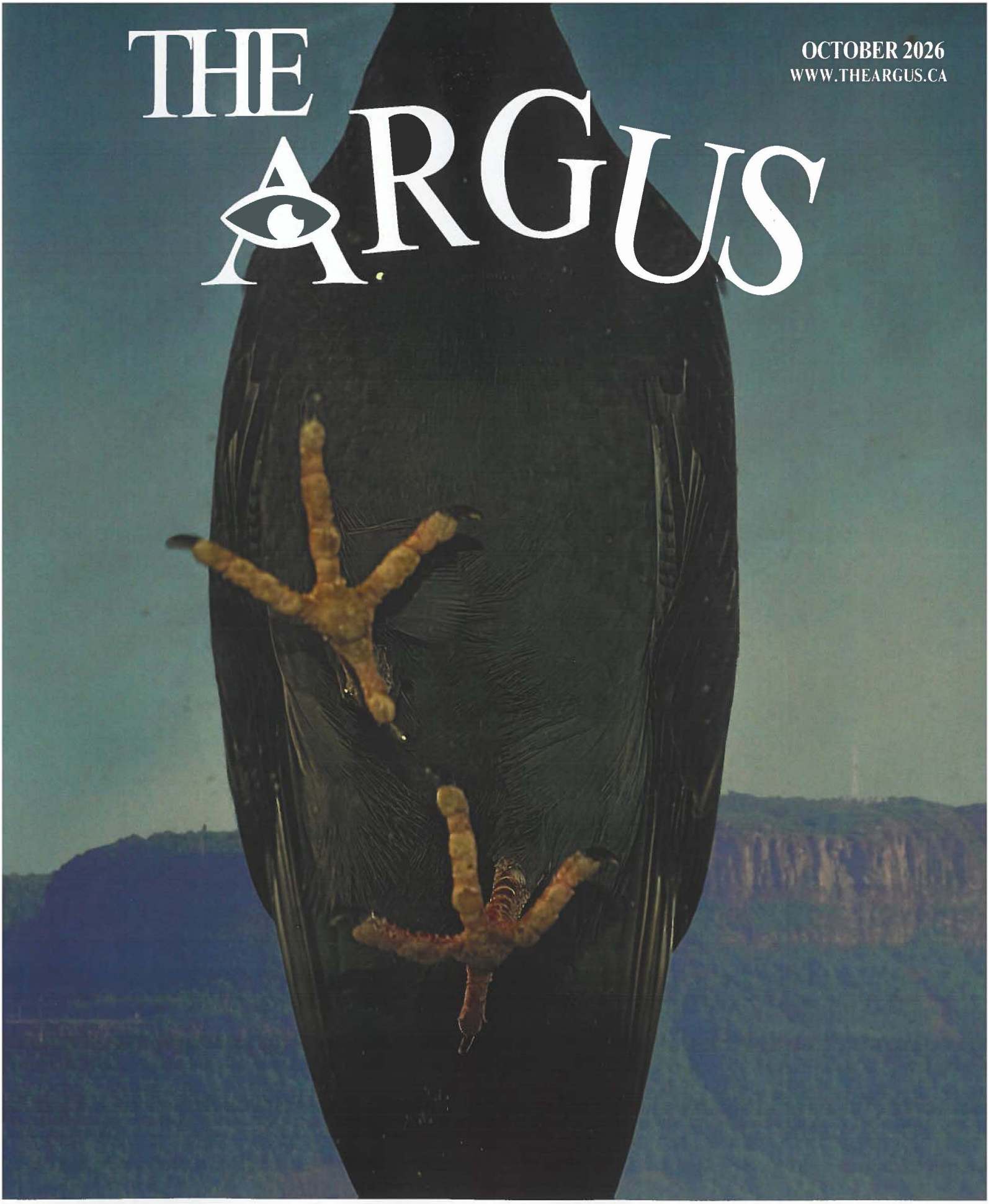
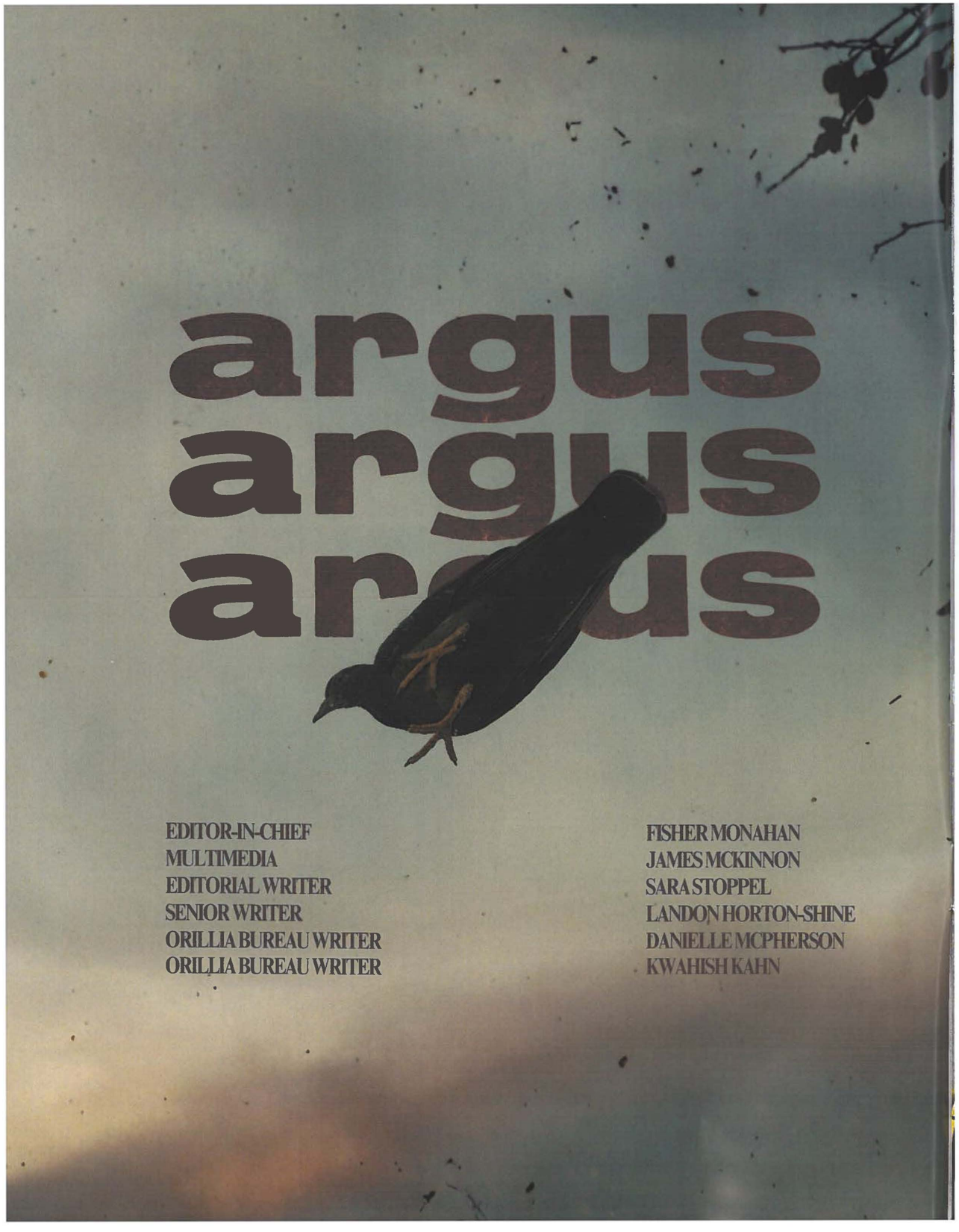
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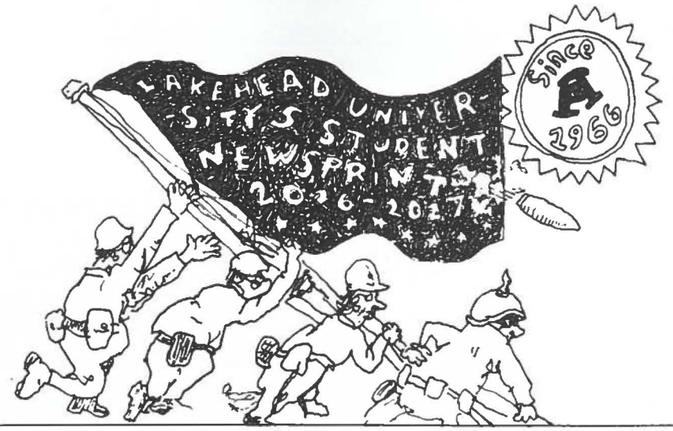
LAKEHEAD UNIVERSITY, THUNDER BAY, ONTARIO.

