

THE BRUIN BULLETIN

December 2022 Edition

Have we
taken the term
"Queerbaiting"
too far?

Gentrification
in Chinatown: A
Threat to
Preserving
History



Editor's Note

The goal for the December Issue of the Bruin Bulletin was to engage in a range of meaningful topics close to our local community, while still providing a student perspective. The Bruin Bulletin hopes to continue to expand the size of paper in the Spring Issue, bringing more stories from more voices.

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Coaching the World's Most High-school Marathon Runners: An Interview with Trevor Stokes

Interview by: Grace Caruso

Have you ever wondered what the small portable beside the garden is? Or why so many kids are outside running on the track during school hours? The answer would be Britannia’s alternative education program, Streetfront, run by Gord Howey, Barry Skillin, and head teacher and coach Trevor Stokes. It is also home to the most highschool marathon runners in the world.

An alternative program is a way of learning that veers from traditional teaching styles and offers environments to help ‘at risk’ students develop the tools they need to succeed. Students attend Streetfront from grades 8-10, then complete their last two years of high school in the mainstream program or in a senior alternative program. The original goal for Streetfront was to teach students academics, as well as life lessons, through a focus on physical education. “Just like you have a socials class, we have a running class,” Stokes told the Bruin Bulletin. Stokes explained that running teaches students perseverance, resilience, and instills a sense of pride.

“A lot of kids at Britannia have a low self concept, the world has told them they are poor, that they are kids of colour, that they are LGBTQ+, and that they shouldn’t be as proud as other people. I think that this is stupid, why shouldn’t they be? So I needed something to make people believe that,” Stokes answered when asked why he decided to run marathons with students. He described how, in 1999, when he first started teaching at Streetfront, they participated in a 10k race called the Sun Run. But he felt it was not enough, “How many people were doing

the Sun Run? 50,000. Where is the part that brings unique pride?” Stokes said. “I decided that we should run a marathon, because no matter where you come from in society, you understand what it takes to run a marathon. It is a part of our collective consciousness whether you have run one or not, we know it is hard and we know very few people will ever attempt it,” Stokes explained.

So, in the year 2000, Stokes convinced a 14 year old Streetfront student named Mauricio Garcia to run the full 42 kilometer Seattle marathon. “When he crossed that finish line as the only 14 year old in a sea of thousands of people, it not only brought attention to himself, but his courage.” Since then, Stokes approximated that over 700 full and half marathons have been run by Britannia students, and only four students were unable to finish.”“I needed to find things that the world would acknowledge as special. This is why we started to run marathons, because these kids have been ignored forever, and now they are not ignored,” Stokes expressed.

When asked how he motivated students to run marathons, Stokes revealed that he and other youth workers at Streetfront will run the full marathon, and then run back to the last student in order to give them a smile and a high five, running beside them every step of the way “I won’t let them give up. I think there is too much on the line,” Stokes said. Stokes went on to describe the community’s belief in the Britannia students, and that the high probability that runners would finish the marathon gave students the confidence to try. “I don’t usually round down, when I ask you to run, I don’t want you to run

half, I want you to run a full,” Stokes declared.

Stokes is also the coach of the school’s Cross Country team, where he connects with non-Streetfront students, some of whom run marathons with Streetfront. He spoke to his goal of creating a sports team that students would not feel intimidated to join: “people love to insulate an experience so cliques form, they want that security of their own group, I’m the exact opposite, I just want people to have fun and be a part of something.” Britannia’s Cross Country team has become one of the biggest in the Vancouver school district. “One thing we know about running, is that if you keep at it, you can’t not improve,” Stokes claimed.

In 2013, Stokes, Howey, Skillin, amongst others, started a ten year project called Street2Peak, with the mission to take a small group of students to five different continents, one every other year. Stokes explained that the current principal at the time had the goal of climbing Africa’s highest peak, Mount Kilimanjaro, and was looking for others to join, and approached Streetfront with the idea. Stokes’ job was to fundraise for the trip, “his idea was once, you can’t raise money for a one off event, so I came up with the idea to do a major international expedition, five different continents in 10 years.” Street-2Peak has successfully climbed Mount Kilimanjaro in 2015, backpacked through Patagonia Chile in 2017, and climbed Mount Aspiring National Park in New Zealand in 2019. “We thought: why don’t we marry difficult physical achievements with international travel, something that these kids don’t get the chance to do,” Stokes said

Throughout his time at Streetfront, Stokes has always had the same goal: “The bottom line is, I want students to believe in themselves as much as I do.”

Spotlight on Britannia Secondary’s Art Scene

Article by: Finn Ghosh-Leudke (12)

Imagine a place where music fills the halls and livens the day of every person within earshot. Vibrant art adorns the walls and brightens the busy workspace. In this magical building, innovative ideas are projected onto the silver screen for hundreds of people to see. Imagine Britannia Secondary.

Throughout the school, countless students engage in exciting artistic endeavours. Within the Arts department, there are a multitude of distinct arts programs such as visual arts, film and animation, and music. Each program grants students the opportunity to explore new art forms, embrace their creativity, and build a community. Dedicated teachers like Ms. Boulet, Mr. Green, and Ms. Nobbs-Thiessen work hard to foster a lifelong appreciation of art, share their skills, and support Bruins in student-led creative pursuits. The Bruin Bulletin explored three specific programs within the bustling Art Department — fine arts, music, and film and animation — to share the exciting projects and activities that students are undertaking in the arts this year.

Film/Animation

Mr. Green’s students direct, design, and produce fascinating films for the screen. Mr. Green’s program provides junior and senior film and animation classes, where he teaches an array of professional filmmaking skills and inspires students to pursue their creative ideas.

This semester, Mr. Green leads the junior film and animation class. The class began by studying the famous 1995 film “Clueless” to inform their projects and learn the structures of storytelling. According to Mr. Green, “students studied the film mostly to look at character dynamics and then they recreated select scenes from the film using different techniques and styles.” Mr. Green’s class pursued different aspects of film and animation such as rotoscope, animatics, paper cut out stop motion animation, and live action. He also has plans for the music and the film and animation programs to collaborate on a live performance.

Next semester, Mr. Green will teach the senior film and animation class. The most exciting aspect of the senior film program is that the students will have the opportunity to take initiative and

pursue their own creative interests by working on a choice project. Discussing the upcoming project, Mr. Green said, “There’s a lot of range depending on what the person wants to make: a documentary or maybe if they want to make an animation, there’s a lot of wiggle room.” In the film program, the students take on the role of a filmmaker; they explore their ideas and realize their creative vision using the technical and stylistic skills they have built up over time. Mr. Green said, “That’s an exciting part of the course, where the students have an exciting idea and I just support them managing the project and making something of their own interest.”

Like all great movies, the work of the film program is designed for presentation. Mr. Green addressed students, “Once you’re in the class, the work we make goes on the big screen and it goes online on our Vimeo page so it’s kinda real.” By making films with the intention of sharing them to the world, the threshold for quality is raised. “You’re not making it for school, you’re making it for an audience.”

