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DALHOUSIE GAZETTE

NORTH AMERICA'S OLDEST CAMPUS NEWSPAPER EST. 1868



PHOTO BY MELANIE KENNY

Sex & Love

The steamiest issue of the year

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DALHOUSIE GAZETTE

NORTH AMERICA'S OLDEST CAMPUS NEWSPAPER
EST. 1868

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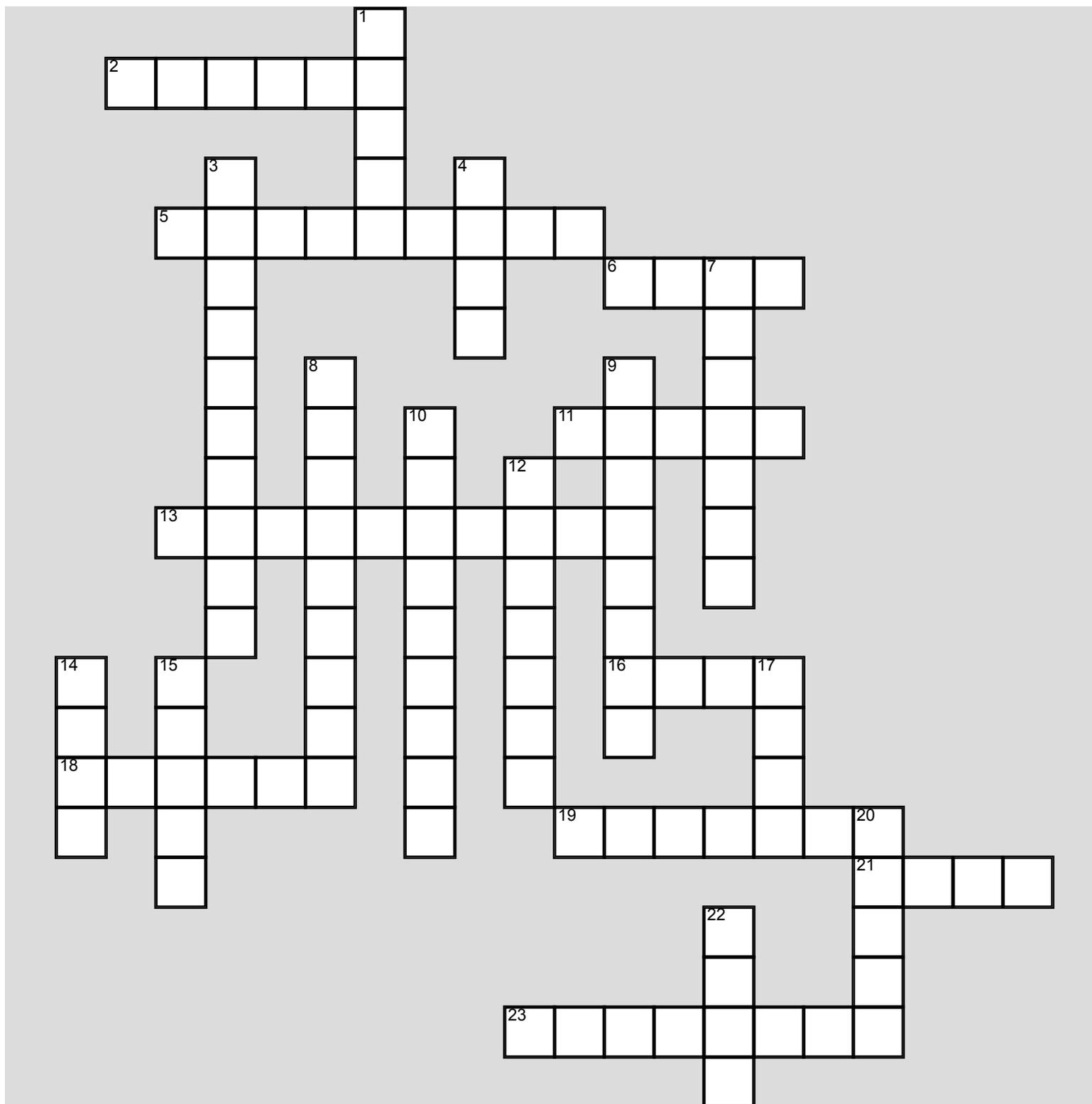
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Politely lewd

Reveal the hidden sexy

CREATED BY MATT STICKLAND, COPY EDITOR



Across

- 2 Velvet glove
- 5 Stop and turn around
- 6 Richard, for short
- 11 Very good boi
- 13 Alone time
- 16 Back door
- 18 Little rain coat
- 19 Required
- 21 Of Jeddore
- 23 Post-fun cuddles

Down

- 1 Paternally attractive
- 3 Religious travellers
- 4 A way to eat ice cream
- 7 Save a horse, as a cis het male
- 8 Like the Hoover, but for teeth
- 9 Sometimes better than the main event
- 10 Better than two
- 12 The basics
- 14 Crows in the morning
- 15 Grade school ink 15 club
- 17 Coconut oil is a good alternative
- 20 The _____ song
- 22 See you next Tuesday

For the answers, peep on:
www.dalgazette.com/politely-lewd-answers

Chase the ace

Pushing for asexual visibility and understanding

BY KARLA RENIC



A PIN FEATURING THE ASEXUALITY FLAG. PHOTO BY JOY LOXDALE



THE ASEXUAL VISIBILITY & EDUCATION NETWORK AT THE PRIDE FESTIVAL IN LONDON, UNITED KINGDOM ON JULY 3, 2010. PHOTO BY PETER O'CONNOR ON FLICKR

Sexuality and romantic identity don't necessarily go hand-in-hand.

Katherine Hosker, a 28-year-old Haligonian, identifies as pan-romantic asexual and is currently in a long-term relationship with a bisexual man. She learned about asexuality five years ago when she read about it online.

"I spent a horrible three days learning what asexuality was for other people and realized – this is me."

Asexuality is a sexual orientation characterized by the lack of sexual attraction towards anyone. According to BBC, Canadian researcher Anthony Bogaert argues around one per cent of the population are asexual. This is often disputed; many believe it's just as common as other sexual orientations – it's just less visible.

AVEN (Asexual Visibility and Education Network) is the world's largest asexual online community and resource center, based in the United Kingdom. Representative Michael J. Doré, who is also asexual, said the organization was founded at a time when there was very little awareness about asexuality. Their main priority is visibility.

Doré said many asexual people feel alone, "like they are misfit." In reality, all they are is lacking sexual attraction.

However, this should not be confused with not having sex; many asexual people do engage in sexual activity regardless. Doré said "many non-asexual people have sex with people they're not attracted to" and it's no different with asexuality.

For example, Hosker said she enjoys sex but lacks attraction and libido. "It's like when you're hungry, but you don't know what you're hungry for," she said.

"You go to the fridge and nothing is appealing, then you go to the cupboard and nothing there is appealing, but you're hungry and want to eat something and you don't really have a preference for what you want," she said, "that's what it is like for me to experience sexuality."

Doré, on the other hand, said that he wouldn't have sex under any circumstances and has never

experienced sexual attraction. At AVEN, it's important to recognize that everyone experiences asexuality differently, he said.

Spectrum of experiences

Iz Lloyd, another Halifax resident, identifies as demisexual.

"I don't develop any sexual desire until I have a fairly deep connection with someone," she said, "sometimes I can date someone for three years and that still doesn't happen."

Lloyd considers herself a romantic person and doesn't have a preference whether she dates someone asexual or otherwise, as long as they're respectful.

"I'm in a relationship now and I absolutely adore my partner. They were great about waiting until that happens and knowing that it might not," she said. "I've dated people in the past that have gotten very upset and shamed me heavily for how I feel."

Demisexuality is on the spectrum of asexuality and falls into a "grey area" where people don't experience sexual attraction until they have an emotional connection. This most commonly happens within a relationship, but it doesn't have to.

"I think the most confusing part was when I was 18 and I didn't know I was demi," she said, "I would snuggle with people and think 'Oh this is great' and then I would sleep with them and not enjoy it at all." After finding out about demisexuality, she was relieved that she was not alone. "Oh, I'm not weird. My brain isn't miswired somehow," she said.

Before the internet, being openly asexual was almost impossible. AVEN pushes to recognize asexuality as a legitimate orientation.

"We feel that it is very important to get accurate information about asexuality out there," Doré said.

Part of the community

"We consider ourselves to be a part of the LGBT+ community," said Doré.

"How do you know you don't want sex if you've never had it?"

...
"How do you know you don't want to deep-throat a pineapple if you've never done it?"

One strike, you're out

Earth Strike is demanding change from the people responsible for the most greenhouse gas emissions

BY KRISTEN TYMOSHUK



PHOTO BY EVAN DE SILVA

Rising greenhouse gas emissions are still having disastrous impacts on the planet. That's why a group of people have come up with an innovative new way to fight climate change.

Earth Strike is a grassroots organization founded in November 2018 with the goal of reducing greenhouse gas emissions by planning protests throughout 2019, leading up to a global general strike on Sept. 27, 2019.

Research from the CDP's 2017 Carbon Majors Report showed that 71 per cent of the world's global industrial greenhouse gas emissions come from just 100 polluters. That's why they plan to demand climate action from governments and corporations that are responsible for most greenhouse gas emissions.

Planting the seed

According to Leo de Vries, the Canadian National Organizer, Earth Strike started on reddit – mainly in response to the October 2018 IPCC Special Report. The report stated that if anthropogenic greenhouse gas emissions continue to rise at the current rate, the planet will likely reach 1.5 C between 2030 and 2052. The idea gained sup-

port among reddit users internationally, and eventually, national groups formed, and planning began.

The first protest took place on Jan. 15. Local branches of Earth Strike around the world reached out to the public by canvassing and talking to members of their communities.

