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DALHOUSIE GAZETTE

NORTH AMERICA'S OLDEST CAMPUS NEWSPAPER, EST. 1868



AS THE PLANET SHIFTED ONLINE DURING COVID-19, STUDENTS EMBRACE LOVE AND DATING IN A VIRTUAL WORLD. (PHOTO BY GEOFFREY HOWARD)

Happiness and heartbreak

Our annual love and sex issue: pandemic edition

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LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

Hooray for happiness

Dear reader,

Here it is: the *Dalhousie Gazette's* annual love and sex issue. I hope these articles serve as a light-hearted break from the never-ending depressing pandemic news cycle.

However, we can't celebrate love and sex this year without acknowledging how much devastating heart-break the world has experienced throughout the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. In Canada, more than 22,000 people have lost their lives to the virus. Thousands of families continue to mourn the death of their loved ones.

Back in issue nine of this year, I argued: optimism is the way forward for 2021. But it's not easy to tell yourself to stay positive amidst all this horror. I can't say I've managed to retain all the positivity I had in January, but recognizing bits of good news, and small moments of love and happiness in my everyday life, has been getting me through these past few months.

Every time I hear or experience something good, I shout a mental hooray: Vaccine deliveries are back on track in Canada, and Nova Scotia Premier Iain Rankin says interested province residents will all get their dose by the end of June. Perhaps both those facts will change in a week's time, but for now, hooray!

I took a walk with my sister through Point Pleasant Park the other day — the sun was out and it was beautiful. There was a time last year when most provincial and municipal parks were closed, and maybe that will happen again. But for now, hooray for being able to enjoy nature!

My friend got her wisdom teeth out recently, and I had the pleasure of listening to her lament in an anaesthesia-induced high about how her doctor's name was Chad. (Why that made her sad I have no clue.) So, hooray for the hilarious moments of life anaesthesia and friendship give us.

Some days may not be worthy of a hooray. But if we all try and identify those small moments of love, happiness, joy or connection, maybe the months to come will be a little easier to get through. For that possibility, I say hooray.



-Tarini Fernando, Editor-in-chief

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New major in Black and African diaspora studies

Dal students will soon receive a more complete history education

BY NATALIA TOLA



DAL PROFESSOR AFUA COOPER HAS SPEARHEADED THE PUSH FOR MORE BLACK-CENTRIC EDUCATION. STARTING NEXT FALL, STUDENTS CAN ENROL IN COURSES FOR THE NEW PROGRAM. (PHOTO BY KARLA RENIC)

Dalhousie University is creating a new major in response to recommendations for more Black-centric education by the *Report on Lord Dalhousie's History on Slavery and Race*, which examined the university's history and connections to slavery.

The new program will be officially titled a bachelor of arts major/honours degree in Black and African diaspora studies under the faculty of arts and social sciences.

The program is among the first of its kind in the country, spearheaded by Afua Cooper, chair of the Lord Dalhousie scholarly panel on slavery and race.

Cooper has been working to increase Black and African diaspora studies at Dal for nearly 10 years. She began pushing for a Black and African diaspora studies minor at Dal after being named the James Robinson Johnston chair in Black Canadian Studies in 2011. The minor was instituted in 2016.

Cooper said she's glad to see this major created after launching the minor "did seem like an uphill battle," she said. "We have overcome that. I think the university is at a place where they are saying, 'We are supporting this' and it's not just lip service but, as the saying goes, putting their money where their mouth is," Cooper said.

Registration for the major will not be available until fall 2022, but students will be able to register for courses that will count towards the major this fall, according to Rachel Banks, a master's student in the department of philosophy, and a research assistant for Dal's Black and African Diaspora Stud-

ies program committee, who are developing the program.

Black history is essential to all history

Cooper said she was shocked after coming to Dalhousie in 2011 and learning there was not even a Black and African diaspora studies minor at the school.

If history departments fail to address Black and African diaspora studies, and its undeniable relevance, students aren't receiving a complete education, Cooper said.

"They are producing students who are absolutely unequipped to deal with the world," Cooper said. "We are producing students who don't have cultural competence. They don't have the intercultural skills. They don't have the knowledge." By educating all students about Black history and cultures, the university can make an impact in dismantling racism within the community, Cooper said.

For example, Cooper said some Canadians have told her they're surprised she speaks English so well. Cooper was born in Jamaica where English is the only official language.

"Why would you be surprised? English is my mother tongue," Cooper said. "You have a bachelor's degree, you should know those things. That's basic."

The idea of Black history as a central part of education is echoed by the committee who are developing the major.

"Black history is a part of our history, of every-

one's history. And it should be taught as such and not separate," said Banks. She said the goal is to make this program as big as political science or history at Dalhousie by inviting guest speakers, or potentially doing a co-op program.

"What will be real progress is once the program is established, seeing how Dal continues to grow, and embrace and foster the program. So by that I mean setting aside funds to hire new Black faculty, and to bring in graduate students from all around the world to come to Dal and engage with the program," Banks said.

Banks said the current university curriculum is complacent in causing students to believe Black scholarship does not exist.

"This further perpetuates the idea that there were no Black scholars back in the day, or there were no Black thinkers contributing to the field of history or political science. And I think that is a failure on the department's part," she said.

Dal moving in the right direction

According to Cooper, it's crucial for universities to support programs like this due to their role in the world.

"Dalhousie University is a major influence on the province of Nova Scotia and the Atlantic region. It is the flagship university of the Atlantic region. So we cannot continue producing knowledge about one set of people," Cooper said.

The introduction of this program, and the greater integration of Black history and culture into Dalhousie courses is a key part of creating a more diverse campus, Cooper said.

"We have to say, 'Where are African Nova Scotian students? Why aren't we seeing more of them on campus? What is going on?' It's not a simple matter of offering scholarships to African Nova Scotians," Cooper said.

Similarly, Banks believes the university requires deeper change than simply offering monetary supports to Black students.

"It's not just a matter of making an inclusive space, but it's also about making Black students feel like their contributions matter, and are just as important and are taken seriously in any field at Dalhousie," she said.

Banks and the committee are open to student feedback regarding what they'd like to see in the program. She can be reached at r.banks@dal.ca.

Dal burns through \$9.5 million pandemic handout

Where's the money going?

BY LANE HARRISON, NEWS EDITOR



THE DSU CONTINUES TO PRESS DAL FOR DETAILS ON SPENDING. (PHOTO BY GEOFFREY HOWARD)

The provincial government gave Dalhousie University about \$9.5 million in January 2021. According to Maddie Stinson, the Dalhousie Student Union (DSU) president, the university owes students a better explanation of where that money is going.

The province announced in January it would be providing \$25 million to universities across Nova Scotia to help them “manage the impact of the pandemic,” according to a provincial news release. Dalhousie received \$9,479,700 in total.

The university will be using the money to cover a \$9.8 million shortfall in its operating budget, according to Janet Bryson, Dalhousie’s associate director of media relations and issues management.

Without government assistance the university would have to use funds from its reserve budget to cover the shortfall, Bryson said. The reserve budget is made up of budget surpluses from previous years.

According to the fiscal update published in June 2020 the university believed it would be facing a \$28.5 million shortfall due to COVID-19. At that time, the university planned to reduce faculty budgets by 2 per cent and cut funding for teaching equipment purchases in half to help address the shortfall. Dalhousie has a reserve fund of \$12.2 million, bolstered by a \$6.4 million surplus in the 2019-2020 operating budget. At this time, the university planned to reduce faculty budgets by 2 per cent and cut funding for teaching equipment purchases in half to help address the shortfall.

The shortfall took place because of several expenditures the university had to make due to

COVID-19, Bryson said in an email to the *Dalhousie Gazette*.

According to Bryson, “Dalhousie has an open and transparent budget process.” But only if students know where to look and understand institutional budgets, Stinson said.

“I think it’s Dal’s responsibility to continue to educate students about how they’re spending our fees in a way that’s digestible to students,” Stinson said. “That’s something we’ve brought up repeatedly, being that our student body doesn’t have the time to look through a budget report.”

