

THE **U** N I T E R

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RESPONSIBILITY— — OR AUSTERITY?



A LOOK AT THE GOVERNMENT OF MANITOBA'S FISCAL RESPONSE TO COVID-19

Keisha Greaves

Founder of Girls Chronically Rock

Girls Chronically Rock offers inspired fashion celebrating Muscular Dystrophy and other chronic illnesses.

THURSDAY, JANUARY 21 / 7 P.M.

ON FACEBOOK LIVE ON THE UNITER PAGE





Ava Jerao, owner of consignment shop Shapes and Feelings, is one of many Winnipeggers to found a new business during during the COVID-19 pandemic. Read more on page 11.

SPEAKER SERIES RETURNS!

THOMAS PASHKO
MANAGING EDITOR

THOMPASHKO

The COVID-19 pandemic has impacted our work at *The Uniter* in many ways. But one of the longest-lasting impacts has been the delay in our Speaker Series programming. But the hiatus is about to end!

For those who aren't familiar, the Uniter Speaker Series is an ongoing lecture series hosted by *The Uniter* and its board, Mouseland Press. The folks involved in putting on the Speaker Series try to bring speakers to Winnipeg with unique perspectives that are of interest to our readers, as well as the U of W and downtown communities we serve. Past events have included lectures by musician Vivek Shraya, historian Gwynne Dyer and panel discussions on topics such as meth in the media.

While the pandemic put a hold on our in-person events, we are finally ready to bring virtual Speaker Series lectures to the comfort of your laptop or smartphone.

The first of the events will take place on Thursday, Jan. 21, with speaker Keisha Greaves. Greaves is the founder and CEO of Girls Chronically Rock, a fashion company that makes clothing celebrating and advocating for people living with chronic illness and disabilities.

The second, taking place on Thursday, Jan. 28, will feature speaker Matthew James-Wilson. James-Wilson is a writer, journalist and the editor of *FORGE*. *Art Magazine*. His longform article for *Pitchfork* magazine, "What It's Like to Be Black in Indie Music," explored the racism and obstacles that Black musicians face in the independent music space.

We're looking forward to finally bringing the Speaker Series back to our readership. Keep an eye on uniter.ca and our social media channels for info on these upcoming events.

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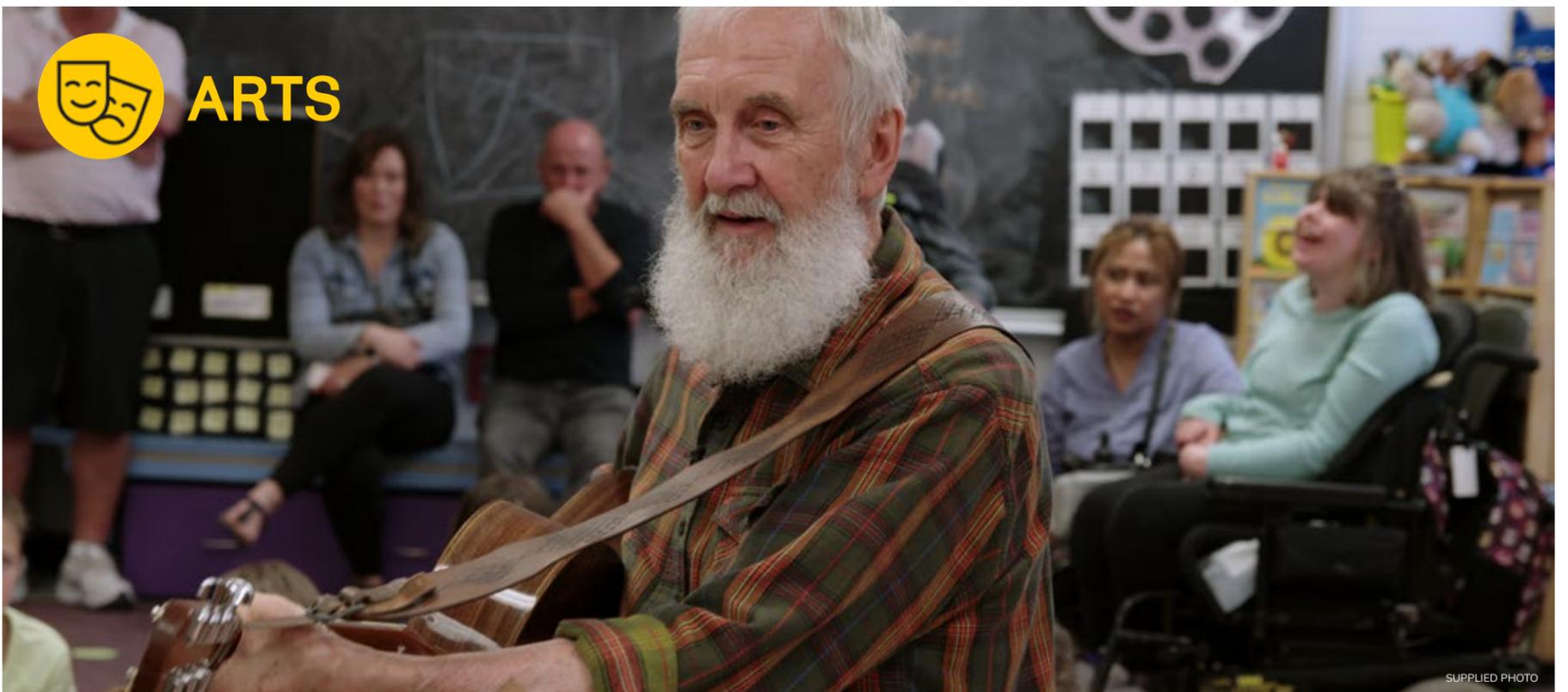
Submissions of articles, letters, graphics and photos are encouraged, however, all new contributors (with the exception of letters to the editor) must attend a 45-minute volunteer orientation workshop to ensure that the volunteer understands all of the publication's basic guidelines.

In-person volunteer orientations are currently suspended due to COVID-19, but over-the-phone and remote orientations can be arranged. Please email volunteer@uniter.ca for more details.

Deadline for advertisements is noon Friday, six days prior to publication. The Uniter reserves the right to refuse to print material submitted by volunteers. The Uniter will not print submissions that are homophobic, misogynistic, transphobic, ableist, racist or libellous. We also reserve the right to edit for length/style.



ARTS



SUPPLIED PHOTO

Veteran children's entertainer Fred Penner is the subject of a new documentary about his life and career.

A PEEK AT FRED PENNER'S WORLD

New documentary digs into the history of the beloved children's entertainer

HANNAH FOULGER | ARTS AND CULTURE EDITOR | [FOULGERSCOVFEFE](#) [SPEAKSTORY](#)

A new documentary about the life of Fred Penner premiered on Super Channel's streaming service on Dec. 4. *Fred Penner: This is My World* is a feature film by Winnipeg director Aaron Floresco. It explores Penner's childhood, how he came to work with children and the journey he took to become the person he is now, but also the person he is becoming.

Floresco, who grew up watching Penner and was able to share the singer-songwriter's music with his own son, met Penner six years ago after he saw him perform one of his shows for adults.

The project has seen three incarnations: a 15-minute short for Bravo about Penner's adult shows, a 45-minute film for CBC Gem about Penner's life and now, a 92-minute feature for Super Channel.

"I thought Fred's story was worth telling as a feature," Floresco says. "I was glad I was able to complete the project the way I wanted to."

Floresco rounded out the picture using the footage he had already shot for the previous two projects. Over the course of the COVID-19 pandemic, he filmed new interviews with current Penner collaborator Alex Cuba and several re-enactments to flush out the portions about Penner's childhood.

"I've covered a lot of territory over my lifetime," Penner says. "I'm hoping that people will get a sense of some of the circumstances that lead to me committing myself to a performer's life."

Penner's sister Susie, who lived with Down syndrome, died very young but had a huge impact on the direction of Penner's life.

"She really set my appreciation for the value of music in her life and, ultimately, in the life of all children," Penner says. "My music has been very powerful with autistic children, (so) when I was doing my first record, it made sense to direct it to children and families."

Susie's death was followed within the year by the death of their father. Those two mortality checks are crucial parts of Penner's journey to becoming a musician, despite completing a degree in economics from the University of Winnipeg.

"It is a really unique position to be able to look at my life and see where it has gone, and more importantly, where it's going," Penner says.

Penner, who has been working nonstop for the past 45 years, has been taking a pause during the pandemic with his wife on Vancouver Island.

"I've not lost any of my enthusiasm or delight in what this can do for myself or for an audience," Penner says. "There is still lots more music inside of me."

***Fred Penner: This is My World* is available on Super Channel's streaming service. Due to the pandemic, there are no current plans for a screening in Winnipeg, but there may be opportunity for one at a later time.**

THE MATURE REBRAND

Grown-up child star releases his sophomore album

HANNAH FOULGER | ARTS AND CULTURE EDITOR | [FOULGERSCOVFEFE](#) [SPEAKSTORY](#)

Dane Bjornson released his first album when he was 12 years old. Almost 10 years later, he has released his follow-up album, *Wondering*.

This marks a mature rebranding of the musician, who has been performing since he was nine years old. His first gig was at the Greendell Community Centre, performing at a family day event. He went on to open for bands Down With Webster in 2011 and Said the Whale in 2012.

Shortly after that, he released his first album, *Lucky Day*, and competed on YTV's music competition show *The Next Star* and its follow-up, *The Next Star: Supergroup*. Bjornson, along with band members Parker Schmidt, Adam Hunter, Bradley Martinez and Zee Peters formed Electric Avenue, which received second place in the *Supergroup* competition.

Since then, he has developed more of an alto voice and has collaborated with Winnipeg musician Featherfall.

"You can tell he has that theatre background of 'yes, and,'" Featherfall says. "He will run with an idea and explore it to its full potential. With our song 'Limelight,' I sent him rough lyrics and a simple melody, and he turned (it) into a killer hook in just a few days."