Owen Maitzen, the Nova Scotia provincial organizer, planned the event in Halifax. He stated that the preliminary response from the public was very positive. Many of the people they talked to seemed

“very eager to help out and excited about the work that we were doing.”

Given the previous negative responses from the online Halifax community, Maitzen was surprised at the outpour of public support on the ground.

“I made a post on the Halifax subreddit back in December, and the response was mostly negative,” said Maitzen. “There were a lot of climate skeptics and people that had no idea what would be involved in a general strike, why it might be effective, and generally not as much enthusiasm as there was on the ground.”

“I think [Earth Strike] should be a major player on the world stage for years to come.”

However, there are still negative attitudes and misconceptions about asexuality.

“We get comments that we are trying to impose our prudish views or stop people from having sex. The same as any sexual orientation should be celebrated, same goes with lack of sexual attraction,” he said, “it's not any less valid.”

Local sexual and gender resource center South House recognizes asexuality as a part of the queer spectrum. Frank Heimpel, the Outreach and Education coordinator, says asexual people often experience very similar forms of oppression, as others in the LGBTQ+ and are marginalized by their communities.

Heimpel said that South House thinks of “queer” as not just “gay,” but everything that falls into that spectrum. “I think it is important to contextualize oppression under the relatives of heteronormativity and cisnormativity. Asexual people are one of many who fall out of that cis/heteronormativity and what is expected there.”

Hosker said she's never personally experienced any discrimination for being asexual but she often sees it online.

She said the most annoying comment is “How do you know you don't want sex if you've never had it?” to which she responds: “How do you know you don't want to deep-throat a pineapple if you've never done it?”

In Lloyd's experience, demisexuality is often disregarded within the local LGBTQ+ community and the ace community especially.

“Ace people don't think we're actually ace. With the rest of the community, it is mostly just ‘Oh so you're a prude. You won't sleep with anyone until you're in a relationship.’”

Sexuality, Lloyd said, is easily explained

“My brain isn't miswired somehow.”

through analogies. “There's some people that really like cupcakes, they'll eat any kind of cupcake and then there's other people who only like one specific flavour of cupcake and there's other people who don't like them at all,” she said, “and there's people like me, that like just one cupcake and they really like that one cupcake and have no interest in any others.”

AVEN also understands that sexual orientation and romantic orientation don't always go together. A person can be homoromantic and heterosexual, or aromantic and pansexual, or aromantic and asexual and so on, said Doré.

“What we emphasize about asexuality is that it is not a choice. It's just like being gay or straight or bisexual; it's not a decision to not have sex, it's not like celibacy and it's not abstinence.”

Growing an idea

Maitzen believes a general strike is an effective way for people of the labour force to demand action from corporations that benefit economically from greenhouse gas emissions, such as oil and gas companies.

Earth Strike created a list of international demands, which require companies to reduce worldwide carbon emissions, stop wildlife habitat destruction, and agree to be held accountable for their emissions. The Canadian campaign also created a list of demands for the federal government that fall under the categories of green technological advancement, resource management reform, and economic reform.

Two more events will occur on April 27 and Aug. 1 to raise awareness before the first strike in September.

Maitzen said he's not yet sure what will be planned for Nova Scotia on April 27, but he's hoping that it will be “a much bigger” and “broader reaching event” than the January protest, hopefully expanding to other places around Nova Scotia.

Rustling the leaves

Maitzen wants to hold bi-weekly events like the Jan. 15 canvassing event to “grow [the] movement, so when April 27 comes around, maybe we don't have 10 people, maybe we have 100 people. That might fulfill our secondary goal of getting media attention and spreading the message of Earth Strike in a much more efficient way so that by the time the strike rolls around everyone will have heard of it.”

Both Maitzen and de Vries envision the Sept. 27 strike date as the beginning of a much longer struggle to avoid the worst of climate change effects. However, Maitzen realizes that one strike won't be enough to bring about massive global reform.

“I don't think [Earth Strike] should die out after 2019. I think it should be a major player on the world stage for years to come while climate change and climate-induced poverty, starvation, disease, and those kinds of things are still an issue.”

For those interested in getting involved with Earth Strike, Maitzen recommends joining the Earth Strike Facebook group to keep in contact with other members.

Sex education IRL

Getting the low-down on sex therapy

BY ISABEL BUCKMASTER



DR. KATE RANCOURT. PHOTO BY HILARY RANCOURT

Sex therapy, like sex itself, can be clouded in stigma. But as two local therapists see it, it doesn't have to be that way.

"I think sex therapy can be a lot of different things. It is really an umbrella term for any type of therapy that's addressing some kind of sexual difficulty or some kind of sexual dysfunction," said Dr. Miranda Fudge, a sex therapist at Lesley Hartman & Associates.

"There are lots of different strategies that it in-

volves, but for the most part, we're working ... to help people get an understanding of all the different types of factors that may be contributing to their concern and then we come up with a plan to address them."

Fudge, along with her colleague Dr. Kate Rancourt, presented a workshop on the topic at Venus Envy this month. Through the workshop, 'Getting Real About Getting It On,' the therapists aimed to alleviate stigma, along with edu-

cating the public about sex and busting some of the myths associated with it.

According to Rancourt, sex therapy is not unlike general couple's therapy. Sex therapy can address sex-related concerns in a relationship, which can relate back to relational issues or emotions. But it also deals with more than that. Although sex therapy often does involve with couples, it can also occur when an individual comes in with sexual difficulties – whether that is in the context of dating or a relationship.

"If I'm doing couples therapy, we're focusing on issues that relate to a couple's sense of connection or ability to be vulnerable and intimate with one another and particularly manifests around the ways

that they're communicating around difficult topics," said Rancourt. "When an individual comes in with sexual difficulties ... some of our strategies, in that case, are to determine whether it is in the context of a physical concern or emotionally not being able to effectively communicate with your partner – relationship or otherwise – about sexual or non-sexual issues."

As with any form of therapy, both therapists agree that prospective patients should seek out someone they feel comfortable with. The patient should also ensure that the therapist they are seeing has expertise and experience when it comes to working around sexual issues.

"The beginning of sex therapy includes setting out what the person wants to accomplish," explained Fudge. "It's about taking a look at your sex life. It's about taking a look at your day-to-day interactions with your partner, if there's a partner involved, or with yourself when it comes to your sex and sexuality."

Depending on what a patient is looking to change in their sex life, the outcome of the sessions may be different.

Challenging assumptions

Sex therapy also seeks to eliminate some of the pre-conceived myths surrounding sex while alleviating some of the discomfort that often occurs when sex is the subject of conversation.

Ideas such as "sex is supposed to hurt," "having crushes while I'm in a relationship isn't normal," "not having an orgasm during partnered sex is weird," or "losing my erection while switching positions or giving oral is abnormal," are typical assumptions that both Fudge and Rancourt are trying to open conversations about.

Christine Ollier, a sex educator at Venus Envy, also deals with a lot of these common questions. She works to educate outside of sex therapy to ensure that the general public can feel comfortable in their bodies and with their sexuality in a way that is healthy and safe. According to Ollier, staying educated about sex is one of the best ways to decrease stigma and make sex a more

pleasurable experience.

"I think that sex is often thought of it as scary or shameful or stressful and the more that you talk about something, the less scary it gets," said Ollier. "Accessing good sex education can only improve these negative feelings and learning about our bodies and sharing our experiences can prevent more misinformation and debunk more myths."

Fudge and Rancourt agreed that sex therapy puts a similar emphasis on education, but instead of being a strictly education-based practice, it can also be used in conjunction with other sorts of sex-related psychological and physical therapy. Many of these methods include an aspect of mindfulness or behaviour-based strategies. The discussions involved in these methods are often what ignite the stigma that leaves sex therapy being thought of differently by the general public.

"Seeking sex therapy for some people feels like they're admitting something is wrong or that there's something unnatural about them. So I think that that in itself is kind of a stigma," said Rancourt.

"I certainly think that sex therapy is not something that is openly discussed in the same way as regular therapy. I think part of that stigma, I suppose, is just around how personal sexual issues are and a general societal discomfort in talking about sexuality."

"I certainly think that sex therapy is not something that is openly discussed in the same way as regular therapy."

Heart and soul(mates)

Making the case for – or against – the existence of “the one”

