

THE **UNITER**



WINNIPEG'S FAVOURITE PEOPLE, PLACES AND THINGS OF 2022

IT’S THE UNITER 30!

THOMAS PASHKO
MANAGING EDITOR



It’s the final *Uniter* issue of the calendar year, which means this issue is dedicated to the results of our annual Uniter 30 readers’ poll.

If this is your first time, the Uniter 30 gives our readers the chance to vote in 30 categories for their favourite people, places, things and events of the past year. Essentially, it’s a chance for the community to act as editors for a week. You’re the ones who decide what gets covered in this issue.

In most cases, we opt to write about the first-place winner in each category. However, sometimes we’ll opt to cover second- or third-place winners when the other winners aren’t available for interviews, have won several years in a row, or if there’s a member of the University of Winnipeg campus community in the top three.

Working on this issue is always a whirlwind. Tabulating the results. Figuring out which votes are genuine and which are people voting for their friends as a joke.

It’s also a chance for us on the *Uniter* staff to engage with the community, not just through the voters, but to interview winners, to think and write about neighbourhoods and events, and to work with volunteers, photographers and illustrators to make the issue look pretty.

Thanks for reading and for helping. We (literally) couldn’t do it without you.

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SUBMISSIONS

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 editor@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.

CORRECTIONS

In the Nov. 24 city briefs, we stated that in the final 54 seconds of the Grey Cup, Winnipeg Blue Bombers kicker Marc Liegghio had his attempted field goal blocked by "Toronto's Nick Hallett." The Toronto player who blocked the goal was Robbie Smith. Nick Hallett plays for Winnipeg and earlier in the game blocked an attempted field goal by Toronto.

The Uniter regrets the error.


Favourite local achiever over 60

1. Fred Penner

2. Scott Oake

3. Al Simmons

BY AMANDA EMMS

 AMANDAEMMS

Since the 1970s, Al Simmons has made audiences worldwide laugh at his off-the-wall performances. Until, like a lot of people, the initial COVID-19 lockdowns left him without work.

“I must admit, for a little while, I was – upset is too strong a term. I guess I was concerned that I’d lost a lot of work and was just wondering what was going to happen,” Simmons says. “I ended up napping all the time. And then I thought, you know, enough of this. Get a project. Get up, Al Simmons. Find a project.”

Simmons decided to record a goofy poem he wrote about the Klondike Gold Rush in Yukon. Working remotely with other musicians presented challenges, like navigating the delay over a phone call. But by spring, he had a collection of new tunes in the vein of his previous award-winning albums.

Simmons’ act is rooted in vaudeville-style comedy for all ages. He toured festivals every weekend this summer but kept putting off returning to the recording studio. Finally, he got a push from his youngest granddaughter, Penny.

“There’s a play structure in our yard, and she was afraid to jump. I went and helped her down. And I realized, that’s right, I’m not alone. I’ve got a helper. I’m working at a studio, and I’ve got talented musicians around me. So I’ve got help. I don’t have to be afraid.”

For the first time in his 54-year career, Simmons is producing his own album. He says the finality of putting his songs to tape was intimidating, but now that he’s made the jump, he’s completed five new tracks so far.

The beloved Manitoba-based entertainer expects to finish in the studio by December before moving on to completing artwork and liner notes for the upcoming release.



SUPPLIED PHOTO

Favourite local achiever under 30

1. Lauren Wittmann

2. Alex Kohut

3. Bevy Teyems / Jaydin Pommer (tie)

Favourite new local independent business

1. Riley Gray Café

2. Keener Jerseys

3. One Sixteen

BY PAUL CARRUTHERS

“I’m sitting here blushing right now. It makes us feel very special. We work very hard to make the store welcoming and a nice time. It’s very rewarding that people agree and want us to know by voting.”

Lauren Wittmann exudes joy, creativity and fun, so it’s no wonder that Riley Grae feels like an extension of those feelings.

When asked how they foster that environment, Wittmann says it has a lot to do with the trusting partnership with their mother, Trish.

“She trusts my gut a lot with newer and kinda obscure stuff. It’s special to me that she trusts me to make those decisions and also special that enough people in the city like those items enough to buy them and keep us in business. I’m very lucky to be able to curate and make whatever I like,” they say.

That spirit of collaboration goes beyond the mother-daughter dynamic and extends to the rest of the space.

“The whole space has always been community-orientated, and it’s built out of multiple businesses. We always say we’re a bit of a mini-mall. We share the space with Nails Thank You (Devin), Die Blume (Holly) and Gray Beauty (Shayna) who all operate their businesses out of here. We’re always welcoming of anyone who wants to come into the space.”

Wittmann says Riley Grae started when she began selling homemade crafts at mini-markets when she was 15. That’s why it’s so special when they can extend that opportunity to others through their summer pop-ups every Saturday.

“We don’t sell any local products in the store,” Wittmann says. “Instead, we host pop-ups so the local people can shop directly through the artist, and the artist can keep all the profits from what they sell.”

Wittmann’s achievements aren’t restricted to Riley Grae. Other projects include their band Virgo Rising, freelance work, making of ceramics, T-shirts and stickers, as well as the recent painting of their first mural on the walls outside of Riley Grae.

When asked of their greatest accomplishment thus far, Wittmann says she’s most proud of “creating a job for myself that I’m happy at, where I feel supported and creative and passionate. Everything I’m working towards right now feels like something I could do for the rest of my life.”



SUPPLIED PHOTOS

Favourite local activist

1. Omar Kinnarath

2. Michael Redhead Champagne

3. Lara Rae / Uzoma Asagwara (tied)

BY ARMANDE MARTINE

 1MANDE7

Omar Kinnarath often makes local headlines as a person who steps up to serve the community.

After Donald Trump was elected president of the United States in 2016, Kinnarath knew it was imperative to monitor far-right activity.

“Outright racism was coming into the mainstream, and there wasn’t any anti-racism, anti-fascism organization in the city going on at the time,” he says.

In 2017, Kinnarath founded Fascist Free Treaty One (FF1) to raise community awareness about the dangers of extreme right-wing political beliefs.

“We keep an eye out for far-right activity locally and nationally. It’s been five years for FF1, and I’m glad it was there to get the ball rolling and to be a counter to the far-right in the city,” Kinnarath says.

He and his group attempt to stem far-right groups like the Proud Boys from gaining a foothold in Winnipeg. Kinnarath claims actively calling out such groups on social media forces far-right groups underground before they can grow. Although he admits this doesn’t eradicate or dissolve extremist groups and there is the possibility that they will return.

“When there’s something that goes on in the city that’s not right, (like) far right, neo-Nazis or anti-trans folks, we get on it right away,” Kinnarath says.

He refers to the Battle at Old Market Square in 1934 when citing Winnipeg’s history of resistance to alt-right groups.

“(Winnipeg has) an overall legacy of having intense anti-racism organizing since the 1930s with the anti-Nazi leagues,” he says.

Early in the COVID-19 pandemic, he felt local leaders were failing citizens. In 2020, Kinnarath founded Mutual Aid Society Winnipeg (MAS). He believes the best way for society to survive and thrive in times of crisis is through mutual aid and connecting people in need of resources.

He says grassroot groups like FF1 and MAS actively help communities daily, whereas many politicians spend money that doesn’t always directly support vulnerable citizens.

“One of the reasons I ran for office (is) because I wanted to put that out there, that there are people in the city who do their work at a very intense and high level that our political leaders don’t do. Their care and capacity doesn’t reach the next level,” Kinnarath says.



PHOTO BY DANIEL CRUMP

Favourite local album		Favourite local live performance
1. Jamboree - <i>Life in the Dome</i>	2. Yes We Mystic - <i>Trust Fall</i>	BY MATTHEW TEKLEMARIAM  MATTTEKLE
3. JayWood - <i>Slingshot</i> / Living Hour - <i>Someday is Today</i> (tie)	3. Three-way tie	

Anyone worried about the future of Winnipeg’s music scene can rest assured, as the kids are more than alright.

Jamboree’s second full-length release, *Life in the Dome*, has garnered acclaim from fans, critics and *Unitar* readers alike.

“I think the last two albums that we’ve made have been a lot more focused than when we were just releasing EPs,” Nick Lavich, Jamboree’s singer and bassist says, referring to their newest release as well as their debut studio album, 2018’s *A Beautiful Place*.

“I think we feel a lot more confident and comfortable now, too,” drummer and guitarist Alex Braun says.

The group attributes the cohesiveness of the project to a long gestation period protracted by the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as a greater focus on live recordings in the studio rather than overdubbing.

“It’s more of a band-type sounding record, I think, and with that, I think the sound is a bit more focused. It’s all rock songs, good rock songs,” Braun says.

Like most concept albums in rock music, the thematic essence of the project was only realized

once the group finished recording.

“But that’s something we always do. We’ll record everything, and then, after the fact, we’ll create some sort of concept,” Lavich says.

“I think it’s just kind of funny to have that bombast, high concept aspect to it,” Braun says.

Equally accomplished as a live act, the group won favourite live performance as the British rock group Oasis in Bands as Bands. The group was inspired to do a full set of Oasis songs after daily listens of *(What’s the Story) Morning Glory?* at the youth drop-in centre where all three members are employed.

“It was just fun to act like these douchey British guys, and we had a lot of fun with that set. The crowd as well played a huge role in us having fun, because the crowd was quite into it,” Lavich says.

“Oasis as a band has this really funny ... confidence. From the minute they started, they were like, ‘we’re the greatest band in the world.’ Putting on that costume of confidence feels really good,” Braun says.

