

3

Dalhousie prohibition results

9

**Level-Up:
Sexism Badge Achieved**

21

Login to eSports

Beneath the cosplay

Hal-Con 2016 “Local Hero”
tells all

JESSICA BRIAND, ARTS & LIFESTYLE EDITOR

It all started in 1992 with a letter, a money order, and a whip.

Fox Lidstone, has been doing cosplay in Halifax on and off for the last 25 years; after finding his first collectors item, he couldn't stop searching for more to complete his Indiana Jones costume. His repertoire now includes anything Harrison Ford.

“One day, I was reading a magazine,” says Lidstone. “And I was reading an article about the guy who made the bullwhips that Harrison Ford used in the movies lived in Australia, and here was his name. He had a little shop where he hand-made these leather whips. So back in the days where there was no internet, I wrote a letter to a guy in Australia saying ‘I’d like to buy one of these whips.’”

Lidstone began putting together a costume—not knowing that he was about to enter the cosplay world. He did his research; he found the right whip, the perfect hat, pants and jacket, and he transformed himself into his childhood hero.

“I had people commenting, ‘Oh your mannerism, you’ve got mannerisms that are a little bit like Harrison Ford’s sometimes, when I hear you talking, I’m hearing a weird mix of Indiana Jones and Han Solo,’” says Lidstone. “And I was always saying, ‘that’s cause I grew

CONT'D PG. 13



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Kaila Jefferd-Moore, editor-in-chief
editor@dalgazette.com

Alex Rose, news editor
news@dalgazette.com

Matt Stickland, opinions editor
opinions@dalgazette.com

Jessica Briand, arts & lifestyle editor
arts@dalgazette.com

Josh Young, sports editor
sports@dalgazette.com

Jayme Spinks, art director
design@dalgazette.com

Alexandra Sweny, visual editor
photo@dalgazette.com

Elyse Creamer, business and advertising manager
business@dalgazette.com

Contributing to this issue:

Mady Gillespie, Anahit Kondyan, Louise Andrews, Serena Jackson, Piper MacDougall, Anastasia Payne, Erin Brown, Gabriële Roy, Alex Rose, Jessica Briand, Matt Stickland, Josh Young, Alexandra Sweny, Sarah Moore, Cam Honey-Webb, Qi Chen, Chiara Ferrero-Wong, Hannah Bing, Jessica Wilson

ADVERTISING

Elyse Creamer
Advertising Manager
(905) 870-9610
business@dalgazette.com

CONTACT US

www.dalgazette.com
The SUB, Room 345
6136 University Avenue
Halifax NS, B3H 4J2

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Drinking ban brings mixed results

Howe Hall drinking video goes viral during Dalhousie's first attempt at dry O-week

LEAH SIMONOT

Newcomers to Dalhousie weren't the only ones testing the waters this month as the university implemented its first dry orientation week.

From Sept. 2 to Sept. 11, no alcohol was allowed in most Dalhousie residences, with the exception of LeMarchant Place and Glengary Apartments.

Vice-provost of student affairs, Verity Turpin, said alcohol harm reduction is one of Dalhousie's top three priorities for student health and wellness, both on and off campus. Limiting access to alcohol during this important transition period aims to divert students' attention away from drinking and towards other opportunities to get involved and connect with new friends.

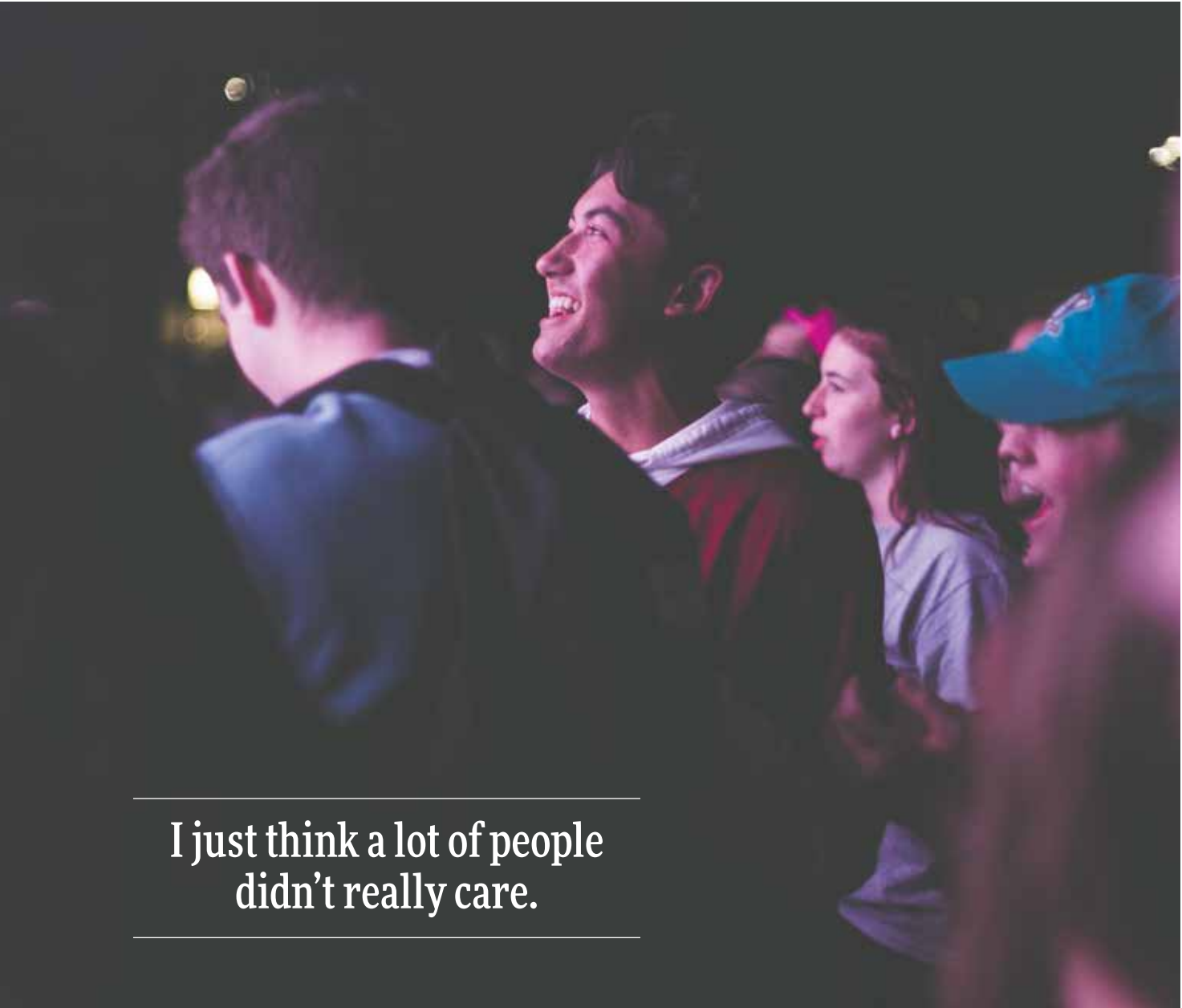
The ban raised mixed feelings among students, however, with many reluctant to take the new rule seriously.

Throughout the week, several videos surfaced online of what appears to be extravagant alcohol consumption in Dalhousie residences. One video posted on Sept. 7 shows a student drinking from a four-story beer bong in Howe Hall. The video was featured on the well-known Instagram account @Totalfratmove, where it had earned more than 880,000 views at the time of this article's publication.

First-year student and Howe Hall resident, Phoebe Knight, confirms having witnessed alcohol consumption in her residence and is "sure that it was also going on in other residences."

Although she acknowledges the intent behind the university's new alcohol policy, she does not consider it effective.

"It was a good idea, but I just don't think it was pulled off," said Knight. "I do know a ton of people who got caught by RAs and by



The alcohol ban during O-week meant that, for most student, the week's events were best attended sober. Photo by Carter Hutton.

Dal security and got written up for it, but I just think a lot of people didn't really care."

Dalhousie's Dry O-week is in alignment with a framework developed by the Post-Secondary Education Partnership on Alcohol Harms (a partnership between universities across Canada and the Canadian Centre on Substance Abuse and Addictions.) The framework proposes a socio-ecological approach to addressing violations of student conduct that accounts not only for the individual, but for the community at large.

Turpin hopes that focussing the treatment of alcohol-related misconduct on education and developmental conversations will help students make better choices moving forward.

"What we want to do is create a safe space

for students to share and learn and perhaps make different choices moving forward versus having a conversation that's just about, 'You did something wrong. Here's the consequence,'" said Turpin. "Reducing alcohol harms and really making a difference in terms of the culture on university campuses is not a sprint, it is a marathon. You can't just take one single approach and expect to have a huge impact."

Howe Hall residence assistant, Ashley Whyte, said she feels this method allowed for misconduct to be handled in a positive way throughout O-week.

"I think it was effective in keeping students safe," said Whyte. "If we are dealing with some sort of misconduct—we go and we see why it

happened and what we can do to keep it from happening again."

She said overall, follow-up conversations with students were well-taken.

"The tactic that we have tested this fall in residence is just another one of the series of things that we do that align with the best practises of reducing alcohol harms on post-secondary campuses," said Turpin. "We know as an institution that our students will consume alcohol both on and off campus. Our job through our approach to alcohol harm reduction is to educate and support our students."

This fall's pilot strategy will be assessed to see if it is something the university wishes to continue in the future.

Dal professors’ study confirms what we all suspected

There is a strong correlation between attendance and final grades

GABRIÈLE ROY

It can seem like a real struggle to get to an early university class, but missing it will likely affect your final grade.

According to a recent study on the relationship between attendance and grades, there is a strong correlation between the number of classes that students attend and the final grade they receive.

“I always suspected that it contributed to poor grades and that’s really what the study brought out,” says Thomas Duck, author of the study and faculty member of the department of physics and atmospheric science at Dalhousie University.

To conduct the study, sign-in sheets were passed around his first-year science classes on several occasions during the winter semester. These sheets were later used to build an attendance database.

Students who attended all of the classes received an average final grade of 73 per cent, while those who still passed the class

but never signed the attendance sheet averaged 52 per cent, the lowest passing grade received.

At the first year level, attendance is a major issue, says Duck. “In upper-year classes, I have 100 per cent attendance rate, so the objective here is to get more students to the finish line.”

Duck and Simon de Vet, co-author of the study, also found out that about 70 students were signing the attendance sheets by March, compared to 230 students at the beginning of the semester.

“We were not really surprised of the results concerning attendance rate because when you’re teaching, you can see easily see that the class is half-empty,” says de Vet.

Now that there is hard evidence of the relationship between attendance and grade, Duck says he plans on working on the format of some of his assignments as well as discussing the importance of attendance on the first day of class.

Feedback

Duck and de Vet also informally asked students about their attendance habits. Some of the reasons given by students for missing classes were related to the time at which the classes took place, time management problems or the lecture format.

The university assigns the time at which the classes take place, says de Vet. Changing them is not an option.

“If we look at the student evaluations we get every year, students are pretty happy with us and we get very positive reviews.”

“We spend a lot of time teaching and I strongly believe there is a cause and effect situation here; attending classes is beneficial.”



