

the Reckoner

of Marc Garneau C.I.



MAY 2022

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NEWS BOARD

A board to keep the student body informed about their school and local community.



Helping Students Succeed: A Q&A with Mr. Smith

by ANNE LIU

Q: When did you join MGCI as a Grade 10 Vice Principal?

A: I officially joined MGCI as a Grade 10 VP on 3 February 2022. Before that, I bounced around quite a bit, so I worked at a number of different schools. Most recently, I was at Cedarbrae Collegiate Institute.

Q: What are the main responsibilities you have in this position within the school community?

A: Primarily, I manage all Grade 10 issues and concerns. In addition to that, I manage student success; guidance; excursions, so if anyone wants to take a trip, they have to go through me; and school-wide events like prom. I also help to address some equity concerns and issues by building learning and capacity in our school to handle these issues as they arise.

Q: How has your experience been working with students as a VP?

A: It's been absolutely incredible. And I'm not just saying that, I've really grown to love the school. The student population is so diverse and there are so many unique insights, lifestyles, and ways of addressing things that I've found very rewarding to engage with. Finally, the population has really embraced me here so it's been incredible for me as a first-timer experiencing this space.

Q: COVID-19 has evidently changed the way school works. How has your job in particular been



influenced by the virus?

A: It's strange, because it's hard to remember a time prior to COVID in terms of all the things we need to keep account of in our regular workdays. What I mean by that is, I'm just so used to dealing with a number of different obstacles and challenges in a regular day, and it's because of what COVID has brought into our world. I can't remember not having to deal with, like, seventy different problems, pertaining to health, illness, and absences. But yeah, I feel almost normalized to it now.

Q: Now that schools are reopening, what are you most excited about?

A: I am most excited to see students happy, to see them engaging with their friends and their social environments. I mean, so much of our well-being is connected to our relationships and the quality of those relationships, so knowing that the in-person experience lends itself to better relationships is so beneficial for students now. Kids are going to be able to enjoy that in-person experience at events, like sporting events, and whatever else it might be. So, I'm

very excited to see how it all unfolds.

Q: What are some things you like to do outside of school? What are some of your favourite pastimes?

A: Well, I work a lot. Outside of my work here, I run two businesses: I run a non-profit, called Generation Chosen, which deals with mental health and emotional intelligence for youth and young adults; I run a consultancy agency, so I deal with corporate entities that contract my staff for general mental health training. I also built another charity called the Foundation For Black Communities (FFBC), and its goal is to support Black nonprofits and charities across Canada. With the FFBC, we successfully lobbied the government for two hundred million dollars to do that work across Canada. In addition, I worked for another nonprofit called Operation Black Vote Canada, and the goal there is to increase the representation of people of colour within our political ecosystem. So, I get to engage with federal, provincial, and municipal leaders on policy changes and also create relationships between often marginalized communities and political representatives.

Apart from that, I love playing video games when I have a couple of minutes of free time. I also have two kids both under three years old, so I try to play with them as much as I can too. I like clothes and fashion, so I'm always looking at websites for that kind of stuff as well. And finally, I love TV and films. I'm a big horror film guy.

Q: What is one message you'd like to send to the student body?

A: In light of the times we're living in, tough times don't last, tough people do. And, for every young person that's really striving for greatness and trying to achieve goals that they didn't always see achieved in generations before them, it's up to them to break the cycle, it's up to them to live up to their potential. ■

Starting With a Bang: The Badminton Team's First Game This Season

by LILLIAN LI

After over three weeks of early-morning practices, the MGCI badminton team limbered up for their upcoming matches, the first of which was a home game held on 7 April.

To kick off the badminton season, team coaches Ms. Yoganathan, Ms. Maharaj, and Mr. Aggarwala invited interested students to two separate tryouts, ultimately handpicking 18 players for the team.

Since the end of the March break, the team has trained two mornings a week in preparation for their first match—the coaches were able to squeeze in numerous practices despite the highly-demanded gymnasium slots. Early-morning training, however, still came with sacrifices—team members took a unified stance on the 7:30 am practices; Stephanie Chan said, “They’re too early; I want my sleep,” and Isabel Liu commented, “It makes me have no will to live the night before. Waking up at 5:50 for practice is not fun.”

The MGCI badminton team started off on 7 April by playing against Jarvis CI, one of the four schools in the Tier II section. All players were divided into Group A and Group B, as well as by the following events: girls’ singles, girls’ doubles, boys’ singles, boys’ doubles, and mixed doubles. Each event was played in a best-two-out-of-three system. For each match won out of the two or three played, Group A and Group B earned two or one



Photograph: Stephanie Chan

points respectively (e.g. if in a Group B match MGCI won the first match, Jarvis CI won the second, and MGCI won the third, MGCI would earn two points and Jarvis CI would earn one). Based on the team’s final standing, MGCI may or may not move on to the Regional Championship beginning on 20 April.

The team has been off to a great start; on 7 April after school, the two schools gathered in the gymnasium and played their ten events with five per group. MGCI ultimately earned 24 points and defeated Jarvis CI by 13 points. MGCI coach Ms. Maharaj said, “[Jarvis CI had] great sportsmanship and [the players were] very supportive of each other,” and Luck Xing remarked, “It was cool to play with Jarvis, but they’re hilariously energetic.”