“It was nice to sneak in a couple of personal favourites, too.”



SUPPLIED PHOTO

Favourite local athlete	
1. Seth Jarvis	BY PAUL CARRUTHERS
2. Nic Demski	
3. Brady Oliveira	

Jonathan Toews, Mark Stone, Nolan Patrick and now Seth Jarvis. It’s almost like NHL star power is in the water in Winnipeg.

It might be a little early to list Jarvis with those names, but even though he’s only in his second season, and on a team other than the Jets, he’s already a hometown favourite.

Picked 13th overall in the 2020 NHL Entry Draft by the Carolina Hurricanes, Jarvis burst onto the scene as a 19-year old rookie in 2021, scoring 17 goals and 40 points in his first season, building on his early success with eight points in 14 playoff games.

I recently had the opportunity to see Jarvis play in person against his hometown team on Nov. 21. It was a 4-3 Jets win in overtime, and the arena had dozens of Jarvis jerseys.

He may have only had an assist in the game,

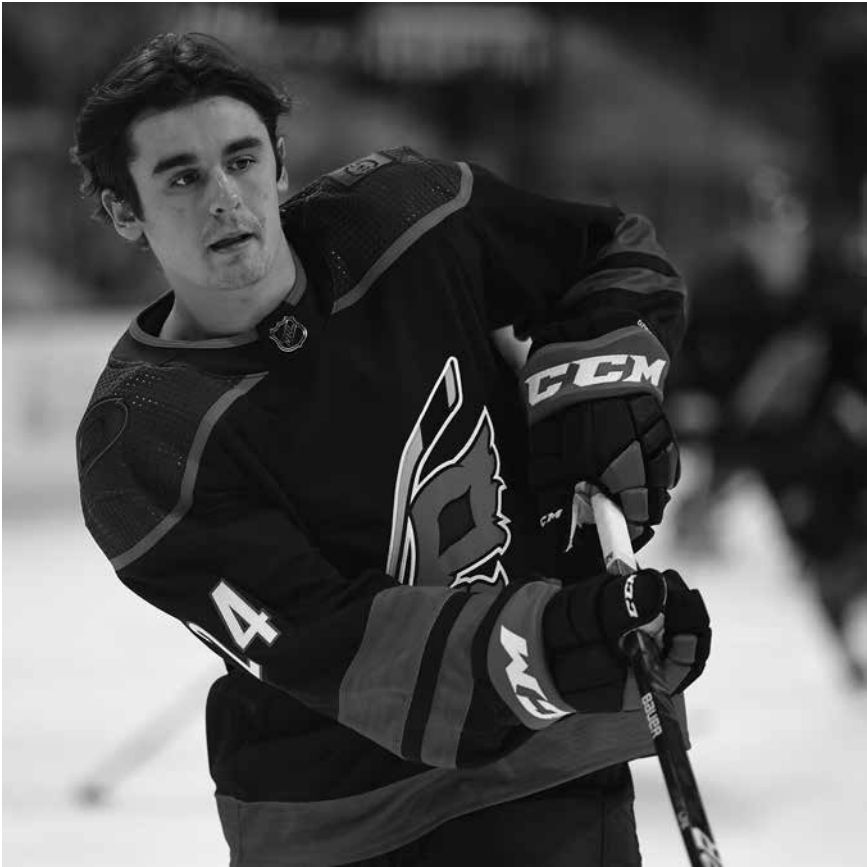
but his presence was certainly felt. He almost scored in overtime, and when the puck *just* missed the net, you could hear more gasps of disappointment than relief.

It’s no wonder that such a talented player would be named Winnipeg’s favourite local athlete, but I think what makes Jarvis endearing to many fans is his down-to-earth attitude and optimism.



For example, what was the first thing Jarvis was excited to buy when he signed his three-year \$832,500 annual contract?

“I want to get my mom a car, just to show her appreciation. That’s the first thing on my list,” Jarvis, said, as reported by Paul Friesen of the *Winnipeg Sun*.

It’s that kind of humble star that us “Friendly Manitobans” love.



GREGG FORWERCK (SUPPLIED)

Favourite local dancer	
1. Ella Steele	BY TESSA ADAMSKI  TESSA_ADAMSKI  TESSA.ADAMSKI
2. Dancing Gabe	
3. Carol-Ann Bohrn / Jillian Groening (tie)	

Since 2017, Ella Steele has performed with Rhythm & Sound, a Toronto-based dance company.

In August, Steele was commissioned to present a 15-minute excerpt of *Mirror/Water/Doorway* from the collective (in)sight at the Toronto International Tap Dance Festival. She says being able to present her own work on stage with live musicians and two other dancers has been vulnerable and emotional.

“The difference between performing someone else’s work and being able to help them express their vision, versus me, doing my own work on stage, was a whole different experience,” Steele says.

“I was feeling a lot of excitement and normal pre-performance nerves ... but by the end of the show, when it was the last song, the energy went up a lot, and it was just an amazing feeling.”

Currently, as the co-artistic director, she is continuing to create the full-length tap-dance show with David Lafleur, based in Gatineau,

and musical director, composer and bassist Leighton Harrell in Montreal. The show features three original jazz compositions.

Steele hopes to perform the full show by next year in both Quebec and Manitoba.

In the meantime, she teaches tap dance and jazz choreography at her own pre-professional tap-dance company called Language of Rhythm at the Doreen Bissett School of Dance.

“With tap dance being a Black American art form, it’s important to always have as much respect and knowledge for (its) history, (to) be able to teach it in a respectful way and be as authentic with it as we can,” Steele says.

“It’s an incredibly unique art form. It’s a lot about connection and expression and your own personal voice as an artist.”

This year, Steele is teaching students aged five to 13 years old. She is trying to find ways to do outreach and create opportunities for workshops and classes.



THE ART OF MOVEMENT PHOTOGRAPHY (SUPPLIED)

Favourite local gallery or artist space

1. WAG & Qaumajuq	BY ARMANDE MARTINE
2. Artspace	
3. MAWA	1MANDE7

“We want everyone who walks into the WAG (Winnipeg Art Gallery) to feel that it’s a safe and welcoming space, regardless of their background or whether they know anything about art,” WAG spokesperson Hanna Waswa says.

The gallery’s emphasis on creating a community space is the reason Waswa believes Winnipeggers voted for the WAG as this year’s favourite local gallery.

Initially, the gallery was housed in a building called Cinema Centre that faced Colony Street. Construction of the current arrowhead-shaped WAG building was completed in 1971. Today, the art gallery houses more than 28,000 works of art from Canadian, Indigenous and international artists.

In the last few years, the art gallery has undergone important changes. Along with having a traditional board, an Indigenous advisory circle was created in 2017 to help guide the gallery’s decisions. For instance, the name Qaumajuq (it gives off light) was chosen by Indigenous language keepers for the WAG’s new museum housing the world’s largest collection of contemporary Inuit art.

Qaumajuq’s collection was acquired from donations and collections over the years. The idea of adding a vast home for Inuit art, especially sculptures, was a decade in the making.

“One of the ideas of Qaumajuq was this concept of bridging the north to the south. We do have a fairly large Inuit community within Winnipeg. The combination of those two things is what led to the creation of Qaumajuq,” Waswa says.

Qaumajuq’s Visible Vault, where a vast number of sculptures are housed, is an impressive introduction to the Inuit gallery. One can explore the *INUA* (life force or spirit) exhibition in its entirety via an audio guide available online.

In the new year, the curators will replace *INUA* with the *Inuit Sanaugangit* (art by Inuit) exhibition. The collection spans three centuries of Inuit art from creators living around the globe.

“(It’s) an exploration of Inuit art across the centuries. That’s going to be a massive show, and it’ll be a wonderful way to explore the artistic tradition of Inuit,” Waswa says.



LINDSAY REID (SUPPLIED)

Favourite movie by a local filmmaker

1. <i>A Social</i> by Tavis Putnam	
2. <i>I Survived Winnipeg</i> by Folks Films	
3. <i>Late Summer</i> by Ryan Steel	BY PATRICK HARNEY

Tavis Putnam’s *A Social* (2022) premiered at Cinematheque on Oct. 15. The film is a cringe comedy centred on an individual who straddles the line between extroversion and social ineptitude as he attempts to sell tickets to his parent’s wedding social.

The film’s focus on the peculiar Manitoban tradition through the perspective of an equally peculiar character has clearly struck a chord with audiences. *A Social* has received positive reviews from both *The Uniter* and *The Manitoban*, as well as from many who attended the film’s premiere.

“The response to the film so far has been great, so I’m really pleased. I am going to school in Toronto right now, so I wasn’t in Winnipeg for the screening at Cinematheque, but I heard it went pretty well, and there was a decent turnout,” Putnam says.

He was surprised, humbled and thankful that the film received such wide support.

Since the film’s release, Putnam has been attempting to submit it to several film festivals in hopes that it will reach a wider audience.

In the meantime, he is currently focused on his studies, preparing films for his master’s in film at York University.

“I’m working on a couple of shorts for school right now. One is my thesis film that we’ll shoot this summer, and the other is a class assignment, shot Dogme 95-style on beautiful VHS, that will likely be available soon,” Putnam says.

Putnam will be back in Winnipeg for a screening of *A Social* on Dec. 30 at Cinematheque.



SUPPLIED PHOTO

Favourite local photographer

1. Adam Kelly	BY THOMAS PASHKO
2. Leif Norman	
3. Joey Senft	THOMASPASHKO

In 2017, when Adam Kelly was last voted favourite local photographer in the Uniter 30, they had just released their first book, *HomeFree*. In the five years since, they’ve lived an entire life.

