

The Royal *Gazette*

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The 2021 NHL Trade Deadline *pg 11*

Take a look at some of the NHL's most noteworthy trades and what they might mean for each team's future.



Battling Ancaster's Suburban Sprawl *pg 13*

Local organizers are saying that the city's new expansion plans put valuable farmland and ecosystems at risk.



Tackling Anti-Asian Hatred at Home

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What does it mean to battle prejudice in your own city? Asian students at Ancaster High weigh in with their responses to the recent rise in violent anti-Asian hate crimes.

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Get to Know Mr. Trojek

INTERNALS: One AHS teacher is finding new ways to make learning hands-on, despite COVID-19.

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The Falcon & The Winter Soldier

VOICES: Marvel's newest TV show sees its superpowered stars wrestle with the legacy of Captain America.

This Month's Top Stories

Get the most important news right away. Here are some of the top stories of April.

By Anne Fu — Editor-in-Chief



EXTERNALS
Protests in Myanmar Escalate, Become Fatal
pg 4



INTERNALS
Celebrating Ramadan During Lockdown
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HAMILTON

COVID-19 Concerns Continue to Climb

Above: Hamilton nurse Laurie Doma administers the COVID-19 vaccine to Hamilton Mayor Fred Eisenberger. Eisenberger has been pushing for more vaccine doses to be sent to Hamilton and other vaccine hotspots. (*City of Hamilton*)

As Canada enters the third wave of the COVID-19 pandemic, hospital workers in Hamilton are feeling the pressure ramp up once more as they struggle to both vaccinate citizens and treat the newly infected population.

On April 13th, 2021, the city recorded 209 new cases in a single day, setting a new daily record and bringing the number of active cases in Hamilton to 1,224 in total. Amongst the newly infected included two patients with the P1 Brazilian variant of the virus, which is more transmissible and possibly more dangerous to young people than the original strain. Medical professionals in Canada are having to work double time to clamp down on the spread of the disease.

In the meantime, some doctors worry that there may not be enough resources to care for everyone. As of mid-April, St. Joseph's Hospital is at 89% of its adult patient capacity, while Hamilton Health Sciences is at 93%. With case counts rising by the day, the city is searching for new ways to accommodate for the rapidly escalating number of patients.

"We're sort of quickly approaching a cliff set and we're seeing increasing numbers being admitted to ICUs," said Dr. Bram Rochweg, the critical care lead at the Juravinski Hospital, to CTV News. "[We're] stretched in terms of capacity and places to put patients, as well as staff.

I think the most alarming point is that despite the increasing numbers... we have yet to see the plateau, even in provincial numbers."

In response, Hamilton Health Sciences is planning to set up a mobile health unit (MHU) in the parking lot on Wellington Street to add an estimated extra 80 beds to the province's healthcare facilities. This MHU is expected to be completed by next month, and will be a self-sufficient unit that houses its own generators, ventilators and washrooms. There is still, however, the issue of having enough doctors and nurses to serve every patient.

"...despite the increasing numbers... we have yet to see the plateau, even in provincial numbers."

Dr. Bram Rochweg, critical care lead at Juravinski Hospital

"There's no doubt our system is becoming very pressured and it is daunting to consider the coming weeks as was depicted in the modelling," said Hamilton Health Sciences CEO and president Rob MacIsaac. Both his hospital and St. Joseph's are continuing with surge plans by reassigning patients and hospital staff to other hospitals to lessen the strain on medical facilities in the GTA. Despite this, transporting patients from one hospital to another — sometimes up to

to thousands of kilometers away — is not an easy task either. ICU workers and their resources remain stretched thin.

Alongside treating current COVID-19 cases, hospital staff around the city have also been hard at work vaccinating as many people as possible against COVID-19 to prevent its spread. Here in Hamilton, a city considered one of the province's COVID-19 hotspots, officials are reporting a shortage of vaccines that has led to the delayed opening of a mass vaccination clinic in Rosedale Arena due to the lack of supply.

As of April 14th, 2021, 21.1% of the country's population has been vaccinated with at least one dose, which totals up to about 8.9 million Canadians. Over 1.6 million of them received their dose last week. One of these people was Hamilton Mayor Fred Eisenberger, who encouraged every Hamiltonian to get vaccinated as soon as they could. He has been calling for the province to allocate more vaccine doses to hotspots like Hamilton, Peel and Mississauga.

"I strongly encourage everyone in our community to roll up their sleeve and book a vaccine appointment as soon as they are eligible," Eisenberger said in a press release. He also reminded city residents that even after receiving a vaccine, all citizens were still required to follow public health and social distancing guidelines.

And in Pop Culture...



Prince Phillip, husband to Queen Elizabeth II and the longest-serving consort of any British monarch, passed away on April 9th, 2021 at 99 years old.

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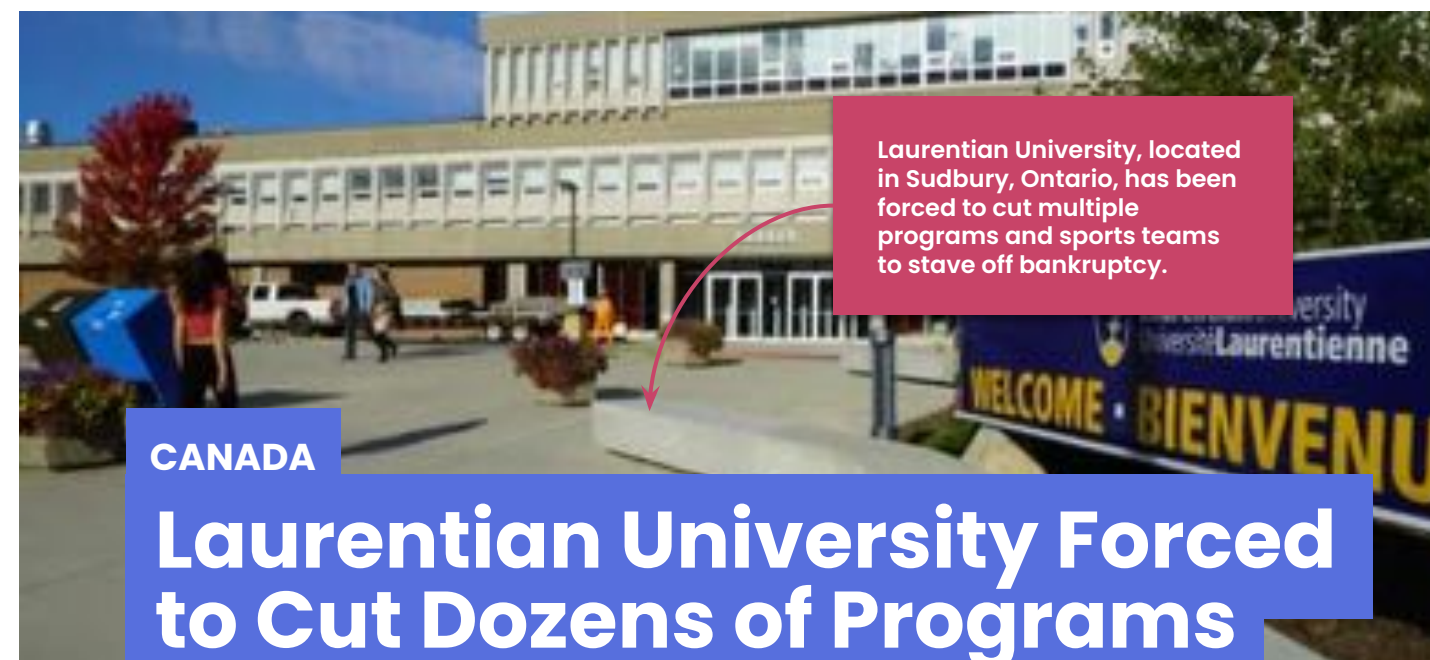
VOICES

Review: Boys State is an Insight into Both Politics and Adolescence

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ARTS AND CULTURE

"MONTERO" by Lil Nas X Shakes Up the Music Scene



Above: After declaring insolvency in February, Laurentian University is facing massive layoffs and removing a number of degree programs in order to restructure. (*Radio-Canada*)

Laurentian University, one of Canada's few bilingual post-secondary schools, has announced that it will be slashing 69 programs and firing over 100 faculty members in order to deal with financial issues that had been plaguing the university for years. Amongst the degrees being affected are 58 undergraduate and 11 graduate programs, with 34 of them being in French. These included courses in fields such as physics, anthropology, music and geography.

After spending millions of dollars building new facilities that did not attract the higher enrollment the university had expected, officials declared financial insolvency in February. According to *The Globe and Mail*, Laurentian had been spending millions of dollars in grants meant for research "just to keep the lights on", due to the school only having one bank account where funds from multiple sources were mixed.

For many students and staff at the Sudbury university, these announcements came as devastating news.

"I had one girl text me yesterday wondering if a Laurentian degree would be respectable anymore," second-year student and university newspaper editor Lexey Burns told CBC News.

Katlyn Kotila, a political science student at Laurentian, also spoke about how it felt finding her own program was to be cut as well.

"I found out the news on my program on Twitter... but then to see it officially confirmed in the email was

just absolutely heartbreaking," she to CBC News. "It's an absolute loss, not just for the university, but especially for students. These students came to Laurentian to study with academics who are top of the class in their field. Many of these professors are doing incredible things in the fields that they study."

While undergraduate students are being allowed to finish their degrees and being provided alternate pathways to program completion, many graduate students will not be so lucky, as the faculty members teaching them will soon be laid off. According to a statement released by the university, most of the programs they chose to cut had been ones with historically low enrolment, so that Laurentian could better "align its financial resources to ensure that all of its remaining programs are fully supported."

Despite this, many educators are also concerned that the university programs being lost are also the ones that are the most essential to preserve. Indigenous and Francophone programs will be disproportionately impacted by these cuts, due to the fact that they are already underrepresented across most of Canada. The Canadian Federation of Students-Ontario (CFS-Ontario) is calling on the Conservatives to help save these programs by providing them with vital funding and support.

"It is unacceptable that students, who have invested so much in their education, are impacted by financial challenges created by reckless administrative decisions and the erosion of public university funding," said Kayla Weiler, CFS-Ontario's national representative.

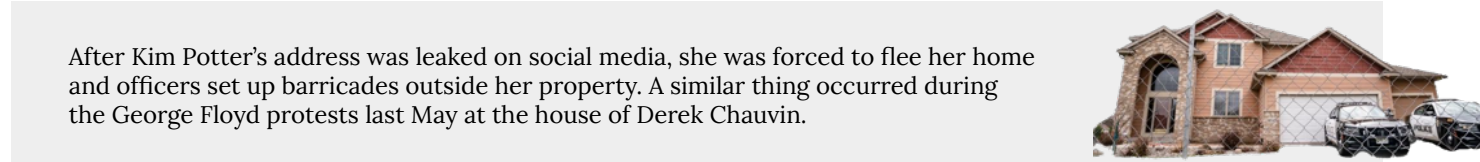
executive representative. "The manufactured crisis at Laurentian could be stopped at any time by the Ontario government. The 2021 budget is the third budget in a row with reduced funding for post-secondary education. It is time to invest in all students no matter where they live in Ontario."

CFS-Ontario also slammed the Conservatives for betraying the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada's Call to Action #16, which calls for the creation of university programs that study Indigenous languages; and for supposedly telling Francophone students "that their education, language and culture aren't worth saving" by cancelling many French programs. Now they are asking for the province to invest immediately in Laurentian and for Ross Romano, the Minister of Colleges and Universities, to resign. CFS-Ontario believes that Romano and the Ford government are to blame for ignoring Laurentian's crisis, which they had known about "for months, if not years."

Kotila, however, insists that students at other post-secondary institutions should pay attention to what is happening at Laurentian.

"We're losing so many incredible academics and in the process. We're also going to be losing many students who will likely leave and go on to pursue academics elsewhere now that their program is being cut," she said. "I urge people to pay attention, because what happened at Laurentian can happen anywhere, so hopefully this never has to happen to any other... post-secondary institution ever again."

ON THE HOMEFRONT



After Kim Potter’s address was leaked on social media, she was forced to flee her home and officers set up barricades outside her property. A similar thing occurred during the George Floyd protests last May at the house of Derek Chauvin.



Above: Friends and family of Daunte Wright gather in Brooklyn Center. Wright was killed by ex-officer Kim Potter during a traffic stop on Sunday, April 11th, 2021. *(Christian Monterrosa/AP)*

Less than a year after officer Derek Chauvin pinned down George Floyd with a knee in Minneapolis, a White Minnesota police officer has been charged with second degree manslaughter in the fatal shooting of Daunte Wright, a 20-year-old Black man. If convicted, she could serve a maximum of 10 years in jail or pay a fine of \$20,000 USD.

Kim Potter, a former Brooklyn Center officer, resigned from the force on Tuesday, April 13th after killing Wright during a traffic stop. Potter claims she had intended to use her taser on him, but ended up pulling out her gun instead.

Since Wright’s death, protestors have been gathering in Brooklyn Center nightly. On Sunday, April 11th, demonstrators marched with chants, signs, candlelight vigils, and wrote “Justice for Daunte Wright” in chalk on the streets. Some members of the rally also hopped onto the windshields of police cars, broke into local malls, and threw bricks at officers. Cops responded to the unrest with flashbangs, tear gas and pepper spray, and a curfew was shortly put into effect over the city after multiple clashes broke out. On April 14th, the third day of protests, the National Guard was deployed and over 60 people were arrested by the police.

Naisha Wright, aunt of Daunte Wright, spoke out about Potter’s actions during a joint press conference with the family of George Floyd. According to her, officers like Potter should be prosecuted to the fullest extent of the law.

“She was the law. She was the

law, right? Protect and serve. Put her in jail, like they would do any one of us,” she said.

Other visitors to Wright’s memorial at the corner of 63rd Street North and Kathrene Drive in Minnesota had much to say about Potter’s role in his death.

“I’m pleasantly surprised that there were charges,” said Emily Johnson, a White woman who was standing across from the memorial holding a sign with the names of multiple Black men killed by Minnesota police. She spoke to NBC News about the Wright protests. “But, yeah, still feeling like it’s not enough. These are just charges. We’re seeing that with the Chauvin trial — how much more damage will be done?”


Wright had initially been stopped for the expired tags on his car, but after finding out that he had an outstanding warrant for possessing weapons and fleeing from officers since June, Potter attempted to arrest him. In a body camera recording of the shooting, she can be heard warning that she was going to tase Wright, then firing a shot from her handgun and exclaiming, “Holy s**t! I shot him.” Wright attempted to flee before crashing into another vehicle, and was pronounced dead at the scene due to a gunshot wound to his chest. He was killed just miles away from the courthouse where the trial of Derek Chauvin had been taking place.

Jeffrey Storms, one of the Wright family’s attorneys, is skeptical about the shooting being an accident. An investigation by the Minnesota Bureau of Criminal Apprehension fou-

nd that Potter’s taser was holstered on her left side and her pistol on her right, meaning that Potter would have had to use a different hand to draw one instead of the other. She had also apparently been an officer for 26 years.