VOLUME 59 ISSUE 01



Letter From The Editor







Since its inception 60 years ago, The Argus has been a triumph of student journalism at Lakehead. There have been major world events chronicled in these pages, as well as a fair number of not-so-major ones. As Journalists, Designers, Artists, and Marketers, we're on a mission to preserve this slice of our time as students. We work hard to document life beyond the screen, in unsuspecting places high and low.

The commencement of this semester marks Argus's birthday. A year after Lakehead recieved royal assent, and The Lakehead College of Arts, Science, and Technology was thereafter known as "Lakehead University" on July 1st, 1965. The next year in October of 1966– The Argus began publishing.

On this year of our 59th volume, I'm proud to be working with such a great team to bring a diverse range of student voices to everyone. From the bottom of my heart, please enjoy.

Fisher Monahan he/him
Editor-in-Chief

STATE OF THE UNION

From LUSU President

Aliss Chavari **Lakehead University Student Union**

Over the summer, LUSU successfully expanded the Lily Pad Project, our menstrual equity initiative that provides free menstrual products on campus (Thunder Bay & Orillia). We are incredibly grateful to our partners and volunteers who help make this initiative possible. We are also happy to share that our volunteering program, "The WolfPack," is back with better perks than ever before. We would love to see you join and get involved!

LUSU is very passionate about food security and sustainable food initiatives, so we hired a Garden Coordinator this summer. Students were able to access gardening workshops and garden plots where they could start growing their own food during the growing season. We are hoping this can grow into a long-term initiative, with a dedicated gardening centre and eventually opportunities to grow food year round, contributing to our food security mandate. Continuing with the food talk, we will also be hosting a weekly Fresh Food Market throughout the Fall semester, starting September 21, with affordable and delicious fresh produce available for students.

Expect our first ever outdoor Homecoming party happening in October. We are hoping to spark some Lakehead spirit on campus, so join us, have some fun, and get excited before the first game! The Clubs Fair is also coming soon, along with Pumpkin Palooza, Country Night, and much more.



Premier Doug Ford defends our nation's pride.

Loblaw August Food Inflation Report

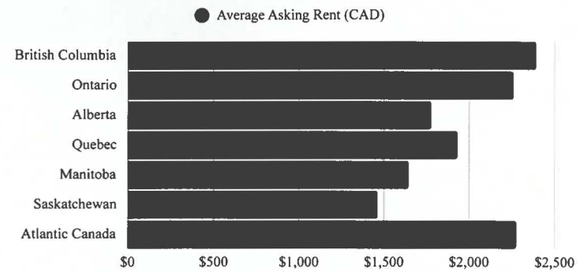
(TORONTO) August 25, 2026 GLOBE NEWSWIRE

Inflation for food purchased from stores slows to 3.1% year over year, down from 3.9% in June. Loblaws reported second quarter earnings growth of 4.1%.

National Rent Report (CANADA)

September's rent report from rentals.ca outlines a 4.8% nationwide decline in rent prices year over year. In Thunder Bay, average rent for a 1-bedroom is $1,444 per month. The current national average for 1-bedroom rental is $1,813 per month. Figures represent asking rents, not rents paid.

Average asking rent by province



Source: National Rent Report, Rentals.ca.

Upcoming Events (Thunder Bay)

LUSU Fresh Market	Wednesday, October 7th & 21st at 1pm in The Agora
Free Soup Friday	Friday, October 9th & 23rd at 12pm in UC 2014B
Yoga	Saturday, October 17th at 11am in Student Health & Wellness
Line Dancing Lessons	Saturday, October 24th at 2:30pm in RC 1001
Breakfast with Norwest	Tuesday, October 27th at 10am in UC 2014B
Reading Week	October 12th to 16th

CLUBS DEN POWERED BY LUSU

See more and register for events at clubsden.lusu.ca

Bicycles for Cheap (Community Spokes)

Community Spokes is a grassroots bike shop operating out of their workshop at 110 Simpson Street in old Fort William. Students can learn to build their own bike via a work-to-earn program. The total cost of building your own bicycle this way can be as low as $80, but prices vary depending on quality and brand of parts. Alternatively, they sell used bikes for between $100-$1000. If you already have a bike, and are looking to get it repaired:

Flat Tire:	$15-$25	**Wheel Staightenin :**	$15-$35
New Cables:	$15-$25	**Skipping Gears:**	$25-$90

110 Simpson Street, Thunder Bay ON. Information via communityspokes.com



Lakehead U Increases Parking Ticket Cost

By Sara Stoppel

I am truly disgusted with myself. For the past four years I have perfected the art of avoiding the Lakehead Parking Authority; I know their schedule, I buy the hour passes if I'm around during ticketing times. I even had spies watch out for the ticket guy when I was on the way to school or move my car to another area of the lot were they had already passed over. I did the math. I could get fifteen tickets in a year and it would've been cheaper than buying the parking pass. I took pride in my frugality and resourcefulness, and so I never bought the parking pass. Until this year.

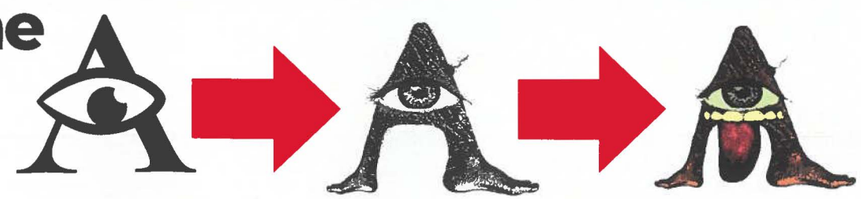


Right there in the parking lot I pulled out my calculator. Even if I paid within the discount-rate time frame, I could only get seven tickets the entire year if I still wanted to skip the pass and save money. This would be an unlikely occurrence. My heart broke. I wrestled it for a the weekend, but the Lakehead bigwigs forced my hand. And so I swallowed my pride, I spent the two eighty.

The piece of orange plastic mocks me every time I get in the car. It tells me I have no backbone. It's right. But at least now I don't have to look over my shoulder for the ticket person any more and can rest, knowing I made the safe economic decision.

On the afternoon of Tuesday September 15th, I sauntered over to my 2019 Hyundai in the G lot and spotted the strip of white receipt paper on the windshield. I figured, eighteen bucks (twenty five if it took more than a few days to pay) and I'd be on my merry way, plus, I'd know when they ticket on Tuesdays. However, where the twenty five dollar figure usually was, had been replaced by a whopping thirty-five dollars, with twenty five is now the new discounted rate. There must be some kind of mistake! That's seven lattes at The Study! That's one and a half burgers from The Outpost! That's a forty per cent increase in a single year, and one that had me sweating.

Behind the Scenes "Argie"



© The Argus 2026

My SUMMER of REST & Relaxation

By Sara Stoppel

What is a student on summer break to do when the singular place they applied to denies their application? The student scrambles to find alternative employment. And that's exactly what I did when I booked an interview I found on Craigslist at a place 45 mins away from my house. I interviewed for the role of Summer artist, they reviewed my portfolio, and said they'd send me a formal offer soon. As a desperate, broke 20 year old, this-sequence of events did not strike me as odd, even when they asked how I felt about gardening and cooking in my supposed art interview.

The following week on Sunday's eve, I received an email from the lady who interviewed me, which included a full list of tasks to be completed during the week. How peculiar, I thought, that this was how I found out I got the job (I had heard nothing of her, and there was no formal job offer signed). As for the content of the schedule, it made no mention of art activities I would be engaging in this first week, but assumed this would perhaps arise the second week. On the first day of my employment, I made the trek to the quaint yellow shack that stood in the backroads bush. A kids Summer camp would be running that day, they said, and I would be in charge of the seed planting station.

On the second day the schedule read Sara - "Prep for concrete pad" as my priority task. I looked around. I was seemingly the only Sara to be found. My brain began to explode in a chorus of alarm bells, and I thought to myself, how does this have anything to do with the job I was hired to do.

I must interject with context: The Summer prior I had worked at a garden center. Although this job experience has left me with knowledge of some types of annual flowers, I know nothing of gardening and even less of manual labour. I have never so much as used a shovel in my life. Ever.

