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Motion to convert feminist centre into open student lounge space fails

DANA BELLAMY

Following an electronic vote, the University Centre board of directors has decided to go through with the proposed UC renovation plans with the exception of converting the current Guelph Resource Centre for Gender Empowerment and Diversity (GRCGED) into student lounge space.

At the five-hour Oct. 4 board meeting, a motion was put forward to split the original proposal to renovate spaces on the first floor and basement into six separate motions: to convert the old convenience store location into new washrooms; to convert UC 103 and Click Signs space into student lounge space; to renovate Peter Clark Hall as a whole; to convert the vault space (located across from GRCGED) into meeting room space; and to convert GRCGED's current space into student lounge space.

Throughout the renovation proposal process, GRCGED has been advocating to keep their current space in UC 107 and has formed a coalition with other special status groups (SSGs) and student service groups to campaign for better student organizational space on campus as a whole. At the Oct. 4 board meeting, the board was presented with a space needs report as well as a letter of solidarity from the coalition.

“It is in the interest of all students to protect and expand space given to voices that often otherwise suppressed and to those which are inherently critical of our institution, each other, and wider society,” read the solidarity letter.

At the Oct. 4 meeting, following lengthy discussions between board members and guests, the first two motions were passed by the board with little opposition. When the third motion to convert the current washroom space into student lounge space was opened to discussion, student representative Peter Miller proposed an amendment to instead convert the current washroom space into student organizational space. When the amendment failed and the original motion was passed, several student reps on the board prompted a walkout which caused a loss of quorum and prevented the board from voting on the remaining three motions at that meeting.

“I think it was clear from discussions that there was a bit of a gap in understanding and perspective between student members of the board and other members,” said student representative Sonia Chwalek following the meeting.

“It was really frustrating to see that the board wasn’t really taking into consideration the report that the students had brought forward and so stepping out of the meeting was the best way to reflect that concern.”

The remaining three motions were put to an electronic vote the next day and board members were given 48 hours to respond. The board voted to pass the motions to renovate Peter Clark Hall and to convert the vault space into meeting room space, but when it came to GRCGED being converted into student lounge space, the motion failed.

“I was surprised,” said Lori Guest, volunteer and resource coordinator for GRCGED. “The tone of the meeting on Tuesday was not one that I thought was positive for the Guelph Resource Centre for Gender Empowerment and Diversity [and] I’m really wondering if having that couple of days to look at documents and to think about the arguments that were presented actually changed some people’s minds.”

Miller, one of the student representatives who instigated the walkout, said, “I’m really happy about that result. I think it was good that board members—and especially students on the board—made sure GRCGED could have a voice there, as well as other special status groups and just students interested in general about that issue.”

Ryan Shoot, chair of the UC board, said that using an electronic vote was permitted according to Robert’s Rules.

“As chair, wanting to have all voices heard on the matter, I agreed to the idea when quorum was lost because I did not think it was fair for this opportunity to just disappear or sit on the table incomplete,” said Shoot in an email to The Ontarion. “Even though we lost quorum I think it was important to complete the vote and discuss with the opportunity for all voices to be heard.”

In his email, Shoot also said that Don O’Leary, vice-president of finance for the University, plans to move forward with all of the passed motions, accepting the board’s amendment to the original proposal and floorplan. If all goes according to plan, renovations will start on the first floor and basement over summer 2017.

Going forward with future renovations and space allocation within the UC, Shoot said that the board plans to review and utilize the SSGs’ space needs report.

“I think the next step for the board is to take the advice of special status groups and get consulting a lot more with students and especially student groups,” said Miller. “There are groups that should have prominent location on campus, like Guelph Queer Equality and the Guelph Black Students’ Association, so making sure we’re talking with them is important.”

Brad Evoy, a member of the Ontario Public Interest Research Group Guelph who has been involved in organizing the coalition of SSGs said of the board’s decision, “I think that the fact that what seemed to be the prevailing opinion on the board has definitely shifted is a good sign for all of us. I think it definitely gives a lot of hope for further mobilization and movement of these kinds of issues.”

With further renovations of the UC to be discussed down the road, Miller said, “Students should be ready to have their voices heard and make sure they ask for what they want.”
Unofficial CSA by-election results announced over long weekend

Executive commissioners were announced and the referendum passed

TANNER MORTON

The CSA by-election concluded on Oct. 8 and the unofficial results were released later that evening. The by-election was successful in surpassing quorum, which has not been achieved since 1976.

Emily Vance has been elected as the new external affairs commissioner with 2249 votes in favour, 1645 votes in favour of her opponent Amber Sherwood-Robinson, and 952 declining. In a statement to The Ontarion, Vance talked about her experience during the campaign and the final results of the election.

"Campaigning was one of the most rewarding and fulfilling experiences I have ever had. Putting myself out there like that was very intimidating, but I knew that I needed to go out of my comfort zone and take the risk in order to initiate the change I wanted to see in our campus and grow as a person. I love finding new ways to challenge myself and I believe that this campaign and the external affairs commissioner position was the perfect way for me to do it. No matter what the results were, I would have been happy that I took the chance."

Vance continued by thanking those who supported her during the campaign, "I, of course, would not have been able to do any of it without my amazing team and supporters. This campaign really highlighted how many amazing people I have in my life, and I am very grateful for them."

Vance concluded by saying, "As the external affairs commissioner elect, I will make sure that I continue to earn every vote that I received and will work towards my goals of creating inclusive campus spaces on campus for underrepresented groups. I am excited to speak with all of our student groups, to learn what those spaces will look like, and to be a representative for the student voice. I will not take this opportunity for granted, and I will give it the attention and hard work that it requires and that our campus deserves."

As the sole nominee for the position, Jay Rojas has been elected as the new local affairs commissioner with 3737 in favour of his appointment, 282 against, and 827 votes to decline.

Rojas, in a statement to The Ontarion, discussed both the election and his plans for the future as the local affairs commissioner.

"This campaign season was such a humbling moment. That regardless of my fears, faults, and failures, I had the love and support of my friends and family throughout the whole endeavour. Through social media, Campaign Walks, and Classroom Talks, we had in mind to inspire and engage 40 per cent of the student population to vote. While we didn’t get to that goal, we still managed to make history. In that, for the first time since 1976, a fall by-election met quorum. Rojas echoed Vance’s commitment to giving student a voice. "As a local affairs commissioner, my role is to be the mediator between the students and the City of Guelph, as well as between the students and the University of Guelph. More specifically, to ensure that students are aware of their tenant rights, Guelph Transit concerns, municipal issues, and much more. Which is why, during the campaign, our immediate challenge was accurate representation and student engagement."

As the only candidate for the CSA board of the directors, Nicholas Kowaleski has been elected as the representative for the College of Biological Science.