“Grabbing your sidearm that you’ve likely deployed thousands, if not tens of thousands, of times is an intentional act,” he said. “A sidearm feels different than a Taser. [It] requires different pressure in order to deploy it.”

Wright’s death is the third high-profile shooting of a Black man during a police standoff in the last 5 years, following the deaths of George Floyd in 2020 and Philando Castile in 2016. Since his passing, new conversations about the legacy of police brutality in the USA have been sparked, with many commenting on Wright’s circumstances of death.



Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez
@AOC

Daunte Wright’s killing was not a random, disconnected “accident” – it was the repeated outcome of an indefensible system that grants impunity for state violence, rewards it w/ endlessly growing budgets at the cost of community investment, & targets those who question that order.

External News

The biggest stories from outside the Ancaster community on a provincial, national and international scale.



EXTERNALS
Vaccine Distribution Hits a Few Hitches
pg 9



Above: Anti-military Myanmar protesters in Yangon show a three-finger salute to symbolize their demand in the release of elected leader Aung San Suu Kyi. *(Stringer/Reuters)*



Protests in Myanmar have been ongoing for months due to a political crisis caused by a military coup. Hundreds have been killed during the subsequent government crackdown.

By Sanya Patel & Lindsay Liu
Staff Writers & Editor

Myanmar, also known as Burma, is located in Southeast Asia with a population of about 54 million people. For months, the country’s protests have been seen all over the media. However, what is the reason for such unrest? This is largely because the military is back in charge again and has declared a year-long state of emergency. On February 1st, following a general election that Aung Suu Kyi’s National League for Democracy (NLD) party won, the military seized control. The military backed the opposition, who were demanding a recount of the vote as they claimed widespread fraud however, the election commission said there was no proof of such claims. The coup took place as a new session of parliament was set to open. Suu Kyi, who won the election, has been held at an unknown location since the coup. She is facing multiple charges, including violating the country’s official secrets act, possessing illegal walkie-talkies and publishing information that may have caused fear or alarm. Some of the NLD MPs that managed to somehow escape the arrest have established a new group, and their leader has urged protesters to defend themselves against the crackdown. Currently, commander-in-chief Min Aung Hlaing has taken power and states the military supports the

side of the people and would create a “true and disciplined democracy”. Furthermore, he said the military will hold a “free and fair” election once the state of emergency is over. Due to this political issue the people have started protesting and these protests have been the largest protests since the Saffron Revolution in 2007. The Saffron Revolution in 2007 was when the monks stood up against the military regime. In the Myanmar protests teachers, lawyers, students, bank officers, and government workers all are protesting. Due to the protests the military has implemented restrictions including curfews and limits to gatherings.

rise. Ever since the protests began, many have been sentenced to death, with this news being announced publicly since February. 1st On April 10th, nineteen people were sentenced to death for the killing of an army captain’s associate, which reportedly occurred on March 27th. According to an activist group called the Assistance Association for Political Prisoners, an estimated number of more than 600 people have thus far been killed by forces preventing protests. The group also recorded more than 2,800 people in detention. It is now estimated that the death toll has surpassed 700. General Zaw Min Tun, a senior spokesperson for the Myanmar army says that the reason protests have been reduced is for the “cooperation of people who want peace, which we value.” As for the police, domestic media stated that at least 10 were killed in a recent attack by an alliance of those who oppose the junta.

Overall, the threats the protestors face in the form of violence and arrests have not deterred them and caused them to step down from their goal of reinstating the democratic government. As for other countries, 18 countries’ ambassadors have stood with the protestors for the restoration of the democracy as well as calling for the release of those who have been imprisoned. The UN Security Council also cautioned that Myanmar was close to “state collapse.”

BY THE NUMBERS

- 300 + Myanmar protesters killed since last month’s military takeover.
- 3,000 + Myanmar protesters have been detained by the military.

Now, the protests in Myanmar continue, with the number of killings rising. Anti-coup protesters also recently used more unconventional methods of protesting, including decorating Easter eggs and holding them up with three fingers as a symbol of resistance. As for the state of the protestors, the death toll continues to



EXTERNALS

Sarah Everard, One of Many Victims of Violence

Above: Flowers are given at the Clapham bandstand, London, in memory of Sarah Everard. *(Johnny Armstead/Shutterstock)*

By Vita Rao
Staff Writer & Editor

Imagine this — after eating dinner with a friend, you realize it's getting late, and you should probably go home, but you're torn. The last few weeks have been arduous and this is the first time you have felt any sense of contentment: maybe you could stay for another hour? Although, it is already dark outside, the streets are getting less crowded, and it's fairly late. What do you do next? Do you stay or do you go? How do you decide? For many, primarily women and non-binary people, this is a daily dilemma. It's not a phase, it's not a trend, it's not paranoia, it is a daily sacrifice that they have to make, deciding between their safety and their happiness.

BY THE NUMBERS

1 in 3 women worldwide have experienced physical and/or sexual violence.

80 to 100M girls are “missing” from the world's population — victims of gender-based infanticide, femicide, malnutrition and neglect.

On March 3rd, 2021, Sarah Everard made the valid choice to go home. She walked on well-lit, populated streets; she wore bright, recognizable clothing; she checked in with her boyfriend; she left at a reasonable hour. Seven days later, her remains were found in a builder's bag in Kent, with the main suspect being a police officer. This case is one of many violent attacks against women and non-binary people; one of many where the victim follows every rule and societal expectation, yet still suffers.

How could she have taken every precaution, and still have been harassed? Even if she hadn't taken these precautions, why was she targeted?

Sparking Larger Movements

The case has sparked immense public outcry and begun a larger conversation about gender-based violence and police brutality. For many, this case is personal and has had a direct impact on their lives. An anonymous Ancaster High student explains, “it just acts as a reminder for me that the world is unjust and there are so many bad people out there. It forces me to generalize everyone for my own safety even if I want to put trust in them. I always have a little voice in the back of my head telling me to be wary.”

On one hand exists a vicious, victim-blaming society that pardons male perpetrators and vilifies women and non-binary victims. It faults victims for the harassment that they face; it questions every aspect of the crime, but the perpetrator's actions. Eisha T. — a Grade 11 student at Ancaster High — describes how “few actually choose to spread awareness or speak up when they see someone being harassed, or even just call out their friends when they hear them saying derogatory things toward women,” which leads to victim-silencing and perpetrator-enabling. By faulting the victim and neglecting the perpetrator's actions, one is “basically justifying that [...] she was allowed to be hurt like that, [when] the problem [is] the man that did it not the woman who experienced it,” she went on to say. This ever-existing toxic, sexist cycle seems backwards for a seemingly progressive time and country; it's infuriating.

On the other hand, is the equally cruel media that uses its power to shame victims, especially those that don't fit social norms. The public and the media relish in the imperfections of victims, but as Seb M. — also, a Grade 11 Ancaster High student — remarks, “is an answer going to change the fact that she was killed?” Ultimately, as he goes on to say, it holds no relevance, as “she was still taken advantage of by someone with authority.” It still makes one wonder whether the media attention would be so immense if Everard wore different clothing or were a person of colour.

Nevertheless, it's important to recognize that, in every regard, society, law enforcement, and the government failed her. After all, the primary suspect in her case is a police officer, a supposedly trustworthy and authoritative figure. Not to mention that this is only one of many instances of abusive, gender-based violence by a police officer. Police reformation is desperately needed. As Seb M. says, women and non-binary people “do not deserve to be harassed and be viewed as objects. Men, we have to do better.”

“Sarah was bright and beautiful - a wonderful daughter and sister. She was kind and thoughtful, caring and dependable. She always put others first and had the most amazing sense of humour. She was strong and principled and a shining example to us all. We are very proud of her and she brought so much joy to our lives.”

Statement from Sarah Everard's family



EXTERNALS

Trouble in the Suez Canal: The Boat That Captivated the World

Above: The Ever Given container ship while stuck in the Suez Canal. *(2021 Maxar Technologies)*

By Joe McDermott
Staff Writer & Editor

Trouble arrived to the Suez on March 23, 2021, in the form of a 400m long container ship which obstructed Egypt's critical canal, blocking the passage of dozens of vital vessels. Being an exceptionally important avenue connecting the Red Sea to the Mediterranean and so essential for global trade, Evergreen's *Ever Given* boat spanning the length of the waterway posed a pressing challenge to Suez authorities. While stuck for a mere six days, the blockage spurred an array of consequences, namely an unprecedented traffic jam, reduction of goods causing rationing and, of course, a variety of internet memes.

The canal's significance is best understood with a glance at key numbers. Of all the goods transported in a single day, 12% pass through the Suez. Around 50 vessels carry this substantial cargo, and without open passage, millions could go without necessities. By March 27, this fear manifested, with the stranded *Ever Given* impeding the travel of over 300 ships. Efforts to relieve the canal of the pressure thus came immediately and persisted for as long as the boat remained stuck. But at 220,000 tons and with a length almost the height of the Empire State Building, forcing the stubborn ship from its position would be no easy task. Canal authorities worked tirelessly, operating dredgers to remove over 700,000 cubic feet of sand which kept the boat immovable, physical forces reluctant to back the side of the excavators.

News from the authorities on moving the ship was largely pessimistic as the tides worked against their vigor, as Egyptian tugboat captain Magdy Gamal told The Washington Post that “the tide [was] like a ghost [they were] trying to face”. Authorities knew the cost to world trade was high, estimating a staggering delay of \$400 million per hour in goods according to shipping data.

As the scramble to dislodge the boat raged on, onlookers across the globe took to the internet — but not to simply inform fellow netizens of the situation as is typically the response to global challenges. Instead, a wave of memes involving the stuck ship flooded social media outlets and online forums, the creators and consumers of the jokes delighting themselves in carefree discussion of the situation. Most of the memes featured an image of the boat captioned with some description of a relatable impediment to exhausting effort. An example of this is likening the boat to someone procrastinating work and the crew to making a to-do list. It seems the biggest factor in the growth of this humour was the blatant simplicity of the situation; Guardian journalist Ben Jenkins wrote in an opinion article on the topic that the concept of the “Big Boat Stuck” was “simple enough to explain to a child”. He also noted it as one of the rare news stories which do not provoke rage or bitter argument, contrasting with much of the depressing and polarizing topics which frequently appear in the media. Having a basic narrative, which Jenkins called “the narrative we needed”, is refreshing to a stressed and overwhelmed popu-

lace to say the least.

So while the Suez Canal now enjoys free flow again — thanks to the diligence of the whole excavation crew finally forcing their stubborn barge to budge on March 29 — the Internet will remember those six eventful March days for the refreshment of the story. With a canal team exhausted and an audience still hungry, it is possible events of similar kind present in the near future. Hopefully such a scenario won't be as dire or challenging as the stuck ship, but simple nonetheless.

BY THE NUMBERS

\$400M/hour

lost in goods, based on estimated values of goods going through the canal

400 meters

the size of the container ship *Ever Given*, owned by Evergreen

\$1B

total fine for owner of ship; *Ever Given* detained in Egypt until fine paid



The São Paulo Pride parade is the largest LGBTQ+ rights celebration in the world. 4 million people attended in 2009.

EXTERNALS

Transgender Day of Visibility 2021

Above: A group of demonstrators hoist a trans pride flag during a 2018 pride parade in São Paulo, Brazil. (Cris Faga/Getty Images)

By Faria Haque
Staff Writer

Transgender Day of Visibility is a day of celebration to celebrate trans people's existence and their fight for equal rights. The majority of trans people — especially those who are Black, Indigenous or racialized — face discrimination every day. These groups experience ongoing violence and harassment because of who they are.

Transgender Day of Visibility was founded in 2009 by Rachel Crandall, a Michigan-based transgender activist. It is important we represent the importance of transgender activism is global.

In 2020, at least 40 trans and non-binary people were killed, most of whom were black trans women. Political attacks on trans people have escalated in recent years and attempting to criminalize which bathroom trans people were to use. No matter how many hate crime laws we have these people are still in danger. It has never stopped. When Bill C-16 was introduced in Canada June 2017, both gender identity and gender expression became federally protected identities in the Canadian human rights act. Canada was a significant leader to the protection and recognition of transgender communities in Canada.

2021 has been a record year for anti-transgender legislation. The prob-

blem is not with the bills, the problem is the people. We have so many safe communities and places for these people to rely on and having a safe environment to be themselves and yet they still face so much discrimination against them. And for what? For being different and not feeling comfortable in their bodies.

As time goes on, we are changing and progress is being made. In November 5, 2017, Julie Lemieux won 48% of the votes to become the mayor of Très-Saint-Rédempteur, making her the first transgender mayor ever elected. Kael McKenzie was appointed to the provincial court of Manitoba, making him the first transgender person appointed as a judge in Canada. In 2021, the Quebec civil code declared discriminatory against the trans community.

In order to carry on these accomplishments, there are a few ways you can support the transgender community today. You can call your local LGBTQ+ advocacy group and see what kind of help they need, whether it could be volunteering or even just offering services. Examples in Hamilton include Spectrum or the LGBT Youthline. You should also educate yourself and your allies and learn the basic terminology surrounding the transgender community. You can help seek out stories by transgender creators such as the Transgender Film Centre, which is a non-profit organization that suppo-

TRANS CREATORS



Janet Mock ✓
@JanetMock



Raquel Willis ✓
@RaquelWillis_

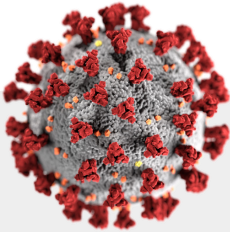


J Mase III ✓
@JMaseIII

rters transgender filmmakers and their projects. There are so many reasons you can go to find ways to help.

During these hard times, it's been difficult for transgender communities to be understood. People have been unable to provide in-person support to one another. In the past year, there has been a lot of legislation proposed to target against transgender people, so Transgender Day of Visibility is especially important, as it is a day where we can send support to the trans community after all the violence they have faced. This day is an attempt to break the cycle of discrimination against them and we celebrate this day of recognition to respect them and their individuality.

Transgender rights have been an ongoing fight for freedom. They go through so much as people and deserve a day to be celebrated. Transgender Day of Visibility is the perfect way to show them our respect.



IMPORTANT REMINDER:

The AstraZeneca-Oxford vaccine is not recommended for people with a history of severe allergic reaction to any component of the vaccine, and is currently forbidden for people who are younger than 40 years of age in Ontario. Results of further studies are pending announcement.



EXTERNALS

Vaccine Distribution Hits A Few Hitches

Above: The AstraZeneca-Oxford (AZD1222) vaccine is approved by Health Canada and will be available for people 55 years and over, says Dr. Heather Morrison. (Matthias Schrader/AP)

By Aisha Mahmoud
Staff Writer & Editor

Health Canada stated on April 14th that the Oxford-AstraZeneca vaccine is safe and effective for use, following concern over extremely rare cases of blood clotting due to the vaccine. Despite this announcement, Canadians are still hesitant to receive the AstraZeneca vaccine and clinics that don't have vaccines from other manufacturers are struggling to book appointments with their patients. The Ontario College of Family Physicians made a statement saying that waiting for a "preferred" vaccine increases the risk of contracting COVID-19.