“I left Winnipeg for almost all of 2018,” Kelly says. “I was overwhelmed by how known I’d become in the city. I like a little bit of anonymity.”

That was just the beginning of a major shift for Kelly. After returning, they completed a business degree and picked up an abundance of new passions and practices.

“Now, I work at a halfway house, I photograph artists, and I volunteer at a wildlife shelter hanging out with super big birds.” The shelter in question is Wildlife Haven Rehabilitation Centre in Île des Chênes, while the birds are Swainson’s hawks and a wayward Mississippi kite.

Kelly plans to start taking portraits of the birds. They also plan to start photographing the sport of boxing. While Kelly started boxing five years ago, they’ve never photographed boxers before.

“I think you really have to do your research

and live in the communities you want to document and interface with as an artist,” they say. “(It’s important to) be patient and give these spaces time to teach me how they want to be perceived and presented to the world.”

In their professional work, Kelly primarily does artist portraits of musicians. It’s something they call “an honour.”

“I have such profound love and respect for music. It’s such a big part of my life. The fact that people who make music that I love ask me to collaborate with them ... that’s still totally bananas to me, even though I do it all the time. I kind of have to pinch myself.”

And, as far as a follow-up to *HomeFree*?

“I’ve designed like eight books, and they’ve just been sitting on my harddrive, because I haven’t really gotten around to putting them out into the world. But I’m dreaming about doing that sometime soon, in addition to personal projects of taking sick photos of birds and my friends who punch each other.”



SUPPLIED PHOTO

Favourite local podcast

1. *Witchpolice Radio*

2. *The Reel Debaters*

3. *Barking Dog*

BY PATRICK HARNEY

As a fan of folk music since high school, creator and host Juliana Young started *Barking Dog*, a folk and roots show hosted on CKUW, in 2018 to fill a gap they saw in commercial radio.

Four years later, *Barking Dog* maintains a supportive listener base that returns each week to discover new music and musings on the history and politics intertwined with folk and roots music.

“I wanted to create an easily accessible show that brought together historical and contemporary recordings and explored how traditional music has changed over time,” Young says.

They’ve since partnered with producer Dylan Bodner to expand the show and cover a larger variety of folk musical traditions.

“Dylan’s helped broaden the focus of *Barking Dog* to include styles of music I’d never considered playing before,” Young says. “These styles might seem irrelevant to North American folk and roots music ... but once you actually play

them side-by-side, it’s obvious how connected so many of these international traditions are.”

Barking Dog is notable for its well-researched and informative approach to radio. Fittingly, Young holds a master’s degree in folklore from Memorial University in Newfoundland. With Bodner, they search through resources such as the Smithsonian’s Folkways website and California state’s ballad index to discover new music to play each week.

“Researching the music each week also contributes to our knowledge of other artists. We might play a song by someone one week, then discover one of their major influences in our research and play that person’s music the next week,” Young says.

Powered by Young and Bodner’s evident love for folk music, *Barking Dog* shows no sign of slowing down. In the future, Young hopes to incorporate more themed episodes and interviews into the show.



SUPPLIED PHOTO

Favourite local politician

1. **Uzoma Asagwara**

2. **Leah Gazan**

3. **Wab Kinew**

BY ARMANDE MARTINE

1MANDE7

“It’s really humbling to be considered so thoughtfully by the community. I genuinely love Union Station (constituency). My heart is in the community. It’s a reflection of this strong New Democratic Party (NDP) team I feel privileged to be a part of,” Uzoma Asagwara says.

Asagwara responded with these appreciative thoughts after being named Winnipeg’s favourite local politician.

They made history as the first Black queer person elected as an MLA in 2019.

Asagwara is a registered psychiatric nurse and addictions specialist who serves as the opposition critic for health, seniors and long-term care.

They are often on their feet during question period in the House and do not shy away from social media to amplify their voice on behalf of Union Station constituents.

Asagwara has a history of experience in activism and community work.

“As someone with a lived experience of (fighting for) equity across all systems, that is a value that is important to be reflected in every political space that exists in our province, in our country,” they say.

They view healthcare as Manitoba’s top political issue, followed by affordability, climate change and education, in that order. However, Asagwara doesn’t seek to hold higher office, at least for the time being.

“My aspirations are to be the best representative for the constituency of Union Station that I could possibly be, and for our team to be the next government of Manitoba. It’s time for a change, and it’s time for an NDP government that puts people first,” Asagwara says.

Their spirit of generosity and compassion for their community is even reflected by their name.

“My first name means ‘the good road’ or ‘God’s good journey,’” Asagwara says.



SUPPLIED PHOTO

ARTS BRIEFS

CIERRA BETTENS | ARTS AND CULTURE EDITOR | FICTIONALCIERRA CIERRABETTS

Burton Cummings at Burton Cummings

The Winnipeg-born namesake of the Burton Cummings Theatre, Burton Cummings, will play two 75th birthday shows on Dec. 28 and 30. Tickets are on sale now via bit.ly/3OMspHI.

Extra! Extra!

In tandem with the 150th anniversary of the *Winnipeg Free Press*, the Winnipeg Art Gallery’s *Headlines: The Art of the News Cycle* takes a deeper look at the history of news and how readers consume it. The grand opening of *Headlines* takes place this Friday, Dec. 2 from 7 to 9 p.m.

A migratory tale

A cast of students from the University of Winnipeg’s Asper Centre for Theatre Film are in this weekend’s production of Christopher Gozum’s *Alunsina’s Love*. The play combines a Philippine creation story with narratives of Filipina migrants working as seamstresses in Canada. For more information and to purchase tickets, visit bit.ly/3XGmIVt.

Something old, something new

Next Saturday, Dec. 10, get your hands on some pre-loved, secondhand and vintage goods at the Nuage Vintage holiday market. The evening market is on from 7 to 10 p.m. at Le Patio 340 (340 Provencher Blvd.). There will be sips and sounds by DJ Janky Knee to accompany your shopping experience.

A very Ukrainian Christmas fair

Ukrainian cultural centre Os-eredok’s annual Christmas fair runs from Friday, Dec. 2 to Saturday, Dec. 3 both virtually and in-person at the boutique (184 Alexander Ave. E). A variety of handmade wares from Ukraine will be available to purchase. The online catalogue can be found at oseredok-boutique.ca.

Gimme Some Truth @ Cinematheque

Winnipeg’s beloved documentary festival Gimme Some Truth is back from Dec. 7 to 11 at the Winnipeg Film Group Cinematheque. Ten brand-new short docs from local filmmakers will be screened at the festival alongside several workshops, talks and feature-length screenings. A \$500 cash prize, courtesy of DOC Manitoba, will be awarded to the audience favourite. Visit gimmesometruth.ca for more information.

Favourite local barber or hairstylist

- 1. Ari Jakobson (Olafur's)
- 2. Walter Spooner (Waltz On In)
- 3. Ashley L'Heureux (Sapphire)

BY PATRICK HARNEY

Ari Jakobson got into barbering as a way to help out friends in need.

“I had friends who didn’t want to go get a haircut, and I got booked as the friend-group barber,” Jakobson says. “Then I wanted to give good haircuts, so I went to hair school.”

That was seven years ago. Jakobson has since gained a reputation as a talented barber with a dedicated clientele.

Jakobson reciprocates his clients’ dedication feeling “adjacent” to many of their lives.

“I really feel close and connected to my clients,” he says. “You are around for all the special occasions. You get a haircut for a wedding or a first date or a new job interview ... You get the highlight reel.”

For the past couple years, Jakobson has worked at Waltz On In but recently left, on amicable terms, to pursue a career cutting hair in his home.

Waltz On In “was awesome. I was one of the

four original people there. We worked long, long hours setting up the business to what it is,” Jakobson says. “They are really good friends of mine.”

Jakobson’s pivot to solo work came after a wrist injury that required him to slow his pace down. That pace and work scheduling can be a challenge for many barbers.

“You work when people are available. If someone works a 9-to-5, you have to work 5 to 9,” Jakobson says. “It’s a job that can easily slip into burnout and betraying your own boundaries.”

Despite slowing down the pace, Jakobson is happy as a barber and does not seem to be stopping anytime soon.

“You get to be there for people. You get to pump their tires. You get to make them look and feel good,” Jakobson says. “That’s why I keep working. It’s the relationships and the community I’ve built.”



SUPPLIED PHOTO

Favourite local comedian

- 1. Carson Košik
- 2. Benji Rothman
- 3. Paul Rabliauskas

BY THOMAS PASHKO

THOMASPASHKO

Comedian Carson Košik is relatively new to the standup game. He started performing solo shortly before COVID-19 after growing disillusioned with improv comedy.

“I did improv for a long time,” he says. “In improv, you have to share the credit with whoever you’re on stage with. With standup, it’s just for you. If you get a laugh, it’s like, ‘I’m the one who got this.’ And I can do it again tomorrow or next week and get the same reaction. In improv, if you do something funny, you can never do it again ... (in standup) I can control what’s happening.”

Košik recently brought his act to the long-running Winnipeg Comedy Showcase series at the Park Theatre. He says the show’s welcoming atmosphere is an ideal performance setting, where “everyone is on their best behaviour, comedy-wise.”

“(At other venues), you have to struggle a bit for them to figure out what you’re trying to do. At the Park Theatre, the audience wants everyone to

do well, and they want to support the local scene. So it’s nice to have a crowd who’s on your side the second you walk out ... I had a bad haircut, unfortunately. I don’t think it made too much of a difference.”