Bjornson studies music recording and production at MacEwan University in Ed-

monton, where he recorded large portions of his album of music initially written in 2018.

"It ended up being between four different studios with five different engineers, 12 different musicians and between two different cities, Edmonton and Winnipeg," Bjornson says. "I used the isolation and the quarantine to my advantage."

This new album demonstrates the maturation of the experienced musician, as he delves into darker material in songs like "Addicted" and "Battle Scars," while also seeing a little light in "Everyone's Sun."

"To me, his musical-theatre roots really show. Each song is about telling a story first and foremost. So beyond the stunning harmonies and instrumentation, it all serves the story and the emotional state of those in it," Featherfall says, referring to Bjornson's performance history with Rainbow Stage in their 2010 production of *Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat*.

This album also marks a shift in genre from his pop-rock roots. "In very recent years, I've started listening to more funk and R&B. There is a lot of influence from funk bands like Melt and Lawrence, with their implementation of horns and woodwinds and big brass sections," Bjornson says. Benjamin Hill (trombone) and Fred Warner (trumpet) from Apollo Suns appear



SUPPLIED PHOTO

Musician Dane Bjornson is transcending his child-star roots with his new album *Wondering*.

on the album.

Bjornson hopes to tour with the album across the Prairies or rural Manitoba. He plans to release a few more singles and music videos from the album. He filmed a music video for "Addicted" in summer of 2020, when COVID-19 restrictions were more relaxed.

"Once concerts (are) around again, I would love to do a big CD release party at the Park Theatre or at the Good Will," he says.

***Wondering* is available on all streaming platforms, including Spotify, Apple Music and SoundCloud.**

PLAYING ON PAPER

Origin Stories

 HANNAH FOULGER | ARTS AND CULTURE EDITOR | [FOULGERSCOVFEE](#) [SPEAKSTORY](#)
Jon Klassen
 Children's author and illustrator

Jon Klassen, like many artists, didn't set out to have the career he has now. The illustrator and author of the award-winning *I Want My Hat Back* trilogy of children's picture books was born in St. Boniface before his family moved to southern Ontario. By the end of high school, he knew he wanted to become an animator. However, he loved reading plays and took a slight detour to intern at the Shaw Festival as a scenic painter.

Klassen later studied animation at Sheridan College and developed a successful career in animation, working in Vancouver, Los Angeles and Portland on such films as *Kung Fu Panda*, *Coraline* and the animated music video for U2's "I'll Go Crazy If I Don't Go Crazy Tonight."

Klassen started to post simpler illustrations to his website with captions. "It started looking like books, but I didn't know how you got a job that way," he says. He was contacted by art directors and publishers who contracted him to illustrate children's books, including *Cats' Night Out* by Caroline Stut-

son, which won him the Governor General's Award for illustration.

He went on to work with some of the premier children's book authors of the decade, including collaborating with Mac Barnett on the *Triangle* trilogy and *Sam & Dave Dig a Hole*. Klassen is known for his seemingly simplistic illustrations in watercolour with muted colours, which are delightful and strange at the same time.

Klassen went on to write and illustrate the existentialist *I Want My Hat Back*. He was the first author to win in both the Caldecott Medal writing and illustration categories for the same book, which inspired two more books following the animals as they pursue their Beckett-esque hat.

"I like writing, but I don't write naturalistically when it comes to the picture books. I'm really tense about it and nervous. Everything comes out that way. It is very stiff and normal. It feels like every word just has to go through a labyrinth to make it out," Klassen says.

"I can think about dialogue, because it gets me off the hook as a writer. If they are talking, I'm not writing. They are talking, and the writing can be bad, because they are weird charac-



Winnipeg author and illustrator Jon Klassen honed his distinct visual style while working in theatre as a scenic painter.

ters, or they are performing it badly. The idea of them as performers is a big deal. But you can pin it on them."

I Want My Hat Back was adapted into a musical at the National Theatre. Klassen did not write the play, but he says he would like to

work in theatre again, even in set painting. He continues to write from his home in LA, where he lives with his wife and family.

His next book, *The Rock from the Sky*, is due out in April.



Interior designer Tara MacTavish says sunshine and colour are two adjustments people can make to their living spaces to improve mental health.

FINDING PEACE AT HOME

Arranging living spaces to boost mental health

 HANNAH FOULGER | ARTS AND CULTURE EDITOR | [FOULGERSCOVFEE](#) [SPEAKSTORY](#)

During the long winter months, living spaces can be a boost or a burden to flagging mental health.

"The physical environment can be both the cause and the symptom of someone's mental health," therapist Noah Star says. "What we do outside of us speaks to what's inside of us and can become a possible tool. That sense of progress we get when we maintain our environment can be an achievable, positive step to better mental health."

While a complete overhaul of a home may not be prudent during a pandemic, there are some small things people can do

to maximize the positivity of their space. Tara MacTavish, interior designer and owner of Changes by Design, has a few pointers.

Organize your space

While things may seem out of control in the outside world, a person's home environment can feel crushing and disorganized.

"Especially if you are starting to spend more time inside, it can start to feel more crowded, which can really make you feel out of control. Right now, when we are stressed and feeling out of control, the one thing we can control is to make our

spaces organized and livable," MacTavish says. One way to do that is "having a place for everything, whether that (means) getting some storage boxes (for) when you are done with it" or another solution.

Adding colour

"The lack of sunshine and colour depresses my spirit," MacTavish says. But while painting a wall might not be prudent, MacTavish says there are some easy ways to incorporate colour, like adding new pillows or throws to a couch.

If able to paint a certain space, happy colours like bright yellow or green could help boost mood.

Display items with meaning

"Let's make sure we display those things that really bring you joy. Let's bring them out and look at them (to) remind you of the good times," MacTavish says.

Find your light

Depending on budget, there's the option to add lighting. "Now that you are working from home, you have to think 'Do I

have good task lighting? Am I feeling tired because I'm working in a dark space?'" MacTavish says.

Using cooler tones for a work space can make focusing on a task easier, while living areas can benefit from relaxing, warmer lighting.

Set the tone

Setting the tone for beginnings and endings can make or break a day, MacTavish emphasizes.

Entryways "are important. Making them organized, as well, because they can become overwhelming. It is the first thing (you see), and your day has been really stressful, and (if) the first thing you see is chaos, it sets the tone for being at home," MacTavish says.

"And if you could do one thing for yourself every single day, it would be to make your bed and make sure it invites you to enter it. After a (hard) day, and you have your bed made, you open your bedroom door, and your bed is made, there is this sense of accomplishment and peace when you enter. It sets the mood for going to bed."



SUPPLIED PHOTO

MASS EFFECT TRILOGY

Available on PC, Xbox 360 and PlayStation 3



KEESHA HAREWOOD | FEATURES REPORTER | @KEESHAHAREWOOD

BioWare's *Mass Effect* trilogy is a collection of the third-person role-playing shooter video games that follow the customizable hero Commander Shepard. In this space opera, the player controls Shepard as they endeavour to save the galaxy from the Reapers: a mechanical race of beings hell-bent on death and destruction.

On Nov. 7, 2020, it was announced that a remastered version of the *Mass Effect* trilogy – entitled *Mass Effect: Legendary Edition* – was set to release in spring 2021 for PlayStation 4, Xbox One and PC. The

remaster will feature Shepard's unchanged story, but with a much-needed upgrade in terms of graphics and gameplay, giving the games a renaissance of sorts.

Since the gameplay and graphics will soon be drastically improved, it's worth taking one last look at the overall quality of Shepard's three-part story.

Despite the controversial ending, the story features some unforgettable narrative moments. The games encompass a wide range of emotional scenes, from tense to lighthearted, downright hilarious to devas-

tatingly bleak. The games have a little bit of everything, and some wacky shenanigans to boot.

The trilogy excels at building up Shepard as a hero of legend while simultaneously making them a relatable and flawed character. Every time Shepard overcomes impossible odds, like gunning down deadly foes or uncovering ancient galactic secrets, it feels earned. Each success feels deeply satisfying, and failures feel justified.

That said, a notable gripe some players have with Shepard is the paragon/renegade system. Like other BioWare games, the player is able to control Shepard's gender, appearance, sexuality and dialogue. Unlike other Bioware games, Shepard's dialogue choices contribute to establishing one of two personality types.

Depending on Shepard's dialogue, they can be known as the paragon (a righteous, peacemaking hero) or the renegade (a brutal, victory-at-all-costs rebel). By committing to one personality type over the other, the player is able to unlock special dialogue options that significantly influence the outcome of the story.

This system works well to create distinct

personalities for the commander. However, if players want to opt for a more nuanced parade Shepard, including instances of renegade or vice versa, they will have to sacrifice the ability to unlock important dialogue options that typically lead to desired outcomes at moments in the games.

In each game, Shepard recruits a ragtag team of aliens and humans. There is a great deal of focus put on Shepard interacting, befriending, romancing or even betraying their companions. Shepard's squad features characters with interesting and well-developed backstories that they share with Shepard over time. What's more, the squadmates react to Shepard's actions dynamically, which incentivizes players to consider their choices carefully.

It's one thing to shoot down a giant alien monster on an arid desert planet, but it's another to do it with a sassy companion making clever quips at the same time.

All things considered, the *Mass Effect* trilogy is definitely one of those games to play, especially for fans of role-playing video games.

