

THE **U** NITER

GOOD + PLENTY PRODUCER'S CLUB—P4

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THE LEGISLATIVE LOGIC BEHIND SINGLE-USE PLASTIC BANS



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SUPPLIED PHOTO

Lana Winterhalt hosts *The Good + Plenty Producer's Club Podcast*. Read more on page 6.

BREAKER BREAKER

THOMAS PASHKO
MANAGING EDITOR

  THOMASPASHKO

Watching the evolving press coverage and online discourse around the anti-vaccine-mandate trucker convoy for the past week has been fascinating. It's also been extremely frustrating.

The convoy, which is a cross-country parade of truck drivers opposed to the new rule requiring all truckers crossing the Canada-US border to be vaccinated against COVID-19, is a repeat of so much of the reactionary anti-vax rhetoric we've seen throughout the pandemic, fuelled by disinformation and wrapped up in right-wing, anti-science sentiment.

Dubbing itself the "Freedom Convoy," the group is steeped in far-right, racist and anti-Semitic sentiment. Many online were quick to point out that several of the protest's organizers are familiar to people who monitor neo-fascists in Canada. One of the most prominent, Pat King, was the founder of the Alberta branch of the separatist Wexit party and has organized violent counter-protests against anti-racism demonstrations.

One of the convoy's organizers, Tamara Lich, has said that the Freedom Convoy doesn't condone extremism among its members. But Lich herself is the current secretary of the former Wexit party, which has been renamed the Maverick Party.

The typical goons of right-wing Canadian media have come out of the woodwork to voice their support, including the dependably ghoulish Rex Murphy. In the *Winnipeg Sun*, Ryan Stelter condemned the convoy's obvious racism, saying it's "lost the plot on the original purpose of its protest."

But even putting aside the racism, the problematic far-right politics, and the fact that this overwhelmingly white protest is not representative of the majority of Canada's truckers (60 per cent of whom are Punjabi), it's important to remember that the "original purpose" of this protest was already very bad and very stupid.

Don't forget that *even if* the Freedom Convoy wasn't a deplorable carnival of the worst of Canadian racism (which it very much is), it would still be dedicated to anti-science nonsense.

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THE UNITER SPEAKER SERIES PRESENTS ADELINE BIRD

The unapologetic self

KEVIN SETTEE | VOLUNTEER | THESETTEE

Currently residing in Tkaronto, Adeline Bird is an Afro-Anishinaabe storyteller creating new waves in Canada's television and film industries.

Originally from Rolling River First Nation, Bird grew up in Winnipeg's West End. She remembers going as a child to the Blockbuster on Young Street and Portage Avenue with her father to rent movies. As a child, accessing the beaches of Lake Winnipeg wasn't always an option, so trips to the library and local movie stores played a foundation role in Bird's upbringing. Accessible stories in the inner-city helped expand her paradigm, creating new worlds and dreams of other possibilities in media.

She wrote a brilliant book, *Be Unapologetically You: A Self-Love Guide for Women of Color*, and takes every storytelling opportunity that comes her way. When she isn't writing television shows and dreaming up new projects, she is unapologetically challenging white supremacy in the dark and dirty corners of Canada's television and film industry.

How did you first get involved in filmmaking?

"Well, I'm friends with Roger Boyer, and he's been a filmmaker for a really long time.

We talked about filmmaking, and I got involved in the community, started working in wardrobe and then helping people with their short films. I always had one foot in the door with the industry. Roger really encouraged me to apply for CBC New Indigenous Voices through the National Screen Institute, so I did and got it. Through that program, I wrote and directed my first short film called *Nappy Hair and an Eagle Feather*. After my first short film, I pitched at the imagiNATIVE Film Festival contest for APTN and won. A couple months later, I applied for the Telefilm Talent to Watch Program and ended up winning that as well."

What are you currently working on?

"In 2020, I was asked to sit on the Visioning Committee for BIPOC TV and Film, which has been amazing. I love the solidarity in the industry between Black, Indigenous and People of Colour, it's so meaningful and beautiful to be part of it and witness the work. Along with that work, I moved to Toronto in 2020 and have been freelancing here ever since. I've been able to do some work for *Etalk*, *The Social* and Sportsnet. My book sales started picking up in 2020, because of the pandemic. Everyone needed to find stuff to do at home. So I was like okay, here is an opportunity for me to move To-

ronto in the middle of the pandemic. I didn't know what this was going to look like, but I knew I needed to be out here. I didn't know how or why, but I moved out here, and honestly it has elevated my career the one year I've been here.

What are some of the challenges you've experienced in Canadian film and television?

"After the murder of George Floyd, I got pulled into a lot meetings around diversity and inclusion. Everything from festivals, funders, broadcasters, and I was included in a lot of those conversations. Let me tell you, I was brought into a lot of these meetings as just a Black face. I'm in these meetings, talking about what we are navigating as a community, and they are all confused and have no idea what I'm talking about. For me, my identity is so normal, I forget there is a bigger world that doesn't even realize we are here. It's such a crazy ride, and I'm going to write a book about it someday. The fear that white people have of us is so real ... (I also see a lot of) manipulation and fear of Indigenous people. They are scared to get to know us. Why do they only want to get to know us in a month, like Black History Month or Indigenous History Month? A lot of the barriers are just white supremacy, how much whiteness seeps into everything. It is exhausting."

What has filmmaking taught you about yourself?

Because I'm always going, I haven't had time to just stop and absorb everything. But what I've learned is that I can go far. Some people have tried to tell me I've gone too far into the industry, but at the same time, another thing I've learned is we haven't been given the opportunities, so how do we know what 'too far' looks like? Being part of the industry has opened my eyes to my own identity and my world, as well as all the other perspectives, narratives and voices that I'm still learning about. I'm still learning and being intro-

duced to new voices all the time. It honestly liberates me. The generation coming behind me is so talented. I'm so inspired by them."

What advice would you give someone who wants to learn and get involved in filmmaking?

"Do it. We need more Indigenous people in this industry. You don't need to be a writer, producer or shooter! This industry has over 200 different types of jobs for everyone. We need people in hair, makeup, sound. We need you heading these departments. Think about when you are creating a set. You are building a new world. You need electricians, architects and designers. We need Native entertainment lawyers, and one day I'd love to hire all of you!"

What kind of projects do you want to work on in the future?

"Honestly, I don't want to be doing this for a long time. I want to eventually be supporting other people ... I hope that we can get to a point where seeing ourselves on television isn't a huge deal. It's important and we celebrate it, but I don't think we are there just yet. I hope we can get to a point where we can tell our stories how we want to, whether it's people sharing their trauma or doing a comedy. Someone once asked me a question, 'Don't you think there is too much Indigenous comedy?' and I was like hell no, there is not enough. To me there will never be enough. I hope we can get to a space where this is a world we are leading, running and acting in our own shows."

Kevin Settee is a filmmaker based in Winnipeg. He is the writer and director of *The Lake Winnipeg Project*.

ARTS BRIEFS

CIERRA BETTENS | ARTS AND CULTURE EDITOR | FICTIONALCIERRA CIERRABETTENS

Open beading circle

Mentoring Artists for Women's Art (MAWA) is hosting a cross-cultural beading workshop on Jan. 31 from 6 to 8 p.m. Participants have the option of joining in person at MAWA (611 Main St.) or virtually over Zoom. Kits can be picked up in advance at MAWA. Space is limited. Email Niamh Dooley at dooley@mawa.ca to request registration.

Grants for arts!

The Feb. 8 deadline for the Winnipeg Arts Council (WAC)'s Project Grant Program is just around the corner, but there's still time to apply. New and emerging arts organizations and collectives are encouraged to apply for the grant, which offers a maximum of \$10,000 to be put toward projects with artistic and civic impact. Visit bit.ly/3tXyZTB for eligibility requirements and details on how to apply.

Skywalk lectures

The annual Skywalk lecture series, presented by the Winnipeg Public Library in conjunction with the University of Winnipeg, will take place virtually this year. On three Wednesdays in February (9, 16, and 23) from 12 to 12:50 p.m., features distinguished U of W faculty members. The first lecture is a talk by Dr. Yannick Molgat-Seon on how sex influences the physiology of the human pulmonary system. Register through the library's calendar via wpl.libcal.com.

Helen Chau Bradley launches debut book

On Feb. 9 at 7 p.m., join Helen Chau Bradley for the launch of their debut collection of stories, *Personal Attention Roleplay*. The collection brings in themes of "queer loneliness, mixed-race confusion, late capitalist despondency and the pitfalls of intimacy." Presented by McNally Robinson Booksellers, Chau Bradley will be in conversation with authors Anne Leventhal and Jenny Heijun Wills. Register for the Zoom event by visiting bit.ly/3nYQG1d.

