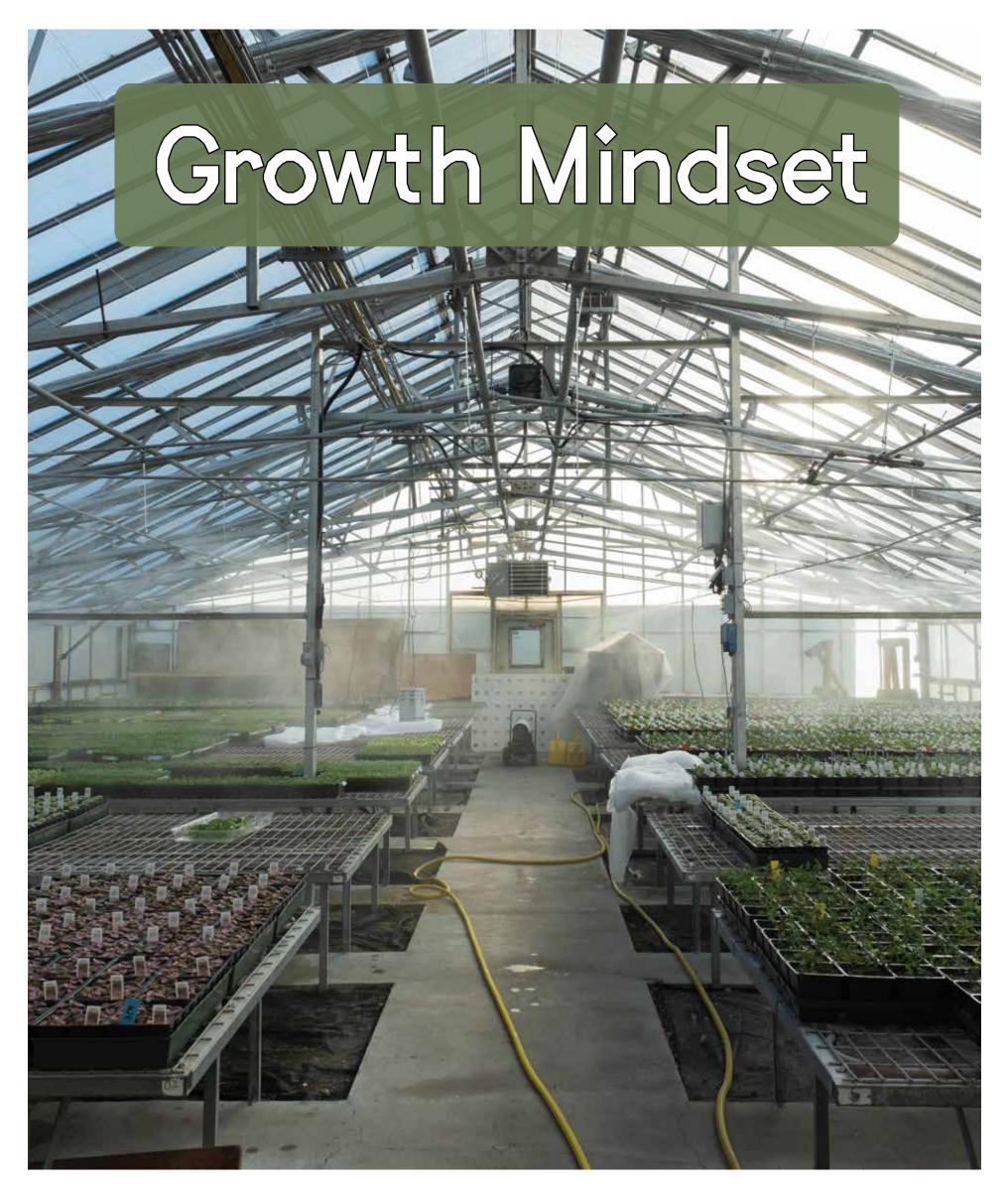
# MER

NORA DECTER'S WHAT'S NOT MINE—P5

U OF W CYBER ATTACK & OUTAGES—P13

THERE'S SHIT EVERYWHERE—P14



BEHIND THE SCENES IN WINNIPEG'S GREENHOUSES



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# **TAKE A BREAK**

THOMAS PASHKO MANAGING EDITOR



My friend Lasha has been telling me for weeks that I need to slow down.

"You're doing way too much," she told me over burritos two Saturdays ago. She'd managed to drag me out of my apartment for my first social activity in weeks. I've been filling in for some vacant slots at the newspaper, so I've been working most days since reading week.

Admittedly, I was exhausted. But I did think her concerns were overblown. It's not like I was building airplanes or performing brain surgery. I could deal with it for a few more weeks, I said.

Still, I couldn't deny that those three hours in the taqueria were a bright spot I didn't realize I needed. I love my job and my coworkers. But sitting in the corner, sipping our respective Jarritos and margarita while the sun went down, goofily chatting about nonsense, I thought, "I really missed this."

I thought that respite was all the recharge my batteries needed to make it to the end of the academic year. But then, this past Sunday, I got sick. Specifically, conjunctivitis. Pink eye, if you're nasty (I am).

It's an ailment I haven't had since I was a little kid. Maybe my immune system was weakened from overwork, maybe I was just overdue for some seasonal bug. On Monday, as I tried to force my bleary, leaking eyes open to write an article, I gave in. Screens weren't an option. I needed a sick day.

Again, afterwards, I felt rejuvenated. I normally hate taking a sick day. But with a sleeping mask over my eyes, I couldn't help thinking, "I need this."

I know it's easy to get into cycles of overwork, overstudying, neglecting yourself. Sometimes it's because you love what you're doing. But listen to the Lasha in your life. Take a break.



Portage and Main is set to finally reopen to pedestrians. Why now? Read more on page 11.

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Submissions of articles, letters,

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letters to the editor) must attend

a 45-minute volunteer orientation

workshop to ensure that the

volunteer understands all of the

A volunteer orientation will be

held on Friday, March 29 at 1

publication's basic guidelines.

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.

"Incoming UWSA executives 'open for suggestions,'" we failed to acknowledge that the University of Winnipeg Students' Association board has yet to ratify the results of the election. In an emailed statement to The Uniter, the UWSA states, "The UWSA General Elections 2024 results are preliminary until approved by the Board. Due to the large number of complaints regarding violations of the bylaws, policies, and regulations during the campaign and voting period, the ratification of the results will take longer than usual to ensure fairness and compliance.

CORRECTIONS

the March 21 article

The Uniter regrets the error

### **CONTACT US**

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UNIVERSITY OF WINNIPEG 515 PORTAGE AVENUE







Artwork from local Syria-born Kurdish artist Bîstyek

# ORIGIN STORIES: BISTYEK

### Forbidden colours

OMID MOTERASSED | FEATURES REPORTER | OMIDMOTERASSED

For Kurdish visual artist Bîstyek, colour has always been a symbol of resistance. A prolific painter, his practice grew to incorporate sculpture, design and public art, recognized on a national scale.

"I come from a culture that's very co-

lourful," he says.

Born in Syria, his family faced persecution for celebrating Nowruz (Persian New Year), which commemorates the spring equinox.

"It's a day where we dance, we eat, we celebrate," he says. "The police would arrive and start to arrest people. They would tear down our flags. They took our colours away."

As a child, he remembers getting into trouble over a drawing assignment. "I just used three markers: green, red and yellow." Upon handing it to his teacher, he was slapped in the face.

was slapped in the face.
"I had no idea what I did," he says.