BY ISABEL BUCKMASTER

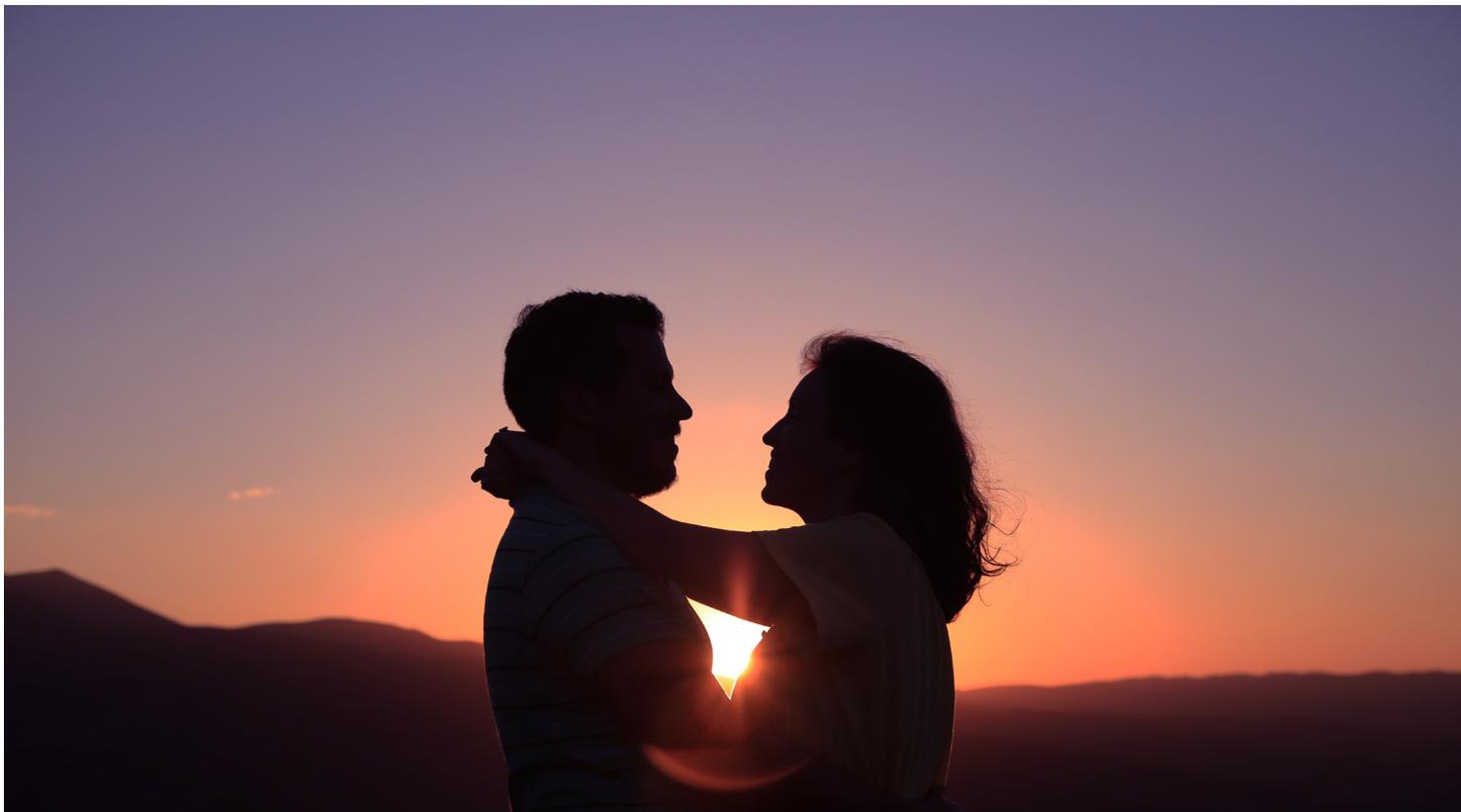


PHOTO BY OZIEL GÓMEZ ON UNSPLASH

With Valentine’s Day on the horizon, *The Dalhousie Gazette* took to the streets to find out how many how many people in Halifax actually believe in soulmates.

“He’s my soulmate, my teammate and my other half,” Halifax resident Jackie Turner said of her husband. “I can’t imagine getting through all of the things we’ve been through without him.” Turner and her husband, Kyle Aucoin

both believe in soulmates without a doubt. In fact, they believe they’ve already found their soulmates in each other.

“A soulmate is easy, fun to be around and you can do anything together,” said Aucoin.

“Jackie is all of that and more.”

According to a study done in a Marist poll, 73 per cent of Americans believe that “the one” is waiting for them somewhere. Most Canadians appear to share the same idea, with 75 per cent of Canadians believing that their “one” is out there, as stated in a study run by the online dating website, Match.com.

However, not everyone is so sure about the existence

of soulmates. Some are hesitant to the concept, enjoying the concept and wishing it to be true. Others remain skeptical, completely against the romanticized idea altogether.

“I think the idea of soulmates is really romantic and it’s great and reassuring to hear that people believe.”

view, stating that four in every 10 first marriages will end in divorce. This would leave the people who believe in “the one” out of luck or saddled to their first marriages with high stakes. That said, there are people who, although believers of soulmates, think that an individual can have multiple in one lifetime.

More than one “one”

“I think that there are just some people that you feel differently for, where as soon as you met the person you just vibed in a way that could be likened to a soulmate,” said Aziza Bayoumi. “I don’t think you can have one soulmate, I believe that you can have many. I’ve had both platonic friends and romantic relationships with a similar feeling of connection.”

As reported in *Psychology Today*, researcher Raymond Knee found that people either have one of two beliefs when it concerns relationships: destiny beliefs, in which a person believes they are destined to be with a specific person or growth beliefs, in which a relationship progresses slowly and the couple puts in an effort to fit and grow together.

The people who believed in destiny were the people who pursued relationships after an initial click, rather than a gradual attraction. When problems arose in these relationships, they are more willing to make things work over ending things altogether.

For armchair researchers, there’s also comfort in the idea that soulmates don’t have to be of the romantic sense at all. The belief that there are people out there that one can be destined to encounter and immediately connect with doesn’t have to remain exclusive to one type of relationship, but all of them.

“I believe in soulmates but I don’t necessarily believe they have to be romantic,” said Chris Snook. “I think the real problem is the thought that soulmates can only be concerning a romantic relationship.”

“I don’t know if ‘soulmate’ is the right word, but I think I believe that there are definitely people out there that you can have an instant connection with, like physically, emotionally, mentally,” said Taylor Cusack. “I think the idea of soulmates is really romantic and it’s great and reassuring to hear that people believe.”

Nick Caps, a friend of Cusack’s, scoffed at the concept. While being open to the idea of love, he refuses to be contained to only one singular chance at true love.

“No, I don’t believe in soulmates. There are too many people in the world,” said Caps. “The idea that there is only one person out there for you seems kind of fabricated.”

A study from the Vanier Institute of the Family appears to back up Caps’ point of

The importance of David Rose

A CBC show gave us an openly pansexual character and I'm living for it

BY REBECCA DINGWELL



DANIEL LEVY PLAYS DAVID ROSE ON SCHITT'S CREEK. PHOTO BY GRACE MASON-PARKINSON

A show dubbed “Canada’s answer to *Arrested Development*” recently started its fifth season on CBC.

But *Schitt’s Creek* isn’t just some a carbon copy of an American sitcom. I’d argue it’s one of the best shows on television right now. There are a few reasons for this, but I’m going to focus on one: his name is David Rose. David is the adult son of the protagonist family of four, played by *Schitt’s Creek* co-creator Dan Levy. He’s also unambiguously, unapologetically pansexual.

People who identify as pansexual are attracted people of all genders. As a bisexual woman, I’m comfortable using the terms bi and pan interchangeably – but some people prefer one over the other.

Schitt’s Creek explains it pretty gracefully: the day after David sleeps with his female friend Stevie, she broaches the subject of sexuality while the two shop for wine. She explains that she only drinks red wine, and up until the previous night, she’d assumed the same of David.

“I like the wine and not the label,” he says, understanding her implication.

Stevie gets it.

That said, the show doesn’t hide behind euphemisms the whole time. David’s father, Johnny (Eugene Levy) later says it casually, outright: “my son is pansexual.” Another character responds by mistaking “pansexual” as a “cookware fetish” – a joke I’m sure most of us are sick of hearing by now – but that’s pretty much the end of jabs about David’s sexuality.

This is a step above most other shows with bi or pan characters, who may be portrayed as dating people of different sexes but refuse to use the b-word or the p-word (see: *Orange is the New Black*).

As an audience, we laugh at David, sure. But David is funny because of his extravagant fashion choices (much like his mother), his awkwardness and his bluntness. He’s also so, so loveable. He doesn’t conform. He’s not “a normal guy who happens to be queer” so that conservative audiences can feel comfortable with his queerness. It’s about time we saw that outside of, well, *Glee*.

In season four, David begins a relationship with a man named Patrick. None of the other characters are apprehensive about two men being together, and in an Instagram post on Oct. 11 last year (National Coming Out Day), Dan Levy explained why:

“In *Schitt’s Creek*, bigotry and homophobia don’t exist. I made that decision because I wanted to show the transformational effects of love – how loving openly and wholly, without fear of judgement, can let light into the most protected of hearts.”

And that’s the core of it. As an audience, we are happy to see David in a supportive and loving relationship, so his partner’s gender hardly matters.

Schitt’s Creek isn’t perfect (um, did anyone else cringe when Moira used the word “ladyboy” in season two?), but David Rose gives me hope for the future of multisexual representation in TV and film. We’ve made leaps and bounds since the year 2000 when an episode of *Sex and the City* depicted Carrie Bradshaw agonizing over dating a bi man.

“I’m not even sure bisexuality exists. I think it’s just a layover on the way to Gaytown,” she said.

Ouch. These days, however, we have bi/pan characters on shows such as *Brooklyn Nine-Nine*, *Jane the Virgin* and – most recently – *The Good Place*. If that’s not progress, I don’t know what is.

Take care of yourself, dude

Addressing men's mental health stigma

BY BAYLEIGH MARELJ AND JESSICA BRIAND, ARTS AND LIFESTYLE EDITOR



PHOTO BY MADDI TANG

At the end of every January, the Bell Let's Talk campaign, asks Canadians to talk about mental health. Though some have a harder time starting those conversations than others.

"While rates of mental illness are comparable between men and women, men are less likely to recognize, talk about and seek treatment for their illness," according to a letter written by Louise Bradley, President and CEO of the Mental Health Commission of Canada.

Though this letter wasn't widely published, the idea that it's harder for men to reach out doesn't surprise Maxwell Tal, a second-year student at both the University of King's College and Dalhousie University.

Tal said, many men in his life often stigmatize emotional conversations.

"I don't feel afraid to show people my feelings but I know many people, including my brother, who are. He almost brags about how little he cries," he said.

Tal believes although it's getting easier for

himself and other men to talk about their emotions, it's still difficult to find ways to start conversations.

On university campuses it's common to find vocal women talking about mental health, whereas men who are mental health advocates are few and far between.

"They tend to be perceived as manly," said Marihan Farid, fourth-year medical science student. "And masculine means that you don't express your emotions. Young boys are encouraged not to cry because that makes you less of a man somehow."