PEOPLE series returns to the stage

Performance and movement artists Ian Mozden and Matthew Sawatsky will perform in the second installment of the *PEOPLE* presentation, titled *PEOPLE LET NOTHING IN*. They are joined by dancer D-Anne Kuby and photographer Leif Norman for a night of music, dance and performance. The show will take place at the Rachel Browne Theatre (211 Bannatyne Ave.) on Feb. 13 at 8 p.m. Tickets are a suggested price of \$15 and can be purchased through Eventbrite.

PATHWAYS TO A DIGITAL LEGACY

Buffy Sainte-Marie exhibition sheds light on innovative work

ISABELLA SOARES | ARTS AND CULTURE REPORTER | [BELLASOARES0601](#) [@BELLA_SOARES16](#)

The new year started well for Academy Award-winning singer-songwriter, Indigenous activist and digital artist Buffy Sainte-Marie. In addition to her new deal with Cameron Strang's Howe Sound Publishing and a documentary being produced by White Pine Pictures, Sainte-Marie is getting the recognition she deserves for her lasting impact in the Canadian arts and culture scene through an exhibition at Urban Shaman Gallery in Winnipeg.

The exhibition, which features works from Sainte-Marie's digital portfolio, includes blended scanned images of her sketches, beadwork and other pieces. Though Urban Shaman Gallery is currently temporarily closed due to COVID-19, a virtual showing will run from now until March 5.

Although she has been in the public eye for years, Sainte-Marie is often not recognized for accomplishments outside of her music. This exhibition is an opportunity for her to reclaim her own narrative and share more about her personal life.

"Mostly I learned about how much misinformation there is out there about her. I think the biggest takeaway from this is that Buffy Sainte-Marie is an example of longevity and authenticity as an artist," Paquin Entertainment curatorial manager

Natasha Lowenthal says about what she learned during the process of curating the *Buffy Sainte-Marie: Pathfinder* exhibition alongside the artist herself.

Lowenthal says Sainte-Marie was "at the forefront of (digital art) before the medium was used for art's sake."

The exhibition showcases over 16 digital paintings (some made with an Apple Macintosh computer), as well as artifacts, never-before-seen sketches and behind-the-scenes footage. All these artistic elements shed light on her impact in folk music (most notably for her antiwar anthem "Universal Soldier" and the Oscar-winning "Up Where We Belong"), her vocal support for education and her involvement in Indigenous rights since her career began in the early '60s.

To commemorate the exhibition before it became open to the public at the end of 2021, Sainte-Marie paid a visit to the gallery in a private get-together.

"It was great to have her here. She was here for the Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs event (Jingle Mingle) and wanted to present her exhibition at the same time here in Winnipeg. She came in and walked through the show with us, and it was really great to hear more about her work," Daina Warren, Urban Shaman's gallery director, says.



SUPPLIED PHOTO

Buffy Sainte-Marie: Pathfinder is an exhibition of digital art by the iconic musician.

Although *Pathfinder* was available to see in person by appointment at the gallery when it launched, the new wave of the COVID-19 pandemic led to an imminent shutdown. To allow people to continue connecting to this and other Indigenous artwork, Urban Shaman made virtual tours available.

"The virtual galleries have become a long-time goal, because we tend to do a lot more outreach with reserve and remote

communities. This is just one way we are hoping to connect with them and show them what our programming is all about," Warren says.

The *Buffy Sainte-Marie: Pathfinder* virtual gallery is already available through urbanshaman.org. The exhibition will continue at Urban Shaman until March 2022, so there may still be time to check it out in person if the gallery reopens.

COMEBACK KID IS MAKING HEAVY STEPS

Hardcore kings of the north release seventh studio album

GRAHAM BURNS | VOLUNTEER

On Friday, Jan. 21, Comeback Kid released their seventh studio album via Nuclear Blast America. The aptly titled *Heavy Steps* is the band's first release since their 2017 LP *Outsider*.

The final result is a roaring 32 minutes of Comeback Kid's signature anthemic, gritty – albeit melodic – hardcore sound.

Hailing from Winnipeg, lead vocalist Andrew Neufeld and lead guitarist Jeremy Hiebert founded Comeback Kid in 2000 alongside former members Kyle Profeta (drums, 2000 to 2014) and Scott Wade (vocals, 2000 to 2006).

From there, Comeback Kid went on to release their debut album *Turn It Around* in 2003, which was followed by 2005's *Wake the Dead*. Shortly after, Wade left the band as they were exploding onto the global hardcore punk scene.

"By the time Scott quit, we were full-steam touring Europe. That's when it clicked that we were all very eager to travel and wanted to play in as many places as possible," Neufeld says.

Having started out as the band's rhythm guitarist, Neufeld became the frontman after Wade's departure in 2006 and has remained there ever since.

Heavy Steps is filled with Comeback Kid's signature hardcore tones, yet the

band has managed to add brand new layers to its hardcore musical repertoire.

"We really were focused on making the guitar tones heavier, and with the vocals we tried to be dynamic and add a lot of different layers. It's a traditional hardcore sound. There's melodic anthems, but we're still heavily relying on modern production and new fun plug-ins to play with," Neufeld says.

However, Comeback Kid has had to face another, albeit unwelcomed, challenge: the COVID-19 pandemic.

Beyond stretching their creative boundaries in the studio, Neufeld also says the pandemic has forced his band to push the envelope when it comes to performing.

"We're welcoming of a unique kind of show experience. For us, we have a good time playing. We want to come out of this better, and this (pandemic) gives us that extra kick in the ass to try to do better," Neufeld says.

Comeback Kid has played a handful of shows for distanced crowds, but the band has managed to keep those performances energetic and hard-hitting.

The band is set to tour Canada in support of *Heavy Steps* in March and April. Fellow Canadian hardcore heavyweights Cancer Bats will join Comeback Kid for this leg of the tour.



GEORGIA RASON (SUPPLIED)

Winnipeg hardcore veterans Comeback Kid are back with a new album, their first in five years.

Comeback Kid will kick things off with three shows in Ontario, then play in their beloved Winnipeg on Apr. 15 at the Park Theatre then finish off with two shows in British Columbia before heading to Europe in July.

With the release of *Heavy Steps*, Comeback Kid fans do not have to worry about the pandemic having any effect on the band. When speaking about the challenges his band has faced throughout the years,

Neufeld says Comeback Kid has never quit. "We've never taken a hiatus. If there's one thing that I've been sure of, it's been this band for a long time," Neufeld says.

Heavy Steps is a first-rate hardcore album and an affirmation of Comeback Kid's relentless attitude.

For more information about tour dates, visit comeback-kid.com.

INCLUSIVE PRODUCTIONS

The Good + Plenty Producer's Club is a safe space for change

ISABELLA SOARES | ARTS AND CULTURE REPORTER | [TW BELLASOARES0601](#) [IG BELLA_SOARES16](#)

Good + Plenty WPG was founded in January 2020 as a vehicle to promote local music and live events by women, non-binary and trans artists. With a full programming schedule planned, mass cancellations led the creative team to rethink their plans to connect with the music community through a recently launched Producer's Club and a corresponding podcast.

Lana Winterhalt, the podcast host and one of Good + Plenty WPG's co-founders, explains that her personal experience with representation within the Manitoba production scene was practically non-existent.

Drawn by the questions surrounding diversity within music and film production, Good + Plenty Producer's Club became a platform to help ensure those who are underrepresented in Winnipeg's music scene are given space to thrive and address solutions for barriers that are still standing.

"I've been a producer for the past couple years and wasn't seeing much diversity within the city. I was trying to find a mentor for myself that was a woman or non-binary or a trans producer in Manitoba, who was working professionally for a few years. I was thinking that there must be someone that is working and that I don't know yet," she says.

To Winterhalt's surprise, she was told

she was one of the few most qualified producers that fit the profile in the local scene. This led her to discuss the obstacles preventing women, non-binary and trans production students from pursuing a career in the industry with mentors John Paul Peters and Vanessa Peters. A few identified reasons involve a lack of funding and approvals.

In addition to the club, the podcast is an outlet for producers to share their experiences in the industry and inspire young people to pursue this career. Artist, songwriter and producer Sarah MacDougall is based in Ontario and joined the podcast for its second episode.

"There has been a lack of support and role models for gender minorities in the audio engineering and production world for a long time, and I think podcasts such as this one are really important for visibility and community," MacDougall says in an email to *The Uniter*.

To make sure listeners receive the affirmation to carry on, Winterhalt reminds them at the end of every episode that their art, music, poetry and perspective in life matter. She is convinced this will somewhat remedy the usual feeling of imposter syndrome that might prevent them from wondering if their work is good enough.



Lana Winterhalt is the host of *The Good + Plenty Producer's Club Podcast*.

As of Jan. 23, the Producer's Club includes 50 members involved in the production process. The upcoming podcast episodes include a solid lineup of women, non-binary and trans professionals both in and out of the province.