When it comes to bad gigs, Košik’s had much worse experiences than a hostile open-mic audience. One private gig ended up being something truly bizarre.

“This was just when COVID was starting. I did a show for this guy (who I later learned) is a prominent right-wing anti-vaxxer ... I didn’t know what it was, but it was essentially an anti-vax gathering in a backyard.”

Ultimately, Košik says bad gigs, like performing on the street for uninterested pedestrians in Selkirk, Man., still have value.

“I’ve done Rec Room in front of literally zero people, other than five eight-year-olds who walked in ... After a while, you get over that stuff.”



PHOTO BY KEELEY BRAUNSTEIN-BLACK

Favourite date activity

- 1. Attend a local comedy show
- 2. Walking/skating the river trail
- 3. Dinner at a local restaurant / catch a movie at Cinematheque (tie)

BY SYLVIE CÔTÉ

“I truly think (comedy shows are) a great date activity. Like, there’s a lot of people that are on dates, whether it’s a first date or they’ve been dating for a while,” Karlee Liljegren, a Winnipeg comedian, says.

She started attending comedy shows as a fan seven years ago. “I haven’t stopped going,” she says.

Eventually, Liljegren became friends with a few comedians who pushed her to try some open-mic nights. At first, “I had terrible stage fright,” Liljegren says, but she’s been working as a comedian for three years now. “It’s been so much fun. I love it. I enjoy every minute of it.”

“There’s a lot of really good comedians out in Winnipeg,” she says. Some of her favourites include Jaydin Pommer, Mike Green, Benji Rothman, Spencer Adamus, Tyler Kotowski, Emmanuel Lomuro and Garrett LeBlanc.

For her own shows, Liljegren mentions crowd work as a way to get the audience more involved. “I’ve asked people ‘Are you dating?’ and it’s kind

of a good way to lead into our material and make it a little bit more relatable.”

Winnipeggers who voted for the Uniter 30 specifically mentioned two venues where they like to take their dates. “The Handsome Daughter and Wee Johnny’s for sure I think are some of the best ones in the city,” Liljegren says. They’re smaller and more intimate than bigger clubs like Rumors Comedy Club, she explains. That said, “(Bigger clubs) bring out bigger names.”

“A really good date spot is The Basement,” Liljegren says. “They have great food, really fancy drinks. It’s kind of a more fancy atmosphere if people are looking to dress it up other than the dive bars.”

Still, open-mic nights are a great option for those on a budget. “They’re always free,” Liljegren says. On the other hand, headliners might range anywhere from \$10 to \$25 per ticket.

Either way, she says, couples “come back again and again.”



ILLUSTRATION BY TALIA STEELE

Favourite local grassroots group

1. Bear Clan Patrol	BY MEGAN RONALD
2. Winnipeg Police Cause Harm	MEGANLYNNRONALD
3. Mutual Aid Society Winnipeg	

Born out of the desire to provide security for Winnipeg’s Aboriginal community, Bear Clan Patrol works “to keep the peace and assist community members.” Kevin Walker, the group’s executive director, credits the first-place title to the patrol’s hands-on involvement in the community.

“(We’re) engaging with community members, meeting them where they are at (and doing) our best to be involved in the community as much as we can be,” he says.

At three locations in the city, over 1500 volunteers take to the streets. These daily patrols encourage safety, by resolving conflict, and providing an early response to situations, all contributing factors in reducing crime.

The patrol distributes food, water and other needed resources to inner-city community members. Walker mentions the organization’s “food den that distributes food to about 600 to 700 people in the community daily.”

He says inflation, addiction, mental-health issues and poverty all contribute to the city’s cur-

rent crises. “With all those dynamics involved, I think being a constant presence and a constant resource for some of the city’s most vulnerable is part of our mission to our community members.”

“The hardest part is not being able to help everybody. We help as many as we can. We get to engage with about 50 to a hundred people on a patrol, so it’s very tough when we can’t necessarily help them, but we try our best to give them resources that they can utilize and leave it up to them.”

Walker says interacting with youth is a highlight of his job. “It’s engaging with community members, meeting them at their level and just watching people. Changing people’s days (sometimes by doing) something as simple as giving them an apple.”

He attributes the success patrol’s to its volunteers. “Without our volunteers, the Bear Clan Patrol wouldn’t be where we are right now,” Walker says. “They are the backbone of our organization.”



ILLUSTRATION BY GABRIELLE FUNK

Favourite on-campus menu item

1. Chicken fingers	BY CIERRA BETTENS
2. French fries	FICTIONALCIERRA CIERRABETTS
3. Huevos Rancheros wrap	

Fingers, tenders, tendies, strips, nugs. Whatever you call them or however you like them, they’re the holy grail for adults who wish they could still order from the kid’s menu. Unsurprisingly, they’re also this year’s campus fan-favourite.

We can’t afford a staff food critic here at *The Uniter*, so you’ll have to be patient with us. And while chicken fingers are no Michelin-star dish, we all have to start somewhere. Consider this the Spark Notes of a nonexistent Yelp review section.

The first order of business was to make sure that honey dill, Winnipeg’s culinary lovechild, was included with the order. Checkpoint passed.

The chicken fingers and fries were handcrafted by the Diversity Foods kitchen – two-time winners of LEAF Canada’s Greenest Restaurant Award, among other culinary achievements.

Here are some stats:
Texture: 8/10
Sweet to salty ratio: 9/10
Temperature: 10/10 (steamy without burning

your tongue)
Breeding-to-chicken ratio: 10/10

And then for our second-place winner: the fries. Perfect seasoning. Slightly on the dry side. A clear runner-up.

After practicing casual vegetarianism for nearly a decade, I’ve mostly retired from ordering chicken fingers from restaurants. Many of my memories of noshing on chicken tenders are from my glory days of ordering off the kid’s menu.

That being said, I can easily imagine 10-year-old me begging my mother for these in the back-seat of her van, only for her to shut it down in five crushing words: “we have them at home.”

Chicken fingers align comfort-food seekers, overgrown picky eaters and kindergarten students. They’re so universally loved that even the plant-based crowd opted to drop the “e” for an apostrophe and meat for seitan.

They’re nothing special. That’s what makes them so special.



ILLUSTRATION BY TALIA STEELE

Favourite local outdoor gathering place

1. The Forks	BY MEGAN RONALD
2. Munson Park	MEGANLYNNRONALD
3. Assiniboine Park	

The Forks is an intersection between the Red and Assiniboine Rivers, a historic landmark founded by Indigenous peoples more than 6,000 years ago.

Today, the site is a year-round gathering place that attracts people from all over the world. It houses some of Winnipeg’s favourite local restaurants and businesses, from the famous Tall Grass Prairie Bread Company to The Common, a bar highlighting Manitoban and Canadian craft beer and wine.

The Forks is also home to the Manitoba Theatre for Young People and Canadian Museum for Human Rights, as well as their famous Riverwalk and native-flower Prairie Garden.

Another time-honored tradition for Winnipeggers, are The Forks’ skating trails. This includes the Nestaweya River Trail, which is not only one of Canada’s longest skating trails, but the world’s. In 2008, the trail earned a spot in the Guinness Book of World Records for being the longest naturally frozen skating trail.

The sustainable site has a zero-trace goal that aims to create zero trash, water waste and carbon emissions. In an attempt to reduce its carbon footprint, The Forks uses geothermal heat, composts 80 per cent of the waste produced onsite and uses rainwater to maintain its famous ice-skating surfaces.

While The Forks has implemented many sustainable practices, one of the most noticeable initiatives has been its transition from disposable dishes to reusable plates and utensils.

The shift from single-use plastics to physical dishes allows consumers to contribute in some small way to the site’s Target Zero philosophy.

The Forks is a beautiful and historic space, further enhanced by its innovative mindset. Winnipeggers and tourists from around the world are encouraged to enjoy this space, learn about the history and make sustainable decisions for the future.



PHOTO BY DANIEL CRUMP

Favourite local place that no longer exists

1. Forth Café and Bar

2. Cousins Deli & Lounge

3. Misericordia emergency room

BY MATTHEW TEKLEMARIAM

MATTEKLE

Parting is such sweet sorrow, especially when coffee and spirits are involved. For the second year in a row, Forth Café and Bar has been voted the community’s favourite now-defunct establishment.

A former fixture of the bustling Exchange District, Forth was but another casualty of the COVID-19 pandemic’s impact on small businesses.

“We closed like every other restaurant and café, because of COVID,” former staffer Pamela Kirkpatrick says.

Kirkpatrick was a fixture at Forth during its entire tenure, working as the chef during its opening in January of 2017 before later moving into a managerial role until its closure in March 2020.

Predominantly, she mourns the establishment as a hub of community congregation.

“Because of the vast space, like the entire building itself was always active and being used,” Kirkpatrick says.

“It felt like a real hub of a central place. We were open from 7 in the morning and closed at 10 every day of the week, something we wanted to do in order to set that precedent of, ‘yes, we’re always open.’”

Kirkpatrick notes the community feeling extended to customers as well as employees, with nearly 200 staff working at some point over the course of Forth’s run.

“We ended up pulling in so many creative people that didn’t necessarily need to have a full-time permanent job.”

Whether the niche filled by Forth can be replaced is yet to be seen, as Kirkpatrick laments the hole left in its absence.

“You could come by yourself and have a cup of coffee or do your work by yourself, but the odds are, you’re going to run into somebody there and that you’ll connect with somebody there. Since the pandemic, I don’t feel like there’s many places that have fulfilled that.”