Rachelle Marsman cosplays as Michonne from *The Walking Dead*. With more common characters, Marsman says it can be acceptable for some racial lines to be blurred—such as Velma from *Scooby Doo*. Photos from Rachelle Marsman.

Cosplay controversy: is a costume just a costume?

What happens at cosplay doesn’t stay at cosplay

ALEX ROSE, NEWS EDITOR

On September 22, Hal-con is opening its doors to sci-fi, fantasy and gaming fans from across the Maritimes. This year, the featured guest list includes actors Elden Henson from *The Hunger Games*, and Tom Lenk from *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*. Also on the featured guest list is Kiss a Frog Cosplay, otherwise known as Alicia Renaé, an African-American woman from Charleston, West Virginia.

Cosplay is short for costume play, and those who participate dress up as their favourite characters from shows, games, comics or other popular forms of media.

Renaé’s presence is noteworthy. Her bio on the Hal-con site describes her as a “plus-sized” and “body-positive” cosplayer. Cosplay, as a community has its share of issues with discrim-

ination, and by bringing in a plus-sized woman of colour as a featured guest, it seems Hal-con is making a statement about the inclusive and welcoming convention they aspire to be.

Raychelle Marsman is a fourth-year Dalhousie student who has been cosplaying since 2013. She’s a regular attendee of Hal-con, but as a woman of colour, she feels she has to be careful about how she dresses up for the convention.

“I’ve never gone to a convention cosplaying a character that I haven’t made or that isn’t black already yet, just because I’m terrified,” she said.

Marsman is terrified of being called out for not dressing as accurately as possible. She says that other convention attendees often give black cosplayers a hard time for dressing as characters who don’t look like them. It’s the



same rationale that leads some cosplayers to darken their skin to look more like certain characters—essentially putting on blackface.

Marsman also said that as insulting as some cosplayers might be at conventions, either through their words or their costume, it’s generally not malicious.

“I doubt anyone in the community would really say anything outwardly. It’s usually in anonymity that people become really racist,” she said. In other words: online.

“Because I’m black I haven’t made an online [cosplaying] account,” Marsman said. “You get called racial slurs, you get a lot of hate mail, you get called monkey.”

Jennifer Lambe is the executive director of Hal-con, and she says she makes sure they take these issues seriously.

“We have specific statements around anti-bullying, anti-harassment, anti-hate,” she said. “We want Hal-con to be a place for everyone.”

Their policies extend beyond the convention itself, including onto the internet.

“We have a very active [Facebook] group, and we have some very active moderators as well... if there is anyone that gets really out of line, with hate speech or whatever, we’re quick to remove them from the group,” said Lambe.

Hal-con doesn’t have an official position against blackface; they instead look at each possible instance on a case-by-case basis.

“We have a policy that says any costume that is deemed offensive, we can remove that individual from the event,” said Lambe. She also stressed that their blackface policy is a work in progress, a constant conversation with both the local community and the community at large.

Blackface, or even offensive costumes in general, aren’t the only removable offense. Marsman said that as a cosplayer, especially a female one, there are other hazards.

“There’s people who have tried to do upskirt shots on me while I was just trying to walk around, there’s people who, when they come and try to get a picture with you. they’ll touch you where you really don’t want to be touched,” said Marsman.

All of those actions would get someone removed from Hal-con, said Lambe, but she only sees about one case a year that’s serious enough to warrant removal. If someone is just taking pictures of other people without permission, they will generally receive a warning before being kicked out, and that almost always stops the action.

In spite of all the negativity in the cosplay community, Marsman still says it’s overall a positive experience.

“It’s a welcoming community, it’s a place of people who all share the same interests, it’s a place where you’re not going to get picked on or bullied for what you like. And it’s amazingly fun,” she said.



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For Halifax students, the price of having a roof over your head can be higher than anticipated. Photo by Gina Grattan.

Advice for student renters

Make sure to know your rights, and where you can go for help

ALEX ROSE, NEWS EDITOR

Like in any university town, the student renters and landlords of Halifax have an often contentious relationship. Students might not be as calm or clean as other renters, and landlords might try to pull a fast one on their unsuspecting tenants.

Drew Blair has been one of those unsuspecting tenants on a few separate occasions. He currently works for Manulife in their customer service department, but back when he was a student he had some clashes with his landlords.

In one of his rental properties, he made sure it was cleaner when he moved out than when he had moved in. But the landlord dinged him \$75 for moving a shelf. Blair says it would have taken a second to replace, and his now ex-landlord claimed the kitchen wasn't

clean because Blair and his roommates had left a pen and a wrapper in it.

"We had a \$450 security deposit, and we got none of that back," said Blair. "Basically what they do is, they hire a cleaning service, they don't monitor what costs are being allocated."

Blair was also dinged the remainder of his damage deposit. He asked his landlord why he was charged \$375 to clean his already clean apartment, and they replied that's what the cleaning had cost for two people for two hours.

"If they're making \$375 in two hours, for two of them, I want that job and I'll do it for the rest of my life," said Blair.

Zach Pajtasz is the marketing and social media specialist at places4students, which is

Dalhousie's partner for student off-campus housing. Pajtasz has some advice for students who might find themselves in a similar situation to Blair's.

"When you move into the accommodations, make you document the conditions. Whether that means taking some photos, taking a quick video—basically so you have something to hold up as proof," he said. "Essentially what will happen right now is it will be more or less the students' word against the landlord's word about whatever damage may have occurred."

If the students do have photos or video of the property both when they move in and move out, and feel like they are being unfairly

charged, then they can take their case up in small claims court. Pajtasz recommends first going to the Dalhousie Legal Aid office, who can provide additional resources and information from a legal standpoint.

Pajtasz also pointed out the normal wear and tear provision for tenants, which states that it's expected for things like carpets to slightly wear down over the course of a lease and the landlord cannot penalize the tenant for it. Pajtasz says that places4students is working on an informative blog post about it; they also have many other resources for student renters on their website, including a Q+A about the Nova Scotia Residential Tenancies Act. Check it out at www.places4students.com/Blog

Collecting mental health stories from Canadian students

Submit yours to her anthology *Mindfully You*

ERIN BROWN

In Canada, 3.2 million youth are at risk of developing depression or mental health illness. Dr. Renee Raymond is a Kinesologist and Cognitive Behavioural Therapist who wants to know their stories.

The Canadian Mental Health Association shares staggering statistics of the impact that mental health illnesses have on youth, and Dr. Raymond states that there is a mental health crisis in Canada's post-secondary institutions. This inspired Dr. Raymond to start the project *Mindfully You*, in which she is creating an anthology of stories from post-secondary students about their experiences with mental health, stigmas and seeking treatment.

"*Mindfully You* is a project I started where I wanted to really help identify what it is that we need to do to address the mental health crisis that is happening with post-secondary students," said Dr. Raymond, who is hoping to include stories from students across the country.

She was inspired to launch the project from her work as a cognitive behavioural therapist and the return-to-work counselling she has done. Dr. Raymond also became involved with the organization Jack.org, where she saw firsthand that many students were struggling with their mental health.

"As I started delving deeper I started to see that different universities, colleges or trade schools don't really know how to deal with this crisis, and we don't have a plan as a country to

really address this issue, and it's really starting to balloon," Dr. Raymond said.

She added that despite her extensive research, she believes there is still not a clear sense of what it is students need in terms of treatment.

Her plans for the anthology are to use it as a resource for organizations, lawmakers and policy makers, adding, "I would supplement that with research and commentary to try and tie the stories together, and make a cohesive guide to help other individuals, and take some direction, and hopefully implement policy changes."

Dr. Raymond hopes to market the finished project in order to show that there are alternatives to addressing mental health in youth, primarily youth who are attending post-secondary institutions or have dropped out of post-secondary institutions due to their mental health.

Ally Geist is a successful mental health blogger on Dalhousie Campus, who believes that youth sharing their stories can have an impact on other people coming forward with their own experience.

"My friends who were vocal about their limitations had an impact on the person I am shaping myself to be. I think it's easier for someone to see that their friend said this, their friend was open about this, I can be too."

Geist has worked with the organization Jack.org and Wear Your Label; and has

performed speeches to high-school students on her own mental health story. She uses her blog posts with Wear Your Label, and her personal Instagram to share self-care practices and mental health experiences with young people from across the country.

Geist stated that it was her Residence Life Manager, and her friend Laura, who inspired her to talk more openly about her mental health and to be an advocate for others as well as herself.

"Hopefully when people talk about it, it will help other people take those little steps to have the tough conversations," she said, "The more I have spoken about my own story, the

more I have had people reach out to me to ask how they can get involved or 'thanks for saying that, I needed to hear that'. It's shocking to me how many people will tell me that they've also been going through that."

Both Raymond and Geist have said that getting involved with local organizations, whether they are on campus or in the community, can have positive impact for an individual looking for support. Students can also share their story with Dr. Raymond and her project *Mindfully You*.

The submission information can be found at mindfullyyouwellness.com. The deadline for submission is November 30th.

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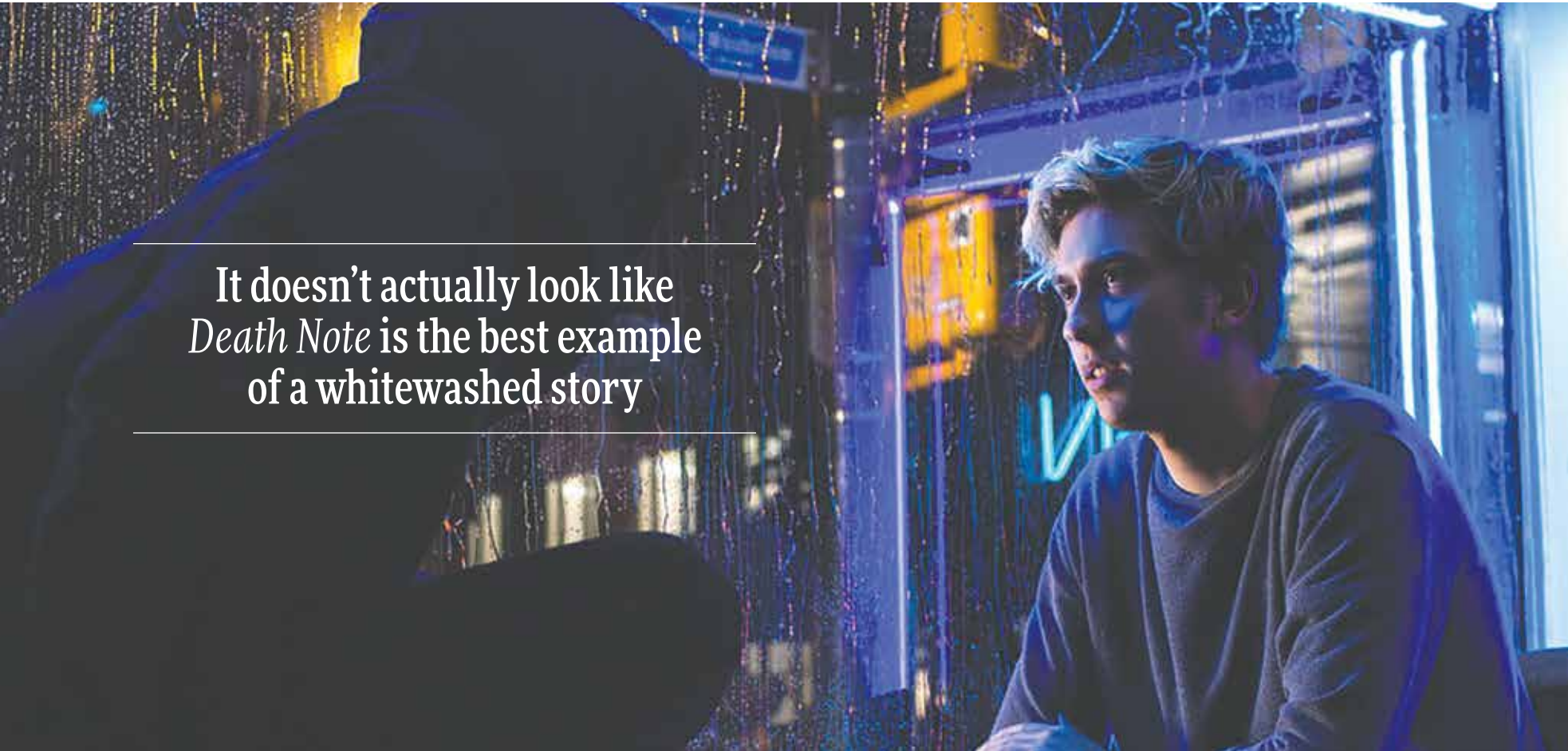
I worked as a server at Smitty’s Restaurant over the summer; I served pancakes and decaf coffee to cranky old seniors who were obnoxiously demanding. Their coffee not hot enough, pancakes not fluffy enough, eggs not poached soft enough—nothing was enough! As the summer progressed and my patience grew thin, there was this recurring trend that caught my attention: using cell phones during meal times among the younger demographic. When families would have meals together, I could see that they weren’t engaged in conversation with one another. Instead, they were busy checking their Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat, Twitter, emails or whatever else I’m sure they’re checking.