"Production is already an isolated job as it is, but through this initiative we saw how many people are in the field, and

there are a lot more people interested in being in this field," Winterhalt says.

Tune in to *The Good + Plenty Producer's Club Podcast* on all major streaming platforms.

ENVIRONMENTAL CRISIS THE FOUNDATION OF NEW THEATRICAL WORKS

TPM showcases local talent to talk about climate change

REBECCA DRIEDGER | ARTS AND CULTURE REPORTER | [TW REBECCADRIEDGER](#)

Theatre has been a medium for change for centuries. Theatre Projects Manitoba (TPM) is contributing to that history with their new show *Climate & Main*, which will bring attention to climate-related issues.

Climate & Main is a mixture of new works by local playwrights and a few international pieces.

"Before Christmas, we had been in talks with a company out in New York called The Arctic Cycle, and they were taking part in something called Climate Change Theatre Action," Michelle Boulet, interim artistic coordinator for TPM, says. "It is a worldwide event, and they were trying to encourage theatres to put up some programming that was identified specifically as dealing with climate change."

TPM posted a call for submissions on social media in December and recently announced *Climate & Main's* participating playwrights and artists: Waawaate Fobister, Victoria Hill, Tanner Manson and Jack Maier.

Manson says he is excited to work on

this project with his friend and fellow theatre-maker Hill.

Manson says *Climate & Main* was a great opportunity for them to experiment and create something together. Their piece is currently a work in progress, but he hinted that it will involve some type of movement or dance.

"My favourite thing about theatre is process," Manson says. "The process of making and discovering new things with artists, nurturing and creating relationships with collaborators, the process of learning about my own arts practice by sharing the arts practice of many (and) learning from each other."

Using theatre as a space to talk about the climate emergency can be fun, and both audiences and creators alike can learn something about how we treat the planet. Manson says it is also a topic that needs to be addressed with care.

"I think theatre can be a tool to spark change. I think whenever we take the time



to listen, there are little shifts that happen all the time in ourselves, and theatre sets you up to listen to a story, usually with others," Manson says. "There's something really beautiful about having a potentially deeply personal experience in a sea of patrons also having potentially deep personal experiences of realizations. If nothing else, theatre reminds us to listen more, and that things are impermanent."

Climate & Main was initially created to be a part of The Bridge, the Royal Manitoba Theatre Centre's annual festival of ideas, but due to the Omicron wave of COVID-19, Boulet is shifting the show to

be held at a different venue later in the year. "You really do adapt. And it's just such a huge metaphor for climate change," Boulet says. "The world that we're living in is not going to be the world that we were born into. And so artistic practice, the whole idea, the whole notion of artistic planning, it's all evolved, and it will continue to evolve."

To keep up with *Climate & Main* and future show dates, follow TPM on Facebook, Instagram or Twitter @TPMwinnipeg or sign up for their newsletter at theatreprojectsmanitoba.ca.



CRITIEG



MONGREL MEDIA (SUPPLIED)

RED ROCKET

Plays at Cinematheque Feb. 4 to 17



THOMAS PASHKO | MANAGING EDITOR | [Twitter](#) [Instagram](#) THOMASPASHKO

Since breaking through with 2015's *Tangerine*, writer-director Sean Baker has made a name for himself as an auteur utilizing guerilla-style shooting to create humorous and humanizing portraits of marginalized people on the fringes of American society. While his newest, *Red Rocket*, continues in that tradition, it injects a new darkness into his body of work.

Red Rocket stars Simon Rex as Mikey, a down-on-his-luck porn actor who returns to his economically depressed Texas hometown. Mikey appears at the doorstep of his estranged wife (Bree Elrod)

and mother-in-law (Brenda Deiss). It's unclear why exactly Mikey has fallen out with the porn industry. He arrives on a bus from Los Angeles with a bruised face and no money. He soon begins selling weed to try and get back on his feet, all the while boasting of his imminent return to adult-film stardom.

Mikey is a walking bouquet of red flags. He's the kind of narcissist who burns through the people around him faster than he can collect them. According to him, nothing is ever his fault. He's deeply misogynistic. Every social interaction is transactional to him. These are

scary qualities. But the scariest thing about him is how likable and charming he is despite being such a bastard. If he were simply an off-putting creep, he'd be less threatening than the wolf in sheep's clothing he actually is.

The true danger of Mikey becomes apparent when he initiates a relationship with Strawberry (Suzanna Son), a teenage donut-shop employee. Strawberry is bright, mature and in way over her head with Mikey. Mikey claims to be many things: a pornstar, an agent, a talent scout. But as Strawberry gets in deeper with him, it becomes clear what he really is: a predatory pimp.

Several of Baker's previous films (*Tangerine*, *The Florida Project*) have been empathetic stories of sex workers, showing the joy of their daily lives as well as the dangers they face. *Red Rocket* is a movie that's literally about one of the human dangers they face. It's like the Baker version of *Volcano* or *Twister*. There is a natural disaster wreaking havoc on all who touch it, and its name is Mikey.

Baker continues his practice of integrating first-timers or non-performers

with established actors. Rex's performance has been rightly praised, but non-professionals like Deiss or Ethan Darbone hold their own with him. The film's real hidden gems, though, are Son as Strawberry (this is her first acting role) and Elrod as Mikey's wife Lexi (Elrod is an accomplished theatre actor, but her sole prior screen credit is as an unnamed patient in 2010's *Shutter Island*).

The film plays out against the backdrop of the 2016 US presidential election. There are obvious parallels between Mikey and Donald Trump, both exploitative predators who take credit for others' success while shucking blame for their own failures. But the more trenchant commentary of *Red Rocket* is illustrating how the people in this floundering Gulf Coast town, or hundreds of others like it, could fall for these hucksters. These stagnant towns failed by the system, where the poor get poorer and the rich don't exist, are feeding grounds for con men like Mikey and his ex-presidential counterpart.

MOSAIC AWARD INVESTS IN EMERGING FILM VOICES

Neckoway's *Language Keepers* receives additional production funds

REBECCA DRIEDGER | ARTS AND CULTURE REPORTER | [Twitter](#) [Instagram](#) REBECCADRIEDGER

Funds can be the most significant stepping stone for a filmmaker's career, so awards are highly sought after. There are several awards and funds available for filmmakers in Winnipeg, and the winner of the Mosaic award from Winnipeg Film Group was just announced.

"The Mosaic Film Fund is an award open specifically to women/non-binary-identified people to support those who come from an Indigenous or diverse cultural background to create their first short film," Karen Remoto, production department and training coordinator for the Winnipeg Film Group, says.

The award covers a host of supports for blossoming filmmakers, including living expenses, mentorship, services from Winnipeg Film Group, accessibility supports and a screening of their short film at Cinematheque.

Remoto had the opportunity to be on this year's selection committee alongside filmmakers Chanelle Lajoie, Kristin Snowbird and Erin Hembrador.

The committee "judges an applicant's artistic vision, script, production-schedule plan, budget and other materials filmmakers have given us," Remoto says.

This year, the award was given to Fawn-

da Neckoway, a member of Nisichawayasihk Cree Nation and an alum of the Academy of Acting and the National Screen Institute's New Voices Program.

The award will help fund Neckoway's project *Language Keepers*, which will focus on two people as they learn the basics of their Indigenous language.

"The award is a great start. I'm really looking forward to the mentorship aspect of it as experience, and guidance is just as valuable," Neckoway says. "There will be portions allocated for production costs and equipment, so overall it's going to help a lot and provide a good stepping stone."

Remoto says the fund acts as a starting point for emerging filmmakers to transition into more established filmmakers.

"It helps them gain footing in how to create a film from pre-production to post-production and hopefully encourages them to connect with other filmmakers they could work with in the future," Remoto says.

Neckoway says she's excited about the project, which she believes will resonate with local audiences.

"I've noticed over the past while (that) other Indigenous people in my generation have expressed interest in also wanting to learn our languages, and I've found that



SUPPLIED PHOTO

Fawnda Neckoway is the recipient of the 2022 Mosaic award from the Winnipeg Film Group.

encouraging. People (are) taking their own initiatives to educate themselves and connect, noticing workshops available through organizations or groups coming together to learn," Neckoway says.

"Maybe this can help others who also want to learn and keep their language active."

Remoto is looking forward to seeing the end product of *Language Keepers* after hear-

ing about the project.

"Language is such an important influence in how you connect to your culture and how you interact with those around you. Not being tied to your original language at an early age can displace you from an identity others have comfortably inherited," Remoto says.

Looming legislation

Alan Diduck, professor and department chair in the University of Winnipeg Department of Environmental Studies and Sciences, recalls working in Manali, India in 1998, three years after the town introduced a ban on plastic bags. Diduck notes that many jurisdictions, from municipalities to whole countries, have already introduced some degree of single-use plastic ban by now, often due to the impact plastic bags have on infrastructure like greywater systems.