PHOTO BY DANIEL CRUMP

Favourite political moment

1. Stefanson uses her son’s hockey game to distract from the healthcare crisis

2. CTV *La La Land*’s the mayoral election for Glen Murray

3. Stefanson’s low approval ratings

BY DANIELLE DOIRON

DANIELLEMDOIRON

Steinbach’s first-ever Pride event. Justice 4 Black Lives Winnipeg’s rally. Brian Pallister’s resignation. In my time at *The Uniter*, readers have seen and celebrated major political organizing and progress across the province.

But the more some things change, the more others stay the same.

Since its election in 2016, Manitoba’s Progressive Conservative government has decimated healthcare services by shuttering emergency rooms across the province, failing to support staff throughout the COVID-19 pandemic and pushing for privatization.

Their utter lack of compassion was perhaps best exemplified in March, when Premier Heather Stefanson responded to a question about a woman’s death by congratulating her son’s winning hockey team.

During question period, NDP Leader Wab Kinew asked for an inquest to investigate the death of Krystal Mousseau, a patient who died

in May 2021 after a failed attempt to airlift her to an Ottawa hospital.

Instead of respectfully responding to Kinew and acknowledging the healthcare system’s failings that contributed to Mousseau’s death, Stefanson first took a “proud parent moment” to mention her child’s provincial hockey championship win.

“Sometimes, we need to remember that we need to take time to celebrate our kids,” she told the legislative chamber. The comment would be almost laughable, a moment of awkward levity, if not for the gravity of Mousseau’s death and the state of healthcare in Manitoba.

Stefanson later apologized for her remarks and said the comment about her family was “misplaced.” Really, they couldn’t be more spot-on. This PC government claims to “want a province where families can thrive,” but these statements deflect from actual issues and underscore how separated from reality these leaders are.



ILLUSTRATION BY SAM NEAL

Favourite local public art piece

1. *Forever Bicycles* by Ai Weiwei

2. *Bloody Saturday* by Bernie Miller and Noam

3. Chip’s Vintage mural by Hanna Reimer

BY CIERRA BETTENS

FICTIONALCIERRA CIERRABETTS

On June 21, 1919, a critical mass of 6,000 striking workers occupied Winnipeg’s Main Street.

Then things got bloody. A streetcar transporting scab labour incited fury in the striking crowd. The car shook from side to side by the force of protesting shoves. Windows shattered onto the pavement. A fire ignited.

Eventually, a mob of Mounties stormed Main Street to break up the chaos – some firing directly at striking workers. Around 45 injuries and 94 arrests later, the military took control of the streets. Two strikers – Steve Szczerbanowicz and Mike Sokolowski – died after being shot.

Noam Gonick wants to make sure the legacy of the Winnipeg General Strike never fades from the public consciousness.

That’s why he and the late artist Bernie Miller took it upon themselves to construct *Bloody Saturday*, a steel and glass rendition of the tipped streetcar installed just steps away from the historic action.

“I wanted us to make something that would be very public-facing and would cause new

generations, new arrivals to Winnipeg and new Canadians to question their history,” Gonick says.

It all came together with the help of Ironworkers union members who transported sheets of glass and steel beams from Transcona to Winnipeg’s urban core. While waiting for the windows to be installed, Gonick hauled a sleeping bag and slept in the car “like a mummy sarcophagus.”

As Gonick explains, there’s a reason the lights are always on in the streetcar, even if no one’s home.

“It’s always illuminated, and the lights are supposed to stay on day and night,” Gonick says. “The reason for that is that we never want the sun to set on those issues. We always want to shine a light on the importance of labour rights.”

After all, “It took some people sacrificing their lives so we can have some of the rights we enjoy today.”



PHOTO BY DANIEL CRUMP

Favourite Winnipeg neighbourhood	
1. Wolseley	BY DANIELLE DOIRON  DANIELLEMDOIRON
2. West Broadway	
3. The West End	

My first introduction to Wolseley wasn't Tall Grass Prairie's cinnamon buns or De Luca's pasta but the neighbourhood's eponymous Stella's salad. Along with their toasted focaccia and copious amounts of coffee, this mix of spinach, brussels sprouts, radish, avocado, sprouts, chickpeas and seeds kept me (mostly) fed and alert through the final night classes of my undergrad.

Like Stella's, the neighbourhood isn't always as accepting, welcoming or progressive as it seems. "You think of Wolseley now as the granola belt, hippies, things like that, but back in the day, it was pretty conservative," *Wolseley Stories* author Laina Hughes told *The Uniter* in 2013.

"One of the girls I interviewed for the book, her dad has lived in Wolseley since the '50s, and he's angry that the hippies have come and taken over his neighbourhood." While the "hippie" label might not apply to all Wolseley residents, there's no denying the area's history of activism.

A blue plaque stands outside Wolseley's 97 Chestnut St. to mark the former home of wom-

en's-right activist Nellie McClung. A few years ago, residents launched at least one petition to rename Wolseley Avenue, Lord Wolseley School, Wolseley School and the neighbourhood itself.


Col. Garnet Joseph Wolseley was a colonist British military general who invaded Manitoba and suppressed Louis Riel's Red River Resistance in the 19th century. As one renaming advocate told CBC in 2021, "while there is a place for this history to be taught, it's not for commemoration on street names."

It's difficult to reconcile this violent history with the so-called "granola belt" and "incredibly diverse neighbourhood" Tourism Winnipeg describes as "the poster child of whimsical charm in Winnipeg." Maybe that's the point.

Wolseley isn't just a collection of Instagrammable houses, independent grocery stores and meandering sidewalks. It's a place with a past, a complicated legacy, just like almost anywhere else we call home.



ILLUSTRATION BY TALIA STEELE

Favourite local music venue	
1. The Good Will Social Club	BY MEGAN RONALD  MEGANLYNNRONALD
2. The Park Theatre	
3. The Handsome Daughter	

This year marks the third time *Uniter* readers have named the Good Will Social Club their favourite local music venue. Since opening in 2014, the Good Will has worked to make live music accessible, which goes hand in hand with the club's zero-tolerance policy for discrimination of any kind.

Anthony Kowalczyk, one of the club's owners, points to this inclusive environment as a reason for its success.

"It's a really good space that has a variety of different music types and genres. There's a lot of young up-and-coming bands that play there. I feel like most people feel comfortable and safe," he says.

The Good Will offers a concert experience that is harder to achieve in larger spaces. In this small and intimate venue, the line between the

audience and the stage is blurred, making connections easier.

"We offer sort of a different style of venue than maybe your mid-to-large style. It's a local place. It's just a little different than what is currently out there," Kowalczyk says.

In the past eight years, the Good Will has prioritized featuring local artists. "It was really created as a stage for Winnipeg musicians and artists to get a foothold in the industry and have a place to shine," he says.

At the end of the day, the club is more than a building. It reinforces a belief in the value of local art.

"It's a pretty neat venue to be a part of, in that we've fostered a culture," Kowalczyk says. "We're really building visibility into all of what is offered in Winnipeg."



PHOTO BY KEELEY BRAUNSTEIN-BLACK

Favourite local writer	
1. Jessica Seburn	BY SYLVIE CÔTÉ
2. Bartley Kives	
3. Madeline Rae	

"It's so vulnerable to share your art and share your passion ... It's completely worth it."

Some Winnipeggers may know Jessica Seburn as the author of *The Corner Chip*, a book she self-published in 2018 that discusses her grief after her best friend's unexpected death.

"I'm so flattered and honoured by being named the best writer in Winnipeg. It just means a lot to me," she says. "I've been a storyteller and a writer pretty much my whole life. So this year, it's just really nice to get recognition for the writing that I've been doing lately."

Seburn says she started writing again this year after suffering a brain injury. "I realized how many things I had been putting off, and that included my passion for writing," she says.

"So many of us are really holding back on

the things that light us up. And this year has been a testimony of what can happen when you don't wait, and you just go for it."

Seburn started writing a memoir essay collection called *I Love the Alphabet*. Thinking through her past and present, Seburn writes about the connections between her online identity and her relationship with herself. "A lot of us aren't living in reality, and that's not necessarily a bad thing," she says.

She is publishing this book chapter by chapter, each of which is based on a different word starting from letters A to Z. Seburn says she feels grateful for the feedback and support she gets from her readers. "It's been a very challenging and fun and fulfilling experience so far," Seburn says.