His friend clarified the issue after class, pointing to the colours of Kurdistan. "Are you *stupid*? It's a flag!" his friend said. Bîstyek cites this as a turning point in his life. "That's when I knew I was Kurdish."

In the midst of cultural oppression, watching cartoons sustained his relationship to colour. Images of warmth and peace provided an escape.

"We did not have a TV, so I would go

to my cousin or my neighbour's house to watch," Bîstyek says. Upon arriving home, he would recreate the characters in his sketchbook. "Then at night, when I really felt like watching cartoons, I would just look at my drawings."

Fleeing the Syrian civil war, his family took refuge in Lebanon. Seven years later, they were admitted into Canada.

Bîstyek eventually quit his job at a Winnipeg coffee shop to focus exclusively on art. He quickly gained the support of local curators and gallery owners, leading to his first exhibition in 2020.

Now a professional artist, his paintings retain the same bold lines, primary colours and childlike essence of his early work. For Bîstyek, the innocence of youth is always in tension with the violent realities of conflict.

"It's an artist's responsibility to reflect the times," he says. "To ignore what is happening around me, I don't feel like I am fulfilling my duties."

He is interested in how art captures the emotional experience of a time and place. For him, it is an act of remembering. "It's not just my story, it's a lot of people's story," he says.

"I come from a city called Afrin, where olive trees are very important. I remember asking my mom, 'Who planted these trees?' She replied: 'Your ancestors did.'"

It astonished him how the actions of individuals hundreds of years ago would eventually feed and shelter his community. "The work we do today will pay off tomorrow," he says, "even if not for you, then for someone else."

His latest work is a series of smaller, more intimate portraits — a departure from the large canvases, political scenery and pop-culture iconography he is known for. "I started (my career) with faces," he says. "Looking at someone's face is a mirror to what they're feeling inside."

He is adamant about breaking free from the ways he has been labelled. "There are more sides to who I am. I am not just a refugee."

Despite this, Bîstyek is heartfelt about the trajectory of his career, which began with monochrome drawings and has now blossomed into intensely colourful canvases. "The work is evolving," he says. "This is what I'll be doing for the rest of my life."

### **ARTS BRIEFS**

CIERRA BETTENS  $\,|\,$  ARTS AND CULTURE EDITOR  $\,|\,$   $\,$   $\,$  FICTIONALCIERRA  $\,$   $\,$   $\,$  CIERRABETTS

# Just what the doctor ordered

This Sunday, March 31, the local jazz legends of Dr. Henry Band will bring Afro-fusion melodies to the basement of the Fort Garry Hotel. The trio met in Winnipeg after they emigrated from Nigeria and now bring the sounds of their West African roots to haunts across the city and beyond. Tickets to the show, which begins at 7 p.m., are available to purchase via showpass.com/dr-henry-band.

### Flora Luna launch @ CCFM

On April 6, francophone artist Flora Luna will launch her latest EP at the Centre culturel franco-manitobain (CCFM, 340 Provencher Ave.). Tickets to the show, which begins at 8 p.m., can be purchased via bit.ly/3xa69CV.

### Guilt: A Love Story @ Royal MTC

A forthcoming play at the Royal Manitoba Theatre Centre's Tom Hendry Warehouse explores one of humanity's most complex emotions: guilt. Catch Guilt: A Love Story from April 3 to 20 by reserving your seats via bit.ly/3xdcBJH.

# The art of the monoprint

Join artist Bette Woodland at the Soul Gallery (65 Albert St.) on Saturday, March 30 for an art talk and monoprint demonstration. Woodland will discuss her process and unveil exciting works from 1 to 4 p.m. The event is free.

### The Year of Magical Thinking @ PTE

The theatrical adaptation of Joan Didion's masterful memoir on grief will take the Prairie Theatre Exchange stage from April 9 to 21. Tickets to The Year of Magical Thinking may be purchased online via pte.mb.ca.

### Learn to print!

Spring registration for print-making classes has opened at Martha Street Studio. The sessions are offered from April 15 to June 10 on Mondays from 6 to 9 p.m. and from May 1 to June 19 on Wednesdays from 6 to 9 p.m. To register, call 204-779-6253.



# BETWEEN AND BEYOND YA

## Nora Decter to release genre-breaking novel

PAUL HODGERT | BUSINESS MANAGER | 6 PAULHODGERT

Fentanyl. Abandonment. Sexuality. Bears? What's Not Mine, the upcoming novel from author and University of Winnipeg adjunct English and creative writing instructor Nora Decter, addresses all of these issues head-on.

Told from the perspective of Bria, a teen girl living in a rural town during the summer of her sixteenth birthday, *What's Not Mine* is set to be released by ECW Press on April 2.

"I've always been really interested in teenage characters and narrators," Decter says. "I just think it's a really dynamic time in your life, and it's sort of an interesting consciousness to write from inside teenagehood."

After witnessing her father's girlfriend overdose on Fentanyl, Bria's life becomes fraught with peril. She finds herself caught in a world of drugs, lies and a much older man.

When asked why she chose to write about such dark themes, Decter explains that overdose awareness posters around campus prompted her to think about the secondary effects an overdose can have.

"What happens to the addict after (an overdose) ... but also what happens to bystanders?" she wondered. "How does that experience leave a person, especially a young person?"

Using rural settings reminiscent of various Manitoba locations, Decter explores the contradictory thoughts and emotions that can exist within teenagers.

"(Bria) might think that the way she's feeling or what she thinks about a person or a thing is true, but then, like five minutes later, it isn't." Bria's developing substance addiction only adds to her confusion about who she is and what she wants from life and those around her.

While Dexter's first book, 2018's *How Far We Go and How Fast*, was published as a young-adult (YA) novel, *What's Not Mine* carries no such label, even though it focuses on teenaged characters.

"I feel like, (with) the categories, that publishers and maybe reading audiences care a bit more about than I do," she explains. "I was reading something the other day about how J.D. Salinger would have a hard time publishing *Catcher in the Rye* traditionally these days, because people would be like, 'well, it's YA."

"I think big publishers get more uncomfortable with that stuff than maybe the independent ones do."

ECW Press, the independent publisher releasing *What's Not Mine*, also has some other benefits.

"They have a program where they let you



University of Winnipeg creative writing and English instructor Nora Decter is releasing her new novel. What's Not Mine. on April 2.

choose a nonprofit, and one per cent of the cover price of the book is donated," Decter explains. "So I chose Sunshine House, which is a drop-in centre/resource centre in Winnipeg doing really great work to support people with addiction issues."

What's Not Mine will be released on April 2 by ECW Press, and a book launch event will be held at McNally Robinson Grant Park on April 5 at 7 p.m. For more info, visit bit.ly/3JaCFI9.

# THE DRAWING IS ON THE WALL

## Lawrence Bird and Video Pool Media Arts Centre put an end to their mid-life crisis

MATTHEW TEKLEMARIAM | ARTS AND CULTURE REPORTER | OMATTTEKLEMARIAM

Convertibles and comb-overs can never truly sate the desire to live twice as hard for what half you have left. Art, conversely, is always worth more than the time it takes to enjoy it.

On now until May 31, 'drawing Room is the latest exhibition at Video Pool Media Arts Centre (VP), and a significant one at that. As the centre wraps up its 40th-anniversary celebration, which they've dubbed the "Mid-life Crisis", 'drawing Room represents the final stage in the process: withdrawal.