From surplus to shortfall

The new funding “will allow the university to support much-needed programs that were approved in the 2020-2021 budget,” Bryson said.

The shortfall is a result of both new investments made in response to COVID-19 and the waiving of certain student facility fees, which resulted in a revenue loss that contributed to the shortfall, according to the 2020-2021 budget.

“The university provided significant financial support for students through increased bursaries and by waiving some fees,” Bryson said.

According to the budget, the university spent \$10.6 million on this support, \$4.2 million on increased bursaries and \$6.4 million in fees normally paid by students.

The university waived all athletic programming and fitness centre fees for both the fall and winter terms, according to the budget.

“The fitness centre is open, but access is limited due to Public Health requirements, and many students are completing their studies remotely,” the budget said.

Increased bursaries for students also contributed to the shortfall covered by the provincial funding, Bryson said.

The university doubled its bursary funding from \$3 million to \$6 million due to the pandemic, according to the budget. Additionally, the university increased its support for student assistance programs for international students and students in designated groups by \$455,000, according to the budget.

Other expenditures that contributed to the

shortfall are those that were needed to transition all classes at Dalhousie online for the 2020-2021 academic year.

The university had allocated \$6 million to focus on strategic initiatives, things such as equity, diversity and inclusion, or student recruitment, according to the June 2020 fiscal update. Due to the pandemic, \$2 million of that had to be re-allocated for immediate spending on pandemic preparation.

According to the budget, that includes additional teaching assistants and other supports for faculty, funds for Academic Technology Services, and the Centre for Learning and Teaching to facilitate online learning through new software, as well as the Together@dal project — a program launched in the fall meant to connect new students with the campus community.

Students deserve more transparency

Every month, Stinson and the DSU executive team meet with members of Dalhousie’s senior administration to discuss student issues on the DSU radar.

Prior to the January meeting, the executive team consulted with members of the DSU council and other students to gain their opinion on

how the funding could best be used.

“When the executive brought it up, we were very quickly told that the topic of the \$9.5 million in public funding wasn’t up for discussion,” Stinson said.

Covering the shortfall is the goal of the funding, according to the provincial press release, which said the province issued

“When the university very publicly receives funding from the province, I do think that our community should be made aware of where that funding goes.”

the dollar amounts in response to information provided by the universities on expenses incurred during the pandemic.

“I do recognize that having a deficit in our budget does require attention,” Stinson said. “But when the university very publicly receives funding from the province, I do think that our community should be made aware of where that funding goes, and in this case, saying that that information is present, and the justification for that choice is present in our budget, I don’t think is enough of an explanation,” she said.

Cuddles during COVID-19

Students share their dog days of the pandemic

BY MORGANE EVANS



OWNER GRACE METCALFE CREDITS DISNEY WITH BOOSTING MORALE IN DIFFICULT TIMES OF ISOLATION. (PHOTO BY MORGANE EVANS)

The COVID-19 pandemic has forced people to work, relax and play all day with their pets at home. For some pet owners at Dalhousie University, this experience has been a mixture of labour and love.

Added love during lockdown

Grace Metcalfe, a first-year science student from Toronto, has discovered that just by caring for her 11-year-old Cavalier King Charles spaniel, Disney, she has had an easier time coping with the pandemic.

“Even just having her with us will boost the morale of the entire house,” she said. “I feel very lucky to have her.”

Kate Cameron, a third-year sociology student at Dalhousie has had her Maltese, Henry, for 12 years. When she moved back to Halifax in her second year, she decided to bring Henry with her, and has been travelling with him back and forth from Calgary ever since.

“Since the beginning of the pandemic, I have interacted with Henry more,” Cameron said, though this has mostly been inside, as she’s been worried about catching COVID-19 while leaving the house with him.

The isolation of the pandemic has created a deeper bond between pets and owners. To bond and to take care of Henry, Cameron has created a pandemic routine.

“I feed him in the morning and let him out four times a day to go to the washroom, give him lots of cuddles, feed him treats and groom him,” she said.

Similarly, Metcalfe said having Disney around is a welcome distraction from the current state of the world.

“It’s great to have [Disney] because she keeps me busy. Having her is helpful. She reduces depression and anxiety, and improves [me and my roommates’] mental health.”

It’s not all love and long walks

Caring for dogs during the pandemic has produced some challenges. Such as when Metcalfe and Disney completed their 14-day self-isolation after entering the province.

“It was pretty difficult just because you’re not able to take them for like walks or anything like that, and we had to stick strictly to the backyard,” Metcalfe said. “It was also difficult to have her in [my house] for the entire day because normally she’ll spend like a couple of hours outside.”

She has also noticed that social distancing rules have made it challenging to get Disney to socialize with other dogs.

“I find other people have changed, and don’t really come up and socialize their dogs. [On the sidewalks] people go across the street so they don’t have to walk past us. It kind of worries me because I don’t want my dog to get socially anxious because she’s not seeing other dogs.”

Cameron has found a way to get Henry to socialize just by virtue of living with other people.

“He always has people around him because of my roommates,” she said.

Both Metcalfe and Cameron believe their dogs have noticed a change since the pandemic began.

“[Henry] could probably sense that there were changes in the beginning,” Cameron said. The pair spent a lot more time together than usual when the pandemic began. She thinks that Henry has grown accustomed to the pandemic life and probably does not notice the changes as much anymore.

“[Disney] definitely has noticed a change in scenery, and she would have noticed a difference just because she’s not seeing dogs or family members as regularly,” Metcalfe said. “[She’s also] in this confined space and sees the same six people who live in my house a lot.”

An expert’s take

Silvia Jay, a dog behaviour consultant who has been working with dogs since the late 1990s, said in an email to the *Dalhousie Gazette* that the lack of socialization for dogs during the pandemic is not much of a concern.

“Even with ‘COVID-19 puppies,’ as long as they were still exposed, and as long as they’re with the odd visitor, that is typically enough to prevent neophobia [the fear of something new],” she said.

However, what is a concern is the effect of owners’ changing schedules on dogs during the pandemic. Jay explained newly adopted dogs can get

separation and isolation anxiety when their owners go back to work in person.

Dogs who were adopted pre-pandemic whose owners now work at home may not get enough rest — something they’d usually do while their human is at

work or class — which “can lead to all sorts of expressions rooted in frustration and overstimulation, including barking and generally overreacting to stimuli,” Jay said.

To help dogs get used to the constantly changing nature of the pandemic, Jay recommends owners take dogs out to explore the outdoor environment, leave them alone for a short time if they have developed separation and isolation anxiety, or provide them with a resting place away from humans.



CANINE COMPANION: DURING THE PANDEMIC, HENRY HAS PROVIDED A DAILY ROUTINE FOR HIS OWNER KATE CAMERON. (PHOTO BY MORGANE EVANS)

No captain, no problem

Dal students attempting to build an autonomous sailboat to cross the Atlantic

BY ANDY JUNG



SEALEON WAS LOST AT SEA IN 2018. (PHOTO PROVIDED BY THE DALHOUSIE AUTONOMOUS SAILBOAT TEAM)

A group of Dalhousie University engineering students are attempting to build the second autonomous sailboat to ever cross the Atlantic Ocean.

The Dalhousie Autonomous Sailboat Team is aiming to launch a fully autonomous sailboat in August 2021 to compete in the Microtransat Challenge, a transatlantic race of autonomous boats between university programs and engineering companies.

Dalhousie last entered the challenge in 2018. At that time the team was led by faculty who selected a group of students to work on the boat. But the 2018 team was disqualified when they lost contact with the boat after 76 days at sea. It was eventually found more than 200 days later on the coast of Ireland.

The team is now being led entirely by students. "Once this is done, we're going to put it in the water and we're not going to give it any information," said Nolan Cain, a fourth-year mechanical engineering student and the mechanical team lead. "Once it sets sail, it does all of its own steering and everything, and propulsion. We have a solar panel, so it can consistently recharge itself, and we just get location data from it every few hours."