"To best protect yourself and others, we agree that the best COVID-19 vaccine is the one that reaches your arm first."

Canada's vaccine rollout has been the subject of public frustration, with many Canadians comparing our current efforts to those of the US, who've already fully vaccinated around 30% of the adult population. Compared to Canada's 2.1%, it may seem like we're barely inching along. Trudeau and the current government have been criticized for not acting quickly or securing enough vaccines. But, Canada has already placed orders with vaccine manufacturers for enough doses to vaccinate the population 5 times over. This may seem like a relief, but this vaccine hoarding can actually be detrimental to the process of overcoming the pandemic.

"Despite how slow Canada's vaccine rollout has been compared to the US, UK, and Israel, and other countries, we are the single worst culprit of vaccine hoarding worldwide," says medical anthropologist at the University of Toronto, Bianca Dahl. With rich countries buying up the majority of doses, poorer countries are resorting to using vaccines that do not meet the strict standards of countries like Canada. Throughout the pandemic, poorer countries have been suffering the most. Along with fighting off COVID-19, these communities are hit hard by Ebola, tuberculosis, and malnutrition.

BY THE NUMBERS

63.09%

Efficacy against COVID-19 and symptomatic SARS-CoV-2 infection.

8-12 weeks

Range of dose intervals associated with a greater vaccine efficacy.

"If COVID-19 continues to rampage through the global south unchecked by mass vaccination, this radically increases the likelihood of yet more variants of concern emerging," said Dahl. If more COVID-19 variants begin to spread, it could even render current vaccines useless. The nationalist mindset that is causing vaccine hoarding is a virus in and of itself. Without equitable vaccine distr-

ibution, it's impossible to beat the coronavirus.

"By definition a pandemic is a global event, and global events need global solutions," said Dr. Ivar Mendez, Provincial Head of Surgery at the University of Saskatchewan, in an interview with CTV News.

When we look back at Canada's abrupt pause and continuation in administering the AstraZeneca vaccine, it is clear that we are extremely well-off when looking from a global perspective; there was no concern with halting AstraZeneca vaccinations because there are millions of doses from other manufacturers currently available or on their way.

With the end of this pandemic seemingly on the horizon, it can be easy to get sucked into the nationalistic mindset. Although Canada's vaccine rollout is not without its bumps in the road, it is significantly better than well over half of the rest of the world. But, we need to look at vaccine rollout as a worldwide event, because we can never return to normalcy without global cooperation and equitable vaccine distribution.

"By definition a pandemic is a global event, and global events need global solutions,"

Dr Ivar Mendez, Provincial Head of Surgery at the University of Saskatchewan

INTERNATIONAL SUPPORT

Diplomats from nations all over the world showed support for Canada, Spavor, and Kovrig, in front of the building where the closed-door trial was held. (Carlos Garcia Rawlins/Reuters)



Above: Detained on allegations of national spying and selling private information in China, Michael Spavor (left) and Michael Kovrig (right) hold uncertain futures in the light of a recent trial. (The Associated Press/International Crisis Group/The Canadian Press)

By Iris Elik
Staff Writer

Michael Spavor and Michael Kovrig seemed to have been at the wrong place at the wrong time. The two Canadians were arrested in China back in 2018 on charges of national spying and selling private information to parties outside of China. However, Canadian officials believe this is an international symbol of retaliation against Canada for detaining Meng Wanzhou, a Chinese businesswoman.

The international conflict boils down to the enforcement of extradition treaties. Canada and the United States have an extradition treaty, in which both countries will agree to extradite (to send back) fugitives of the other country. Essentially, neither party will act as a refuge for fugitives of the neighbouring state.

The United States has charged Meng Wanzhou for fraud and embezzlement back in 2018. Wanzhou is an executive and CFO of Huawei, China's biggest privately-owned tech company. It was alleged that she was conspiring to commit fraud against the United States in order to aid Iran. At the time of these charges, Wanzhou was (and still is) residing in Canada, specifically in her Vancouver home.

Canada, following extradition treaty laws, detained her. This in turn caused China to arrest Spavor and Kovrig, both of whom are Canadian citizens, as a means of getting revenge.

The fate of the two Michaels does not appear to be very optimistic at the moment. Leaked stories from Beijing have described the treatment of Spavor and Kovrig, revealing that the Chinese government is intentionally starving the men and refusing their requests to speak to their families and lawyers. On June 19th, 2020, the men were officially charged with spying on China and on March 19th 2021, Spavor's

court hearing ended with no final conclusion.

As for Meng Wanzhou, she was arrested and detained in Canada but posted an \$8 million dollar bail in December of 2020. The main conditions known to the public of Wanzhou's bail conditions are constant electronic surveillance, a 6 AM to 11 PM curfew, and GPS monitoring. There is, however, a contrast to the treatment of Wanzhou in comparison to Spavor and Kovrig. Wanzhou is staying in her Vancouver mansion, with her husband and two children. Whereas Spavor was only able to call his family for the first time in two years this past Christmas.

Justin Trudeau, the Prime Minister of Canada stated that "We have been working from the very beginning on this. This will be their third Christmas in arbitrary detention in China. What their families have gone through is just horrific, what they've gone through with an amazing amount of resilience."

The information gathered so far is inconclusive. There currently is no definitive answer as to what will happen to Michael Spavor and Michael Kovrig. However, based on the lack of answers from Kovrig's hearing, it is apparent there will be no conclusion at this time.



For the past two years, we've been working tirelessly to secure the release of Michael Kovrig and Michael Spavor - and we'll continue to do so until they're safe at home. We'll keep standing up for them and standing with their families.



Above: Former police officer Derek Chauvin (right) and defense attorney Eric Nelson (left) in court for the Derek Chauvin Trial. (CTV via AP Pool)

By Anika Kanagaretnam
Staff Writer & Editor

Derek Chauvin, former Minneapolis police officer, is on trial for the murder of George Floyd. His trial began on March 29th, for a serious event that occurred in May 2020; the death of a black man named George Floyd.

Before getting into the trial, we may need a reminder of the events that happened leading to the trial of Chauvin. On May 25th of last year, George Floyd died in the hands of Derek Chauvin. The full event was recorded and shared online, where it gained a lot of attention. On May 26th, Chauvin and three police officers at the incident were fired from the Minneapolis Police Department. On May 29th, Chauvin was arrested and charged with third-degree murder and second-degree manslaughter for the death of George Floyd. On June 1st, Floyd's death was decided to be a homicide, based on two autopsy reports. On June 4th, the other three officers who were arrested spoke up, with their attorneys arguing that Chauvin, the veteran officer, was ignoring the others' calls to stop hurting Floyd, and that the three junior officers were doing as much as they could, being the less experienced officers in the situation. On October 7th, Chauvin was released from jail after posting a \$1 million bond. The three others were released after posting \$750,000 each. On March 23rd of this year, the last panelist of the trial's 15-person jury was selected. This jury includes six men and nine women, with nine white, four black, and two multiracial people. Finally, on March 29th, the Derek Chauvin trial began.

At this point in time, the trial is still ongoing, but this is what has happened in the first week.

Day 1: The opening statem-

ents from each side were presented. The prosecution side stated that Chauvin knew Floyd was unarmed. He did not threaten anyone, and was handcuffed and defenseless. The defense side was next, claiming that Floyd's actual cause of death was cardiac arrhythmia which was as a result of hypertension, Floyd's coronary disease, the ingestion of methamphetamine and fentanyl, and the adrenaline flowing through his body. They also said that there were no bruises on Floyd's neck, and no evidence that his airflow was restricted. Dispatcher Jena Lee was testified, and she stated that she felt something was wrong when she received the call about the incident that was going on.

Day 2: Minneapolis firefighter Genevieve Hansen broke into tears and said that she felt helpless when the police prevented her from giving medical attention to Floyd. Next, a teenage bystander was testified off camera because she was 17 at the time. She took the video that went viral, and stated that she wishes she could have done more to save Floyd. She came upon the incident when she was taking her 9-year-old cousin to the Cup Foods store to buy some snacks. She told her cousin to stay inside the store, and she went outside to see what was happening, and began to record. Her cousin testified as well, saying, "I was sad and kind of mad cause I felt like he was stopping him from breathing." Mixed martial arts fighter Donald Williams II was another witness who testified, saying Chauvin used a "blood choke," applying pressure with his knee on the side of Floyd's neck and cutting off the blood flowing to his head.

Day 3: Christopher Martin came today, a 19-year-old who worked at Cup Foods and sold Floyd cigarettes before the police were called. Floyd gave a counterfeit bill of \$20, but Martin decided not to call him out on it because he thought Floyd was under

the influence and thought Floyd didn't know it was fake. However, the manager at the Cup Foods store called the police about the counterfeit money, even after Martin offered to use his own money to cover Floyd's cigarette costs. He added that "If I would have just not [taken] the bill, this could have been avoided." Body camera footage was also shown, which was caught from the three other officers' cameras. Officer Tou Thao was told by bystanders that Floyd couldn't breathe, to which we responded with "He's talking, so he's fine."

Day 4: 5 more witnesses were testified on this day, totalling to 17 witnesses. Floyd's longtime girlfriend, Courteney Batya Ross, testified and spoke about how herself and Floyd had struggled with an opioid addiction. She said that he was hospitalized with an overdose in March 2020, just a couple of months before his death. Paramedics and the Minnesota police sergeant were testified as well.

Day 5: On this day, Lieutenant Richard Zimmerman of the Minneapolis Police Department was questioned. He is the department's most senior officer in the amount of years he has served. He discussed how officers are trained, and spoke about never being trained to kneel on the neck of a suspect who is in the prone position, which was exactly what Chauvin did.

UPDATE:

On Tuesday, April 20th, after deliberating for over 10 hours, the jury made a decision. The final verdict is that Derek Chauvin is found guilty on all three counts: second-degree unintentional murder, third-degree murder, and second-degree manslaughter. This is a turning point in history.



EXTERNALS

The 2021 NHL Trade Deadline

Above: Taylor Hall on the ice with his new team, the Boston Bruins (*The Hockey Writers*)

By Joely Stockl
Staff Writer

With the trade deadline wrapping up on April 12th around 4pm, the NHL playoffs are now on the horizon. The regular season is set to finish in roughly one month, and with the trade deadline passed, team rosters are now set for the rest of the season. Heading into the deadline, there was speculation around many valuable players on the trade block. Some of these players got traded, and some didn't, but nonetheless, it was another exciting trade deadline day in the NHL.

The Most Noteworthy Trades of 2021

Taylor Hall to the Boston Bruins

The 2017-18 season MVP, Taylor Hall, has had trouble finding success on his new team in Buffalo this season. It was expected that Hall would be one of the more significant players on this year's NHL trade bait list, and it was just a matter of which team would make the deal for him. That team would be the Boston Bruins, and his teammate Curtis Lazar would be shipped from Buffalo in the trade as well. In return, the Buffalo Sabres gained forward Anders Bjork and a second round pick in this year's draft. Taylor Hall is now a Boston Bruin, and time will tell if he has the impact that he is anticipated to have, and possibly return to the caliber of which he once was.

Jeff Carter to the Pittsburgh Penguins

36 year old veteran Jeff Carter was one of the names not expected to be dealt at the deadline, but he is now

a Pittsburgh Penguin. In return, the LA Kings got conditional 3rd and 4th round draft picks for this year and next year respectively. The addition of Jeff Carter in Pittsburgh will add a leadership presence and a depth centreman, which is something that may help Pittsburgh get to that next level, and possibly win one more cup.

David Savard to the Tampa Bay Lightning

This trade involved 3 teams, the Columbus Blue Jackets, Tampa Bay Lightning, and Detroit Red Wings, which ultimately resulted in David Savard heading to Tampa Bay. The defenceman was perhaps the hottest name on the list prior to the deadline, and the 2020 Stanley Cup Champions are the team to get their hands on him. Savard will improve Tampa's defence core even more, and will log a lot of minutes every game.

Nick Foligno to the Toronto Maple Leafs

This off-season, it was rumoured that the Leafs would be searching for a left-handed forward that could play anywhere on their lineup, and that is what they found with Nick Foligno. The former Columbus captain will be a very valuable piece for Toronto, and Foligno might be the key to a deep playoff run. This was another 3 way trade that involved Toronto, Columbus, and San Jose. A 1st and a 4th round pick from Toronto went to Columbus, and another 4th went to San Jose. Columbus would retain 50% of Foligno's salary, and San Jose would retain another 25% so that only 25% of Foligno's contract would count against Toronto's salary cap.

Anthony Mantha to the Washington Capitals

This trade came late on trade deadline day, but it certainly wasn't a small deal. First line winger Anthony Mantha was traded from the Detroit Red Wings to the Washington Capitals for a hefty return package. The return included a 1st and 2nd round pick in this year's draft, along with Jakub Vrana and Richard Panik. Vrana has an impressive 25 points in 39 games this year and will likely become a top line player in Detroit, while Anthony Mantha will likely fit in on the 1st or 2nd line in Washington. The Red Wings lost one of their big offensive players, but they do gain many assets in return.

Other Trades for Canadian Teams

Calgary Flames

- Sam Bennett to the Florida Panthers and a 6th round pick in 2022 for prospect Emil Heineman and a 2022 2nd round pick.
- Goaltender David Rittich to the Toronto Maple Leafs for a 2022 3rd round pick.

Edmonton Oilers

- A conditional 2022 4th round pick to the New Jersey Devils for defenceman Dmitry Kulikov.

Montreal Canadiens

- A 7th round pick to the Philadelphia Flyers for defenceman Erik Gustafsson.
- Hayden Verbeek and a 5th round pick in 2021 to the Detroit Red Wings for defenceman Jon Merrill.

Ottawa Senators

- Traded defenceman Erik Gudbranson to the Nashville Predators for a 2023 7th round pick.
- Defenceman Mike Reilly to the Boston Bruins for a 2022 3rd round pick.
- A 7th round pick from the New York Islanders in exchange for Braydon Coburn.