"What we've had is a whole series of residencies, some parties, exhibitions all sort of focused around the 40th anniversary," Emma Hendrix, the executive director of VP, says. "Part of it was we wanted to build a time capsule, so at the end of the anniversary, we would have not just celebrated, but we would have materials that we could keep for (the) future."

Following a call for submission centred around the idea of withdrawal, Hendrix got in touch with artist and architect Lawrence Bird after a chance meeting at a conference in Colombia.

Bird was intrigued by the opportunity to delve into the VP archives and explore space in the exhibition while connecting personally with the overarching theme.

"One thing that interested me was that I'm in a mid-life crisis. I'm a little older than 40," he says. "I've done installations before, and I'm always looking for this intersection of architecture and digital image."

Bird describes the show as a "space between media and architecture," created by the play of light over material. 'drawing Room is interactive in nature, giving Poolside Gallery visitors the opportunity to draw on the walls and alter the digital projections cast on them.

"You feel really drawn to enter into (Bird's) space. Old equipment, cables, projections ... it feels like you're walking into somebody's space when they've just stepped away for tea," Hendrix says.

Bird was granted access to VP's film and image archives, as well as a bevy of obsolete equipment, and aspired to a holistic experience that mirrored VP's original collaborative philosophy.

He attributes additional inspiration to Sputnik Architecture, a former employer that allowed him to cross over between film and architecture with their public art projects.

"Video Pool is called that for a reason. It harkens back to the wheat pool and to the idea of an agricultural collective. I reached out to the artists whose work I was drawing on," Bird says. "VP is imagined as a sort of shared endeavour, a collective or co-op almost."

Both Hendrix and Bird encourage visitors to engage with the finely crafted multimedia display, either physically or emotionally, that simultaneously celebrates VP's past, present and prospective future.

"Get engaged, get involved in the project. Don't be afraid to touch it, and don't hesitate



'drawing Room at Video Pool Media Arts Centre

to get in there," Bird says.

"I've touched on this idea of really feeling like you're a part of it. I find there's a real sense of ghostliness in the piece, being a part of the past and a part of the present at the same time," Hendrix says.

'drawing Room is on display from now until May 31 at VP's Poolside Gallery (300-100 Arthur St.).



# THE THREE MUSKETEERS: MILADY

# Plays at Dave Barber Cinematheque on March 30 in the Alliance Française French Film Festival

\*\*\*\*

THOMAS PASHKO  $\mid$  MANAGING EDITOR  $\mid$   $\bigcirc$   $\nearrow$  THOMASPASHKO

Every generation gets its *Three Musketeers* movie. The classic 1844 swashbuckling Alexandre Dumas novel has been adapted dozens of times for the big screen, with each often exemplifying the cinematic trends of their era.

Disney's 1993 version starring Chris O'Donnell as D'Artagnan was done in the style of *Robin Hood: Prince of Thieves* (complete with a Bryan Adams power ballad over the end credits). The 2011 version with Logan Le-

rman's D'Artagnan aped *Pirates of the Caribbean*, awash in bad CGI. The newest adaptation of Dumas' 19th-century telling of a 17th-century story, from director Martin Bourboulon, is a very 21st-century movie, mostly for better and occasionally for worse.

Bourboulon gives *Musketeers* the *Dune* treatment and splits it into two parts. *Milady* is the second. The first, *D'Artagnan*, is helpfully recapped in the opening minutes of *Milady*,

but anyone interested in part two would do well to watch part one. (It's currently rentable online for \$1.99.)

This is the first French big-screen *Musketeers* in more than 60 years. It's shot in France, often in real period locations, giving it a depth and authenticity far beyond 2011's greenscreen travesty or 1993's theme-park stunt-show touch.

If there's a modern-day film style that this is drawing on, it's probably the *Dark Knight* trilogy. Bourboulon takes a grounded approach to the material, shooting most action scenes in long, continuous handheld takes, often following his heroes through the full geography of the spaces they inhabit. He uses great fight choreography to convey the chaos of combat without ever resorting to lazy shaky-cam confusion.

One way the *Dark Knight*-style approach falters is in the colour palette. Bourboulon gives in to the 21st-century tendency to film anything set before 1900 in drab, desaturated browns and greys. The signature blue cassocks of the Musketeers aren't present here, and the flamboyant fashion of 17th-century France is disappointingly muted. Fortunately, *Milady* has more visual pop than *D'Artag-*

*nan*, with many of its scenes filmed outdoors under clear, sunny skies.

The cast give excellent performances across the board, even if some of the actors are significantly aged up. Vincent Cassel is a fantastic and brooding Athos, but, at 57, he was the right age for this part 20 years ago. François Civil is closer to the right age for Athos, but here he plays D'Artagnan, written by Dumas as a naive babyface. A mid-30s D'Artagnan comes across less as an inexperienced youth than as being a bit thick.

But still, it all works, particularly with the great supporting players. Louis Garrel and Vicky Krieps bring extra dimension to King Louis XIII and Queen Anne, even if they have less to do in *Milady* than in *D'Artagnan*.

Eric Ruf's turn as Cardinal Richelieu is refreshing, a believable backroom schemer, especially compared to previous takes by Tim Curry and Christoph Waltz, whose respective mustaches were so enthusiastically twirled, it's impossible to believe they weren't outed as villains immediately.

Perhaps best of all is Eva Green as the title Milady de Winter. It's a bit of casting so obviously perfect that it could border on self-parody if Green wasn't so damn good.

# RIDDLE OF FIRE

# Plays at Dave Barber Cinematheque from April 3 to 13

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MATTHEW TEKLEMARIAM | ARTS AND CULTURE REPORTER | @MATTTEKLEMARIAM

Hear ye, hear ye, and gather round for this tale of whimsy and woe and whippersnappers. Debuted at the Toronto International Film Festival (TIFF) but just now hitting the arthouse circuit, *Riddle of Fire* is an endearing modern fairytale mired in a strange milieu – just where it likes it

The film follows a trio of valiant, pintsized paladins, brothers Hazel (Charlie Stover) and Jodie A'Dale (Skyler Peters) and their friend and de facto leader, Alice (Phoebe Ferro).

They embark on a noble quest across the kingdom of Ribbon, Wyo. at the behest of the ailing Queen Mother (the A'Dales' mother, bedridden with a cold) for the restorative powers of the Holy Grail (a freshly baked blueberry pie). In exchange, the heroes are promised glory and mystic treasures hitherto untold (TV screen time).

Their metaphorical swords clash with a roving band of flower people, The Enchanted Blade Gang, led by actual witch Anna-Freya Hollyhock (Lio Tipton). She's halfway between Morgan le Fay and Charles Manson, barking spells at her young and impressionable coven, with Tex Watson analogue and Scooby-Doo-type villain John Redrye (Charles Halford) begrudgingly by her side. What they're after is tangential and esoteric. Their role underfoot of the three champions is what defines them.

"The best things in life are cute," Hazel

says to Jodie, neatly espousing the film's philosophy. Among the limericks and chaos magick is a frank and farcical look at childhood adventure, the days spent stomping through the woods near the highway like Robinson Crusoe. The medieval styling is an astute reach for identity, and it's fresh enough to complement the shaggy-dog narrative befitting such a never-ending story.