When asked about his vision for the

future, Mr. Green said, “I would love to have an exhibition that brings together our department: A showcase.” He imagines an exciting large-scale event where people dress up to see the culmination of two semesters of artwork and performance training across the department. Various visual art pieces could be displayed on the walls, band and drama students could perform for the audience, and film and animation projects could be projected in the space for all to see. He envisions woodworking products on display alongside products marketed by the business class as well. At the annual showcase, the school community could come together to celebrate creativity within Britannia.

Mr. Green believes art is valuable because it creates safety and connection. “Art is a place where we can just focus inward, find some peace, and make something cool.” Furthermore, art also gives people a method of communicating. “It’s hard to see inside someone else’s brain, but you can paint it and you can sing it and people get a piece of that,” Mr. Green explained.

Fine Arts

Between the arts room on the second floor and the media arts room below the school, Ms. Boulet, the department head, teaches students skills in ceramics, jewellery-making, visual arts, and photography. When asked what types of projects her students are pursuing in her art classes, Ms. Boulet described an approach to the creation of art that applies to all her classes, “in my mind, there’s three aspects to every art project. There’s a new skill to learn, new materials to play with, and then a question to answer.”

At the time she was interviewed, Ms. Boulet’s art class was exploring print-making. By learning the skills and becoming familiar with the materials of the art form, her students were able to pursue their own ideas within the medium. “The students are free to create content for their piece based on looking back into their portfolios and sketch books and finding motifs or subjects that they’ve been interested in pursuing,” Ms. Boulet said about her art class and their print-making project. Through her approach to her art class, Ms. Boulet grants students the skills of the medium, enabling them to explore their ideas in future classes. “We’re at the point in the course where the foundation has been laid and the students are capable and curious.”

Ms. Boulet’s vision is to instill an appreciation for art in her students, to inspire them to potentially pursue art beyond high school. When asked about her vision for her art program, Ms. Boulet stated, “I would love to create an ecosystem where students feel compelled to take a fine arts or ADST course at the senior level for their own enjoyment of the arts and their own enjoyment of culture.”

While the idea is still in progress, Ms.



Ensnare, Sabrina Zesati

Boulet hopes to incorporate Indigenous-focused learning into her department in the future and invite Indigenous artists to Britannia elective classes to share their perspective on different artistic media. When discussing the potential for that type of program, Ms. Boulet said, “I’m trying to have a pilot project here where the First People’s Principles of Learning move not only from English and social studies, but into a senior elective where we might partner with the Indigenous Ed and create opportunities for Indigenous-focused electives.” Indigenous instructors could join elective teachers within the department to share cultural perspectives on working with the various artistic media that Britannia students are currently studying. “It’s just an access that would be really fantastic for the learning environment, both for the teacher and for the learner.”

Britannia Secondary offers a wide variety of arts courses that open up doors for students to explore new art forms and learn new perspectives around artistry. Ms. Boulet said, “I think [high school] is sometimes the first place a student and a learner will encounter ways of making art, ways of seeing art, ways of thinking about art.” For example, Britannia Secondary is one of

the only schools to have an operational dark room for the development of film photography. Without the high school photography class, it is unlikely that students would experience the analog process of taking and developing pictures.

Ms. Boulet thinks it is important for students to create and support art in the school community because the process can instill an appreciation of art beyond graduation. “When people graduate and go out into the world, they can appreciate art when they see it. They will either have directly experienced trying to draw, trying to make prints, trying to take photographs, trying to make jewellery; and when they encounter jewellery, visual art, drama, music in the real life, they will have an appreciation of what it takes to survive and thrive in that milieu.”

Music

During classes, at lunch, and even after school, Britannia students may hear melodies emanating from Ms. N-T’s many music rooms. Ms. N-T teaches music to a variety of ensembles such as the Brit Voices singing club and the junior concert, senior concert, and jazz bands.

The senior concert band meets for an extra hour after school twice each week. The band performs a variety of songs, including rock, jazz, and concert pieces. The band is active in the local community and recently performed numerous songs to celebrate the holiday season at the winter craft fair.

“In band, the main thing that we’re working on is building our connection with the ensemble and a sense of community, but also reaching out to the broader community,” Ms. N-T explained. Participating in a band at Britannia creates a strong sense of connection and a team mentality because every musician works together to create a cohesive performance. Each musician is integral to the ensemble and plays a role in the final performance.

In October, both the Grade 8 band and the senior band learned the Coast Salish Anthem with Indigenous Education Curriculum Consultant Brandon Peters. Furthermore, the music program came together during the Indigenous Veterans Day Assemblies on November 6th and November 8th when they sang the Coast Salish Anthem to honour Indigenous Veterans. The senior concert band played two songs of remembrance and the Brit Voices singing club sang a rendition of “Imagine” by John Lennon.

In Grade 8 concert band, Ms. N-T’s goal is to give her students the opportunity to explore new instruments and types of music. “It’s really about helping students find their passion for music and building a connection to an instrument or to singing.” The Britannia music program has opened up new avenues for Grade 8 students to discover instruments and the joy of music. The band program is a large community that is connected between different classes through a shared desire to perform. As it is such an interconnected

group of ensembles, the Grade 8 band will perform alongside the Senior band in the upcoming Winter Concert.

While there are many on-timetable courses in the music program, Ms. N-T also runs a singing club at lunch called Brit Voices. “We’re really focusing on student voice and having students involved in decision-making for repertoire choices and how they want to present themselves as leaders in their school and as musicians,” Ms. N-T stated. They will return to the stage during the holiday season to sing two new pieces at the Winter Concert on December 15th.

When asked about her vision for her program, Ms. N-T described that her word of the year is “elevate” and she is focusing on growing the music program. For example, in the last month, the band received a grand piano to elevate performances in the auditorium. “[Part of growing our program] is being more involved in community events, with bigger tours, inviting other people into our school to work with us.” Before the Indigenous Veterans Day Assembly, Ms. N-T invited Dr. Jemima Bunn, a doctor of music education from Australia, to work with the band and provide another perspective. “[Dr. Jemima Bunn] Showed us new ways of learning, understanding, and knowing music, [which is] one of the ways that we as a collective in music are growing together and building our program up.” The band is inviting the Britannia elementary school to watch the band’s dress rehearsal. When they get a preview of the upcoming concert, prospective students will see all the exciting music opportunities at Britannia Secondary.

Readers are encouraged to support and join the music program at Britannia. Music has a unique way of connecting people, and there are a multitude

of opportunities beyond high school where alumni of the Britannia music program can continue to practice and perform. “Once you play a musical instrument or sing in a choir, you are part of the music community and will always have a place to belong.” The ensembles within Britannia also benefit the school community as a whole by providing performance opportunities to students and participating in school events. Ms. N-T stated, “But ultimately, my goal is not just to build the music program, it’s to build up the status of the school through the music program.”

Drama

Britannia’s drama program in room 111 grants aspiring actors the opportunity to learn acting skills from professionals in the field, explore their creativity, and perform for an audience. In her exciting drama classes and the extracurricular Arts Club Drama Club, Ms. Duttchen provides students with an invaluable theatre education. This year, the students of the grade 8 drama rotation have been focusing on fundamental skills for acting in theatre, film, and television such as improvisation, place-based storytelling, and voice acting. Outside of instructional time, Ms. Duttchen also offers a fun drama club that is partnered with the renowned Arts Club Theatre Company. Recently, the drama club worked on spoken word pieces with actor and poet Omari Newton. “One of my goals is to have students see the larger Theatre Community and know that they belong to a larger world of creative people,” Ms Duttchen said.