“But sometimes there’s political pushback,” he says. “The issue can be highly political, and the decisions can be made on the political winds of the day and how they blow.” He mentions the City of Victoria’s attempt to ban single-use plastic bags, which was challenged by a lawsuit by the Canadian Plastic Bag Association. The appeals court initially favoured the municipality but later overturned the ban in favour of industry lobbyists, which was then overturned again in favour of the ban in 2020.

Many single-use plastic-reduction initiatives were paused in the early days of the COVID-19 pandemic, especially before it was confirmed that the virus is not transmitted by surface fomites. This uncertainty was capitalized upon by plastic manufacturers.

Now, in 2022, a partial ban in Canada seems inevitable.

On Dec. 21, 2021, the Government of Canada announced that a ban on single-use plastic – including checkout bags, cutlery, foodservice ware made from or containing problematic plastics, ring carriers, stir sticks and straws – proposed in 2020 and to be enforced through the Canadian Environmental Protection Act, will in fact be going into effect as early as late 2022.

In the two years since the proposition, provincial, territorial and municipal governments and businesses have been slowly examining their own policies to bring themselves in line with the imminent legislation. However, with a general lack of clear direction from the federal government, the effectiveness of these anticipatory actions has been a little uncertain.

What constitutes single-use?

Defining single-use plastic in a legislatively useful way can be complicated, as many products that can be used multiple times or recycled are produced in such abundance and repurchased at such a high rate that they are often used once and then disposed of.

Plastic water bottles are one example of this: a person can reuse and repurpose a plastic water bottle, but many don’t. The same is true for plastic cutlery, produce clamshells, plastic bags and reusable packaging. The most accessible option to purchase many products requires also repurchasing the packaging, and while some of that packaging might be reused by consumers, much of it is recycled or thrown away.

Which items are specifically targeted by single-use plastic bans depends a lot on what waste is most common and what alternatives exist. Colleen Ans, the coordinator of the Living Green, Living Well program at Green Action Centre, notes that the six items selected for the federal ban were determined by evaluating which products were most commonly found in ocean pollution and which products have viable alternatives that they could see businesses swapping to. Cigarette butts, for example, are the most abundant pollutant in the world, but until there is a market-viable non-plastic alternative for their filters, they probably will not be the subject of plastic bans, according to Ans.

Plastic subjectivities: ableism and the banning of plastic straws

When Seattle banned single-use plastic straws in 2018, there was a lot of discourse about introducing similar bans in other jurisdictions and a large shift toward purchasing reusable straws. Some people with disabilities, for whom single-use plastic straws are often the safest and most usable option for liquid consumption, pointed out that these campaigns relied on ableist assumptions about straw use and what constitutes a viable alternative product. They argued that bans would ultimately limit the ability of many people with disabilities to participate in society.

As governments move towards legislation further restricting single-use plastic, it is important that their approach reflects the nuanced relationships different communities have with these products and barriers to the current alternatives, from economic barriers to specific-use cases where a feasible alternative does not currently exist.

Many grocery stores have already switched from plastic bags to paper, but Joelle Robinson, chairperson of the Manitoba League of Persons with Disabilities, points out that, in many cases, those bags don’t have handles, which makes them impractical for people using scooters or wheelchairs.

“Bags need handles at minimum if you’re using a scooter



SUPPLIED PHOTO

Alan Diduck, professor and department chair in the U of W’s Department of Environmental Studies and Sciences



SUPPLIED PHOTO

Colleen Ans, Living Green, Living Well program coordinator



or wheelchair," she says. "The sizing of reusable bags is very large, so again if you're using a wheelchair or scooter, those bags are so big that they're too long for the handlebars and drag on the floor."

Robinson stresses that people with disabilities are not monoliths and, like able-bodied people, will adapt when single-use plastic restrictions are adopted.

"You might carry a straw with you if you need one, you might ask a server for a straw, because generally they will have paper straws," she says. "There are workarounds, and people with disabilities are some of the most creative problem-solvers in the world, because every day we are presented with challenges."

However, given issues of affordability and access to suitable alternatives, Robinson says decision-makers should include people with a variety of disabilities and people from a wide variety of communities in all decision-making if they want to avoid proposing rudimentary solutions to complex problems.

"Have people with physical disabilities on committees when you're making changes to the built environment, include people with disabilities in everything when you're making changes to legislation."

"It's not just items that are specifically related to persons with disabilities. It is not just worrying about the built environment or braille or font size," she says. "Have people with physical disabilities on committees when you're making changes

to the built environment, include people with disabilities in everything when you're making changes to legislation."

Recycling revenue

What Canadian legislators consider to be a viable alternative is also determined by which are market-viable rather than those that are able to totally replicate the utilities of the targeted object.

"In the society that we live in, it's also about making a profit, so that business is just something that we just have decided to live with and need to work around," Ans says.

"Better disposables is not creating a solution. It's just lessening some of the more harmful impacts," she says. "There is still a carbon footprint behind paper bags, and even if we can dispose of them better, we are still disposing of them. We need alternatives that reduce waste overall, not just plastic waste."

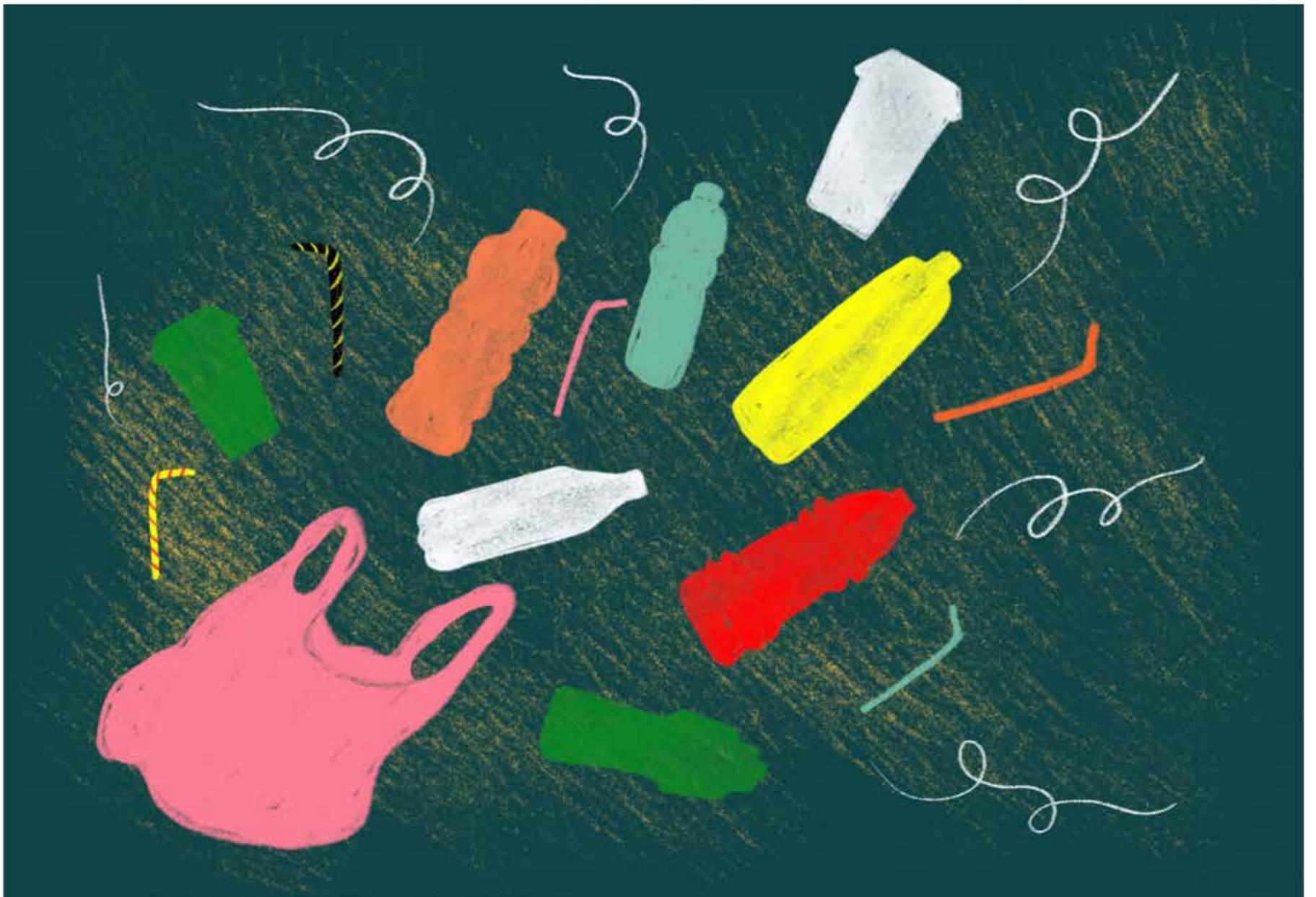
Ans says that while Winnipeg has a high recycling rate, the process is energy-inten-

sive and leaves out many materials. She says it's important to reuse when possible and introduce legislation that limits the distribution of items that cannot be disposed of in an environmentally responsible way.