Although MGCI acquired more

than double the points of Jarvis, several of the games played were near-losses. “It was so close because we won the first [match] and lost the second; we won the third 22-20,” said Emily Ma after her doubles match. After Andrew Chen’s singles match, he said, “It was really intense, especially the last set where [I won] the last point because my opponent [hit] it out.”

With three Tier II games still to come on the 13, 14, and 19 April, the badminton team is looking to rack up as many wins as possible. “The team worked tirelessly to prepare for our first game, and all that hard work resulted in us winning our first game of the season against Jarvis CI,” said Ms. Yoganathan. “Now we are getting ready to take on the next three games!”

April in Review

2022

APR

1

Internet versus 4 million pixels

What happens when you hand the internet a blank canvas? What happens when each person can only place one pixel at a time? What happens when there is a 5-minute cooldown between placing them?



APR

1

Alberta places \$75 bounty on wild boars

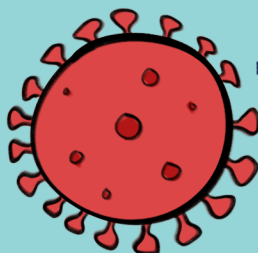
They have been labelled pests by the government as they thrive and menace the province and ecosystem. This has led The Alberta government to put a price on their heads, offering a bounty of \$75 per set of ears turned in.

APR

3

Raptors legend, 7, Kyle Lowry, returns to Toronto

The “greatest raptor ever” heading to the south beach marked the end of an era, a decade of Toronto playoff basketball. However, the respect of Toronto basketball fans will forever stay with the legendary point guard, and this return was needless to say one to be remembered for the ages.



APR

6

6 confirmed cases of XE Hybrid Variant in Canada

The XE recombinant COVID-19 strain has features of the BA.1 and BA.2 Omicron strains. The XE variant, estimated to be approximately 10% more transmissible than the BA.

APR

13

62-year-old man arrested in relation to the Brooklyn Subway Attack



Significant Digits: April in Review

written by Significant Digits Team and illustrated by Zoe Cheng

[04/01/22]

Internet versus 4 million pixels

What happens when you hand the Internet a blank canvas? What happens when each person can only place one pixel at a time? What happens when there is a 5-minute cooldown between placing them? All of these questions were answered when Reddit reintroduced r/place on 1 April, 2022. r/place was a concept first introduced on April Fools' Day in 2017 by Josh Wardle, creator of the viral game Wordle, and it was one giant blank canvas where users could place one pixel every 5 minutes. The rules of this canvas eliminated the possibility of constructing a project alone and forced users to work together as communities to create pixel art. During the first year, 2017, over 1 million users placed over 15 million tiles on the canvas. Fast forward to 2022, and over 6 million users placed over 70 million tiles. The growth of popular community-oriented platforms, such as Discord and Twitch, is one of the reasons for this massive skyrocket in popularity. The event ended on 4 April and the final image can be found in the r/place subreddit. [The Washington Post][By Justin Wei]

[04/01/22]

Alberta places \$75 bounty on wild boars

In the 70s and 80s, wild boars were imported into Alberta to diversify livestock, with the expectation that they would not survive long. On the contrary, in current times, they have been labelled pests by the government as they thrive and menace the province and ecosystem. In an announcement by Agriculture Minister Nate Horner, he stated, "Wild boar at large are a threat to our animals and environment, as well as a vector for diseases like African swine fever." This has led The Alberta government to put a price on their heads, offering a bounty of \$75 per set of ears turned in. The trapping and hunting programs are scheduled to end in the March of 2023 and 2024 respectively. [CTV][By Iris Ma]

[04/03/22]

Raptors legend, 7, Kyle Lowry, returns to Toronto.

When Lowry left Toronto last summer, Raptors fans were devastated—it was inevitable, but nevertheless saddening. The "greatest Raptor ever" heading to the south beach marked the end of an era, a decade of Toronto playoff basketball. However, the respect of Toronto basketball fans will forever stay with the

legendary point guard, and this return was needless to say one to be remembered for the ages. Lowry was showered with love upon his entry; his tribute video was not only enlightening but also nostalgic, and even though the Raptors lost the competitive shootout (114 - 109, during which Pascal Siakam and Fred VanVleet both stepped up with 29), no one left without a smile overwhelmed with gratitude. This will definitely be the first return of many many more. With regards to the play-off picture, the Raptors have now secured a spot in the 2021-2022 postseason. [CTV News][By Sam Li]

[04/06/22]

6 confirmed cases of XE Hybrid Variant in Canada

The XE recombinant COVID-19 strain has features of the BA.1 and BA.2 Omicron strains. The XE variant, estimated to be approximately 10% more transmissible than the BA.2 variant, was first detected in the United Kingdom on 19 January 2022. By April 2022, the country had confirmed around 600 cases. However, according to the United Kingdom Health Security Agency, this number still accounts for no more than 1% of total cases. Currently, the XE strain has been reported in China, Thailand, the United States, Ireland, Denmark,

and Canada. "As of April 6, 2022, the Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC) is aware of six detections of the XE recombinant lineage of Omicron in Canada," said a Public Health Agency of Canada spokesperson across email. [Toronto Star][By Grace Pu]