CKUW TOP 30

November 30, 2020

TW = This Week // LW = Last Week // ! = Local content // * = Canadian Content



TW	LW	C	Artist	Album	Label
1	NE		Osees	Protean Threat	Castle Face
2	RE	*	Pharis & Jason Romero	Bet On Love	Lula
3	RE	!	Silver Clouds	Silver Clouds	Disintegration
4	RE		Alister Spence And Satoko Fujii	Imagine Meeting You Here	Self Released
5	RE		The Dream Syndicate	The Universe Inside	Anti-
6	RE	!	Sean Burns	It Takes Luck To Get The Best Of Me	Self-Released
7	RE	*	Tami Neilson	Chicka Boom	Outside
8	RE	*	Tommy And The Commies	Hurtin' 4 Certain	Slovenly
9	RE		Matmos	The Consuming Flame: Open Exercises In Group Form	Thill Jockey
10	RE	*	Wares	Survival	Mint
11	NE		Uniform	Shame	Sacred Bones
12	NE		Silver Synthetic	Out Of The Darkness	Third Man
13	RE	*	Zoon	Bleached Waves	Paper Bag
14	RE	*	Japandroids	Massey Fucking Hall	Anti-
15	NE		Bob Mould	Blue Hearts	Merge
16	NE	*	Heaps	What Is Heaps?	Birthday Cake
17	NE		Peter Bibby's Dog Act	Marge	Spinning Top
18	RE	*	Tough Age	Which Way Am I?	Mint
19	NE		El Ten Eleven	Tautology	Joyful Noise
20	RE	*	Nestor Wynrush	Roxbury And Wooden Legs	Peanuts And Corn
21	NE		Optic Sink	Optic Sink	Goner
22	RE	!	Pip Skid/Rob Crooks	Its Ok	Marathon Of Dope
23	RE		Black Marble	I Must Be Living Twice	Sacred Bones
24	NE		Various Artists	The Harry Smith B-Sides	Dust-To-Digital
25	NE	!	The Famous Sandhogs	Telma Muskwa 2	Self-Released
26	NE	*	Black Thunder	La Fine Crea	Transistor 66
27	RE		Vinyl Williams	Azure	Requiem Pour Un Twister
28	NE		Quintron And Miss Pussycat	Goblin Alert	Goner
29	RE	*	New Fries	The Idea Of Us	Telephone Explosion
30	NE		A Certain Ratio	Acr Loco	Mute

ARTS BRIEFS

THOMAS PASHKO | MANAGING EDITOR | @THOMASPASHKO

An evening with Ian Williams

The Pandemic Response Reading Series will host a virtual talk with award-winning poet and novelist Ian Williams. Williams' many celebrated works include the poetry collection *Personals* and the Giller Prize-winning novel *Reproduction*. This free event will celebrate the release of Williams' newest poetry collection, *Word Problems*. The talk will take place on Jan. 14 at 7 p.m. To register, visit lauren-carter.ca/prrs.

Grant-writing workshop

For many creatives seeking funding for projects, writing grant applications can be a confusing, headache-inducing ordeal. Fortunately, the Winnipeg Film Group is here to help! WFG will host a grant-writing workshop with filmmaker Kevin Tabachnick, who will walk participants through the ins and outs of writing a successful application. The workshop will take place over Zoom on Jan. 21 from 7 to 10 p.m. Registration is \$10 for WFG members and \$20 for non-members. For more info, visit winnipegfilmgroup.com.

Cross-cultural beading

MAWA (Mentoring Artists for Women's Art) will host a virtual cross-cultural beading group on Jan. 18 from 6 to 8 p.m. This free online event will be facilitated by Genevieve Benoit and will teach how to make earrings with a "heart design inside a diamond shape using delica beads and brickstitch." Kits with necessary materials are available for participants, who must register by Jan. 16. Kits will be delivered on Jan. 17. To register, email dooley@mawa.ca.

Theory at Home: The Ugly Truth

MAWA continues its free online Theory at Home series with a presentation from Susan Aydan Abbott. The Ugly Truth, which starts at 6:30 p.m. on Jan. 14, will examine difficult questions such as, "Is there pressure for women artists to censor their work, soften their rage? Is it a given that women's art should be toned down to make it more palatable, poetic, prettier?" For information and registration, visit mawa.ca/critical-discussion/view/the-ugly-truth-with-susan-aydan-abbott.

Psycho Goreman at Cinematheque at Home

Winnipeg-born filmmaker Steven Kostanski cut his teeth as part of the local horror-comedy film collective Astron-6 (*Father's Day*, *The Editor*) before branching out into solo efforts like *The Void* and *Leprechaun Returns*. Kostanski's newest feature, *Psycho Goreman*,

is available to rent via Cinematheque at Home from Jan. 22 to Feb. 25. The film makes ample use of Kostanski's signature creature effects and follows two children who "unwittingly resurrect an ancient alien overlord." For more information, visit winnipegfilmgroup.com.

RESPONSIBILITY — — OR AUSTERITY?



A LOOK AT THE GOVERNMENT OF MANITOBA'S FISCAL RESPONSE TO COVID-19

"What the pandemic has done is it's torn back a veil and shown how rotten our support systems are." - Dougal Lamont, leader of the Manitoba Liberal Party

Over the past few months, many Manitobans have surely wondered how the COVID-19 situation in Manitoba went from being one of the best in Canada during the summer months to being currently one of the worst.

In fact, Manitoba went from having very few active cases in June and July to having, as of Jan. 11, one of the highest numbers of active cases in the country per 100,000 people (248, compared to Saskatchewan's 316, currently the highest). Manitoba's death rate is second only to Quebec's.

Manitobans are also facing a severe economic crisis, which is intertwined with the public-health crisis. The province's gross domestic product is expected to decline significantly in 2020, and its unemployment rate increased, according to Government of Manitoba data.

Andrea Slobodian, a spokesperson for the provincial government, says the "government's No. 1 priority is protecting our most vulnerable Manitobans from COVID-19 and ensuring our healthcare system is there for all Manitobans when they need it."

"COVID-19 has created unprecedented fiscal and public-health challenges for Manitoba, and, in response, the Manitoba government has introduced measures to protect Manitobans and support local businesses," she says.

"Manitoba has committed \$3.2 billion in response to the health, social and economic impacts of the pandemic, which is the third-highest level of estimated per capita and as a percentage of gross domestic product support in the country," Slobodian says.

The funding includes the Pandemic Staffing Support Benefit (\$10 million), the Safe Schools Fund and Safe Restart Contingency Fund (\$185 million) and the Caregiver Wage Support Program (\$35 million).

"Our focus remains on making life affordable for Manitobans and keeping taxes low while making record investments on healthcare, education and families," she says.

However, the provincial government's approach has been heavily criticized by many. Since becoming premier in 2016, Brian Pallister has focused on an agenda of so-called fiscal responsibility. Some have suggested that a lack of funding for essential services like healthcare has affected Manitoba's ability to address the COVID-19 pandemic.



Manitoba Liberal Party leader Dougald Lamont says Manitoba's disastrous second wave of the pandemic was, in part, caused by the government's fiscal response.

Is austerity happening in Manitoba?

Austerity, as defined by Encyclopædia Britannica, is “a set of economic policies, usually consisting of tax increases, spending cuts or a combination of the two, used by governments to reduce budget deficits.”

While reducing budget deficits is generally regarded as an important long-term goal, many economists, such as Nobel Prize winner Paul Krugman, have found that austerity measures usually are, in fact, harmful. In particular, they can affect growth and exacerbate inequality.

University of Manitoba economist Dr. Evelyn Forget, whose research focuses on healthcare policies, believes the term austerity accurately describes the current Manitoba provincial government's policies.

“Even before the pandemic, they were really quite fixated on reducing expenditure, reducing salary costs for civil servants, streamlining the civil service and eliminating jobs,” she says.

“I think they've certainly resisted hiring the people that they needed to hire in order to deal with the public-health issues.”

For instance, it is only recently that the government has posted an ad for a provincial COVID-19 immunization director.

While the fiscal policies of governments can often seem like they have no impact on peoples' everyday lives, Forget points

out a situation where such a policy directly affected many Manitobans.

“Some people who are collecting Employment and Income Assistance (EIA) in Manitoba qualified for the (Canadian Emergency Response Benefit),” she says.

“Some provinces allowed them to keep that money without reducing their EIA. Manitoba didn't,” Forget says, adding that the government “actually clawed it back on a dollar-for-dollar basis.”

“They really did hurt the most vulnerable people in the province,” she says.

Part of the problem, Forget says, is the fiscal imbalance between the provinces and the federal government. In other words, Canadian provinces lack adequate revenue to provide adequate services.

“Most of the provinces are in deep trouble, and Manitoba is one of those provinces that is running a structural deficit,” she says. “There needs to be a rebalancing of financial responsibilities between the provinces and the federal government.”

Especially now, during this current economic crisis, government revenues are down. However, it is unclear how the provincial government will deal with this situation.

When asked if Manitobans should expect spending cuts or tax hikes in the coming year, Slobodian says the provincial government “will continue to invest in Manitoba's safe recovery and reinforce public health, as

well as economic and fiscal resilience.”

“We will invest when and where it is needed, ensuring the public-health response and individual and business supports are in place,” she says.

How does fiscal policy affect healthcare?

Research conducted by the World Bank has shown that underfunding of healthcare and insufficient resource allocation in certain areas severely restricts the ability of jurisdictions to deal with COVID-19. Though, in Manitoba, there is essentially universal healthcare, many would argue that it is highly underfunded.

In the past few months, intensive-care units across the province have been nearing capacity, and various procedures not related to COVID-19 have been postponed.

Darlene Jackson, president of the Manitoba Nurses Union, says “the Pallister government's fiscal response has fallen short in many respects.”

“There simply (have) not been enough resources invested in the frontline to keep up with the COVID-19 hospitalization rates and case numbers,” she says.

“Throughout the healthcare system, the common thread is that a lack of resources and staff have hampered the pandemic response, and that more robust investment (was) needed, and still (is), to keep staff

safe and reduce the spread of COVID-19,” Jackson says.

Other healthcare professionals have also been calling for more resources. In November, more than 200 Manitoba doctors wrote an open letter to Pallister, which brought forth their concerns and called for more action.

“The healthcare system was already stretched thin before the pandemic ... after three years of austerity and healthcare changes, there was little flex left in the system.”

One positive development, according to Jackson, is the recently signed memorandum of agreement regarding personal protective equipment.

“Under the new (memorandum of agreement), nurses will be automatically provided with an N95 respirator in more situations, instead of having to request one,” she says. “This now makes Manitoba a leader in Canada in terms of (personal protective equipment) access.”