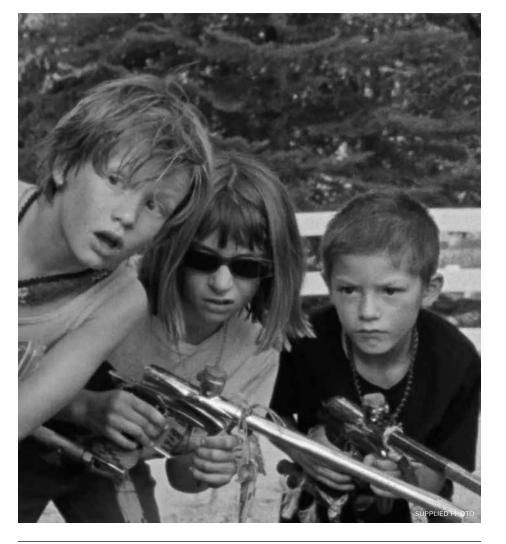
Although syncretic in family-friendly influence (eat your heart out, Chris Columbus), *Riddle of Fire* has a unique colloquialism to its dialogue intended to disarm and appeal to ironic adult sensibility.

A blithe acknowledgement of the limitations of child-actor delivery endows them with alternating eloquence and impudence, all through stammers and mistimed cues. Young, subtitled Jodie is given hilariously precocious dialogue to great effect.

What may prove most alienating about this project is that it's essentially a kid's film exclusively for adults. And unlike *Moonrise Kingdom* or *Stand by Me*, it fails to really illuminate any darkened corners of juvenile recollection.

It's pure romp, and a protracted one at that, given its nearly two-hour runtime. The picture is too quaint to earnestly endear itself and too broad to be personal. By the third act, much of the enchantment has worn off.

The film is shot on 16mm Kodak film, perhaps in the hopes of a feature-length

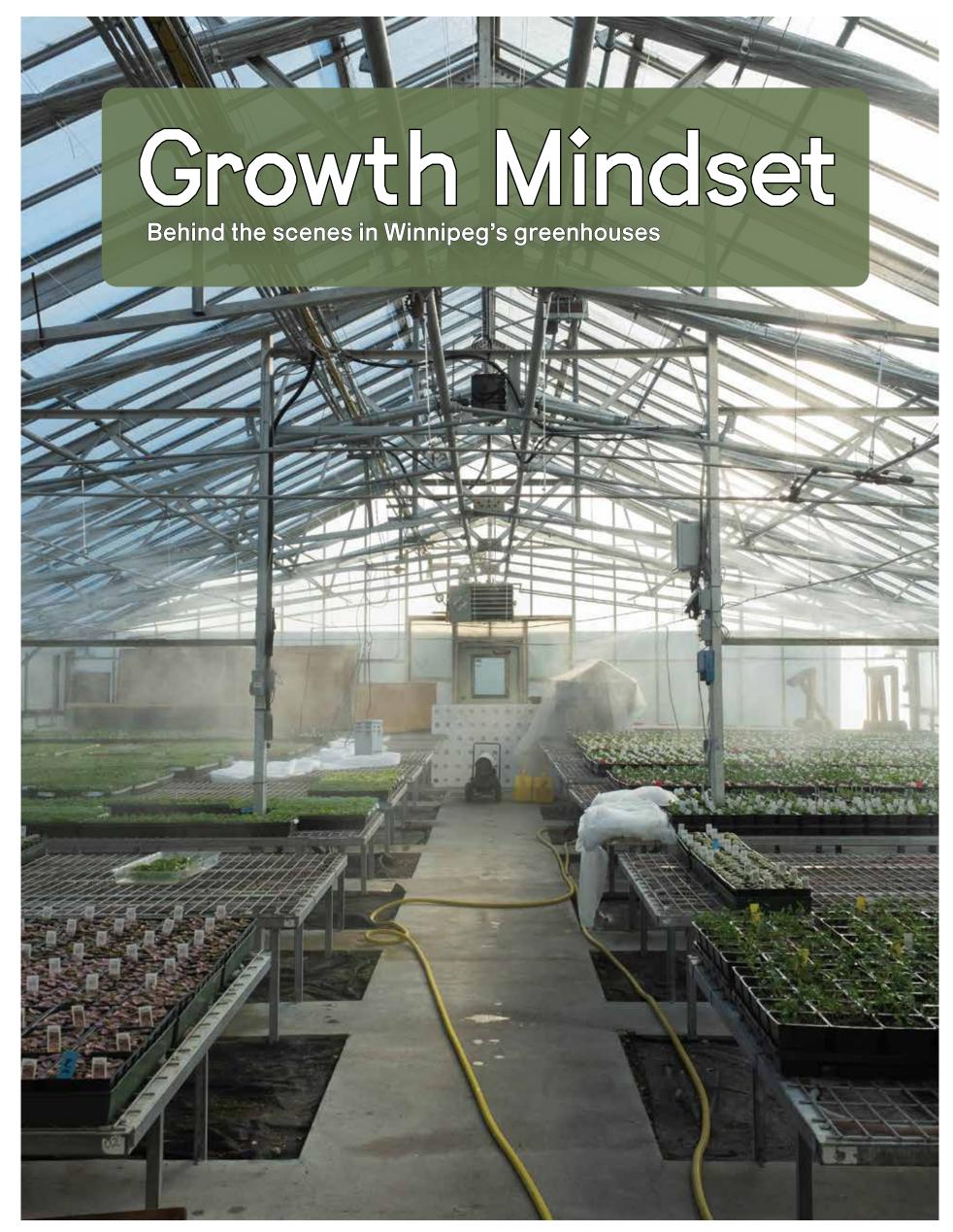


rendition of the proverbial Kodak moment. It gives *Riddle of Fire* a warm glow, worn and wrinkled like a \$5 bill in a pocket representing a child's fortune, and a score filled with ye olde synthesizers provides an extra shimmer to the fantasy.

A hilarious scene has Hazel distracted by food and drink at a campfire, scuttling their carefully crafted plan before he and the audience are confronted with the gravity of the situation. And the one use of a licensed song buoys a disappointing climax.

An urban odyssey of Homeric ambition and Lilliputian proportions spanning rocky mountains, seedy nightclubs and chicken coops, it's fitting that the best parts lie between the broader strokes.





New seedlings are misted in the Shelmerdine glasshouse. The business receives many plant cuttings from overseas, to which they apply a root compound and move to the heated tables in the glasshouse, where they are misted every five to 10 minutes.

With spring on the way, many Manitobans are beginning to think about their gardening plans, and the city's greenhouses have them covered.

Shelmerdine Garden Center, Sage Garden Greenhouses and Ron Paul Garden Centre are three of these businesses that are currently ramping up for the spring growing season. While these greenhouses operate at different scales with varying specialties, they all find themselves in the same state of rapid preparation. Seeds are planted, cuttings are misted, and trays of flowers are laid out en masse.

Winnipeg has no shortage of retail greenhouses – Ron Paul Garden Centre and Sage Garden Greenhouses are

two of five such businesses within a four-kilometre stretch on St. Mary's Road, just south of the Perimeter Highway, fostering some friendly competition.

Between these three greenhouses, as well as the others throughout the city, there's bound to be something for every green-thumbed Winnipegger this spring.



A row of hydrangeas in full bloom at Shelmerdine Garden Center



Denise Billings, Shelmerdine employee, loads freshly potted plants onto a cart that will be unloaded onto the tables in one of the greenhouses.