Toronto Maple Leafs

- Acquired David Rittich from the Calgary Flames for a 3rd round pick in 2022.
- Traded a 5th round pick in exchange for Ben Hutton from the Anaheim Ducks.
- Depth forward Alex Barabanov to San Jose for Antti Suomela

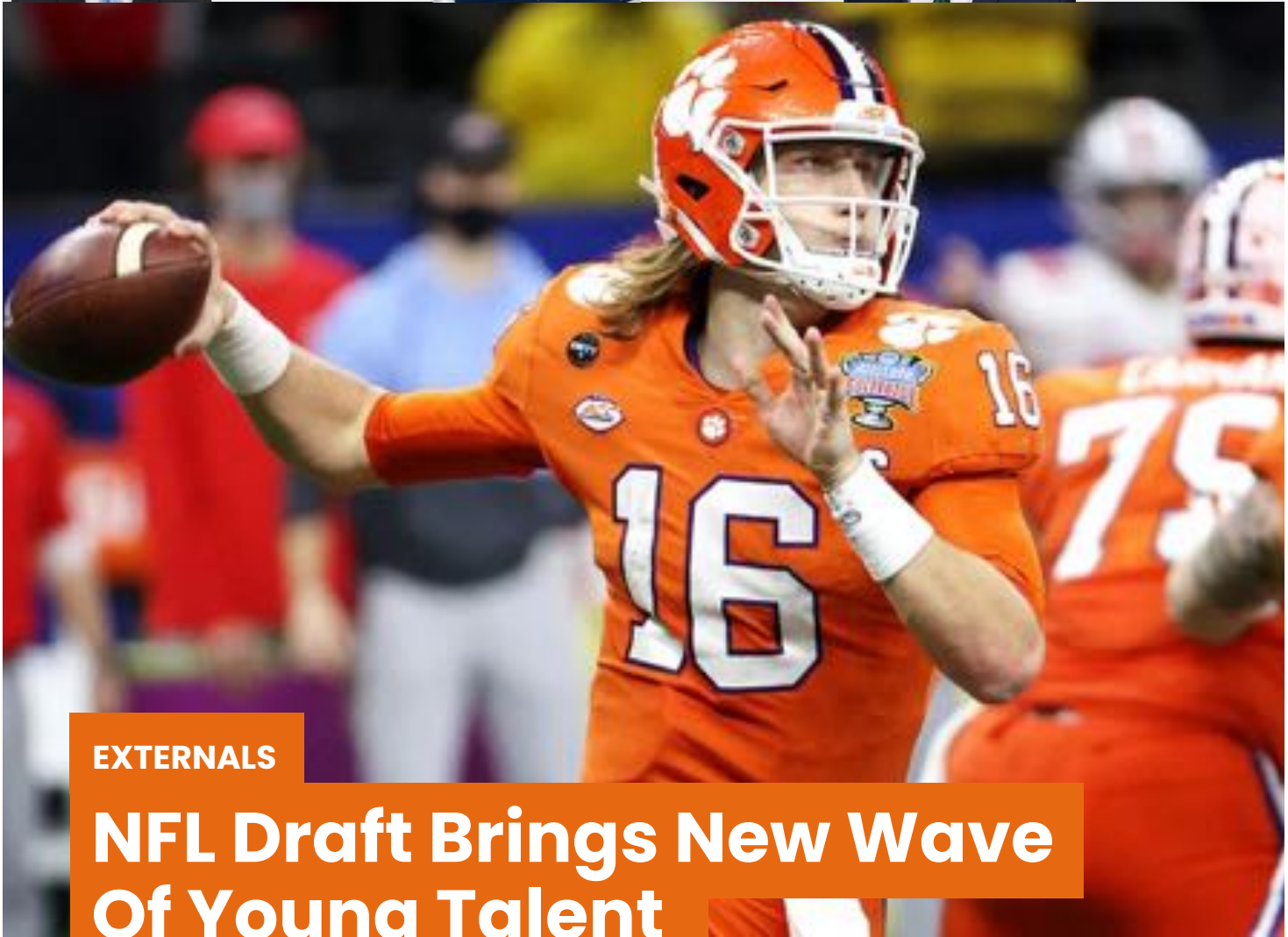
Vancouver Canucks

- Acquired Madison Bowey and a 2021 5th round pick from Chicago for a 4th round pick in 2021.
- Traded away Jordie Benn to the Winnipeg Jets for a 6th round pick in 2021.
- Forward Adam Gaudette to the Chicago Blackhawks for Matthew Highmore.

Winnipeg Jets

- Acquired Jordie Benn from the Vancouver Canucks in exchange for a 2021 6th round pick.

2021 TOP PROSPECTS:



EXTERNALS

NFL Draft Brings New Wave Of Young Talent

Above: Quarterback Trevor Lawrence is expected to go No. 1 overall in the NFL Draft (*Chris Graythen/Getty Images*)

By Nicholas Tazzeo
Staff Writer

With the new wave of professional football talent coming into this year's NFL draft, we are subject to inarguably the most talented group of playmakers we have seen in quite a while. The face of this class is inarguably Trevor Lawrence, quarterback for the Clemson Tigers, and arguably the best prospect since Andrew Luck was drafted in 2012. Lawrence has been heralded as the future number one pick ever since he was a sophomore in high school. His running-mates for the top quarterbacks in the draft are Ohio State quarterback Justin Fields, BYU quarterback Zach Wilson, and Alabama quarterback Mac Jones. We are also subject to other great talents, including LSU wide receiver J'Marr Chase, Heisman trophy winner and Alabama wide receiver Devonta Smith, Alabama speedster Jaylen Waddle, and perhaps the best non-quarterback player in this draft, Florida Gators tight end, Kyle Pitts.

Great offensive line play is a necessity in today's NFL to succeed and win Super Bowls. We have two notably great offensive lineman with Penei Sewell out of Oregon and Rashawn Slater out of Northwestern;

both players are highly sought after. Both are highly likely to be selected within the top ten picks. There is also no shortage of defensive talent, notably headlined by Virginia Tech cornerback Caleb Farley, Alabama cornerback Patrick Surtain II, and Michigan Defensive End Kwity Paye, among other talents.

The order for the draft usually decides how a player's future will go because, in today's game, the system that a player, especially a quarterback falls into is exceptionally vital. The Jacksonville Jaguars, New York Jets, San Francisco 49ers, and the Atlanta Falcons all make up the first four teams in the draft and are all teams that are potentially or are 100% in the market for a new quarterback.

This means that most of the elite quarterback talent in this draft class will be gone before the 5th pick overall, leaving many franchises with tough decisions that could impact their futures for years to come. The only selection that we can say with some certainty that is happening for sure is Trevor Lawrence going first overall to the Jaguars. There is a good reason for that. Lawrence has been the presumptive best player in college football ever since he took the field for his first game as a freshman for Clemson. He ended his Clemson car-

eer with over 10,000 passing yards, 90 passing touchdowns, 900 rushing yards, and 18 rushing touchdowns in only three seasons of play, not to mention his last season was cut short due to COVID-19. Oh yeah, he also won a National Championship in his first year. His running-mates, Justin Fields and Mac Jones, also came out of their collegiate careers with National Championship appearances and Jones winning one. Kyle Pitts is the only other pure game-changer within this draft because of his raw athleticism and his outstanding ability to be versatile and play wide receiver if he needs to.

Overall, the amount of pure football talent in this draft is exceptional, and leaves many franchises with tough decisions to make that can build careers and stars and just as quickly destroy them.

So, get ready for a thrilling draft that is sure to leave viewers speechless and entertained as the new wave of talent hits the NFL for good.

“The amount of pure football talent in this draft is exceptional, and leaves many franchises with tough decisions to make that can build careers and stars and just as quickly destroy them.”

Internal News

News on what matters immediately to you, from **Ancaster High School, Hamilton, and the GTA.**



INTERNALS
Ontario Schools Closed Indefinitely
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INTERNALS

Fighting Suburban Sprawl in Hamilton

Above: A satellite view reveals a notable divide between the grasslands and the suburban areas of Ancaster. Ancaster’s suburban sprawl continues to expand, but some residents are taking a stand against it. *(Google Maps)*

 By Anne Fu
Editor-in-Chief

Activists across Hamilton rejoiced on Monday, March 29th, when Ward 9 City Councillor Brad Clark passed a new motion to delay the decision to expand Hamilton’s urban boundary until after the pandemic. The success of this proposal meant that new plans to expand the city’s growth would not be put into action until after the city had a chance to consult with homeowners in full — something that the COVID-19 lockdown had been preventing them from doing. This triumph, however, did not come without the efforts of some of Ancaster’s own.

Nancy Hurst, an Ancaster resident who’s spent the last several months organizing with other community members and Environment Hamilton, was a part of the delegation that managed to win the councillors over. To her, this recommendation means one critical thing: the curtailment of suburban sprawl, a problem she says is everywhere in the Golden Horseshoe Area.

“I am particularly excited [about this initiative] because it started off with myself and a friend, and Linda Lukasik and Environment Hamilton,” she said. (Lukasik is the Executive Dir-

ector of Environment Hamilton, a grassroots organization fighting for conservation in the city.) “We really gathered together, one after the other after the other, a large group of citizens, and we mobilized. We pressured City Council. And it really made me understand that the power that people have, if they would band together and spread the word and people fully are in the know and understand what’s going on.”

In Hurst’s point of view, Ancaster is a suburb on the front lines of the battle against sprawl. The neighbourhood sits right next to prime farmland that she says is being endangered by urban development plans, and she believes it’s our duty to protect it.

Since 2019, the Ford government has introduced a number of changes to urban planning regulations in the Golden Horseshoe, all of which Hurst and Environment Hamilton insist will aggravate suburban sprawl. For one, the minimum density requirement a city needs to meet before expanding outwards was lowered from 80 people per hectare to just 50. The reduction of this lower bound means that developers are incentivized to expand cities outwards and build new single-family dwellings that take up a great deal of land to accommodate new growth, rather than develop on what infrastructure

ady exists. For another, municipal councils have been approved to plan land allocations for up to 30 years into the future, allowing them to buy up land in hopes of developing it decades from now.

In a delegation to the General Issues Committee presented on March 29th, members of Environment Hamilton and other advocacy groups explained the risks posed by suburban sprawl to the city. According to them, outward expansion encroaches onto farmland and protected ecological areas, while also promoting cities that are larger, less walkable, less affordable, and more environmentally destructive. What’s more, some insist that the land being acquisitioned for development right now could be put to much better use.

“Those lands are between the city boundary and the greenbelt... it’s prime farmland, Class I soil. This is the land that the developers want to build McMansions on,” Hurst says.

Rhu Sherrard, an Ancaster resident for 20 years and the parent of two Ancaster High students, was introduced to Stop The Sprawl by Hurst. She too believes that walkability and transport is a priority in Hamilton communities, but that suburban sprawl will only serve to further distance citizens from essential businesses.

BY THE NUMBERS:

50 people per hectare is the province’s new minimum population density required before expansion.

30 Cities are now allowed to allocate land for usage for up to 30 years in the future.

175 acres of farmland are lost every day in Ontario.



Above: A distanced view of the new housing development and expansion in Elfrida, Hamilton (looking south to Binbrook). *(The Hamilton Spectator)*

“People don’t need to drive everywhere if they are in a walkable city that has groceries, shops, healthcare providers and restaurants within their local communities,” she told the Gazette.

The first place that citizens are likely to feel this impact, Hurst says, will be in their tax bills, as property taxes are hiked up to pay for the cost of maintaining new infrastructure. She points to the development on the Mountain as evidence of the damage already being done.

“If you have a big, large, spread-out city, full of pipes, and roads, and electrical stuff... it all needs to be repaired and paid for by the citizens who live in the city, their property taxes. And one thing people don’t know is that Hamilton is behind infrastructure and maintenance spending by \$3.8 billion at the moment, which means we can’t pay for what we’ve already got. So why on Earth would we want to build more?”

Both she and Sherrard agree that the solution to accommodating new growth in Hamilton and creating a healthier, more vibrant city is not to develop outwards, but to build on what is already here.

“We have so much empty space within our existing city boundaries that we could use. I mean,

if you drive around, even on the Mountain here, even in Ancaster, but especially down in the lower city, there’s empty lots, there’s unused strip malls,” Hurst says.

Environment Hamilton has been pushing for change with emails, video delegations, and presentations since January, and finally made a breakthrough on March 29th when Clark’s motion was passed with a vote of 13-2. Now with the expansion plans delayed, they say the next step is to educate citizens so they know what’s at stake. Earlier this year, the city sent a survey out regarding expansion plans but received just 150 responses out of Hamilton’s 570,000-strong population. This lack of citizen input is something activists stressed was unfair to Ancaster homeowners. Now, however, Hamilton plans to send a survey out to over 200,000 households in May in preparation for a final vote on the matter in October 2021.

“Our current focus is to delay and/or stop the motion by City Councillors to develop these protected lands, and to educate the public on options such as urban densification and cost-effectiveness of redeveloping and retrofitting commercial and abandoned properties in the downtown cores, including downtown Ancaster,” says Sherrard. Currently, she believes that the City Council is not yet on the right path, “but a few council-

lors are assisting but we don’t believe everyone in the community has enough information. Developers have lawyers and substantially more funds available to them than grassroots movements such as ourselves.”

Hurst especially stressed the importance of young people getting involved. Of the 150 respondents to City Council’s survey, only four were under the age of 25, meaning that less than 0.003% of the city’s youth had made a say in the matter. But according to her, “it’s all it’s gonna affect you [young people], because this growth is being planned for the next 30 years. And you’re going to be in your [middle years], and paying all the taxes for it at that time,” she insists.

Above all, she wants to tell young people that they shouldn’t be intimidated from being involved in the process. “I’ve really learned something important here, which is never assume that other people, even those in positions of power: developers, or city hall, or even journalists... don’t assume that they know more than you do. Because time and time again, I’m surprised to discover that I know more about these issues than someone I thought would have been better informed,” Hurst says with a smile. “So I never assume that they know what I know. Or even more than I know — I assume they know less than I know.”



INTERNALS

Celebrating Ramadan During Lockdown

Above: The crescent moon and star are used in Ramadan decorations because the crescent moon symbolizes the beginning and end of fasting during Ramadan. *(Crescent Occasions/Etsy)*

By Aisha Mahmoud
Staff Writer and Editor

Ramadan, the holiest month of the year, is finally here! Ramadan is the 9th month of the Hijri calendar, which spans from April 13th to May 12th in 2021, and is believed to be the month when the Holy Quran was revealed to the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH). It is celebrated by Muslims all over the world as a time to reflect on one's spirituality and relationship with God, build good habits, and give charity.

During Ramadan, Muslims fast from dawn until sunset. Fasting involves refraining from eating and drinking, in order to become more aware of your blessings, and increase your Taqwa, or consciousness of God. The month is usually filled with festivities and large gatherings, like eating Iftar with your extended family, or praying Taraweeh at the mosque.

DID YOU KNOW?

Fasting during Ramadan is one of the five pillars of Islam, along with Shahada (affirming belief in Allah), prayer, Zakat (charity), and Hajj (pilgrimage to Mecca)

But under stay-at-home orders, Ramadan looks very different this year. For the second year in a row, Muslims will be spending Ramadan in

lockdown. Despite this, there are still many ways we can share the joy and have a blessed Ramadan this year, while staying safe. We asked Ancaster High Students how they are celebrating Ramadan in lockdown, and here are some of the ways they are keeping holiday tradition alive.

1. Decorating your home

In many Muslim countries, the streets are filled with colourful lights and lanterns during Ramadan. It creates a beautiful atmosphere and sense of community, so why not do it at home! Whether you already have decorations, buy them, or create your own, putting up lights, lanterns, banners, and signs will fill your home with the Ramadan spirit.

2. Praying Taraweeh prayers with family

Taraweeh prayers are voluntary prayers performed during the night throughout the month of Ramadan. They are usually done at the mosque amongst your local Muslim community, and are an exciting part of Ramadan that many Muslims look forward to. By organizing a nightly Taraweeh prayer at your household, you can feel connected even during lockdown.

3. Call or message friends

Although it can be tough to stay in touch with friends amidst the

challenges of the pandemic, it can be a huge boost to morale and mental health to call and wish them a Ramadan Kareem!.