Any student with an interest in the Drama Club is encouraged to join in the new year as the club will be working towards a presentation.

A New Mural in the Britannia Community: an interview with Ejiwa Ebenebe

Interview by: Grace Caruso (12)

This September, a new mural was unveiled on Britannia's Gym C wall, showcasing different stories and connections within the community. The Britannia Community Centre had asked artist Ejiwa (Edge) Ebenebe to create a mural that focused on Black Lives Matter and one that would also capture the feeling of Britannia. "I wanted to portray not necessarily a genetic family, but the family of a community, a found family," Edge said.

She had started working on the mural in mid-June of 2022, and was able to talk to students and members of the community for inspiration. "Everyone was super sweet and I felt very welcomed. I am glad the students were able and willing to talk to me," Edge exclaimed.

During the 8-9 weeks the mural took to complete, Edge could be found elevated on a crane with her headphones on, painting in bliss while her mother sat listening to stories from all of the Britannia folks who passed by. "She has been my loyal supporter, it has been fantastic. I don't know if I could have

done this without her," Edge said. "My whole family inspired the mural, but I did not want to put too much of myself in it, because I really wanted to focus on the community, it is YOUR mural," they explained.

Edge's first mural was installed in 2019 for the Hogan's Alley Artist Call project, and was done with digitally printed vinyl. She then caught the attention of Vancouver Mural Festival (VMF), and painted a mural titled "Flower Crown" on Robson street for VMF 2020, using projection to transfer the initial sketch onto the wall. This time around, Edge describes her new approach, called the doodle grid method: random scribbles are drawn on the wall, then photographed, and then the drawing is overlaid to scale using the scribbles to estimate the location of the sketch. The painting is then completed with spray paint and acrylic paint. "I learned about the doodle grid from a fellow mural artist and now I think it is my preferred method," Edge revealed.

Edge was originally introduced to digital art when she and her family were still living in Samoa. They explain

that technology was not very accessible where they were living, but thanks to Edge's mom, she bought a basic digitizer tablet and learned how to navigate Photoshop. Digital art has been her main medium ever since, but they have also been working in traditional art for the past couple of years.

When asked why it is important to see black artists showcased in local communities, Edge responded with, "I feel like it is vital, stories matter, stories are how we find our place in the world and if we don't see our own stories, it will feel like we don't matter." She goes on to say that "It is important for marginalised artists to have that space and opportunity to share their stories and experiences."

The colourful mural livens up the area and conveys the familial connection within the Britannia community, reminding us of the many different people here, each with unique stories. Edge expressed "I just want people to feel like they belong and feel like they are seen, that's what I try to achieve in my art, helping people feel like they matter."

Mural by Ejiwa Ebenebe
Photo by Grace Caruso

Tik Tok's Effect on the Music Charts

Article by: Ama Birch (11)

Tik Tok in its essence, is centred around music. It informs just about every action taken on the app, providing context for countless videos and various creators.

TikTok, after rising to popularity in 2019, began shaping the music tastes of many teenagers, exposed them to new small artists, and diversified their playlists. Now well-known hits like "Say So" by Doja Cat began surfacing as 'TikTok sounds' in late 2019, often used as background music for talking videos or dance challenges, and sometimes having whole trends revolving around them like "Old Town Road" by Lil Nas X. Likewise, more recently, independent artists like Clairo and Phoebe Bridgers have received more attention as a result of the app.

To get a sense of just how many songs have blown up this way, TikTok's yearly music report showed that approximately 430 songs surpassed 1 billion views on the platform in 2021.

Reviving a song that has not appeared on a music chart in 25 years is not an easy feat, but exactly that was accomplished in June 2022 with Kate Bush's "Running up that hill". The song appeared on the Billboard Global 200 chart after a 25-year dormancy period, staying in the top ten for the entire month of June 2022, peaking at number 1.

This occurred after the new season of *Stranger Things* premiered in late May, including a scene that featured the song and earning the hit a place as a popular TikTok sound for weeks.

Impossible to ignore, the song made its way onto playlists, the news, and various social media. The song used in the background of countless Tiktoks managed to prove that the complete resurrection of a once forgotten song can occur on TikTok and social media alike.

Churning out new artists, songs, reviving genres, and eras of music all around the world, are examples of this phenomenon, due to the persistence of such a social media platform that is constantly pushing out new content at an immeasurable rate.

Once a TikTok gets a considerable number of views, the song in the background of the video tends to spread like wildfire. If you go to the app right now you will often hear clips of the same song where the sound is sped up, slowed down, or reverbed. The constant altering of music that takes place on TikTok can sometimes be favoured by listeners over the original songs. Even though a clip from a song that has been sped up may go viral, the edited version, that can only be listened to through social media, raises concerns about where streams and royalties lay. With the song's creator or the app. Artists like Steve Lacy, combated this dilemma by releasing a sped up version of his popular song Bad Habit, in an attempt to attract TikTok listeners to his officially released music, and

it worked. Racking him up over 100 million streams on the song, according to Spotify.

Although it can be overstimulating for some, the cycle of continuous artist exposure is mostly a positive thing. Giving small creators a platform and a chance to get their music out. For instance, GAYLE, a small singer is now set to tour with Taylor Swift after her song "ABCDEFU" blew up in TikTok and peaked at No. 1 on the Billboard Global 200 in January of 2022 with 58.8 million streams.

From 2019 to 2022, the unmovable constant of TikTok sounds trending at the top of various established music charts has not wavered. Which begs the question: how does an app consisting largely of teenage users control the music charts?

Songs are repeatedly used on the app until it has been drilled into viewers' heads, effectively making their way out of Tiktok, onto streaming services like Spotify and Apple Music. This is how a song, whether it be new or old, gets around. How it gets stuck in everyone's heads. Which is how TikTok, as of now, widely controls the pop charts, proving to all that it knows what people, and most importantly, teens want.

Solidarity with Mahsa Amini: Under the Oppressive Iranian Regime

Article by: Ann Ho (9)

With all citizens under the government's supervision, one wrong move and it may cost you your life. Why does a government get to determine the lives of its citizens? How did the actions of the government and police officers take away an innocent 22-year-old woman's life?

The death of Mahsa Amini has sparked a fire and started protests around the world. Earlier this year, she was detained by the morality police for not fully covering her hair with her hijab. She was beaten into a coma and died three days later, on September 16th. Many people have died at the hands of the Mortality Police for the same reason, but the case of Mahsa Amini was the breaking point for many Iranians. People are taking to social media to show how the Iranian government is forcing fear upon their citizens and how they are living in peril every day.

Many people are losing their families because of the power the government has given to the morality police. The state government stated: "The Morality Police, an element of Iran's Law Enforcement Forces (LEF), arrests women for wearing inappropriate hijab and enforces other restrictions on freedom of expression."

In the midst of a rebellion, citizens are joining forces to overthrow the government. The slogan, "don't call it a protest, it's a revolution now" speaks to the determination and ambition, among both the protesters themselves and international observers. The supreme leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, picture has been burned at protests with chants of "death to the dictator." The movement during the past month has been noticeable in several ways.