I don’t want to make a generalization for all families, but cell phone usage during meal times was becoming the norm. Rarely did I see families sans cell phone during a meal and take the time to converse with one another. In 2015, *Time Magazine* published an article aptly titled, *Everybody Hates When You Use Your Phone at Dinner*. The article draws on comprehensive research completed by Pew Research Centre that surveyed 3000 adults. The results indicate that 82 per cent of the respondents conclude that using a phone in a social setting hinders on conversation. Ironically, 89 per cent of the respondents also confessed that they have used their cell phones at a social gathering for texting and so forth. With regard to using cell phones at the dinner table, only 16 per cent said that it was appropriate. The article is a couple of years old, but its merit still stands. I noticed that people were so consumed by their cell phones, that they were less cognizant of whoever they were interacting with during their meals at Smitty’s. I remember vividly, serving a family of four and the parents would not stop using their cell

phones. Their two young children kept trying to converse with their parents about their summer camp plans. “we are biologically, cognitively, physically, and spiritually wired to love, to be loved, and to belong. When those needs are not met, The parents didn’t even look up from their phones to acknowledge their children. All they said was, “mhm.” There’s value in engaging in conversations with other people, be it family, friends, or co-workers. You are able to develop deeper connections with them by taking the time to get to know them, and asking them questions that reveal more about who they are as individuals. This connection also improves mental health. Countless studies have demonstrated that individuals with deep social connections have stronger physical health and psychological well-being. As the scholar Brené Brown once said,

“we are biologically, cognitively, physically, and spiritually wired to love, to be loved, and to belong. When those needs are not met, we don’t function as we were meant to. We break. We fall apart. We numb. We ache. We hurt others. We get sick. We are profoundly social creatures.” If we are too preoccupied with our cell phones, we’re hindering our social relationships because those social relationships need our time and attention to develop. Don’t get me wrong, I think cell phones are fantastic—I don’t think I can live without mine. It’s my calendar, alarm, and radio. It keeps me connected to friends across the country, and so many other things. But there is a time and place for it—when you are out enjoying a meal with your friends or family is not it.

The parents did not even look up from their phones to acknowledge their children



It doesn’t actually look like *Death Note* is the best example of a whitewashed story

The problem with *Death Note*

White washing isn’t actually the issue

CHIARA FERRERO-WONG

You may have heard about the new Netflix original *Death Note*, a movie based on the extremely successful Japanese manga and anime. *Death Note* is a story about a teenage boy who finds himself in the possession of a book which gives him the power to kill anybody so long as he knows their name and what they look like. The new film is a western adaptation, using the original premise with slight plot variations—and it takes place in Seattle, Washington, instead of in Japan. Since the release of the cast list, the movie has been receiving a lot of negative attention in the media. People are accusing the film of whitewashing the original story. These whitewashed stories have been in the news a lot recently. People are frustrated with the movie and TV industries for continuously casting white actors in traditionally non-white roles. A recent sore point was the casting of Tilda Swinton as a Tibetan monk in Marvel’s live-action Doctor Strange. In the comic books, Swinton’s character was always depicted as being Asian, whereas Swinton is white. Similar accusations have been made regarding the new *Death Note* movie. In the manga the characters were all

Japanese. In the new film, the majority of the cast is made up of white actors. But it doesn’t actually look like *Death Note* is the best example of a whitewashed story. The movie was meant to be an adaptation, not simply a real-life version of the manga. Because the movie takes place in an entirely different location, it only makes sense that the cast reflect the diversity of the new city. According to Seattle’s 2016 census, the city’s population is almost 70 per cent Caucasian. This could explain the decision to cast white actors as the majority of the characters. That’s not to say that they couldn’t have cast Japanese actors; that’s a bit of a separate problem. If the movie is to be accused of any racial discrimination, it would be the usual underrepresentation of minority groups in the cast. Though there are non-white actors in the movie, it still only has its token minority characters, such as Keith Stanfield who plays the character L. This issue, though slightly different, is definitely related to whitewashing. It’s an issue that’s been gaining a lot more attention in

recent years, most obviously in all the controversy about the “whitest Oscars ever.” People are feeling more empowered to speak against the issue of the severe underrepresentation of non-white actors in films as it more well-known that it’s an issue that needs to be fixed. Action needs to be taken on both the administration side, but also on the actor side—recently Ed Skrein, after being cast as a traditionally Japanese character in the new *Hellboy* reboot, turned down the role in order to not whitewash the character. This is an example of the kind of action that needs to be taken in order for any change to happen. Should this change occur, it will hopefully succeed in showcasing the talented non-white actors who up until now have been receiving less attention, than their white colleagues. Maybe, just maybe, the story shouldn’t have been adapted at all, maybe the live-action film should have remained in Japan in order to protect the cultural integrity of the film. But since it hasn’t, it’s important to realize that yes, there are issues with the new *Death Note* movie; but it’s not whitewashing. It is the all too common issue of the homogeneous white casts that prevail in western cinema.



Failure to launch

Politcal campaigns are basically failed Kickstarters

MATT STICKLAND, OPINIONS EDITOR

The Liberal government is demonstrating mastery in messaging within modern pop culture. From memes to selfies – there are a lot of examples, but none better than their mimicry of the never-shocking ‘Kickstarter failure.’

It’s a weird thing to emulate perhaps, but it is one of the most consistent things they have done with their big-ticket campaign promises. The level of similarity is uncanny and it all starts like this:

The Promise

Kickstarter campaigns start with huge promises that capitalize on some of the deepest fantasies of their intended audience.

In the video game world that means re-vamped versions of classic games with modern game play, features and graphics. In a modern re-make, it would also allow for huge multi-player capabilities. What could be better than re-visiting the massive immersive world of Wing Commander, but this time with friends in virtual reality cockpits? Nothing. Nothing could be better.

And so, people backed Star Citizen.

For their part, the Liberals have made a couple massive promises: for those who have felt that their votes in first-past-the-post were wasted—worry not. The election of 2015 is going to be the last election under that system. Full Stop. For those who finally want justice and closure—don’t worry. The Truth and Reconciliation Commissions’ (TRC) recommendation for an inquiry is happening. There will finally be justice. Full Stop.

And then comes:

The Great Success!

After making these amazing promises, Kickstarter campaigns usually hit their goals quite fast. From thousands to millions, people are convinced to buy in. They spend their money to help achieve a dream. It’s nice to feel like a personal contribution will help that dream be achieved.

In the case of the Liberals, they enjoyed huge electoral success. Crushing the incumbent Conservatives and the early front runners, the NDP. In some places the victory was absolute. Sorry, not sorry NDP, Green or CPC voters east of Quebec. The

vote has been cast and it’s time for dreams to become reality.

But then:

The Red Flags

After the initial giddiness of the personal contribution wears off; when people are waiting for updates, the rose coloured glasses come off.

The thing about rose coloured glasses is they make all the flags look red, so it’s easier to dismiss the actual red flags.

Once those glasses come off some serious questions start to be raised. If the game play in Star Citizen is supposed to be so immersive and amazing wouldn’t larger companies with more resources like Blizzard or Valve had made a game like this before? How will a small game developer be able to make a game of this scope in anywhere close to their projected timeline?

Is it just a coincidence that electoral reform was put on the Liberal platform when they got relegated to third party status? If this is the last election under first-past-the-post, why hasn’t the prime minister, or anyone in the party, said which version of reform was their preferred one? Shouldn’t a plan to change

The thing about rose coloured glasses is they make all the flags look red

the electoral system have a defined end goal?

With eight other studies into systemic violence and specific cases, what will the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls (MMIWG) add? The TRC had 94 recommendations for action, why start with this one? If the purpose of the MMIWG inquiry is to find and recognize truth, why was the TRC necessary? Or vice versa?

These red flags are often when people realize the scope of the promise has grown to the point where is no longer achievable.

And so begins:

The Slow Implosion

The hallmarks here a freakishly similar to both game development and the Liberal party. They burn through their good

will and money. They start to lose people in key places as those people realize there’s no way they can do their job as was promised by their bosses.

They make a bad website (like mydemocracy.ca which wouldn’t load if users had privacy extensions that blocked the sites’ access to the users Facebook page.)

The date by which they will complete their projects gets pushed and pushed until eventually the updated date comes and goes and there is radio silence. Even with funding they don’t have the resources to do their job.

As an aside: It is absolutely shocking that even when the MMIWG Inquiry can get computers, they are unable to connect to the internet in remote and rural areas of the country. If only there was any way to have known that this would be an issue. If only residents of rural and remote areas had raised the alarm about this starting in the early 2000s. Ah well, guess we’ll never know why the MMIWG Inquiry is having such connectivity issues.

And then everything kind of ends in:

The Unsatisfying Conclusion

There’s no real happy ending, or an ending at all. Just unending disappointment.

The MMIWG Inquiry will probably end at some point, with findings and recommendations. If anything, there will probably be another inquiry because polices that implement #realchange on indigenous issues take a lot of political capital to only help four per cent of voters.