Fragile masculinity could be to blame for the lack of men talking about mental illness. The "rub some dirt in it," mentality is still strong, although more men are starting to speak out about things that are deemed more "emotional" or "feminine."

The #MeToo movement although primarily featuring women's stories allowed men like Terry Crews to come forward about the issue of men being sexually assaulted, which can also be heavily stigmatized. It's

times when influential men speak out that allow ordinary people to talk about their own experiences.

"For men there's a larger stigma still standing that should be disintegrated about fragile masculinity," said Patrick Lewis, fourth-year English major. "but really there shouldn't be anything necessarily bad about showing emotions, despite media's overwhelming condescension."

Self-care: a term often used but rarely defined

Conversations about women's self-care have come to the forefront of social media content lately, gracing the stories of many influencers on Instagram. Face masks, bath bombs and beauty routines have been boasted as self-care rituals specifically for women. But what about men? They seem to have been left out of the conversation. While some companies try to brand beauty products as "for men," self-care isn't just

about beauty routines and physical appearance.

The Oxford English Dictionary defines self-care as "the practice of taking an active role in protecting one's own well-being and happiness, in particular during periods of stress."

Even if a man isn't comfortable with some of the more "feminine" aspects of what has been deemed as self-care there are still options. And let's be honest, everyone can enjoy a good face mask or bath if they want to.

"My personal self-care comes in poetry," said Lewis. "It helps me get thoughts out of my head and onto paper so that I can forget about them and move on."

If poetry isn't your cup of tea, the Canadian Mental Health Association has the following Mental Fitness Tips: exercise, set goals, treat yourself and enjoy hobbies.

Everyone has mental health, so no matter your gender it's time we all start taking care of ourselves.

Love. The universal language?

International students reflect on relationships. What makes them, breaks them and everything in between

BY YIJIE WANG AND LEXI KUO, OPINIONS EDITOR

“So, what’s your relationship status?”

Three international students sit in *The Dalhousie Gazette* office, looking at each other sheepishly. They’re here to discuss their relationship experiences.

International students come from many languages, countries and backgrounds. But these are only the tip of the cultural iceberg. Differences may go deeper, to beliefs, attitudes and values.

Renayre is from the U.S. and in her second year of computer science. Her boyfriend is Canadian.

“We have different views on certain aspects of different things. For example, I really love the idea of kissing, but my boyfriend doesn’t show affection by kissing. The different views of us may clash sometimes but it doesn’t mean any of us are wrong, it’s just different.”

Yijie is from China and like Renayre, is in his second year of computer science. His girlfriend is an international student from Japan. They’ve been together almost a year.

“You can learn so many things from the different culture through your partner, which is fascinating. Sometimes we share our childhood stories in our counties, sharing our favorite music and tv shows.”

Yijie and his girlfriend communicate in English, although neither are native speakers. Daily communication is easy, but the language barrier plays out in unique ways.

“We all feel that sometimes we can’t thoroughly pour our hearts out. There is lots of guess work,” says Yijie.

Nathan is an exchange student from Hong Kong. Language barriers don’t only apply to dating.

“It is human’s nature to talk with each other in a relationship, sometimes you want to make some jokes and talk about some gossip. I would rather to talk about some gossip with people who speak the same language as me rather than using English,” he says.



PHOTO BY KARLA RENIC

According to Yijie, language differences may affect a relationship beyond verbal communication, “Language decides your confidence level, if you aren’t speaking your first language in a relationship, you feel that you are at a relatively inferior position because you can entirely express yourself.”

Despite language or cultural differences, Nathan thinks love prevails.

“Love is able to across any boundaries as long as you love someone. Personality or even appearance might play a more important role than cultural differences in a relationship,” he says.

When the love is there, it’s not always easy to convey. There are different cultural under-

standings of love.

“You can still be in love with the person, but after going through lots of frustrations with communication, your point of view may change, and you might not want to be in the relationship with that person anymore,” Renayre says. “You can still love your partner, but if your love cannot be felt by your partner, it is nothing.”

Expectations around love also differ between countries. People have different ideas of what is important to consider in a relationship. Nathan says, “In Hong Kong, even you if aren’t pop stars, just students, your relationship might be judged by other people, like fami-

lies or relatives.”

It isn’t just about cultural interpretations. Everyone has different experiences learning about love. Renayre reflects on how her idea of love has changed. “My idea of love was based on what I saw on TV. It tends to be really sexual which is not huge on emotional impact. I’m trying to look at love as how I would feel when that person passes away,” she says.

Relationships are complex. Everyone has different experiences. Others may have the impression that communication challenges for international students boil down to language barriers. But their personal experiences, cultural norms and understandings of love are also important, as they are for everyone.

We all face challenges looking for common ground in relationships. In the process, we grow and learn, and maybe even find love.

We all feel that sometimes we can’t thoroughly pour our hearts out. There is lots of guess work.

Are you being gaslit?

What seems like normal conversation may be emotional abuse under a thin-veil

BY MAYOWA OLUWASANMI

Gaslighting is when someone makes you question your thoughts, feelings and reality, using your self-doubt as a weapon of manipulation. Gaslighting is emotional abuse. It's when someone hurts you – and instead of acknowledging your feelings, they turn it against you.

Your emotions are made to be trivial, invalid and effectively silenced.

Someone upsets you. You know that you're upset, you can even think of a few reasons why. Maybe it isn't the first time that his has happened, or they disrespected boundaries you'd set.

You want to let this person know how you feel, that they didn't treat you right, that you don't feel good about what happened.

You go into the conversation with all this in your head. You know what you are thinking, what you want to say. Yet somehow the conversation spirals out of your hands.

You are speaking but they aren't listening to what you are saying. The conversation keeps going to something else, something you weren't concerned with in the first place. You can't seem to bring the conversation back to what you wanted to say, how you felt upset.

Now they are upset. "You're upsetting me. I don't get why you're upset. Now we are both upset, and it's your fault."

You are frustrated, emotional. You just want to end the conversation. Somehow what you wanted to say at the start has completely slipped away. Were you even upset in the first place? Maybe they're right, you were overreacting or misinterpreting.

You're not the one that's upset, they are. You are at fault. Make things better for them, and you can both move on.

Sometimes it's just one conversation that goes this way, or multiple, or even an entire relationship.

How do you know if you're being gaslit? If interactions have you questioning your memory, actions and/or mental state – they're gaslighting you.

An abuser who gaslights will rewrite history, of-

ten with the purpose of dismissing your emotions. This leads to the victim questioning their own mental state. The abuser crafts their version of history so convincing that causes you to question yourself. Whether it's by denying an experience or convincing you of something you did not do – that self doubt is firmly planted and ripe for manipulation.

They aren't "just doing it," and this isn't just "how they are": gaslighting is but one weapon in an arsenal of abusive tactics

By turning your words against you, a gaslighter can absolve themselves of accountability. Every word spoken by the verbal abuser has a double meaning – this making it easy to deny any resulting harm. This manipulation tactic allows the abuser to humiliate you yet maintain complete deniability if you call them out.

"*I didn't mean it like that,*" is the toxic catchphrase of gaslighting. How they "meant it" might change each time you bring it up, somehow the blame is always shifted to you.

Hyper-fixating on errors is another weapon of gaslighting. By reminding you constantly of a mistake, error or simply a harmless action – the abuser convinces you that you do this constantly. Imagine taking the wrong bus by accident. The gaslight weaponizes this mistaking and brings it up every time you take vehicular transport. Your confidence and sense of direction is thus shot, leaving you in constant fear of repeating the mistake.

Unarguably the most important thing to do is recognize you are being manipulated – knowledge is always power. What else can you do?

1. Realize you are not responsible for the behavior of others:

A wise man once said, "Not my monkey, not my circus."

It's not your place to determine why an abuser behaves this way. The behavior of your abuser is never the fault of the victim. Gaslighting is a form of insidious abuse. It is finely tuned manipulation. They aren't "just doing it," and this isn't just "how they are." Gaslighting is but one weapon in



PHOTO BY EVAN DE SILVA

an arsenal of abusive tactics. Every offhand comment, sarcastic joke, critique is a way for them to keep you constantly in flux.

According to the National Domestic Violence Hotline, "Gaslighting typically happens very gradually in a relationship; in fact, the abusive partner's actions may seem harmless at first. Over time, however, these abusive patterns continue and a victim can become confused, anxious, isolated, and depressed, and they can lose all sense of what is actually happening."

This manipulation makes you lose trust in your own memories and observations, the way you function and think.

A false sense of reality is then crafted where the abuser pulls the strings. A whole new existence is created, typically where the victim cannot function without the toxic abuser. Recognizing that this is abuse and not due to your personality is the first step in tackling this toxic manipulation.

2. Keep a record: especially with professional relationships

The power of an abuser lies not only in manipu-

lating you but also in manipulating others.

Whether audio, visual or written – it's imperative that you keep a record of gaslighting behavior. This is especially relevant in professional settings where abuse can lead to legal action. Keeping a daily journal is a useful way of recording the truth and can help distort the abuser's tactics.

3. Remember you can never win with this person; they will always find fault

Gaslighting is but one of several tactics adopted by manipulative abusers. Such toxic people will consistently find fault in your existence. It allows them to take advantage of you and maintain control.

Knowledge is the ladder out of the gaslighter's trap. Awareness of such insidious behavior allows the victim to take tangible steps in getting out of poisonous relationships. It also allows you to reclaim your reality and sense of self. Stay aware and stay safe.

#LoveLetterToMySexToy

A sex toy love story

Passion, intimacy, dependability. What else do you need?

“I’ve been trying to find a decent stroker for about three million years. No, I don’t want it to look like some anthropomorphic detached flesh blob, or be branded after some famous porn star from California. I’m a working man who needs a functional tool – something to get the job done, down to earth, no frills, plain and simple. This one changed my life, brought back some semblance of control in my busy schedule, and is honestly making my romantic (and sexual) relationships more productive and healthy. 10/10.”