The team

The team was initially run by the faculty of engineering, led by the past dean Josh Leon who became Dal's assistant vice-president of information technology services in 2019. Leon and other faculty members on the team selected upper-year students to work on the project, according to Jade Farr, the management team lead.

The failed boat was called the SeaLeon. This year's entrant is named Nautono.

This year, the team is made up of more than 40 students that range in experience from second-year to graduate studies, said Farr. Having a variety of students with different expertise is a major asset to the team, she said.

The team is divided into four sections based on students' interests and skill. These sections are management, electrical, mechanical and software.

The boat

According to Cain, the most important aspect of each team's work is ensuring it functions in harmony with the rest of the boat. While the mechanical team works on designing a mechanism to turn the rudder, they must regularly consult with the electrical team to ensure there's space for the required technology that will bring the boat to life.

All of this harmony, and the possibility of Nautono's success in the transatlantic competition, begins with its software.

"Our main focus is an upgrade to the navigation system, so that we can ensure that the boat actually goes where we want it to," said Seamus MacInnes, a third-year electrical engineering student on the software team.

Nautono will navigate its way across the Atlantic using a series of GPS waypoints that have been pre-programmed by the software team. To capture wind speed, it will be equipped with a weather station that senses the wind's direction and reacts accordingly.

Nautono also has the ability to make its own decisions, through software such as the automatic identification system (AIS). The AIS tells Nau-

tono if any other vessels are nearby, allowing it to change its course as it sees fit.

Nautono will be constantly recharging itself through a solar panel equipped to the boat.

The boat is being built with both cast resin and carbon fibre, which will make it both strong and lightweight, Cain said.

The project costs between \$7,000 to \$8,000, said Farr. The team was able to make up half of its budget through a \$3,000 donation from Dal faculty, as well as \$1,000 in sponsorship through a student on the team in the capstone program — a program within the faculty of engineering where industry members sponsor student projects that solve real world problems. The rest of the funds are being made up through corporate sponsors.

A challenging transition for a new team

Due to COVID-19, the team is facing the challenge of not being permitted to use Dal facilities.

"Going into Dal would have been easier," Cain said. "We know the layout of the labs and what we're able to use and what we have access to there."

Instead, they were able to gain access to the Centre for Ocean Ventures and Entrepreneurship (COVE) in Dartmouth, N.S. "That's been a huge help for us," Cain said.

Another large challenge, according to Farr,

has been the lack of information available about the SeaLeon, Dal's last autonomous sailboat.

"It's really important to have those transition documents and we just didn't have them," Farr said. Additionally, no one on the current team was also on the 2018 team.

"I'd say the transition has been a struggle for everybody," said MacInnes, "we don't have anyone on the software team that knew much about the old code coming into it. So, a lot of effort has to go into understanding the old code and finding out where it needs upgrading."

Despite the challenges and previous failures, the team is still inspired to see the project through.

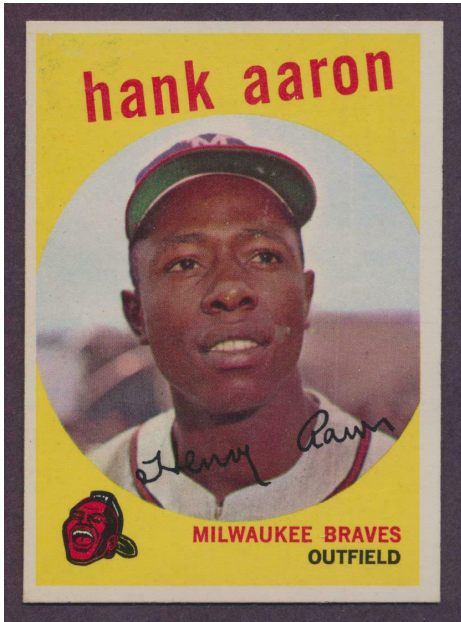
"It's just a really cool project," said MacInnes. "And it would be real fun to have our names on a boat sailing on its own to Ireland," he said.

"It would be real fun to have our names on a boat sailing on its own to Ireland."

Baseball legend trailblazed path for Black players

Why Hank Aaron's achievements must be recognized

BY TIGER CUMMING



HANK AARON, ONE OF THE GREATEST MLB PLAYERS EVER, PASSED AWAY IN JANUARY 2021. (PHOTO BY STEVE BURNS ON FLICKR)

When Hank Aaron retired from baseball in 1976, he did so as one of the greatest baseball players of all time. Aaron died in his sleep on Jan. 22, 2021. He was 86.

The feat he's most famous for was breaking Babe Ruth's career home run record of 714. Even after Barry Bonds eclipsed that record in 2007, Aaron still holds the Major League Baseball (MLB) record for career runs batted in (RBI) with 2,297 and total bases with 6,856. He is third all-time in career base hits with 3,771.

Before taking the MLB by storm, Aaron got his start playing for Negro League teams like the Indianapolis Clowns. In a recent decision, the MLB elevated the pre-1948 Negro Leagues to the status of the American and National leagues. This means while Negro League statistics before 1948 are included in MLB record books, Aaron's five home runs he hit for the Clowns are not counted as part of his major league home runs, having debuted in the '50s.

Although they may not leave a huge impact on where he stands in all-time leaderboards, the Leagues (before and after 1948) are commonly considered to be roughly as good as the MLB at the time. Considering players like Aaron played in the Negro Leagues after 1948, perhaps it's time to elevate all Negro League stats to the major league level.

Paving the way for Black baseball players

Aaron's Hall of Fame career came to be over the course of three decades worth of civil rights movements in the United States. Growing up playing semi-pro baseball in Mobile, Ala., he broke the colour barrier in the South Atlantic League in 1953 with the Jacksonville Braves.

Early in his pro career, Aaron's time in the minor leagues is often forgotten, but might be just as important as his MLB accomplishments. Throughout the season while playing in southern American states that enforced Jim Crow laws, Aaron, his fellow Black teammate Horace Garner and Puerto Rican native Félix Mantilla experienced racist abuse from both Jacksonville's and its opponents' fans.

Despite this abuse, and not being able to live, eat or stay at the same hotel as his teammates, Aaron was described by Jacksonville manager Ben Geraghty, in a 1957 *Sports Illustrated* interview, as "the most relaxed kid" he ever saw.

It's easy to forget widespread racism in baseball didn't disappear with Jackie Robinson signing with the Brooklyn Dodgers. Robinson opened a path for other People of Colour into the MLB, but the injustices he faced with the Dodgers, and the entrenched racism that Aaron had grown up in, was felt by every Black player trying to make it to the major leagues. The abuse would continue through Aaron's career, especially as he closed in on Ruth's home run record.

Recognition of the Negro Leagues

Just as Robinson's historic appearance with the Dodgers didn't end racism in the major leagues, it didn't immediately end Black baseball as it had existed for decades as the Negro Leagues. In his first professional contract, Aaron had previously played in the Negro American League for the Clowns in 1952.

The Negro Leagues of the early to mid-20th

century boasted players of extraordinary talent, though many aspects and initiatives in the leagues were underfunded and disorganized. Immediately after Robinson broke the colour barrier, the best way for a Black player to make it to the majors was through the Negro Leagues even if only a brief stint like Aaron had with the Clowns.

Players like Aaron, Ernie Banks and Willie Mays — all Hall of Famers during the '50s and '60s — got their starts in the dying days of the Negro Leagues. So the possibility that their achievements as Negro League players after 1948 might now be included as MLB-calibre is an interesting and exciting prospect.

While disorganized, the Leagues had spent decades growing into a premier competition with immense talent, and while breaking the

colour barrier was the best thing that has ever happened in major league baseball, it severely hurt the Negro Leagues.

In this sense, the Negro Leagues sort of went out with a bang. It wasn't from a lack of talent that doomed the Leagues, but issues on

"It's easy to forget widespread racism in baseball didn't disappear with Jackie Robinson signing with the Brooklyn Dodgers."

the organizational side. How can we overlook these players simply because of how the Leagues were run aground? That's like saying if the MLB went broke today then the next baseball league wouldn't recognize present-day stars like Trout, Mookie Betts or Bryce Harper because they were only around near the end.