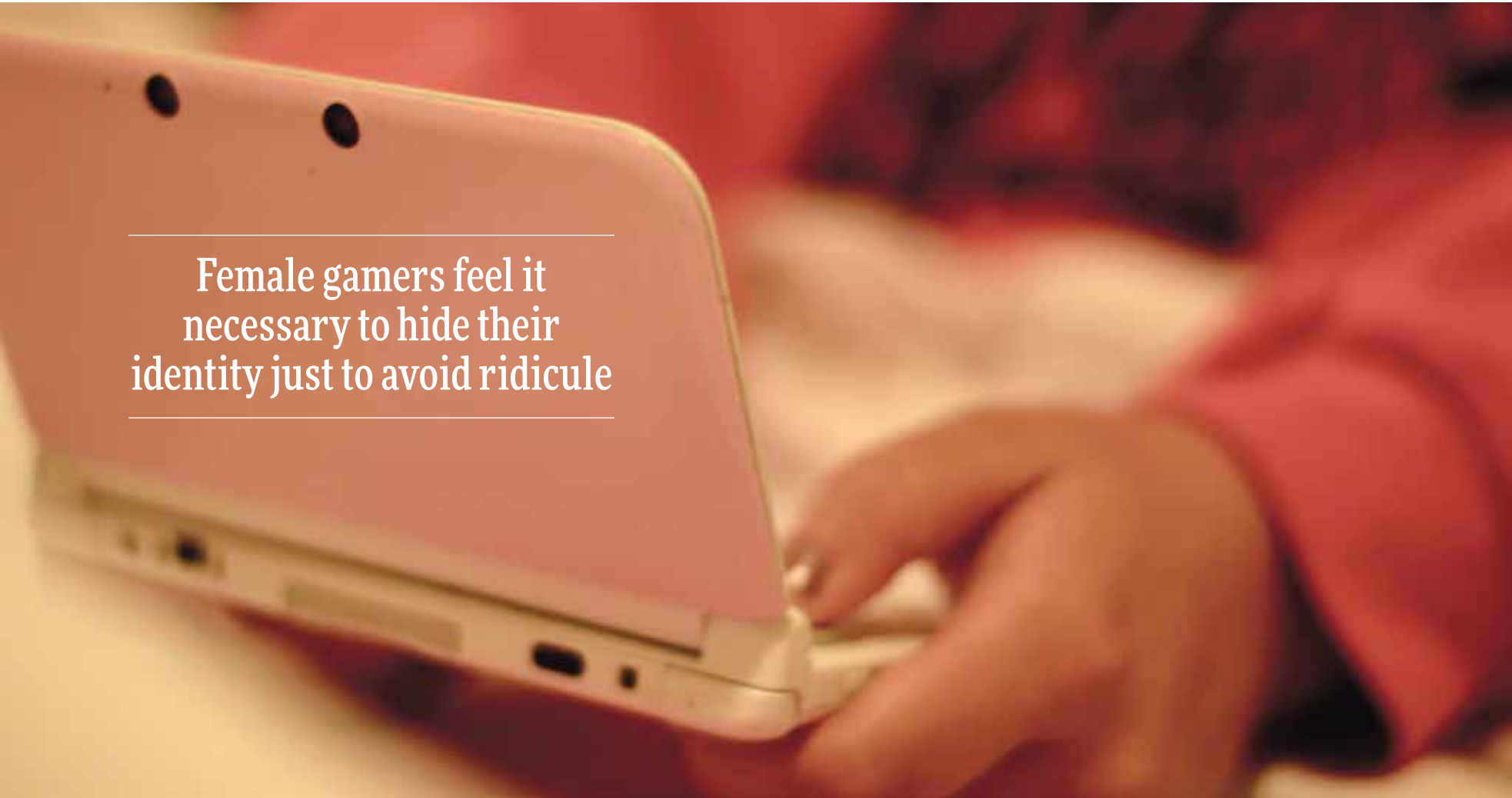
Electoral reform will probably continue to be promised when politically expedient and only acted on when first past the post doesn’t ensure continuing power.

Star Citizen may one day leave alpha testing.

Realistically, Kickstarter campaigns will still take our money and run. Governments will take our votes and run because it works. At the time of this writing, Prime Minister Trudeau has an approval rating of over 50 per cent. The Liberal Party has an approval rating of over 40 per cent.

Despite knowing the issues plaguing Star Citizen, people are still buying virtual ships with real money to play a game still in alpha.

Maybe the issue is us.



Sexism in Gaming

What it’s really like to be a “girl gamer”

HANNAH BING

We are all familiar with the age-old concept of ‘damsel in distress’ and living in a society where girls are portrayed as princess’ while men are here to save us. Men dominate the online gaming world with two thirds of gamers identifying as male; there is the other third, the population who identify as female.

Sadly, in the gaming culture that has been created, opening up about being a female gamer is not as easy as we would like to think.

In an article written by Stephanie Barrett for *Metro UK* titled “*Men Don’t Like Women Who Play Games- What it is Really Like to Be a Girl Gamer in 2017*” she writes that, “Admitting you are a girl in an online game can feel a bit like opening a bucket of KFC at a PETA rally.”

According to Brooke Grover, an 18-year-old female gamer, the experience is not unique.

“The general reaction of men when they find out I am girl gamer is surprise and shock, and if I haven’t revealed my gender while playing an online game it is usually assumed I’m a man.”

Male gamers seem to often forget about the female population.

According to Grover, the worst part about being a female gamer? “I instantly become the target of many sexist jokes, they will assume I am not good at playing because of my gender, and it can make me feel insecure about my abilities. Because of that I’ll try my best to keep my identity hidden online.”

It is definitely a concerning matter that this experience is not rare. Many female gamers feel it necessary to hide their identity just to avoid ridicule, whether it be sexist

comments or questioning their abilities because of their gender.

It’s due to this preconceived notion that women are the princesses who need rescuing and men are here to save us that make it easier for them to doubt the abilities of women in gaming.

To date, we have progressed in so many other issues we should have learned to leave the gender roles out of gaming and not base people’s worth or abilities on what gender they choose to identify as.

Unfortunately, the sexism doesn’t stop just in the players of the games, but are also found in the games themselves.

“Many games including female characters tend to exploit the character, making her wear very revealing clothing that is not necessary

and giving her an unrealistic body. These over sexualized female characters give me and other females an unrealistic image of what we should look like,” says Grover.

It’s no secret that men in games are given protective armour that is appropriate for fighting, and the same cannot be said for female characters.

Being aware of the sexism in gaming is important. Although we are in a time where society is slowly progressing and is getting better at eliminating gender roles and stereotypes—we must be aware that they still exist and even thrive in certain communities. It’s important to be aware of it because we need to work on eliminating it, to make the gaming community a safe and better space for people of all genders.



The 2017 adaption of *Wonder Woman* emphasizes the importance of feminine power—armour and all.

Female characters deserve better

Who even makes sexy bikini steel plate armour?

JESSICA WILSON

It makes sense for male and female clothing to be fitted differently. There are inherent physical differences that make it so that clothing should be made to be practical and comfortable for either sex. So, from a fit perspective, it makes sense that there should be some differences between men’s and women’s clothing.

It often seems that these differences, especially in video games and comics, do not exist for practical reasons. It seems that they exist to enforce gender roles; and make it more difficult to break free of the gender binary.

The idea of pants-for-boys and skirts-for-girls has not always been enforced as strictly as we might think. Most notably, in Scotland it was more practical for male soldiers to wear something differing from traditional trousers. Scotsmen wore kilts into battle and earned a fearsome reputation as “ladies from hell”

amongst the Germans they fought. Perhaps they were so fearsome because their male anatomy was more comfortable in the loose fitting, free flowing kilt?

When it comes to the creation of female characters, the practicality of their outfits often seems to go out the window in favour of pleasing the cismale portion of the audience. While maintaining some typically-feminine elements in an outfit can help prove that anything feminine is not inherently weak, the opposite is done when an outfit or a suit of armour would limit a woman’s movement on the battlefield or make it more difficult for her to do her job.

Striking a balance is possible. In the latest *Wonder Woman* movie, the protagonist’s outfit is perfectly adequate for what she needs to do. It provides her with freedom of movement and is perfect for her

character. Her armour has various elements that cater to her fighting style, such as a leather skirt with strategic cut-outs to allow for her signature kicks.

Women can most certainly wear more masculine clothing. *Wonder Woman*’s clothing screams that femininity is not a weakness.

An important message for everyone, from little girls seeking empowerment, to men afraid to express traditionally feminine traits.

The state of female characters in video games and mainstream media as a whole is improving; there is still a long way to go in the design and features of most female characters.

Mainstream video games often seem to adhere more strictly to the gender binary than most other forms of media and this is evident in their limited clothing options. In fact, when it comes to female characters who fight the same battles as men, what “armour” they have often offer very little protection whatsoever while hyper-sexualizing them; in reality, would be uncomfortable to fight in or would restrict their movement.

Mika, in *Street Fighter V*, is adequately clothed up to her knees. Past that, her designers covered up as little of the rest of her as possible. For a wrestler, it would be practical for her to wear tight-fitting clothing, but a thong and very little breast support, or coverage, would not be very comfortable in the middle of a wrestling match. It seems that Mika was created with an exclusively cismale audience in mind, despite the fact that this game was released in 2016 and we know that fighting games aren’t just played by one specific cohort of the population.

While there have been many steps in the right direction in recent years, we should continue to challenge the idea that anything feminine is weak; and demand that clothing and armour for female characters match what they would require in real life to offer adequate protection and freedom of movement. With strong female characters comes an acceptance of feminine traits and ideas, making it more acceptable to do everything from expressing emotion to wearing pink.

Giving strong female characters the clothing designs they deserve benefits everyone.



The casual sexism of nerdy men

The culture geeky men grow up in never really give them a chance

MATT STICKLAND, OPINIONS EDITOR

Growing up as a nerdy boy heavily influenced by video games and space operas meant that there was very little avoiding indoctrination into casual sexism.

Other articles in this issue cover the nuts and bolts of the issue. Needlessly skimpy and sexy armour. Heroes rescuing princesses’ (or other female characters.) While these things lay the ground work for how boys ‘*should*’ think about girls, they are relatively minor symptoms of a larger, more terrifying, underlying issue.

Without strong female characters, video games and hero stories teach boys that women are something to be earned. Mario, a plumber, rescues his princess, and therefore is entitled to marry her. In real life, if a plumber were to rescue Kate Middleton from a kidnapping, it would be absolutely ludicrous to expect that the reward would be her hand in marriage. Although men would probably still have an expectation of “drowning in it.” Meaning most men would, on some level expect that there would be enthusiastic, physical, female affection as a by-product of the heroism.

While it used to be more prominent in movies of the past, once a hero completes his task, he then claims his reward whether the women like it or not.

One of the single most egregious examples of this is Han Solo’s assault and subsequent courtship of Princess Leia. Stuck on a space ship together, Solo approaches Leia and starts touching her. She says stop. He gets closer and keeps touching her, she stays stop again so he presses her up against the wall, kisses her and *voila!* A romance is born.

This is not an isolated example. It happens frequently in pop culture, and in almost every character Harrison Ford has played.

As society has progressed, it sometimes seems like this narrative has fallen by the way side.