– *Feeling pragmadick*

“She’s bold, spunky, a little bit ~crazy~ but still soft and tender, which reflects through the pink in her skin. She’s there for me when no one else is, but we are far from exclusive. Through a week, through a night, we meet many people, together and sometimes apart or alone or just us. She loves to tease me, tickle me and taunt me, but I love her all the same.

My friend introduced me to her when I was in eleventh grade, and we’ve been hanging out ever since. We’ve travelled through three provinces together and spent one year apart. Some of my other partners are intimidated by the connection I have with her, she takes me places few others can.”

– *Lasting love*



A RANGE OF SEX TOYS. PHOTO BY MELANIE KENNY

“About a year ago, my little blue rabbit vibrator died. I wasn’t upset because I was living with my lover and the orgasms were constant at the time. That little fucker got me through some hard times though – I bought it in 2012 after a breakup and it served me well for six years (way better than the cheap electric toothbrush I bought to use as my first “toy”).

Anyways, fast forward to 2019: I’m in a long-distance relationship, about four months strong. My boyfriend is the worst. He ignores me for days, says mean things and cheats on me. This used to be counter-balanced by him being really nice and loving most of the time, but lately it’s just been pure asshole-ry. I don’t really care because we’ve been off and on for years and I’ve also been hooking up with other people for my own sanity.

It’s the fucking worst. Everyone is gross. Ev-

eryone’s dick is gross.

And nobody can make me come like my boyfriend. I’m fairly certain that’s the main premise behind loving him even though he’s a sociopath; but I try not to think about it too much because I have too many things far more important than love and sociopaths going on in my life.

So, I’m grocery shopping a couple weeks ago and I stop into the sex store.

(The last time I was there, I spent 60 dollars on maid lingerie per aforementioned boyfriend’s request and he still hasn’t even fucking see me wear it!).

I need a vibrator. Nothing else is cutting it. I’m sexually deprived. Dudes in Halifax are generally repulsive fuckboys (which wouldn’t be so bad if they could actually fuck).

I spend a solid 45 minutes looking at the toys before settling on a sleek-looking black wand,

about half the size of a Hitachi.

This is the one! I send my boyfriend and picture and he wants to see one of me using it, but fuck him. This is about me. Even when he’s giving me multiple orgasms, it’s not about me, it’s about him and his stupid male ego. I can tell by the smirk on his stupid, smug face.

It’s been two weeks. I named it Tyler Swift. I don’t know why. I love him. And, he’s rechargeable! No more rabbit and it’s ancient technology, going through like 8 AA batteries in a month. Now I don’t have to ration my orgasms – MY orgasms. Not his. I felt bad about spending the 100 dollars because I also needed a new pair of earphones. I decided to go with the vibrator instead and two days later I found a new pair of earphones on the bus. It was meant to be. I love Tyler Swift.”

– *Bitter but pleased*

“A love letter to my vibrator:
Last week you made me come
so hard I got a foot cramp.
Thank you.”

– *Third-year foot cramps*

“She’s shy and seems like she would be boring, but once you get to know her she’s a blast. She’s a little cutie but she can cause a big buzz! We’ve been together for about a year and she is my first so the relationship is still new and exciting. She has been introduced to a few special friends. She is a real fun and snazzy gal and I have loved our relationship together.”

– *Honeymooning*

Read This: *Exit West*

A poetic and political love story

BY HANNAH VAN DEN BOSCH AND CHIARA FERRERO-WONG

Exit West, by Mohsin Hamid, is the story of two strangers in an unnamed country who fall in love.

The relationship between these two strangers, Saeed and Nadia, begins when the two cross paths in a community class. They grow closer as the country's political climate worsens — landing them in the middle of a vicious civil war.

Surrounded by terror, Saeed and Nadia find comfort in each other. When hearing rumors of guarded doorways with chance exits, they plan their escape together.

Hamid's writing is at once lyrical and poetic, while remaining light and readable.

The lightness in the novel is contrasted with overarching themes of love and isolation. He makes these themes universal by leaving people and places unnamed, and parts of the plot ambiguous.

Hamid uses “vignettes” (brief glimpses

into the lives of others performing mundane tasks) throughout the novel. Combined with no names or identities, these people and their situations become universal. These vignettes are one of the highlights parts of the book, because as unrelated as they were to Saeed and Nadia, Hamid perfectly captures the often forgotten simplicity of humanity.

The other nice thing about this book is its length. And though it deals with heavy themes, *Exit West* is a fast and enjoyable read, making it the perfect companion to any courses you may be taking.

Whether it acts as a break from your work, or compliments what you're learning, *Exit West* pairs well with the stress and busyness that comes with being a student.

Find a copy of *Exit West* at the Killam Memorial Library or the Halifax Public Library.



CHIARA FERRERO-WONG (RIGHT) AND HANNAH VAN DEN BOSCH.
PHOTO SUBMITTED BY FERRERO-WONG AND VAN DEN BOSCH

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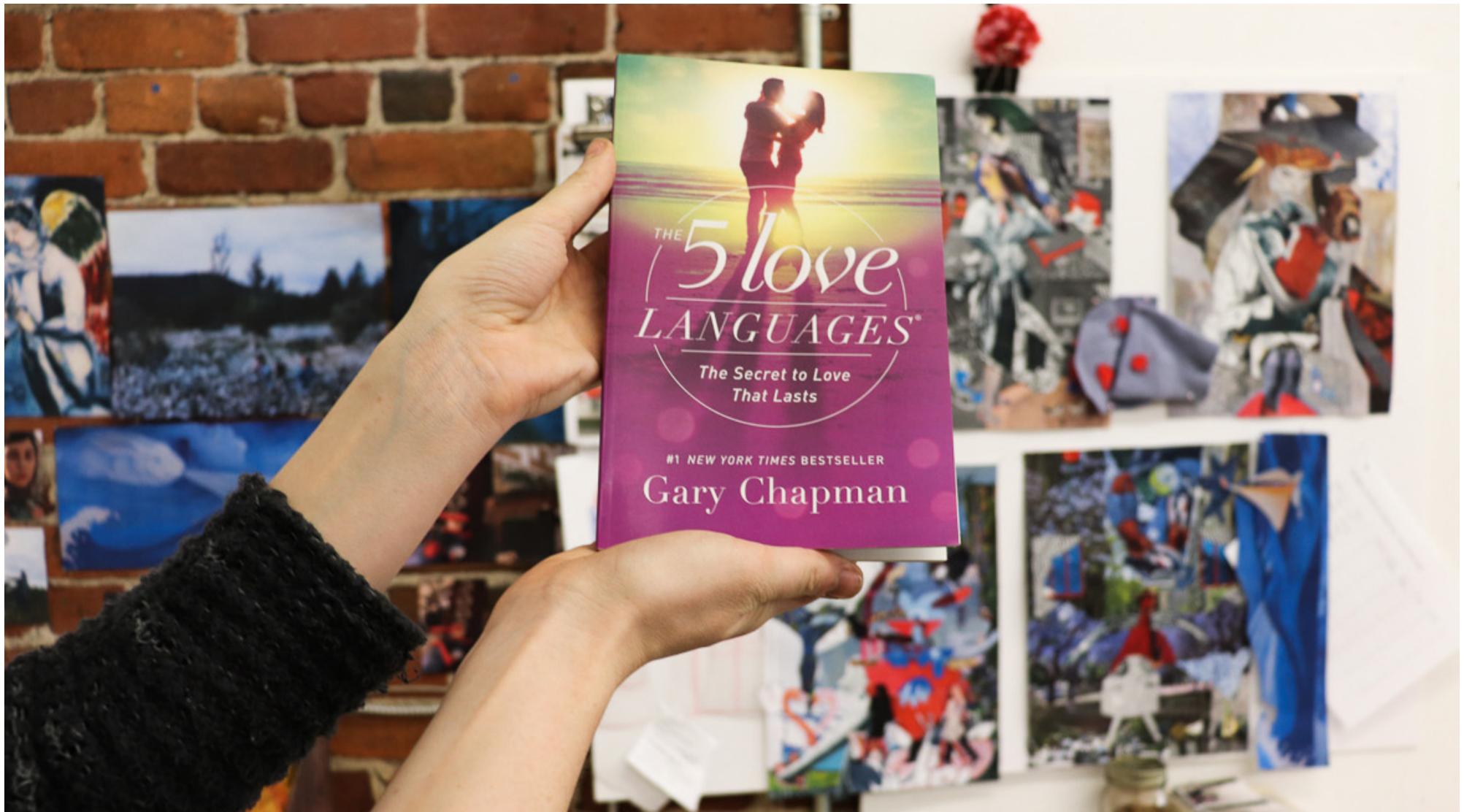


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Learning the languages of love

Q&A with Gary Chapman, author of *The 5 Love Languages*

BY KATHLEEN JONES



THE FIVE LOVE LANGUAGES, BY GARY CHAPMAN, WAS RELEASED IN 1995. OVER 10 MILLION COPIES HAVE BEEN SOLD WORLDWIDE. PHOTO BY KATHLEEN JONES

There are five ways to tell someone you love them — or so says Gary Chapman, author of *The 5 Love Languages*.

In his book, he lays claim that everyone expresses love with primarily one love language, because that's the way they want to receive love. The five are: words of affirmation, quality time, physical touch, acts of service and gift giving.

Here's an interview with Chapman him-

self, about why the love languages are still relevant and how you can use them in your own life.

Dal Gazette: When you were first writing the book, how did you narrow it down to only five love languages?

Gary Chapman: I've been counselling for many years and I had heard similar sto-

ries over and over in my office, where one person would say, 'I feel like my spouse doesn't love me,' and the spouse would say, 'I don't understand that. I do this, and this, why would you not feel loved?'