Aside from the election of student representatives, the fall by-election posed a referendum question to the undergraduates at the University of Guelph concerning funding for the Guelph Student Foodbank. The question of whether to increase funding to the Foodbank, and thereby increase student fees for all undergraduate students by $0.52, was passed with 4124 votes in favour, 588 against, and 131 choosing to decline.

The results, as they have been posted by the CSA, are still unofficial until they can be ratified at the next CSA board of directors meeting on October 20.
Guelph remembers missing and murdered Aboriginal women

**Annual Sisters in Spirit Vigil held in honour and memory**

**KATE SCHEIVINK**

On Oct. 4, 2016 communities across Canada held annual Sisters in Spirit Vigils, recognizing and upholding a national day of remembering and honouring Aboriginal women. Nationally, the night serves to offer both community members and those of First Nation, Metis, and Inuit descent a chance to grieve, heal, and strengthen together.

This year, Guelph-Wellington Women in Crisis held their fourth annual Sisters in Spirit Vigil at the Boathouse on Gordon Street. To begin the evening, a land acknowledgement was made to the Attawandaron people, as the Boathouse sits on traditional Attawandaron territory. A group of community drummers followed with a song to honour and remember those who we’ve lost. After, words from Women in Crisis and from the family of a victim were shared, then participants lit candles and made way across the bridge to Marianne’s Park for an official recognition and moment of silence.

Aboriginal women in Canada are three times more likely to live in poverty, three times more likely to live in unsafe and inadequate housing, and are five times more likely to be murdered relative to non-aboriginal women. These statistics shared at the vigil continuously motivate foundations and interest groups across Canada to advocate on behalf of missing and murdered aboriginal women in Canada.

The event also acknowledged the overlooked subject of how families of the victims are left to endure unsettling ripple effects from their missing loved ones. Traditionally, aboriginal women are revered as life-givers in their community and are highly respected and protected by men and their families. As life-givers, women are considered to be the backbone of the household, and with them gone, family members suffer greater risks of substance abuse and mental health complications.

At the vigil, the story of Denise Bordeaux was shared. Bordeaux, 39-years-old at the time, went missing on Dec. 31, 2006 in Waterloo, Ont. Later found and declared dead, a close family member found solace in alcohol during their grieving process. This dependence deepened, leading to mishaps with law enforcement officers and a formal arrest.

Noting that many friends and families were left unsatisfied with the police work on over 200 unsolved cases, the CBC launched an accessible online database. This open forum can be used as both a tool to upload photos and case details as well as a means to personalize the women and their stories with biographies written by friends and family. After several public displays of discontent from various communities, the Canadian government officially launched a national inquiry into these cases on Sept. 1, 2016.

**Community members gather by candlelight for annual Sisters in Spirit vigil. | Kate Schievink**

Traditionally, aboriginal women are revered as life-givers in their community and are highly respected and protected by men and their families...
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U of G prof Lawrence Hill awarded with the Order of Canada

Discussing his work as an author and an activist

FIONA CASHELL

Lawrence Hill, creative writing professor at Guelph and author of The Book of Negroes and The Illegal, was recently awarded with the Order of Canada to recognize his contributions to Canadian culture as both a writer and as an activist. Last week The Ontarion had the opportunity to sit down with Hill and discuss what the award means to him.

FIONA CASHELL: How does it feel to have won the Order of Canada?

LAWRENCE HILL: It feels like a pat on the back—like, “You’ve done a good job, keep going.” The people who were being inducted alongside [me] are just so amazing. Their accomplishments were so staggering, it’s a bit humbling to be amidst them.

FC: You’ve won a number of awards over the past few years. Is there one that is particularly close to your heart?

LH: It’s always amazing to be recognized in your own backyard, in the Order of Canada especially because it includes both your professional work and whatever kind of community or activist engagement you’ve had. It’s really a snapshot of a larger piece of your life than just a literary award; it’s meant to honour kind of a lifetime’s involvement. Canadians aren’t so good at patting their own shoulders or feeling good about who they are. It’s nice that we reward and honour Canadians every year who have done amazing things in the country. As for other awards, one of the greatest honours was the Commonwealth Writer’s Prize, which, being an international prize, allowed to break into international publishing. It was hugely influential in terms of my moving forward as a writer.

FC: Your latest book, The Illegal, came out about a year ago. Did you know at the time when you began writing that refugees and the migrant crisis in general would become so much a part of our daily conversations?

LH: No, I didn’t anticipate it would be on the front pages of all of our newspapers and influence the outcome of a federal election. The general thinking about refugee and immigration matters, and foreign affairs in general, is that they do not affect the outcome of elections, certainly outside of world wars and things like that. I’m delighted to be taken by surprise that it did become a central tenet of the voting decisions in the last federal election.

FC: It is pathetic and sad that it would take a little boy drowning on a beach in the Middle East and a massive unbelievable desperation of Syrian refugees to kind of galvanize Canadians. I didn’t know that it would have this impact on Canadians, or on other people in the world, but I did know that these issues have been with us for a long time, certainly since the end of the Second World War. There has been refugee crisis after refugee crisis, and I have been following many of them over the decades. Although the Syrian refugee crisis wasn’t front and centre in my mind for the five years I was writing, other refugee crises were. The issues were just as pressing, but we hadn’t focused on that hotpot of Syria yet.

FC: Your parents worked as civil rights activists. Would you be able to talk a bit about that?

LH: My parents were married interracially in Washington, DC in 1953; my father was African American and my mother is white. They spent their lives at the forefront of the human rights movement in Canada. My father created the Ontario Human Rights Commission and was its first director, and my mother worked with an anti-racist activist group in the early fifties, called the Toronto Committee for Human Rights. It was a coalition of blacks and Jewish people working together to advocate for the introduction of human rights legislation in Ontario because at the time, we had virtually none. They also created this wonderful group which still exists called the Ontario Black History Society. My father went on to become the ombudsman of Ontario. They both wrote books about black history in Canada and were really in the trenches of the black history and human rights movements in Ontario.

FC: When we think of civil rights movements in Canada, we default to thinking about what took place in the United States. What kind of issues were your parents facing in Canada?

LH: It’s so Canadian that we would default to thinking about the States. People from Dawson City to St. John’s and everywhere in between could tell you something about American slavery or American segregation. Many of those people could tell you nothing about the history of segregation and the civil rights movement in Canada. I think it is important to note that we do end up pointing a finger—and I say this playfully—at our “nasty American neighbours.” The danger there is that it stops us from addressing our own problems. We have a long history of racial oppression in this country too. Slavery existed in Canada and the British Empire until August 1, 1854. It took a long fight to eliminate slavery in Canada. There was vociferous racial segregation in place in Ontario right through the middle of the 20th century. We have a lot of history, but many people are happily unaware of it and would almost rather not talk about it. I guess one of my jobs as a novelist and professor is to provoke deeper thinking about these matters. Not to point fingers, attribute blame, or make people feel bad, but just to be aware of who we are and where we come from.