In reality? It has just been pushed to secondary characters. How mad was Ron that Hermione dare have a romantic interest in Viktor Krum? Why was he mad? Because he liked her, and so therefore Hermione was supposed to be his reward for their brave adventures together.

As boys get socialized by pop culture they then also get a different lesson on sex ed than the formal; depending on the school, boys and girls are taught the mechanics of sex, how to stay safe, and the importance of consent.

It’s the last bit that causes the most consternation. It’s easy to understand how wearing a mask and using violence to get sex is wrong. It’s easy to understand that getting consent to do things is important. The mushy bit is where that consent starts.

If a boy has grown up on a steady diet of nerd and pop cultures, consent is completely given at the start of an interaction.

If Peach didn’t want to be betrothed to Mario, she shouldn’t have consented to being rescued. If Leia didn’t want to be kissed by Solo, she should not have asked him to stay and help fight the Empire. Since they wanted help with a rescue or a rebellion, consent was given, and taken, by Mario and Solo.

It’s a weird thing to digest as a boy, but most men are to some degree familiar with how this has played out in their lives. Some men never get past this.

This is where the concept of being ‘owed’ sexual attention if men pay for dates comes from. It’s where men get the idea that being ‘*nice*’ and doing things for women warrants requited affection.

Most of these men described above understand that consent is required for physical advances. Since consent is never really adequately explained to boys and young men, it’s unclear how exactly the consent for a date translates to consent for hanky-panky. So, most men won’t do anything about it. They feel too cowardly to seize the day like Han Solo – not because they don’t think they deserve to.

The casual sexism starts to manifest in different ways, but with this background it’s very easy to see where the more egregious misogyny found in some of the darkest corners of the internet comes from.

Good news for anyone who recognized a bit of themselves in this description. There is a very easy one step solution to fix any lingering casual sexism:

Talk to women with no expectations.

COSPLAY CONT’D FROM COVER

up on that, that’s my idea of this masculine, heroic, decent, stand-up guy.”

It wasn’t until he joined Facebook—when people were posting pictures of their own Indiana Jones costumes and associating the word “cosplay” with them—that Lidstone realized that he could be part of all of this too.

In 2010 he went to Hal-Con dressed as Indiana Jones, joining the community.

“I’ll say this about the cosplay community,” says Lidstone. “And it’s something I never expected to learn. The cosplay community—I think worldwide—but definitely, definitely, definitely in Halifax is such a welcoming community. It is a community that is blind to whatever persuasion a person might be. Their height, their weight, their sex, their colour, their creed, their religion, their whatever it’s just like ‘you are welcome to be here,’ it also applies to your level of creativity. If you are like well I can’t make things, but I want to wear this costume, it’s like ‘you are welcome to wear that costume.’”

Lidstone has joined many different groups over the years to do cosplay; including Hal-Con Super Friends, who make public appearances in parades, and do charitable work as well as the Maritime Heavy Armor group, who take pictures with people on the Halifax waterfront to raise money for charities.

Cosplay has taken off over the years as fandoms get larger, creativity gets easier with technology and conventions like Hal-Con start to grow. Critics still exist, however.

According to Lidstone, people assume that when people dress up as fictional characters they believe they are Superman or Batman, but that’s not the case. He compares it to a football fan wearing the jersey of their favourite player.

“I’m just kind of saying I like this guy, and I’m in his corner.”

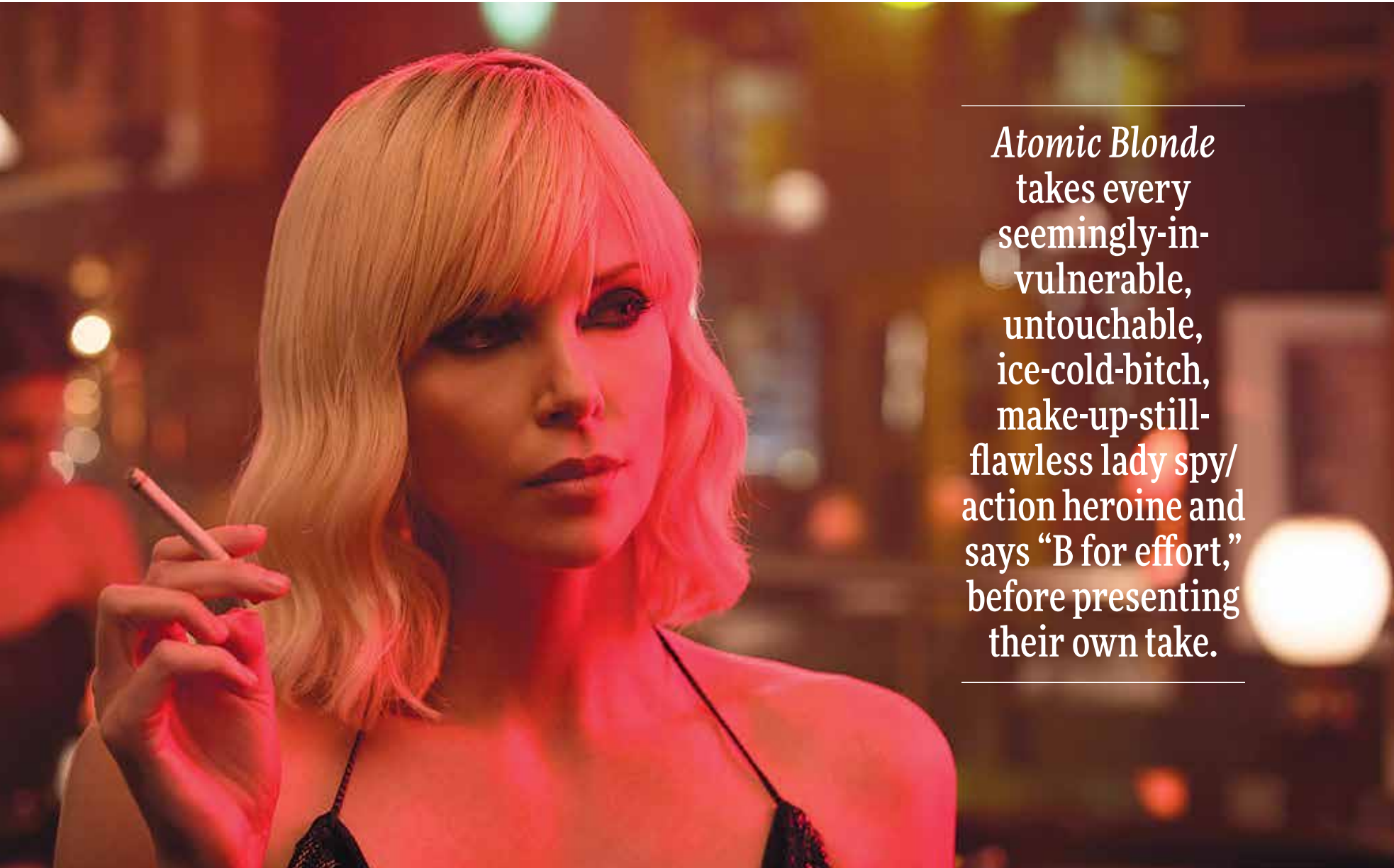
Cosplay isn’t just about the passion people have for the character they are dressing up as, but the passion other people have towards the same characters. Lidstone explains that there’s an honour system, where you’re “waving the flag” for a character.

“I don’t ever want to see anybody using foul language in a public setting. It’s like if you got to go outside to go for a smoke, find a corner to go around, don’t run the risk of a little kid seeing that and having it smudge their idea of who that character is. Or doing anything to conflict with what they expect of your character.”

Why does Lidstone and others participate in cosplay? “It’s colourful, and exciting, and fun, and silly, but it’s still a hobby,” says Lidstone.

“People don’t usually make a point of cosplaying characters they don’t enjoy on some level. So, the other thing is, it’s sort of a celebration of fictional characters that they enjoy or that they feel a connection to.”

Hal-Con starts today, September 22, and runs until Sunday, September 24. To see more of Fox Lidstone’s cosplays check out “Fox Lidstone Cosplay” on Facebook.



Atomic Blonde takes every seemingly-in-vulnerable, untouchable, ice-cold-bitch, make-up-still-flawless lady spy/action heroine and says “B for effort,” before presenting their own take.

Blonde Bombshell: Why *Atomic Blonde* Blew Me Away

A female heroine without the sexism

MADY GILLESPIE

Despite being a fan of Marvel, and a huge supporter of Wonder Woman, the film I anticipated watching the most over the summer was *Atomic Blonde*. I saw it twice.

I can't quite put my finger on why.

Was it because the trailer was beautifully done; using musical cues more effectively than some entire films? Because it was immediately evident that, not only was the lead of this movie a woman—but a queer woman? Maybe, it was because Charlize Theron is amazing, and the supporting cast was impressive in its own right? (Probably yes, to all of the above.)

Overall, it was because *Atomic Blonde* promised something

I see far too seldom; a female-led action movie that leaned into the main character being both incredibly badass and incredibly vulnerable.

I don't want to spoil the movie, but her job takes a physical and emotional toll. The director succeeds in doing so without using a sexualized, disgusting, male-gazey shot of a naked woman.

It's an achievement in and of itself.

A beautifully shot Cold War-era spy thriller with a fantastic soundtrack and a variety of morally ambiguous characters you can sink your teeth into.

Atomic Blonde takes every seemingly-invulnerable, untouchable, ice-cold-bitch, make-up-still-flawless lady spy/action heroine and says “B for effort,” before presenting their own take; a woman who is allowed to succeed and fail (look bad while doing it,) without being penalized or dehumanized for either.

They make her into a person.

She's clever, well dressed, and undeniably a badass. She has to make hard choices to get her job done, and sometimes she fucks up. Don't take my word for it—*Atomic Blonde* is available for purchase in October for those of you who missed it in theatres.

What's your superpower?

Your real-life Superpower based on your Zodiac sign

BY PIPER MACDOUGALL

LIBRA (Sep 23 – Oct 22)

“Adaptability”

In any social situation you find yourself in, you're always up for adventure. You love the company of your family, friends and peers, and don't mind jumping from one party to another. Regardless of how busy your schedule is, you're always able to squeeze things in here and there.

SCORPIO (Oct 23 – Nov 21)

“Zeal”

No matter what you want in life, you have the snuff to achieve it. Having zeal and enthusiasm makes you diligent when completing or participating in a certain task, hobby or activity. Don't let it betray you, while it is your power, putting it in the wrong place can leave you obsessive and pushy, kind of like a 2010 Justin Bieber fangirl.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov 22 – Dec 21)

“Wit”

Are you the joker in your squad? The life of the party? Do you surprise others with your quick antics or clever puns? This is one of the greatest superpowers; you can lighten a room with your effervescent personality, initiate joy and spread smiles across sad faces.

CAPRICORN (Dec 22 – Jan 19)

“Balance”

You have the power to calm the storm. If there is turbulence in your life or drama in any situation, you counterbalance it with harmony and perspective. Friends may reach out to for stability in their own lives. You are able to stay composed in compromising situations; a trait that has your back until the very end.