As with the MLB, the calibre of competition in the Negro Leagues remained consistent throughout as elite-level baseball. And Aaron, the greatest player to ever come through the Leagues, played after 1948. Could that mean the post-1948 era was even better? Regardless, the whole pre-1948 rule just doesn't make sense.

Validating Negro League achievements from post-1948 would go a long way in acknowledging how Black players joining the MLB was a process and not a moment frozen in history. It would further cement Aaron's reputation as one of the greatest baseball players ever and one of the greatest athletes to lead the way for Black players into the upper echelons of their respective sport.

Love in the algorithm age

What's the verdict on dating apps?

BY MAYOWA OLUWASANMI, OPINIONS EDITOR



SWIPE LEFT, SWIPE RIGHT: CONSUMERS LOOK TO APPS LIKE TINDER AND BUMBLE TO FIND POTENTIAL MATCHES. (PHOTO BY GEOFFREY HOWARD)

Algorithms are now a part of our human experience, forecasting the outcomes of numerous activities from driving to takeout to social interaction. Now valued at US\$4 billion, the online dating industry is one of many tech innovations aiming to make life easier by helping us navigate the dating landscape and find *the one*.

Companies like Tinder and Bumble accumulate data from billions of users, using sophisticated algorithms to analyse and predict our potential matches. But are algorithms an effective means of finding love?

Dating app algorithms

According to Sucheta Soundarajan, a computer science professor at Syracuse University in New York, dating app algorithms are like recipes. You must have specific ingredients for your meal, and they must be combined in a certain order to produce the final result, Soundarajan says in an article by Syracuse's online master in computer science program.

Soundarajan defines proper algorithm design as

including the ability to identify a problem, find an efficient solution to the problem and use the right data to solve the problem. In a dating app, the problem would be finding love, sex or whatever connection the user is looking for. The solution

uses mathematical algorithms to identify matches for each user, based on data like inputted location and other biographical information — for example, interests, photos, location, preferred age range and so on.

While not all dating apps work the same, they all aim to tackle this problem.

Tinder's parent company Match Group reported as of the fourth quarter in 2019, Tinder has an average of 5.9 million subscribers. According to a 2019 Pew Research Center report, 30 per cent of American adults have used a dating app, with 12 per cent entering a long-term relationship. Additionally, the Pew report found dating apps and websites are more popular amongst American LGBTQ+ adults, where 55 per cent indicated they were users, than with straight adults (only 28 per cent said they used online dating services).

“Harassment is a key concern on dating sites, especially for younger women.”

Needless to say, dating apps are becoming the new normal of dating.

The downsides

Like any of its counterparts, dating app algorithms are ripe for bias. Companies like Tinder, Bumble and Hinge implement a technique called collaborative filtering.

Collaborative filtering generates matches based on both personal preferences and majority opinion. When a user first joins, the matches recommended are mostly dependent on the majority of users profiles. Over time, collaborative filtering creates a digital hierarchy where certain human choices are lauded and certain types of profiles are marginalised, despite the user's ability to alter specific preferences. In an article by *Wired*, video game designer Ben Berman noted how niche dating platforms such as Jdate and AmoLatina are evidence of how minority profiles are excluded from major dating platforms by collaborative filtering.

The nature of online dating can make the dating environment somewhat riskier, as it is harder to keep users accountable. The study shows more than three in 10 users report matches through a dating platform continued to contact them after stating they weren't interested. Additionally, 35 per cent said they were sent unsolicited sexually explicit photos or messages by other users to contact them after stating they weren't interested.

Clearly harassment is a key concern on dating sites, especially for younger women as 60 per cent of female users aged 18 to 34 report someone on a dating app continuing to contact them after they said they weren't interested. Dishonestly is another issue that comes up with dating apps, where 71 per cent of users believe others lie about themselves in their profiles to appear more desirable. In an ecosystem of collaborative filtering, how can this even be avoided?

What's the verdict?

Dating sites haven't fully perfected the ultimate love-solving artificial intelligence that will match everyone with their perfect soulmates. Despite this, romantic love is fair game for any algorithmic solution, and a significant portion of today's dating landscape relies on these algorithms.

Online dating is a tool using sophisticated algorithms and making the virtual world as ripe for love as a bar, a school or anywhere in reality. It is also important we recognise the bias entrenched in algorithms, and that data is not always just, fair or even accurate.

Date night pandemic style

New ways to connect during COVID-19

BY MANDY KING

Provincial COVID-19 restrictions make traditional dating difficult these days. To help Dalhousie University students keep the romance alive, here is a list of safe ways to have fun with your partner.

Hold hands and hit the ice

For those who love getting outside, the Emera Oval on Cogswell Street in Halifax offers socially distanced ice-skating sessions. You are welcome to hold hands on the ice, but only in groups of two.

Due to the pandemic, the Oval has implemented safety procedures. This includes the continuous use of non-medical masks by all participants on the ice.

To skate at the Oval, you must book a time-slot online through the Halifax Online Recreation Services website. Skate times can be booked up to 48 hours in advance. This is meant to limit the number of people on the ice, making it a safer experience for everyone.

If you don't own your own skates, don't worry! You can rent skates and helmets for free with government-issued photo ID, but supplies are limited.

Once the ice melts, visitors at the Oval can enjoy outdoor activities such as biking, in-line skating and roller-skating.

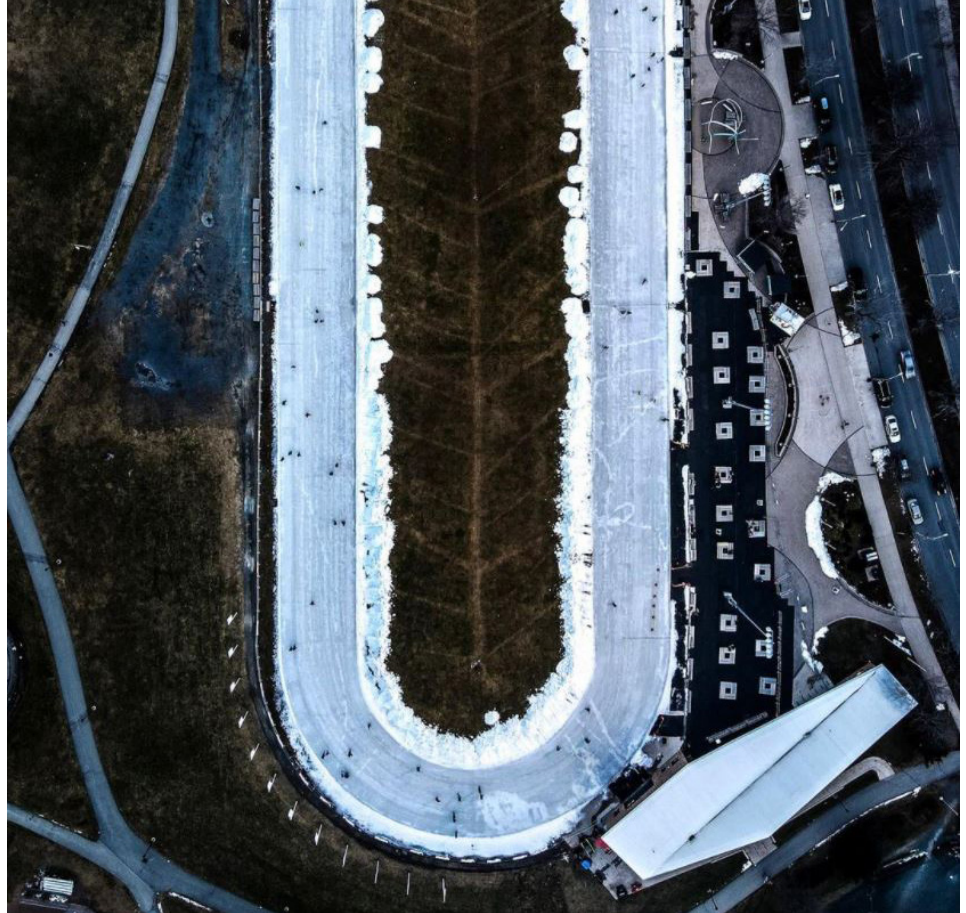
Get artsy

If pottery painting interests you, there's two different studios in the Halifax Regional Municipality. Clay Café Dartmouth is on Portland Street in Dartmouth, N.S., and Clay Café pottery studio is on Quinpool Road in Halifax.