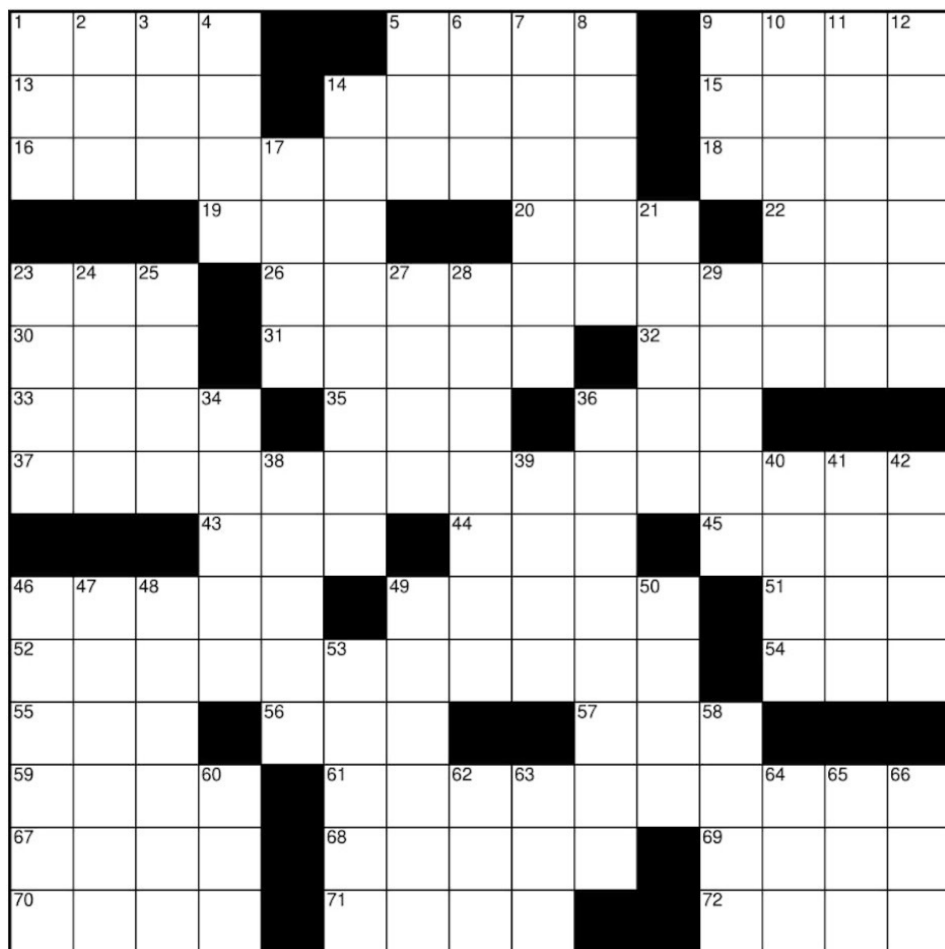
[04/13/22]

62-year-old man arrested in relation to the Brooklyn Subway Attack

On the morning of 12 April, 2022, a mass shooting took place on a crowded subway train in Brooklyn. The shooter threw two smoke grenades and opened fire on the train. While 29 were injured, with 10 from direct gunfire, there were no deaths. Frank R. James, a 62-year-old American, was taken into custody 30 hours after the initial incident. James is being charged for terrorism on a mass transportation system and other violent acts. He will face up to life in prison if convicted. In the months leading up to the attack, James posted hours of online videos rambling about a variety of topics including New York City's Mayor Eric Adams, the danger of subway stations, NYC's mental health system, racism, and violence. [CBC][The Guardian] [By Michael Yang]

LIFE BOARD

A board for imaginative self-expression through written and visual content.



ACROSS

- 1 Aid in wrongdoing
- 5 Expanse
- 9 "Until I feared I would lose it, I never loved to _____. One does not love breathing.": Harper Lee
- 13 It may be beaten
- 14 45 Across game, colloquially
- 15 Portuguese border
- 16 The long wondering?
- 18 _____-O; Old Macdonald's letters
- 19 Criticize (into)
- 20 GOP org.
- 22 Canadian ice hockey equipment brand
- 23 Me in Haiti
- 26 Egg-dipped ham and cheese sandwich; a variation of the French croque monsieur
- 30 Milk bag abbreviation
- 31 Viral concern circa 2014
- 32 "YOU DONE MESSED UP _ _ _ _"
- 33 16 Across is one

- 35 Tolkien monster
- 36 Beast of burden
- 37 Mariner's direction near shore
- 43 "_____ Maria"
- 44 '90s Indian prime minister
- 45 March Madness org.
- 46 Japanese dog with a curly tail
- 49 Finnish or Turkish bath
- 51 _____ Vegas
- 52 New roof installments
- 54 Regarding, abbr.
- 55 Nice water
- 56 Of Khan Academy acclaim
- 57 Conifer
- 59 Interior ministry of the Soviet Union
- 61 Out of the garden, towards the sunrise
- 67 Go-getter
- 68 "See ya!"
- 69 Bare
- 70 Miyazaki's "Spirited _____"
- 71 Hook's first mate
- 72 Class struggle