AQUARIUS (Jan 20 – Feb 18)

“Independence”

It doesn't make you sad or friend-less for enjoying a quiet afternoon reading in the library by yourself, or going to the movies solo; it makes you strong. Whether you're alone physically or stand alone in your opinions or ideas, it is those who aren't afraid to break apart from the crowd that achieve magnificent things.

PISCES (Feb 19 – Mar 20)

“Benevolence”

What the world needs are a few more Pieces, well at least more charity, kindness and compassion; all powers you possess. Being a humanitarian makes you a great human inside and out, through these qualities you will find rewarding opportunities abundant in your life. You have the power to save the world.

ARIES (Mar 21 – Apr 19)

“Fearlessness”

You may not be unafraid of everything, but you certainly do not let your fears stop you from getting what you truly want. You have the resilience to bounce back from making mistakes and admit when you're wrong. An Aries can be anything from a goal-getter to a jet-setter.

TAURUS (Apr 20 – May 20)

“Pragmatism”

Who would have guessed being “down to earth” is a superpower? Whatever highs or lows you reach in life; you will always be the same person on the inside. If you wake up one day rich and famous, your friends should know they can rely on you to be the same great chum you always were.

GEMINI (May 21 – Jul 22)

“Knowledge”

You're always learning and taking what you learn and manifesting it into something marvellous. You not only teach yourself important skills and facts, but also pass those on to others. Curiosity, openness and willingness to learn new things makes you a true hero.

CANCER (Jun 22 – Jul 23)

“Tenacity”

When you have an opinion or good idea that others do not necessarily agree with, you don't give up on it easily. If you come to realize you aren't meeting your goals, giving up is never an option for you. Instead of quitting, you have the power to change your routine to better get what you want.

LEO (Jul 24 – Aug 23)

“Creativity”

Steve Jobs once said “creativity is just connecting things,” and he wasn't wrong. Others may find it difficult to imagine where you came up with the genius idea to fix the coffee maker, the brilliant name for your trivia group, or how you're so skilled at art or music or writing, it's because of your creative powers. Hold onto them tightly and be thankful.

VIRGO (Aug 23 – Sep 22)

“Persistence”

It's believed that the most successful people came to be that way because they never gave up. No matter how bruised your pride may get, or how many hits your confidence takes, you have the power to preserver and live long and prosper.



By: L. A. Bonté



For more comics visit FilbertCartoons.com



It’s not so much the art, although people appreciate it. It’s the story and the connection of saying something that people are identifying with.

An inside look at the life of local artist Joel Duggan

ANASTASIA PAYNE

Joel Duggan has been drawing cartoons since before he was a teenager.

Duggan’s father introduced him to political cartoons at a young age; despite being too young to understand the jokes, knowing that someone was getting paid to draw cartoons was a life-changing revelation.

Around the age of 12, he took an interest in the “behind the scenes” featurettes that would air after animated movies on the Disney Channel. These clips would show how animators drew characters and made them move.

“Between that and a couple of how to books, I thought, you know, this is possible,” he says. “This is something that I could end up doing.”

Fast-forward to today and Duggan is an independent cartoonist, illustrator, publisher, and podcaster. He lives and works in his hometown of Dartmouth, NS. Working independently allows Duggan to enjoy all the rewards of being his own boss, such as two-hour lunch breaks and the freedom to personalize his schedule.

Duggan gets up at seven or eight every morning. He fixes breakfast and reads the newspaper, making sure to be in the studio by nine. Despite having the luxury of setting his own schedule, he maintains regular business hours to keep work flowing smoothly. Many of his clients are other businesses. By keeping a nine to five schedule Duggan maintains access to clients who also operate during regular work hours.

Duggan uses his mornings to complete tasks such as replying to emails. He jokes that dealing with such tasks are often easiest in the morning, after three cups of coffee.

Once the mundane details are complete, Duggan rewards himself with a lunch break.

Two hours allows him time to eat and workout before immersing himself in his illustrations.

He regards the hours of two to six p.m. as the most productive part of his day. Having exhausted all potential distractions, this is when his ideas come to life.

Just because he works during regular business hours, doesn’t mean Duggan isn’t burning the midnight oil. In addition to working all afternoon, he often finds himself having a late supper before returning to the studio between 10 p.m. and 12 a.m. This time is usually dedicated to completing the more repetitive tasks, such as inking finished cartoons and adding color. Duggan says it’s a long day, but having the work spread out helps. “Not everywhere that you work do you get a two-hour lunch.”

Duggan graduated from Mount Allison University in 2002 with a Bachelor of Fine Arts before spending a year studying animation at a private college.

He’s attended Hal-Con several times as both a vendor and a guest. During his visits as a guest, he’s taken part in panels for cartooning, fan art, and podcasting.

Since his first appearance at Hal-Con, Duggan has continued to attend conventions throughout the Maritimes. He sees conventions as a great way to meet people, from aspiring cartoonists, to artists he admires.

Despite social media drawing positive feedback about his work, Duggan enjoys conventions because they allow him the opportunity to watch people connect with his work. He cites this as one of the most rewarding parts of his career.

“It’s not so much the art, although people appreciate it. It’s the story and the connection of saying something that people are identifying with.”



Could you fight crime in this?

Superhero fashions that work

SERENA JACKSON

A critical look at superhero costumes and whether you could fight ‘all them bad guys’ in a suit-cape combo. Costumes are scored on inconsequential rating systems for readers’ convenience.

01. A classic costume

Superman’s costume is iconic. Easily recognizable. Hundreds of kids around the world throw on the ol’ blue and red for Halloween every single year no fail. The real Superman staple is that rippling bod, most Superman costumes include some sort of very fake macho biceps tacked underneath thin blue material. This costume gives a lot of leg-room for moving around, fighting monsters and stuff—it basically mimics those neon latex leotards workout girls wore in the early 80s.

(Okay—maybe I just want to take a Jazzercise class with Clark Kent. Is any of this so wrong?)

Could he fight crime in this costume?

I give him four capes out of five.

02. Money can buy you a super suit

Another iconic look, Batman totally brings it (please don’t ask me what ‘it’ is.) My guess is this costume is made out of 350 kinds of deluxe, breathable, fortified, made-in-a-lab fabric; it is surprisingly easy to replicate with a bit of black polyblend and a black bat emblem. The piece that would set you back the most would either be the mask or the cape—both of which are necessary to complete the look. The utility belt might be important too, if only to carry ammo or whatever he’s got on him. There are no pockets and his calf-length boots seem to be fitted skin-tight to his legs, so if he’s got a knife strapped down there I’d be very impressed.

A friend who is “into” superheroes and stuff, says Batman just “whips weapons out—like, he pulls out a grenade and it’s like, *BOOM!*, and he doesn’t have actual powers but is rich and owns a lot of gadgets. And he’s a cool guy.”

So there you have it.

Could he fight in this? Gonna circle ‘yes.’

03. Bugle boy hits ultimate geek status

This is just another onesie so I’m going to talk about his personality. I feel like most kids want to be Peter Parker on Halloween because he’s a nice guy with a relatable outlook, and not because they’re into the whole black-on-red web pattern.

The guy’s awkward and arguably one of the dorkiest heroes in the multiverse but also fights crime, “...like a boss. Don’t write that, though,” says my ultra-reliable source of information on all stuff hero-related. “It’s true though, he’s like, a total geek.”

Could he fight crime in this?

“Yes, and he does!” (*Thanks, Christina!*)

04. Girl in the boys’ club

Wearing actual armor, Wonder Woman is portrayed in a shiny breastplate and cape to match. We see a lot of red and blue, but also green and gold with matching star patterns. Her tiara is useful in that it keeps her hair out of her eyes and acts as a makeshift throwing weapon. In my expert opinion, Wonder Woman is the most stylish superhero yet, and is also amazing at her job.

She’s able to move around in her suit fairly protected—although her arms and legs may not fare well in colder climates. I’m sure she’s thought of that, though. She thinks of everything. I feel safer just looking at this costume.

Could she fight in this? Three hell-yeah’s out of four.

05. X-Men gets A-rating

Wolverine’s all trussed up in neon yellow, which may make him easier to spot. The sharp metallic claws are a convincing deterrent to keep the bad guys at a distance. The silhouette of his mask is especially interesting because it’s a half-mask—giving him lots of room to snarl at his enemies while still maintaining the coverage he needs. It’s an effective design. The claws fused to his knuckles, though—they must be pretty heavy. He’s fairly ripped and seems to hold them up with no problems, so I’m sure he could take out a bad guy or ten.

Could he fight in this?

He’s intimidating and I’m scared to comment. Please don’t make me comment. I like my face unscathed.

What have we learned today? All forms of fighting can be done in practically any outfit.

I’m currently fighting the urge to spend my entire weekend in a bathrobe watching Netflix comedy specials that I have already watched instead of see people I know. I may not be a superhero from a comic book or movie franchise, but for this, I do consider myself an everyday hero. One of the quiet heroes. Hey, we’ve all got our battles. I do mine in my bathrobe.

It’s a strange adventure

Halifax’s very own comic and curiosities shop

LOUISE ANDREWS



Strange Adventures is a curious little shop. Nestled on the corner of Prince St. and Lower Water St. It holds what appears to be an endless collection of comic books.

Originally, it began in 1992 with the owner, Calum Johnston, running a stand at the local flea market. From there, his business grew and eventually, he opened up a storefront. There are three locations: the main location is downtown Halifax, one in Dartmouth, they call it their “sidekick” store, and one in Fredericton, NB.



This is Mackenzie Belfour. Belfour has been working at Strange Adventures for three years. For her, the appeal of working at Strange Adventures is that “It is work, but it doesn’t feel like it.” “I mean, who doesn’t want to work and talk to people about comics, and cool movies, and things you enjoy?”

“You can come in not knowing what kind of comics, really not knowing what you’re into,” Belfour says. “But you can still find something in here.”



When asked about her favourite superhero, her face lights up and she says, “Vision.” without hesitation. She says he’s very aesthetically pleasing, and enjoys the author’s take on his storyline in a new run of comics based around him. “It’s very visually pleasing in here. And it’s very user friendly.” Being user friendly is something the workers at Strange Adventures strive for. “You can come in not knowing what kind of comics – really not knowing what you’re into,” Belfour says. “But you can still find something in here.”



Even people from outside the city are drawn to Strange Adventures. One particular customer loves it there because it contains “his whole childhood” in one store. Spiderman, a Marvel hero who gets powers from a radioactive spider bite, is his favourite.



“A tough question.” That’s what Belfour says about trying to choose something special about Strange Adventures. “There’s so much I love about it.” She finally settles on the customer base the store has. “We’ve got really great customers here. And there are a lot of customers who are like regular customers. We have regulars that come in who are really awesome people. You get to know them over the years, them coming to visit and they make this place a really welcoming place, and it’s really awesome to have such cool customers.”



Perry vs. Swift: the tumultuous rivalry

Music taking a back seat for the feud

ANAHIT KONDYAN

Kerry Perry and Taylor Swift’s rivalry makes headlines—tucked comfortably between stories on the impending nuclear war and that weird wavy brow trend. Their rivalry in itself nothing new, but their music is. We’ve watched them go head to head both on the charts and in the tabloids for years now. It all started when Swift released *Bad Blood* in 2013, going on record to say that the song was about another female artist who had tried to sabotage her. She sparked an insipid feud that left fans of both artists scratching their heads.