4. Set a Ramadan goal

Ramadan is a great time to take to reflect on your Imaan, or spirituality, and create goals for yourself to improve your habits. By setting a goal for yourself, such as reading a page of the Quran every day, praying your five prayers, or learning a new dua, you can make the most out of this holy month.

“Fasting is refraining from eating and drinking, in order to become more aware of your blessings, and increase your Taqwa, or consciousness of God.”

Fortunately, the first week of Ramadan takes place during the April Break. But after the break is over, Muslim students will return to online school while fasting. It is important to maintain healthy habits to ensure you are focused and energized at school. Make sure to have a healthy Sehr, or morning meal before dawn, filled with fibre, protein, and water.

Although this is not ideal, let's make the most of the situation and enjoy this beautiful month!



INTERNALS

Ancaster Student Excels at Science Fair

Above: Zainab Al-Rammahi poses with her project. *(Zainab Al-Rammahi/The Royal Gazette)*

By Noor Menhel
Staff Writer, Designer & Illustrator

In our society and community today, there are millions of opportunities for students, both female, male or non-binary, to discover and explore their interests in the fields of science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM).

The Bay Area Science and Engineering Fair (BASEF) is a regional fair which provides local students with an opportunity, amongst many others, to showcase their work and gain recognition for their scientific endeavours. Under normal circumstances, BASEF would be held in real life with students, parents and viewers attending. However, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, BASEF has now adapted to a fully online model. BASEF opens up possible opportunities for students to compete at both national and international levels, leaving room for lots and lots of accomplishments.

The fair, which is free for participants, annually attracts over 500 participants, from grades 7 to 12. Affiliated with the Canada Wide Science Fair and the International Science and Engineering Fair, students have competed against the top most young minds in the whole entire world. Over the years, students have won many prestigious national and international awards which they proudly brought home. Surprisingly enough, BASEF is run completely by volunteers and funded by various extremely generous sponsors. As prev-

As previously mentioned, the participants must all be in middle or high school. There are a few requirements such as: the students must be living in the City of Hamilton, the Regional Municipality of Halton, Six Nations, Haldimand, Norfolk, and Brant Counties; and the students must be attending any public, private school or are homeschooled.

This year, the fair award ceremony was live streamed through YouTube on April 8th, with hundreds and hundreds of students competing with their previously submitted projects for awards and recognition. One of our very own Royals, Grade 10 student Zainab Al-Rammahi, won numerous awards on this night.

From day one, Zainab has always shown her interest in the STEM fields, with this being her third year in a row participating and winning awards from BASEF. When asked how she feels, Zainab stated:

“All the challenges I faced were really fun to get through. But the stress of school, Air Cadets and all the extracurriculars piled on with BASEF...” she jokes, “...it gave me like, four mental breakdowns. Although I will say, BASEF is super rewarding and the fact that I get to work with science just tops it off. Science to me is more like a hobby than work.”

This year, Zainab and her project, which was designed to detect the presence of flammable gases to potentially help save lives, won the Primary Fluid Systems Award, the Venture Academy Scholarship, the BASEF Inspiration Student Awards, and the Bronze Merit Award.

As an Ancaster High Royal, Zainab continues to inspire us, strive and work hard to satisfy her great passion for the STEM field. Especially as a woman who is constantly active in the STEM field and defying most if not all gender and racial stereotypes, Zainab is a huge inspiration for all female students. Congratulations Zainab!

MAR: THE SENSOR TO DETECT FLAMMABLE GASES

“The purpose of this project is to build a mobile autonomous chemical detecting robot. This robot specializes in flammable gasses, which can pose dangerous threats, such as in an auto shop, a construction or manufacturing zone, a military atmosphere, or potentially in a home. This project is designed to effectively detect the presence of those gasses to help potentially save lives.”

For more information visit the BASEF website:

basef.ca



INTERNALS

Get to Know Mr. Trojek

Above, left: Mr. Trojek teaches a class from home. **Above, right:** A garden tractor Mr. Trojek brought to the auto shop to assist with learning about small engines. *(Mr. Trojek/The Royal Gazette)*

By Jocelyn Mattka
Staff Writer & Editor

This April, *The Royal Gazette* got the scoop on Mr. Trojek, one of Ancaster High's phenomenal history teachers. Known for his potlucks prior to COVID times, Mr. Trojek has been teaching at Ancaster High for over 12 years. He has taught a variety of courses, including English, several different history courses, Challenge and Change, Civics, and geography. But who is Mr. Trojek, beyond his notable appearance on a tractor in the holiday assembly? In this interview, we cover everything from tractors to ice cream as we delve into the way Mr. Trojek brings history to life!

Q: Is it true you have a tractor in the auto shop? How does that fit into the curriculum?

A: Ha! People do indeed seem curious about my garden tractors — a menagerie of iron, rust and dirt. I do have one of my Shaw Du-All garden tractors in the auto shop. In terms of it fitting into the curriculum, in this case, it fits into the curriculum for the auto shop classes. They're working on it to learn about small engines and some other things which are part of what they do in those classes. My garden tractor is just one more project for them to work on to give them more experience, albeit an unusual exper-

ience that may be the only time they ever get to work on such a thing. I was going to do the work myself this spring as I enjoy such activities, but this seemed like a better idea.

Q: You also have a radio in your classroom, is that right? What is being done with it?

A: I have had a number of radios in my classroom over the years. I had a 1935 Sparton floor model radio in the front of my classroom this semester, for a time (it's at home at the moment). The chassis (electronic parts) was made in London, Ontario, and that cabinet was made in Woodstock, Ontario. (I also have a 1930s Rogers car radio on display in the cabinet at the back of my classroom that is a permanent fixture.) Inspired by the Warplane Heritage Museum, I brought the Sparton radio into school to turn my classroom into a "working history" classroom, where history work could be seen in action in the class. In a normal year, I would have wanted students to do a bunch of the work to get their hands dirty as well, however that wasn't possible because of COVID. Still, at least students could see it being worked by a newbie, and whether the radio worked or not in the end, it would still serve its purpose. History is more than textbook/internet website learning. It is in books, oral storytelling, and the things that surround us. They all speak. We just have to listen.

Q: So you have a couple of hands-on projects going. Would you say you believe in hands-on learning as a model?

A: I certainly do indeed believe in hands-on learning. In the history classroom, hands-on learning with the tangible things created by human hands in a particular time and a particular place tells a different, more meaningful connection to our history in some ways. It adds flesh to the bones of history that are found within the pages of books ... or maybe it's the other way around. I'm not sure. I had a 1920s Witte hit and miss engine in my classroom last year that I was going to use to do just that, with the aid of my students, though that experience never came to fruition due to the pandemic. The things with which we interact to facilitate hands-on learning help to tell another story, an important story, their own story. Beyond speaking more strongly to different types of learners, it speaks to everyone, connects everyone, past and present, in a way that print cannot. Hands-on learning is an experience. We value experience in most of the things we do. It's innate. Sitting on a dock in the Muskokas is different than reading about vacations. Holding your child for the first time is different than watching a movie where someone starts a family. Hands-on learning is similar. It creates a meaningful experience for a person on a different level than other forms of



Above: A variety of items Mr. Trojek has at Ancaster High School that helps engage students in learning. *(Mr. Trojek/The Royal Gazette)*

learning about history.

Q: Your classroom is set up and decorated fairly specifically. Do you think that the classroom environment is important for students' learning?

A: My classroom environment is important, I think. While it has been scaled back since COVID, it is meant to create a different world when you walk in the door. I can use any of the items in a lesson, if I wish. But more than that, ideally, it is meant to submerge students in history to create a certain tone, to create interest, and to denote a cultural shift. I still have a long way to go to get my classroom to where I want it to be in terms of its appearance. It's a long-term project that I'll probably never finish.

Q: How do you feel remote learning has impacted your teaching style?

A: I'm not really sure what my teaching style is or what it was, but I can say that I have had to adapt to remote learning, like most teachers. For me, remote learning is not conducive to what I would typically do in my classroom. I discovered how much of my teaching is dependent upon me being with students in person. I'm not sure what that really means or whether it's good or bad for me or students. I do know that it's different for sure. I mean, at least students can mute me

online, so there's that. I don't feel like I can teach in a way that I enjoy, that I'm used to, that I think works for me, the way that I think connects with some students, at least. I'm not sure how to translate parts of what I do to the online space. I mean, my monthly potlucks with students are no longer possible, for example. That's just sad for everyone, I dare say. I could try to do that online, but who will eat my bread? Who will eat my spinach and artichoke dip? Whose delicious cookies will I get the pleasure of trying? The Trojek Experience is on hold. Sad.

Q: What would you say is the best part about being a teacher?

A: The best part of being a teacher is by far having the privilege to meet so many amazing students, so many amazing people. This alone is the greatest blessing to me. Talking history is fun too, but it's a distant second. The people matter the most.

Q: What do you hope students walk out of your classes having learned?

A: I hope that they grow in wisdom, in understanding, which is far more complicated and meaningful than knowledge. For me, that one thing means that I hope that they mind how they go. I hope they ask questions of the world in which they live and of the people with whom they are surround-

ed. I hope that they think critically and creatively, but have the humility to admit when they're wrong - and that's okay. I hope that they listen first and learn to ask questions second and think and consider third and speak last. I hope that they understand that this world is filled with different people with perspectives and different experiences and to respect those people. I hope that they search for and find the stories that are all around us and I hope that they take the time to think about those stories. I hope they always wonder. I hope that they are GIANTS in their own little worlds.

Q: If you didn't teach history, what other departments would you be interested in teaching in?

A: I think either in the humanities department, or in the tech department.

BONUS QUESTION: IF YOU WERE A FLAVOUR OF ICE CREAM, WHAT FLAVOUR WOULD YOU BE?

That's a trick question! Nice try. I would not be an ice cream flavour as it's sweet and ubiquitous and is excellent and soothes the soul. That's my wife, and her flavour would be vanilla.



INTERNALS

Ontario Schools Closed Indefinitely

Above: Ontario Premier Doug Ford addresses the province on April 12 to announce temporary switch to remote learning. (Premier of Ontario/YouTube)

By John Kerr
Staff Writer and Editor

In the early morning of April 12th, 2021, at a press briefing at Queen's Park, Ontario Premier Doug Ford announced that the province's schools would remain closed after the April Break as the third wave sweeps through the population.

"I know this is not what many of you want to hear," said Ford on that Monday morning. "Right now, I'm extremely concerned about the new variants."

Despite Education Minister Stephen Lecce's constant assurances to school boards and parents that the province's priority was to keep schools open, he reversed his stance today to align with the new orders. When asked why his position on the issue changed so rapidly, he credited talks over the night of April 11-12 with Ontario's Chief Medical Health Officer Dr. David Williams and Ontario's other medical professionals.

The news comes after 217 new school-related cases were reported on 11 April. These include 187 students and 30 staff. Of Ontario's 4,828 public schools, 27% have had an identified COVID-19 outbreak.

As of the writing of this article, there has not yet been a defined date for the return to school. Dr. Williams said that a "prolonged" school closure is "prudent." Premier Ford said that

health officials will determine a return date after sufficient research and observation on Ontario's COVID-19 data and trends is completed.

An update issued by HWDSB Board Chair Dawn Danko and Director of Education Manny Figueiredo gave additional details about the school closure to HWDSB students.


Ancaster High School students return on Tuesday April 20th, having Monday off as a transition day to the online learning model. The planned board announcement that was scheduled to take place on April 15th about whether schools will switch to remote learning was cancelled and Hamilton Public Health Services was no longer responsible for determining if a school closure was needed.

Meanwhile, the decision to close Ontario schools comes as Canada's COVID-19 cases per million rate surpassed that of the United States of America, with a 7-day average of 205.73 confirmed cases per million citizens in Canada as compared to 205.12 confirmed cases per million citizens in the U.S.A.

As Ontario's vaccination program hits roadblocks and triggers scrutiny, the calls to vaccinate teachers to allow students to safely return to the classroom grow in the board and the community.

In their update released 12 April, the HWDSB states that they "acknowledge the importance of the

vaccine rollout that is currently in progress to reach eligible education workers," and that they "stand behind our education workers and advocate that they all be vaccinated immediately. When schools reopen, a vaccinated staff population will enhance the public health measures in place and combat the spread of COVID-19."




Education Ontario
@ONeducation

After April break, students will move to remote learning to help stop the spread of **#COVID19**.

<https://t.co/4mSeEGt1Yh>

#KeepingKidsSafe

Students temporarily move to remote learning following April break



As for the students of Ancaster High and the HWDSB, expect the online learning model to stay in place for at least the rest of April and into May as the province's vaccine rollout reaches more people and the spread of the variants is curbed by Ontario's public health measures.



INTERNALS

Cast Your Vote for Student Trustee!

Above: Student Trustee elections for the 2021-2022 are running from April 26th-30th. (@HWDSB/Twitter)

By John Kerr
Staff Writer and Editor

Attention students of Ancaster High School! From April 26th until April 30th, you will have the opportunity to vote for your favorite candidate for Student Trustee for the 2021-2022 school year.

These Student Trustees, elected by the students of the HWDSB, sit on the Board of Trustees and will be the voice of the students for Board decisions, providing their views and opinions on issues affecting them directly. We at the Royal Gazette encourage you to check out the candidates posted on the board website and cast your vote on the election days for your preferred candidate to represent you through the 2021-2022 school year.



HWDSB students in Grades 7-12 can now learn about their Student Trustee candidates so they can make an informed decision when casting their ballots! Voting begins on April 26, 2021.

Visit our Student Trustee webpage for candidate profiles and videos: hwdsb.on.ca > About HWDSB > Trustees > Student Trustee Election



By John Kerr
Staff Writer and Editor

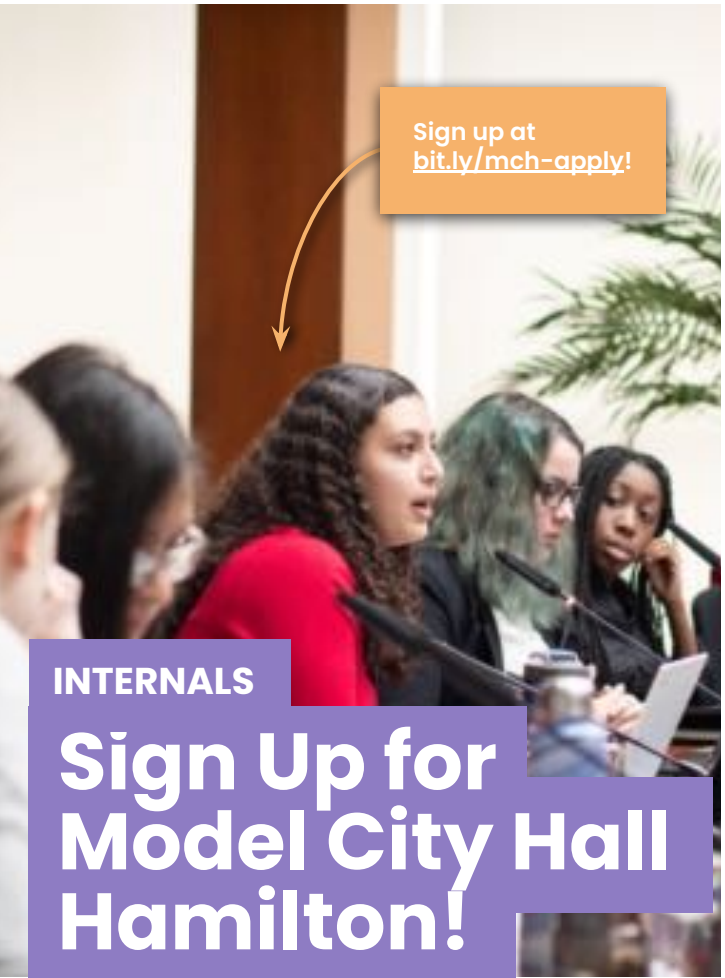
If you are looking for a student leadership opportunity during the pandemic and stay-at-home orders, this is the event for you. Model City Hall, a federally registered non-profit organisation promoting youth involvement, is hosting their GTHA conference, virtually, on Saturday May 1st, providing secondary and post-secondary students with the chance to build their leadership, public speaking, and networking skills.