The experience allows singles, couples and groups to select pottery pieces to paint. After painting, the piece is left at the studio to be glazed and baked in a kiln. When ready, the shop calls and you can pick up your pottery.

The cost of paint and studio time is included in the price of the clay piece. Larger pieces cost more than smaller ones, making this an affordable date night option.

While both studios are still offering in-studio sessions, the Dartmouth location allows you to purchase your pottery piece and rent paint supplies to enjoy this activity at home. If you're part of an artsy couple looking to get creative, this is a safe alternative to group painting events.



FOR COUPLES WHO ENJOY SPENDING TIME TOGETHER OUTSIDE, THE EMERA OVAL IS NOW BOOKING ICE SKATING TIMES. (PHOTO BY @RYAN.KEEPING ON INSTAGRAM)

Cook up some romance

The dinner date is a classic, but COVID-19 restrictions might make students feel uneasy about hitting the town for a meal. If you're sick of takeout, but still want to treat your partner to a culinary date, try a meal kit.

Meal kits come in different sizes and brand names, including Hello Fresh, Chef's Plate and Goodfood. These companies offer a selection of meal options, and send ingredients and cooking instructions to your home.

Rather than face the buzzing nightlife of Spring Garden Road next weekend, simply unbox a meal kit and enjoy the shared experience of whipping up something tasty.

At-home spa day

The spa is a luxurious way to unwind with a romantic partner, but wearing a mask on the massage table might take away from the ambience. A fun alternative is gathering luxury

items from local shops and having a spa day at home.

Wrap up in comfy robes and swap safety masks for moisturizing Korean beauty (a.k.a. K-beauty) masks from Moon Moon Cosmetics on Lower Water Street.

For bath products, Lodestone Soap Co. on Agricola Street in Halifax sells vegan and organic soaps from Nova Scotia.

Make a foot soak with bath bombs from Little Luxuries Soapworks. Shop their Etsy page, or local shops like Seaside Casual Wear in Eastern Passage, N.S. or Coconut Creek in Dartmouth Crossing, N.S.

Self-love for singles

Not everybody has a somebody. Don't forget to take time out for self-love. All of the above ideas can be great opportunities to treat yourself to some fun, good food, creativity and pampering.

The kids aren't all right

International students share mental health anguish amidst political turmoil

BY GOKCE ON



STUDENTS FROM COUNTRIES WITH OPPRESSIVE GOVERNMENTS OR UNSTABLE SITUATIONS HAVE BEEN FACED WITH ADDITIONAL STRESS, ANXIETY, AND WORRY ABOUT FAMILY AND FRIENDS BACK HOME. (PHOTO BY GEOFFREY HOWARD)

There's no doubt everyone wanted to leave the chaos, unpleasantness and bad news behind in 2020. However, it does not seem like 2021 got the memo.

Even with vaccinations rolling out throughout the world, the COVID-19 pandemic continues to affect students' lives. International students may have the extra burden of sitting through classes, completing projects and writing exams under less-than-ideal political situations in their home countries.

The Philippines

The Philippines has faced a human rights crisis since last July when their president, Rodrigo Duterte, signed the Anti-terrorism Act of 2020. While the act outlines that protests and dissent are not terrorist activities unless they cause harm or death to people, opponents worry the act vio-

lates freedom of speech. In June 2020, before the act was officially signed, more than 1,000 Filipino students and activists protested at the University of the Philippines Diliman against the act's possible infringement on human rights.

Neo Ragsac, a second-year marine biology student at Dalhousie University who's currently living in Toronto, says he's worried about his friends and family in the Philippines. They have strong opinions about the act.

"Once in a while when I watch the news relating to protests regarding the [act] and the red-tagging of various institutions, it leaves a thump in the brain."

Red-tagging is the Filipino government's practice of targeting, and black-listing people and organizations not supportive of the current government. There

is currently a petition on Change.org with almost a million signatures to throw out the Anti-terrorism Act.

Turkey

Similarly in Turkey, students and activists have been protesting in support of the freedom of the academy and the LGBTQ+ community. In January 2021, the government appointed Melih Bulu as rector of a major university. Bulu, who shut down the university's LGBTQ+ club, has ties to the ruling party of Turkey. Students have been protesting Bulu's appointment as rector, which is a position usually elected by the university.

Turkey has an extensive history of political turmoil. In the words of Melis Erkan, a second-year medical sciences student at Dal who's studying remotely from Tur-

key, “repetition of history in this country has tired people down.”

The continued oppression has affected millions of people in horrendous ways and left others with trauma.

“Turkey’s been being ruled by this one party ever since my generation was born, and we have been in an economic crisis as long as I can remember,” Erkan explains. The Justice and Development Party of Turkey has held power almost every year since 2003.

With the added pressure and dangers of COVID-19, tensions have been on the rise. The new wave of protests while hopeful, are also extremely draining to keep track of.

Erkan says, “I feel like my whole college experience, especially this year, has been not letting my grades fall, talking to a million different advisors to sort my life out as soon as possible, and leaving [the ability of] not worrying about the future for when I’m economically stable.”

Honduras

The Honduras government has been under fire about its response to the pandemic.

“While it is true that this country is already facing multiple political issues, rooting from systematic corruption and oppression, it cannot be said that the Honduran people did not have the tools ready for a pandemic of this level,” says Dal student Allan Rueda in an email to the *Dalhousie Gazette*. Rueda is in his first year of engineering and studying from Honduras. “The issue is not in the workers or in the financial side. It is in the root of it all: the government,” he says.

Many citizens are unhappy with the help, or the lack thereof, the government has offered in addition to their failure to upkeep public healthcare facilities.

“It is a common belief that you have a higher chance of getting the COVID-19

virus if you even get near [a public hospital],” Rueda says. Many Hondurans cannot afford private institutions or healthcare. Rueda believes the death toll has been high due to “the incompetence of the public healthcare system and its lack of proper fund distribution.”

“Witnessing all the unfairness, I have felt anger and rage built up,” he says.

Ecuador

Unfortunately, like many other countries, Ecuador has also been suffering from the pandemic while also trying to navigate its way through various political events.

“When the first wave hit, people’s bodies were quite literally piling up unattended in the streets of Guayaquil,” says Adrian Vásconez, a second-year math student at the Universidad San Francisco de Quito in Ecuador. He adds while “cases are still soaring in most of the country, sadly, many of us have gotten used to news of death, violence and corruption.”

Violence against the LGBTQ+ community and women has also been an important topic of discussion in Ecuador with many people taking the issue to social media.

“Ecuador’s society is profoundly influenced by Catholicism,” Vásconez says. “Many fundamentalist groups have taken it against feminist and human rights advocacy groups, blaming them for government’s corruption or even the pandemic. As a gay feminist man, it is sometimes quite triggering to wander in political news comments.”

There have been also reports of extreme violence in the prison system. During a February 2021 riot, 79 inmates were

killed in four prisons, and many videos of the violent murders were posted online. While the riots were a result of rival gang conflict, some believe the government is also at fault for the lack of proper rehabilitation resources at prisons.

“These events further increase our anxiety over the future,” says Vásconez. “How can we focus on university assignments when it feels like our country is falling apart?”

India

On a slightly more positive note, Trisha Dhar Malik, a second-year University of King’s College journalism student from India, says she is “so proud with what’s happening in Delhi and with all the farmers in [her] home country finally de-

manding the kind of justice they’ve always deserved.” Farmers in India have been protesting against new agricultural laws they claim will lower farmers’ income and make them vulnerable to corporate exploitation.