DOWN

- 1 Well-suited
- 2 "Nonsense!"
- 3 Summer in Paris
- 4 Valhalla thunderer
- 5 Distress signal
- 6 Opposite of neg.
- 7 Ancestral guinea pig
- 8 "Bye Bye Bye" band
- 9 _____ v. Wade
- 10 The Good king of Denmark, maybe?
- 11 One of the Furies
- 12 Indwelling power or spirit
- 14 Gross under-exaggeration, perhaps?
- 17 A _____ a dozen
- 21 Computer problem
- 23 Google's response to Zoom
- 24 Montreal's was in '67
- 25 Dentist's instruction
- 27 Sushi wrapper
- 28 90 Day Fiancé screenshot, maybe?
- 29 Hero of Golden Fleece acclaim, in Greece
- 34 A Scottish swindler
- 36 Set right, in a way
- 38 Chris of "Captain America"
- 39 Burglar's booty
- 40 Bruins' sch.
- 41 Former Swedish automaker
- 42 Vane reading
- 46 It may be hidden
- 47 Second-largest Polish city
- 48 Specification or clarification following a description of the middle layer of the eye?
- 49 Respectful bow
- 50 "Oh, please!"
- 53 Celts
- 58 Monthly payment
- 60 Like some humour
- 62 Abbr. on some passports
- 63 Casual shirt
- 64 58 Down at the end of the month
- 65 Mag. workers
- 66 Traditionally cut down following a 45 Across championship victory

by FLORA CHEN

Darkness Within

by YOLANDA ZHOU

"Mommy... I'm hungry," moaned a five-year-old. Yet no one answered. The little kid got off the bed and set off to find something that would fill his rumbling stomach. The hall was dark and deserted, the only light being the pale moon shining from the window like a ghost.

Swish.

The little boy jumped with fright, shivering at every creak along the wooden boards. Gulping, the boy advanced further into the darkness, amassing all the courage he had. Little by little, he inched along. Curiously but cautiously.

Long shadows stretching like phantoms stalked him from behind. The large glass windows bathed the hall with natural light in the daytime, and the vines climbed freely along the wall. But nothing could be seen at night except the dark gnarled shadow of the twisted branches that extended their claws upon the boy. When had this hallway ever seemed so eerie?

A while later, the boy could see a faint light shining through a crack. Relieved, the boy quickly tip-toed silently towards the improperly closed door, where he heard the dull sound of scrambled voices emitting from within.

"Do you think it's another one?" one asked.

"Haha, of course, we've struck gold this time," another one laughed confidently. The boy instantly recognized it was his father and listened more intently.

"I thought they were hunted to extinction, little did I ever know that one was so close," the other man replied, greedily smacking his lips. "If this is the case, we'll finally be able to finish the project we've been working so long

for. The blood of an exorcist is something worth dying for. Crazy people they are, wasting their precious magic vanquishing their so-called apparitions."

Suddenly, as if the devil had grabbed him, the boy froze a second away from opening the door. Leaning towards the crack, he decided against going in. The little boy paused for a second, and felt his heart pulsing violently within. Exorcists, exorcists, where had he heard of them before? The conversation about them droned on along the night, and the boy's eyes shone with interest.

What were these creatures? They sounded like the dragons and unicorns of his childhood fantasies. And his father would hunt one down to show him! The little boy couldn't wait! A small sprout grew within him, planting a tree that grew into curiosity and wilted into guilt.

Ten years later, the little boy had grown into a young student, top of the class in a dark arts academy.

He was no longer as pure as that fateful night. But his growing curiosity was as voracious as ever. One could hardly imagine his excitement when he approached an exorcist, someone he had desperately hunted for.

Even though he knew he should've just left them alone, even though he knew that he should tell them to hide, even though he knew that his clan had hunted their whole family, the young student still stayed. He stayed with guilt, torn between his clan and his... friend?

When the young student finished the test, he headed towards the bar. Yet the young exorcist was nowhere to be found. The

student panicked, where could they have gone? There was no way, they started hunting already?

The next few days were nothing but a blur to him. He didn't know where he went, where he looked. His heart was wracked with guilt. Why didn't he tell them then? Why didn't he give them a warning? What if they were dead... and it was all his fault?

But relief didn't come to him when he finally found the exorcist. A cold feeling clasped his heart, and he avoided the ice cold gaze shot upon him.

"S-she was your sister," the exorcist commented uncomfortably, stumbling a few words. They didn't know it would be so hard to sound angry, or at least pretend to be a bit mad. The screaming didn't come, just a thin veil of acceptance showered in sadness, "and... you guys want to kill me."

"I can explain," the student protested. But what was there to explain? The exorcist had more or less figured everything out. The exorcist shook their head. Their silver hair, now brown at its roots, flowed in the wind like a swaying branch.

"No need."

The black-haired boy felt a cold fist clench his heart after the curt sentence. Were they really that angry?

"She... s-spared me 'cuz of you."

"You don't k-kill me, you don't hate me," the exorcist said, almost in a childish way, "is not your fault."

The words rolled and stumbled along like a snowball downhill. The student extended a hand, and with a bit of fumbling,

“the exorcist held it
tight.”