You can still be a part of this experience as a delegate where you can share your ideas, opinions, and solutions on some of the major issues our community is facing this year. The three topics that will be discussed this year are: public health and well-being, housing, homelessness, and social supports, and dismantling discrimination in the public sector.

This is your opportunity to build your post-secondary resume, share your views on these important debates, and convene with like-minded people, all from home, a place we will all be spending quite a bit more time in the next few weeks.

MCHH SPEAKER GUESTS

At this year's conference, guest speakers and panelists such as Dr. Isaac Bogoch, MPP Mike Schreiner, MP Jagmeet Singh, and the Hon. Elizabeth Dowdeswell will be there to discuss the topics of the conference and answer questions.



INTERNALS

Sign Up for Model City Hall Hamilton!

Above: The 2020 MCHH conference. (@MCHHamilton/Twitter)



By Gavin Liu
**Staff Writer, Editor
and Designer**

Anti-Asian hate has always been present in Western culture. Blatant racism, microaggressions, stereotypes, and cultural appropriation plague Asian communities all throughout the Western hemisphere. Starting from a very young age, people of Asian descent will most likely be subject to mockery, or worse, simply because of their differences. With the rise of the coronavirus pandemic in 2020, anti-Asian hate crimes and attacks have skyrocketed, increasing the amount of both verbal and physical assault. Anti-Asian prejudice and preconceptions are ever present, but unfortunately, it took a global pandemic to bring this issue to the forefront of the media.

Over the past year, anti-Asian rhetoric hse been used over and over again to try and cast blame on those of Asian descent for the coronavirus. It did not matter what your ancestry was; in the eyes of racists, all Asians were Chinese, and all Chinese people had the coronavirus. This behaviour is found all over the internet, and was most notably spread by former President Trump. Along with these overgeneralizations, hate speech and hate crimes have spiked. According to a survey by AAPI Data, 1 in every 10 Asian American Pacific Islander (AAPI) will be subject to a hate crime. The c-word, China virus, kung-flu, and a myriad of other derogatory terms all encompassed under verbal assault makes up almost 75% of all reported hate crimes. 10% of crimes involved unwarranted physical contact, while another 10% was being coughed or spat on.

On Tuesday March 16th, 2021, in Atlanta, Georgia, a white man entered three salon parlors and killed eight people, six of whom were Asian-American women. The perpetrator claimed this was out of sexual frustration. Law enforcement has not found enough evidence to label this as a hate crime. But six out of eight of the victims were Asian women, and these salons were Asian-owned. The Asian-American community was quick to point out how this is an example of the fetishization of Asian women. The stereotype that Asian women are exotic

and only exist to fulfill sexual fantasies is gross, dehumanizing, and this trope has been consistently used in popular media. Popular television shows and movies like *Memoirs of a Geisha* and *The Office* have portrayed Asian women as hyper-sexualized and submissive. To activists, experts, and community members, this fetishization is inextricably linked to racism, meaning it is impossible to not call this senseless massacre racially motivated. This mass shooting has been the definitive event to thrust anti-Asian hate into the limelight.

The string of anti-Asian hate crimes have not stopped. On the contrary, the stream of videos of Asians being attacked seems to be increasing. On March 17th, an elderly Asian woman was attacked, but she fought back against her attacker. After a GoFundMe was created to pay for her medical bills, she donated almost one million dollars to help combat AAPI hate. On March 29th, a 65 year old woman was attacked in front of a luxury condo in Manhattan. Bystanders simply watched from afar. A doorman of the condo building even went and closed the door after the attacker left the woman writhing on the ground. On April 11th, bystanders were able to help save an Asian woman from being pushed onto train tracks, not once, but twice. These attacks have been becoming more and more common, but those in the media are only the ones being reported or filmed. In a survey released by AAPI Data, while Asians are being faced with the highest amount of hate crimes, the community is least comfortable with reporting the incidents to law enforcement, with only roughly 30% willing to do so.

Most of the aforementioned crimes and reports were based in the USA, but Asian Canadians are subject to just as much racism as their American counterparts, contrary to what many may believe. The Vancouver Police Department revealed that between 2019 and 2020, anti-Asian hate crimes increased a staggering 717%. In Ottawa, according to the Ottawa Police Service,

generic hate crimes rose about 57%, while anti-Asian hate crimes had increased by 600%. Project 1907, ‘A community-based reporting tool to track incidents of racism,’ reports that Canada has more anti-Asian hate crimes per Asian capita when compared to the United States. With British Columbia as the leading perpetrator, followed California, New York, and then Ontario, anti-Asian hate is rampant in Canada. There is limited media attention over Canadian issues as they are often overshadowed by their American counterparts. However, there is hope, as recently the Toronto City Council unanimously passed a bill that denounces anti-Asian racism, and with this foundation, will move forward to create an action plan to formally deal with the problem.

To the vast majority of the Asian community, it is incredibly important for Asian hate crimes to be labelled as such. The ignorance of race as a factor during the investigation of the Georgia shooting has prompted activists to fight harder for the protection of Asian lives. This conflict with law enforcement has continued the dismissive narrative against Asians. As a “model minority,” media chooses to tell stories of successful Asian families, and constantly talks about wealthy and affluent Asians in prosperous jobs. Examples include *Crazy Rich Asians* and Netflix’s *Bling Empire*. In the end, this disproportionately represents Asians as rich, discrediting the struggles of the community. Furthermore, this characterization is weaponized against other minorities. “Asians are the successful people of colour. They represent the American dream.” Successful Asians are used as an example to support the myth of meritocracy to put down other minority groups, while that same success is used to discredit the struggles Asians go through because of race. While this is somewhat an oversimplification of this rhetoric, the dichotomy the “model minority” myth creates is harmful for everyone.

Anti-Asian racism in Hamilton and Ancaster may not be seen at first glance, but after talking with Asian students from Ancaster High School, we can see there is still much to be done to address the discrimination and we face. While Ancaster is a relatively safe community, many Asians still feel as if they should stay to themselves and not cause any trouble. When talking with Thomas Lin, a Chinese Grade 9 student, he recounted his experience. “Since COVID-19, my family and I have been more increasingly aware of the rise of anti-Asian hate cases. We would be more cautious when we go outside, and try our best not to bother others.”

Victoria Lu, a Chinese Grade 11 student I spoke with, told a similar story too. “My parents have become more cautious about my safety, constantly trying to convince me that finding a life in China would probably be safer

Tackling Anti-Asian Hatred at Home



Above, left to right: Victoria Lu (Grade 11), Thomas Lin (Grade 9), Kate Kim (Grade 11), and Kenneth Zhang (Grade 11) are all Asian students at Ancaster High School who shared their experiences with Anti-Asian hate and how to combat it.

because I wouldn’t be at risk of any anti-Asian hate crimes that have been happening more frequently. I’ve also starting being more wary of my surroundings when I go outside, even though I live in a safe neighbourhood with a lot of Asians.” Their stories show how the rise in anti-Asian hate has exacerbated many of the struggles that Asians have faced. These attacks on Asians are unprovoked and often come out of nowhere, meaning you would never know where a threat is coming from.

“My parents have become more cautious about my safety, constantly trying to convince me that finding a life in China would probably be safer because I wouldn’t be at risk of any anti-Asian hate crimes that have been happening more frequently. I’ve also starting being more wary of my surroundings when I go outside, even though I live in a safe neighbourhood with a lot of asians.”

Victoria Lu, Grade 11 student

Then there are the most common forms of racism our community goes through. “Your English is really good!”, “Where did you really come from?” and “Say something in your language” are all offensive microaggressions that alienate Asians and paint them as foreigners. Canadian-born Asians may have never even been to the countries which their ancestors were from, but these types of questions follow us around everywhere. Worse are the blatant forms of racism: mocking our eyes, exoticizing Asian women, and the c-slur, to name a few. Sadly, these forms of racism come from the people around us, including sometimes friends, classmates, teachers, or strangers.

Grade 11 Korean student Kate Kim provides an incredibly thought-provoking anecdote, showing how commonplace this form of racism is. “I never knew that I was considered different because of my race,until my mom would warn me [that] when I went over to friends’ houses, that if they made fun of my facial features or anything [to do] with my race that it

“I never knew that I was considered different because of my race, until my mom would warn me [that] when I went over to friends’ houses, that if they made fun of my facial features or anything [to do] with my race that it was normal. It really isn’t and when I look back on it it shouldn’t [have happened] at all.”

Kate Kim, Grade 11 student

was normal. It really isn’t and when I look back on it it shouldn’t [have happen[ed] at all.”

Kenneth Zhang, a Chinese Grade 11 student, also addressed the idea of compliance when I spoke with him. “Normalization of Asian hate isn’t something to be ignored, and is certainly an aspect we can begin with in order to find a solution to the problem.” He then went on to point out “that passively ignoring all the hate against Asians that happens on a daily basis is a cumulative method as to how Asian hate has reached this magnitude. Addressing and analyzing case-by-case instances of Asian hate is a method of commencing the end to Asian hate.”

“Normalization of Asian hate isn’t something to be ignored, and is certainly an aspect we can begin with in order to find a solution to the problem.” He then went on to point out “that passively ignoring all the hate against Asians that happens on a daily basis is a cumulative method as to how Asian hate has reached this magnitude. Addressing and analyzing case-by-case instances of Asian hate is a method of commencing the end to Asian hate.”

Kenneth Zhang, Grade 11 student

Now, how are we supposed to address this issue? Currently, there is more awareness being spread about these issues. All four interviewees have concurred that the light shed on this attention has been great, but we as a society need to keep moving forward and combating this problem. While difficult, it is vital that Asians and non-

Asians alike call out forms of anti-Asian hate. Point out prejudices and learn from past experiences. Racism can come from anyone, so holding your friends and family accountable is essential to stop it. Kate Kim lays it out quite frankly: “[Stop] any racism you see. It’s not a problem that can be solved overnight but we should still put the most effort in.”

The pandemic has intensified the already present anti-Asian hate that permeates through our culture. #StopAsianHate and the increased awareness about this issue has sparked hope in AAPI communities; Asian racism will not continue to be swept under the rug. Over these past weeks progress has been made. “Resources have been made accessible to everyone”, said Victoria Lu.

Lin offered some final thoughts on the matter. “I am happy that the media is showing those instances of anti-Asian hate, and bringing a lot of awareness to it. Celebrities and politicians are also using their platforms to speak on this issue, which is great and brave. I still hope that people can focus solely on the problem of discrimination and hate, rather than politicizing the problem and causing more polarization and conflict. Nevertheless, the amount of love and care that has been expressed by the general public has been touching, and I hope more unity can be developed between people and we can all live without hate”

“I am happy that the media is showing those instances of anti-Asian hate, and bringing a lot of awareness to it. Celebrities and politicians are also using their platforms to speak on this issue, which is great and brave. I still hope that people can focus solely on the problem of discrimination and hate, rather than politicizing the problem and causing more polarization and conflict. Nevertheless, the amount of love and care that has been expressed by the general public has been touching, and I hope more unity can be developed between people and we can all live without hate”

Thomas Lin, Grade 9 student

Views & Voices

The *Gazette's* staff weigh in on what they believe matters with essays, opinions, reviews and advice.



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VOICES

Review: *Ok Orchestra* is More Than Just Ok

Above: Ryan Met (left), Jack Met (center), and Adam Brett Met (right) in their music video for *Bummerland*, a track on AJR's newest album, *Ok Orchestra*. (*AJR/YouTube*)

By Jocelyn Mattka
Staff Writer & Editor

On March 26th, AJR released *Ok Orchestra*, their newest album. AJR, an American indie pop trio, takes its name from the initials of the three brothers who make up the group; Adam, Jack and Ryan Met. The trio has been playing together since 2005, although their first single, “I’m Ready”, wasn’t commercially released until 2013. Since then, AJR has become known for their alternative sound intertwined with what otherwise presents as pop.

This newest album continues to deliver on that quirky style that AJR fans have come to know and love. Right from the “OK Overture”, AJR is upfront about the sound they intend to present, where they re-introduce themselves with some charm. True to the “Orchestra” promised in the title of their album, the overture utilizes strings and brass to call to mind a traditional orchestral sound, while still including all the synth associated with modern pop. This is precisely the beauty of the piece, which strives to establish the atmosphere of this futuristic, slightly humorous but relatable, orchestra.

Among the most interesting pieces on the album is “3 O’Clock Things”, the lyrics of which are written as a stream-of-consciousness type

rant. As a result of this raw honesty, the song speaks to listeners in a way that is easily relatable. From thoughts about politics, to college, to insecurities about being likeable, AJR’s lyrics tap into issues that make the song feel instantly familiar. There’s also another interesting layer to the story, which is the open recognition of the fact that the sentiments, and by the extent the workings of the world, are a little bizarre. It’s that layer of truth hidden beneath the slightly humorous presentation of the song that makes “3 O’Clock Things” memorable.

In regards to the composition of this song, most of it has a fairly typical pop/alternative vibe, although AJR does, or course, add their flare. In this song, it takes the form of 1940s swing music, which comes in for the introduction and odd choruses throughout the song. Not only does this swing sound come across as being interesting because it’s so atypical to modern music, but also because it somehow manages to be catchy and fit in with other elements present in the song.

This theme of mixing styles together continues throughout the rest of the album. One example of this is the piece “Joe”. This song has arguably one of the most engaging musical introductions in the album. It begins with quick, classical piano, which is quickly joined by beatboxing, layered

“Overall, *Ok Orchestra* is an incredibly underrated album that introduces a fresh mixing of sound, along with a grounded sense of humorous relatability.”

over top. This song tells a story about what it is to fit in, to be cool or popular, and how that desire can still remain long after a person has supposedly become objectively “cool”. Similarly to some of the other pieces, the music draws listeners in, but the honest storytelling is why they stay.

A final track that stands out on *Ok Orchestra* is “Ordinaryish People”, which also features Blue Man Group. Of course, this song also incorporates unique instrumental elements, starting off with an old-timey big band sound. The lyrics follow along the theme of identity and questioning societal norms. The song explores again that idea of fitting in and not fitting in with any one particular set of stereotypes or expectations.