SUPPLIED PHOTO

1. *The Winnipeg Free Press*
2. *Stylus*
3. *Border Crossings / The Manitoban* (tie)

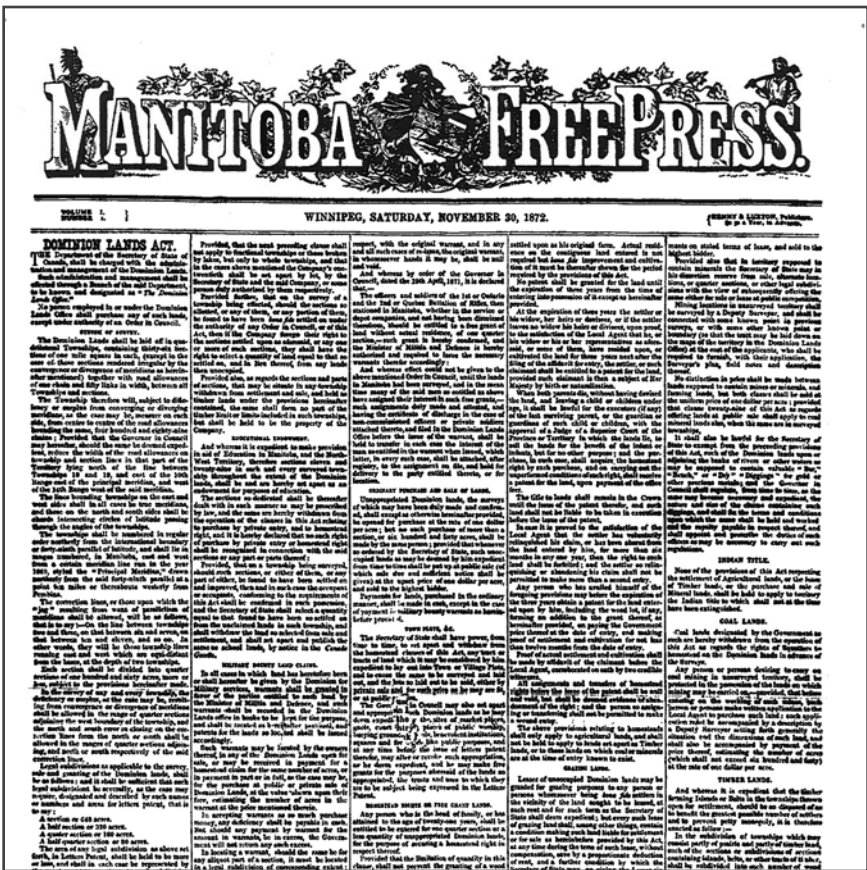
BY THOMAS PASHKO

 THOMASPASHKO

It was surely a far cry from the present-day offices of the *Free Press* or the Centennial Concert Hall at Main and James. That day was a snowy -10°C while the muscular Kenny turned the handle on the cylinder press, which by then was already archaic. Steam-powered mechanical presses had been the global standard for decades,

Since then, many local Manitoba papers have come and, sadly, gone. Winnipeg is extremely lucky to have a journalistic institution as old as the city itself. And as I sit here writing, at home on my laptop in my pajamas, procrastinating walking to the office in the snow, I think of that cold shack and feel very spoiled.

Editor's note: In this category, the publication that got the most votes was, far and away, *The Uniter*. While we do appreciate the love, we do feel the need to point out that the name of the category does exclude us from contention. In the future, please spread the love to other folks putting out good work. If you love (or hate) something we've written, you can always send us a letter, an email or a social-media post!



SUPPLIED PHOTO

1. Bonnie Day
2. Nola
3. The Tallest Poppy

BY PAUL CARRUTHERS

Bonnie Day is a good idea. It's now a democratically backed statement.

Rachael King, co-owner of Bonnie Day, says it "means everything" to win in the category, especially as the anniversary of their opening lands on Dec. 1.

"We created this space for (the community). To have all of that hard work and heart put into something and have it be received with such gratitude is really humbling."

A major inspiration for Rachael and the other co-owners was rooted in the values their late uncle, playwright David King, imbued: creativity, joy and community.

"We talk about having a legacy of joy in our family. We hope that translates to people's experience there, breaking bread in our family way and experiencing joy in the process," King says.

As legend has it, Bonnie Day's namesake was David's famous catchphrase, a double entendre of the French *bonne idée* (good idea) and the Scot-

tish phrase *bonnie day*, meaning beautiful day.

The menu, carefully designed by executive chef Pamela Kirkpatrick and Brian Johnson (co-owner and general manager), is, as Rachael says “at the heart of it all. It’s an assembly of people that are the best at what they do.”

The menu is inclusive for people who are gluten-free, vegan or omnivores, all serving up “nourishing comfort food in a cozy milieu.”

Staff members show off their creativity through the cocktail menu, where “everyone brings something different to the table.”

“I think whenever we do anything, it’s never done unilaterally. It’s always done as a team, and we really value all of our staff that work here,” King says.

Soon, Bonnie Day will expand their hours to include a café and coffee to go (managed by Jordan Cayer from Never Better Coffee) during the day.

“The goal is to keep building and leveling up and listening to the community and taking it with us,” King says.



SUPPLIED PHOTO

1. @winnipegwildin (Instagram)
2. @faceplam (Twitter)
3. @mbpolidragrace (Instagram)

BY MATTHEW TEKLEMARIAM

 MATTTEKLE

The Red River Rebellion. The General Strike of 1919. If Day. Winnipeg has been chaotic for as long as it's been; wildin', even. It was only a matter of time before someone made a tidy agglomeration of its daily folly for convenient consumption on your timeline. Enter @winnipegwildin.

"All Winnipeggers have their opinions on the city, and it's just kind of put into a page. It's all inside jokes that Winnipeggers know," the head of growth at @winnipegwildin, who wishes to remain anonymous, says. We'll call him Dave.

The Instagram page showcases "the good, the bad and the ugly" of Winnipeg through user-submitted content, witty tweets and headline news. City-specific memes coexist alongside peculiar traffic incidents and videos of citizens fighting the elements in their own zany ways.

"Ninety-nine per cent of the content is from Winnipeg. If we post anything that isn't from Winnipeg, I would usually hashtag 'notWinnipeg,' so people know," Dave says.

@winnipegwildin is one of many such accounts under the Wildin Media Group, which had its origins in Lethbridge, Alta.

“My business partner here, he started it in Lethbridge about four, four-and-a-half years ago. He came to Winnipeg, and he pitched the same idea here. It was just a fun place to post community-related memes,” Dave says.

The group hopes to provide a less sanitized perspective on the city and its happenings.

“People can go there and see what’s really happening in the city: the headlines of what’s actually in the news and also things that aren’t in the news. Things that wouldn’t regularly be covered in the mainstream media.”

Even then, there is content made in our great city deemed unfit for “wildin” standards.

“I try and keep the craziness to a low. It doesn’t really seem like that, but a lot of the really crazy stuff, it’s just not posted, because it can’t be.”



SUPPLIED PHOTO

Favourite local visual artist

1. J.D. Renaud	BY TESSA ADAMSKI
2. Hanna Reimer	
3. Adelle Rawluk	TESSA_ADAMSKI TESSA.ADAMSKI

J.D. Renaud is a mixed-media collage artist and a third-time winner of the Uniter 30’s favourite visual artist category.

He has been creating collage-based artwork since 2012, using movie and concert posters, calendars, art books and other types of printed media to make colourful, abstract and geometric designs. Renaud uses scissors, exacto knives, drafting rulers and other paper crafting tools to cut and paste his art.

He works at a table in his office room for eight to nine hours a day, listening to history and true-crime podcasts or lo-fi beats for concentration. He says his floor is always covered in paper scraps and that he wears “grubby” clothing he doesn’t mind getting covered in glue.

In October, Renaud was commissioned to make a floor-to-ceiling mural in the bathrooms at the Artspace building. The mural is a tribute to the late Dave Barber, senior programmer for the Winnipeg Film Group, who had been collecting film posters since 1984.

“It’s all encompassing. It’s huge ... It is a combination, an abstraction of my interpreta-

tions of decades of work, posters that were primarily all made by Dave,” Renaud says.

The bathroom murals at Artspace took one month to complete. It is the largest commissioned piece Renaud has ever produced.

“I always like to say that art in the bathroom is one of the highest honours you could give an artist, because there’s nowhere else to look and nothing else to do in the bathroom than stare at the walls,” he says. “It feels like a great honour to be a permanent fixture there now.”

Although he is proud to have completed the Artspace mural, last year, Renaud created his favourite commissioned piece for a married couple who gave him a giant shoe box filled with six to seven years’ worth of movie-ticket stubs.

Renaud says this piece will always have a special place in his heart, and he is awestruck to have been trusted with the project.

Currently, he works as the art curator at The Handsome Daughter, where he showcases his own work and runs various art shows every three to four months.



SUPPLIED PHOTO

Favourite Winnipegger abroad

1. Tim Gray	BY VALERIE CHELANGAT
2. Ryan Steel	
3. Neil Young	VALERIECHELA

Standup comedian Tim Gray has been involved in comedy for more than 12 years. He’s previously performed in various comedy festivals, including Just for Laughs Northwest, Oddblock Comedy Festival, San Francisco Sketchfest, Chicago Sketchfest and, of course, the Winnipeg Comedy Festival.

Winnipeg is Gray’s hometown, although he now lives in Toronto. In an email to *The Uniter* Gray says “I left Winnipeg for the adventure of living in a different, bigger city.”

He’s appeared on CBC Radio’s *The Debaters* twice and took part in one debate that led him to marry his longtime partner, comedian Dana Smith.

The couple debated whether or not they should get hitched. After a heated discussion, they posed the question to listeners, because, why not?

Gray won the debate, and the couple tied

the knot on stage. A reluctant Smith wore the wedding dress she had brought with her for their seven-minute ceremony.

One of Gray’s fondest memories in Winnipeg was in 2019, when he and Smith were skating on the river trail. It was after midnight, and the frozen trail was packed with people skating, walking and even some dog sleds. That night, they witnessed a northern-lights display.

We reached out to inform him of his winning the Uniter 30 vote as the city’s favourite Winnipegger abroad. Calling Winnipeg “the best city in the world,” he wrote that it “feels incredible to get some love from my hometown.” He expressed his desire to make everyone who voted for him proud.

Tim Gray can be found on Instagram, where he continues to crack up his followers. His handle is @timgrayrulez.