With young people, and young women in particular, taking on the most prominent roles. It appears to be an international response to the death of Masha Amini, having spread to dozens of cities and countries and spanning across ethnic and religious groups.

The police provided fake information to the public stating that Masha Amini died due to a heart attack, but it was later revealed that she suffered a concussion and died three days later while in a coma. The devastating fact is that she wasn't the first victim of this tragedy. Many people have lost their lives for this same reason due to the Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi, with the reinforcement of the hijab law just this past July. Thousands of Iranians, primarily women, hit the streets in protest, risking their lives. Since September 19th, protests continue to take place in solidarity with Mahsa Amini. Iranian women are burning hijabs and cutting their hair in public, as a demonstration against Iran's government, signifying that they don't belong to the government or anyone except themselves. "For many Iranian women, cutting off hair – a sign of beauty that is decreed to be hidden in the Islamic Republic – is a poignant form of protest," said CNN reporters Celine Alkhaldi and Nadeen Ebrahim.

Videos of protests in Iran have gone viral; footage of police assaulting pro-

testors, and protests taking shape have spread internationally. These movements tend to capture the world's attention briefly before being shut down by state repression. The Iranian government shut off the internet in parts of Tehran and Kurdistan, and blocked social media platforms as a way to limit protests. Without internet access, it is harder for people to post videos on social media and generate support for their cause or access reliable reports on what is happening. TikTok, YouTube, Twitter, and Facebook are routinely blocked in parts of the Islamic Republic of Iran, which have some of the strictest internet controls in the world. Determined to earn back their rights, women are risking arrest, imprisonment, and even death by demonstrating against the state and violating the law. On April 1st 1979, Iranian people voted in a national referendum to become an Islamic republic and to formulate and approve a new theocratic-republican constitution whereby Khomeini became supreme leader of the country in December 1979. Unfortunately, in 2009, human rights in Iran were dictated. On December 8th 2022, The New York Times declared that "Mohsen Shekari was accused of blocking a street in Tehran and of attacking a member of the Basij militia with a machete, according to the Mizan news agency, which is overseen by the country's judiciary. He is one of 11 protesters who have so far been sentenced to



death by the regime."

There are protests happening in Vancouver as well. People have been taking to the streets, marching from the Vancouver Art Gallery all the way to Stanley park for months now. Recent incidents are going beyond the limits of

human suffering that Iranians have endured for a long time. The government is supposed to protect its people but it fails to do so and causes fear and horror for its civilians. Protestors are being put on trial or killed on the spot for fighting against the Iranian government. With the police constantly using force to stop

the protests, many innocent people are losing their lives. In light of the controversy that followed, the citizens of Iran are continuously fighting for their lives and their earned rights every day.

The Renewal of RayCam Co-operative Centre

Article by: Bec Ly (11)

On the east of Vancouver operates a community centre called Raycam that was established in 1976. Raycam has served the community with programs, services, and housing for families, supporting the most financially vulnerable for years. Over 18,000 people operate in the neighbourhood and the majority are low income, immigrants, and single mothers. Raycam has always been the heart and soul of Stamps Place. Recently, Raycam has set up a plan to expand and renew its centre. RayCam and Vancouver city has stated: "A renewed RayCam envisions a neighbourhood centre with services and housing to meet the needs of the local population. A fully inclusive multi-generational community, with social and rental housing affordable for local residents. Expanded recreational, child care, seniors, local health and

youth programs, facilities for partner organisations, NGO's, and local startup enterprises; and potential leasable space for local serving businesses."

As a vital serving centre for several vulnerable populations, RayCam's programs are important and irreplaceable, and recognised as essential services by the Labour Relations Board of BC. To keep the continuation of recreational and social service that residents of Stamps Place rely on while decreasing disruption, the renovation of RayCam will be based on a phased construction plan.

The new and expanded centre will include features prioritised by local residents, organisations, and centre staff, including: expanded administration and reception; new and expanded multi-use, youth and seniors programming space; new games, drop-in and afterschool

space; community kitchen, commercial kitchen, and laundry facilities; new and expanded childcare; seniors drop-in, adult daycare and frail elderly centre; new gymnasium; expanded fitness centre; health clinic; vocational training; media lab and theatre; outdoor and common spaces; and support for local serving retail and social enterprises. According to Raycam-new.Ca, the centre is also over-capacity and is increasingly challenged in responding to the demands of a growing population. Families eagerly await the projected housing. Seniors look forward to support and homes that will help them to age in place. The RayCam Renewal cannot wait. With support from municipal and provincial partners, other funders and the private sector, residents are hopeful their renewed neighbourhood centre will quickly take shape.

Have People Taken the Term “Queerbaiting” Too Far?

Opinion piece by: Elsie Iwankow (10)

Queerbaiting is a term that can be heard everywhere on social media platforms. This term is usually used to describe when a fictional show or story leads its viewers to believe that characters or relationships are queer, but do not depict them as such. An infamous example of queerbaiting in a show is Will Byers in *Stranger Things*. The writers and actors alluded many times in interviews that Will might have a queer storyline in Season 4. However, many fans were disappointed to see no canon queer storyline established in the new season’s release. Writers use queerbaiting as a marketing tool to grab more attention and interest from the queer community. Accusations of queerbaiting have been more recently used on social media to criticize pop culture figures claiming that these artists adopt aspects of queer culture and aesthetics to expand their audience. Creators such as Kit Conner, Billie Eilish, and Harry Styles have been criticized by the LGBTQ+ community, fans, and allies for profiting from a queer identity that they have not publicly claimed. So why is this problematic and are there legitimate grounds for these accusations?

Sexuality is something that some people don’t figure out until later in life. This is why I take issue with accusations of queerbaiting directed not at shows and movies but at specific celebrities. Harry Styles has been a key figure in the controversy around this issue. This may come from the contrast of the Harry Styles we know now and the One Direction Harry Styles we grew up on. The image of early Harry doesn’t fit the flamboyant gender ambiguous aesthetic that Styles is now expressing. This specific case of queerbaiting disregards the development of celebrities as people capable of growth and change. Styles has addressed these accusations in interviews. His response mainly being that although the public may only see him in one kind of relationship, that isn’t the full picture. This is important to note because Harry Styles has never publicly stated his sexuality. So, despite the issues in queerbaiting accusations, it is clear that Styles is able to grab attention from the 2SLGBTQIA+ community without having to publicly deal with the scrutiny of coming out. But when it comes to Harry Styles, it

is important to consider how we tend to praise cis straight white men for “breaking toxic masculinity” with feminine styles without recognizing that queer folks and queer folks of colour have been penalized for breaking these norms historically.