Brayden Klassen, Shelmerdine greenhouse associate, holding trays of petunias



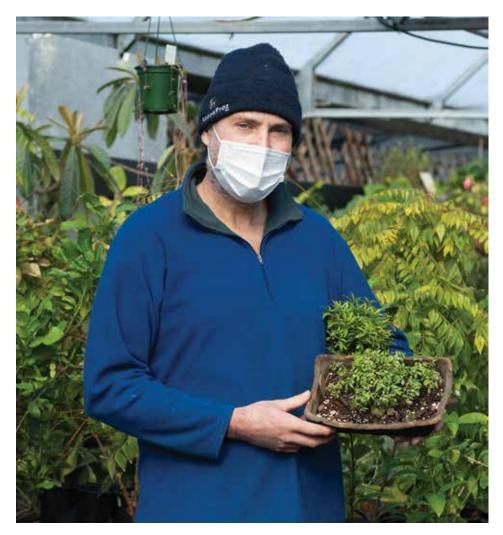
Joy Bamford, a long-time employee of Sage Garden Greenhouses, uses a dibbler to punch holes for tomato seeds.



Shelmerdine Garden Center boasts 22 greenhouses in total. At this point in the year, only about half are in use, with the remainder to be put into operation later in the spring.



Freshly planted seedlings in the Sage Garden greenhouse. Sage Garden is the only greenhouse in Manitoba, and one of a handful in the country, that uses geothermal heating and cooling.



Dave Hanson, one of the owners of Sage Garden Greenhouses. He and his wife, Evelyn Yauk, have owned and managed the business since 1996.



Flowers bloom in a greenhouse at Ron Paul Garden Centre, in the midst of a particularly impressive tomato and set of peppers.



Kumquats grow on a tree at Sage Garden. Hanson places a lot of emphasis on a cyclical process in the greenhouse, using seeds and cuttings from plants they grow themselves rather than importing seeds from overseas. These kumquats, and a number of other tropical plants Sage Garden grows, are part of this cycle.



Trays full of yellow onion seeds at Ron Paul Garden Centre

# **CITY BRIEFS**

THOMAS PASHKO  $\mid$  MANAGING EDITOR  $\mid$   $\bigcirc$   $\bigcirc$   $\bigcirc$  THOMASPASHKO

# Winnipegger sues Uber

A Winnipeg woman is suing rideshare tech giant Uber after she says she was sexually assaulted by one of its drivers. The suit, filed on March 15, claims the driver assaulted her after she fell asleep during a ride in December. She alleges that after she filed a complaint with Uber through the app, she was locked out of the account. Uber declined to comment on the case.

# Federal ministers visit U of W

Three federal ministers, along with five of their staffers, visited the University of Winnipeg on Wednesday, March 27. Liberal MPs Jonathan Wilkinson (minister of energy and natural resources), Anita Anand (president of the treasury board) and Dan Vandal (minister of Prairies Economic Development Canada, Canadian Northern Economic Development Agency and Northern Affairs) attended a class, met with students and were available to answer questions.

# Amy Mazowita artist talk at 1C03

Gallery 1C03, the official art gallery of the University of Winnipeg, will host an artist talk by emerging scholar Amy Mazowita. Mazowita will discuss Life of Fire: An Ethnography of Smoke, Flame, Ash, and Earth, her photography research exhibit examining the impacts of fire on Whiteshell Provincial Park. The talk will be held over Zoom on April 2 at 8:30 a.m. To register, visit bit.ly/4crarGe.

### Alleged human smuggler pleads 'not guilty'

The suspect in a human smuggling case that resulted in a family of four freezing to death along the Manitoba-US border has pleaded not guilty in his Minnesota trial. Harshkumar Ramanlal Patel is accused of helping illegally smuggle migrants across the Canada-US border. Among those migrants were the family of Jagdish and Vaishaliben Patel, including their two young children, who travelled from rural India. The Patels were sent to cross the border on foot without adequate warm clothing, which

killed them.

# Ten Ten Sinclair strike ends

160 healthcare workers have a new contract after a weekslong strike. The workers are staff at Ten Ten Sinclair Housing, which provides homes and appropriate care for 100 Winnipeggers with disabilities across seven facilities. Residents spoke out about the lack of adequate treatment they received during the strike, including in a letter by Myles Taylor published in the March 21 issue of The Uniter.

### Feds probe alleged China spying in Winnipeg

Federal immigration officials are holding a third immigration hearing for Winnipeg resident Huajie Xu. Xu, who moved to Canada from China in 2021, is a veteran of China's army, where he achieved the rank of lieutenant-colonel. Specifically, he taught for 20 years at the army's Information Engineering University, which specializes in cyber and information warfare. Canadian officials say Xu could be involved in spying against Canada, while he compared his decades of lecture work to that of a cook or janitor. Feds also approved a probe into Chinese espionage at Winnipeg's National Microbiology lab.



# COUNCIL VOTES TO OPEN PORTAGE AND MAIN

# Nearly 40-year debate settled, repairs deemed too expensive

JURA MCILRAITH | CITY REPORTER | ◎ 💥 JURA\_IS\_MY\_NAME

The City of Winnipeg council members have voted in favour of reopening Portage Avenue and Main Street for pedestrians.

Three members were against the decision, while 11 voted in favour. Now, the intersection is expected to be opened as of July 1, 2025, after more than four decades of it being barricaded against foot traffic.

The decision comes after a report showed it would cost \$73 million to repair the underground system beneath Portage and Main and cause four to five years of construction-related delays.

Repairs would have to include replacing leaking waterproof membrane under the concrete in the concourse and involve digging up parts of Portage and Main.

"Tearing Portage and Main apart would create traffic chaos for nearly half a decade," Mayor Scott Gillingham said in a press release issued at the beginning of March. "Then we'd need to do it all over again in 30 to 40 years. I don't think that's the right choice for commuters, taxpayers or downtown residents."

The intersection was closed to pedestrians in 1979. Although there are various reasons for the move, a major one was to drive foot traffic down into the concourse to help businesses that were struggling at the time.

Winnipeg is unique among other cities in not allowing pedestrians to cross a large intersection, University of Winnipeg history professor Janis Thiessen says.

"Most of the major cities in the world have their intersections downtown open to (foot) traffic," Thiessen says. "Vancouver doesn't have major intersections closed off to pedestrian traffic, and they seem to manage quite alright."

In Winnipeg, an average of 12 pedestrians are killed and 160 injured each year, according to Manitoba Public Insurance data from 2019. Roughly half of those deaths take place at an intersection, while one in 10 happen between intersections or while walking on roads.

She says the closure of the underground walkway will likely impact businesses that have already struggled because of the COVID-19 pandemic. But with new housing complexes, like the 300 Main apartment block, more people are living downtown now than 50 years ago.

Currently, the underground area is not open 24 hours a day and is also physically inaccessible.

Thiessen says people with mobility concerns may have a hard time using the underground system, especially since elevators



Portage and Main is set to reopen to pedestrians by July 1, 2025.

and escalators at the entrances are often broken.

Much debate around the intersection opening surrounds the safety of pedestrians trying to cross.

Thiessen thinks the main factor in opening it up is money.

"People hate change, and people hate spending tax money," she says. "That's the only reason that this has shifted now. (Repairs are) going to cost more than to simply open up Portage and Main."

Gillingham said the intersection is a "critical connection point" for the New Transit Master Plan.

The plan was approved in 2021 and pro-

poses broad visions of Winnipeg Transit for the next 25 years and more specific goals for the next five years. The project includes enhancing ridership and riders' experience, reducing traffic congestion downtown and increasing access to essential services like healthcare by expanding services.

"It's time to deal with Portage and Main once and for all and move on to more important issues like improving traffic flow throughout the rest of the city, redesigning our new transit network and investing in new recreation facilities," Gillingham said in the press release.