She notes that recycling was invented by plastic companies to avoid blowback for ecological damage, but that it is generally better to purchase something recycled than something new.

However, since recycling is contracted to private companies, what is and isn't recycled is determined by the value of materials. Some plastics are frequently sent to landfills by recycling companies because the recycled product would be of a very low quality, so the ecological value of diverting it is not financially worth it.

In this regard, single-use plastic bans are "a good message to show, as a country, that waste reduction is something we're focusing on," Ans says. "It takes the responsibility out of the consumer's hands and puts them into the corporations. It's



creating a system that no longer allows (these single-use plastic products), so we don't have to find another use for them or go out of our way to avoid them. Alternatives will now be provided to us. It's a great first step."

What communities and non-producing businesses can do

Ans also highlights the need to divest from industries that produce single-use plastics and invest in companies that prioritize social and environmental responsibilities, and the need for better awareness and public education regarding how to dispose of different objects. This is especially important with products that consumers are new to dealing with, like COVID-19 PPE, which can be recycled at several Terracycle boxes around Manitoba.

Businesses that don't manufacture plastic also have a responsibility to reduce plastic usage in their workplace.

As the coordinator of the Living Green, Living Well program, which provides consultation services for businesses, schools and individuals to find greener alternatives, Ans suggests that businesses avoid purchasing plastic-bottled water (tap water is best, jugged water is preferable to bottled), have a coffee maker and compost bin in their office and require employees to manage their own non-recyclable, non-compostable garbage rather than providing office garbage removal.

Sherry Sobey says that when it comes to businesses, "there are options available now, and unfortunately some of them are a bit more costly, but when you weigh that, I just think it's a responsibility that we have as business owners with what we're putting out."

Sobey is the founder and owner of Generation Green, a store that prioritizes green products and features a refill shop where customers can bring in refillable containers to purchase products, and the Acorn Cafe, which uses

exclusively compostable and reusable items. Even when people have been second-guessing reusables during the pandemic, she says there are options to reduce plastic and potential disease transmission.

Taking responsibility

Diduck says he sees all levels of government displaying interest in developing single-use plastic bans. For such legislation to be effective, it needs to impact "manufacturing, import and sales, perhaps including social marketing guidance regarding alternatives," meaning effective communication about what alternatives can be used and how to use them safely, as well as "incentives for development of alternatives, giving consideration for the full impacts of those alternatives."

Diduck cites a University of Arizona study that found reusable shopping bags to be a hotspot for E.coli growth as one example of an alternative that requires

some additional study and public education to be an effective alternative.

"When you issue a ban on single-use plastics, people look for alternatives and manufacture them and sell them, and consumers will buy them and use them," he says, "so consideration for the impact of those alternatives need to be considered, whether that's climate change implications or production of alternatives or the pollution implications."

There are Terracycle PPE recycling drop-off boxes at Red River College, the University of Manitoba Fort Garry and Banatyne campuses, Assiniboine Park Zoo, Birds Hill Provincial Park, Spruce Woods Provincial Park, Winnipeg Beach Provincial Park, Clearwater Provincial Park, Pinawa Dam Provincial Heritage Park, St. Malo Provincial Park, Grand Beach town site and campground office, Falcon Beach town site, Falcon Lake Beach campground office and West Hawk Lake campground office.

CITY BRIEFS

ALEX NEUFELDT | CITY EDITOR

Have your say in parking signage

The City of Winnipeg is considering changing parking signage for greater clarity and is looking for public input regarding which signs are more clear to drivers. If you would like to provide feedback, fill out the survey at engage.winnipeg.ca.

River Trail officially open

The Nestaweya River Trail – the cleared skating trail on the Assiniboine and Red Rivers – has officially been completely connected and open as of Jan. 24. The six-kilometer trail stretches from The Forks to Hugo on the Assiniboine River and from The Forks to Churchill Drive on the Red River.

Understanding genocide in international law

On Feb. 3, the Mamawi Project is holding the latest event in the Mamawi Aachimotaak (let's tell stories together) visiting series, titled "The International Crime of Genocide: Is Canada Guilty?" The event will be hosted by Breanne Lavallée-Heckert from Red River Echoes.

Reading week, rescheduled

Due to scheduling issues, the Fall 2022 reading week will now be held at a different time in October or November. The UWSA is running a survey to gather student input on when the break should be rescheduled. To contribute, fill out the survey at theuwsa.ca.

Main Street Project gets millions

The Government of Manitoba and Government of Canada will contribute \$1.5 million in funding to the Main Street Project to provide renovations that would expand overnight bed capacity and ensure physical distancing could be maintained. The project has also received major donations from the Winnipeg Foundation and from private donors.

Reading and Q and A with Lindsay Wong

Lindsay Wong, author of *The Woo-Woo, My Summer Of Love And Misfortune* and upcoming short-story collection *Tell Me Pleasant Things About Immortality* is giving a virtual reading and Q and A on Jan. 28 from 12:30 to 1:30 p.m. The event is hosted by the University of Winnipeg English Department.

FEDS FUND AFFORDABLE HOUSING UNITS

Will serve women, Indigenous and LGBTQ+ people

CALLUM GOULET-KILGOUR | CITY REPORTER |  CGOULETKILGOUR

On Jan. 11, the federal government announced an investment of upwards of \$12.7 million to create affordable housing units in Winnipeg. This falls under their Rapid Housing Initiative and will create approximately 59 units.

These units will be spread across three housing projects, each targeting a specific demographic. The first project, located on Victor Street, will be operated by the West Central Women's Resource Centre (WCWRC), according to a Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation press release. "This generous investment from Canada's Rapid Housing Initiative, the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation and the City of Winnipeg allows us to open a new, affordable and safe transitional-housing building for women and their children who have experienced gender-based violence," Carey Richards, director of housing for the WCWRC, says in an email to *The Uniter*.

"With this grant, we have purchased a three-storey apartment building ... and are converting it to include a mix of 17 affordable three-bedroom, two-bedroom and one-bedroom units," they say.

"This new transitional housing will offer safe, supportive and culturally appropriate transitional apartments where 35 women and children can live for up to two years, giving them the time they need to stabilize and secure long-term housing with the sup-

port of our housing team," Richards says.

"We believe that housing is a human right and that everybody is deserving of a safe place to call home."

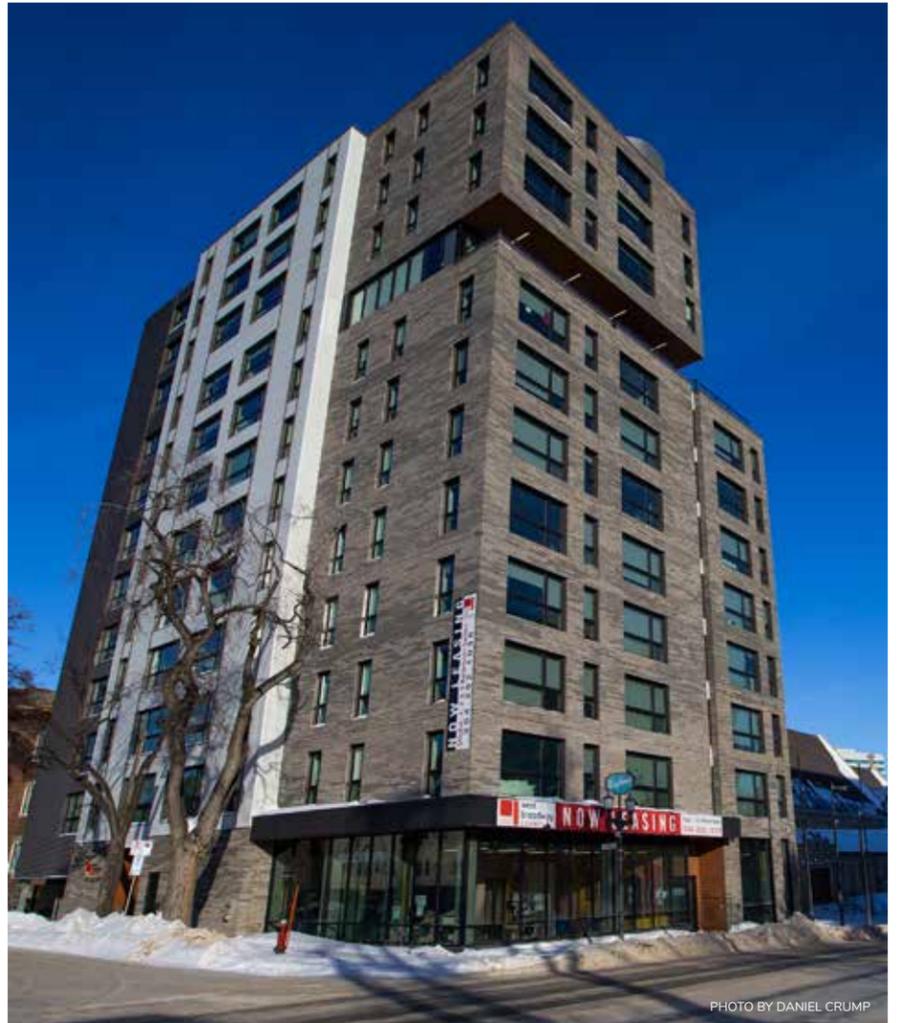
The Manitoba Metis Federation (MMF) will operate another of the projects receiving funds, located at 670 Main St. Will Goodon, the MMF's minister of housing and property management, welcomes the announcement.