FC: Do you think the actions of your parents have shaped the topics you choose to write about?

LH: Absolutely. I’ve spent my life writing about topics of migration and alienation and people in the African diaspora, whether they’re in Africa, the States, Europe or Canada. My primary focus in life hasn’t been to become a human rights activist, but their passions have become mine. I sometimes joke that there are two types of people in this world: the children who throw off their parents’ values and reject everything they stood for, and those who embrace quite profoundly the values that their parents have. I definitely fall into the latter camp and it is reflected in my work.

FC: With issues regarding refugees, racial tensions, and other such issues constantly in the news, what do you hope people will draw from your novels to help interpret what is going on around them?

LH: I’d hope that people would slow down, consider the humanity of those around them, and pause to meditate on the miraculous resilience of the human spirit. We find it hard to empathize and to care. We find it hard to imagine the humanity of the people who are showing up in our country. I think the role of the artist, and certainly my role, is to provoke more empathy, deeper imagination, and a greater appreciation of the humanity of the people around us. Whether they are the enslaved peoples of the 18th century coming to Canada or they’re refugees today who are fleeing horror and genocide, desperate to build safe lives somewhere new, I hope I make people stop and ponder the humanity of our brothers and sisters on this planet.
Where to Invade Next (2015), directed by Michael Moore

3 relatively-well-articulated-progressive-theses out of 4

SAMEER CHHABRA

It’s a simple fact of life that there are really only two kinds of people in the world: those who like Michael Moore and those who think he’s a self-obsessed, self-entitled, anti-American lunatic who spews progressive propaganda at every waking turn. In the spirit of full disclosure, I must begin this review by declaring myself a proud supporter of many of Moore’s arguments, as well as a fan of much of his work.

Where to Invade Next—a documentary both narrated and directed by Moore—asks a simple question defined by a substantial preface. America—the country and the idea—has a long, sordid history of implicit and explicit cultural appropriation. Since its appropriative tendencies are quite evident through no small amount of social and economic studies, why not look at what other countries are doing to guarantee their citizens a better life, and steal those ideas for the American people?

Moore travels to nations like France, Italy, and Slovenia to interview citizens in order to find out what America can steal to truly become great again. He interviews general members of the citizenry, as well as police officers, factory owners, the CEOs of Ducati, ministers of education and finance, and even prison guards to systematically dissect the cultural and social injustices plaguing America, while simultaneously showing that the solution to America’s greatest problems are not only well within grasp, they’re working quite well in countries that aren’t American.

There is method to Moore’s mad travels. Beginning in nations like Italy, Germany, Portugal, and France, Moore attempts to prove that so-called civilized, first-world nations—especially nations that lagged behind America in the essential developmental years following the Second World War—are now leading America in terms of social equity.

However, by shifting his scope to nations like Tunisia—a nation that, to many, is most notable for its 2011 revolution—Moore’s film is ultimately both a deconstruction and testament to the ideals that America holds dear. One imagines that a writer more articulate than Moore would begin this film with a simple plea of decency: “There was a time when America was a proud global leader in education, civil rights, and labor rights.”

The film’s underlying argument, however, isn’t just that America has a lot to learn from other countries, it’s that other countries have taken ideas that were quintessentially American and expanded on them to better serve the citizenry.

Italy, for example, employs labour rights that would make most Americans’ heads spin. Italian citizens are afforded substantial paid holidays, as well as a paid honeymoon, a bonus consisting of a 13th-month salary on top of the final salary, in addition to two-hour lunch breaks, and a substantial paid parental leave. These labour benefits, Moore argues, stem from the advances made to labour rights in America in the early 20th century.

In Norway, prisoners are entitled to rights that far exceed those of Americans. The Norwegian guards and prisoners, however, argue that these rights are also guaranteed under the Eighth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution.

For those viewers who do not find solace in examining America’s failings, Where to Invade Next is, at the very least, a travelogue insistent on demonstrating the simple fact that North America isn’t nearly as progressive as it purports to be. As such, it is a welcome reminder to open one’s eyes—and one’s mind—to the power of human unity.

Moore’s film is ultimately both a deconstruction and testament to the ideals that America holds dear.

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**ALBUM OF THE WEEK**

**THE NATIONAL**

Alligator

The National’s 2005 album Alligator solidified the band’s sweet—but mostly salty—style. The album opens with “Secret Meeting,” telling of bitter self-reflection, paired with full, melodic guitar and rhythmic drums. Singer Matt Berninger’s cool, unwavering vocals provide context and coherence to the band’s fierce musical versatility. From stripped-down guitar and piano-based track “Daughters of the Soho Rots,” to manic songs “Lit Up,” “Abel,” and “Mr. November,” the group combines the most personal and impersonal aspects of music and throws them at you with angst. “The Geese of Beverly Road” begins with an extensive wind instrument section before the percussion comes in. “All the Wine” opens with subtle guitar, with lyrics equal parts strange and bitter. The track’s ambient-rock feel is perfect for studying or walking. Or, if you take the lyrics’ advice, it’s an album to enjoy with a glass of red wine.

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**CFRU TOP 10 ALBUM CHART**

01 L*CON* Moon Milk (Self-Released)
02 A TRIBE CALLED RED* We Are The Railroad Nation (Radicalized Records)
03 SNOWBLINK* Returning Current (Outside Music)
04 VARIOUS* 10 Years of Secret City Records (Secret City)
05 STEVE LEHMAN & SÉLÉBÉYONE Sélibéyone (Pi)
06 VALLENS* Consent (Hand Drawn Dracula)
07 JOHN SOUTHWORTH* I’m A Teen Water Tower (Elan Angel)
08 CHARLOTTE DAY WILSON* CDW (Self-Released)
09 DON IVER 22. A Million (Jagajuguwar)
10 THE LUVAS* You (Paper Bag)

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www.CFRU.ca
No stranger thing than a teenage girl

Nancy Wheeler: feminist, existentialist, badass

SIE R A  PAQUETTE-STRUGER

Spoilers to follow.

Fans of Stranger Things took to the internet in droves to collectively lose their shit over Barbara Holland, a character who lasted approximately four episodes.

Barb’s narrative function is to drive an anachronistic vehicle and switch from nepotistically supporting her friend Nancy’s newfound popularity to jealousy condemning Nancy’s forays into teenage pursuits incongruous with her Wes Anderson aesthetic.

The character we should all collectively be losing our shit over is none other than the tragically ubiquitous Nancy Wheeler. Nancy is the existentialist feminist hero we’ve always wanted. The Duffer brothers have given Nancy Wheeler unprecedented agency; it is her ability to shirk expectation and follow her own path which ultimately helps her to navigate the unsettling landscape of Hawkins, Indiana.