"It's just an intersection."

# 'I THINK (WINNIPEGGERS ARE) ADDICTED TO ICE CREAM'

# Seasonal ice-cream shops looking forward to year ahead

JURA MCILRAITH | CITY REPORTER |  $\bigcirc$  X JURA\_IS\_MY\_NAME

Two of Winnipeg's most iconic ice-cream shops are now open for the season and have already had customers lined up at their door despite a lapse in warm weather.

Sargent Sundae opened on March 15 and drew a crowd before they officially let the public in. Co-owner Lynn Dusessoy says she and her husband John are expecting a busy year and are looking forward to celebrating the business's 40th anniversary on July 7.

Normally, Sargent Sundae tries to open near the end of the first week in March, but the fluctuating weather impacted their opening date this year.

"We're very weather-driven. It was beautiful and then it snowed, so we were going to open, but we didn't," Dusessoy says. "(But) it doesn't stop people. Winnipeggers are tough, and I think they're addicted to ice cream."

She says it takes a few weeks to get ready to open. Staff has to re-clean and sterilize everything and make sure all their stock is in order. She adds that many staff members return year after year, or that their kids come work for them once they're old enough.

Dusessoy's favourite season is summer, and she's excited that she gets to share ice cream with people across the city.

"Sometimes you don't know people's names, but you know what they eat, you know their story," Dusessoy says. "They just make (Sargent Sundae) a part of their life."

Justin Jacob is also excited to start the year for Bridge Drive-In (BDI).

He has owned the business since 2013 and says the cooler weather and construction nearby last summer impacted their business.

"We're mostly just looking for things to get back to normal, because prior to the construction, we were in COVID," Jacob says.

He tries to always open in time for spring break, and their official first day this year was March 23. He's already seen some Winnipeggers come by for their sweet treats.

"I do have an ice cream machine on, so I gave them some free ice-cream cones just because they came down," Jacob says. "With the longevity of this business and how long it's been around, I think Winnipeg generally gets pretty excited, because it's kind of the first sign of spring and sum-



Hungry Winnipeggers gather for ice cream on opening day at BDI on March 23.

mer being on the way."

Jacob adds that they're looking to add another location on the northern side of the city this year.

"We're hoping to get that up at some point in April," he says. "We might as well give it a shot and see how it goes for a season."

Previously, BDI had a satellite location at Kildonan Place mall, but their lease expired just as COVID-19 lockdowns started. They also had a pop-up store at the University of Manitoba in 2017.

Currently, BDI runs the Goog-to-Go ice

cream truck that travels across the city and into Kenora. Googs are one of the store's best-selling items and consists of a blueberry milkshake with a banana, hot fudge, whipped cream and a cherry on top.

Sargent Sundae is now open every day from 11 a.m. to 11 p.m. BDI is open Tuesday through Friday from 2 to 9 p.m., Monday and Saturday from 2 to 11 p.m. and Sunday from 2 to 10 p.m.



# U OF W FACULTY NO **LONGER WORKING UNDER EXPIRED** CONTRACT

### UWFA makes gains on salary, research and governance

MIEKE RUTH VAN INEVELD | CAMPUS REPORTER

After nearly a full academic year at the bargaining table, the University of Winnipeg (U of W) and the U of W Faculty Association (UWFA) ratified a collective agreement for 340 regular academic staff in early March.

Regular academic staff (RAS) form one of the UWFA's three bargaining units. The category encompasses tenured faculty, librarians and full-time, teaching-focused

The previous RAS contract expired in 2020, though it continued to be enforced pending the negotiation of an updated agreement.

UWFA president Peter Miller says the union "made gains or held its ground" in several key areas, including salary, the role of faculty in university governance and ensuring professors are able to devote ample time to research.

"I think we were pleased to make a series of gains like that, (to) build strength and retain faculty centrality to the university," Miller says. The new agreement will "make it easier for faculty to do their research, do their teaching, and that means, at the end of the day, support students," he says.

The collective agreement will be posted

on the U of W website once wording has been finalized by both parties. The U of W administration declined to comment before the agreement is made public.

The new deal will compensate faculty for missing pay increases from 2020 to the present, as well as locking in more significant salary increases in coming years.

Miller says the retroactive pay increases fall short of UWFA's goal to see its members fully compensated for the period of above-average inflation from 2022 to 2023, but that the raises coming in subsequent years will represent real dollar gains.

UWFA's biggest concession was on contract faculty workloads. Miller says full-time instructors will now be required to teach the equivalent of four courses per term, representing a 33 per cent increase over the previous agreement.

Miller says this concession was the subject of "hours and hours of membership meetings," but, ultimately, a "strong majority" of members voted in favour of the agreement.

"This was a hard fight and something we didn't want to give up, but that was something the university was very keen on," he says. "There are kind of good and bad



things, I guess. In the end ... we think it's a good agreement, and it's one that's fair to both sides."

UWFA's representative for instructors declined to comment.

A key protection relating to contract faculty was maintained in the new agreement. Article 20 of the RAS agreement limits the percentage of courses that can be taught by contract faculty, a relatively rare provision for collective agreements of this kind that bolsters the centrality of research- and mentorship-oriented faculty in teaching at the U of W.

A 2018 survey by the Canadian Association of University Teachers found that "sizable proportions" of surveyed contract faculty "worked more than eight hours a day and into the evenings at least several days each week, and 62 per cent said they work most weekends."

Now that bargaining has finally wrapped up, Miller says the UWFA is looking forward to opportunities to work alongside its fellow faculty unions and other interest groups to hold the provincial government accountable to its election promise to reverse cuts, enhance research and support post-secondary institutions.

"We have had a relatively large amount of facetime to put our priorities out there, and some of our priorities, the priorities of (the U of W) Student(s') Association and the administration really align," he says. "Obviously, other elements, our priorities diverge, but that's ... our main way of lobbying."



# **SEARCHING FOR HOME**

### Dr. Jobb Arnold, associate professor of conflict resolution studies

OMID MOTERASSED | FEATURES REPORTER | OMIDMOTERASSED

For Dr. Jobb Arnold, home is not only a physical space, but a psychic one.

"Humans have a need to belong," he says. "The feeling of dislocatedness or not being able to find one's home is a real struggle."

Arnold holds a PhD in cultural studies and an MA in social psychology. He has taught conflict resolution studies at Menno Simons College since 2015.

People will go to great lengths to fit in and be a part of a community, which, in some cases, can lead them to do things they may not otherwise do," he says.

Some of his research examines the role of severe drug addiction within the city. He explains how substance use can be a response to this crisis of belonging.

'The drugs themselves furnish an interior dwelling space ... (providing) a particular relief, a sense of euphoria or a comfort and wellbeing, albeit temporarily."

He says anxieties around not fitting in may present challenges to community-building.

"It's difficult to encounter people we feel distant from. We put up our guard, keep people out. We can numb ourselves to the suffering of others," Arnold says. "These things can create a psychic distance, even when we're nearby.

He says conflict can quickly escalate when interpersonal bonds are eroded. Back-andforth retaliation can cause an issue to "get out of hand."

"Although we may not like a circumstance or situation the way it is, (we must) address the problem rather than see the person as the problem," he says.

One of Arnold's key findings is how community can be forged in the midst of adversity. His research on peacebuilding post-genocide has led him to critical parts of the world, including Northern Ireland and Rwanda.