"We are very excited to be able to access the Rapid Housing Initiative funding to invest in support for Métis citizens experiencing or in danger of homelessness," he says in an email to *The Uniter*. This project will provide 22 housing units for Indigenous people.

"We have known for a long time that a lot of our citizens are falling through the cracks," Goodon says. "This investment will provide immediate safety for those most in need, and this facility cannot come fast enough. It is my belief that we will literally be saving lives, and there is no greater goal than that."

Homelessness and affordable housing have been hot topics in Winnipeg municipal politics in recent years. Interestingly, Mayor Brian Bowman said in his 2021 year-end interview that he regrets not doing more on these files during his mandate. He remains in office for another 10 months.

Desiree McIvor, spokesperson for Make Poverty History Manitoba, says this afford-



The West Broadway Commons is a newly constructed building at the corner of Broadway Avenue and Colony Street that includes affordable living options for students.

able housing announcement comes at a time when life is increasingly unaffordable for so many. She notes, however, that the word "affordable" can be problematic when used in funding announcements for things like housing units.

"The language is very exclusive and it's like 'affordable' to whom?" McIvor says.

The final project will be located on Broadway Avenue and will aim to provide housing units for LGBTQ+ people.

'LEARNING TO LIVE WITH THE VIRUS'

Manitoba continues to struggle in COVID-19 fight

CALLUM GOULET-KILGOUR | CITY REPORTER |  CGOULETKILGOUR

The Manitoba provincial government, led by Premier Heather Stefanson, has been giving every indication that it wants to move past the ongoing COVID-19 crisis. Speaking at the recent cabinet shuffle, Stefanson declared, seemingly with glee, that "this is the first day of the rest of our lives."

Politicians and public officials had said similar things well before the Omicron wave. In July 2021, deputy chief provincial public health officer Dr. Jazz Atwal said "we need to learn to live with COVID-19 like other respiratory illnesses."

Many public-health experts have been calling for different approaches to dealing with the virus. Dr. Ashish Jha, dean of the Brown University School of Public Health and one of the world's leading experts on COVID-19 policy, has suggested that most organizations (such as schools) should resume as normal with a strong emphasis on masking, vaccination and testing.

Critics of the provincial government say the government is keen to "learn to live with COVID-19" without implementing strong enough policies. Another complicating issue for Manitoba is the lack of testing capacity leading to inaccurate COVID-19 data. Furthermore, the healthcare system in Manitoba is under significant strain now, with many surgeries being cancelled.

Dougald Lamont, leader of the Manitoba

Liberal Party and MLA for St. Boniface, says in an email to *The Uniter* that "Premier Stefanson made it clear her PC government has given up on protecting Manitobans and that they are on their own to learn to live with the virus."

"It is clear that, for months, the PCs ignored public health and doctors' advice to slow the spread of the Omicron variant, just as they failed to get ready for the second and third waves of the pandemic," he says.

"Ultimately, this means Manitobans are paying the price with their lives, backlogged surgeries and high infection rates across the province," Lamont says, adding that the "PCs' decision-making, or lack thereof, has been reckless and irresponsible."

Darlene Jackson, president of the Manitoba Nurses Union, agrees.

"The unfortunate reality is that Omicron has gotten away from us," she says in an email to *The Uniter*.

"The resultant wave of hospitalizations, that has not peaked, will fall squarely on the shoulders of nurses, doctors and other health-care workers," Jackson predicts.

"Nurses who were already working at critically short staffing levels before COVID and have been stretched to the limit throughout and beyond will again be expected to do even more with less," she says, noting that "burnt-out nurses have retired or left the profession to



ILLUSTRATION BY GABRIELLE FUNK

save themselves from the unsustainable."

To deal with the surgery backlog, the Government of Manitoba recently announced they are considering an agreement to send patients to North Dakota for their procedures.

"Undercutting the public system, then

turning to private alternatives when the inevitable and predictable occurs, does not honour Canada's historic universal healthcare, nor the many nurses that have and continue to sacrifice to keep it afloat," Jackson says.



ADVANCING THROUGH MOVEMENT

Zorya Arrow, instructor, Department of Theatre and Film, U of W

KEELEY BRAUNSTEIN-BLACK | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER | KEELEY_IMAGE

Advanced movement instructor Zorya Arrow started teaching for the University of Winnipeg's (U of W) theatre and film faculty at the start of the 2020 winter term.

Currently, their classes are a blended format between in-person and Zoom. The divided attention from juggling multiple stimuli has been a challenge.

"The first week has been wild. I have two students in the room with me on a rotation," Arrow says. "There is still this feeling of being there together and exploring movement, being curious about it and having fun."

Arrow was always interested in both movement and theatre. She went directly from high school to the professional program at the School of Contemporary Dancers in a joint program with the U of W.

"When I was studying, I wasn't sure which one I wanted to go into. I tried to do both. The honours programs are pretty intensive, and I had to pick," Arrow says.

After receiving a degree in dance with a minor in theatre and film, she completed independent training and workshops,

melding the two practices.

They started making work while in school by creating and performing at fundraisers, as well as community and arts events.

Arrow has found her niche and enjoys teaching within it.

"I think it's the perfect fit," they say. "Movement with actors and working physical bodies but also engaging emotional spaces I find really exciting."

What is your favourite thing about your job?

"I love being in a room and exploring movement with people."

What is something you've learned from your students?

"Engagement of learning, curiosity and question-asking is such an exciting place for me, and it helps me grow as an artist and teacher."



PHOTO BY KEELEY BRAUNSTEIN-BLACK

What do you like to do in your spare time?

"I love to see the people that I love."

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

"I feel like flying might be low-impact to the people around me and feel so lovely."

If you could dance in any performance, what would it be?

"With this ability to fly, doing some wild sky show or something."



THE UNIVERSITY OF WINNIPEG

Student Services

Klinic Health Services

Klinic on campus is once again available to provide virtual appointments to the University community. For more information, please visit uwinnipeg.ca/student-wellness/health-services.html

Spring Graduation

Are you finishing your last courses in April? Interested in graduating in June? The final date to apply to graduate in June 2022 is **Feb. 1**.

To apply for graduation, go to the "Student Planning/Registration" link on WebAdvisor. Click on the "Graduation" tab and complete the form.

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Study Skills Workshops

Study Skills Workshops are designed to improve your learning skills and help you achieve your academic goals. Topics include time management, writing essays, and test-taking strategies.

Organized by Academic & Career Services, the series of six workshops

continues on **Mondays and Wednesdays until Feb. 2**. Each session is held 12:30 to 1:20 pm, via Zoom.

Registration in advance is required. For details and to sign up, see: uwinnipeg.ca/academic-advising/study-skills-workshops.html

UWinnipeg Award Applications Now Open

For current students:

- Winter 2022 Bursaries - Online application deadline Feb. 1. uwinnipeg.ca/awards/apply-for-awards/index.html
- UWSA Student Conference/Travel Fund Award - Online application deadline March 15. <https://www.uwinnipeg.ca/awards/apply-for-awards/index.html>

For new students:

- 2022-23 Entrance Awards - Online application deadline March 1. <https://www.uwinnipeg.ca/awards/apply-for-awards/index.html>

2022-23 President's Scholarship for World Leaders – web application form now open; deadlines vary by term start and program of entry (PACE, ELP, Collegiate, Undergraduate, Graduate Studies). uwinnipeg.ca/awards/awards-bursaries-and-scholarships/international-students.html

Student ID Cards

New students for Winter Term and others who need an ID card: The next deadline for ordering your card is coming up on **Feb. 2** (for pick up **Feb. 4**).