Several characters throughout the course of the show create their own preferred vision of Nancy Wheeler. From her romantic interests (both reciprocated and unreciprocated) to her best friend, Nancy consistently fails to live up to any expectations other than her own. The people around her give Nancy an extremely narrow range of acceptable actions and become irrationally upset with her when she can’t operate within those parameters. To Barb, she is supposed to be static nerdy girl best friend. Barb means well, but she has difficulties accepting that Nancy might be starting to want different things and different people around her. Conversely, Nancy balances her love for her best friend Barb—contrary to popular opinion, she searches for her until her confirmed death—and her fledgling love for Steve.

During one such occasion, when Nancy heads upstairs to change out of her wet clothes at Steve’s house, Barb says, “This isn’t you.” It could be just me, but I’m pretty sure nobody should be in the business of telling other people who they are. Nancy tells Barb to “just go home,” proving that nobody gets to tell her what kind of girl she is. As she is poised to pout on the diving board, she is promptly murdered by the Gormogon.

Rather than explicitly asking Nancy what she wants and what she wants, Steve and Jonathan project romantic ideals upon Nancy and expect her to meet them. In episode five, “The Flea and the Acrobat,” Nancy and Jonathan, allied in their quest to recover missing loved ones, discuss the night that Barb disappeared. Jonathan, to excise his extremely creepy and wildly inappropriate photographs of Nancy changing out of her wet clothes at Steve’s party, explains that he “saw this girl trying to be someone else...” He continues, “You were alone... you thought you could be yourself.” Nancy looks at him, walks ahead and calls back over her shoulder, “That is such bullshit.”

Here, Nancy refuses to let Jonathan claim Nancy’s selfhood for his own. Contrary to his lame and sexist belief, young women can try new things. New things can include exploring sexual agency with the cute—albeit often, idiotic—Steve. We see over and over again that nobody gets to tell Nancy who she is. Perhaps Jonathan’s misplaced and inappropriate concern stems from some kind of puritanical claim over her virtue, similar to Barb’s attempt at gatekeeping her sexuality. Perhaps Jonathan is afraid Steve will, like a vaudeville clown, take her virtue and leave.

Nancy, however, decides time and time again when she wants and with whom she wants to engage in sexual activity. Similarly, when Steve comes around to her house uninvited and peers into her bedroom one night, he misunderstands Nancy and Jonathan’s intentions after Nancy undergoes an ordeal in the Upside Down. Rather than talk to Nancy about what he believes is an infidelity, or break up with her for it, he and his friends write derogatory messages about her on the town’s cinema marquee, calling her “Nancy the Slut Wheeler.” Again, rather than meekly accepting this label or ignoring it, she confronts Steve and demands he clean it off.

Nancy’s greatest strength is to do the exact opposite of what every other character thinks she should or will do. She’s a better shot than Jonathan, wields a bat with ease, dives into the Upside Down with flagrant disregard for her mortal state of being, forgives Steve for being an asshole and Jonathan for taking intimate photos of her without her consent. She’s a badass, but she is also a teenage girl in patterned sweaters. She wears a cute new shirt to Steve’s party, she shoots a gun, she studies for her science tests, she fights with her mom, all while prioritizing her herself and her single-minded determination to follow her gut.

4chan site may be counting its final days of internet trolling

The website 4chan may be shutting down soon as its moderator, Hiroyuki Nishimura, struggles to find ways for the website to fund itself. Nishimura has become unfeasible for its operations to maintain its subject matter, companies associated with 4chan. However, Martin Shkreli, the pharmaceutical executive responsible for a 5556% increase on his antiparasitic drug, has expressed interest in funding the website. Milo Yiannopoulos, an alt-right member who has ties with Donald Trump and white nationalism, is interested in the running of the website as well, according to Inquisit.com.

So how is it that after all of this, the website has stayed alive for the past decade? Poole chalks it up to its anonymity and lack of infrastructure that has allowed its user to post whatever they please. While 4chan has milled these facts and often used them to hurt others, there is a very appealing principle beyond all of its antics. The content is completely uncensored. In a world where this suppression of ideas is seen everywhere, from news to media, the idea of an uncensored discussion board is highly alluring.

Although 4chan’s users have warped the idea of complete freedom of speech, it is still important to think about how anonymity has disappeared, and the importance—yet danger—of unfiltered thoughts.
Religion has taken more lives than abortion. Don’t call yourself pro-life if you only value certain lives.
A local pro-life group has donated $91,000 for a memorial garden located within the grounds of Basilica of Our Lady Immaculate. Guelph & Area Right to Life, founded in 1974, is a “non-denominational human rights organization,” according to their website. In the works for over two years, Right to Life has been planning the construction of the Garden of Grace; a place to remember, in their eyes, children lost to abortion and miscarriage.

Jakkii Jeffs, the garden’s founder, told GuelphToday.com that the garden would be a place for parents to grieve, “where they could recognize their little one and reflect on the decision they made.”

The memorial has not been without controversy. Many individuals who consider themselves pro-choice have taken issue with the garden’s name, intent, and implications.

In response to the proposed garden, of which construction has already begun, Guelph residents Sara Bortolon-Vettor and Carly Hunt took to Facebook to organize a peaceful protest.

The event page, called “Rally: Right to Life memorial at Our Lady,” attracted over 250 individuals and was shared with over 1000 users. The event asked that concerned individuals meet in front of the grounds of Basilica of Our Lady Immaculate, straddle this line between public and private. It’s in the centre of Guelph, there have been laws in place for hundreds of years that prevented buildings from being built taller than the church.

In Menezes’s opinion, the garden also reflects poorly on the city of Guelph, “I think that this is shameful for the city of Guelph. I think that this is shameful for the garden itself. It marks our city as allowing oppressive viewpoints and oppressive structures, and as one that allows for the shaming of people with uteruses.”

Many protesters questioned the ability of a church, in this day and age, given the laws of Canada regarding reproductive rights, to make a statement such as the one implied by the garden’s construction. “Namely that abortion is shameful,” said one protester, who wished to remain anonymous. “Pro-choice individuals argue that abortion is neither shameful nor something to be proud of, it’s not a good or bad thing. It exists, for me at least, outside of moral morality because it isn’t an issue of right or wrong. It is merely a choice that every person should make for themselves and every person should have the right to make that choice.”

They concluded, “I think the underlying tension of this rally is that people are afraid that this is one step down a slippery slope that will end in our reproductive rights being stripped from us. I think it’s simultaneously an ungrounded and very real fear.”

Those protesting the garden were not the only demographic represented at the rally. A number of individuals identifying as pro-life attended the rally as well.