So I knew people were missing each other. What I did was sit down and read several years of notes that I made when I was counselling people, and asked myself this question: when someone said 'I feel like

my spouse doesn't love me,' what did they want? What were they complaining about? And their answers fell into five categories.

And since then, the book's been out for 20-25 years, and no one has come up with one that I think is a valid sixth love language. One guy said for example, 'There's a sixth love language.' I said, 'What is it?' He said, 'Chocolate.' I said, 'Well if they bought it, it's a gift. If they made it, it's an

act of service.' One guy said 'The sixth love language is shopping with my wife.' And I said, 'Well that sounds to me like a dialect of quality time.'

DG: When you first came up with the love languages and wrote the book, were you expecting it to be as popular as it's become?

GC: No way. I knew the concept would help people, because I had used it. But I had no idea what has happened would have happened.

DG: Since the book was published over 20 years ago, why do you think they're still relevant?

GC: I think because almost everyone agrees the deepest emotional need we have as humans is the need to feel loved by the significant people in your life.

If we don't feel loved, life begins to look dark, the conflicts look bigger and we're less likely to solve conflicts. I think because it deals with that deep emotional need, and it gives people information on how to communicate love effectively to the other person. As long as we're human, that's a fundamental need we have.

DG: What would your response be to people who say there's not really any research to support the love languages, or scientific backing?

GC: The millions of people who have responded online to us, though it is not scientific research, certainly indicates that millions of people have found this to be helpful in their relationship.

DG: What's your love language?

GC: Words of affirmation.

DG: How did you discover that?

GC: I knew long before I knew anything about love languages, that when people affirmed me verbally, I felt appreciated. And I would not have called it love languages in those days, but I also knew that when my wife gave me critical words, it was like a dagger in my heart. And in the early years of our marriage, we struggled greatly. My wife's love language is acts of service. And so by nature, we all express love to other people in our language.

So I gave my wife affirming words. I told her how nice she looked, how much I appreciated her; I would tell her several times a day I love you, I'm so glad I married you, and one day she said to me, 'You know, you keep on saying, 'I love you, I love you'. If

you love me, why don't you help me?'

I started asking her three questions: What can I do to help you? How can I make your life easier? And how can I be a better husband? And she started giving me answers, and she started responding to them. Now looking back on it, her answers were really teaching me her love language. But I wouldn't have called it that at the time. I think because of my own experience and our conflict, that's probably why I've devoted my life to doing marriage and family counselling.

DG: Aside from your marriage, how have you used the love languages in other relationships in your life?

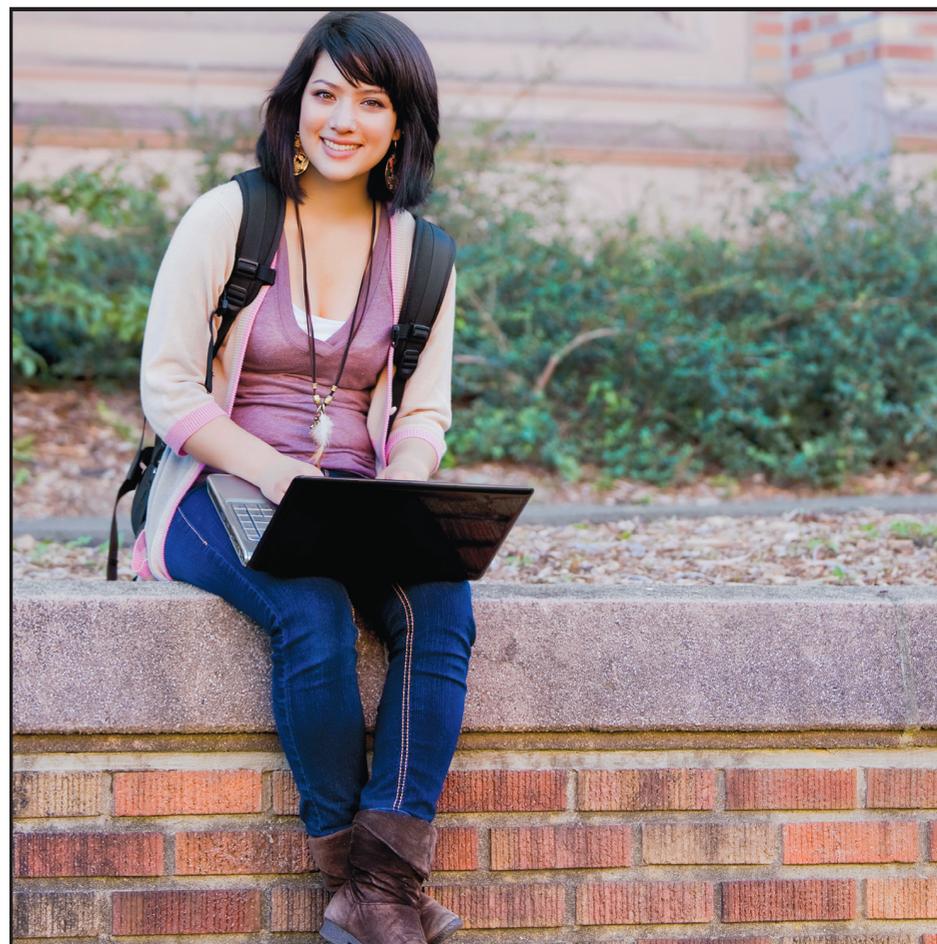
GC: The second book in that series was *The 5 Love Languages of Children*, and that helped me greatly. You can discover a child's love language by the time they're four years old. My son when he was that age, when I came home from work, he would grab my leg, jump on me; he's touching me because he wants to be touched. Our daughter never did that. At that age, she would say, 'Daddy, come to my room; I want to show you something.' She wanted quality time.

Now with the children, I make it very clear — I'm not suggesting that you only speak the child's primary love language. I'm suggesting you give heavy doses of the primary. Then you sprinkle in the other four. Because we would like for the child to learn how to receive love and give love in all five languages. That's the healthiest adult, but most of us did not receive all five growing up. And some did not receive their primary, so they grew up not feeling loved.

DG: The book, and the concept in general, have been really popular with a younger crowd. Why do you think it's struck a chord with a younger group?

GC: I think again because of a deep need that we have, whether we're young or we're old, to feel loved by the significant people in our lives. And I think many of the younger generation have seen their parents' divorce, for example. And they went through the pain of all of that, when the two most important people in their lives pulled away from each other.

I think any generation is going to be helped by this concept. And I think when they read it and they apply it to their relationships, then they want others to know about it. And of course a lot of colleges are using it now in various relationship classes that they have, because it does apply in human relationships.



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Wearing the language of love

University student creates collection based on best-selling book

BY KATHLEEN JONES



Among the deep pockets and carefully crafted patterns of Olivia Mansveld's work, there's one common theme: it all expresses love, in one language or another.

Mansveld, a fourth-year fashion and textiles student at NSCAD University, wanted to do something different in her final year. She'd already experimented with depicting the human body in sculpture and garment form, and after reading *The 5 Love Languages*, she started "representing the human heart," she says.

The 5 Love Languages, a 1995 book by Gary Chapman, tells its readers that everyone has a primary love language, and people tend to give love in the way they wish to receive it. (The five are: words of affirmation, quality time, acts of service, gift giving and physical touch).



In one of Mansveld's pieces, a pocket takes the shape of a love letter. Pockets are a common theme throughout her work; she became interested in them after reading up on their history, and almost all of her work emphasizes them in some way. For her, pockets represent "carrying your attachment to someone."



At first, Mansveld's work focused on representing each of the five love languages in specific garments. But with time and feedback from professors, the garments evolved into the broader theme of love having all kinds of languages.



Along with love, Mansveld's work carries a touch of herself. One piece, composed of a wool blanket to represent self-love and care, contains the dye from the pits of several avocados she collected from her homes throughout the years.



Home is, indeed, perhaps where the heart is in Mansveld's collection. First there were avocado pits; then, she took a digital print of sketches of the various homes she's lived in and printed them onto a jacket.

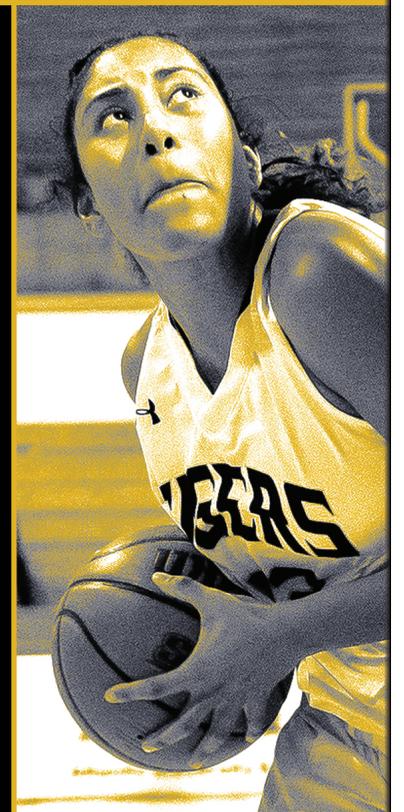
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To the sport I can no longer play

Breaking up with a life-long love

BY JESSICA BRIAND, ARTS AND LIFESTYLE EDITOR



JESSICA BRIAND (LEFT). PHOTO BY MATT STICKLAND

Growing up as a high-level athlete, there was always that fear in the back of my mind that it could all end in an instant if I made a wrong move or a klutzy mistake. But as an athlete I stuck with it because it's a love like no other.

I said good-bye to all sports in November 2017. The final straw was when I saved a shot with my face and ended up with my third concussion – the worst one yet.

I started playing soccer when I was four. While other kids were picking dandelions, I was running up and down the field trying my best to learn every aspect of the game.