For instructions, please go to: uwinnipeg.ca/accepted-students/getting-ready/student-id-cards.html

Webinar Wednesdays

Student Services staff share some valuable strategies and tips to help you succeed at UWinnipeg. Upcoming dates/topics for these Zoom webinars include:

Feb. 9 - Budgeting and Financial Literacy

Feb. 16 - Building Resiliency

All sessions are from 12:30 to 1:00 pm via Zoom. For more information and to register online, please go to: uwinnipeg.ca/student-services/webinar-wednesdays.html

Fall/Winter Term Courses – Final Withdrawal Date

The final day to withdraw from a Fall/Winter Term (U2021FW) class is Feb. 16. No refund is applicable. Courses are dropped through WebAdvisor using the "Student Planning/Registration" link.

Reading Week

Winter Term Reading Week is Feb. 20 – 26. No classes all week. The University will be closed on Louis Riel Day, Feb. 21.

Winter Term Courses – Final Withdrawal Date

The final day to withdraw from a Winter Term class is March 16. No refund is applicable. Courses are dropped through WebAdvisor using the "Student Planning/Registration" link.

Student Services Goes Remote

Departments in Student Services are now offering their services remotely. No appointments for in-person meetings are available. Please see this webpage for details about each department: uwinnipeg.ca/student-services

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Use the myVisit App

Need some help from staff in Student Central and/or Academic & Career Services? Download the myVisit app today. The myVisit app enables students to add themselves to a virtual line for drop-in Zoom sessions at Student Central. The app can also be used to book appointments for a Zoom meeting with an academic or career advisor. Appointments with advisors can also be booked through the website: www.myvisit.com.



ACCORDING TO HER

What is expected

CIKU GITONGA | COLUMNIST

It was during childhood that a line appeared before me, and I stepped back and found myself in the category of “girl.”

I grew up surrounded by children my age in Buruburu, a housing estate in the Eastlands neighbourhood of Nairobi, Kenya. Together, we played in those sunset hours after school, and those long, golden afternoons that melt into each other during holiday breaks.

My friends and I held mock fashion shows, walking up and down the lengths of our backyards with the dresses of someone’s mother or older sister draped over us like tents. We watched the American pop stars on TV and tossed our bony little hips in imitation. Meanwhile, the boys would crowd into living rooms, taking turns on their PlayStation.

Each day, we all came together to play outside, a roving, wild band of children set loose on the neighbourhood sidewalks. We played Kenyan versions of the universal childhood games: brikicho (hide and seek), kati (dodgeball), hapo (freeze tag).

Some games were rough, and I found myself pushed over, my knees scraped raw. But to show weakness was pitiable. We laughed at the boys who could not stop their tears after a fall or a harsh word. We did not laugh at the girls, because weakness was expected. To be a girl who did not cry, who could keep up with the roughest of games, was an achievement.

We were children, all of us, under the shadow of adult influence. From infancy, they towered above us, watching our upward progress, issuing commands.

“Sheryl, I saw you walking home with some boys yesterday,” a teacher said loudly in class. “A girl should not be seen walking amongst boys. It’s disgraceful.” I watched my classmate wilt in shame.

In the opinion columns of the *Daily Nation* newspaper, I read about “loose” women and what happened to them: AIDS, prostitution, teen pregnancies. As we grew older, the pastors, teachers and parents alike commanded us to close our legs, to keep the boys at arm’s length.

Marriage was our aim. A career was great, and ambition was encouraged. Be a doctor, be a lawyer, be anything you want. But above all was the command to be a Good Woman. Married. Religious. Free from the stain of disgrace.

This command fell away when my family and I immigrated to Winnipeg when I was 17. Our plane landed in July, and I spent the muggy days of that summer walking around in a dreamlike state. The streets downtown were so clean, the roads so orderly. I could bare my legs and midriff without so much as a whisper from the men I passed, let alone the catcalls and admonishments that used to greet me in Nairobi. I was delighted.

But those rose-coloured glasses wouldn’t last. The streets weren’t actually that clean. And as I entered high school, I began to understand that Canada had its own version of a Good Woman. For better or worse, unlike the narrow confines of this prototype in Kenya, the standards of the Canadian Good Woman are elusive.

Of course, she has to be pretty. This rule

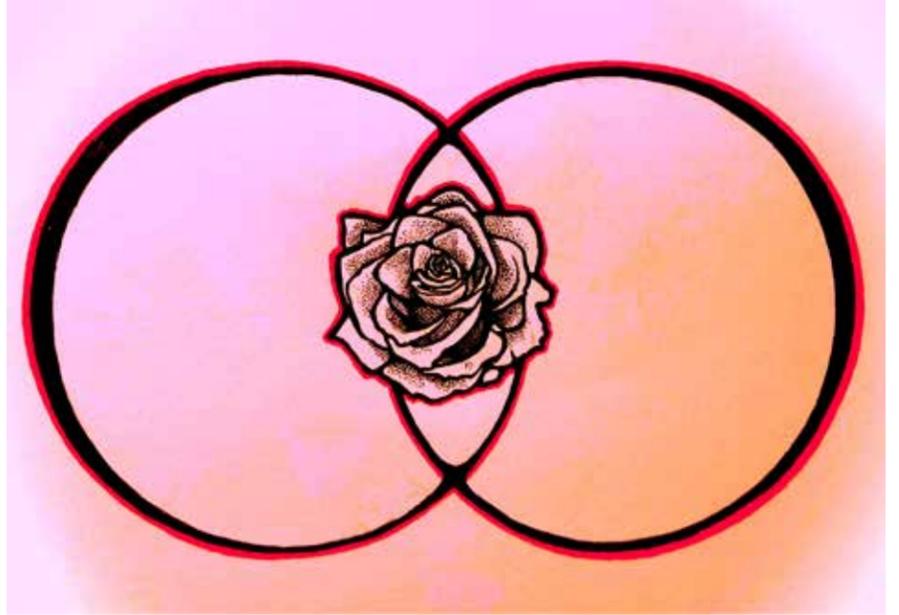


ILLUSTRATION BY GABRIELLE FUNK

is universal for women. She can be sexy but never too available. She can be smart and ambitious and can even stay unmarried (but not for too long). She can have safe casual sex, with the guidance of Canadian sex ed and women’s health clinics and rape-shield laws, but she can’t have it too much. And encompassing all these carefully balanced traits is the assumption that the Good Woman is white, or the closest to white that she can get.

It was jarring to make the transition from Girl to Black Girl. I discovered my sexuality in what seemed like a sprawling meadow where I could run free but that soon revealed itself to be a minefield, where the wrong step could blow back in my face, a sudden explosion of shame.

Five and a half years later, I am still making my way through this landscape. I am still a Kenyan girl who remembers home

with its sunshine and its familiar shackles. But I am also a Winnipeg girl, braced tough against the cold. I have discovered feminism, a movement that is working to topple the idol of the Good Woman. I want to bring my voice to this task, using the intersection of my African past and my present experience as a Black girl in the diaspora.

I want to work toward replacing the question “What should a girl do?” with a richer, more inclusive one: “What should a girl do to make herself happy?”

Ciku Gitonga is a third-year political science student at the University of Ottawa. She moved from Nairobi, Kenya to Winnipeg with her family in 2016. Although her first love is fiction writing, she also dabbles in nonfiction.



PLANT CARE IS SELF-CARE

From killing every plant to growing a thriving garden

KIM UDUMAN | VOLUNTEER | @SHINGEKI_NO_KIM

I grew up hearing stories about my mom’s childhood, which she spent on a farm in the Philippines.

She would talk about selling the fruits and vegetables her family grew on that farm. I guess you could say having a green thumb is in my blood.

Despite this lineage, I didn’t have the easiest time on my own plant-growing journey.

When I first moved out, I lived in a basement apartment with little to no sun, and the chances of plants surviving were slim. However, this didn’t stop my friends from giving me three plants as gifts for Christmas.

Plants are a big responsibility. Each one needs the right amount of water, sunlight and sometimes food. These gifts made me want to step up to the plant-parenting plate.

My friends reassured me that the plants would grow in low-light areas and that I wouldn’t have to water them often, because they were all succulents.

I’d had succulents in the past, and they had all died pretty quickly, so I wasn’t sure if I could do it again. But my friends had found ones specifically catered to me, so I felt obliged to try. I didn’t want to let them down.

Having gone from those three plants to 15, I guess I can say that I have some plant care

know-how. But I’m not here to brag about my new knowledge (even though I can now successfully identify plants without the tags at the nursery).

Plants unexpectedly gave me a pick-me-up during the long pandemic restrictions in 2020 and 2021.

During the first round of restrictions, my whole routine was thrown out the window. With school shutting down, my job canceling shifts and being stuck in a basement apartment for days on end, there was no structure in my life anymore. The only constant I had was feeding my cat breakfast and dinner.

After getting my plants, it was like a new breath of energy surged through me. I got an app on my phone that told me when to water my plants and prompted me to complete progress updates about how they’re doing. Every Saturday, I would go around my apartment and check for pests, new growth and anything out of the ordinary.