This leads to the question of if we have the authority to call out celebrities for queerbaiting. Queerness, as much as people might disagree, is not something that you can see. You cannot confidently establish someone’s sexuality by judging their appearance or the way they act. To do so would be problematic because we are assuming that all queer people look and act a certain way, further perpetuating stereotypes surrounding the 2SLGBTQIA+ community. This issue is something that has no right or wrong answer, but I do think that people on the internet can be very quick to cancel celebrities for queerbaiting without recognizing the nuances of identity and the community itself. This is important to consider because the effect of repeatedly harassing celebrities for queerbaiting can cause more harm than good. Kit Conner, who plays a bisexual main character

on Netflix’s *Heartstopper*, was under scrutiny by several fans of the show on Twitter for queerbaiting. Fans were criticizing Conner for playing a bi character while seen out with a girl and never explicitly clarifying his sexuality, leading many to assume he was playing a queer character as a straight man. The constant comments against him lead to his leaving of the app for some time. Conner, after many fans continued to harass him, tweeted “I’m back for a minute. I’m bi. Congrats on forcing an 18 year old to out himself. I think some of you missed the point of the show. Bye.” This situation demonstrates exactly why a mob mentality on this issue is so problematic. The internet has a huge influence on many people’s reputations and lives, so how are we deciphering between valid criticisms on how celebrities can abuse the queer community for their own gain and blatantly outing them? Because it is clear that when a lack of critical thought is involved there are serious negative consequences that outweigh the intention.

Netflix’s Recent Losses and the Decline of the Streaming Industry

Article by: Sam MacFadden-Quatsel (11)

For the first time in the past decade, Netflix has had a drop in income for two quarters straight. This came after the monumental boom that Netflix and other streaming services received in 2020 and 2021 with the advent of COVID-19. With people stuck inside, they flocked to long-form, cheap entertainment and the streaming industry grew by an enormous margin. In 2020, the entire industry reached one billion subscribers, growing by 26% within the first year of lockdown. They carried this momentum into 2021 growing by another 20% in 2021. However, in the beginning of 2022, Netflix reported for the first time since their rise to prominence, a drop in subscribers for two quarters in a row. Netflix isn’t alone in this either, Hulu and Disney+ among many others reported similar losses in 2022. These drops in viewership may seem relatively minor in comparison to the massive earnings of the industry, however, these statistics are evidence of a bloated and over-saturated market. They show that the growth of the industry is at the very least unsustainable and potentially evidence of an economic bubble.

The core reason for this observed decline in the viewership of video streaming services is due to the belief that there has been a decline in the quality of streaming platforms. In the past couple years there has been a large increase in the quantity of available streaming services. Netflix used to be the only option; it was a cheap and easy way to be able to watch a large variety of existing TV shows and movies. For ten dollars a month, you could watch *Friends*, *The Big Bang Theory*, and all of the Marvel TV shows and movies whenever you wanted. However, within the past couple years, several entertainment companies — including Disney, HBO, and Warner Brothers — have pulled their properties in order to make their own streaming services. They also increased prices and used a general business model of producing as many TV shows as possible. Now, as a consumer, instead of having one 10 dollar per month subscription for which you could view all these popular shows, you now have five 20 dollar per month subscriptions to watch the equivalent amount. The market has become saturated, and because of this

the product being offered has declined in quality. Each individual service now offers less shows, there is a common sentiment online that the content being offered has become formulaic and generally worse, and the price has gone up from \$10 a month to \$20 a month per service.

These declines in quality combined with increases in price are emblematic of the economics of late stage capitalism. When Netflix broke onto the scene in the late 2000s and early 2010s, an untapped market of online streaming was discovered. People realized that online streaming was more convenient than cable TV. After that, Netflix dominated the market until later into the 2010s when there was a rush to capitalize off of their success. Suddenly there were many other companies offering a similar service but worse, since they were taking away their properties to start smaller platforms. However, they were leveraging their intellectual properties so that the only popular shows they had were exclusive to their platform. This led to the situation we have today, there are more streaming

services to choose from than ever, but it is known that none of them are nearly as good as before. Ironically, the current business model has begun to closely resemble cable television, the exact thing streaming services were originally conceived as a solution for. Corporate greed has made services like Netflix come full circle. What originally made the product likeable has been abandoned in favor of extracting as much profit from consumers as possible.

In a nutshell, there has been a marked decline in the on-demand video streaming service industry. This decline has been illustrated by what some would call a plateau in the subscriptions and revenue from Netflix and other major streaming services. This decline in revenue and subscriptions is due to the industry being both bloated and spread apart among too many subscriptions for individuals to keep up with. It has returned the broader entertainment industry to the state that facilitated the original rise of these services.



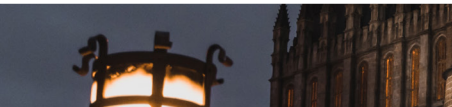
Is it Possible to Seperate JK Rowling from Harry Potter?

Opnion piece by: Ella Tsang (11)

Whether or not you’ve read or watched the series, you’re sure to have heard of *Harry Potter*. The success of J.K. Rowling’s *Harry Potter* has established the name as a fixture in pop culture. Rowling has received endless praise for her work, as well as endless criticism.

J.K. Rowling’s Problematic Actions

The release of the *Harry Potter* books in the late 1990s and early 2000s earned J.K. Rowling



roaring acclaim for her magical fiction. She was seen as one of the greatest young adult authors until recently when she vocalized her opinions on issues involving the transgender community.

The uprising was evoked when Rowling retweeted an article on how the COVID-19 pandemic was affecting “people who menstruate.” Rowling went on to say, “I’m sure there used to be a word for those people. Someone help me out. Wumben? Wimpund? Woomud?” Her tweet was unnecessary, transphobic, and seemed to imply that cisgender women are the only people who menstruate, failing to include transgender men or other non-binary individuals. Moreover, it contributed to the type of bias and misinformation that leads trans women, especially teens and Black trans women, to experience sexual assault, violence, and hate

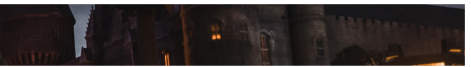


Photo by Aditya Vyas on Unsplash

crimes in alarmingly high rates. Rowling speaking her ‘truth’ was extremely harmful and created an unsafe space for not only trans men, but other trans individuals as well. This tweet then spawned a larger discourse that sought to examine J.K. Rowling’s series as a whole.

Racism, Classism, and Problematic Ideologies in *Harry Potter*

One may argue to ‘separate the series from the author’ which is applicable in some cases, but not with *Harry Potter*



and J.K. Rowling. One of the prevailing issues in *Harry Potter*, brought up by critics, readers, and fans, was the racism, classism, and ideologies found in the series. While there are obvious examples of racism in the form of stereotyped names for characters, there are also deeper controversies that some may declare offensive.

Classism and Social Status

Classism and social status are apparent issues in the *Harry Potter* series. In *Harry Potter*, there are different blood types which are meant to serve as class types. There are pure-bloods, half-bloods, muggle-born, and squibs. All the different blood types are treated differently throughout the series, but the pure-bloods are deemed superior because their blood is reflective of the ‘pure’ wizard class.



Blood supremacy has no real foundation, it’s a construct fabricated by those who benefit from it. In other words, it’s invented by those who meet meaningless requirements to place themselves in positions of power and privilege. In this case, however, pure-bloods take advantage of it, and that becomes the basis of the plot. Rowling’s implementation of classist stereotypes of blood supremacy does not imply that she is a classist. The implications of blood supremacy and house division, however, reinforce classist stereotypes such as higher power supremacy and class division.