One such individual was the previously mentioned Cameron, a fifth-year student in the agricultural sciences program at U of G. Cameron heard about the garden as well as the rally through Facebook, though from a Right to Life post. To Cameron, as an individual who supports the garden, “Memorials are created to stand in solidarity with those who have suffered loss or stand in solidarity with those who have done wonderful things.”

To Cameron, it is this first part which is most relevant in this context: “I think that’s the intention of this memorial garden—to stand in solidarity with women who are grieving choices that they’ve made, who are grieving the loss of a child that they believe was significant, whether through miscarriage or abortion.”

Cameron wasn’t at the rally to argue against a person’s ability to choose, “I came here because the article that I read said that a group of people were coming here to protest the memorial garden because they felt it vilified those who’ve had abortions,” he explained. “The subtle message that this protest sends is that it’s not okay for women to grieve.”

Overnight Sunday, police were called to investigate at the Basilica after vandalism at the Garden of Grace was reported. Vandals spray-painted phrases like “Condom Not Condemn” and “Pro-Choice” on the new walkway and scattered the site with condoms and tampons, made to appear used.

“Jaks” wrote to GuelphToday.com in an email that despite the vandalism and online comments regarding her personal morality, construction will resume on the garden, adding, “It will be here long after this group finds someone else’s rights and freedoms to trample upon.”

Organizers of Friday’s rally denied any involvement in the vandalism in an online post. “This is unfortunate and upsetting as this is something that could have been dealt with in a more mature manner. Vandalism is not part of our pro-choice message,” wrote Bortolon-Vettor on the rally’s event page, which continues to see traffic and stimulate dialogue on this issue.
Student-friendly recipe of the week: Chilli Paneer

If you like Sriracha and soy sauce, you’ll love this Indo-Chinese appetizer

MIRALI ALMAULA

I’ve heard people say that Sriracha is the hipster ketchup. But—despite my MacBook Pro, my desire to sit in Starbucks and write stuff, and my black-framed glasses—I’m 90 per cent sure that I’m not a hipster. I am, however, 100 per cent sure that most university students own or have a roommate who owns a clear bottle with that tell-tale green top, filled with red chili-garlic sauce.

Sure, you can use garlic and chili paste of any kind but Sriracha is easier because you can use it like hipster ketchup and enjoy it with a bunch of food rather than buying yet another bottle of something you’ll only use for one recipe and then forget in the back of your pantry until moving day. If you’ve never had paneer, it’s an Indian cheese that is best described as a compressed cottage cheese. It’s more like tofu in the sense that it doesn’t melt when it is heated, but it definitely tastes more like a dairy product. Unlike cheese, you have to cook it before you eat it. Don’t just buy it, open it, and eat it. Paneer is one of my favourite things to eat, so I’ve introduced a lot of dinner guests to it and I don’t think I’ve ever met anyone who hasn’t liked it.

INGREDIENTS
• 1 block of paneer (they only come in one size and are usually near the yogurt in the dairy aisle; you could also use tofu if you don’t do dairy)
• 1 to 5 bell peppers, cut into large cubes
• 1 to 2 small red onions, cut into large cubes (optional)
• 1 tablespoon of grated ginger root (remove the skin and then use the tiniest side of your cheese grater, should be around one inch of ginger)
• Thai or bird’s eye chilli peppers to taste (I used two—one red and one green)
• 2 tablespoons olive oil or vegetable oil (one for paneer marinade and one for sauce)
• 2 tablespoons Sriracha sauce
• 1 teaspoon soy sauce (soy sauces range in saltiness, add a teaspoon and then taste before deciding to add more)
• 2 teaspoons balsamic vinegar
• 1 1/2 teaspoons ground cumin
• 1/4 teaspoon red chilli powder or cayenne powder
• Pinch of salt
• 1 lime, to finish

DIRECTIONS
1. Cut paneer in half lengthwise and then cut into nine to 10 slices widthwise so that you’re left with about 18 to 20 cubes.
2. Heat a frying pan on medium heat.
3. In a medium bowl add one tablespoon of olive oil, the chili powder of your choice, half a teaspoon of cumin, and a pinch of salt. Mix well with a fork or whisk.
4. Add paneer pieces into the spice and oil mixture. The best way to coat the paneer is mixing using your hands, because a fork or spoon will probably make the pieces break.
5. Add all of the marinated paneer pieces to the heated frying pan. Cook until golden brown on one side (about four minutes), flip and cook until golden brown on other side. Remove from heat.
6. Heat a big pot over medium, add another tablespoon of olive oil, onions, and chilli peppers. Cook for five minutes until onion is slightly browned. This part may make you sneeze. Power through it.
7. Add Sriracha sauce, soy sauce, balsamic vinegar, ginger root, one teaspoon of ground cumin, and bell peppers.
8. Put lid on the pot and cook for 10 minutes.
9. Add cooked paneer, stir well, and cook for five more minutes with the lid on.
10. Transfer to serving dish. Garnish with slices of lime or top with the juice of one lime (or to taste). If you’re not using lime then you’ll need to add more salt.

Chilli paneer is actually an appetizer on most Indo-Chinese restaurant menus, but when I was a university student, it became a main dish for me. All I did was add some garlic naan from the grocery store and I was content. Speaking of grocery store naan, here’s a quick tip: ignore the ridiculous “400 degree fahrenheit for two minutes” baking directions on the package and just cook them in a frying pan; it’s faster and won’t turn the naan rock-hard if you’re off by ten seconds. What are we—oven scientists?

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New digital collaboration lab opens in McLaughlin Library

U of G makes way for digital humanities

DANA BELLAMY

Putting emphasis on digital humanities and communal research, The Humanities Interdisciplinary Collaboration (THINC) Lab opened on the second floor of McLaughlin Library last week.

THINC Lab came as a result of conversations between the College of Arts and the library going back as far as 10 years, according to Prof. Susan Brown, a professor with the School of English and Theatre Studies who also holds the Canada Research Chair in Collaborative Digital Scholarship.

"It’s a space for people to come together and collaborate," said Brown in an interview with The Ontarion. "It’s really a space to try to bridge the gaps in disciplines, whether disciplines in the humanities or disciplines in different colleges in the University."

Other partners in the project include the College of Physical and Engineering Science, U of G’s Office of Research, the Canada Foundation for Innovation, and the Province of Ontario’s Ministry of Research, Innovation, and Science.

THINC Lab will soon be outfitted with desktop computers, laptops, and a flat screen touch table, but the focus of the lab does not rely on its technical elements.

“We’re really about trying to make a space for things to happen in, rather than focusing on the digital to the exclusion of the critical or the creative," explained Brown, who hopes to open the lab up for communal research sessions, outreach training programs, and various workshops.