Though happy to report how people are taking a stand, Malik adds “it hurts to be so far away [from Dal] in a time like this, and I constantly find myself spiraling about how I’m not doing enough.”

“As students all around the world, our job is now, as ever, to study, no matter how taxing it may seem at a time like this,” Malik says. “To talk about this, make sure this news doesn’t die out or go unheard, donate in ways that we can with time or money, or by simply trying to find ways to raise awareness and just keeping talking about this important issue.”

While students might not constantly be able to see the light at the end of the tunnel, many have not given up on trying to create change.

“How can we focus on university assignments when it feels like our country is falling apart?”

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Dalhousie poets: thoughts on heartbreak

Falling in and out of love

BY RACHEL COOKE

The moment you realize

When I walk outside, the earth and sky thrum good morning. I know even without you, I am never alone in a world so rife with life.

I take a deep breath of the clean air. And for the first time feel like I can look back without wanting to go back, and think about all I've learned since leaving you for the last time.

For a long time, I had been lost in trying to reconcile myself with the world I suddenly found myself in. How can something that has all-encompassing first love, radiant sunflowers, acoustic guitar and 10-foot Pacific Ocean waves have you suddenly, one day, stiff with silence?

We were driving down this road and I remember the trees were covered in orange even though it was July. The river water was still wet on my skin, and I tried to tell you then how I wanted you. I tried to tell you that every day I woke up fighting to keep wanting you. I glanced over to the driver's seat, mouth open to speak, only to find it was like looking through lake water, down to the murky bottom. You couldn't hear or see me through the dirt.

Now I'm both detached and destructively yoked to a world I can't make sense of, a world where your presence is no longer guaranteed in my life. I think everyone in love feels as though it will last forever. My most grounded moments were with you, moments that still feel unreal in my memory.

Life with you was a liquid dreamscape: sipping honey wine in the dead heat of August, walking through the grocery store throwing snacks in my basket, touching my hair and arms and nose, running through waterfalls and city streets. I have to constantly remind myself — moments of joy are not all I am destined for, even when my entire life has seemingly been defined by these subtle moments.



ART BY PABLO STANLEY ON BLUSH.

Dalhousie poets is a rotating column in the Gazette's Art & Lifestyle section featuring poetry by students on various subjects. Interested in submitting your verse? Email arts@dalgazette.com.

Season shortfall

Tigers disheartened after chance to play gets snatched away

BY THOMAS SCOTT WITH FILES FROM LUKE DYMENT



LAST SHOT: DAL'S MEN'S HOCKEY TEAM STAND FOR THE NATIONAL ANTHEM BEFORE A FEBRUARY 2021 GAME AGAINST ACADIA. SHORTLY AFTERWARDS NOVA SCOTIA SUSPENDED ALL PLAY. (PHOTO BY AUS TV)

With university teams throughout Nova Scotia not playing any games all season, there was finally relief in early February 2021: University teams got a taste of exhibition games.

In early February, Dalhousie University, the Saint Mary's University (SMU) Huskies and the Acadia University Axemen and Axewomen organized an exhibition schedule slated to last roughly five weeks. But on Feb. 26, Nova Scotia Public Health declared a circuit-breaker to counter recent COVID-19 case spikes in the Halifax area. As part of the measures, games were cancelled for four weeks and effectively killed the schedule.

Emily Holt, a third-year guard with the Dalhousie Tigers women's basketball team, said she was excited to be playing games again, even for just a brief time.

"It was nice to play with all of our teammates, in one game on one team, because we had been practicing constantly against each other in scrimmages and drills. It was nice to have something all together again," Holt said.

The feeling of relief touched many players such as forward Brett Crossley of Dal's men's hockey team.

"It's a bit of a relief, honestly. Because as competitive people, and hockey in itself is a competitive sport, all you want to do is have a chance to compete. I think everyone was pretty excited," said Crossley.

The opportunity to play

Players have been hit with the mental toll of having only practices without any games to prepare for.

"Eventually we developed a routine, but you can use competition as a bit of a measuring stick to justify all the work that you've put in. It's nice to be able to see the results of all the work that you've done. Not having that was a bit of a struggle mentally," said Crossley. "To have [games] back was big for us. It gave us something to look forward to and gave us a reason to push a little harder, even when we felt like the tank was empty. And that's essentially from the mental side of things, that's the boost that it gave us. It just gave us something to look forward to."

Some players on the teams, including Talia Vidykhan on the women's volleyball team, played their first games as Tigers in the two-week span. Intense practices, including plenty of intra-squad scrimmaging, helped her adjust to the university level well before playing her first match against another team.

"We trained and prepared this year as if we were expecting to play matches," Vidykhan said, who learned about the exhibition schedule about a week before the team's first game, much to her excitement. "Since we prepared so much, it felt very natural and good being out there. Not that it was easy, but I felt relaxed because of the preparation. It was almost like a practice."

Expectations were low before the hockey team hit the ice. Dal had gone more than a year between games and was coming off an underwhelming record of eight wins and 22 losses in the 2019-2020 season. Crossley said the team rose to the occasion.

"I'd say we performed above expectations," he said. "You can only expect so much when you go a full year without any games. But for that

being our first outing in [that long], the team bought into our systems and worked at it. I think there was a little added motivation in there as well."

Last minute cancellations

When tighter COVID-19 restrictions hit, games came to a grinding halt. The games were providing teams with a much-needed boost in morale. Holt said the change in restrictions was demoralizing.

"The games have been going so well. But we have a few injuries right now, so it'll be good to have some rest and we're still going to keep training," Holt said. "Ultimately, we knew this year would be different from normal years and we're looking forward to next season. We're going to try and keep our mental focus on next season and working towards something more concrete than this COVID season."

After experiencing game action, Crossley said it was hard to take in the news of the restrictions. Dal was set to take on their cross-town rivals at SMU the day Nova Scotia announced circuit-breaker measures, adding salt to the wound.

"That was a tough pill to swallow, being that we were an hour or two away from the game. That one hurt a little extra. You're so close to getting back to what you wanted to do," said Crossley. "But obviously, there are more important things than playing the game. You got to take that into account and appreciate the fact that health and safety come first."

Vidykhan said the shutdown took her by surprise. But no matter how short the season, with few other goals to pursue, the game represented a goal the team had been working toward all season.

"We had literally just gotten the green light to finally play, which we had worked so hard on," she said. Like the hockey team, the volleyball team had a game scheduled the day restrictions were announced. "Having one game [against Acadia on Feb. 21] is better than none. I was excited to actually experience something close to a real game. It was hard to find motivation at practice and in the weight room this year when you know there was no outcome like in a game or something to work toward. We definitely were upset about the cancellations, but were very happy we got that one game."

Rock in the community

Halifax climbing scene reaches new heights

BY LUKE DYMENT, SPORTS EDITOR



EAST PEAK INDOOR CLIMBING OPENED ONLY 16 DAYS BEFORE THE FIRST PANDEMIC SHUTDOWNS HIT. WITH THE SUPPORT OF AVID HALIFAX CLIMBERS, EAST PEAK IS STILL GOING STRONG AFTER A YEAR WHERE MANY SMALL BUSINESSES WENT UNDER. (PHOTO BY LUKE DYMENT)

Sometimes finding your passion takes years. Sometimes it shows up spontaneously, or requires a leap of faith. For Shelby Hallam, a walk one summer day answered that question for her.

While waterfall chasing around Nova Scotia with her boyfriend last summer, Hallam encountered a towering rocky wall along their path. Eager to get a view of that waterfall, her boyfriend climbed the rocks and encouraged Hallam to do the same. What she found at the top of her climb was more than a waterfall.

"When I got back to the city, I was like, 'Where can I climb every single day?'" she said. "The feeling was amazing and climbing's amazing. I got hooked right away."

Soon after, Hallam began frequenting rock climbing gyms in Halifax on a near daily basis. She invested in her own climbing equipment like harnesses and took up different types of climbing like top-roping.

The best part though? Joining the Halifax climbing community.