He recalls visiting the then-National University of Rwanda in 2005, where he met several people who had lost their families in the 1994 genocide. In response to the social destruction and individual trauma they experienced, local student groups had created what they called "new families."

"They would appoint a mother and father from among their peers and help each other to fulfil different familial functions," he says.

This ability to find joy and see meaning in life, despite having faced severe violence, is



a concept known as post-traumatic growth. He says this does not negate the very real, debilitating outcomes of genocide.

Studying these topics which are extremely heavy ... I'm also trying to see where people are retaining their humanity and where that light is shining in the darkness."

He cites the COVID-19 pandemic as another example of such social adaptations, where people found community and connected online. However, Arnold says humanity must retain its ability to work directly with neighbours if it is to conquer upcoming global challenges. "Community takes work."

### What do you like to do in your spare time?

"I love music: seeing live music, playing

### What is the best part of your job?

"I get to explore ideas and think about things that matter to me with students, colleagues and other people who are really invested in thinking deeply and collectively ... for me, that's a real joy."

### What is something you've learned from your students?

"I'm constantly reminded I have lots to learn."



# UNIVERSITY OF WINNIPEG REBUILDING SERVICES AFTER CYBER ATTACK

# Virtually all web services impacted by targeted criminal data breach

THOMAS PASHKO  $\mid$  MANAGING EDITOR  $\mid$   $\bigcirc$   $\bigcirc$   $\bigcirc$  THOMASPASHKO

University of Winnipeg (U of W) staff are working "day and night" to restore the school's critical web services following what they're calling a criminal cyber attack they discovered on Sunday, March 24. In the meantime, it's clear that the outages will have significant repercussions for U of W students and faculty.

U of W classes were cancelled on Monday, March 25, when the school announced that internet and other online services would be experiencing a complete outage.

On Tuesday, on-campus internet was partially restored via a temporary wifi network. But U of W web services, including its learning management system Nexus, the online registration portal WebAdvisor, Colleague and VPN remain offline. The school announced that the outage had been caused by a "cyber incident" and that police were involved.

The university hosted a virtual town-hall event via Zoom at 4 p.m. on Wednesday to provide updates, address ongoing concerns and answer questions from the community.

One thousand people attended (the maximum allowed by Zoom) and submitted hundreds of questions to president Todd Mondor, provost and vice-president academic Pavlina Radia and Technology Solutions Centre (TSC) chief information officer Kim Benoit. Questions were moderated by asso-

ciate vice-president Danielle Dunbar and vice-president of research and innovation Jino Distasio.

During the town hall, Mondor explained that the university took all of their systems offline after discovering the security breach to cut off access by the threat actor. He said that TSC staff have been working "around the clock" to fully understand the consequences of the breach and prevent readmittance of the threat actor. The university does not believe that any information was lost.

"Our objective is to have some critical services restored by early next week," Benoit told the town hall. Radia acknowledged that, since many students don't have access to their emails, the university will communicate with students through its website, the UW Safe App and social media, with FAQs on the U of W's website being updated regularly.

As a result of the outages, the end of the academic year has been extended from April 5 to April 12, though Mondor emphasized that this extension isn't mandatory. Individual instructors will decide whether to make use of the extension. The exam period has also been moved and will run from April 18 to May 2.

Radia acknowledged that some students may have already made travel or employment plans based on the old date, asking instructors to "exercise compassion and flexibility" when dealing with students, adding, "We do recog-



A cyber attack on the University of Winnipeg has resulted in a significant outage of web

nize that the extension is not going to work for everybody."

In addition to cutting off access to course materials via Nexus, the outage has also impacted registration for spring courses via WebAdvisor, which was already underway, as well as access to transcripts. The library remains open, and eResources are available on campus but can't currently be accessed off campus. Campus printing is also down.

Acknowledging that the lack of transcript access may impact grad-school applications for some students, Radia assured town-hall participants that the U of W is making accommodations.

"We are ready to issue a letter as an institution basically highlighting why there will be a delay in transcripts, and we have good relationships with other institutions, so that shouldn't be a problem," Radia said.

There is currently a "Campus services outage: updates and FAQ" banner atop the home page of uwinnipeg.ca. Click "more information" to access regular updates, browse FAQs and learn how to access the services you need during the outages.



## **Student Services**

### WEBINAR WEDNESDAYS

The Webinar Wednesday series continues with these sessions:

- April 3 Self-Compassion (rescheduled from March 13)
- April 10 Government Student Aid Re-payment (rescheduled from April 3)

Webinar Wednesdays are held at 12:30-1:00 p.m. via Zoom. Pre-registration required. Please visit: uwinnipeg.ca/ webinar-wednesdays

### SPRING TERM REGISTRATION

Open registration period for Spring Term begins **April 3**.

View Spring Term courses here: **uwinnipeg/timetable** 

# LAST DAY OF LECTURES FOR WINTER TERM

The last day of lectures for Winter Term 2024 will be **April** 5. A make-up day will be on **April 8** for classes that would have been held on Good Friday.

# EXAM SCHEDULE FOR WINTER TERM

The exam schedule is now posted. Students are able to view and search the schedule here: uwinnipeg.ca/exam-schedules (the exam period will be April 11 – 24.)

### **CONVOCATION AWARDS**

Nominations for Convocation awards are now open for undergraduate students graduating in the 2023-24 academic year.

Deadline to submit – **April 15, 2024** 

### TAX FORMS

The T2202 tuition tax forms and T4As scholarship tax forms for 2023 have now been uploaded and are available to students through WebAdvisor.

# SINGLE-SESSION COUNSELLING

Student Counselling Services is launching "Single-Session Counselling," based on the idea that sometimes, a single, well-timed conversation is just what is needed to facilitate change or offer support.

To find out more information and see if a single session would be a good fit for you, please visit: uwinnipeg.ca/student-wellness

### STUDY SKILLS

The next offering of the Study Skills workshops will be **May 13** – **28**.

Topics include Reading Strategies and Critical Thinking, Dealing with School-related Stress, and Goal-setting and Time Management.

Sessions are 9:00-9:50 a.m. via Zoom. Pre-registration is required. Go to uwinnipeg.ca/study-skills



# XO, THE FINANCIAL THERAPIST

# The isolation/freedom dichotomy of self-employment

ELENA STURK-LUSSIER | COLUMNIST | OELENASTURKLULU

I quit my office job last June in what I thought would be a liberating, career-boosting move. I expected to bask in the freedom of self-employed work, but instead it left me feeling isolated.

Quitting was not an easy decision. My office job was a few minutes' walk from my apartment, and I had many friends there, but while it was within the industry I loved, the position wasn't.

I ended up applying for and receiving federal funding for a project that would need to be completed in four months' time. Seeing that I had so much to do before the deadline, I took the leap and quit.

However, I didn't have anything planned for after the four months of self-employment work ended. So after my project was submitted, I found myself with a lot of time on my hands. I took the opportunity to apply for funding for more of my own projects, like many artists do.

But sitting in my home office day in and day out, working on projects that might never see the light of day and that no one knew I was working on, I felt like I was living in a bubble of my own making, where no one could see or hear me.