The prep required pouring a layer of sand and heavy, bulky crusher fines down prior to the concrete. A shovel and wheelbarrow were thrust upon me and I was told to fetch the materials. Much to my chagrin, the two piles were neatly stacked at the bottom of the giant hill the shack rested on, almost mockingly. And so I went up and down the hill, shoveling rock and sand in the grueling July heat, while my underdeveloped bicep muscles inquired as to what we thought we were doing.

The days followed suit. One day I was made to whipper snip and another had to shovel compost with a pitchfork into the garden. I was even listed to "take branches down from off the shed roof". How? I have no idea. I am also scared of heights and do not have a chainsaw licence (I called in that day). It was then revealed to me by a coworker that I had actually been hired as a gardener and not as an artist. What the fuck. I knew I was screwed when the actual artist in residence was doing the same tasks I was.

Continued on page 3

Continued from page 2

Once a week, I was sent to the community garden we ran, which was located on a very public street in a rougher neighbourhood. Although I think it's a wonderful addition to the community, I do not personally enjoy digging in public dirt. The place I worked for joined forces with a volunteer program, which included an army of people from all walks of life. Like one older man in particular who spoke mostly Ukrainian and once got into a very loud, verbal altercation with a Russian man over the war.



I gave a one day resignation notice. On the last day I worked, me and my coworker (who always smelt like candy apples) were dropped off in the backroads bush and were asked to chop down tree sprigs for an art project. Our boss took off in the truck and said they'd be back soon. With no cell service, there was not much to do but complete the task. I made him do most of the chopping, as I am also deathly afraid of ticks. She did come back for us though, after I had spent twenty minutes wondering if I was going to die out there.

I still have no idea how this happened to me, or why I stayed as long as I did. I did get to teach one art class and was received with a very warm welcome by my former employer and coworkers. And hey, at least I know that I never want to touch a trowel ever again.





Celebrity Sightings in Thunder Bay

By Sara Stoppel

Thunder Bay has been truly spoiled this month. Our city has seen the likes of Prime Minister Mark Carney, Bryan Adams, Steve Aoki, and the wonderful performers at Wake the Giant. For those who missed the Prime Minister's visit earlier this month, Carney was here strictly on business. On September 3rd he announced a 4.7 billion dollar investment into Thunder Bay's railcar industry. He then took to Tungsten street with 1980s singer Bryan Adams for a quick persian and coffee. Both the Adams and Aoki shows went off without a hitch, playing at the Thunder Bay Community Auditorium and NV Nightclub respectively.

Wake the Giant took place last weekend at Marina Park. It's a local staple, and this year the music festival featured The Plain White T's, The Wallflowers, and more. However, it was the headliner, Flo Rida (yes, "Whistle" singer), who caused quite the stir at the sober event. The American artist used alcohol bottles as props during his performance and even invited viewers up on the stage, including minors. Some members of the on-stage crowd were also seen stripping off their shirts and dancing suggestively to the songs. The Wake the Giant team has since then issued an apology for the "harm" caused by this performance and clarified that Flo Rida and his team were briefed on alcohol prohibition.

What makes these celebrity visits so special is that they essentially sum up the spirit of the city. Persians, Canadiana, and the very comical scenario that one of the only times Thunder Bay sees an international superstar, it goes horribly sideways.



Sara Stoppel is a writer for The Argus, and voice around Thunder Bay.


HEADS UP!
319 VICTORIA AVE E
WWW.ROCKROOMCLIMBING.CA





What It's Really Like To Plant Trees In Northern Ontario

By Landon Horton-Shine

June 2026

An uncharacteristically beautiful day paints the sky above us a deep cobalt blue while keeping the temperature below deadly. By 2:30 PM my trusted Editor and I had put in 2250 and 1800 trees in
the ground respectively. We're moving at a good pace before we hit a speedbump: we're completely out of trees. Without a path or a guide our idling hearts drifted to the comfort of the ground underneath us to wait. Sitting soon turned to laying sprawled under the cover of a tall poplar tree, heads against our discarded hard hats. Absently, my editor ruffles through his dry bag and produces a case of joints, flourishing them with a menacing grin. Why not? We smoke to Mark William Lewis and Alice's Restaurant Massacree and don't say much through the smoke that's taken quickly by the breeze. Then, from a hill far over yonder we hear someone calling for us, something is very wrong. Our perception zooms into her face, and with 4K resolution our crew boss orders us from behind furrowed bushy eyebrows to get our bags and get over the hill. My Editor turns to me with his bursting red eyes glued to mine,

"We have GOT to get over there NOW." I match his urgency and finish off the roach.