"The staff at [the gyms] were so friendly and welcoming. I knew through [those interactions] that I was meant to be in this community," Hallam said. "Them and other climbers are the most inviting people. And just like me, they're stoked on climbing rocks."

Solid support

Jackie Turner is a co-owner of East Peak Indoor Climbing in Halifax. East Peak opened in late February 2020 for 16 days before the initial COVID-19 shutdown closed the business for three months. In a time where small businesses like East Peak ended up going under, she gave local climbers credit for helping to keep the climbing gym open.

"People have pulled through in huge ways," said Turner, who was organizing activities for East Peak's first birthday when interviewed by the *Dalhousie Gazette*. "They kept member-

ships running during closures and asked what they could do to help. In your first year of business, to already have customers that dedicated and loyal was amazing."

Paul Denzler worked in climbing in Montreal and Ottawa before coming to Halifax in 2014. The general manager at Seven Bays Bouldering said there's something he finds special about this community with the smaller population.

"It's cool to be part of this small club of climbers in Halifax as compared to Montreal or something like that. The interest in climbing places like outdoors here is cool, since we have access to so much more other than just the gym," he said.

The climbing community, Turner said, was a big reason for why she decided to open the type of business in the location that she did. Before, she had worked at climbing gyms in Newfoundland and Saskatchewan, which contributed to the love for the sport she shares with climbers today.

“Nova Scotia has this dedicated and long-standing climbing community. There’s established outdoor climbing here too. So when our business joined the community, they were ready to welcome us with open arms,” Turner said. “Being in Halifax, good news travels fast around here. We’ve been really lucky that people have been coming in and having a good time, then telling others about it. Most of our customers have come from other people’s referrals.”

As Turner and Denzler mentioned, Nova Scotia’s outdoor climbing scene is just as popular as indoor climbing within a gym. When rising COVID-19 cases closed gyms for another month in late November 2020, climbers like Hallam got their climbing fixes on some real cliffs.

“The shutdown didn’t stop me,” she said, laughing. “I found some cool rocks outside and I never climbed outdoors before so I didn’t try anything too crazy. But once you start climbing, you can’t stop.”

Exponential growth

Both rock climbers and businesses have raved about Halifax’s rock climbing community. Heather Reynolds is the Dalplex rock court’s climbing coordinator, working in climbing with organizations like Climb Nova Scotia since the 1990s. She said while the local climbing community has always thrived with good places to climb outdoors, popularity has jumped within the last five years.

“Today, there are more climbing venues available around here, as it becomes more and more popular of a sport,” Reynolds said. “In the United States, the sport grew exponentially a few years before here. In the U.S., there are varsity climbing teams, but we’re not there yet. The sport itself has just been growing and it hit here in a big way.”

Despite struggles small climbing gyms faced in the pandemic, she suggested, the shutdowns highlighted the importance of physical activity.

“The break has taught us that perhaps there’s a benefit of taking time to be active,” Reynolds said. “When things first shut down, more people were out hiking and taking advantage of parks and public spaces. The pandemic has taught us about the value of recreation and sport, not just for the physical benefits, but for the connections and fun with people.”

Denzler said the sport itself is good at keeping climbers engaged through the pandemic as an interesting activity that’s easy to try out.

“The interest in doing something new and challenging, plus safe in the pandemic, attracts a lot of people to come and check climbing out,” he said. “By the nature of the sport, people get hooked quite easily too, so

as long as we provide safe facilities to climb in, climbers will come.”

“The best part about climbing is that anyone can climb,” Turner said, highlighting East Peak’s and the sport’s popularity with customers from all ages. “We have customers all the way from two to 70 years old. We see lots of students too, many come to meet new people or try a new activity.”

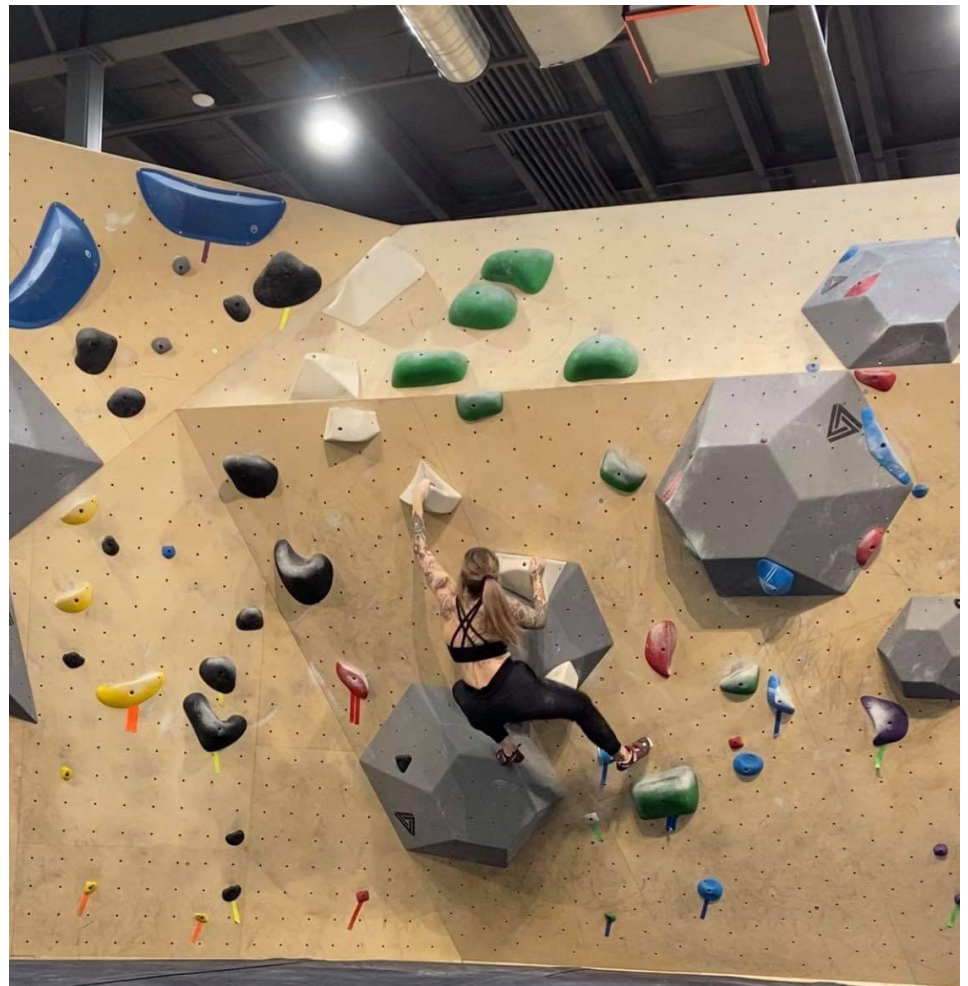
For Hallam, meeting new people has become a community of supporters that have had her back. When her climbing gear was stolen just over a month ago, she posted on Facebook asking for friends to look out for her missing equipment bag.

Several people messaged her in response, offering gear she could borrow in the meantime. Among them was East Peak, who offered to cover equipment rentals until Hallam found her gear. As it turns out, the bag was in a ditch near her home. She suggested the thief wasn’t pleased that it was full of only climbing gear.

“They make me feel welcome. It’s not a group sport, but it kind of is,” she said. “You have all these people cheering you on. I wasn’t really into sports until I found climbing. The whole community is like a family.”



THE LOCAL ROCK-CLIMBING HYPE OVER THE PAST DECADE LED SEVEN BAYS BOULDERING TO OPEN IN 2014. (PHOTO BY GEOFFREY HOWARD)



SHELBY HALLAM FREQUENTS ROCK-CLIMBING GYMS IN HALIFAX ON A NEARLY DAILY BASIS. (PHOTO PROVIDED BY SHELBY HALLAM)

Bursting onto the scene

Former Dal curlers with multiple international wins debut at Scotties

BY TIGER CUMMING



KARLEE BURGESS AND LAUREN LENENTINE PREPARE TO SWEEP A STONE THROWN BY TEAMMATE EMILY ZACHARIAS. TEAM ZACHARIAS PICKED UP THREE WINS IN ITS FIRST SCOTTIES COMPETITION. (PHOTO SUBMITTED BY KARLEE BURGESS)

New among the competitors at the 2021 Scotties Tournament of Hearts this year were Dalhousie University student Karlee Burgess and Lauren Lenentine, a former Dal student now studying at the University of Manitoba.