Jackson also believes that lack of funding in previous years hampered the government’s ability to deal with the pandemic.

al-care homes,” he says.

It is during the autumn months, beginning with the back-to-school season in September, that the second wave of the pandemic hit Manitoba hard. Perhaps a higher level of funding could have allowed for things like smaller and more socially distant classrooms or more support for long-term care homes.

Where do we go from here?

Despite the fact that many have criticized the provincial govern-

“You have a 14-year cockroach infestation that was never dealt with under two governments ... what the pandemic has done is it’s torn back a veil and shown how rotten our support systems are.”

“The healthcare system was already stretched thin before the pandemic,” she says, noting that “after three years of austerity and healthcare changes, there was little flex left in the system.”

Jackson adds that “the government should have used the summer months to build system capacity.”

“Instead, the government sat on their hands and ignored predictions that a second wave was coming,” she says.

Dougald Lamont, leader of the Manitoba Liberal Party and MLA for St. Boniface, says many of the flaws in Manitoba’s healthcare system are much more long-term.

“It’s not just this government,” he says.

He points to a cockroach infestation in Parkview Place, which was originally brought to the NDP’s attention in 2006, when they held government. This long-term care home is the site of one of the worst – and deadliest – COVID outbreaks in Manitoba so far.

“You have a 14-year cockroach infestation that was never dealt with under two governments,” Lamont says. “What the pandemic has done is it’s torn back a veil and shown how rotten our support systems are.”

Lamont believes that now is the time for governments to step up.

“Crises like this are one of the reasons that governments exist,” he says.

Lamont says Manitoba’s disastrous second wave of the pandemic was, in part, caused by the government’s fiscal response.

“By mid-August, the government had committed no new money to (going) back-to-school or person-

ment’s fiscal restraint in the past years, Slobodian says it has allowed them to better respond to the current crisis.

“The Manitoba government’s hard work and prudent budgeting since 2016 put it in a far stronger position to respond to unforeseen emergencies and much better prepared to face the COVID-19 health and economic crisis,” she says.

As the vaccination process has begun, many Manitobans are more hopeful that 2021 will bring loosened restrictions, fewer COVID-19 cases, and a “return to normal.” However, even the vaccination rollout has not been without its flaws.

“There’s just been an ad posted for a COVID immunization provincial director,” Lamont says.

“The fact that they’re hiring for this now really tells you about how far behind we are,” he says, adding that “there should have been a plan in place a while ago.”

Earlier this month, Pallister shuffled his cabinet, which brought changes to key portfolios. Notably, Cameron Friesen, Minister of Health, Seniors and Active Living during the pandemic, was replaced by Heather Stefanson. Though Friesen remains in cabinet as Minister of Justice and Attorney General, many believe he was moved due to a poor handling of the pandemic.

Perhaps this leadership change will bring a different approach. Regardless, healthcare professionals are urging Manitobans to “follow the fundamentals.”

“Nurses need Manitobans to keep doing their part,” Jackson says.



SUPPLIED PHOTO

“The Pallister government’s fiscal response has fallen short in many respects.” - Darlene Jackson, president of the Manitoba Nurse’s Union



SUPPLIED PHOTO

“Even before the pandemic (the PC government) were really quite fixated on reducing expenditure, reducing salary costs for civil servants, streamlining the civil service and eliminating jobs.” - Dr. Evelyn Forget, University of Manitoba economist

WHEN PUBLIC SAFETY ISN'T ACCESSIBLE

Barriers arise out of COVID-19 protocol for people with disabilities

CIERRA BETTENS | CITY REPORTER | [TWITTER](#) FICTIONALCIERRA [INSTAGRAM](#) CIERRABETTENS

Public-health measures have transformed the way people exist in their environments in an effort to slow the spread of COVID-19. Yet, some protocols implemented in the name of health and safety have created additional barriers for people with disabilities.

Caden Flynn is a 19-year-old university student from Halifax who lives with cerebral palsy. Throughout the pandemic, Flynn has spoken on social media about protocols, such as the removal of public seating in shopping malls, that have rendered some public spaces inaccessible for people with disabilities.

"We're so tied up in enforcing COVID restrictions – as (we) should be – but we've completely dropped the ball on enforcing accessibility," Flynn says.

Flynn says that, for many people with disabilities, the pandemic created contrasting circumstances. On one hand, additional barriers have been created. On the other hand, he says accommodations that people with disabilities have fought to have access to for years, like working from home, have been rapidly made available.

"For years, we've been told that 'we can't do that. There's no way to do that.' Then, all of a sudden, when COVID came along, we magically found a way to make this work for everyone," he says.

The Accessible Canada Act (Bill C-81), which came into force on July 11, 2019, is

mandated to implement policies that remove barriers faced by people with disabilities. Federally regulated agencies are mandated by Bill C-81 to consult with people with disabilities to create and implement accessibility plans.

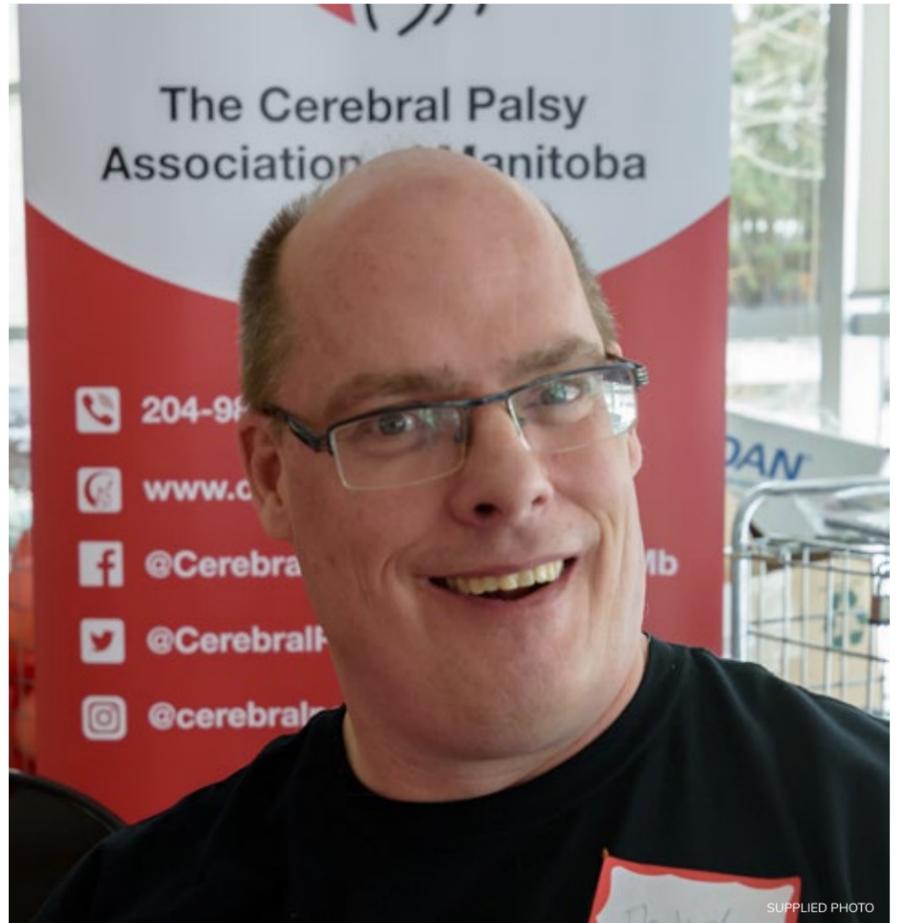
However, many private establishments do not have the same accommodations implemented – and those who require such accommodations have felt the effects adversely.

"I know that many of my hearing-impaired friends are having a very hard time, because many businesses haven't invested in masks that are see-through," Flynn says.

Barrier-Free Manitoba is a coalition of individuals and organizations that work together to push legislation mandating the removal and prevention of barriers for people with disabilities. David Kron, the spokesperson for the organization, says it is crucial to ensure accommodations for people with disabilities don't get "stamped out" due to COVID-19 protocol.

"We know a balance has to be achieved, but we want to be heard," Kron says.

While Barrier-Free Manitoba aims to tackle accessibility on a systemic (rather than individual) level, Kron stresses that being attentive to the needs of people with disabilities can happen on a small scale, too. He says this can mean anything from ensuring content is offered in plain language



David Kron, spokesperson for Barrier-Free Manitoba

with large-text options to not parking in an accessible spot if you don't require one.

Flynn attests to the importance of asking questions.

"There seems to be a misconception that disabled people don't want to be bothered," Flynn says. "I might decide that I don't

want your assistance, but I might say yes, and I might be too afraid to ask."

"People don't realize that accessibility doesn't stop at my ability to get into school or a hospital. It's often overlooked that we are social. We have friends, we have families, and we want to be able to experience life with them."

SHELTERS WORRY ABOUT THE FATE OF RECENTLY ADOPTED ANIMALS

Will 'pandemic pets' have a forever home if things return to normal?

REBECCA DRIEDGER | VOLUNTEER | [TWITTER](#) [INSTAGRAM](#) REBECCADRIEDGER

Animal shelters in Winnipeg noticed a significant increase in adoptions in early 2020 after COVID-19 restrictions limited human interaction. Many shelters have changed their regulations and adoption procedures, but many Winnipeg residents are still searching for furry companions.

Animal shelters across the city report low numbers of animals, and some say their shelters were empty over the holidays.

The Winnipeg Humane Society posted on social media to announce that the Homes for the Holidays campaign, which involved reduced adoption fees for December, was so successful that the shelter only had two cats left.

"We've made this effort to get the animals adopted out before the holidays," Lenore Hume, the communications strategist at the Winnipeg Humane Society, says. "The animals deserve a home over the holidays, but it also gives our staff a bit of a break."

D'Arcy Johnston, owner of D'Arcy's ARC (Animal Rescue Centre), believes dogs are being adopted more often than cats because of the need to get out of the house (for walks), even during a pandemic.