As I got older, when people asked to hang out, I probably replied with something along the lines of, “can’t I have practice.” Although I was disappointed I couldn’t hang out with my school friends, I knew I’d be hitting the field with my teammates who were like family.

I feel lucky, that like so many other athletes, I got to play with most of the same girls growing up and to have had the same coach for the ma-

majority of my career. The bond we made is unbreakable.

I started my soccer career as a striker and then slowly made my way around every position on the field. By high school, I was playing a mix of defensive back and back-up keeper. By university, I was a full-time keeper. This wasn’t a common switch for players, but one I was happy to take on when the team’s previous keeper had to end her career after one too many concussions.

I know it should have been a red flag right then and there, but I loved the thrill of saving a goal.

Sports for some people are no big deal, but after dedicating 16 years of my life to playing a sport it became part of who I was. People knew me as an athlete; they knew me for being a good teammate, who would do whatever it took for the best of the team.

When it all ended, it wasn’t just an “Oh well, that was fun,” moment – it was like breaking up with a life-long partner. I will no longer get to spend three times a week with people I had

played soccer with my whole life. I won’t experience the adrenaline rush of making a big save and I will forever be in love with this sport.

For me, soccer was where I could take out all the emotions I couldn’t express. It was like a friend you could count on to be there no matter the problem.

Some of us are lucky and get to choose when we say good-bye to our beloved sport. Others, like me, not so much.

I knew this was it. But I tried my hardest to finish out the season. I took the necessary time off and went back to my team for the final weeks of my season as a farewell to the sport that’s been with me through every bump in the road.

I felt so many things in that moment.

Anger toward myself, toward the person who had caused the injury and the doctors who told me it was time to stop. I was angry and didn’t have an outlet to deal with it.

I also felt so much regret. I thought about all the things I should’ve done while I was still healthy.

“I really should have tried harder to get first string,” and “Wow, why did I ever skip practice?”

And so much sadness. The thing that once gave me a large chunk of happiness – even on my worst days – is no longer there for me to put my emotions into. What are you to do when you feel like crying or screaming into a pillow? I could no longer go kick a ball around, or let people take shots at me.

Although there were all these negative feelings of anger, regret and sadness there is one feeling that rules them all – thankfulness.

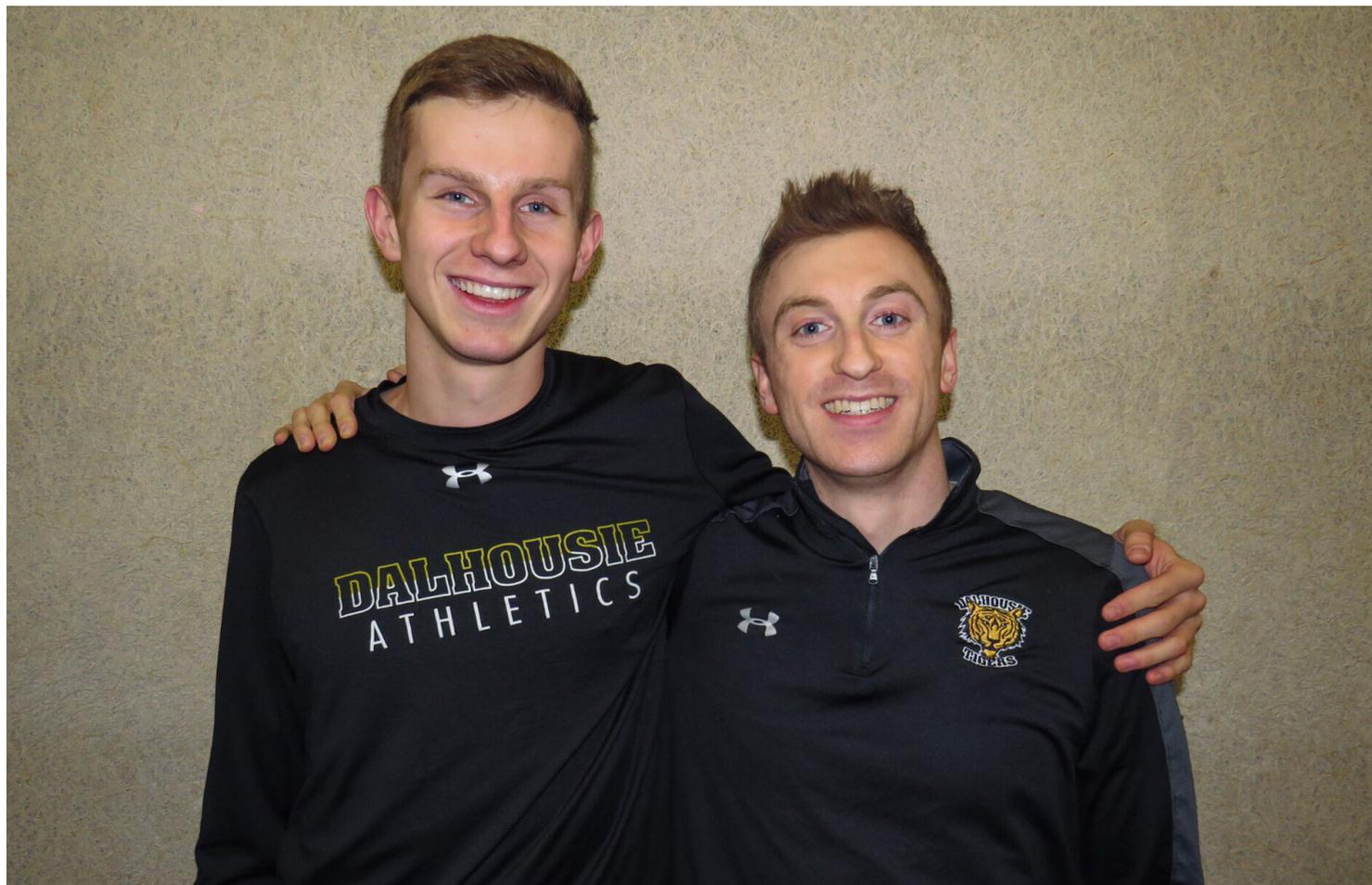
I am so thankful that I had 16 years of doing what I loved. Thankful for the coaches, the players and all the lessons I learned in between. It’s the hardest good-bye I’ve ever had to make but I’m glad that I had something I loved so much in my life for so long.

I guess all this is to say, it’s not you, it’s me. So long sports, you’ve been good to me. Thanks for a wild ride.

High School Rivals to Championship Teammates

Mike van der Poel and Matthew Coolen are two of Dal's fastest runners

BY ELLERY PLATTS



DALHOUSIE UNIVERSITY VARSITY TRACK AND FIELD ATHLETES, SPURTER MIKE VAN DER POEL (LEFT), AND SPURTER/HURDLER MATTHEW COOLEN. PHOTO BY GRACE MASON-PARKINSON

Not many athletes can say they've medalled at a national competition in a sport they spontaneously started.

Mike van der Poel and Matthew Coolen, old high school rivals, can.

The two track and field stars have both taken home a U Sports medal since they began running for Dalhousie University four years ago; van der Poel winning bronze for his 300-metre dash in 2017 and Coolen the gold for his 60-metre dash in 2018.

They began making their mark before university, setting records when their high schools competed. Coolen ran for Halifax West High School while van der Poel ran for Cobequid Educational Center.

"We ran against each other," says Coolen. "It's funny in hindsight that we were competitors against each other and now we're teammates and on the relay team together."

Coolen began his track career when a ju-

nior high gym teacher invited him to try out for the school's hurdles team.

"I remember I had a gym class right before lunch hour and I forgot my pants in the gym, so I went back, and all the hurdles were set up. That's how it all started."

He went on to have Nova Scotia provincial records in the 60 metre hurdles, 100-metre hurdles and 200-metre dash and the 110-hurdles.

van der Poel started track when he moved

to Truro in 2011. "

In gym class my teacher came up to me and asked if I liked running. I said 'yeah sure why not' and then there was a relay member that got injured, it was for the four by four, so they picked me because I said yeah sure. And that's how I ended up running later on."

Van der Poel set provincial records in the 200 and 300-metre dash.

Coolen and Van der Poel say that nothing feels quite like a national title though.

"It's pretty surreal, I didn't believe it for a long time," says Coolen. "I was watching the time come up and I just, I thought I was close. When it popped up, I lost my mind."

He says that in order to win the national title, he makes sure to go to practice and focus on each event individually, adding that he hopes to repeat the 2018 result by following the same training this season.

The bronze medal won by van der Poel in 2017 left similar feelings.

"It's pretty overwhelming. The next morning when you wake up...it's just amazing. It's what we train for all year."

He advises runners to stay cool and live in the moment because overthinking can ruin performance.

Both men agree that their success is due largely to their sprints coach Mike Bawol and hurdles coach Andrew Conrad.

"We represent the work that our coaches put into us," says Van der Poel. "They are kind of in the background when we compete, and it looks like we did all the work, but it really isn't. Our coaches' program everything and we just execute it."

Coolen placed first nationally for the 60-metre dash and seventh for 60-metre hurdles, and Van der Poel, nationally ranked third for 300-meters, are preparing with their Tiger teammates for the AUS championships in Moncton February 22 and 23.

"No detail too small"

What is it like being a Dal hockey equipment trainer?

BY SARAH MOORE, ASSISTANT SPORTS EDITOR

While the game is played on the ice, there's a lot of behind the scenes work that goes into a hockey team's success.

Tony Eden knows that better than anybody. This is his sixth season as the head trainer and equipment manager of the Dalhousie Tigers men's hockey team; he has 36 years working in high performance hockey.

"My job is to facilitate and give the athletes every possible opportunity to be successful on the ice," Eden says.

His tasks range from getting equipment at the beginning of the year and keeping it supplied throughout the season, doing laundry, getting snacks and Gatorade for the players right before games, packing gear for road trips — the list goes on.