Death's Waltz

Elizabeth Wei

The End Of The World

by ZIXUAN XU

At the end of the world, there is still Time.

At the end of the world, you may find a vast expanse that stretches far beyond any sky, solar system, or galaxy. Some think of it as a pocket, or a vacuum, that takes the universe's actions and lets them seep into the loose reddish-brown sand, the kind that is warm, maybe a bit too warm. The ceiling of this metamorphic black hole is not cloud-filled or clear—although that's what any multicellular organism would perceive it as—but rather painted with a hundred million threads of time, each carrying their own young world within them. All of these ropes come together like a bundle of knitting lengths at the calloused hands of the one and only Timekeeper, the martyr of true life.

The Timekeeper Herself is not human, nor is she inhuman—it is the perceiver's position that determines her temporary appearance, and it is Time's decision that powers her body. She is a product of the celestial collisions that had occurred during the time of Creation, leftover specks of galactic stardust that was cusped in the palms of the Creators and took on a consciousness. She swims gracefully through the rivers of Time to navigate each of the endless strings, seeing hundreds of wars both take and give life, sighing as she does so.

Although She was not entirely human as a result of her days spent at the end of the world—which She has named Khrona, in the language of Time—there was a side of Her that was undeniably alive. The Creators understood that only life could breed life. The Timekeeper's job was not something to be tampered with by the inanimate, or those who have never experienced actual living.

The Timekeeper is a female. It had been determined by the Creators long ago that the burdens of childbirth were not to fall upon males, and where life exists, the rules of life apply. Life endorses death, and vice versa, so it is only by the course of nature that the Creators implemented a way for the Timekeeper to survive forevermore. Daughters of Time arrive at Khrona to learn the whispers of Time from their mother, and when the bond is ready, they become one underneath the blanket of stories that they held together. It is a blessing and a curse to be born into Khrona, but when fate calls you, the life within is not strong enough to resist.

Perhaps the sands of Khrona once flourished with the beauty of life, but it seems that the stories have sunk so deep that neither the Timekeeper nor the Daughter has any clue when the Creators might have touched their home. If it is something

that even they, the guardians of Time, cannot find, it is a clear indication that it has become forever lost. That is what all the records say up until the point He arrived at the giant, turning the hourglass in which both the Daughter and the Timekeeper slept. He was human, or He appeared that way, and He had somehow parted Time itself to find Khrona, although that was impossible. The Timekeeper felt it, and She thought quietly to Herself, as she skillfully weaved the Time ribbons, He has too much life within Him to belong here.

He awoke the Daughter with the strangeness of his presence and spoke, in a voice that sounded neither young, old, new, or familiar, "I am the Knight of the World, and I have arrived to take my place."

The Daughter opened her eyes sleepily and a very life-like, deliberate, almost-happy smile spread across her face. She replied to him the answer that she had been repeating to herself for millennia, since she found her mother, since she learned how to strum the chords of Time, and since her bare feet crossed the colossal plain of Khrona. It was the first entry the Timekeeper heard her daughter make in their records. At the end of the world, Time is life. Time is, in fact, everything.

"So, what do you have to offer to the void of Time?" ■

“At the end of the world,
there is still Time.”



Illustration: Samara Rahman



the beginning
Amy Long



Life Indoors

Hannah Xu

You Broke Me First

by YUSRA MUKHTAR

You said I ruined everything.
That I was the cause of all your problems.
You said that I broke you.

What you don't mention is the way you treated me
What you don't mention is that you broke me first.

You thought I was a piece of clay you could mould into whatever
you wanted.
You tried to contain me in a pretty little cage, thinking there
would be no consequences

But I couldn't take the walls closing in on me anymore.
They were suffocating and draining every drop of my identity
away.
So I kicked down the walls
and watched as each of my imperfections slithered through the
cracks.

You said I was ungrateful,
That I didn't understand the way you loved.
But apparently the rest of the world did because I was
labelled as
Cruel
Manipulative
And despicable.

You ambushed me, using the world as a shield of fire.
Your pitchforks and accusations ready to pick me apart.
They said I shattered your heart beyond repair,
But we both know you broke mine first.
I don't know whether it's delusion or your ego that's blinding you
from the truth.

So, here it is in its rawest form,
you broke me first.



Illustration: Hiba Mulla

mirage

by FATIMA SHARIPOVA

Let's take a road trip

Down bonding roads

I can tell you my stories

My hot takes and cold truths

And jokes where I'm the punchline

You'll see an open home,

A welcoming door,

A lush path along the binding road

And you'll tell me stories too,

And everything you've ever thought.

Try not to look at the mirage on the road

I promise it won't spin you out of control,

But maybe you'd enjoy the ease

With life being so hard and all

I'm sorry for the inevitable day that you realize

There's not a thing I don't know about you

Yet all you know of me is a cavity

I'm sorry, because I don't want to fill the gaps.

The Doe

by SUMEDH DHANVANTHRY

The doe knows not what the man believes.
 He approaches, hand outstretched with a faint quiver, surely no older than eighteen,
 with grey eyes so wide and he holds with much trepidation,
 cupped within the dark matrix of his heart,
 larval and warm within the windbreak of his ribs,
 an emotion for which no words ever have been attempted save in jest.