“It’s meant to be a very configurable space so that different things can happen here at the same time, or that as the needs of a particular group shift, the activities can change," said Brown, referencing her own work in digital humanities. “You’ve got designers, you’ve got programmers, and you’ve got the literary scholars. You need times where you’re all facing each other and really talking as a big group, and you need times where you go off and do your thing and then come back to the big group. That doesn’t happen easily down a standard row of offices.”

The lab will also be available for researchers and graduate students to use for collaborative projects across different disciplines.

Dr. Kim Martin, the University’s Michael Ridley Postdoctoral Fellow, hopes to see grad students utilize the lab for its multipurpose functions: “It’s nice to have a space on campus where you can invite a group to come and work together—especially grad students—bringing them together from different departments and having them sit down and think on problems.”

During her postdoctoral fellowship, Martin, along with research assistants and library co-op students, will be regularly working in the lab to offer drop-in help on related questions and projects.

THINC Lab will also host regular events such as DigiCafé lectures, DigiDo hands-on workshops, DigiReads reading groups, as well as a weekend workshop series in the spring called DH@Guelph.

Guelph organizations aim to close generational gaps in the LGBTQ+ community

Helping to create connections with unique programming

KATE SCHIEVINK

Aiming to engage the public with opportunities to participate in art and culture, Guelph’s annual Culture Days partners with local artists, cultural groups, and organizations to offer free activities throughout the weekend. Amid numerous events held around the city, the HIV/AIDS Resource and Community Health (ARCH) and Out On The Shelf hosted a unique mix and mingle event at The Common café on Sun, Oct. 2.

The event welcomed community members to learn about the local Peer Experience and Relation Support program (PEARS) which seeks to connect folks of the queer community who might feel isolated or are seeking to network further into the LGBTQ+ community. Current participants of the PEARS program were encouraged to share their experiences. The event also offered an opportunity to promote other local organizations and initiatives that participants might find helpful.

Piloted within the last few years as an intergenerational community-building initiative, the PEARS program has developed into a sizeable service in Guelph. Jasper Smith, a sexual health educator at ARCH, noted how many queer folks would like to be more social, but face considerable mobility obstacles. For instance, older folks may not find support they need from peers, but also due to mobility circumstances, can’t always access LGBTQ+ community events. Social isolation has undeniable and severe consequences on an individual’s physical, mental, and emotional well-being. The originality of the PEARS program is intentional in its aim to bridge that generational gap.

Although many might consider the Guelph community to be warm, welcoming, and accepting, Smith advocates for many LGBTQ+ folks whose experiences might lead them to feel otherwise by helping to organize unique LGBTQ+ programs, such as PEARS and Voices of Value.

Along with outreach and educational events, the ARCH clinic services transgender folks in the Guelph community. From humble roots, the clinic has grown to receive funding to service approximately 200 people. Impressively, those involved in ARCH have been efficient with the funding and are able to medically support over 600 transgender folks.
Student-athlete program growing the next generation of leaders

New program aims to mould student-athletes into leaders in competition and in life

REBECCA THOMPSON

The inception of the new Guelph Gryphon leadership academy was announced by director of athletics Scott McRoberts in September. The student-athlete driven program is setting an example for other Ontario schools as it is the first of its kind in the Ontario University Athletics (OUA).

The program is partnered with the premier Janssen Sports Leadership Centre, based in North Carolina. This partnership offered the appropriate training to be able to run a leadership program at Guelph.

Now, with the program having completed its first session last week, the impact of the academy is already evident. Forty-five students were nominated by coaches to be a part of the first phase of the program. These students were identified as being potential leaders on their teams and in their community. Students from second and third year were selected, which will allow them to be a part of the program as it grows in the next two years.

“It’s really about creating leaders for when they graduate from this university,” said McRoberts in an interview with The Ontarion. “We want to give them enough tools and resources that when they graduate they can be leaders in their communities and in their workplace.”

There are three different modules in the Gryphon Leadership Academy: the Emerging Leaders Program for this year’s student-athletes, the Veteran Leadership Program, and the Leadership 360 Program.

“The Emerging Leaders Program is around providing a strong foundation for select groups,” said McRoberts. “It looks at creating effective leaders by setting example, while setting the stage on how to be a vocal leader.”

The 45 students in the program now will graduate onto the veteran program next year. The Gryphon Leadership Academy then plans on expanding their programs by adding a new class of emerging leaders to the curriculum next year as well. Their aim is to have student-athletes in all three programs in two to three years’ time.

The leadership academy is a good resource for student-athletes who want to have a greater impact on their team, and see their leadership benefiting their community. Student-athletes are expected to be committed to the program. They must attend five out of the six sessions offered in their program in order to move onto the next phase of the academy. This helps create a dedicated group of students who are invested in their teams and the program.

“The biggest benefit is having like-minded student-athletes in the room, who are going through the same things. I think some of the conversations we have them engage in allowed them to learn from each other and realize that they’re all going through some of this stuff together,” said McRoberts.

McRoberts explained that they are planning on targeting young athletes, with a leadership academy starting for the junior Gryphon programs next summer as well. This program also helps Guelph with recruiting athletes who are seeking leadership support and opportunities.

The program is setting an example in the OUA and McRoberts hopes that students will feel as though they have the skills and leadership abilities to move forward in their next step in life after they graduate: “We want to graduate better people than when they came here.”

Gryphon Leadership Academy making waves across the OUA. | Mariah Bridgeman/The Ontarion

On Oct. 7, Guelph’s women’s rugby team ended a perfect 5-0 season with a shutout match at home against the Waterloo Warriors. The final score was 106-0 in favour of the Gryphons. Their meticulous passing technique has secured them an OUA playoff spot, facing Waterloo again, on Oct. 15 at Guelph’s Varsity Field.

CLAIRE WILCOX

Gryphons women’s rugby ends regular season undefeated
Guelph grad Asia Barclay breaks down stigmas of mental illness

Zine published about personal experiences talks about the importance of community

REBECCA THOMPSON

When Asia Barclay started her journey at the University of Guelph she was in a relatively good place. By second year, she hit a wall as her mental illness started to crawl back out of the woodwork.

Mental health had always been at the forefront of Barclay’s life, having battled anxiety, depression, PTSD, and substance abuse issues. The added stress that accompanies university can weigh down on anyone, and for Barclay, it was a catalyst in her battle with mental health.

Barclay spent five-and-a-half years completing a degree in international development, with a specialization in gender and development. Taking her time with her degree allowed her to receive support that she required and to take a reduced course load to help manage stress.

Barclay was diagnosed with bipolar II disorder, a disorder which usually manifest in young children. Children will be very anxious or depressed at a young age and they can easily get diagnosed with having anxiety and depression for a while until they hit their early 20s and they have their first bipolar episode.

“For me, it was extreme anxiety,” said Barclay in an interview with The Ontarion. “It’s not like the stereotypes you see, people going on wild spending sprees, jumping off buildings and being super crazy. It wasn’t like that for me. It was just very incapacitating.”