"As human beings, we are told to socially distance and told to stay away, stay

home. People have more time to dedicate to this animal, so they come down to adopt. They're looking for that companionship," Johnston says. "It also gives them an excuse to go outside and breathe in the fresh air."

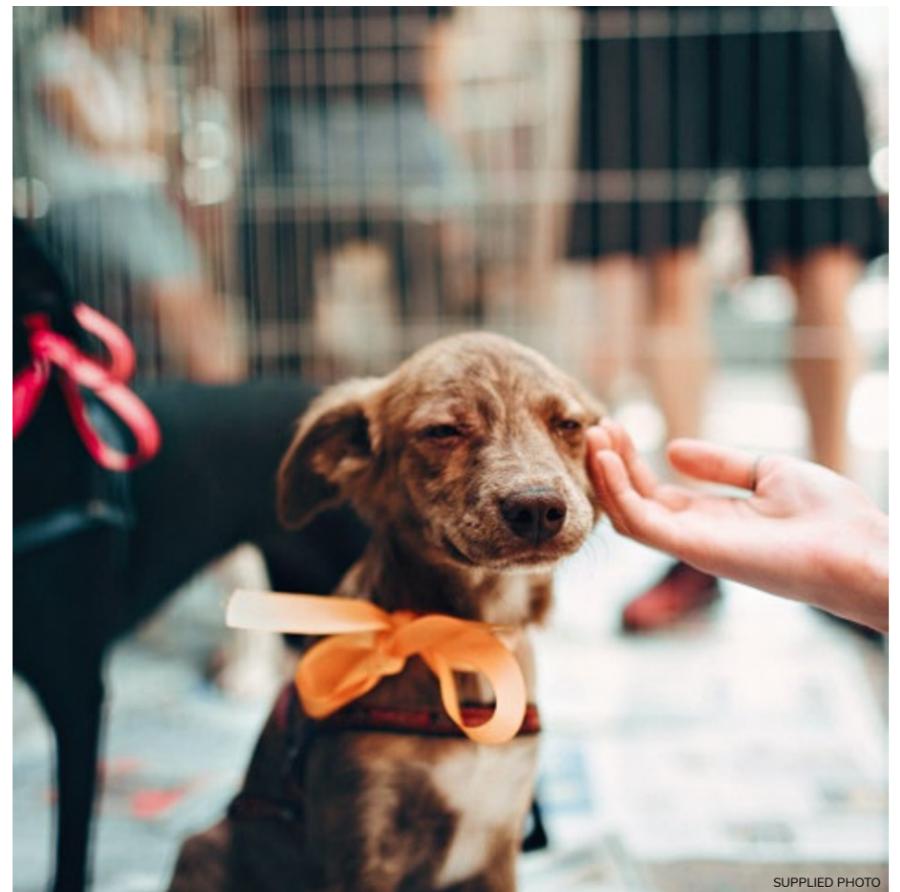
Although animal adoptions have been successful during the pandemic, shelter owners worry about what will happen to the animals when people get busy again.

Craig Street Cats founder Lynne Scott says it has been great to have fewer animals in the shelter, since there is a limited number of volunteers on site due to the current Manitoba COVID-19 restrictions. However, she worries about the future for these pandemic pets.

"I fear that, as people get back to work and live their regular lives, many of the animals adopted will be stuck at home. Or they get returned, surrendered to the shelter or worse," Scott says.

If there is a surge in surrendered animals, shelters may not have the funds, resources or ability to care for them.

"Right now, we have fewer volunteers working because of the pandemic and less money and resources available to look after all of these animals," Johnston says. "All the resources that were available to us 10



Employees of Winnipeg's animal shelters are worried for the future of the many pets adopted during the COVID-19 pandemic.

months ago are no longer there, so I can't fill up the shelter to capacity."

Despite the surge in adoptions, many shelters still struggle with funding. To continue caring for Winnipeg's animals, shelters have to stay open, and they depend on donations.

"People are donating less, and I think it is because they are holding onto their

money, but we are down 60 per cent in donations, which is a huge drop to our charity," Johnston says.

Even with a drop in donations, shelters are preparing to bring in more animals in the new year.

"When the shelters open again, they will be filled again in no time. There'll be animals looking for homes, as there always (are)," Hume says.

UNPRECEDENTED ENTREPRENEURSHIP

Launching a small business in the time of COVID-19

CIERRA BETTENS | CITY REPORTER | [FICTIONALCIERRA](#) [@CIERRABETTENS](#)

In the summer of 2020, Ava Jerao opened her modern consignment store, Shapes and Feelings. She's one of the Winnipeg entrepreneurs who launched a small business during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Operating almost exclusively online, Jerao sells pre-loved clothing with the goal of making it easier to avoid fast fashion and reduce textile waste.

"I've always been really passionate about sustainability, even as a kid," Jerao says. "I wanted to create a space online that's inclusive and accessible and offers different price points."

With roots in Winnipeg's inner-city, Jerao has carried a love for sustainability and secondhand fashion across the various Canadian cities in which she's lived. Now, back home, she established Shapes and Feelings as a way to make a sustainable lifestyle more seamless and accessible.

"One of the pillars of Shapes and Feelings is making sustainable living less daunting, trying to reduce textile waste and production and (promoting) more ethical shopping," she says.

Margaret Firlotte, a Métis beadwork artist, is another Winnipegger who has started a small business in the time of COVID-19. Known by her Instagram alias [@beadwork.by.margaret](#), Firlotte launched an online shop for her projects in the summer of 2020, as her beadwork had already been

well-received by friends and family.

Firlotte's beading journey began three years ago, when she learned from a Métis beadwork circle her mother guided. After working as a historical interpreter at the Riel House National Historic Site last summer, Firlotte says she reconnected with her Métis culture and found a sense of pride in her work.

"I was doing beadwork then, but with that newfound pride in the culture, I really just went gung-ho and fell in love with it again," she says.

Firlotte, like many Manitobans, found herself out of work due to COVID-19. Launching her beadwork business formally became a way to secure more income while sharing her projects with the public. While she says her business is still in the "infantile stage," she says the holiday season increased demand immensely.

When asked what advice she would give others looking to start small businesses amid these times, Jerao suggested hunkering down on the practical matters of starting a business, like registering the business name and opening a separate bank account.

"You can run into road bumps if you don't think about those things right at the beginning," Jerao says.

Following the practical first steps of starting a business, both entrepreneurs emphasize the importance of building connections



Ava Jerao is one of many Winnipeggers to open a new business during the COVID-19 pandemic.

with the community and other small-business owners and artisans.

Wanting to shift the consumerist narrative of Black Friday, Jerao partnered with the Wilderness Committee to donate a portion of her sales on the shopping holiday to the organization's environmental efforts.

For Firlotte, this has manifested in trad-

ing her work with other artists as a way to share projects and get mutual exposure.

"I've actually made relationships and friendships with these people," Firlotte says. "You get that exposure, but it's also good for your soul."

LOCAL NON-PROFIT HOSTS EVENT ON CANADA'S GREEN RECOVERY

Could a green recovery for Canada improve daily life?

ABIGAIL BYLE | VOLUNTEER | [@ABBYINITIO](#)

Science First, a Winnipeg-based non-profit, is holding a virtual event called Canada's Green Recovery on Jan. 16 from 1 to 3 p.m. Guest speakers will discuss the economic, scientific and social elements of a green and just recovery for Canada in its battle against climate change and recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic, followed by a question-and-answer-session with attendees.

The term "green recovery" refers to a proposed approach to a post-COVID-19 economic recovery that prioritizes environmentally conscious investment and regulation over a "business as usual" return to pre-pandemic norms.

Science First was founded by Nathan Zahn in 2015 as a non-partisan advocacy group. Zahn says their goal is to promote evidence-based policy on a wide range of issues, not only environmental concerns.

He says the event will cover a range of issues around sustainability to identify and discuss areas where science can inform policy, such as exploring what green recovery is, how big of a recovery it should be, what it will look like and what can make it a just recovery.

Guest speakers at the event include Dr. Fletcher Baragar, an associate professor of economics at the University of Manitoba, who will speak about the economic potential

of a green recovery for Canada, and Geoff Dembicki, a climate change journalist and author of *Are We Screwed? How a New Generation is Fighting to Survive Climate Change*.

Originally from Alberta and surrounded by the oil and gas industry, Dembicki says he relocated to New York to be able to write about climate action in advance of the recent US presidential election.

Dembicki was in New York to witness the September 2019 climate strikes, led by international activist Greta Thunberg, which he describes as a "huge movement of people demanding aggressive action" on the climate crisis.

In all his time writing on climate issues, Dembicki says he had never seen such wide support, with climate strikes occurring worldwide amidst widespread public interest.

"All this momentum and political power was building, and then the pandemic hit, and things were put on hold," Dembicki says.

Dembicki recognizes that Canada is facing multiple crises, including the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic and its enormous environmental and economic impact — as well as climate change, income inequality, social injustice and a housing crisis for Indigenous people. But, as Dembicki observes, the "pandemic has shown that these crises are all related."



Climate-change journalist and author Geoff Dembicki will be a guest speaker at the Jan. 16 virtual event, Canada's Green Recovery.

Dembicki says the way to move forward on major climate action is within the framework of government, because large-scale political action and investment is needed on a national level. He identifies housing as the type of national initiative that could make a real impact, from building sustainable housing for Indigenous communities to retrofitting homes across Canada to be more energy efficient.

"Energy efficiency is a significant climate

solution," Dembicki says, adding that the ultimate goal for Canada is to transition the energy grid from oil, gas and coal, which will also create jobs in the process.

As Dembicki observes, "climate action is often seen as sacrifice and giving things up. The new way of thinking is that it will improve your life," because climate policies really mean lower energy bills, cleaner air to breathe and a more economically equal and prosperous society, as Dembicki notes.



NEW YEAR, NEW TASK FORCE

Mental-health supports students can expect to see in 2021

ALEX NEUFELDT | CITY EDITOR

Now that the University of Winnipeg's (U of W) wellness and mental-health infrastructure has weathered a full semester of pandemic restrictions, those who sit at critical places in that infrastructure are able to reflect on lessons learned and move into the winter term with additional experience.