It is that phylum itself in which love and awe and, among the shadows,
 even fear are contained but
 the doe knows not. What the man believes
 is that the doe must have a conception of the world, of all the sorry enterprises of man
 to which it has bore witness, purer than any manheart beating or ever having beaten.
 Like the child who glows with an innocence to make outlaws, veterans, widows kneel.

She looks to him, both thick eyes, the sole implements by which she might gauge
 the merits of the living world fixed on him. If she senses any mute darkness in my eyes,
 the man thinks,
 the doe knows not what. The man believes
 no Lord-built creature could know malice with legs so quick and frail and body so
 slight and radiant in the evening as quickgold in its right wooded crucible.

The man puts his hand to the skin, soft and so new, of the doe's neck and
 she doesn't flinch
 and he thinks of his mother and sister who don't wait by the woodfire.
 There are brown sparrows flitting and a cool westerly wind and a big sun
 and this is what
 the doe knows. Not what the man believes
 of nature but what he believes of himself is called into question,
 as his mooring grows tenuous.

He sees in her reflected back to him by wet eyes an impassable strand of wildness and
 the man believes those same ancient traces of wildness have precipitated man's
 unrelenting trespass into the cordoned wild and
 he fears what this means for the pretty doe who may be
 but flesh and hide and he believes that he is right to be afraid but
 the doe knows not what the man believes.

EDITORIAL BOARD

A board that amplifies student voices through supported opinions.

The Truckers

by AARON ZHANG and DEREK CHEN

Should sound torture be allowed on entire cities while waving Confederate and Nazi flags? Does a lawful protest starve a city of healthcare, blockade roads and border crossings that fuel the livelihoods of countless, and urinate on the National War Memorial? Should these actions be protected by freedom of expression?

According to the “Freedom Convoy”, a group that occupied Ottawa for over three weeks, the answer to all of these questions is an emphatic yes. They’ve blasted horns day and night, driving people out of their own homes. They’ve waved flags that symbolize fascism and oppression in the streets, and ironically urinated on the memorials that symbolize Canada’s freedom. They have relentlessly harassed residents for just wearing a mask. All of this damage is for, as they have said themselves, the purpose of pressuring the government to lift pandemic safety measures. It’s one thing to demonstrate against unfair policy by occupying space in front of government buildings, but it is a revoltingly selfish action to hold a whole city hostage over protocols that are meant to keep everyone healthy.

That’s right. The protestors’

demands include the lifting of all COVID-19 restrictions and the resignation of Prime Minister Justin Trudeau. They are requesting that the front-line workers everywhere in Canada, people who have been through hell during this pandemic, be put in more danger because the truckers want their happy hour back. They have the audacity to protest against wearing a piece of fabric that saves lives, while there are front-line workers who have had to wear them for 2 years so as to not put their families in danger. Vigilant, responsible citizens who have kept themselves and others safe are watching this attempt to obliterate everything they have worked towards. In a world where ambulances are becoming unavailable during life-threatening emergencies are blocked by truckers, the healthcare system would collapse if the demands of truckers were met.

As a citizen of a democratic country, everyone should have the right to protest, but only peacefully. When citizens protest, they should be beholden to the rules around maintaining peace. If they violate these laws, they effectively forfeit their right to participate in that gathering and should receive an appropriate punishment. If a

protester blasts irritating noises at local residents and demands that local charities serve them, then there should be consequences that follow. Public order and the rule of law should never be allowed to falter, especially in a protest. A protestor’s right to demonstrate should not deprive the right of local residents to live in peace. The common Ottawa citizen has nothing to do with issuing or rescinding public health orders. They should not have to suffer for the facilitation of the Freedom Convoy. The government of Canada cannot send the message that people can commit crimes to get what they want and be let off the hook, but that is exactly what it told the Freedom Convoy when it sat on its hands and patiently waited for the protestors to return home.

What adds insult to injury is that the federal government had all the tools it needed to end the occupation of Ottawa, yet chose not to. Instead, they, alongside the Ontario provincial government, asked the occupiers very nicely to leave. On the third day of the occupations, with incessant honking filling the air, then-Chief of Ottawa Police Peter Sloly said, “the demonstration has



Illustration: Grace Zhu

scaled down over the last 12 hours. We want that trend to continue until this demonstration comes to a complete end. I cannot guarantee you that right now” [1]. The Chief of Police, who was tasked with leading the local peacekeeping force, chose not to intervene, even though the ITAC gave clear forewarning of trouble and a local soup kitchen was harassed by protestors for meals [2] [3]. To nobody’s surprise, the occupation continued. Instead, it fell to the citizens of Ottawa, not the government, police, or other institution, to take action with a court injunction against excessive noise that took effect on Day 19 of the occupation [4]. It took the Prime Minister until

Day 22 to take decisive action [5].

