphic design graduate of La Cité Collegiale. “It’s the typical foam you can find at Canadian Tire. It’s those little playmats that you see in kindergartens, in daycares, that you see on the floor. All my armour is built using that, and it also fits into my budget so I’m not breaking the bank.”

Purney, who goes by LittleAl1990 online, began cosplaying in 2016 and has since become a prominent member of the community. He impresses con-goers with his detailed and high-quality builds like his Canadian McCree and Ironclad Brigitte, both from the game *Overwatch*.

“Before I did cosplay, I was a miniature painter,” says Purney. “I’ve painted miniature figures since 2013. I’ve built [miniatures] with other materials that I still use in cosplay and that created the transition to cosplay. It’s a similar style but instead of painting small models, you’re painting a life-scale model.”

Purney is also heavily involved in another big aspect of cosplay which sets it further from the idea of just dressing up.

Cosplay is highly competitive, with competitions being held at almost all events where cosplay is found. These competitions are called masquerades and include four tiers: novice, journeyman, artisan and master. The International Costumers’ Guild oversees rules and regulations for all of the large-scale cosplay competitions around the world.

Purney is an established judge with several masquerade awards under his belt as well.

“I started at the small competition at Ottawa Geek Market,” Purney explains. “That one is mostly a workmanship competition, so it only evaluates on how you created your costume, there is no stage performance. It’s how you made it, what materials you used, is it clean, is it finished and all that. So that’s how I started doing competitions and that’s where I won my first competition with my second cosplay.”

In August 2019, he was able to judge the masquerade at Otakuthon in Montreal where a cosplay duo was chosen to compete in



Waldo makes a rare appearance for attendees at Ottawa Comic Con: Holiday Edition. Alain Purney, aka LittleAl1990, dressed up as the notorious book character to bring a smile to convention-goers.

the biggest international cosplay competition in the world: the World Cosplay Summit. Teams from all over the world are sent to Japan to represent their country. With 40 teams and tens of thousands of attendees at the last event in August 2019, this was the biggest edition in history.

“It’s like the Olympics for costumes,” says Purney. There is a strict points system in place, with one-third being based on the costume and two-thirds being based on the performance, he explains.

“You have to make sure your costume is well done so when you do your stage performance you can move and do crazy stuff in it: aerobatics and stunts, that’s where the biggest judging part is from.”

But cosplay doesn’t revolve around the competitive side, and some cosplayers prefer to stay out of the spotlight.

“I like to spend my time at cons with my friends and unfortunately green room and judging take up a lot of my time if I were to do it,” says Nobear.

Instead of embodying characters on stage, Nobear has discovered a different way to capture them, which she has learned to master all on her own.

In 2013, she took her mom’s camera to a con just to take some photos of her and her friends in cosplay. “I ended up getting into it and just loving it; being able to take a photo and bring it back home, stare at it, edit it and come out with a final product that I was proud of.”

Nobear has since started her own cosplay photography business called Golden Panda Bear photography. She taught herself how to use cameras and editing software such as Photoshop by figuring it out as she went. Through it, she can earn hundreds of dollars in a weekend, which go towards her convention ticket and cosplay expenses.

Cosplay photography is as unique as cosplay itself; it differs from typical photography in several ways.

“For normal photography, you would have a model that is very skilled or candid photos of weddings and stuff. But with cosplay photography you might have a model who is not very photogenic or used to posing or doing photo shoots and you have to work around that.

“I have big self image issues and like seeing myself in another light and seeing myself how other people see me, and be like, ‘Oh, I look good,’” says Nobear.

“My goal is to make the person confident in their costume, that they captured the part of the costume that they wanted, and that they just generally like the photos of themselves and can look back on it and go, ‘Yeah, I look good.’”

Hardware stores and fabric shops are now crawling with cosplayers. New tools, materials and methods are being developed specifically for this hobby. More and more people are crafting their own costumes, performing on stage and posing for the cameras. Through all of it, one message resonates through the members of the community.

Purney emphasizes that cosplay is for your own enjoyment and satisfaction, and not to become famous. “You do cosplay because you want to have fun with friends and you want to challenge yourself to bring a character to life,” says Purney. “It’s all about fun, not to be popular.”

“There’s so much work behind it, and when we showcase it, we get to hang out and have fun. We’re not always doing it for attention,” says Nobear. “It is, at the end of the day, just people dressing up. But we have fun doing it.” **g**

LOVE AT FIRST FLIGHT

By Vanessa Bobai

Scrolling through Instagram, you can't help but notice all the picturesque photos that keep appearing on your feed. It looks like everyone is visiting a new city or country these days.

Travelling for millennials is the new thing on social media. People have been travelling for a long time, but with the emergence of social media, the idea or urge to go is right on your phone's screen.

A recent poll by *Business Insider* found that one out of three millennials is willing to spend \$5,000 or more on a vacation.

This urge to travel has led some people to create a job out of it; Jessica Ufuoma is one of the people that has made it a career. She is a full-time communications analyst and also a travel blogger at theufuoma.com. Ufuoma started travelling as a child, although she fell in love with it when she did a school exchange program in the Netherlands and Peru.

"During my time in Peru, I started to travel through South America," says Ufuoma. "The moment it hit me was when I went to Macchu Picchu."

According to a CNN article, 66 per cent of millennials have nothing saved for retirement. What people don't realize is that millennials who put travelling as a top priority over saving for retirement work hard to achieve their travel dreams.

One of the reasons millennials can travel more is because they can boost their income. That's what allows 25-year-old University of Ottawa student Maureen Michael to spend about \$6,000 per year on travel. She said that to fund her trips, she juggles multiple side hustles: makeup artist, hairstylist and babysitter.

"Travel is a priority for me, and I'll do what it takes to achieve my goal," says Michael.

A certain percentage of her monthly allowance from her parents also goes towards her travel funds.

While culture and unique experiences fuel millennials'

desire to travel, food is also a significant factor in why they choose their destinations.

According to the *American Culinary Traveler*, the percentage of U.S. leisure travellers who travel to learn about unique dining experiences grew from 40 per cent to 51 per cent between 2006 and 2013.

David Abba, a 21-year-old psychology student at Carleton University, says the reason he enjoys travelling is because it allows him to explore different cuisines around the world.

"I travel for a different reason," says Abba. "I'm passionate about food and I won't pass up the opportunity to try food from a local source."

He got into food tourism when he visited Italy in 2012 with his family. He describes that trip as his first opportunity to experience real Italian food.

Social media influencers are one of the biggest groups of people who influence millennials' travel plans and decisions.

One country that has benefited from the use of social media influencers is New Zealand.

Wanaka, a small town in the country, sought out social media influencers to visit and share the city on Instagram in 2015. This action led to a 14 per cent increase in tourism.

Ufuoma has influenced many of her followers to travel over the years, which has resulted in her curating trips for her followers for a fee.

Another factor that influences why millennials travel is how great the pictures they take at these destinations will turn out on their Instagram pages.

A survey carried out on millennials in the United Kingdom by Schofields showed that 40 per cent of the participants cared about how their vacation pictures looked on social media.

"I'll have to admit, I have been to destinations because they look good on Instagram," says Michael.





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