To take care of the 25-player roster, Eden works with two trainers, kinesiology students Melanie Walker and Katherine Porter, as well as Chris McNeil, who helps with sharpening skates on game days.

Game Day

The Tigers hosted the last home game of the season against the Saint Mary's Huskies on Feb. 2. To prepare for the 7 p.m. start time, Eden gets to the rink at 4 p.m. — bringing with him a birthday cake for forward Kelly Bent for after the game.

Before the players arrive, he has the dressing room set up, skates sharpened and ice buckets filled for any injuries. After that, he handles any issues as they come up — taping any injuries, doing last minute equipment repairs and making sure the referees have everything they need.

Eden takes backup sticks to the bench and gets Juicy Fruit gum for assistant coach Dean Dachyshyn.

"There's no detail too small," Eden says. Just before the players head on the ice, he

gives Jonathan Cyr a fist bump and a red Gatorade energy chew, a good luck tradition they've had for two years

Eden usually sees half the game. During the other half he's getting the dressing room ready for the next period and fixing/retrieving equipment.

"Some days it's crazy busy and other days you get to enjoy more of the game," Eden says.

In the first period, he takes a broken stick to the equipment room, where there are bundles of individually wrapped sticks with different flexes and blade curves for each player. This can make managing inventory "real interesting."

In the second period, Eden helps the trainers with player injuries. He goes on the ice with Walker when Cyr hits his back into the boards and makes sure he heads to the dressing room.

He watches the first few minutes of the third period, then heads to the dressing room to get out towels and shampoo for the players after the game.

He returns to the bench as McNeil runs a portable skate sharpener over Colton Heffley's skates. Skate technology is one of the biggest changes Eden has seen in his time managing equipment. Whereas before a player would be out of the game if their blade broke, now it can be changed on the bench in less than a minute.

Post-game

After a game, Eden will be at the rink anywhere from 10:30 p.m. to 2 a.m. getting equipment packed up for practice on Monday and dealing with injuries.

The next day he goes back for four to five hours, vacuuming and cleaning the dressing room, repairing equipment, getting out practice jerseys and checking inventory. That evening, he'll send a report to Head Coach Chris Donnelly, updating



TONY EDEN IS THE HEAD TRAINER AND EQUIPMENT MANAGER FOR THE DALHOUSIE UNIVERSITY MEN'S HOCKEY TEAM. PHOTO BY SARAH MOORE

him about player injury statuses.

"If I look after the little things, Chris can focus on dealing with the athletes from a hockey performance point of view," Eden says.

Although he manages equipment, Eden also spends a lot of time with the athletes, talking about hockey and life.

"I love being around the players — sometimes you're a counsellor for the players who just wanna chitchat because they had a bad game, sometimes you're their mother giving them a hug and sometimes you're

dad who's gotta set down the law a little bit," he says.

What he finds hardest is seeing the players leave. This year, Colton Heffley, Mike Evelyn, Jesse Lussier, Jackson Playfair and Conner Donaghey are all graduating.

"It's hard to see [them] go on, although it's exciting," Eden says. "It's so much fun knowing that you can help play a role in a young person's life. For the most part it's just in a minor way, but I know how much they appreciate all we do."

It's so much fun knowing that you can help play a role in a young person's life.

Model athlete

On the court or in the classroom, Mieke DuMont has had a fantastic Dalhousie career

BY JOSH YOUNG, SPORTS EDITOR



MIEKE DUMONT, A FIFTH YEAR DALHOUSIE WOMEN'S VOLLEYBALL PLAYER, STANDS IN FRONT OF THE DALPLEX. PHOTO BY MELANIE KENNY

After winning four AUS championships in four years, fifth-year volleyball player Mieke DuMont is in the final stretch of her successful university career.

She credits Tim Maloney who is Dalhousie's Executive Director of Athletics and Recreation for making her experience at Dal so memorable.

"It has been such an amazing experience, I'll definitely miss it," says DuMont trying to hold back tears. "Tim and his staff make it like a family, so it will be a big part gone, but I will never forget it."

DuMont moved across the country from Kamloops, B.C. to play at Dal. She's been one of the most talented players ever since her first season in 2014-2015. Every year DuMont is second on the team in points scored, and she's also impactful on defence; consistently in the top five on the team in digs. The team's Head Coach Rick Scott says she's also a primary passer, a good server and a good blocker.

"A lot of times people just see the attacking, but it is the other things that make her a valuable player," says Scott.

All great athletes have one thing in common: they all work hard for their success. DuMont is no exception. During Munroe Day weekend, Scott gave the team the weekend off. But 10 a.m. on Saturday morning, DuMont was in the weight room with another teammate — even though it wasn't mandatory.

That work ethic also translates into the classroom. DuMont has been an Academic-All-Canadian during every one of her four completed years. Last year, she won the President's Award along with Sven Stammberger as the top Dal athletes for academics, athletics, leadership, and community.

"I guess I have put a lot of pressure on myself for school, but over the years I have learned to relax a bit more about it and kind of enjoy it a bit more," says DuMont.

Her work ethic, combined with success on and off the court has made her the captain of the team over the past two years. As a captain, she tries to help players stay organized and be supportive.

"I see Mieke as almost like a big sister," said second-year teammate Julie Moore about DuMont in December.

DuMont says her team is close. They play laser tag or go for team pool parties before the season began while movie nights are a common occurrence during the season.

When DuMont was early in her university career, the senior players told her about how fast their time went as a university athlete. DuMont didn't believe that, but now she knows it is true.

"I found that every year has gone by faster and faster, it could be because you are more comfortable with the environment and everything," says DuMont. I always say I wish I had a sixth year so I could just stay here."

The Tigers are undefeated so far this season and haven't lost a game in the AUS since November 2017. At the time of writing, they're ranked as the best team in the country. The one thing she hasn't been able to accomplish yet is winning a national medal. It's something she would like to finish off her career with.

Outside of team success, Scott told DuMont to relax and make sure she enjoys the last few weeks of her career.

"He talked about sometimes in your last year you kind of want it a little too much," says DuMont. "It is kind of nice to know that he understands what you may be thinking."

Scott will miss DuMont as a Dalhousie Tiger. "She has been kind of a model athlete, and we will miss her for sure," said Scott.

Four and a half years later, DuMont is happy with her decision to be a Tiger.

"It was definitely one of the biggest decisions and one of the best decisions I made."

Coming full circle

Swimmers Geraint Berger and Olivia Feschuk finish university swimming careers in same city they where they started competing

BY JOSH YOUNG, SPORTS EDITOR



OLIVIA FESCHUK (RIGHT) AND GERIANT BERGER ARE TRANSFER STUDENTS FROM MOUNT ALLISON UNIVERSITY IN SACKVILLE, NEW BRUNSWICK. PHOTO BY KARLA RENIC

Olivia Feschuk and Geraint Berger have taken their talents to South Street.

Both are successful AUS swimmers who previously competed for Mount Allison University. This year they transferred to Dalhousie University for their final year in order to pursue master's programs.

"It has been a really nice mix of both change and familiarity," said Feschuk.

Berger agrees. "New faces but same old swimming."

Both athletes give major boosts to Dal's swim program. At the Kemp-Fry Invitational, one of Dal's biggest meets of the season (after the AUS championships Feb. 8-10) Feschuk finished third in the 200-metre breaststroke, first in the 200-metre medley and qualified for nationals in the 200-metre backstroke.

Berger had been ineligible to compete until January because he was a lab technician during the fall semester, not technically a student. He entered into his pharmacology program in January and became eligible to compete again. In his one meet before the AUS championships, Berger finished second in the 50-metre butterfly, first in the 100-metre backstroke and freestyle, he also anchored the 200-metre medley relay team.

Dal's swimming Head Coach Lance Cansdale discusses what Feschuk and Berger bring to the team.

"Olivia is a pretty true worker; she is business like, more times than not in a real positive frame of mind and she is a positive talker, which is a really good help. The athletes that are here know how good she has been and she is doing her master's degree, so she

can put money where her mouth is."

"Geraint is a sprinter, he is a powerful young man and he comes in and has the ability to anchor our relays, he is our fastest sprinter boy right now. It allows us to have a little more flexibility."

Outside of the pool, they've both made a good transition to Dal. The AUS is a small swimming conference with just six teams competing, and both Feschuk and Berger knew some of their new teammates when they arrived. They're also both from Halifax and were coached by Cansdale as teenagers with the Halifax Trojan Aquatic Club, so they knew his coaching style. Both say they're comfortable with school and Cansdale gives them opportunities to train when it works best with their schedules.

"The opportunity to coach them again is a

really nice treat," says Cansdale. "They're very coachable athletes, they listen to you and they give feedback."

They have both enjoyed the team spirit. At the Kemp-Fry Invitational, no one was cheering louder for their teammates than Dal.

In the week leading up to the AUS championships, the women's team play secret psych. Each player is secretly given a teammate they need to psych up for a week before the meet. That can include providing their favourite food in their locker, writing positive notes, making positive videos about them, or even getting a life-sized cardboard cutout of them.

"The excitement is contagious," says Feschuk.

AUS championships

Dal has a chance to defend both their men's and women's AUS swimming titles, something neither Berger nor Feschuk have won. Because Mount Allison is a small school, they never had a chance to win a championship before; they are excited by that possibility.

"It's a whole different approach to the meet," said Berger. "You're racing for place rather than for personal time at Mount A. Here you're racing for your teammates."

He talks about his first relay experience at Dal.

"I was at a different level of nervousness for a relay which is weird because I have been in so many relays, but I had a chance to win at a relay which I haven't had before."

Both Berger and Feschuk started their swimming careers in Halifax and now it will end in Halifax.

"It has been really wonderful, I haven't enjoyed swimming this much in a long time," says Feschuk. "I really love the people on the team."

Berger agreed.

"It's been a really nice way to go out."

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