A responsible government should have seen the threat, taken preemptive action, and better communicated the difference between a lawful and an unlawful assembly. As protests against the government grow in number, it is best for everyone if the people who are given the responsibility of keeping the peace are better prepared for what may happen. The failure of the Trudeau government to recognize this basic axiom of society is simply inexcusable and makes Trudeau Sr.’s Godzilla-threshold handling of the FLQ crisis in Quebec look comparatively active. Demonstrations must remain lawful and peaceful, and anyone who breaks these laws should,

in accordance with the law, be deprived of their right to take part. ■

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Why Did Putin Pull The Trigger?

by ORIANA ZHOU

Everyone knows the Russian military has pushed onto Ukrainian soil. But what exactly happened that led up to this point? Could the war have been prevented?

On the 24th of February, 2022, Vladimir Putin ordered Russian troops to invade Ukraine, causing the largest land conflict in Europe since the Second World War. Over 4 million people have fled the country, and over 6 million have been displaced internally, while the UN estimates around 1 700 casualties [1]. Around the country, buildings have been destroyed by bombs, while Russia faces a war crimes investigation by the International Criminal Court [2]. In Ukraine, the government has permitted civilians to bear arms to fight against Russian troops, and able-bodied men are encouraged to stay and fight [3]. Putin's rationale for the invasion was to "protect people" from "bullying and genocide" and called for the "demilitarization and denazification of Ukraine" [4]. However, these claims have largely been debunked—there isn't evidence to support Putin's claims of genocide by the Ukrainian government, while "denazification" is a distorted term used by a leader that has a tendency to call foreign

enemies "Nazis".

The cause behind the February 2022 invasion of Ukraine was fueled by Putin's foreign policy and specific disdain for the West while dragging Ukraine back into its sphere of influence.

To understand the entire scale of Russia-Ukraine relations, it needs to be traced back to the collapse of the Soviet Union. For hundreds of years, Ukraine and Russia were united as one country, first as the Russian Empire, and then from the 1920s until the 1990s, as the Soviet Union. In 1991, the Soviet Union collapsed into fifteen independent countries, including the current Russian Federation and Ukraine. As President Boris Yeltsin in Russia attempted

to build a democracy, Ukraine liberalized and chose to align with the West while distancing itself from Russia. Beginning in the late 1990s, a western military alliance called the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), began expanding eastwards, closer to Russia's backyard, despite previously promising to not do so [5]. In 2000, Vladimir Putin succeeded Yeltsin as President of Russia and his agenda began to differ from his predecessor's [6]. Russia's path to liberal democracy has taken a step backward—Putin has been suspected of assassinating his critics, suppressing free speech, and changing the constitution to provide him with unlimited power [7]. In 2008, Ukraine started plans



Illustration: Zoe Cheng

to join NATO [8]. As tensions between the West and Russia grew, Russia was aggravated that its sphere of influence was decreasing. In recent years, Russia has expressed strong opposition regarding Ukraine's joining of NATO [9].

Tensions grew to an all-time high in 2013, when pro-Russian Ukrainian President Viktor Yanukovich chose not to sign an agreement for a stronger partnership with the European Union. Following his decision, a massive wave of protests occurred in western Ukraine which led to violent clashes with the police. Eventually, Yanukovich fled Ukraine in 2014. Shortly after, the Ukrainian parliament formally voted to remove him from power and arrest him in absentia for the murder of innocent civilians [10]. In February of 2014, not long after Yanukovich was disgraced, Russia annexed Crimea. The annexation was justified by Russia as attempting to better the lives of Crimeans, as Crimea is inhabited by ethnic Russians and was previously under Russian jurisdiction in the imperial and Soviet eras. However, many viewed the issue as a violation of Ukrainian sovereignty [11].

The annexation continued to heighten tensions, and Yanukovich's pro-Western successors made it clear that they would attempt to join NATO,

specifically current President Volodymyr Zelensky [12]. In December of 2021, Russia issued demands for NATO and Ukraine in order to maintain peace in Europe. Russia wanted a ban on Ukraine from joining NATO and a withdrawal of NATO troops from Eastern Europe to their original location in 1997 [13]. The demands were not met and Russia saw this as the most recent act of Western expansion further into Eastern Europe, as it kept the door open for Ukraine to join NATO.

At the beginning of the war, the Kremlin claimed that Ukraine and Russia are one country that should be reunited [14]. It doubled down on the idea that "Ukraine is not a country" [15]. But what is clear is that the Kremlin has chosen to act on Ukraine as it tips more towards NATO, and will do anything to prevent an alliance between the two. ■

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Cryptocurrencies: Our Toxic Relationship

by LUCK XING

Finance and economics revolve around the fundamentals of an exchange system, either with commodities or forms of money. As we have accepted systems such as paper currency and e-transactions as a society, it is undeniable that these systems are essential to our economy. Still, no functioning systems are flawless and without room for improvement. End consumers can feel the day-to-day restraints of these systems, an example of which can be our unreliable and excessively complex Interac e-transfer system, which most Canadians rely on for private transactions. Many are forced to rely on third-party applications without appropriate encryption for such money transfers, adding an unnecessary layer of risk and insecurity. Signs of these constraints with conventional currencies affecting day-to-day civilian life exhibit some of the issues with traditional e-commerce systems suffering from insecurity, inefficiency, and unreliability.