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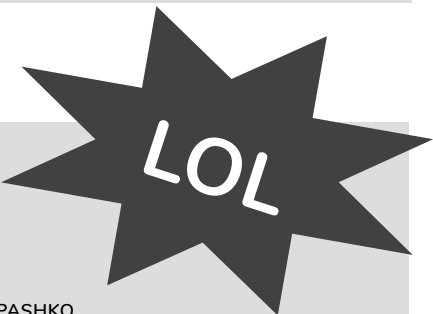
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THE UNITER IS SEEKING COMIC CONTRIBUTORS

The Uniter is looking for local emerging artists to create comics on a volunteer basis.

See your work in newsprint, online and distributed around the city while you enhance skills.

Contact creative@uniter.ca for more information!



UNITER 30 OUTTAKES

We are your bathroom wall

THOMAS PASHKO THOMASPASHKO

Give people a place to write – any place, be it the margins of a notebook page, the wall of a bathroom stall, an internet form entry – and people will write the most inane, puerile thing that pops into their head. Well, the Uniter 30 ballot is certainly one of those things. And, once again, we are your bathroom wall. Here are some of the silliest, crudest things you wrote this year instead of actually voting for things you like. (note: any typos or grammatical errors are preserved from actual ballot entries)

Favourite local achiever under 30

“Don’t trust anyone under 30.”
“My cat.”
“Why no achievers from age 30 to 60!?”

Favourite local activist

“The guy who poured a pitcher on Danny Smyth.”

Favourite local artist

“The person that drew the penis outside Pallister’s house.”

Favourite local athlete

“Air Bud.”
“I don’t sport sowwy :(”
“Neon Cone ice cream shop employees.”

Favourite local barber or hairstylist

“I’m bald.”

Favourite local comedian

“CANCEL CULTURE”
“Jenny Motkaluk. That whole bit where she was running for mayor was hilarious.”

Favourite local dancer

“Kelvin Goertzen dancing to ‘Take Me Out to the Ball Game’ a few rows ahead of me at a Goldeyes game.”

Favourite local date activity

“Bathroom sex at the Good Will after eating some delicious pork buns.”
“bumpin uglyz”
“Eating ass high on psilocybin.”
“Making ‘whoopie!’”
“Getting cancelled on the night of and watching *Hairspray* at home in bed instead.”
“Kissing (no tongue).”
“Making out behind a Salisbury House.”
“Picking gum off the sidewalk.”

Favourite local gallery or artist space

“Defaced Kevin Klein garbage bin ads.”

Favourite local grassroots group

“Is this a bluegrass thing?”
“woke mob”

Favourite on-campus menu item

“The woke agenda.”

Favourite local outdoor gathering place

“Brian Pallister’s house on Wellington Crescent.”
“The line outside the River-Osborne LC.”

Favourite local performance

“Bartley Kives asking questions during press conferences.”

Favourite local place that no longer exists

“Beet Happening (I miss those big salads, made me feel like I was Elaine Benes from *Seinfeld* eatin’ those).”

Favourite political moment

“Jenny Motkaluk’s Canada Day temper tantrum.”
“Ross Eadie showing up at Ed Radchenka’s house at 1:30 a.m.”
“Any time the PCs get roasted.”
“Jon Reyes’ wife shovelling.”
“Monstrosity Burger closing down.”
“Mind ya own business!”

Favourite local public art piece

“Conceptual performance artist Heather Stefanson as a sentient pile of compost.”
“The Golden Boy (love his dong).”

Favourite Winnipegger abroad

“It’s 2022, people don’t like being called a ‘broad.’”
“I mean, I’m away from home pretty often.”
“Santa Clause.”



THE UNIVERSITY OF WINNIPEG

Student Services

WORK-STUDY PROGRAM

The 2022-23 Work-Study student application is currently open. Final deadline is **Dec. 5**.
More info here: www.uwinnipeg.ca/awards/work-study-program.html

WEBINAR WEDNESDAYS

The Webinar Wednesday series wraps up the term with one more lunch-hour session (12:30 to 1:00 pm) via Zoom or in-person: Preparing for Winter Term – Dec. 7
Find out more and sign up here: www.uwinnipeg.ca/student-services/webinar-wednesdays.html

EXAMS

The Examination Period is **Dec. 9-22**. Please check the online exam schedule: www.uwinnipeg.ca/exam-schedules/index.html

WAITLISTS FOR WINTER TERM

Don’t lose out on a seat in a waitlisted course! Remember to check your University Webmail – every day – for permission to register. For more about waitlists, please see: www.uwinnipeg.ca/registration/wait-lists.html

HOLIDAY BREAK/START OF WINTER TERM

The University is closed for the holidays from **Dec. 23 to Jan. 2**. Most services on campus resume on **Jan. 3**. Lectures for Winter Term begin on **Jan. 4**.

WINTER 2023 IN-COURSE AWARDS

The online application for Winter 2023 In-Course Awards remains open until **Feb. 1, 2023**. Students

who missed the Fall Oct. 1 deadline and those registered in Winter term only are encouraged to apply.

For details: www.uwinnipeg.ca/awards/apply-for-awards/index.html

GRADUATE OR PROFESSIONAL STUDIES BURSARY

Students in their final year of an undergraduate degree program in the 2022-23 academic year who are applying for Graduate or Professional Studies starting in 2023-24 are eligible to apply for the “Graduate and Professional Studies Expenses Bursary.”

Applications are open until **March 31, 2023** or until funds are exhausted, so apply now!

More info here: www.uwinnipeg.ca/awards/apply-for-awards/graduate-and-professional-studies-expenses-bursary.html

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COMMENTS

COLONIZING SKATING IN WINNIPEG

YFC’s exclusionary policies create barriers for underrepresented skaters

MAEVE SMITH | VOLUNTEER | @MULLETMAY

Winter in Manitoba can last for six to eight months, which leaves little time for residents to enjoy outdoor summer activities. When sports and hobbies can’t happen in the snow, Winnipeggers will adapt by building infrastructure to enjoy things like rock climbing or soccer year-round. It’s a problem, however, when people can’t access or are excluded from that infrastructure. To my knowledge, Winnipeg has one indoor skatepark, while the outdoor venues are shuttered for much of the year by snow.

Called The Edge, this skatepark is located in the Youth For Christ (YFC) building at the intersection of Higgins and Main. YFC is an international evangelical Christian megachurch with locations in more than 100 countries on six continents.

In August, The Edge released a statement on Instagram saying their fall schedule was still undetermined. Comments for this post are turned off, and the schedule still isn’t live. The Edge subsequently barred all skaters over the age of 17, leaving them out in the cold where they can no longer skate in Winnipeg’s isolating winters.

YFC used to provide a space for all skaters, bladers and scooters in Winnipeg. In the past, I have attended nights specifically set aside for women and non-binary people. Carving out this time made The Edge more welcoming for 2SLGTBQIA+ patrons and other nondenominational skaters in a sport dominated by white, cis men.

The park has quietly phased out their nights for women and non-binary skaters – along with adult programming altogether. Ignoring these skaters is wrong and irresponsible, especially when YFC hosts the only indoor skatepark.

It is no secret that skateboarders are considered delinquents by some in our society. I have witnessed the church take it upon itself to “save” these people who might turn to a life of deviance by providing them with Christian values. I have noticed this a lot in the skating community all over Canada. Not all skaters are Christian, and we should be able to share a space, a community and a sport without talking about the things that divide us.

Forcing God down our throats while participating in hobbies we enjoy and using exclusionary policies is colonization and attempted assimilation in a modern sense. Faith statements released by YFC make it clear who is and who is not welcome or accepted. Attempted assimilation to Christianity is still too normalized. At The Edge, skaters who do not wish to be preached at have little choice in the matter.

Historically, Christian spaces have been both unwelcoming and discriminatory toward queer and Indigenous people. In 2021, The Edge introduced an ongoing policy that Indigenous people can skate for free on their own land. While this acknowledges colonialism, it doesn’t actually take responsibility for harm done by the church to Indigenous peoples in the past.

Not charging Indigenous skaters is a small price to pay. Simply not taking money does not make the space more welcoming or solve the root causes of YFC’s exclusionary practices. Reconciliation requires more than a land acknowledgment. It requires action and culpability.

YFC’s existence at Higgins and Main has been controversial since it was first proposed more than a decade ago. That intersection is also home to Thunderbird House, which was created to provide Indigenous folks in the neighbourhood with cultural and land-based teachings and practices, including language programming and spiritual practices.

These were meant to help folks reconnect with practices attacked by colonialism. Some argued that housing an evangelical Christian organization across the street, with the explicit goal of preaching to that community, was modern colonization in action.

In the last five years, YFC has received millions of dollars in government funding, including more than \$357,000 through summer-jobs grants. It’s unclear, however, where this money has gone. Meanwhile, Thunderbird House has been falling into disrepair for years, suffering from structural problems that could likely be addressed with a fraction of the public money that YFC receives.

While YFC employs some staff mem-



Winnipeg's only indoor skatepark, The Edge, is run by evangelical megachurch Youth for Christ. Their policies are leaving many local skaters feeling left out in the cold.

bers, many other “workers” are volunteers. With the organization recently imposing an age limit on participants, it’s clear YFC isn’t using the valuable public funds they receive to help Winnipeg’s entire skating community.

When YFC blamed the absence of a schedule on a lack of staff, I and others applied to help out in order to have adult skates. All of us openly queer, and none of us made the cut. YFC has been called out on their volunteer-screening processes, yet no obvious hiring changes have been made.