Grudge match between old friends Didn’t the two used to be friends?

Were they simply doing this for publicity? Or was there truth to the harsh words that were pre-approved and dealt in 140 characters or less? For a while, Perry was mum on the topic of her fallout with Swift, instead taking to twitter to warn her fans to ‘watch out for Regina George in sheep’s clothing’. It was soon noticed that the two had different roles to play in this grudge match. Swift, despite her tendency of playing the victim, is the

undisputed frontrunner—always one step ahead of Perry when it comes to maneuvering the battle field. When Perry was set to release her fifth studio album *Witness*, Swift released her entire discography on Spotify and beat Perry in streaming numbers within the week. This calculated powerplay left Perry scrambling like a deer in headlights, desperate to level the playing field.

Fighting back with new music

That opportunity arose recently when Perry announced that she’d be dropping the video for her new song *Swish Swish*; but Swift dealt her yet another blow and revealed that her long awaited single, *Look What You Made Me Do*, would drop the same day. It didn’t appear to phase Perry much. With the release of *Swish Swish*, she would finally be able to tell her side of the story. But when the video dropped many were left confounded at what it was exactly that they were watching. Perry has never shied from embracing eccentricities and trying out concepts other artists would deem bizarre. *Swish Swish* delivered a discombobulated mess of mismatched parts that’s difficult to stomach. The video showcases Perry and co. as players on a laughably terrible basketball team—ironically coined The Tigers—who must face off against their intimidating opponents: The Sheep. The Tigers are on the brink of losing before, *BAM!*, a moment of inspiration (and an IV drip of Kobe Bryant’s sweat) helps them unlock their inner strengths—including profusive perspiration and bizarre taco seduction. The whole thing feels like one big joke. It falls flat even by

Perry’s notoriously vapid standards. The song that was supposed to be her grand clapback is uninspired and offers little to recommend except, perhaps, that appearance by Nicki Minaj.

Dramatic videos failing in the music department

Swish Swish became a laughingstock, with Swifties everywhere quick to claim victory before *Look What You Made Me Do* was even released. When midnight rolled around high expectations fizzled. *Look What You Made Me Do* has Swift playing the victim again. Blaming others for her poor decisions in life. Her lyrics are threatening, yet lacking in any real substance or conviction. The whole song plays out as a cheaply produced, desperate attempt at shedding a persona that has become too tedious to bear. As Swift herself points out in a bizarre mid-song voice over, “the old Taylor can’t come to the phone right now. Why? Oh, cause she’s dead.” After listening to her latest release, one can’t help but wonder if the Old Taylor took her good music to the grave with her. Whatever the reasons for their feud may be, it’s apparent from both Taylor Swift and Katy Perry’s latest releases, that their bitter rivalry has drawn the attention away from the music. Considering the fact that both songs went on to garner millions of views and have been a hot topic since their release, it’s clear that whatever publicity the two are garnering from their enmity, it’s doing nothing but wonders for their sales. As they say, money talks, and these two are taking their *Bad Blood* straight to the bank.



Men's cross-country aim for conference championship

Finishing second in the AUS last year, Dal believes they can win

JOSH YOUNG, SPORTS EDITOR

Racing their way from being the runner-up last season, into being the Atlantic University Sport (AUS) champions this season, is the Dalhousie men's cross-country team's mindset.

"Every time I have an interview with the *Gazette* and the men's cross-country team comes up for the last five years, I have talked about how young, building and developing our team is," said the team's Head Coach Rich Lehman. "I have done that enough times to now say that we're there. They're expected to win a conference championship this year."

Lehman also said if his team could finish in the top 10 in the AUS championship than that will make it a good year. He said a top 10 finish might be a stretch, but if his team has a good day than it is possible.

The team will be similar to last year's team because they only lost two runners: Jake Wing and Brendan Gemmell. They added last season's MVP, Calvin DeWolfe, who left St. Xavier's University in order to go to Dalhousie's law school. This is big, because not only do they add the best runner in the conference, but also, they take him away from the school that has won the last six AUS titles.

"What Cal can bring that we haven't had in the last seven years is...he hasn't lost a team title yet," said Lehman. "He knows what it is like to be a part of a team that goes out and gets it done. And he can lead a little bit that way."

Team co-Captain, Will Russell, believes DeWolfe can have a deeper impact than being a fantastic runner with winning experience.

"He has been a leader not just in terms of his attitude and work ethic, but he has also been a very good team pillar that we can build

a culture around," said Russell. "I think adding Cal is a lot more valuable than just adding a former MVP and former team champion".

Another new addition is first-year runner, James Cromack, who Lehman says is the best cross-country recruit they have had in seven years. The Caledon Ontario native won nine regional championship medals and was his high school team's cross-country MVP every year.

Cromack doesn't have any personal expectations because cross-country is "such an unpredictable sport." He wants to make sure he helps his team to his fullest capabilities and he feels he has a lot of runners to look up too as he starts his AUS career.

At last season's AUS championship, five current Tigers (including DeWolfe) finished in the top 12. If runners like Callum Drever, who finished 11th and AUS rookie of the year Trent Lynds, who finished 12th can squeeze into the top 10, then they should be a lock to win the AUS championship because they have half of the top 10 runners.

The team was close last year, they finished second in every AUS conference race they ran in. The team's other co-Captain, Angus MacIntosh, believes being a fully committed team is what it will take in order to win the title this year.

"I think most importantly is a team buy-in, making sure everyone is moving together in the same direction and making sure we are putting quality workouts and doing what we have to do in between the workouts to make sure we are at our fittest and ready to go for each race."

Dynasty is an appropriate word to describe the Dalhousie men's field lacrosse team the past few years.

They have won six straight championships and have not lost a game since 2013. This year is going to be different.

The past few seasons the team's roster has been fairly consistent but this year they have more new players than returning ones. The team's Head Coach, Connor Dubreuil, says they have 18 new players, and 14 returning.

In previous seasons, Dubreuil and his coaching staff worked more on setting up and fine-tuning the team to get them prepared for the start of the season. With so many new faces this year, it has meant that the coaches have had to spend more time learning about their players and their team; and teaching fundamentals like communication.

Dubreuil does believe there could be a learning curve. The team graduated all of their starting attackmen last year and has four first-years coming into that position this year. The team is experienced on the defensive side of the ball with two returning goalies, and has three defenders: Hayden Nix, Elliot Fougere and Neil McCallum, who will start their 14th game together once the season begins.

Even though the attackmen have a lot of potential, Dubreuil is expecting the defense to bail them out at times.

"There is also a lot of talent coming in with the freshman class on the offensive end and I think their ceiling is pretty high," said Dubreuil. "If they put in the work and the defense can hold the fort for the first little bit, I think we can have two really strong units by the end of the season."

Whether or not having a young team will impact this group's chances to continue their winning and championship streak is not something Dubreuil gives a lot of thought about. He is more concerned with how his team is going to play during each individual

practice and game.

"We don't really like to look too far ahead, and we just like to focus on what we can take care of," said Dubreuil. "We can control practices, we can control our preparedness for games, but we can't control streaks or championship runs and all that sort of stuff, we just try to focus on what we can handle on the field and in between the lines."

Fourth-year-player and Student President, Brett McGuire, does believe that another championship is possible this season, even with such a young team.

"I always do" (believe they will win a championship,) said McGuire. "Even though we have a lot of new faces, we have a lot of eager new talent that are willing to learn and willing to buy into the system, and really work hard at getting it. For us, the guys who have won, we would like to keep winning and we want to build a culture like that so the young guys can come in and build off that culture."

First-year-player Fin Depencier is also confident in the team's abilities.

"We have a lot of rookies but I think we're absolutely still capable of dominating," said Depencier.

With such a rich recent winning history, it would be understandable if the young team felt too much pressure to keep both the win streak and championship streak alive.

No one on the team thought it would be an issue. Nix believes the returning players will be able to lead the team through that pressure. Others, like McGuire, said the team doesn't think about it a lot, but he looks at the pressure as a positive instead of a negative.

"I don't think it adds any negative pressure, just enough incentive to work hard and keep doing what we're doing."

If they keep doing what they're doing, given the history of the program, it should lead to another successful season. Whether that leads to another championship is yet to be known.

Lucky number 7?

With so many new players, can the men's field lacrosse team win their seventh straight championship?

JOSH YOUNG, SPORTS EDITOR

Logging into eSports: Big changes coming to Dalhousie's gaming community

After almost three years off. A student is trying to bring it back with a few changes

ALEXANDRA SWENY, VISUAL EDITOR



Society president hopeful Kaylin Dean is looking to revitalize Dalhousie's gaming society. Photo by Alexandra Sweny.

The Dalhousie eSports society is respawning.

After not being active since the fall of 2014, Kaylin Dean, a Dalhousie theatre student is hoping to channel the university's passion for gaming into a healthy and vigorous society.

"This year, I came back thinking 'I know what I'm doing, and I'm going to do this thing,'" said Dean.

eSports is short for 'electronic sports' and encompasses everything from real-time strategy games and first-person shooter games, to multiplayer online battle arenas. While these descriptors may not mean much outside of the gaming community, the games themselves are almost household names: Call of Duty, League of Legends, and Dota 2 all fall within the realm of eSports.

The Dalhousie eSports Society (DeSS) has existed for over a decade and boasts 491 members on its Facebook page; but since the previous president's graduation Dean says the society "sort of fell out of existence".

After posting publicly in the group that she was willing to lead the society this year, Dean is now running for society president and says she had several previous members reach out with advice and support.

Along with a partner running for treasurer, Dean has researched the community both within Dal and beyond; she already has several changes in plan for the school year.

At the top of her list: changing the name of the Dalhousie eSports Society to the Dalhousie Gaming and eSports Society.

"We want to open the society up to a broader community," she says. "People I've been talking to have been giving me really great feedback, like telling me they don't know what eSports are—and that's important, that's something I need to be aware of."

Dean explains that because the term eSports is still relatively new, prospective members often overlook the society because of it. By changing the name, Dean hopes students will recognize the familiar term "gaming" and be interested in learning more.

In some cases, Dean believes the language can entrench an already steep gender divide in the community. Out of the 491 members in the society, Dean says that only about seven per cent identify as female.

"Survival games, World of Warcraft as an example, are generally not considered eSports," Dean says. "So even though those types of games are very popular with female gamers, they might not be as likely to join."

In this sense, Dean and her partner hope renaming the society would help more female gamers become involved in the Dalhousie gaming community.

Patrick Kell, a fourth-year commerce student majoring in accounting, is one of the society's few, currently active, members and hopes this year will help draw in new students.

"Dal is very behind the growing trend of eSports," Kell says. "A lot of other schools have thriving eSports societies, as well as eSports teams that compete in leagues and even can earn scholarships for their school."

That's why this year Kell has high hopes for the society under Dean's leadership.

"I really hope that this society can start strong again and grow year after year," Kell says. "I know there is a large group of students at Dal interested in eSports and video games. These students currently have no place to gather and enjoy their hobby and I really hope that this society can change that."