Writing tests at school, studying, and completing assignments caused states of anxiety that had a huge effect on Barclay’s time at Guelph. Barclay says she was lucky to have the support she did at Guelph. A friend referred her to the Student Accessibilities Services on campus and upon some testing, Barclay’s mental health was classified as a disability. This allowed her to have a quiet space to write tests which helped curb her anxiety.

“It’s a huge privilege to be able to access services,” said Barclay. “I knew people who knew about them and I was educated enough to be able to advocate for myself a lot of the time”

Barclay decided to publish an online zine to share her experience with others in the community who may be suffering from similar things. Barclay wants to break down the stigma that accompanies mental health.

“One in five people will experience mental health in their lifetime, but I actually think it’s more like five out of five, we just don’t talk about it,” she explained.

While Barclay was in detox when she decided to write her zine, she received many messages from people wondering where she was and how she was doing. This inspired her to start posting on social media about her experiences.

Barclay recognizes that there are negative aspects of social media, but for her it was a way to stay connected: “It was like having a therapist. I couldn’t leave my house a lot of the time so I had very little contact with the outside world for a little while. […] Without social media I would have spiraled into my own head if I couldn’t connect with people.”

Barclay altered her privacy settings on Facebook so only those she felt comfortable sharing those details with were able to read it. Her zine, titled Succulent: A Zine About Healing, Hope, and Happiness, is available to anyone who wants to access it online. The importance of sharing, for Barclay, is helping to create an open community where stigma isn’t present in conversation.

“I think something we worry about a lot of the time is being a burden with our mental health,” said Barclay. “People who care about you, who love you, they want you to talk to them rather than go through a path of destruction by yourself. And we get to offer the same thing for them in return.”

Barclay says it’s important to know that mental health and recovery is never linear.

“Sometimes you go forward and sometimes you go back, but it doesn’t mean that you’ve failed. And failing isn’t always a bad thing; failure means that change is happening, failure means that you’re learning something, and failure means that you’ve hit a certain wall and something else might come out of it.”

Mental health and wellness: ADHD Awareness Month

Campaign seeks to raise awareness about issues involving the Canadian justice system

JENNIFER ALBAY

When we think of October, there are a great number of things that may come to mind. Leaf piles, thick knit sweaters, pumpkin spice lattes, and publicly observed holidays like Thanksgiving or Halloween are all things that are often associated with the autumnal month. Something that is not immediately thought of, however, is mental health and the disorders that can make achieving a balanced sense of mental wellbeing difficult.

In Canada, the month of October is noted as being Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) Awareness Month. From the first to the last day, Canadians are encouraged to raise and spread awareness for ADHD in order to decrease and hopefully one day put an end to the stigma and discrimination that is connected to the disorder. The month-long campaign is organized by the Centre for ADHD Awareness Canada (CADDAC)—a charitable umbrella organization that provides leadership across Canada for the education and advocacy of associations and individuals concerned with ADHD.

Each year, a new theme is introduced as the focus of ADHD Awareness Month. The educational campaign for 2016, titled “ADHD in the Canadian Justice System,” hopes to draw attention to the negligible manner that Canada’s justice system has treated psychiatric disorders like ADHD. Although individuals diagnosed with ADHD should not necessarily be seen as being predisposed to criminal deviance, a news release published to the CADDAC website reports, to date, “Incident rates of ADHD in the correctional population are five times greater than what we see in the community, and 10 times greater for youth.”

The news release continued to explain that, “Little [has] been done to introduce assessment and treatment protocols within justice and correctional systems across Canada […] even though research and on site experience has shown there are significant benefits to doing so.” The CADDAC also noted that, although the 2016 awareness campaign’s theme, “May make some in the ADHD community uncomfortable,” it is important that a better understanding of the issue is achieved so that proper solutions can be brought about.

According to the Canadian Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder Resource Alliance (CADDRA)—an independent non-profit association composed of health care professionals across Canada who provide support to individuals diagnosed with ADHD and their families—the most commonly diagnosed psychiatric disorder in children is ADHD. Reportedly, approximately five to 12 per cent of school-aged children are affected by the disorder, and an estimated three to four per cent of females and roughly eight to 10 per cent of males under the age of 18 have been diagnosed with ADHD.

The CADDAC capitulates that effectively detecting ADHD early on could possibly alter a young person’s possible “trajectory into offending.” The additional administration of treatment, where appropriate, would see a “reduction in criminal behaviour, improved behaviour while incarcerated and [the] improved overall rehabilitation of inmates [which] will increase their, and their family’s quality of life, reduce costs to the justice system, benefit the communities they return to, and Canadian society in general.”

The official websites of the CADDAC, the CADDRA, and the Canadian Mental Health Association serve as invaluable founts of information in relation to ADHD diagnosis and management, as well as support for those concerned with mental health and wellbeing.
Breaking free from big makeup companies and the makeup tax

Mirror, mirror, on the wall, who is the biggest consumer of all?  

MARIA LI

It all started innocently enough: a tube of Lip Smackers in elementary school. A few years later, it was replaced with cheap lip gloss. A black eyeliner pencil joined the lineup soon after—and so I spent a couple of years looking like a wounded raccoon. Before I knew it, I was hooked. It seemed there was always something new to be had, something that would make me look, and therefore feel, like I was enough. Various (read: nefarious) beauty blogs, zines, adverts, and media reinforce this insecurity.

Of course they do! Insecurity breeds consumption—and so “big makeup” makes its billions of dollars, wiping happy tears with our hard-earned cash. I also felt compelled to subject myself to all sorts of questionable cleansers, scents, treatments—the list goes on—but I never really ended up feeling better about my features, and my sensitive skin remained in a state of mildly-messed-up.

Then, there’s my partner and legions of his fellow males, whose faces only regularly come into contact with water and maybe a multitasking wash or a shaving cream. They look fine, and are judged as competent and put together as they are. Bernie Sanders, bless him, can look as frumpy and grandfattherly as he pleases, yet Hillary Clinton has to look made-up and ageless at all times. A new haircut or a bad day gets a disproportionate amount of media attention.

That’s the “makeup tax.” It’s the unwritten rule that women must invest their limited time, energy and money into their appearance in order to be deemed worthy of recognition. For the average woman, that’s $15,000 in a lifetime and two weeks per year.

It’s no secret that society is biased towards attractive people. This preference is ingrained in our nature, and enhanced by our society. Parents unconsciously treat good-looking children better. Women who are attractively made-up are more likely to be awarded prestigious jobs.

Five lipsticks could be a camping trip with friends. That bottle of foundation? Two or three hours of work in a bottle. There’s precious time spent on application, removal, and wondering what to try next.