YFC’s volunteer application form features pledges including a statement of faith and a vow not to participate in homosexuality. While people can opt out of these pledges and instead agree to “not oppose YFC’s mission or values,” this is still asking for a signature endorsing those discriminatory values. These screening methods not only block the space by making it unwelcoming to many skaters but also carry out colonial values.

It took until Nov. 21 of this year for YFC to release a pitiful excuse for an apology – and only due to receiving significant backlash. This statement focused on addressing their commitment to youth skating (not the problem) and recognized “particular instances that patrons (members of the 2SLGTBQIA+ community) may have felt unsafe.”

This statement did not address their documentation that proclaimed their commitment “to the purity and sanctity of sexual relations within marriage, which we believe is a committed union between one man and one woman.”

YFC is actively causing harm to the

adult skating community in Winnipeg by gatekeeping the city’s only readily available skatepark in winter. Like many others who participate in wheel sports, roller skating is how I find happiness. Not only is it wildly inappropriate that YFC can discriminate against the queer community, they are now actively causing harm to all adult skaters by gatekeeping an activity many rely on for exercise, community and happiness.

The Winnipeg skating community is trying to build new infrastructure that will be open, available and welcoming to all people. This will take time, resources and money that no one has in this community. While skateboarding is now in the Olympics and should be taken seriously, a lot of us only participate in our spare time.

Like all organizations, YFC has a responsibility to the communities it serves. That responsibility goes beyond simply creating a physical space for skating, while continuing to perpetuate harmful colonial and anti-queer ideals.

If YFC wants to continue existing in skating communities, they need to acknowledge the harm they have done and continue to do, while making a genuine effort to do better. As it stands now, all they’re doing is holding Winnipeg’s skating community hostage.

Maeve Smith started rollerskating in 2020, when they attended Winnipeg Roller Derby’s “Fresh Meat” training program. When the pandemic hit and derby shut down, they took their skates to the park and have been shredding ever since.

CITY BRIEFS

TESSA ADAMSKI | CITY EDITOR | TESSA_ADAMSKI TESSA.ADAMSKI

Winnipeg budget deficits

In an attempt to win their third consecutive Grey Cup championship, the Winnipeg Blue Bombers lost 24-23 to the Toronto Argonauts. In the final 54 seconds of the game, kicker Marc Liegghio tried a 47-yard field goal that was blocked by Toronto’s Nick Hallett.

City encampments on fire

Since Oct. 30, the Winnipeg Fire Paramedic Service has responded to 20 fires in encampments. On Sunday, Nov. 27, a fire engulfed a West End encampment on Langside Street, between Sargent and Cumberland Avenue. At the time, 10 people were living in the camp and have since lost all their belongings. Staff from Downtown Community Safety Partnership assisted the displaced residents.

Toy drive for Ukrainian refugees

The Ukrainian National Federation is hosting a toy drive in support of Ukrainian families who have fled their home country. Since Russia’s invasion of Ukraine, Manitoba has welcomed 12,400 people. Joanne Lewandowski, the UNF Winnipeg president, is asking Winnipeggers to donate new, unopened gifts for children, as well as winter clothing such as coats, ski pants, toques, scarves and gloves.

NDP holds healthcare rally

On Sunday, Nov. 27, NDP Leader Wab Kinew held a rally at Kirkfield Park over the healthcare staffing crisis. Kinew was joined by more than 60 NDP members and frontline and labour workers. He criticized the Province for recent emergency-room closures and inadequate staffing at hospitals. Kinew pledges to introduce “family-friendly” hours at the Grace Hospital ACCESS Centre from 6 to 12 a.m.

New bill on liquor sales and cannabis tax

The provincial government has introduced a new legislative bill that would allow private wine and beer vendors the opportunity to offer a full range of alcohol, the same as government-run stores. The PCs also introduced a bill that would eliminate the social-responsibility tax, which required retailers to pay six per cent of their annual revenue. Instead, consumers would pay a higher excise tax on cannabis, which would be collected by the federal government.

Flaws in Transit Plus system

People with mobility issues who use Winnipeg Transit Plus are upset with the service’s growing wait times, which are sometimes longer than two hours. Lori Ross, a downtown resident who uses a wheelchair, told the *Winnipeg Free Press* she has cancelled plans and will have difficulty this winter if the sidewalks are not regularly plowed. Users call the booking queue and wait until they can speak to a representative through the City’s accessibility service. The City of Winnipeg says they are developing an online booking system to avoid delays and missed appointments.



COLUMN



ILLUSTRATION BY GABRIELLE FUNK

MOTHER OF GOO

Pop my cherry!

MADELINE RAE | COLUMNIST | [@MOTHEROFGOO](#)

Virginity is a loaded word. The common definition declares virginity as the time or state of being before a person engages in intercourse. Sexual intercourse is commonly defined as penetrative sex, specifically with a penis and vagina. Listen. We know sex is expansive beyond penetrative penis-vaginal intercourse. But does society?

A term that I prefer to virginity or “losing your V-card” is making one’s “sexual debut.” This allows for broader interpretation and in general makes the whole process seem more positive and less intimidating. You aren’t “losing” anything when you have sex for the first time, whatever that looks like for you.

My readers will know that I grew up in the Christian church. I was taught that

my virginity, as it were, “belonged” to my “future husband.” I didn’t know this faceless cisgender man (my little queer self was told it couldn’t be anyone different than this), or why he would care so much about my sexual expression before I met him, but I was trained to believe that he would find me worthless if anyone else entered my vagina before him.

This definition meant that many of my peers in the Christian private school I went to engaged in anal sex, not believing that this counted. After all, the sacred hole God seemed to care *so much* about was the vagina – not the asshole.

Across many religions and cultures, virginity is a dogmatic belief that dictates (specifically a woman’s) worth, and it is

almost always tied to purity in marriage. The term “loose” has been used in our society to refer to a vagina-owning woman who has had “too much” sex ... yet no one talks about how the penis can get small and elongated from having too much sex prior to marriage! ... I’m just kidding. But this comparison illustrates how ridiculous the sentiment is.

The hymen, a thin piece of flesh inside the vaginal cavity, is used cross-culturally to determine if a vagina-owning woman is a virgin or not on her wedding day. If no blood or pain accompanies penetrative sex on that wedding day, it’s often assumed that the woman is a dismissable harlot who’s been around the block.

Hymen reconstructive surgery has been popularized in many countries. The reality is, many people who own vaginas tear their hymen through exercise, tampon use, natural movement or (god forbid) penetrative sexual activity.

Here it is: virginity as a concept is a myth that has been used to perpetuate patriarchy and sexism. The only person who gets to decide whether or not you’ve made your intentional, consensual sexual

debut is you, however this looks to you. And guess what? If you never want to have your sexual debut, or if it doesn’t feel right until you are in your late 20s, 30s or 60s ... that’s *your call*.

Culturally, I “lost my virginity” when I was 18. But emotionally and physiologically, I believe I made my sexual debut at 16, in a cabin bedroom mid-autumn, faint light streaming in and illuminating the dust in the air. I felt sexual intimacy for the first time – no penile penetration required. I am so thankful for all the sex I’ve had. And if I ever marry, the right person will also appreciate and respect my past.

Your body is yours and no one else’s, something the virginity myth begs us to ignore. You decide. I love you.

Madeline Rae, University of Winnipeg alumni, is a sex educator and writer living in Mi’kma’ki, the ancestral and unceded territory of the Mi’kmaq People. She holds a BFA in performative sculpture, a BA in psychology and is studying her masters of clinical social work at Dalhousie University.



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The work: 4 days/week.

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APPLY ONLINE AT [UWINNIPEG.CA/UIC](https://www.universityofwinnipeg.ca/uic) - SEARCH FOR INNER CITY WORK STUDY



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22. PHONOGRAPH INVENTOR
24. TOO SOON
25. WIDE STREET
28. LUAU GARLAND
30. INTERESTED BY
31. LIP
34. AIDE
38. NIGHT SOUND
40. COMPLETELY ABSORBED
41. ICY PRECIPITATION
43. TRACK SHAPE
44. CRAWL
46. CONCURRENCE
48. COVERED UP
49. DALAI ____
51. RENOWNED FIGHTER
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54. CATCH
58. INHABIT
61. COOKING CONTAINER
63. STENCH
64. MANLY
67. SONGSTRESS ____ TURNER
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69. MORE FROSTY
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71. VERY SHARP
72. DESIST
73. MEDICINE AMOUNT
- DOWN**
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5. PUMP, E.G.
6. CHINESE MAMMAL
7. WNW'S OPPOSITE
8. ____ SNAIL'S PACE (2 WDS.)
9. GIVE IN
10. ____ MURPHY OF "BEVERLY HILLS COP"
11. SIGNIFICANT TIMES
12. TV HOST JAY ____
13. LONG-NECKED BIRD
21. WHISKEYS
23. PAIRS
26. APPLE CIDER ____
27. REGISTER
29. ____ A GIRL!
31. WANDER
32. TEHRAN'S LAND
33. DISSOLVE
34. CURVE
35. HINDU GARB
36. DROVE TOO FAST
37. TEXAS LANDMARK
39. PROPOSED AS A CANDIDATE
42. BREWED DRINK
45. BEGGED
47. MORE
50. LACKING IRON
52. WARNING HORN
53. FIREPLACE RESIDUE
55. ____ ACID (NUTRIENT)
56. TEARS APART
57. DELETE
58. CHESS PIECE
59. BRIM
60. FOOT BOTTOM
62. SHREDDED
65. HIGH CARD
66. UNDERCOVER GP.



ILLUSTRATION BY GABRIELLE FUNK