Overall, *Ok Orchestra* is an incredibly underrated album that introduces a fresh mixing of sound, along with a grounded sense of humorous relatability. For anyone interested in alternative pop, this is an absolute must-listen!



VOICES

Review: *Boys State* Captures the Turmoil of Teens & Politics

Above: In *Boys State*, a hundred adolescents in Texas go head-to-head in a mock election. René Otero (above) is one of the four attendees of the 2019 Texas Boys/Girls State camp that this documentary follows. (*Boys State/Apple TV+*)

By Anne Fu
Editor-in-Chief

Every summer, thousands of teenagers across America gather in each state with the hope of accomplishing something extraordinary: building a representative democratic government from scratch in just 7 days. The attendees of these programs, known as Boys/Girls State camps, are split into two political parties on arrival and spend a week writing policies, creating party platforms, holding trials, managing journalistic outlets, and campaigning in mock elections for various office positions. Today, the Boys/Girls State program counts public figures as influential as Bill Clinton, Dick Cheney, Michael Jordan and Neil Armstrong amongst its alumni. Many arrive with the hope of winning the camp’s top position: the coveted state governor office, the highest position offered at the program.

Released in 2020, *Boys State* is a Netflix documentary that takes an inner look at the lives of the young men who attended the Texas Boys State camp in 2019. The film follows four of these students in particular: Ben Feinstein, a passionate conservative with a Reagan action figure in his bedroom and a Betsy Ross flag pinned to his wall; Steven Garza, the son of a Mexican immigrant who volunteered with the Beto O’Rourke campaign a summers back; Robert MacDougall, an extroverted athlete who has yet to form a complete political identity; and René Otero, a no-nonsense Chicago native who fought for prisoners’ rights years before arriving at the camp.

What follows is a searing dissection of the state of modern American politics, as these four teens are placed at the forefront of an embattled election campaign. The drama that *Boys State* captures is like a student council election dialed up to

eleven, as scandals and infighting trouble the leadership of both fictional parties at the camp, known as the Federalists and the Nationalists. The camp’s attendees may only be in high school, but they refuse to play nice with each other when it comes to the cutthroat world of *Boys State*.

Throughout the film, *Boys State* directors McBaine and Moss play the role of something almost akin to a nature documentary, quietly observing the camp attendees from afar. The documentary is filmed with a deeply cinematic sense of lighting and frame that often makes it seem poised on the edge of degenerating into a *Lord of the Flies*-esque horror movie. (One YouTube comment on the trailer states:

“I actually thought this was a mockumentary until I googled *Boys State* and wow.”

It’s a film that captures both the spirit of American politics and the recklessness of adolescence: at one point in the documentary, the Federalist party receives a joking proposal to have Texas secede from the rest of the United States, which eventually gains serious traction amongst the members. Push-up competitions break out sporadically amongst the boys. Awkward talent show auditions see young men struggle to entertain their peers. Campaign ads are propagated through the universal language of teenagers everywhere: Instagram memes.

But *Boys State* isn’t just about hormonal teenagers laying waste to the good intentions of the political process. At its heart, it probes a number of very serious concerns about young people and the future of American politics, which either makes it either bleak or inspirational, depending on who’s watching.

In a bid to win the Nationalist campaign against Garza, MacDougall appeals to the conservatives of his par-

ty by proclaiming himself to be a fierce opponent of abortion, despite holding pro-choice views in private. He sacrifices his personal convictions for appeal and later admits, “It’s a morally questionable thing to lie in politics... I shouldn’t lie. I wish politicians would be more truthful, but getting here certainly gave me a new appreciation for why politicians lie to get in office.” Otero admits a similar thing in his chairman campaign speech, declaring, “We’re not gonna pick [one side]. We’re gonna stay in the middle, because we are not an intolerable party. We are one that is palatable to all.” Faced with these moral crossroads, *Boys State* offers no solutions, but merely an observation: this is what politics today looks like, and this is the world these teens will soon be expected to lead.

The inexperience of the film’s subjects often shows. The stars of *Boys State* can be territorial, naive, and idealistic — but the documentary also reminds you that’s not all they are. McBaine and Moss’ movie could have easily become a cynical, eye-rolling documentary full of “kids these days”-style sentiment, but it instead opts to take the more difficult (and more hopeful) route. In the end, *Boys State* chooses to finish on a high note, tracing many of the teens’ highlights during their last year of high school: Otero wins a speech and debate competition, Garza addresses other youth at a Texas Young Democrats convention, and MacDougall is accepted to his top university. It goes to show that while the documentary may have revealed much about each of these young men, their lives and careers are only beginning — and despite their eagerness, they still have a lot more to learn.

It’s a rare feat to find a documentary that provides a commentary so thorough on a situation that is often so divisive, but *Boys State* does it flawlessly. Ultimately, what it reveals about American politics and adolescence is hard to forget.

VOICES

Advice: Ask a Royal

By Jocelyn Mattka
Staff Writer & Editor

Q: Asking as a Grade 10, I have no idea what I want to do after high school. When did you know where you wanted to go/what you wanted to study?

That's a great question, and one that I think most high school students wonder about at one time or another. Grade 10 might seem a little early to start thinking about your post-secondary plans, but I would argue that it's not. You still have plenty of time, so this is the perfect time to start exploring your interests and options without too much pressure.

For myself, I started to get a general idea of my university plans around the beginning of grade 11, but wasn't confident until I really started looking into specific programs at the beginning of grade 12. Everyone has different timing though. Some of my friends have known what programs and schools they wanted to apply to since grade 9, some of them have changed those plans, and others are still choosing between different options now. Considering this response is specific to someone in grade 10, I have a few suggestions for you.

First off, make sure you're choosing your elective courses carefully. Not in terms of pathway planning and worrying about pre-reqs, but making sure you are taking classes that genuinely interest you. AHS offers a wide variety of elective courses from computer science, to all varieties of visual art, to law and economics. I would encourage you, especially as you head into grade 11, to take advantage of those classes; they are a great way to dip your toe into different areas of interest! On a similar note, I would also encourage you to make the most of the classes you choose to take. It's important to learn how to take your learning into your own hands. When

you have the option to pick a topic for a research assignment, pick something that you want to learn more about; when you have a chance to experiment with something new for a creative project, take the chance and try it. Take advantage of the opportunities you have to learn and try new things because high school is the perfect place to do that.

In addition to learning about your interests through the classes you take, I suggest you also consider the stream of classes you are in. As you probably know at this point, the courses at Ancaster High are designed to help prepare you for a variety of post-secondary destinations. As you head into grade 11, consider if the classes you're taking align with the best post-secondary option for you. This is in no way an attempt to knock university or university-bound courses; however, many careers don't require a university education. Don't limit your options if you're unsure of where you're headed, but if you do have a future career path in mind, you might want to start thinking about what is really required in order to reach it.

That aside, if you are headed to a university or college pathway, start your research early. Not just your research into schools and programs, but also into scholarships! There are a lot of scholarships out there, but the biggest ones ask a lot of you. I recommend you start looking into them now so you can start doing prep work sooner rather than later. Some scholarships require a lot of volunteer experience, or examples of initiative within your school or community. The earlier you start working on these things, the better odds you'll have when the time comes to apply. In terms of researching the actual schools and programs, guidance has some great resources they can share with you, including websites such as www.ontariouniversitiesinfo.ca, which is a great directory if you're looking for university programs in Ontario.

Finally, and maybe most importantly, don't be afraid to change your mind. There's no reason why you can't be interested in one pathway in grade 11, then decide you want to apply for something different when it comes time to actually apply to programs in grade 12. As someone who has been going to university info sessions all year (where current students of the university were present), I can tell you that many university students change their majors even after starting their programs. I personally know people who went to school with one career in mind, left the program and went back years later to get a different degree. While I applaud all of those who are able to sort out their futures at 15, there is still so much time to figure all of this out.

RESOURCES FOR EXPLORING POST-SECONDARY PATHWAYS

- For university or college pathways, you can visit www.ontariouniversitiesinfo.ca for information on university programs in Ontario.
- To explore different career options, you can use Xello's career matchmaker to explore careers that match your interests.
- Ancaster High offers co-op opportunities that can allow you to experience many careers firsthand.

In short: take your time and enjoy doing research into post-secondary options that you are enthusiastic about. There is no right or wrong method of determining your future plans, but there are many resources available to help you. Talk to guidance, make the most of your current classes, and get excited for the years to come!

Right: "Ask a Royal" is a monthly AHS advice column. (Illustration by Aisha Mahmoud/The Royal Gazette)

Have a question you want answered? DM @ahsroyalgazette on Instagram or email jmattka7612@hwdsb.on.ca.

VOICES

Ontario's Concerning COVID Update

Above: Ontario Premier Doug Ford addresses the province on April 12 to announce temporary switch to remote learning. (Premier of Ontario/YouTube)

By Jocelyn Mattka
Staff Writer & Editor

According to Ontario Premier Doug Ford, the latest COVID-19 developments or nothing short of "extremely concerning".

On April 12th, Doug Ford, along with Dr. Williams, Minister Elliott, and Minister Lecce, announced the latest COVID-19 regulations in a live address to the public. The most significant piece of news communicated in this address was the indefinite closure of schools across the entire province.

Minister Lecce frequently commented on the gravity of the decision, stating that "as difficult as it is, [the decision was made] to protect your family and to prevent this crisis from getting worse." This stance served as something of a surprise to the citizens of Ontario, especially considering Stephen Lecce's letter, which was issued only a day before, stating that schools would remain open. When pressed on this discrepancy, Lecce responded that they "want kids to be in school"; however, they "want to tackle the root cause of this, which is community transmission." Lecce went on to state that it has become apparent that this decision, while not made lightly, is necessary in order to "lower community rates to get our kids back [to school]."

Dr. Williams shed light on the concerning nature of the newest variants, which were highlighted as being one of the major causes of the current surge in cases. He explained that "people are going to the hospital without being tested, then discovering they have COVID". This shift is alarming because it demonstrates both a failure

In the testing structure and the swiftness of the newer, deadlier variants of the disease. These strains of COVID-19 have proven to be much more likely to land victims in the hospital and have the ability to debilitate patients much more quickly than the original virus.

Regarding the testing, positivity rates have risen to over 8%, a number indicating imminent danger to the system under its current resources. Based on these trends, Dr. Williams explained that "a prolonged closure at this time is only prudent and necessary." Although the government initially intended to wait to make this announcement until later in the week, Dr. Williams insisted that the current variants require the government to "move much more nimbly" and to act immediately "instead of waiting a few more days."

BY THE NUMBERS

>8% Positivity rates in Ontario have reached above eight percent.

40% Ontario's target is for 40% of adults to be vaccinated by May 5th.

350 350 new ICU units could possibly be constructed soon.

In terms of Ontario's medical plans and capabilities, Minister Elliott outlined some of the measures that will be taken by the healthcare industry in an attempt to address the situation. These include possibilities such as

"creating new critical care spaces", with the hope of 350 new ICU units being constructed. She also stated that they are "looking at nurses out of practice... making sure they're qualified to practice." By this, Minister Elliott is referring to retired nurses. Additionally, nurses in their final year of school are "being paid to do extra hours so the nurses with greater experience and knowledge can move up to the ICUs." While the province is fortunate that these emergency measures exist as options, they serve as a testament to the precariousness of the present situation.

Doug Ford, for his part, continually mentioned the vaccination efforts in Ontario, in a clear effort to provide optimism in an otherwise bleak address. Despite his assurances, it was still painstakingly clear that this will not be a short process, as even the premier himself recognized that vaccination rollouts can only be continued "as long as we continue to get vaccines from the federal government." He also recognized that even their targeted 40% of a vaccinated adult population is "by no means herd immunity."

Based on all of the information presented, it is understood that Ontario is to remain under a strict lockdown until the trends begin to reverse and the situation is deemed acceptably safe by public health officials.

COVID-19 cases in Ontario have continued to increase, with the positivity rate reaching a level unseen since April last year. As of April 26th, Ontario's positivity rate is 10.7%.

WARNING: SPOILERS FOR EPISODE 4 OF THE FALCON AND THE WINTER SOLDIER



VOICES
Reviews: *The Falcon and The Winter Soldier*

Above: *The Falcon and The Winter Soldier*, starring Anthony Mackie (left) and Sebastian Stan (right), takes place six months after the events in *Avengers: Endgame*. (Marvel Studios/Disney+)

✦ Aisha Mahmoud & Brooke Vesentin / Staff Writers & Club Advisor

After the massive success of Marvel's *WandaVision*, the newest Disney+ miniseries, *The Falcon and The Winter Soldier*, is making waves as it tackles themes such as systemic racism, police brutality, mental illness, and power balances.

Joined by Daniel Bruhl, Emily Vancamp, Wyatt Russell, Cle Bennett, and Erin Kellyman, Anthony Mackie and Sebastian Stan reprise their roles as Sam Wilson and Bucky Barnes. Created by Malcolm Spellman and directed by Kari Skogland, *The Falcon and The Winter Soldier* miniseries airs exclusively on Disney+ every Friday at 3 AM EST.

The First Episode

The first episode of the series, which aired on March 19th, 2021, titled *New World Order*, was our first look at the lives of Sam Wilson (aka the Falcon) and Bucky Barnes (aka the Winter Soldier) after the events of *Avengers: Endgame*. In *Endgame*, we saw Steve Rogers bestow the iconic shield along with the mantle of Captain America to Sam Wilson. In *The Falcon and The Winter Soldier*, Sam feels that the title and shield do not belong to him, resulting in him giving it up to the Smithsonian museum. Meanwhile, Bucky Barnes has been attending court mandated therapy after he's gained control of his own mind, and is attempt-

ing to make amends with people he's hurt in the past. We are introduced to the main antagonists of the story, the terrorist group known as the Flag Smashers, who are pushing back against world governments to return to the way things were during the Blip (the five years in the MCU after Thanos snapped away half of all life). The first episode ends on a shocking note, revealing that the U.S government had created a new Captain America, John Walker.

The show dives deeper into John Walker, and the pressure he's feeling as the new Captain America. Bucky confronts Sam about giving up the shield, and they begrudgingly team up to investigate the Flag Smashers, and a fight breaks out. After Walker and his partner, Lemar Hoskins, join the scene, the stark contrast between the two pairs' morals and ideologies is evident. With no further leads, Bucky and Sam have no choice but to seek help from Zemo, a returning character from *Captain America: Civil War*, to help them uncover the truth about the super soldier serum and what the Flag Smashers really want.

Sam, Bucky, and Zemo fly to Madripoor, the fictional criminal hotspot from Marvel Comics, in order to locate the source of the super soldier serum. There, they meet former S.H.I.E.L.D. Agent, Sharon Carter. The four of them find the scientist who had been creating super soldier serum for the Power Broker, which had been stolen by Karli Morgenthau, the lea-

der of the Flag Smashers.