Shawna Peloquin, president of the University of Winnipeg Students' Association (UWSA), says student mental health has been a top priority of the UWSA and currently plays a role in all of their initiatives.

"I think that, this year, it's become the backbone of everything we do. All events have some aspect of supporting mental health for staff and students in the community," she says.

Peloquin says she's grateful for the quick transition the university made to online learning, because it allowed wellness infrastructure to shift the work put into physical health and safety into mental health.

"There's two components to our support: one is to offer consistent services that students can rely on for mental health and (guidance as to) services within your community. The UWSA also has the capacity to do more outreach with students and create more tools for them to bring back home," she says.

She also cites the Green Shield Canada health plan as the greatest resource the UWSA can provide to students looking for mental-health support, as it covers \$800 worth of psychology or counselling services.

Brian Theriault, the clinical co-ordinator and counsellor with the university's Student Counselling Services (SCS), says wellness services have been able to pivot online successfully because of collaboration with the rest of student services, including the Aboriginal Student Services Centre, Academic and Career Services, Accessibility Services and International, Immigrant and Refugee Student Services.

"Here at Student Counselling Services (SCS), we're able to deliver our services online in a meaningful way for students, but connecting with other departments helps us to identify greater underlying issues," he says.

Theriault says that in lieu of on-campus options to accommodate those greater issues, a host of new services has been introduced.

For example, SCS now has an intake specialist to triage student requests for counselling. Webinar Wednesdays and drop-in Zoom sessions can connect students with service teams. Aboriginal Student Services

still has the elder-in-residence program. Prior to Code Red restrictions, students without a study-supportive environment or steady internet at home could request on-campus study spaces.

"I feel like with what has happened with students and with staff, I'm pleased with my team and the other departments at how quickly we were able to meet student needs," he says. "I'm not saying we've met the needs of everyone, but with the people I'm working with, I'm glad at how quickly students were being supported and the way we were able to be creative and deliver services."

A potentially major new development in mental-health efforts on campus is the creation of an operational task force on the subject by the U of W board of regents. A motion was made on Sept. 22 to have the board take on a mental-health initiative, but according to open-session material, this was referred back to the committee due to "technical shortcomings."

The Governance and Community Relations Committee of the Board (GCRC) received a presentation on the state of mental health and wellness services on Oct. 5 from Jan Stewart, interim provost and vice-president, academic. At their next open-session meeting on Nov. 23, they passed a motion to establish an operational task force on student mental health.

While the presentation did not explicitly look at the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on the state of student mental health, Rohith Mascarenhas, chair of the board, said in an email statement that the pandemic played a part in the motion being passed.

"I wasn't at the GCRC meeting myself, but I understand that some members of that committee raised the issue in light of specific COVID impacts, and the GCRC ultimately raised it to the board for discussion in October, and it was sent back to the GCRC for further discussion about some of those issues about composition, mandate, etc.," Mascarenhas says.

"While I think COVID was the catalyst for the recommendation, it wasn't the board's intention that the committee would be limited to examining or addressing only COVID impacts on mental health, which is again why we left the language broad."

Mascarenhas says an important element of this taskforce is that there are no restrictions on who can join.

"By making it an operational commit-



ILLUSTRATION BY GABRIELLE FUNK

tee, the board's intention was to make sure it wasn't restricted to board members, but involved the university community as a whole to get diverse perspectives of those who are directly affected and access the U of W's mental-health support system, as well as those who may have mental-health expertise," he says.

"The board specifically didn't place any restrictions for joining the committee, as this level of detail is beyond the board's strategic oversight function and is an operational issue that we decided was best left to administration to determine," Mascarenhas says. Theriault says he is not aware of any current restriction to serving on the task force.

Theriault, who is a member, says that after the first task-force meeting, he felt a lot of good energy and was heartened to see so

many students present in addition to faculty and administrators.

"The fact that about half the committee was students was really good," he says. "My read on that is that there is recognition that we need identification and a plan here to address student mental health that is thorough and going to meet the needs."

Peloquin says members of the UWSA are taking part in the task force and says that "it aims to strategize what we can do for students on a larger level."

"The aim is to create a really diverse group of people to be able to bring forward initiatives that will help," she says.

Theriault says that because the taskforce is just in its infancy, they have not yet determined specific areas of the broad subject of "mental health" to focus on.

CITY BRIEFS

ALEX NEUFELDT | CITY EDITOR

Career fair going digital

This year, the University of Winnipeg's annual career fair will be online, on Jan 19. Students interested in participating can register on the university's website and will have the option of uploading their resume and sending it to exhibitors. A full list of the exhibitors is available online.

Reckoning with memorials

On Jan 21, Jennifer Scott from The New School, Dr. Omeasoo Wahpasiw from the University of Prince Edward Island and Dr. Erin Millions from the University of Winnipeg will speak in Memorial Reckoning, an online event on monuments, memorials and calls for justice. To register, email l.bosc@uwinnipeg.ca.

Study Skills Workshops start

Academic Advising is hosting several Study Skills Workshops in the winter 2021 term. Registration is available on the university website. The first two workshops will be Skills for the Virtual Classroom: Participation, Note-taking and Presentations on Jan. 18 and Start at Your Library: Navigating Library Resources Remotely on Jan. 20.

On policing and community relations

The University of Winnipeg's Global College will host the first event in their new virtual Critical Dialogues series on Jan. 14: Critical Dialogues on Policing and Community Relations in Manitoba. The event is open to everyone and will feature community leaders and members of the RCMP.

Exploring Indigenous TB knowledge

On Jan 20, Dr. Mary Jane McCallum and Dr. Erin Millions, who are co-researchers on the Advancing and Mobilizing Indigenous Tuberculosis Knowledge: Impacts of Racially-Segregated Tuberculosis Treatment in Manitoba project, will present on their work in an online event. Registration is available on the University of Winnipeg website.

Conserving the Seal River

The Manitoba chapter of the Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society and the Seal River Watershed Initiative will host Connecting for Conservation Speaker Series: Paddling Past Polar Bears on Jan. 15. The event will focus on how five Indigenous communities are working to conserve the river and feature Stephanie Thorassie from the Seal River Watershed Alliance and Caroline Wintoniw, who detailed her exploration of the river in August as speakers.



WHAT WOULD JULIE DO?

Donna Fletcher, instructor, theatre and film department, U of W

KEESHA HAREWOOD | FEATURES REPORTER | KEESHAHAREWOOD

Donna Fletcher first discovered her love for the theatrical arts as a kid, long before she ever thought she'd go into teaching, let alone become an instructor for the University of Winnipeg's (U of W) theatre and film department.

"I grew up singing and making up stories and writing plays and loving musicals," Fletcher says. "That was just what I always loved as a kid."

When Fletcher discovered she could make a living from theatre, she was beyond excited. She pursued degrees in music and musical theatre and went on to earn a master's degree in voice studies at the University of Toronto – all while Fletcher continued to do theatre on the side.

Funnily enough, one thing Fletcher never thought she would do is teach.

"I didn't want to teach at all!" she says.

But when one of Fletcher's friends at Rainbow Stage asked if she'd teach him, she discovered that not only did she have an affinity for teaching, but a love for it as well.

Now, Fletcher greatly enjoys being an instructor and working with young professionals. She says she is grateful for the opportunity to be active in theatre alongside being an instructor. And of course, her love for musicals (that originates from a childhood filled with music from *Carousel* and *The Sound of Music*, among other things) is constant and unwavering.

"You know how people have those bracelets that say 'what would Jesus do?' I want one that says 'what would Julie (Andrews) do?'"

What is something you've learned from your students?

"I've learned to listen. I've learned (that) especially in the last five, six years. I've really learned to look at experience through their eyes. I've also learned to try not to impose my story on them. I've



PHOTO BY KEELEY BRAUNSTEIN-BLACK

learned to be patient."

If you could have any superpower, what would it be?

"My daughter just asked me this a couple weeks ago! I would fly. I would absolutely fly."

What's your favourite musical?

"Wow, I have to say *Sweeney Todd* changed my life. I would say that's probably one of the seminal musicals in my life. I love the musical *A Man of No Importance*. It's a perfect little candy box of a musical."



THE UNIVERSITY OF WINNIPEG

Student Services

ADD/DROP PERIOD

The Winter Term (U2020W) Add/Drop Period is Jan. 6-19. The last day to drop a U2020W course and not be charged the fees is Tues., Jan. 19. This is different from the tuition fee deadline of Jan. 22. Students who drop a U2020W course Jan. 20-22 and onwards are still responsible for paying all of the course fees. Please consult withdrawal schedules.

STUDY SKILLS WORKSHOPS

Study Skills Workshops are designed to improve your learning skills and help you achieve your academic goals. Organized by Academic and Career Services, these workshops are FREE to all students. Topics that will be covered include note-taking, using the Library, time management, and academic writing.

The workshops for Winter Term 2021 will be delivered via Zoom on Mondays and Wednesdays, from Jan. 18 - Feb. 3. Pre-registration is required.

Please see: uwinnipeg.ca/academic-advising/study-skills-workshops.html.

CAREER FAIR

The University of Winnipeg's virtual Career Fair is Tues., Jan. 19 from 10:00 am-3:00 pm.

This is a great event for students to learn about opportunities that can help them work towards their career goals. Recruiters from a wide variety of companies and organizations will be available to chat about potential careers, part-time jobs, volunteer and internship positions, as well as educational programs.

Registration information is here: <https://app.brazencconnect.com/a/uwinnipeg/e/027Q0>

WAITLISTS

After classes have started, if you are still on a waitlist for your preferred course section, you should continue to check your webmail account daily for permission to register off of the waitlist. (NOTE: Professors will not be handing out permission slips anymore.)