After a lengthy hiatus from competition due to COVID-19, curling was back in February 2021 with the Scotties, the national women's curling championships. The Scotties took place from Feb. 19 to 28 in a Calgary-based bubble.

Together with Scotties teammates Emily and Mackenzie Zacharias, Burgess and Lenentine won the World Junior Women's Curling Championships in Russia last year. Burgess has represented Canada four times at the World Juniors and won three times. Lenentine, won twice in three tournaments, and together with Burgess won in 2018 and 2020. Between titles in 2019, they helped Dal win an Atlantic University Sport (AUS) championship.

This year's Scotties was the team's first major senior tournament together, representing Manitoba as one of the three wild card outfits. As one of the youngest teams in the field, Team Zacharias (with Mackenzie as the team's skip) went in as underdogs.

"I know we kind of look like the underdogs because we are a lot younger. We are one of the

youngest teams on the field, but I think we do belong here, and we got here based on our CTRS [Canadian Team Ranking System] ranking," said Burgess on their underdog label, speaking to the *Dalhousie Gazette* during the tournament. Team Zacharias ranks 11th in Canada.

Bouncing back from the break

A more pressing concern for the team going into the tournament was the lack of preparation and competition over the last few months. After playing in more than 100 matches last season, the Scotties was their first major tournament this year.

"As a team, we haven't played together since October, and Mackenzie and Emily hadn't thrown [much] since October," said Lenentine of the months leading up to the tournament.

Their task was not made easier on the opening night of the Scotties. Team Zacharias was drawn with reigning champions and eventual winners Team Canada, also from Manitoba. Team Zacharias would fall to Canada 7-3 on national television. Although a disappointing result, it was a respectable one and an undeniably extraordinary experience for the young team.

"They're such a good team. It was so cool, to say our first game at the Scotties was against Team

Canada. And, it was on TSN. You couldn't have written it any better," Lenentine said of the game.

Team Zacharias would go on to lose their next game to Alberta 7-5 before putting up a statement win against Yukon with a decisive 15-3 score.

This performance was followed by back-to-back close losses, falling to the Northwest Territories 6-5 and fellow wild card Team Peterson 5-4.

"The lack of playing kind of took a toll on us," said Burgess of the team's rough start to the tournament, the win against Yukon notwithstanding.

Only the beginning for Team Zacharias

Team Zacharias shook off some of their bad luck as the team moved into the home stretch of pool play, winning two of its last three games. The team's second win of the tournament came against Team Brothers of Nova Scotia. Trailing 4-2 after five ends, Team Zacharias was able to outscore Nova Scotia, Burgess and Lenentine's former association, 4-1 in the second half of the match to secure the 6-5 win.

After falling 8-6 to eventual runner-up Ontario, Team Zacharias downed Northern Ontario 9-4. A tight game for the first eight ends, Team Zacharias was hanging onto a 5-4 lead with two ends to go before scoring four in the ninth end to put the game away, bringing both teams' Scotties to a close.

This win brought Team Zacharias's record in its first Scotties to three wins and five losses, good enough for sixth place in group A. However, the team did not crack the top four that move onto the tournament's championship round. Burgess said even with the premature exit from the Scotties, the team cranked out winning efforts all week.

"It's been a battle of a week. There were so many close games that could have gone the other way. One shot here or there we may have liked to take back, but overall it's been a good week," Burgess said. "We came in here with high expectations and we are a little bit upset with the results, but I'm super excited to be here. It's an amazing opportunity and the experience we take from this year will help us down the road."

Expectations aside, this year's Scotties has been an excellent opportunity to return to curling that everyone in the bubble was thankful for.

"It's been a lot of fun being able to curl because this year has been very different with COVID and the lack of playing," said Burgess. "This week at the Scotties, it's been fun."

Keeping careers on track

University sports business associations guiding students out of pandemic

BY ADAM DOUGLAS



MEMBERS OF THE BROCK SPORT BUSINESS ASSOCIATION WORKED WITH SCHOOLS LIKE MCMASTER TO EXPAND LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES FOR SPORTS BUSINESS STUDENTS. (PHOTO SUBMITTED BY KAZ ALGUIRE)

For most Canadian university students, the job search begins in the early months of the new year. With applications and interviews completed, many students have employment by March.

Thousands of them graduate each year with hopes of starting careers in the sports industry. For sports management students across Canada, 2020's post-graduate job hunt was no different than it had been in previous years. That is until the COVID-19 pandemic forced much of Canada to go into lockdown.

Many industries were affected and likewise, the sports industry was put on pause. Thousands of students scrambled for jobs after learning many of their positions had been abolished.

In a normal year, the sports industry job market is hypercompetitive. Now, with the additional strains to the job market provided by the pandemic, Canadian sport management students looking for entry-level positions are almost guaranteed disappointment.

Rebounding to help fellow students

In Antigonish, N.S., students at St. Francis Xavier University (StFX) are still wrestling with the burdens of the limited and crippled job market in the sport industry. Students felt there was a growing need for a way to expand and develop their skills, and to help them stand out amongst the competition when vying for employment posi-

tions. This fear of the post-pandemic job market led to the founding of the StFX Sport Management and Marketing Society (SMMS).

Duncan Lovell, co-founder of the SMMS, was looking forward to working in the marketing department of a sport industry company when COVID-19 hit. His employment position was cancelled and he felt dejected.

"You get all your hopes up. I was going to have a great job and was going to work with some great people and knowing that that was so close and that has now been cut off, it hurt," he said.

The situation, while challenging to overcome, led Lovell to help establish the SMMS to sharpen the skills of students and help separate themselves from other applicants.

"This project has been a great way to get myself into the industry and to find jobs in that industry as well," Lovell said.

Since its inception, the SMMS has organized a series of online events, engaging both members and students at StFX.

"We have learned through COVID how to present a sport to people from [a] distance," Lovell said. "You really gain the attention of people even though they cannot be there in person. It can only go up from here."

Students band together

Similar feelings are shared with students across Canada. Namely, graduates of Ontario universi-

ties struggled with strains on the sports industry. This tension has led to the emerging appreciation of sports business associations and similar organizations, and the events they have been able to arrange for students at their universities.

Sports business associations (or SBAs) are university clubs run by students. SBAs provide students with the chance to network with sport industry professionals, and gain experience through planning and marketing intercollegiate events.

Established in 2016, Brock University's Sport & Business Association has been especially active organizing events such as virtual networking forums, educational workshops, and other virtual events designed to prepare members and attendees for careers in the sport industry.

Jadon Bernatsky and Kaz Alguire, the president and vice-president of the Brock SBA, used the circumstances of the pandemic to focus on becoming more well-rounded.

"My online and digital skills have strengthened. I took a LinkedIn class on Photoshop to develop my graphic design abilities," Alguire said. It's one of the positive outcomes he's experienced in spending more time online.

Recognizing the current issues facing students in SBAs across the country, the Brock SBA and representatives from McMaster University's Sports Business Association founded the University Sport Business Alliance (USBA). Now, students in 13 SBAs across Canada can connect and collaborate easier.

Late last year, students at Brock and Ryerson University had the chance to connect through a collaborative club event that helped raise money for charity.

"This event was exactly the reason why the USBA was created in the first place," said Bernatsky.

The USBA's upcoming plans include engaging with more students and motivating them to develop SBAs in western Canadian universities where none exist right now. All of this will provide students with experiences that will better enable them to enter the sports industry when things return to normal.

The future of the sports industry after the pandemic is widely unknown, but at least one thing is clear: thriving communities like SBAs are on the rise tools for students to build their skill sets after university.