Racism and Stereotyping

Throughout the *Harry Potter* series, readers have noticed a pattern in the stereotyping of specific characters. One of Harry’s many love interests throughout the series, Cho Chang, was never identified as Asian. However, two Asian surnames hinted at her

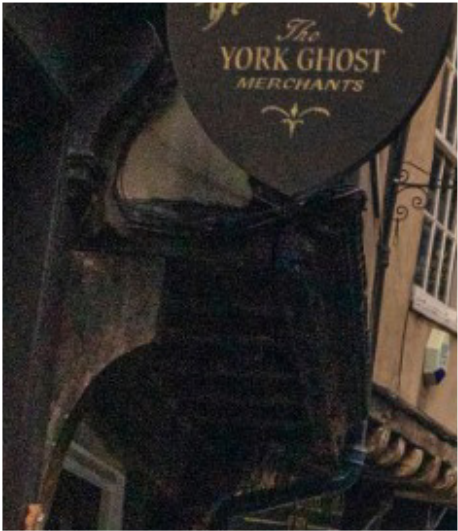


Photo by Karl Morgan on Unsplash

Asian origin. Some speculate that her placement in the smartest Hogwarts house was racially motivated, considering the stereotype that Asian people are smarter than others. The two other Asian characters in the series are the Patil twins. The twins sparked controversy by playing into the stereotype that “all brown people look alike”.

The books also have anti-Irish stereotypes. For example, Slytherin, the “evil house”, was founded by an Irishman, whereas Gryffindor, the “good house”, was founded by an Englishman. This implies a subconscious bias where the Irish could be thought of as “evil”, and the English as “heroes”. One more stereotypically Irish character is Seamus Finnegan. Upon casting spells, Finnegan often causes things to explode by ac-



cident. It should be added *Harry Potter* was written in the 1990s, during a time when the Irish Republican Army was active in Northern Ireland, conducting violent attacks with explosives.

The Gringotts goblins play a substantial role in the series, and it is an obvious stereotype when they are first mentioned. Bankers at the magical bank are all goblins. Goblins have been associated with antisemitic stereotypes for centuries. They are described as hook-nosed creatures obsessed with money, making both stereotypes incredibly harmful to Jewish people. It may appear as a simple mistake, where Rowling played with fantasy stereotypes, but failing to understand the Goblin as antisemitic sybloism shows the ignorance of Rowling.

It’s nearly impossible to separate the author from the *Harry Potter* series. Rowling’s hate and discrimination are evident throughout the book series. Although one may enjoy *Harry Potter*, it is important to recognize how problematic it is and to speak out against the hatred and discrimination that is both written in the books and prevalent in the world today.

2022 Movie Reviews

Reviews by: Chiya Amin (9), Jack Blanco (12), Judah Kimsey (12), Chester Wong (12)

Summer is over, and the year's biggest movie season has come to an end. As you're spending more time indoors and in front of your TV screens, let's take a look at the summer's biggest blockbusters and find out which ones you should check out on streaming services this winter.

Nope - Jordan Peele (9/10)

Nope is Jordan Peele's 3rd movie, released in July of this summer. *Nope* is a movie that you'll either love or hate. Out of Jordan Peele's three movies, *Nope* is easily the least scary and the most nuanced when it comes to its theme. There are many aspects of this film that may not make sense to the narrative upon the first viewing. However, when you

change your perspective and look at the movie as a whole, you'll find that every detail is essential to the overall theme. The main antagonist in *Nope* is spectacle, and the lengths humans will go to achieve it. With Oscar-level performances from Daniel Kaluuya, Keke Palmer, and Steven Yeun, as well as stellar Imax cinematography and a chilling soundtrack, *Nope* is a must watch this Winter Season.



Photo : A24

Bodies Bodies Bodies (8/10)

Bodies Bodies Bodies is a summer horror movie from A24 that subverts the genre and the viewer's expectations of a traditional horror movie. It follows a group of twenty-year-olds at a party. After one of them is killed, the remaining people spend the length of the movie trying to discover who the murderer is. *Bodies Bodies Bodies* uses satire especially well, making light fun of Gen. Z in a way that doesn't come off as inaccurate and remains entertaining. Pete Davidson is hilarious as always, and Rachel Sennott, Amandla Stenberg, and Maria Bakalova

all deliver powerful performances that elevate the film. This movie is recommended for fans of the horror slasher genre, and those who enjoy quality satire.

Bullet Train 7/10

Bullet Train manages to be one of the most, yet least predictable pieces of film to appear this last summer. Starring Brad Pitt, this movie takes place in Tokyo, Japan, and, as one may assume, the majority of this film takes place on a speeding, action-filled train.

This movie is centred around revenge where each character is shown to have their own unique objective, with their intricacies being explored as the train moves toward its final destination. The abundant personality of each character was an aspect I enjoyed most about the movie, and in turn built tension which helped the audience care for the well being of the characters.

Despite this, I found the film lacked purpose. This is an action film and not much more. There seems to be no deeper meaning, no commentary, just action, blood, and more action. Its decent comedic value is what kept me interested through some of these more boring parts. However, sometimes, even with humour, I found certain sections of the movie uninteresting and dragged out.

I don't dislike this film, in fact, I had an overall good viewing experience. Still it's an action movie and not much more. I would recommend this film to any action fans or those who wish to see a middling Brad Pitt film.



Official Bullet Train Poster

Thor: Love and Thunder (4/10)

Thor: Love and Thunder is Marvel's 4th instalment of the Thor series. Thor, played by Chris Hemsworth, embarks on a journey of self-discovery. His journey, however, gets interrupted by Gorr the God Butcher, a vengeful spirit who seeks the annihilation of all gods. Thor steps out of retirement and, with his allies Korg, Valkyrie and Jane Foster, set out to stop Gorr's relentless retribution.



Photo by Marvel Studios

The film attempts to explore the theme of love and loss. Unfortunately, this theme was severely underdeveloped and often was overshadowed by childish and corny jokes. The main villain of the film, Gorr, was extremely underwhelming. Not a single second did I feel like he was a major threat despite his title being "the God Butcher". The lackluster and seemingly-rushed CGI was evident throughout the film and the cinematography was exactly what you can expect out of a Marvel action flick. Christian Bale's phenomenal acting was sorely put to waste due to the poorly written script. Chris Hemsworth's performance as Thor was nothing but excessive goofiness and failed to meet the standards set by previous films like *Endgame*, *Infinity War* and *Thor: Ragnarok*.

Thor: Love and Thunder is obnoxious, mediocre, and shallow. The story had great potential and could have gone miles deeper than the surface that it scratched. Instead, the story lacked emotional impact, the plot was dull, and the characters were simply undeveloped or wasted. The film was nothing more than a disappointment.



Official *Pearl* Poster

Pearl (8/10)

Pearl is one of my favourite films of 2022 so far for many different reasons. Not only does actress Mia Goth give an oscar worthy performance as the character Pearl, but the film is able to tell a tragic and unique story. The film is a prequel to the film X, and follows Pearl in the 1920s as she tries to make it as a dancing star while also taking care of her sick father.