If a space becomes available during the Course Add/Drop Period, you will receive an email letting you know that you can register through WebAdvisor. The "Drop Waitlist" Button will have changed to a "Register" button. Register immediately! (Or drop yourself from that waitlist using "Manage My Waitlist.")

Only students registered in a course on WebAdvisor will have access to the course materials and/or (recorded) lectures on Nexus. Nexus access will be given on the next business day after registering. Students waitlisted for a course will not have Nexus access to it. Being on a waitlist for a course does not mean that you will be given permission to register in it. Students are only admitted from the waitlist if there is space available in the course before the end of the Add/Drop Period. If space does not become available by the end of the Add/Drop Period, students can try to register in the course in a future term.

For Winter Term, the last day to register in a regularly-scheduled Winter Term 2021 course is Jan. 19. The waitlist will run for the last time on January 19 and students who receive permission on January 19 will only have that day in which to register. NOTE: Consider whether it is advisable to register in the course for which you have received permission. How far into the course is it? Do you have the time and ability to catch up? Did you miss any potential marks already? January 19 is also the last day to drop most U2020W courses for refund.

UWSA'S HEALTH PLAN AND U-PASS

The deadline to opt out of the Greenshield health plan is Jan. 19. See theuwsa.ca/healthplan details.

INTERNATIONAL EXCHANGE OPPORTUNITIES

Looking for exciting, international experience? Participate in a UWinnipeg Exchange Opportunity!

Information Session: Wed., Jan. 20 - 12:30-1:30 pm

Complete this form if you would like to

attend: Exchange Information Session

This year, we are looking for students who are interested in becoming UWinnipeg Intercultural Mentors! In this role, students will document their exchange journey via a series of vlogs, culminating in a professional video. The position comes with a \$4,000 stipend, to be used towards your exchange! Applications are via video entry – please see the Exchange website for full details: uwinnipeg.ca/study-abroad/index.html

Application deadline for Fall and Winter 2021-2022: Feb. 15

TUITION FEES FOR WINTER TERM

How do I pay my fees if Student Central is not open for in-person payments?

Tuition payments can be made using the bill payment feature on your financial institution's website.

1. Log on to your bank's website
2. Add The University of Winnipeg – Tuition as a bill payee
3. Use your seven-digit student number as the account number (International payments can be made via flywire.com.)

U2020W fees are due Fri., Jan. 22.

Note: *The fee deadline is NOT the same as the Add/Drop Period. Students who drop a U2020W course January 19-22 and onwards are still responsible for paying all of the course fees.*

SINs AND TAX RECEIPTS

The Canada Revenue Agency requires all designated educational institutions to provide students' Social Insurance Numbers (SIN) on the T2202 tax forms and so The University of Winnipeg is requesting students' SIN in order to comply with this requirement. There is a module in WebAdvisor and Student Planning through which students add their SIN to their University record. Please follow these steps:

1. Login to WebAdvisor
2. Click on Current Students
3. Click on Student Planning/Registration or Student Finance

4. Choose Social Insurance Number (SIN) Information
5. Click on the pencil/edit icon on the right side
6. Type in your nine-digit SIN and save

The University will begin the process of creating the T2202 tax forms on January 22, 2021 in order to have the forms ready to be posted on WebAdvisor on February 28. It is very important that students provide their SIN before Fri., Jan. 22.

GRADES

Grades for Fall Term classes will be posted on WebAdvisor about Wed., Jan. 27.

BURSARIES

Winter 2021 Bursaries will open mid-December 2020. Application deadline will be Mon., Feb. 1.

Need help getting connected to the financial supports you need and deserve to pay for your education? Visit the Awards website uwinnipeg.ca/awards to check out our various info pages, or Contact Us to find out the many ways you can connect with Awards and Financial Aid staff.

TRANSIT SUBSIDY

A \$78 UWSA Transit Subsidy will be available to students who purchase a semester bus pass for the 2021 Winter term. Applications are available through our online award application system and will remain open until Mon., Feb. 1.

WEBINAR WEDNESDAYS

In weekly sessions, Student Services staff will continue to share valuable strategies and tips to help you succeed at UWinnipeg. The next session is on Wed., Feb. 10. Please see: Webinar Wednesdays

FALL/WINTER TERM COURSES – FINAL WITHDRAWAL DATE

The final day to withdraw from a Fall/Winter Term (U2020FW) class is Tues., Feb. 23. No refund is applicable. Courses are dropped through WebAdvisor using the "Student Planning/

Registration" link.

BURSARIES FOR GRADUATE & PROFESSIONAL STUDIES EXPENSES

Graduate and Professional Studies Expenses Bursary is available for students in their final year of an undergraduate degree program in the 2020-21 academic year that are applying for Graduate or Professional Studies which begin in 2021-22. The application is open until funds have been exhausted.

STUDENT AID

The Canada Student Aid program is offering more loans and non-repayable forms of aid (grants) this year. If you have ever thought about applying, this would be the year to do so. You can still receive student aid for the September 2020 to April 2021 study period even as long as you apply before or in February. Go to Student Aid

MYVISIT APP

Need to see a Student Central representative or an Academic or Career Advisor? You can now queue for Zoom drop-in sessions with Student Central, and/or Academic & Career Services using myVisit!

Student Central has drop-in Zoom sessions where students can ask questions "in person" with a SC staff member.

The Zoom waiting room is enabled. One student will be admitted at a time. Students wait for their turn and need to present their UWinnipeg student card (or other photo ID) to talk about their account, the same as actual in-person interactions at SC.

To add yourself to the queue, please use the myVisit app (by Q-nomy) available for Apple or Android phones. Turn off the location permission in the app. The SMS notification when it is your turn shortly will provide the Zoom info. Student can add themselves to the queue 10:00 am - 4:30 pm from Monday-Friday.

Thirty-minute Zoom appointments with Academic and Career Advisors can be booked through the myVisit app or via www.myVisit.com as well.



COLUMN

READING IN COLOUR

Disability representation needs to be nuanced, realistic and respectful

VALERIE CHELANGAT | COLUMNIST | VALERIECHELA

In an article about the (in)visibility of disability in literature, *Daily Cardinal* writer Raynee Hamilton likens fiction to a mirror, suggesting that reading about people who look like oneself can help readers visualize what is possible.

When a reader does not see themselves represented, or when the representation is harmful, what message does that send to them? When other readers don't see a certain group included, what are they left to think?

People with disabilities are underrepresented in literature, yet, in Canada, over 6.2 million people live with one or more disabilities, according to a 2017 survey from the Learning Disabilities Association of Canada. That is 22 per cent of the Canadian population.

A *Toronto Star* survey in 2018 found only two per cent of characters in kids' books represent children with disabilities. It is even more difficult to find protagonists with a disability when multiple marginalized identities are at play.

Children with disabilities benefit from seeing themselves in books. It widens their horizons. It opens them up to the possibilities available to them.

Disability representation needs to be nuanced, realistic and respectful. Disability is often portrayed harmfully in fiction as a problem that needs fixing either through cure or death. One example is in *Me Before You*, a novel that author Jojo Moyes concludes with the assisted death of quadriplegic character Will. Will's determination to end his life tells

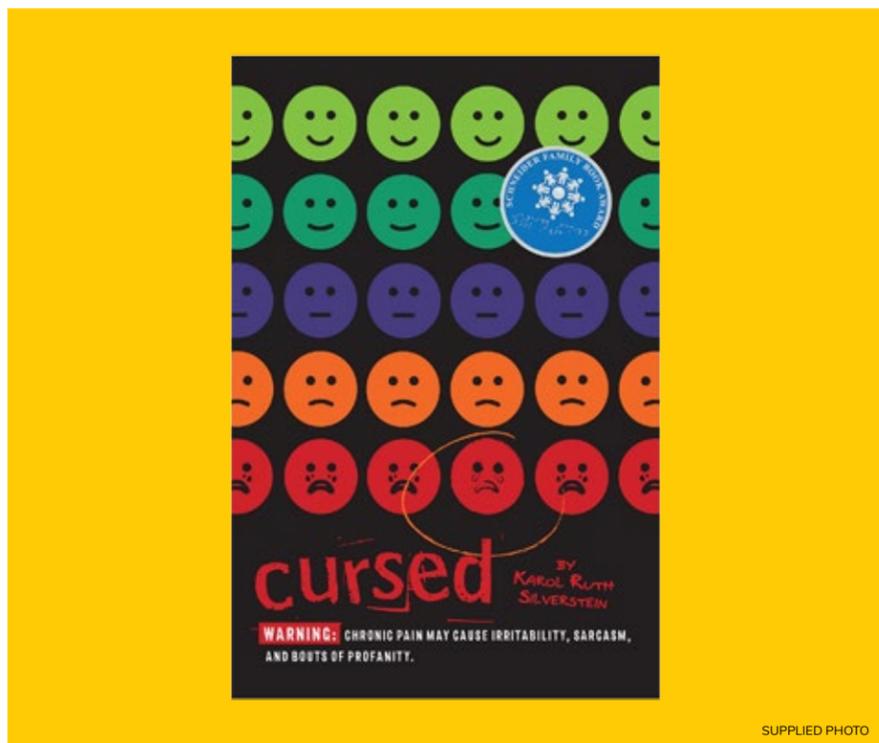
readers quadriplegia is worse than death. This portrayal lacks empathy and feeds into negative discourse around disability.

To non-disabled readers, literature that includes nuanced, realistic characters with disabilities normalizes and respects them. It acknowledges their existence as an important part of the fabric of society.

Karol Ruth Silverstein, who authored the young-adult novel *Cursed* about a teen newly diagnosed with a painful chronic illness (based on her own experience), explains in weneeddiversebooks.org that disability representation bridges "the gap between discomfort and familiarity, between fear of the unknown and true empathy."

It's important to diversify reading lists by including books that feature characters with disabilities. One book that could be a great jumping-off point is *Disability Visibility: First-Person Stories from the 21st Century*. Edited by Alice Wong, this collection of personal essays by disabled writers demonstrates the richness and complexities of disabled experiences. It paints a wholesome image of the everyday lives of people living with disabilities.