I didn't have coworkers to measure myself against, bonuses to hit, favours to curry. I found it hard to contextualise myself with-

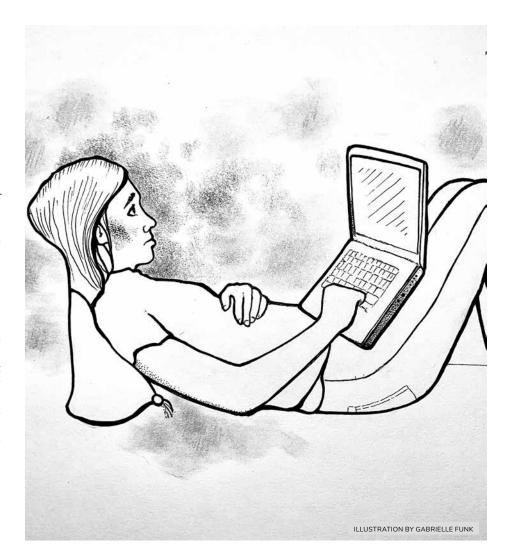
in my industry, because I didn't live in the context of a workplace anymore. I just had myself, and I hadn't anticipated needing to not only create my own work, but my own workplace, too.

I discovered that while I love being able to bring my ideas to life and be my own boss, I felt like I missed (and maybe needed) the external validation of an employer or client. What I needed was for someone to reach out and say "I have this project that I would love for you to work on. Are you in?"

I realized I wanted to be needed. I wanted someone to say "Good job!" now and then. It wasn't enough for me to make art and hope that it was decent enough.

So I cold-called old and new clients. Updated them on what I was doing and what I wanted to do, on what I could do for them. Amazingly, I received a few offers that I was elated to take on. I felt needed, my skills validated and my self-employed existence justified. I joyfully embarked on new projects that weren't my own.

I now know that, for me, the right balance as a self-employed artist is a healthy mix of personal projects and external contracts. I also know that I need to put in the time to make myself relevant within my own industry and constantly work to remind others that I exist. Work won't come to me. I need



to chase it.

Self-employment is hard, and it isn't for everyone, but now that I've created my own bubble, I never want to leave.

Elena Sturk-Lussier is a filmmaker with an MSc in creative writing and a penchant for romance novels.

# COMMUTING THROUGH ENSHITTIFICATION

### Quality drops as profits rise

PATRICK HARNEY | COMMENTS EDITOR

I spent many of my formative years speeding down the information superhighway, hanging out, making friends and getting into trouble. Like a digital version of the teens in *American Graffiti* or *Dazed and Confused*, cruising through cyberspace was a liberating experience connecting me to a new world of possibility.

However, as that period of discovery fades, logging on feels like a laborious commute, passing billboards and big-box stores to find the content I am looking for.

I am not alone in this feeling. In 2023, the American Dialect Society named "enshittification" the word of the year. The neologism, coined by Canadian blogger, journalist and sci-fi writer Cory Doctorow, describes a prevailing trend among online services – becoming shit.

Across several publications, Doctorow has laid out the process of enshittification to show how online platforms and services like Twitter (now known as X), Facebook, Amazon or Google leverage their control over digital life to bombard users with advertisements and paid posts.

The pattern of enshittification begins as tech startups burst onto the scene, enticing users by minimizing costs and maximizing benefits. For example, Facebook used a bot to access and relay users' -- old Myspace data to lower the social cost of switching.

By maximizing benefits, sites capture a

mass of users and are able to begin increasing benefits for their business customers. For example, TikTok fiddles with its algorithm to increase views on certain videos and convince potential content creators that it is the best place to reach an audience.

With these mechanisms in place, alternatives start to die away, brick-and-mortar stores close, alternative sites vacate, and, suddenly, sites like Google stop being the best option. They become the only one.

At this point, enshittification can truly begin as, without competition, companies dilute the user experience, and benefits can be offloaded to those who matter: advertisers and shareholders. Ads flood onto everyone's pages, moderators are fired to cut costs, and payment becomes the only way for creators to be heard.

Enshittification is the reason why official news currently can't be reposted on Meta platforms in Canada. When the Canadian government instituted Bill C-18 asking for fair compensation to news organizations for posting their content, Meta was able to exploit their position as one of the best places to share content and pull the plug.

The result is one of the most popular constellations of online hubs losing access to official news and being inundated with potentially dubious information.

At this point, these online spaces should start to die as everyone becomes fed up with the glut of useless traffic on their webpages.



The pavement of the information superhighway is caked in shit.

Everyone should be getting out of Dodge, jumping in their high-speed wagon and driving off the greener pastures.

However, the current generation of internet giants has put a prohibition on competition and restricted users' right to exit. Manipulating copyright law, tech giants, with more cash than most nations, have made the tactics they used to get to the top impossible for the next generation.

Doctorow's concept is eye-opening, showing why streets of the internet, once paved with gold, are covered in shit.

Escaping enshittification will require digital citizens to fight for internet rights and a new techno-social contract. This includes agreements on basics like searches that actually produce what you search for and the ability to create new platforms.

Cory Doctorow is discussing "Escaping the enshittocene" in Winnipeg at Knox United Church on May 2.

Patrick Harney (he/him) is the comments editor at The Uniter.





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28	29	30		+		+			31		+			die
32		1		+		+	33	ì	34	+	+	35	36	37
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61	+	+	+		62	+	+	63	64	`	65	+	+	T
66		-	+		67	+	+	+	+		68	+	+	
69	+	+	+		70	+	+	+	+		71	+	+	+

### **ACROSS**

1. HIGHWAY VE-HICLE 5. SEPARATED

10. BUTTERFLY **CATCHERS** 14. PLOW-PULLING

**ANIMALS** 15. NEWSPAPERS AND TV, E.G.

16. NEW YORK'S CANAL

17. MALE SHEEP 18. CORAL ISLAND

19. GOLD FABRIC 20. HAM IT UP 22. INDENTED

24 TRIP TO THE

27. GO-GETTERS 28. ATTIRE

31. METAL CON-TAINER 32. TYPE OF CAR

34. PRONOUN 38. POETIC TWI-LIGHT

39. KOREAN, E.G. 41. GRANT'S OPPO-

42. US RAIL SER-

53. KITCHEN GAD-55. SMALL SOFA 57. KINDER **61. CRUDE METALS 62. FIREPLACE** 

45. AVERSION

LOW

48. MEADOW MAMA

49. LEAST SHAL-

50. EMULATE MI-

CHELLE KWAN

**RESIDUE** 65. AREA 66. CHEEKY **67. TENT POST** 

**68. BAKERY HOT** SPOT 69. SNACKS

70. DOGMA

71. WATCH OVER

OZZIE 11. WIPE CLEAN

13. FUTURE FLOW-ERS

26. PUB DRINKS 28. TERRITORY

GLITTER

35. BESIDES

### **DOWN**

1. ACHY 2. TEST

3. OFFICE NOTE 4. AS A SUBSTITUTE 43. QUIZZES AGAIN 5. PHYSICIANS'

GROUP (ABBR.) 6. FAMILY ANIMAL

7. EMBELLISH 8. MADE ANGRY

9. POWDER MIN-10. WILLIE AND

12. KITCHEN GAD-

21. PROVES HUMAN 59. PARADISE

25. SEIZE BACK

29. VERSE 30. GASP 31. CHRISTMAS

33. DISENCUMBER

47. PEACH'S KIN **50. INCLINE** 51. SEOUL'S COUN-TRY 52. WARD OFF 53. GLUE 54. REVOLUTION-ARY \_\_\_\_ ALLEN 56. WEST'S OPPO-23. REWRITE TEXT 60. PULL APART 63. SUPPLEMENT 64. HARDEN

36. PERMITS

37. TOOTSIES

44. IMPRESSES

**46. JUVENILE** 

40. STAFF MEMBER



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