If you are like me and haven't watched the film X, you'll still be able to enjoy the film, as *Pearl* can exist as a stand alone film. This film is able to tell a heartbreaking story of a young girl and tie it up in a neat bow of a 1 hour and 40 minute runtime. This film takes a deep dive into the character of Pearl and does it incredibly well. As the film goes on, all of the character's motivations unravel and you see why Pearl became the person that she is. A24 is known for having amazing cinematography in most of their films and this is no exception. The film has an eye popping high saturated tone and an inviting atmosphere; surprisingly, it is the perfect tone for such a dark and

often cruel movie. The only critique I have is the pacing. The film tries to combine a simultaneous quick and slow pacing, leading the audience to wonder when the tension will finally rise and resolve.

Overall, *Pearl* is a prequel anyone can have fun watching and is a film I'll be rewatching countless times. If you can ignore the unsatisfying pacing, then *Pearl* is sure to be on your 2022 list.

Don't Worry Darling (7/10)

Don't Worry Darling is an enjoyable movie with an engaging premise, but fails in execution. While there are interesting ideas and fun moments, the movie has flaws that leave you with more questions than answers. The plot follows the main character Alice who starts seeing disturbing visions, and soon discovers that her perfect neighbourhood may not be what it seems.

In the first two acts, the cinematographer Matthew Libatique does a good job of getting you immersed into the film. He helps create the perfect balance of a candy coloured and rich environment while also having a certain eerie-

ness and disturbance. On top of that, the 50s-60s setting adds an extra layer to the film. The film has an interesting and engaging story with fantastic performances from Florence Pugh, Chris Pine, and Gemma Chen which elevate the storytelling. Unfortunately the third act is when things fall apart since a lot of subject matter discussed in the first two acts are not explained clearly enough.

The patriarchy is the main focus of the film, and Olivia Wilde depicts the stereotypical roles of men and women throughout the film with the characters Alice and Jack Chambers. Jack goes to work while Alice stays home cooking, cleaning, and waiting till Jack comes home to pour a drink for him as he walks through the door. Although the issue at hand is important and shown well, the characterisation feels forced and underdeveloped.

Don't Worry Darling is a decent film by director Olivia Wilde that has an engaging premise, stunning cinematography, and wonderful performances. However, it fails to explain some of the plot points and feels unfinished.



Is the International Baccalaureate Program Worth It?

Article by: Emmanuel Vega (11)

The International Baccalaureate (IB) program has a long history of having successful students enrolling in great institutions and giving them astounding opportunities, however, you may have heard students talk about how stressed they are because of their IB homework. The IB Diploma program brings many positive benefits to countless students. IB has been regarded as having high standards by leading universities such as Harvard, MIT, the University of Toronto, the University of British Columbia, and Oxford. However, some may ask, are the rewards of the IB program worth the stress, lack of sleep, and impacts to mental health?

You may have heard students talk about how stressed they are because of CAS or that their EE is too long. If you don't know already, this stress is from the International Baccalaureate (IB) program. But what exactly is IB? The IB is an accelerated education program that provides an extensive breadth of six core subjects. There are three programs in the IB curriculum, the Primary Years Program (ages 3-12), the Middle Years Program (ages 11-16) and the Diploma Program (ages 16-19). Britannia is one of two public schools that offers the IB Diploma Program in the Vancouver School District.

Participating in the IB Diploma (DP) or Certificate (CERT) program is greatly beneficial to many students. Firstly, the IB program claims to be a pioneer in worldwide education that cultivates young people who are inquisitive, intelligent, self-assured, and compassionate. The diploma or certificate programs claim to enable students to independently take charge of their own learning and support the development of skills that will enable them to flourish in a world that is undergoing rapid change. Secondly, the IB implements the IB learner profile to better all of a student's characteristics. The learner profile seeks to make their students open-minded, knowledgeable, thoughtful, risk-taking, communicative, balanced, principled, and reflective. Leading universities such as Harvard, MIT, the University of Toronto, the University of British Columbia, and Oxford recognize the

IB program for having high standards which greatly expands the pool of potential post-secondary institutions for IB diploma students. The IB DP program courses can also be converted into valid first-year university credits, thus lifting the workload for first year students.



The Creativity Activity Service (CAS) project and activities are additional components of the IB curriculum. Each student is required to complete activities that fall under the three criteria: creativity, activity, and service. This focused work allows students to go beyond their coursework and creates a more well rounded student. The CAS project is a self directed pursuit that asks students to design a project focused on at least one area of the three CAS requirements. This project must demonstrate an understanding of the IB CAS areas and reflect an area of interest for the student. Due to CAS, IB students can gain experience utilizing communication strategies, are encouraged to take on more social responsibility, and are able to explore and pursue their passions. But, these additional requirements can be hard to balance on top of IB classes.

That being said, the rewards of the IB program also come with an astounding workload, which is the primary concern for many DP applicants. The internal assessments, the extended essay (4,000 words), oral presentations, 150 hours of community and service, mock examinations, and final exams make procrastination practically impossible. Furthermore, before embarking on the massive course load, students must consider if they can manage the unrelenting pace of learning. What will keep you going? Do you have a solid support network? There is no guilt in recognizing that the program's pressure is not for you, especially if you know you would perform far better in a different framework. IB students believe that the grading systems and course load are designed to break down students rather than prepare them for success. Furthermore, IB students report receiving extremely little sleep, which is the opposite of what a healthy adolescent needs.

In conclusion, IB has both positive and negative attributes. On the one hand, there are great long term benefits to your character and learning. At the same time, the benefits come at a price, and in many instances, it is not an advantageous endeavor to pursue. IB is a personal decision and has pros and cons that must be weighed by each individual.

Gentrification in Chinatown: A Threat to Preserving History

Article by: Jenny Chi (10)

Have you ever heard of the term gentrification? It is a process where current inhabitants of poorer urban areas find themselves displaced due to the influence of wealthier people moving in and introducing new businesses and development plans. Vancouver Chinatown is one of the most recent victims of this concept. With plans of million-dollar condos, and the emergence of high-end supermarkets, what will happen to Chinatown and its heritage? If gentrification does take effect, what are the moral implications?

To understand the gentrification of Chinatown, it's important to first acknowledge how segregation of Chinese immigrants led to the creation of Vancouver Chinatown. From when it first emerged in 1886, Vancouver Chinatown was developed as a social and economic hub for Chinese immigrants who were isolated in a city of segregation. Upon the completion of the Canadian Pacific Railway (CPR), the British Columbian government did not feel the need to exploit the cheap labour of Chinese railway workers any further. So, in 1885, the Chinese Head Tax was implemented almost immediately, specifically limiting Chinese Immigration through high taxes. Regardless, many motivated Chinese families still tried to immigrate as wages in Canada were estimated to be 10-20 times higher than that of poverty-stricken China. In addition to the Head Tax, Chinese immigrants also could not vote or hold public office, were forbidden to own property, and were limited to low-paying and labour-intensive jobs because they legally could not work as professionals. As Chinese immigrants would compromise for these low wages, false narratives of Chinese workers 'stealing the jobs' of white men were

formed. Burdened by these circumstances, Chinese workers began to settle as small business workers, which would cause a self-distinct economic community for Chinese immigrants. When the Chinese Immigration Act was established in 1923 by the federal government, all Chinese immigration was denied. Without their own families, the Chinese found support in their community. There was socialisation and relaxation, but there was also financial, banking, employment, and housing help. Chinatown became a safe place of honour in a world that villainized them.