Another is *Get a Life, Chloe Brown* by Talia Hibbert, a romantic, fun read about Chloe, a chronically ill computer nerd who makes a list to help her "get a life." On her list, she includes things such as "enjoy a drunken night out, ride a motorcycle ... have meaningless but thoroughly enjoyable sex ... do something bad." Hibbert does not shy away from explor-



SUPPLIED PHOTO

Columnist Valerie Chelangat points to Karol Ruth Silverstein's *Cursed* as an example of literature that responsibly deals with disability.

ing Chloe's disability, but she also does not make it the focus of the story.

In the children's section, I would highly recommend *I Talk Like a River* by Jordan Scott, a true story aimed at children between the ages of four and eight. Scott, who stuttered as a boy, often felt isolated, alone and unable to communicate in the way he wanted. In the book, his father helps him reconnect to the world.

Finally, *A Kids Book About Disabilities* by Kristine Napper is a great place to start talking to children about disabilities. She introduces herself, her wheelchair and the condition she was born with, and then goes on to describe her

experiences in the world in a kid-friendly way.

Exposing readers to realistic and multidimensional disabled characters in literature is crucial to eliminate fear and discomfort for able-bodied people, and for those with disabilities to see themselves represented.

Valerie Nyamori is a Kenyan-Canadian writer and bookseller. She loves Winnipeg but struggles with the winter. She gets through the season by reading any books she gets her hands on and drinking too much tea.



COMMENTS

BE MORE LIKE SPIDER-MAN

We need to normalize mask use – for the kids

DANIELLE DOIRON | COPY AND STYLE EDITOR | DANIELLEDOIRON

This rant starts like many others: with something I saw on the internet. In early December, a fitness influencer, Manitoba mom and acquaintance of mine shared an anti-masker's critique of Highlights magazines on her Instagram stories.

The problem? Recent issues of their children's publications showed cartoon characters wearing masks. I won't repeat what the now-viral post caption said, but another anti-masker's comment caught my attention. "Folks, this ain't normal!"

Ain't that the truth. There's nothing normal about life during a pandemic, especially when that includes rarely leaving the house, keeping apart from family and teaching preschoolers how to wear face masks.

It's fair to say just about everyone is dealing with fear, stress and uncertainty lately, but all these emotions are often exacerbated for kids who don't know or understand what's happening. That's why it's crucial to normalize the behaviours that are now synonymous with the COVID-19 pandemic: diligent handwashing, staying home and, yes, wearing masks.

According to Health Canada and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, anyone older than two years old should wear a face mask when in public or around people

outside their household.

Showing Highlights characters wearing their masks at tree farms, doctors' offices and grocery stores is just the beginning. Entertainment media, parents and teachers can go a step further than simply normalizing pandemic life. They can and should try to make this "new normal" fun, too.

In the United States, PBS Kids released an *Arthur* short about why healthy people need to wear masks. The network also had the Kratt Brothers remind viewers to "Stay strong, stay calm and activate your mask power!"

Even adults are getting in on this. At the start of the pandemic, news outlets quickly listed song segments to play for the full 20 seconds you're supposed to spend washing your hands. Locally, Tiber River Coteries hung lyrics beside all their sinks, in case humming something from *The Greatest Showman* or '90s boy bands made the task a little easier.

As one San Diego mother interviewed by *The Washington Post* noted, her family and friends in Taiwan have worn masks for a while, and "the successful messaging revolves around superheroes."

"It's totally doable," To-wen Tseng commented. "All the kids now know Spi-



ILLUSTRATION BY GABRIELLE FUNK

der-Man is the true hero, because he covers his nose and mouth and protects himself and others. Batman is not the hero we need right now, because he covers only his forehead and ears."

A Minnesota nurse told the *Star Tribune* that positive images of people wearing masks can help young children make sense of what's happening right now.

"The way that they understand their world is through the faces around them, and that's how they feel safe. But when faces are covered – and we know that from Halloween – it's like the ground is shifting under their feet. So, we need to do what we can to help."

For older kids, celebrities and icons mod-

elling masks can also help normalize their use, despite some of the more unpleasant side effects, like bad breath or maskne. Fashion YouTuber Sierra Schultzie started using #MaskItMonday on Instagram to show her favourite "mask looks" every week.

Despite all the misinformation and fear-mongering circling online, Highlights is doing things right. Just ask Spider-Man.

Danielle Doiron is a writer, editor and marketer who splits her time between Winnipeg and Philadelphia. She's spending the pandemic reading, practising yoga and cursing out the governments in both cities she calls home.



HOROSCOPES

It's Capricorn season!

Uranus ends its retrograde at 3:35 AM on Thursday, January 14. Outer planets spend half of the year retrograde, so it's not that significant when they are retrograde, however, the days they change motion are worth paying attention to! As Uranus slows down and resumes forward motion, there's an awareness of the collective consciousness

SOURCE: ASTROLOGY.COM

ARIES

You'll easily be able to keep all of your emotions in check no matter what kind of hassle you have to deal with. Traffic woes won't worry you in the least. You'll have great music to keep you happy. Grouchy co-workers won't bug you because you'll be content to just do your work and do it well. The outside world simply has no pull with you right now. There's a calmness and clarity inside of you that keeps you on an even keel.

TAURUS

Someone's broken promises have been getting on your nerves, and today they might tip you over the edge. It's fine for you to express your frustration with this person. In fact, it's healthy, but just be careful not to burn any bridges. Just let them know that your time is too valuable for them to waste with flaky behavior. You're taking them seriously, and they need to take you seriously too. Relationships require tricky conversations every now and again. This will be one of those times.

GEMINI

If you have any concerns about your health, you need to follow up on them. The stress you're feeling by not knowing for sure is probably worse than anything you might have to deal with later. And this proactive attitude should be applied to the rest of your life too. Don't waste any more time procrastinating about doing any unpleasant tasks or having any potentially tense conversations. It's time for you to take charge of things. Show the world who's boss!

CANCER

If something smells fishy to you today, steer clear of it, and make sure the people you care about most in the world steer clear of it too. You're smart enough to know that you shouldn't get involved with stuff you're unsure of, but not everyone has had as much experience as you. A few of the more naive people in your life could benefit from someone like you looking out for them, so you should take it upon yourself to give them a heads up about untrustworthy people.

LEO

At work, now is the time for you to be a model employee in every sense of the word. Important people are keeping an eye on you! Resist the urge to goof off when you have some free time. If you can, go back and double-check your work to make sure you've covered all the details. Become self-centered in a professional sense. You should only pay attention to things today that will help you or your career. Gossiping doesn't make the cut.

VIRGO

The intellectual in you is very curious right now, and it could start reading more into someone's statements than they actually mean. Be careful not to make any commitments based on your hunches or assumptions. You're not completely objective right now, and there is a good bit of wishful thinking at play here. It's not that you can't trust your own judgments; it's just that you might want to get a second opinion about things before moving forward.

LIBRA

Are you afraid to go too deep in a new relationship? This person seems like a wonderful addition to your life, but there's something about them that either confuses or concerns you. Take some time to think more about this. Is it a legitimate fear or are you projecting some of your own stuff onto them? The conclusion might surprise you. Sometimes new people enter your life to make you question yourself, not just to enjoy yourself.

SCORPIO

Having a specific vision of what you want the next several months of your life to look like is good, but don't fall into the trap of being inflexible about it. You can't move forward in your life on railroad tracks. The path of life is much more fluid than that. You're going to encounter a few bumps in the road, and you need to be able to react more flexibly. Don't just focus on how your plans are getting messed up. Work around the problem and you'll end up in an even better place.

SAGITTARIUS

Having complete harmony in your life isn't always possible, which is actually a good thing because harmony isn't always helpful. Sometimes you need some friction to help real solutions come about and enable real learning to take place. Don't shy away from conflict all the time. Your controversial stance on a certain issue might not make you the most popular person in the room, but you're right and they're wrong! Take the opportunity to try to educate them.

CAPRICORN

Friends aren't the people who judge you in your life. Your friends are the people who can help you get over whatever problems you may be struggling with. Don't try to hide your faults from them. You will only end up pushing them away. It's time to share your worries with a person you know can relate to what you're going through. No matter how confused you are, they won't think you're stupid or whiny. They will totally support you and help brainstorm some solutions.

AQUARIUS

If growing your career is your main focus right now, you should consider switching your sights to another area of your life. Being too obsessed about your job and where you want to go next is creating an imbalance in your life. Friends and family will start to feel neglected if you're canceling your time with them in favor of working late. You are a multifaceted person, and you need to stay that way!

PISCES

Someone's odd comments could confuse you to the point where you're not sure how to take them. Are they complimenting you or insulting you? To fight off this fuzzy and uncomfortable feeling, try to spend the rest of your day with people you know, working on things you're familiar with. Getting your confidence back will enable you to see things clearly. By the end of the day, you'll be able to look back on earlier events and decode that person's odd statements.

THE AGE OF AQUARIUS

WHAT IS THE AGE OF AQUARIUS?

An astrological age is a time period in astrologic theology which astrologers claim parallels major changes in the development of Earth's inhabitants, particularly relating to culture, society and politics.

This cycle, which lasts roughly 26,000 years, means the zodiac sign visible at dawn on

the first day of spring changes about every 2,000 years.

Out of all the signs, Aquarius is the most free-thinking. The Piscean Age was dominated by a Christian patriarchal system. The new age is all about making room for a more egalitarian world.

Aquarius is heavily associated with getting informed and technology. So, the Age of

Aquarius, then, is about acknowledging that the system is broken and not waiting for someone to fix it.

As the Age of Aquarius begins, humanity is set to focus on the innovative and socialist ways that only the air element can generate for us.

SO WHAT'S NEXT?

— Knowledge is power. 2020

has shaken us all to our core and helped expose the cracks in society's foundation.

We've all experienced a shift in the way we relate to power and safety, so we should think of 2020 as the training wheels for a revolutionary couple years to come that could change the way we relate to our communities and what we value in society.



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