While turnaround times or encryption of transactions may not mean much to the typical customer, the drawbacks of traditional currencies are felt by larger corporations, where two business days can mean the difference between profit and bankruptcy. Cryptocurrencies and decentralized finance were introduced as a more efficient, secure, and hassle-free alternative for traditional fiat currencies. However, this ideal ideology of decentralized finance remains a fever dream, too volatile and underdeveloped for public and civilian usage. Before we step into the controversial topic of cryptocurrencies and investments, we must understand a concept called blockchains. Blockchains are the basis of any cryptocurrency or decentralized platform; essentially, when talking about the benefits and

disadvantages of crypto, we allude to the technology that drives it—blockchains.

Blockchains

Blockchains, the foundations of decentralized currencies, are a new virtual data-storing and transferring system based on decentralized networks of connected members' computers that process data and calculations. With every transaction, a new "block" is created containing a set of transactions, and these "blocks" are then verified by encryption and decryption by every member of the network. This process makes it almost impossible to forge transaction histories and allows for quick transaction times made possible by the sheer scale of these blockchains. Any ordinary personal computer can become a part of a blockchain, doing calculations with its processors. As calculations are completed, the blockchain network members are rewarded with digital tokens or cryptocurrencies. This makes for a brand new, extraordinarily lucrative, but high-risk cryptocurrency mining industry, which we will touch on later. What separates blockchains from traditional servers and their risk of downtime is blockchain's decentralized nature, without any particular entity taking full responsibility or complete control of data processing. Blockchain networks can maintain almost unlimited uptime. Every time one point of the blockchain is breached, there are thousands, if not millions, of supplementary members who can fill in and keep the blockchain functioning. This system eliminates the possibility of a single point of failure, such as a power outage, cyber-attack, or natural disaster, setting off an avalanche of crises, similar to that of the 2008 global economic recession.

The critical part about blockchains is that it is not a system that is uniquely available for cryptocurrencies exchanges but is a technology that could be employed in various sectors, including the medical field, business, law, and essentially every existing industry that employs cloud-computing and server operations. Its versatility allows for employment and function in a magnitude of environments, improving the efficiency and security of existing structures. The issue here lies in the word "could."

It is undeniable that blockchain technology is a direction that society will be aiming toward in the future. However, it's crucial to realize that blockchains are still years from becoming mature enough for mainstream use by governments, fiat currencies, and sectors vital to the functioning of our society. No business is willing to make sacrifices, time, and finances to switch to blockchain technology without adequate testing of the technology and scalability. Without a good reason or urge for this shift, larger corporations are unwilling to make the initial leap to the experimental phase, given that the enormous investments do not make economic sense for profits and return on investment. As long as there aren't more prominent players in the blockchain environment, its development and advancement will be stagnant, leaving us uncertain of its full capabilities and apprehensive of its potential risks.

Cryptocurrency

Continuing with this concept of inconsistency and volatility, we can quickly see that these drawbacks of early-stage blockchains are a trend consistent with cryptocurrencies, systems which rely on blockchains to function. The truth is that crypto

and blockchain technology is essentially a large, over-publicized experiment. Like being the first adopter of an experimental vaccine, cryptos profitability and return-on-investment in today's market is a gamble, being highly speculative, volatile, and not making much sense by tilting the conventional supply-and-demand model, which in traditional markets drives values of investments higher. All this is due to the one most significant issue with this early blockchain experiment—utility. Many may believe that crypto investments seem like stocks and bonds but, in practice, they contain much more risk and are, on average, less informed.

When investing in the stock market, an informed investor may analyze income statements, balance sheets and research industry catalysts, allowing them to decide on investments. The issue with crypto is that an investor's only pieces of information are its transaction settlement times and its total circulation. In contrast with precious metals and other commodities that can retain their value over scarcity, crypto isn't precisely scarce either. Everyone who has access to a computer can "mine" cryptocurrencies, allowing for a greater flow of such coins into the virtual environment. Supply and demand is a model that every investment follows, and it appears that crypto does too. For the value of an asset to increase, its demand must be greater than its supply, as is the case with stocks of rapidly growing companies or precious gems and metals of limited quantity. With more "commercial" miners entering the crypto field, its supply is exponential. Equally, massive demand is required to allow for value growth or even stabilize the market.

As more coins are mined, and market demand is a significant variable, it is difficult to predict its market direction. Its value is still, to this day, highly unpredictable, with Bitcoin nearly doubling its worth

from August 2021 to November and dropping almost 50% again in January 2022. These price fluctuations are rare, even unforeseen in other currencies and markets, giving us an insight into the fragility of the crypto market.

Blockchain technology's benefits are already being exhibited in the virtual world through cryptocurrencies and virtual tokens. Its effortless cross-border transfers and industry-leading security are tilting the scales and showing us how this new financial architecture can help create a closer-knit and more connected planet in the future. While it never hurts to venture and explore

new fields as a society or diversify investment portfolios, many may want to take a step back and analyze the potential risks and the nature of the investment. It is undeniable that blockchains are the path to the future, potentially innovating and reshaping many industries like law and pharmaceuticals. The cryptocurrency market as of today, however, may very well still be an immature and risk-filled environment, which poses significant risks for the civilian investor.

"Uncertainty and expectation are the joys of life. Security is an insipid thing." -William Cowper ■



Illustration: Lucy Qi

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