“*The Falcon and The Winter Soldier* is making waves as it tackles themes such as systemic racism, [. . .] mental illness, and power balances”

John Walker finds the trio in Latvia, and attempts to put a stop to Bucky and Sam and find answers for himself. While Sam tries to reason with Karli and the Flag Smashers, John takes a more aggressive approach, causing the fight to quickly escalate. They find the super soldier serum and Zemo crushes all the vials but one. John Walker, feeling angry, conflicted and incompetent finds this vial and injects the serum. During the heat of the fight, Lemar Hoskins is killed. With the super soldier serum amplifying everything within, John is filled with rage and brutally murders a member of the Flag Smashers using the Captain America shield, while the whole world watches.

RECORD-BREAKING SUCCESS

Upon its release in mid-March, *The Falcon and The Winter Soldier* became the most-watched premiere on Disney+.



One of *The Falcon and the Winter Soldier*'s central themes involves Sam Wilson and Bucky Barnes figuring out their own identities as heroes after Captain America's retirement in *Avengers: Endgame*.

Above: Anthony Mackie (pictured) stars in *The Falcon and The Winter Soldier*, reprising his role as Sam Wilson and the newly-inducted Captain America. (Marvel Studios/Disney+)




So far, the show has been met with an overwhelmingly positive response, as are most projects that Marvel Studios releases. But of course, no piece of media is free from flaws.

The show has done an incredible job of balancing serious themes, buddy-cop banter, character development and, of course, action. It is centered around fan favourite duo, Sam and Bucky, who made their debut appearance as enemies in *Captain America: The Winter Soldier*. *The Falcon and The Winter Soldier* has provided more depth to their characters, diving into the backstories, and emotions we have yet to see due to their fairly limited screen time thus far. The show displays the wit, sarcasm, and nuances of both characters, but also gives us an in-depth look into the bond and friendship that has developed throughout the films, and into this tv-show.

The Falcon and The Winter Soldier features several recognizable supporting characters, such as Zemo and Sharon Carter. It also introduces new characters such as John Walker, Elijah Bradley, Karli Morgenthau, and the Flag Smashers. The characters and their interactions seem to be one of the strongest points of this show. New and returning characters alike, the writers have done an incredible job making them feel unique and real. *The Falcon and The Winter Soldier* also touches on heavier themes that we have never seen Marvel tackle before: Sam faces systemic racism, while Bu-

cky is dealing with mental health issues and attending therapy. The show challenges the idea of what the title of Captain America really means, even criticizing superheroes and super soldiers; it implies that power leads to corruption. Each character has a unique political and social perspective on the issues in their world. These ideologies sometimes overlap between characters, while also causing the main conflict of the show.

CRITICAL ACCLAIM

	87% Rotten Tomatoes
	7.7/10 IMDb
	74% Metacritic

Despite *The Falcon and The Winter Soldier* being met with critical acclaim, it's impossible not to compare it to its Disney+ predecessor, *WandaVision*. While the two very clearly differ in genre, theme, and plot, the latter did a better job at keeping its viewers on the edge of their seats every second. Wh-

at *WandaVision* did right was creating episodes that could stand alone, while simultaneously serving the narrative of the entire season. It didn't show its cards right away, and viewers desperately wanted answers.

On the other hand, *The Falcon and The Winter Soldier* struggles to fit action sequences and dialogue-heavy scenes. It fails to push the narrative forward every episode and keep viewers engaged. It was definitely a slow burn in the first episode, but even now, after episode 4, there are extended scenes of dialogue that do not advance the plot and strange issues with pacing that can take the viewer out of the experience. There are only two hour-long episodes left, and the show still has a lot of questions to answer, plus storylines to wrap up. Will Sam become Captain America? Who is the Power Broker? Are the Flag Smashers still the enemies? Will they team up with Sam and Bucky? What will happen to John Walker?

Also, the show's action is difficult to follow. Despite the excellent fight choreography, the narrative purpose of some of the action sequences feels unclear.

Overall, *The Falcon and The Winter Soldier* hit the majority of its beats exceptionally well. The character-driven story displays real-world issues in a grounded and relatable way. We can't wait to see how the series concludes in the next two episodes.

Arts & Culture

The latest on what’s happening in the world of **entertainment, lifestyle, and pop culture.**



ARTS & CULTURE
Short Stories from the CBC Short Story Contest
pg 30



ARTS & CULTURE Lil Nas X Song Sparks Controversy

Above: Lil Nas X in his music video for “MONTERO (Call Me By Your Name)”. *(Lil Nas X/YouTube)*

By Zonna Mir
Staff Writer & Editor

On March 26, 2021, Lil Nas X – best known for his song “Old Town Road”, released in 2019 – released “MONTERO (Call Me By Your Name)”. Lil Nas X shared a letter to his younger self on Instagram and Twitter in reference to the song:



dear 14 year old montero, i wrote a song with our name in it. it's about a guy i met last summer. i know we promised to never come out publicly, i know we promised to never be "that" type of gay person, i know we promised to die with the secret, but this will open doors for many other queer people to simply exist. you see this is very scary for me, people will be angry, they will say i'm pushing an agenda. but the truth is, i am. the agenda to make people stay the f*** out of other people's lives and stop dictating who they should be. sending you love from the future.

-lnx

The song quickly grew in popularity, topping the Billboard Global 200 list, but it was also faced with major backlash from various groups and people.

Upon the release of “MONTERO (Call Me By Your Name)”, Lil Nas X was met with a lot of support, especially from the LGBTQ+ community. However, the music video for the song was a source of controversy among many people. The music video contained various religious figures and symbols as a way of showing religious opposition to homosexuality, as well as some suggestive scenes, which many found offensive.

Rapper Joyner Lucas said in his since deleted tweets, “I think the biggest problem for me is the fact that he doesn’t understand ‘Old Town Road’ is every kid’s anthem. Children love him for that record. They tuned in and subscribed to his channels. So, with no disclaimer, he just dropped some left-field ish & all our kids seen it. Smh.” Lucas was faced with considerable backlash for his comments, although Lil Nas X seemed unbothered. “I literally sing about lean & adultery in ‘Old Town Road’. U decided to let your child listen. Blame yourself,” he tweeted.

He also responded to backlash from religious groups about his use of symbols in a tweet, stating, “I spent my entire teenage years hating myself because of the [stuff] y’all preached would happen to me because i was gay. So i hope u are mad, stay mad, feel the same anger you teach us to have towards ourselves.” However, despite all the controversy, Lil Nas X has gott-

en a lot of praise, with the music video having over 100 million views on YouTube and being one of the top songs on Spotify charts with over 8 million streams a day as of April 10, 2021.

In addition to backlash from various religious and conservative groups, Lil Nas X also faced a lawsuit surrounding “Satan Shoes.” Keeping with the themes of “MONTERO”, Lil Nas X released shoes with a bronze pentagram, an inverted cross, and a drop of real human blood. The shoes sold out in less than a minute. They were designed as a collaboration between Lil Nas X and MSCHF, and made using Nike Air Max 97s. The shoes became a point of controversy, once again due to the use of religious iconography, and Nike sued MSCHF for selling the shoes unauthorized, claiming they infringed on Nike’s trademarks and harmed the company’s reputation. They stated in response that they “did not design or release these shoes and...do not endorse it.” On April 8, 2021, the companies came to a settlement, of which the details are undisclosed, however, MSCHF is offering a full refund to those who bought the Satan Shoes.

Despite all the controversy following the release of “MONTERO (Call Me By Your Name)”, it is clear that the story Lil Nas X tells is relevant and important. As a gay Black man, he is a source of representation for many people who may feel they do not belong. His song discusses his personal experience of facing hatred and prejudice for being himself, and through his work he tries to make sure that less people have to go through similar experiences.

Short Stories

FREEBREATHERS

They say there's a community a couple hundred kilometers west of Toronto that lives without their OxyHelms. That they’ve developed immunity to the air. That they breathe as if the world wasn’t riddled with pollution.

I listen to Eric ramble about his newest theory surrounding the community, dubbed the Freebreathers by my friend group. He pushes his stories about the structural changes of their lungs through hurried whispers, trying not to catch the teachers attention. His gesticulations are rapidly random as he tries to explain to me the anatomic design of a lung, but most of his information falls on deaf ears. I don’t really care much about The Freebreathers, mostly because I doubt their existence. Living without an OxyHelm is suicide. Everyone kn-

ows that.

I rest my helmeted-head on my hand, absentmindedly staring at my laptop. I’m supposed to be writing an essay about the worldwide pollution, but I can’t think of what to write. I know that pollution started centuries ago, and that people were aware of it long before it became the massive issue it is today, but they didn’t care enough to stop it. I know that the air is filled with enough pollutants and toxins to kill someone within a few days of exposure, and that the death will be painfully slow. I know that fresh oxygen stored in canisters is sold, a basic living requirement turned into a capitalist venture. I know that I feel sorry for those who can’t afford the oxygen canisters for their OxyHelms.

“Eh Sam?” Eric asks, and I blink myself out of the stupor I was in.

PAIRING

“I hate you,” I spit at Marie, frustrated and fed up with her antics.

“Je déteste que tu sois un idiot égotiste! Je te déteste, et je serai te détester toujours,” she shouts right back at me, marching into our shared bedroom and slamming the door shut. I can feel my anger festering, bubbling up from my stomach to my chest.

“If you’re gonna insult me, at least do it in English,” I snarl. I hear the lock on the bedroom door click and I throw myself onto our couch, fuming. I hate that woman. She’s insufferable, aggravating, unpleasant to be around. I wish with all of my heart that we hadn’t been selected for Pairing. There are so many eligible women out there who I would adore, who I would connect with, who could be my perfect match.

DESOLATE

My eyes squint against the merciless sun as I look over the Shab. A bead of sweat trickles down my forehead as I lick my cracked lips, yearning for a sip of water. But I know I must be smart, must save my precious water. Especially when it’s so rare nowadays.

The shanty town in front of me creaks with every blow of the desert winds. The people are too tired, too close to death, to fear it falling apart. I walk down the sandhill connecting my shack to the town, stumbling with fatigue brought on by the relentless heat. As I hobble through the residential area, I see the faces of grimy children bustling around, begging for food, water... anything. Their parents watch from their porches, just as filthy but with significantly less hope.

They know no one has anyt-

The Royal Gazette is proud to present 3 short stories written by one of our staff writers, which were submitted to the CBC Short Story Contest.



By Ashley Smith
Staff Writer

“What?” I mumble quietly, trying to pay attention.

“I said we should go to the Freebreather community. See if it’s real,” he says enthusiastically. I don’t respond, not really sure what to say.

“C’mon man, it would be so cool. Plus, it could give us great content for the essay, not to mention an excuse to get out,” he says, his eyes glistening with excitement. Eric loves adventures, and he always drags me on his little quests. I want to say no, and I know my parents will have their hesitations, but even my refusal can’t deter him. Somehow, I’m always entangled in his messes. That’s what I get for being his best friend.

“Alright,” I sigh, fighting the urge to roll my eyes. Looks like I’m going to the Freebreather community.

But no, I get stuck with the devil reincarnate, here to make my life miserable.

When I signed up for Pairing, I figured that I would be doing my part in helping repopulate the country, and in the process I would meet a wife who is my one true love. The provided housing and grocery money would also be a nice bonus. Instead I get Marie, a woman from Quebec with spite in her heart and a terrible attitude. It’s only been three weeks and we’ve fought non-stop. We fight about the smallest things. It’s like she’s looking, scouring for something to argue over.

The Selectors for Pairing promise that you will find your perfect match in helping repopulate. They took my information, asked me questi-

hing to spare.

You get used to the smell of the Shab, a putrid reek of unwashed flesh and desperation. Whatever water is found is used for drinking, so hygiene has taken a backseat. I try to stay clean, but dust and dirt tend to stick to you like glue.

I finally make it to Sloppy Sam’s stand, chucking the game I had been hauling onto the counter. I flex my fingers, rigid and sore from carrying the two rabbits throughout the thirty minute journey. Sam smiles and shakes his head.

“Don’t know how you do it, kid,” he grunts, rubbing his balding head as he grabs a coin bag.

“I’d reckon it’s worth... fifteen Lugs,” he grumbles, pushing the money

ons about every minute detail of my life, my interests, my passions. What supposedly happens is that all of this information is stored in a data bank that Selectors can access in hopes of finding two compatible partners to begin the Pairing process. As I listen to Marie’s hushed mutters of frustration drift through the air vent, I can’t help but think about how flawed their system must be if I got paired with her.

I unfurl from the couch and make my way to the kitchen to make myself a cup of tea, hands still shaking from anger and stress. We’re expected to get pregnant three months into Pairing, and considering neither of us can stand being with each other for longer than five minutes... well let’s just say our situation isn’t ideal.

towards me. I know he’s underpaying me, but I take the money anyway, frustratedly adjusting my litham as I walk away. It’s better to have some money than no money.

As I head back through the town, I remember the stories Gran used to tell me. She said that this place used to be green, and that solid water would fall from the sky in white tufts. She said that it would get so cold people wore multiple layers. You could build sculptures out of a thing called snow. You could glide on blades across frozen masses of water, as if you were a god.

She said that her Ma experienced this wondrous world briefly, before the sun burned up everything good the world had. Looking back at the Shab once more, I have a hard time believing it.

HOROSCOPES

Taurus ♉
April 20 - May 20
Happy birthday Taurus! This month you will be blessed with the company of those around you. Do not let the presence of those who don't care about you, affect you!

Leo ♌
July 23 - August 22
Leo, your mental health is really important for you. Take a break, we all need it. You will soon be back to normal!

Scorpio ♏
October 23 - November 21
Your nagging will get the best of you, Scorpio. Try to balance your mind and be more aware of those around you.

Aquarius ♒
January 20 - February 18
Aquarius, you have good things coming your way. As long as you remain positive and keep your head high.

Gemini ♊
May 21 - June 20
Gemini, you will not be too happy with midterms this semester but fear not! This is where things are looking up for you! Keep your hopes up!

Virgo ♍
August 23 - September 22
Your patience will be tested, yet again Virgo. Remain positive and stick to your beliefs, those around you should not change you!

Sagittarius ♐
November 22 - December 21
Although things may seem hard during these times Sagittarius, everything will eventually work itself out and you will be able to relax once again.

Pisces ♓
February 19 - March 20
Your impatience is proving to be a great disadvantage yet again, Pisces., try to improve your habits, drink more water, exercise and get outside!

Cancer ♋
June 21 - July 22
Hello hello, Cancer! This month your procrastination has been getting the best of you. Think ahead and try your best to not procrastinate!

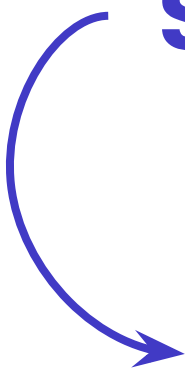
Libra ♎
September 23 - October 22
Libra, your bravery this month is what you need. Though you might face some challenges, you will fight through it.

Capricorn ♑
December 22 - January 19
Capricorn, this month it is your duty to care for those around you. Show them your love and your care, they need it.

Aries ♈
March 21 - April 19
Your maturity will bring you great success, Aries. Share it with those around you and spread the immense knowledge that you have.

By Noor Menhel

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