My leafy friends gave me a task to look forward to every day – yet another reason to get up instead of mope in bed and let myself slip into a depressive episode.

Taking care of plants has also introduced me to new communities and similar interests. I started following Instagram accounts like



ILLUSTRATION BY GABRIELLE FUNK

@wpgfreeplants that built a close-knit plant community in Winnipeg during the first quarantine. Many people in this community are also interested in growing their own fruits and vegetables, which has made me want to become more sustainable and do the same this upcoming summer.

Growing and caring for plants isn’t the most glamorous self-care routine, but it is fulfilling. So if you’re looking to pick up a new

hobby this year why not introduce a little bit of greenery into your life?

Kim Uduman is finishing up her bachelor’s degree in rhetoric, writing and communications at the University of Winnipeg. In her downtime, she loves caring for her plants, cuddling her orange-tabby cat and attempting latte art.



HOROSCOPES

Venus retrograde ends on Saturday, January 29, at 3:45 A.M.

This weekend's vibe is spontaneous and funky as the sun clashes with Uranus, the planet of rebellion, on Sunday, January 30, at 2:31 PM. Look out for restlessness!

SOURCE: ASTROLOGY.COM

♈ ARIES

Today, the moon takes its first steps in Sagittarius, helping you feel alive, optimistic, and ready for adventure! Look for ways to explore right now since the universe will show you something new. Chance encounters, synchronicity, and messages from beyond will lie around each corner, though you'll need to be proactive about seeking them out. Whether you're at work or off for the day, be sure to carve out time for conversation this afternoon, as it's likely to lift the spirits of everyone involved. While today will be filled with fun, you'll want to make sure you call it a night at a reasonable hour, as the moon blows a kiss to Saturn.

♉ TAURUS

Don't be afraid to get a little witchy today, dear Taurus, as the Sagittarius moon piques your interest in the mysteries of the universe. Whether it's secret societies, ancestral magick, or ancient medicinal practices, your soul will crave hidden knowledge. Luckily, you won't have to search that far for it, thanks to the glory of technology. Yes, you'll still have to tend to your professional duties, but that doesn't mean you can't fire up your search engine between tasks. As the day comes to a close, be sure to curl up on the couch with a nice glass of tea, then click on some content that caters to your current fascination.

♊ GEMINI

You'll seem larger than life to your admirers right now, dear Gemini, as the Sagittarius moon travels through the sector of your chart that governs matters of the heart. Love will be in the air right now, but lucky for you, you won't have to chase it. Admirers will look for ways to speak with you right now, so pay attention to who enters your orbit, as well as what they're saying. If someone you're interested in pops up, this might be a good time to suggest a hangout session so that you can get closer to the object of your desire.

♋ CANCER

You move with the move, dear Cancer, and with Luna soaring through Sagittarius today, you'll be in an optimistic, philosophical, and warm headspace. Finding joy in the world around you will come naturally right now, even in your daily routines and tasks. Your cheerful disposition will be contagious, so be sure to share pleasantries and a smile with the people you encounter. As the vibe around you rises, so will your heart, helping you feel connected to your friends, family, and coworkers. Just be sure to carve out some time for yourself this evening, as the quiet will help you connect with any messages the universe has for you right now.

♌ LEO

You'll be filled with quick wit, creative ideas, and a big aura today as the Sagittarius moon soars through your fifth house. Look for ways to connect with your best buds right now, even if you only have time to send a silly meme or quick text. Fun will be at the top of your agenda right now, which can help you raise the spirits of your coworkers, helping everyone find a work/play balance at the office. The afternoon could reveal an admirer, as the moon blows a kiss to the sun, so pay attention to who reaches out around that time.

♍ VIRGO

Spirits will be high in your home right now, so be sure to start your day with a pleasant "good morning" to your housemates, even if your roomie walks on four legs and is full of fur. These good vibes will flow into your workday, allowing you to tackle responsibilities and tasks with a light heart. Just make sure you're checking in with your needs as well, especially this afternoon when Luna blows a kiss to the sun. As the day comes to a close, take some time out to tidy up your space to help you stay organized for the remainder of the week.

♎ LIBRA

You'll be a Chatty Cathy today, dear Libra, as the Sagittarius moon shines a light in the sector of your chart that rules communication. Luckily, your chipper disposition will appear to your friends and colleagues, making it easy for conversation to flow. Your curious side will also come out to play, inspiring you to learn new things about the people you associate with. Don't be afraid to ask new questions right now, but remember to gauge your audience. Also, avoid subjects that could feel too invasive to your companion. Try to plan a dinner with your best buds tonight so that you can catch up to the people closest to your heart.

♏ SCORPIO

You'll be in a generous and optimistic mood today, dear Scorpio, as the Sagittarius moon soars through your solar second house. Be free with your compliments and good cheer right now, as it could make more of an impact than you realize. Check in with your physical and emotional needs later this afternoon, when Luna blows a kiss to the healing asteroid, Chiron. As the day comes to a close, plan on recharging at home instead of going out and looking for ways to improve your space, even if it requires you to do a little bit of online shopping.

♐ SAGITTARIUS

The moon is in your sign today, darling Sagittarius, elevating your mind, body, and soul! Your popularity will see an increase from this cosmic climate as well, and a connection between Luna and the sun is sure to light up your phone later this afternoon. Your name will also cross the lips of others right now, but don't worry! People won't be in the mood for mean-spirited gossip and only sing your praises. While your inbox will likely be full throughout most of the day, give yourself permission to set boundaries and unplug this afternoon, giving energy only to your nearest and dearest.

♑ CAPRICORN

Your psyche will light up in fantastic and optimistic ways today, little Goat, bringing contrast to your naturally grounded demeanor. Allow yourself to get lost in a daydream or two, especially if they inspire you to change your life or seek new goals. Trust that you are creative, intellectual, and capable of actualizing your dreams, and the universe will conspire to help you manifest them. Allow your heart to fill with hope, even if your pragmatic mind is aware of the work ahead to make these aspirations a reality. As the day comes to a close, map out a plan to bring structure to your dreams, and you'll be able to sleep well with the promise of a brighter tomorrow.

♒ AQUARIUS

Your social media pages will be on fire today, dear Aquarius, as the Sagittarius moon soars through your eleventh house. Try to use your platform for good right now since people will be watching your activity online. The afternoon will be a perfect time to post if you're on the hunt for new followers and likes, so be sure to plan accordingly. Try to plan a meetup for you and your friends after work, but be sure to incorporate some new faces into your normal crowd of companions. Just make sure you don't stay out all night since Saturn will expect you to be in bed by a reasonable hour.

♓ PISCES

Professional opportunity will find you today, dear Pisces, as the Sagittarius moon makes its way through your tenth house. If you've had your eye on a new position or promotion, now would be the time to pursue it since the universe will be looking for ways to further your professional ambitions. If you're hoping to switch companies, use this energy to send your application to promising companies, as you're likely to see positive results. Positive affirmations can also help you reach any goals you've set for yourself, so don't feel weird about reciting a positive affirmation or two.

It's Aquarius season!



Aquarius is the eleventh sign of the zodiac, and Aquarians are the perfect representatives for the Age of Aquarius. Those born under this horoscope sign have the social conscience needed to carry us into the new millennium. Those of the Aquarius zodiac sign are humanitarian, philanthropic, and keenly interested in making the world a better place. Along those lines, they'd like to make the world work better, which is why they focus much of their energy on our social institutions and how they work (or don't work).

Aquarians are visionaries, progressive souls who love to spend time thinking about how things can be better. They are also quick to engage others in this process, which is why they have so many friends and acquaintances. Making the world a better place is a collaborative effort for Aquarians.

Dates— January 20 – February 18	Ruling Planet— Saturn & Uranus	Tarot Card— The Star
Symbol— The Water-Bearer	House— Eleventh	Colors— Silver & Blue
Mode + Element— Fixed Air	Mantra— "I Know."	Body Part— The Shins

Those born with the Water-Bearer as their rising, sun, or moon sign have a clear objective, yet intelligent and inventive energy in their core personality, like the icy heart of winter.

As a fixed sign, The Water-Bearer holds the qualities of being a sustainer, making those with Aquarius prominent in their charts great at dedicating themselves to projects, and tenaciously sticking to their social principals. Ruled by Saturn, Aquarians can be thought of as the "reformers" of the zodiac that challenge and test the societal conventions we have built to see if they are still relevant and inclusive.

A Conversation with Adeline Bird

Unpacking the white gaze in
“Canadian” media and television

Afro-Anishinaabe author, filmmaker and producer

HOSTED BY TBD

THURSDAY, JANUARY 27 / 6:30 P.M.

ON INSTAGRAM LIVE @THEUNITER