We make it over the hill and stumble down into the swamp where the next cache of trees is set up and see the issue right away: they have so many fucking trees left. I count like five boxes while our crew boss anxiously explains the situation,

"Basically the whole thing is f**ked, I don't know what they're doing in there."

They? "How many have gone in?" I ask, knowing that the answer is too many already.

Our crew boss looks up with tears in her eyes, my heart breaks, "...like fucking 5 people already. We're probably staying late, just close the land."

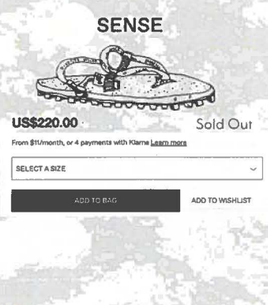
I look at my Editor and he looks back at me, we know what to do. Bagging up half a box of trees each, we make our way into the piece. We're planting rapidly, our shovels splitting earth with a satisfying gritty sound every few seconds. Around one tree every six seconds will net a consistent tree planter between $400-$500 every day, taking into account the time it takes to bag up your trees and lunch. Tree planting may be the last economically viable way to make money between academic years, at least for those who don't have an equally viable job lined up. Most don't. I didn't last summer, it almost did me in for good, economically.

Continued…









Now all I need to deal with are logs shifting beneath my boots, forest beasts, and vampiric insects doing me in, mortally. For some reason I find the latter much easier to manage. Reality snaps back into place when I realize I'm lost in the mess of tilled rows scarring the earth around me.

It's okay though, my Editor and I have been through this by now. We space eight feet off of one another and start to plant back and forth, like Roomba robots optimizing its path on your living room carpet. Other planters are at the edges of my sight, orange hard hats bobbing in time with ours. Some come closer and drift away, while others work in little L shapes or in rapid zig zags before disappearing into the poplars. Eventually we run out of trees and return to the cache to get more. Around the cache are the dejected faces of first years who know they're staying late. Our tree runners are there too, they're the ones who bring us the trees. One looks like a viking, except on his almost bald head the only hair he has is a miniature set of perfectly combed bangs. The other is handsome and he knows it. Both of them are looking around wildly, trying to come up with a way to fill the rest of the land.



Trout Forest, Ontario Argus Staff Photo

Eventually, once the others finish their trees, we're ordered to just bag up a quarter box and plant out to the road, through the tall poplars obscuring everything. We snap into action and bag up what's honestly a pathetic amount of trees. At 14 cents 112 trees is like 17 dollars. Like ok. Anyways,we organize ourselves into a row, some of us slowly sinking into the bog as we line up. It's fine, we're professionals and we don't even make a noise as the water fills our lungs. When everyone is ready we're off, though I pause to grab a grasping hand before it's submerged in the muck. It's Atilla— eighteen and fresh out of the ends of the GTA. We plant about 5 trees each before we can't even see each other through the poplar thicket. Since the bush is partially situated on the swamp the bugs are terrible.



Dryden, Ontario Argus Staff Photo

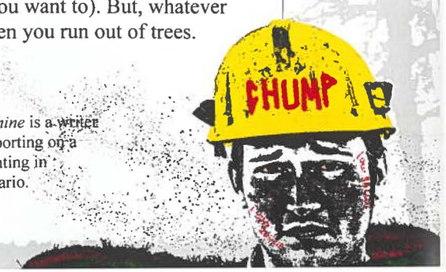
Thick swarms of black flies buzz around our vision, some of them flying directly into our pupils to scream while they drown in our tears. Some fly to the back of our throat to be spit out, drowning in thick dehydrated saliva. Mosquitos trail our ranks waiting to suck the slowest planter into a mummified state. To my right I hear a scream that seems to echo deep through the earth, going for miles. It was Atilla, never saw him again after that day. He was just a kid. Slowly people start falling away. They slip on logs, fall thigh deep into the swampy water, or bug out and attempt to squash the 6-inch wide mosquito that just landed on their forehead with their shovel. Behind us the tree runners are following, watching the destruction. When I sink my shovel into the duff, the woody aerated sediment that holds no tree, the viking goes,

"Hey that's not soil! You can tell by the way it doesn't look or sound anything like soil."