For the term eSports itself, Dean admits that there are numerous ways to interpret the "sports" portion of eSports.

"Some people have called them mind-sports," she says. "There's a lot of dexterity, quick thinking and planning involved. And if you want to play well, there's a team aspect as well."

She also understands why people may be hesitant to call eSports a sport.

"(Other) people think sports are sports, and that's fair," says Dean. "I don't want to say it's an athletic sport, because it's not. But there's that same adrenaline rush – a quick reaction or forethought can win you a game."

Much like with other athletes, Dean says that adrenaline is what keeps gamers coming back for more, time and time again.

"Why do we keep playing? It's so second-by-second. You have these resources in-game, and you need to be able to read the situation around you, read your teammates... It's quick and high-stakes. You have to be smart to play."



Women's soccer team win first game

Hudder and Lalande score to give the Tigers a 2–0 win over UNB

SARAH MOORE

The young Dalhousie women's soccer team won their first game of the season, 2–0, at home against the University of New Brunswick Varsity Reds.

With seven rookies on the team, the Tigers' win was partly due to establishing a program where new players can be brought in, ready to contribute to the team's success.

"The senior players have worked very hard to get the program to a point where we can bring in some young kids and the young kids have come in ready to go, so I think there's a mutual respect there," said Head Coach Cindy Tye.

The V-Reds dominated the first part of the game by controlling possession. UNB came close to opening the scoring when fullback Cierra Thomas hit the post off of a corner kick.

The first goal of the game came 16 minutes in from Tigers striker, Jensen Hudder; the fourth-year buried a penalty kick into the low right corner following a handball in the box.

Dal struck again at the 27-minute mark of the half. Midfielder Rachele Lalande scored on a beautifully placed corner kick that sailed into the corner of the net.

The Tigers were pleased with how they capitalized on their opportunities in the game.

"I think we are miles ahead of where we were last year already," said Tigers Captain Amanda Bowles, "I think we did a really great job of finishing our chances and playing as a team."

With just over two minutes to go in the game, a collision near half sent Dal striker Haley Birrell to the ground. While there was no foul on the play, after the game the rookie had an ice pack strapped to her head. She played in the team's next game so she ended up being fine.

The Tigers are looking forward to more success during the rest of the season. Their home opener has given them an indication of where their strengths and weaknesses lie.

"I was pleased with the game," said Tye. "It's a good starting point for us, it gives us lots of good pictures to work with and then some that we really need to work toward to be better at, so it's a good start."

If Dal athletes had superpowers

The Gazette gave different Dalhousie athletes superpowers based on their sport and athletic achievements.

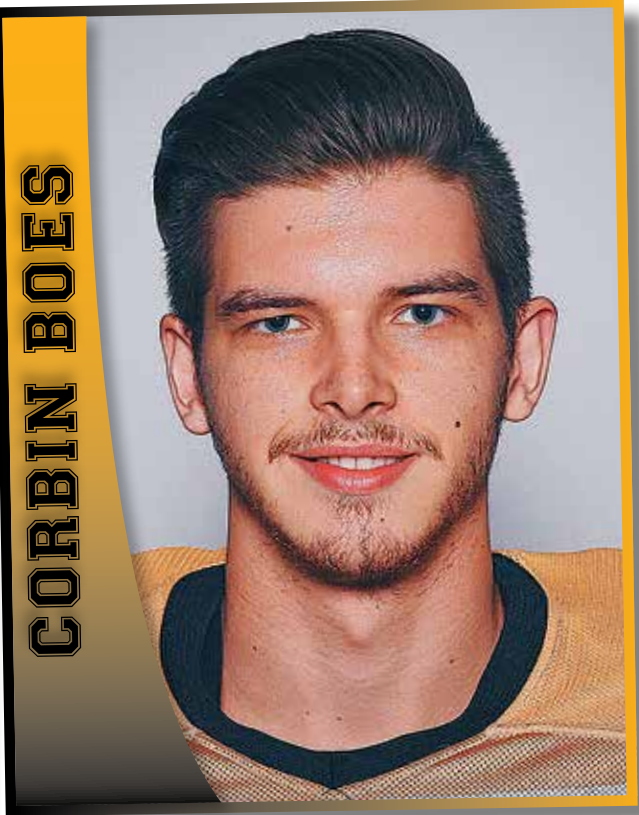
JOSH YOUNG, SPORTS EDITOR



Athlete: Mike Van Der Poel
Sport: Track and Field
Position: Sprinter
Super Power: Super speed

Last season as a second year sprinter, Mike Van Der Poel set an Atlantic University Sport (AUS) record by running the 300 meters in 34.96 seconds. At the 2017 U Sports national championships, Van Der Poel finished third with a time of 34.40 seconds.

He was named AUS Track athlete of the year. Even with all the accomplishments, Van Der Poel doesn't think he is fast. "I never really think of myself as fast it is just that other people tell me that I am," he said. He thinks this is because there are other athletes that are better than him in their sport, so he doesn't see himself as particularly special, he sees himself as an average athlete. Van Der Poel admits he didn't watch many superhero movies growing up, but he enjoyed the Sonic video games, so that is his favourite comic hero.



Athlete: Corbin Boes
Sport: Hockey
Position: Goalie
Super Power: Super reflexes

Boes uses his reflexes effectively. He regularly faces North-of-30° shots a game and has lead the AUS in save percentage the past two seasons. His strong play has caught the attention of the Detroit Red Wings who have invited Boes to this year's training camp. Outside of hockey, Boes says having quick reflexes is similar to reacting to different life situations. He was able to adapt and react to the new challenges that he faced while living on his own for the first time. His favourite superhero is Batman, which Boes believes works well with quick reflexes because Bruce Wayne had to react and adapt himself into a superhero, instead of having his powers naturally given to him. "In relationship to the quick reflexes, I guess you have to admire how Batman is more or less a human and he has taken on a different persona through his training and allows him to be the figure that he is," said Boes.



Athlete: Robertha Charles
Sport: Basketball
Position: Forward
Super Power: Super accuracy

In her rookie season, Robertha Charles lead the Tigers with 9.1 points per game and a field goal shooting percentage of 43.4, which was also sixth best in the league. "We have a lot of good shooters on the team and to be considered one of the good ones is nice," said Charles. Charles is constantly working on her shot in order to sustain it, and make it better. "Coach (Anna Stammberger) always says to us to try to get 500 shots a day in the summers so I try to do that," says Charles. She tries to shoot in the same positions that she would shoot in a game in order to be comfortable shooting from those spots. Her favourite superhero is Superman, because he can do anything and he's always there when people need help.



The men's team celebrates after a goal at their Sept. 9 game against the University of New Brunswick. Photo by Trevor MacMillan.

Men's Tigers propel soccer selves to victory

Dal was flat in the first half but scored two goals in the second to win 2-0

JOSH YOUNG, SPORTS EDITOR

The right recipe was found in the second half to lift the Tigers to a 2-0 win over the University of New Brunswick Varsity Reds in Dalhousie's first game of the season. That is how Tiger's Head Coach Pat Nearing described it. "I think we sort of took 45 minutes to get going," said Nearing. "Kallen (Heenan) gives us a great work ethic up front and we subbed Tareq (Armouh) back on who had the second goal. It is like making a recipe and you got to get the right ingredients." The game did not start out well for the Tigers. Early in the game, Tiger's second year midfielder, Hassan Alnuwaysir, took a knee to his back and had to leave the game. Because of the loss to Alnuwaysir, the Tigers were out of sync in the first half. "We had to make an adjustment and I don't think we got our momentum back after he came off the field until halftime," said Nearing. The good news is Alnuwaysir returned in the next day in Dal's game against Acadia. The Varsity Reds had the best opportunity to score in the half. Mario Maldonado fired a corner kick that Dal keeper T.J. Leopold dove out to grab. Leopold missed and was caught out of position. Luckily, two Tigers defenders were able to block

two shots to prevent the ball from going into the open net. In the second half, the team put in fourth-year-striker, Kallen Heenan, and he immediately brought offensive energy to the game. He quickly created a scoring chance that was denied by a blocked shot. A few minutes later he dove head first to head a rebound into the net to give the Tigers a 1-0 lead. The Tigers struck again 27 minutes later. Heenan passed the ball to Armouh. Armouh took two strides into the box and fired the ball past UNB keeper, Kristain D'Amore, to make the game 2-0. With 11:41 left in the match, it looked like the V-Reds scored off a redirected corner kick. However, the referee turned it back because it looked like Leopold was interfered with. That is as close as the V-Reds would come to scoring and the Tigers won 2-0. Even though the Tigers were outshot 8-3 in the game, they were not too worried about it because the majority of shots they gave up were not dangerous. The Tigers were more efficient scoring on 2/3 shots. Team Captain, Jonathan Doucette, summed it up the best, "We're a quality over quantity team and I think you saw that today,"

The value of experience

Playing in the Canada Games gives a head start on the 2017 AUS season

BY CAM HONEY-WEBB

No matter how hard you try in practice, you can't replicate game experience. Four first-year members of the Tigers women's soccer team were able to pick up some of that valuable experience when they suited up for team Nova Scotia at the Canada Games this summer. "Yeah that's definitely a unique experience," says Tigers' Head Coach, Cindy Tye, who also coached team Nova Scotia. "Competition is unique to be in. And for them to have been in (the Canada Games) I think it helps when they come into this environment. It's not so daunting, cause they've already been through very tough competition." Keeper Kate Fines, defender Olivia MacIntyre, and strikers Haley Birrell and Alyssa Hartlen, all played prominent roles for the bronze medal winning Canada Games team. The high level of competition helped prepare them for the sizable jump from their youth club and high school teams to the university level. Through two games of their AUS career, each has looked comfortable playing at the U-Sports level. Fines is 2-0 with 10 saves and has yet to allow a goal. MacIntyre has played every minute on defense. Hartlen has come on as a substitute in each game and looked confident making plays with the ball. And Birrell scored her first career goal in the team's 1-0 win over the Acadia Axewomen. "I didn't have any doubt that when given the opportunity they could do that," says Tye. The first-year Tigers have had the benefit of working with Tye in the team Nova Scotia program over the last several years. They know what the coach expects from her players and already have a solid understanding of her systems. This understanding of positional roles and expectations gives them a head start over other first year players. Tye is now in her second season at the helm; she believes that the Tigers are more comfortable and developed than they were at this time last year. At the beginning of last season the team was coming off a disappointing 2015 campaign where they missed the playoffs. They had a new coach running a new system and needed to build chemistry from scratch. "Last year was about setting standards and routines," she says, explaining the transition from the old program to her program. "Our starting point is much further along than it was." While expectations are high for the first year Tigers, Tye is quick to point out the importance of her veteran players aiding in their development. "They are still first-years so the older kids can lend them some experience for sure," she says. "But in terms of technically, tactically and athletically, they can do it." The results on the field speak for themselves. The Tigers have already beaten two teams that finished ahead of them in the AUS standings last season, in the UNB Varsity Reds and the Axewomen who began the season ranked ninth in the country. With the teams early season success the expectations are high for the squad and its four homegrown relentless rookies moving forward. "It's exciting," says Tye.

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