Recognizing the history of Chinatown brings us back to contemporary Chinatown today and the threat of gentrification that it presents. We have to recognize Chinatown less as free real estate, and more as a community built on over a century of culture and human persistence. Allowing the continuous growth of upper-class western influence in Chinatown erases the culture and history of those who had once lived here. What will happen to the culture and people living in Chinatown if the streets are suddenly replaced with Cactus Club, Superstore, and any other large corporations alike?

Who benefits from Ryan Beedie's million-dollar housing development plans? Definitely not the Chinese Elders who once called this their home. The fear of gentrification comes from the fight for preservation. This is reminiscent of Project 200 and the fight to save Chinatown in 1967. Following trends of 'Urban Renewal' in the 50s, plans of an eight-lane freeway running through the centre of Chinatown and Strathcona were being proposed by governments and businesses without any consultation of the Chinatown residents beforehand. There were angry protests and opposition, and eventually, the project was scrapped. This incident in 1967 reflects Chinatown today. If that freeway was built, most of the mainly Chinese residents and businesses would've been displaced — and the Chinatown we know today would be gone. In a future where gentrification in Chinatown does fully manifest, I believe we can see the same thing happening. Development plans in Chinatown need to be thoughtful of the present and pre-existing community, as the recognition of gentrification matters in preserving Chinatown and its heritage.

The Book Banning Craze in America

Article by Andrew Huynh (10)

Book bans have been around since books were readily available to the public, but the first notable book bans in mass were during the 20th century, a time in which several dictatorships around the world banned pieces of media that were damaging their cause or did not agree with their politics. Democratic nations have always been bastions of hope for writers and immigrants who value freedoms of speech and rights to information. This is why it is very concerning when bannings like these start popping up in democratic countries. This is mostly centred in the US and is especially prominent in southern states, an area in the US that has seen increased right-wing activity and resistance towards pro-left movements.

In early January 2022, a small Tennessee school board gained international attention when it banned the first and second installments of the book *Maus*, an award winning graphic novel by Art



Spiegelman revealing the horrors that his father and mother faced during the Holocaust. The reason? The book was said to portray child murder, suicide, and violence. The problem with these reasons? These are fair depictions of a violent and tragic event. There are also many other books that are allowed by the school board that feature the same themes/portrayals such as, for example, *The Hunger Games* series.

The banning of *Maus* is not an anomaly, as many other books promoting things such as Critical Race Theory (CTR) and gender equality have been targeted by schools, especially in the state of Texas, a state that features over 800+ books banned in several different schools. Now how are books like these banned? The answer is quite simple; online local community groups. The

school board listens to the people who pay taxes, since taxes also pay for the school, which makes the school obligated to appeal to these groups. With more and more of these groups surfacing on the internet, there has been an influx of book bans every year.

In the end, there are a multitude of factors that play into book bannings, but the most notable and effective way are community groups. This is important as it is a prime example as to how some fundamental freedoms could change things for the worse if the wrong group of people rally and exploit them. The banning of these books is censoring necessary stories important for students to learn in schools, stunting education, and threatening democracy.

Food Allergies: Is there an effective treatment?

Article by: Thi Do (12)

What causes food allergies?

Among children, the number of emergency room visits for severe, potentially life-threatening reactions (anaphylaxis) to food allergies is skyrocketing. Peanut and egg allergies are the most common food allergies in general. Why does this happen? The stomach digests food, and the intestines (large and small intestine) absorb most of the nutrients from these digested food. The stomach hosts only a few microbes since it is a digestive site of the body, but the large intestine houses the majority of microbes. These gut bacteria aid in the digestion of cellulose, and supply body-essential nutrients and vitamins as by-products for their metabolic pathways in our digestive system. Moreover, microbes help maintain the mucosal barrier and protect against pathogens. Over the past few years, scientists have found that food allergies result from the imbalance in the gut microbiome, probably caused by dietary, environmental, genetic and lifestyle impacts.

What methods have the scientists found so far?

Finding a way to underline these biochemical glitches is more effective than to desensitize patients to allergic symptoms or individual allergens. In January 2021, the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) approved Palforzia, the first drug discovered to reduce the reactions specifically caused by peanuts. The medication consists of a standardized amount of powdered peanut protein, which can be mixed into snacks and desserts. Over time, patients taking higher doses can tolerate the equivalent of two peanuts without serious symptoms. However, this medication designed for children aging 4 to 17 is not perfect; wherein it must be taken indefinitely, some children have strong reactions that they cannot continue the therapy,

and the extravagant \$8900 per month is definitely a barrier for low-income households. In February 2021, the End Allergies Together organization (EAT) declared immunologist Talal Chatila from Boston Children’s Hospital the winner of the Grand Challenge to End Anaphylaxis, who suggested targeting a molecular element in the gut that could block allergic reactions before they start. The second project from teams at Vedanta Biosciences and Massachusetts General Hospital is experimenting with a therapy aimed to restore microbial balance in the food-allergic intestine. For families who have teenagers suffering from multiple food allergies, scientists are trying to understand the mechanisms of these disorders so that the targeted therapies are more effective. For those who just want protec-

tion from a single allergen, something like Palforzia may be effective. What can we do to alleviate the allergic symptoms? Similar to the way Palforzia minimizes symptoms of allergic reactions to peanuts, it has been suggested that in-taking a small amount of the food that one is allergic to, and increasing that amount over time can cause our body can gradually adapt to the change, though this must be done in moderation and with professional medical guidance. WE ARE IN NO WAY PROMOTING SELF DIRECTED HEALTH CARE. For now, the best solution for people who are impacted by food related allergic reactions is to avoid the food that causes anaphylactic reactions and be prepared with an epinephrine shot.

Student Art

Borrowed time

Sandy Amadore-Olarte (12)

I remember someone named Pythias.
When I turned to my side.
He was there, just how he always has.
He was my left, and I, his right.
Back to back, we shielded one another.
I saw what wasn’t in his sight.
Together, yes nothing pulled us apart.
When one fell, the other scraped his knees to catch.
Bloody skin, my sleeve carried my heart.

But everything eventually ends.
So why do I cling on the memory of the man you were?
Are you a backstab from my defense?

Dreams are sweet, until you wake.
Beauty is a virtue, but it fades.
Trust is a promise, until it is for my sake.

Wherever he is, it’s too late.
A gripping pain squeezes my faith into nothing.
I blindly took your fate.
Loyalty is a man’s foolishness.
Where along the path did I lose my friend?
I don’t know if I have regrets, but I digress.

There is nothing left to say.
I took a chance, and it’s my own fault.
Why must we end this way?

Loyalty will be the death of me.
But, selfishness will be your downfall.
The future is bleak, there’s only that to see.

You live by borrowed time.
Death lies next to me.
I am paying for your crime.



Sandy Amadore-Olarte (12)



Jenny Chi (10)



Tap Dance, Finn Ghosh-Leudke(12)



Self Portrait, Sabrina Zesati (12)