Makeup itself is not the culprit. It can be functional and necessary, a form of expression, a confidence boost, a tribute to one’s beliefs and traditions. But never before in history have we consumed so many non-essential goods, hoarded so many luxuries, submitted to so many impossible standards.

A new haircut or a bad day gets a disproportionate amount of media attention.

Little by little, the cost of makeup can significantly add up. | Mariah Bridgeman/The Ontarion

Kim Kardashian’s alleged robbery has led to multiple rumours

Reactions range from sympathy to derision

NICOLE STEEVES

Recently it was reported that Kim Kardashian was allegedly robbed at gunpoint in Paris at Hôtel de Portailles. Kardashian reported a frightening incident in which the multi-media mogul was threatened at gunpoint, it’s hard for the staff to do anything either. So what we have so far is a basic, yet well-organized robbery of opportunity where Kardashian lost her jewelry. What should have been a somewhat simple news story of a celebrity robbed with no leads, has recently spiraled into a mess of giant proportions.

Kardashian claimed her own robbery in an article that has since been deleted. Apparently the article reported that she confessed to E! executives on tape because of how guilty she felt about her actions, and when asked why she did it, she said it was to help bring up the ratings for Keeping Up With the Kardashians.

Personally, I think this is absolutely ridiculous. Keeping Up With the Kardashians is one of the highest rated shows on television, attracting approximately two million viewers per week. It has even been reported that due to Kim’s “confession,” the show has been cancelled, though this has not been confirmed at this time. What could cause her to confess, much less plan such a thing? She had to have known the potential consequences.

Since breaking off my long-term affair with makeup, my skin has rapidly improved and I feel comfortable with myself. On a daily basis, I only really need two homemade makeup products, and three for skincare. No one stares or points at my dark circles and blemishes. If beauty is your trade or passion, then power to you. If you have specific needs that store-bought cosmetics meet, there’s no need to feel bad. Ditto if you found a handful of products that make you feel like your best self. But makeup shouldn’t have to be obligatory or taxing, with an accompanying minefield of restrictive rules. All people should have the right to look imperfect and tired and human—or however else we wish to look.

Sadly, I’ll probably have to continue wearing concealer to job interviews.
Growing up in a family full of storytellers

TANNER MORTON

Thanksgiving is one of the few times that I’m fortunate enough to go home during the year. As I’ve gotten older, life gets in the way of making the trip home for birthdays, anniversaries, and weddings, and I’m left looking through the photos days later, 100 km away on Facebook. Thanksgiving is one of the few weekends in the year where my regular life is able to be put on hold for a few days, and I can jump on an early morning train ride northward to head back home. While the truly astonishing amount of food consumed during the weekend is a welcome change from my typically budget-conscious choices, the time spent sitting around with my relatives, whether it’s pre-meal or post-meal, entertaining each other with familiar stories and anecdotes that I associate most with the holiday season.

Even though both my mum and my uncle have both valiantly tried hosting the holiday celebrations at their homes, it’s just not the same as the gatherings that take place at my grandparents’ house. My grandparents, still going strong after 60 some-odd years, continue to bring the family together and educate the younger generation—myself, my brother, and my cousins—on our family history. Now, for the most part, the stories that are told each Thanksgiving aren’t limited to recent events, though my grandmother does make sure to fill her grandkids in on what’s new in the lives of “the girls” in her card group. The majority of the stories have been retold since I can remember, or for some of the lesser anecdotes from my grandfather, since I was old enough to hear them. These stories have become as comforting as a well-worn coat and I find myself mentally recounting them with my grandparents, anticipating the punchline, and smiling as each story finishes with its familiar conclusion.

It was through stories from my grandfather that I learned that not every tale is that is told needs to have a lesson or moral nestled inside the plot. Sometimes stories are just fun and entertaining. Though it’s been over a decade since I first heard of my grandmother and mum going to the wrong funeral, or my own equally embarrassing moment of becoming stuck in a toilet, these stories are still pulled out each time my relatives get together. The novelty of hearing how their youngest hot-headed grandson tantrumed his way into becoming trapped in a toilet may have worn out for my grandparents, but they still laugh uproariously every time my mum talks about her second son’s brat days. Part of the fun of these stories is that everyone is in on the joke from the beginning. After the initial telling, where the story begins to take shape before its fine tuned over the course of additional recounts, everyone knows the framework of the story, even if they don’t know all of the small colourful details.

During Thanksgiving, and most holiday gatherings for that matter, everyone in my family transforms into a storyteller. Everyone has their own specific style, from my grandmother’s laundry list of superfluous details, to my mum’s habit of laughing halfway through her own anecdote, followed by a quick, “I guess you had to be there,” each speaker has their own way of sharing their story with the rest of the family. Many of these become a form of shorthand, little callbacks that will be made at every Thanksgiving, or Christmas until the sun burns out. There’s been plenty of little one liners, passed around the table like mashed potatoes, that originated from a story that occurred before I was even born, but I can still recite each one beat for beat. Its this sense of continuity, that 30-year-old events are still retold with the same amusement as if they had just happened yesterday. Even though this whole situation is completely anecdotal, I haven’t sat around a turkey with a complete stranger’s family, I imagine similar traditions exist within other families. Learning the canon of stories from my family is one of the strongest ties that I have to them, other than an uncanny physical resemblance, and has become one of the defining qualities that I associate with family dinners—other than arguing about politics.

Growing up, the act of storytelling was never commented on, but always integral to the concept of family time, whether it was a book read before bed, or a piece of family history told over afternoon coffee. It’s only been in the last few months, after I walked across the convocation stage with family history told over after-dinner coffee, that I’ve really begun to appreciate this seemingly random, funny little stories told by my relatives that have affected my life. For my family, your audience’s enjoyment is the most important part of telling a good story, and the message has always been secondarily. If the story you’re telling isn’t entertaining, then it may not pop up again come Christmas. While an emphasis on fun over fact is not what most readers want to find in a news story, this early lesson has shaped how I frame and structure the stories I write about. As I’ve gotten older, the duty of entertaining the family with anecdotes has very slowly shifted to the younger generation, and we find ourselves retelling the same stories that were told by our parents and grandparents. While the Thanksgiving meal is always welcome, the family stories and history that I hear each year are the real comfort food for the holidays.
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Nurturing a Distinctive University Culture

one of five themes in the University of Guelph’s new strategic framework

In nurturing our distinctive University culture, we will:

- Inspire each other to excel, remain curious and take informed risks.
- Serve others, supporting people locally and globally.
- Take pride in and be inspired by our history.
- Make principled choices that are transparent and accountable.
- Work together openly, respectfully and inclusively.
- Recognize the importance of our campuses, facilities and services in supporting our academic mission and building communities where people thrive.

Get the whole story at strategicrenewal.uoguelph.ca
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3, 4, 5 and 6 Bedroom Suites
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