I murder him right then and there, bludgeoned by my shovel with a tree planted into his brainstem. Balancing on top of a fallen tree after planting my last handful of trees I can see the road. From stump to stump I hop parkour style, then jump between the boulders shoring up the gravel. My Editor stumbles out of the thicket fifty feet away from me. While walking to the bus we still hear the screams of those taken by the poplars. That was the Rookie Poplar Massacree that took the lives of so many rookie planters looking to make a decent buck. So if you want to make a decent buck and bend over for 14 cents, I would say go for it. Bring some friends, it's really like summer camp. You can meet every kind of person under the sun, see the wild untamed Ontario countryside, and drink until you fall asleep face down in the tall grass surrounded by fireflies (if you want to). But, whatever you do, bring a joint for when you run out of trees.



Landon Horton-Shine is a writer for The Argus, reporting on a season of tree planting in Northwestern Ontario.



Wildfire Smoke in Northwestern Ontario

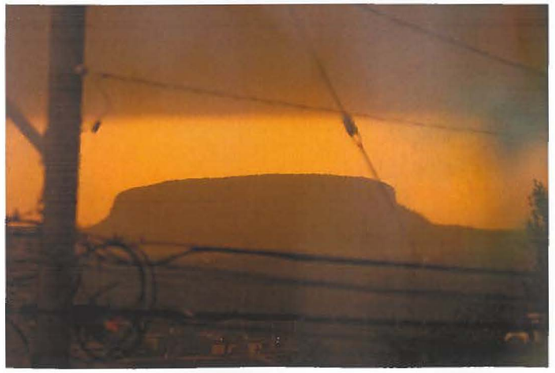
By Argus Staff

In July, wildfires ravaging Northwestern Ontario covered Thunder Bay in a thick layer of smoke, lasting for several days. During this time, air quality AQHI was measuring above 10.















Epstein & the Occult

By Landon Horton-Shine

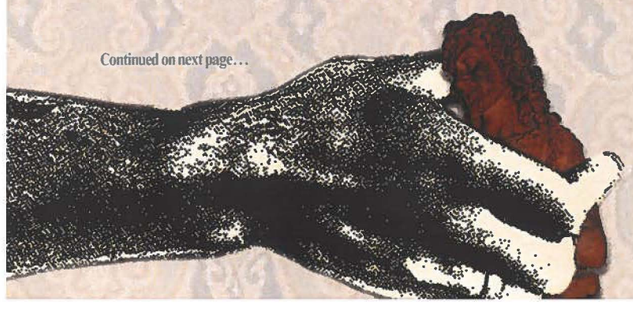
During the 19th century, the a ical Christian philosopher Søren Kierkegaard wrote extensively about the public's relationship with the press. Press opinion offered a window into an abstract "phantom public," stretching a single person's anonymous op nion across the pages of investigative journals..He hated this, and yo should too. Take the time to consider the facts within this a cle and eflect on ho they affect your sense of moral responsibility. Without that personal reflection, the public becom s a mass of conformity, and justice become hollow.

Eps ein's apparent suicide in 2019 kickstarted what became a national interest in both him and his connections to several world leaders and prominent figures. Without diving t o deeply into that history, a few key things stand out. Fi stly, Epstein, with help from longtime partner Ghislaine Maxwell, was leading a sex trafficking ring involving various powerful people om at least 2002 up until his death. Secondly, the US government dedicated serious resources to muddling, misleading, and otherwise censoring a large majority of the information related to the investigations involving Epstein. This behaviour began in 2006, when a grand jury gave him an incredibly light sentence. They charged him with soliciting prostitution when he was charged with unlawful sex with a minor. I don't have to tell you that this is a weird decision. It's suggested, based on evidence from the released Epstein files, that he was a co-opted spy for the US and Israel, but also had relations with other eminent figures from other countries. This spy claim stems from his lasting relationship with former Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Barak. Lastly, for years, American politics has heavily integrated its identity with Zionism. This stretches all the way back to before World War I. Louis Brandeis was the first Jewish Supreme Court Justice in the US, famous for legitimizing the Zionist movement among American Jews. He also inherited a picture of Eva Frank after his mother died. You may not know why, but this is a dreadfully important piece of history in the relationship between Israel and the United States.

THIS ARTICLE IS CITED, FOLLOWING CONCRETE ACADEMIC STANDARDS

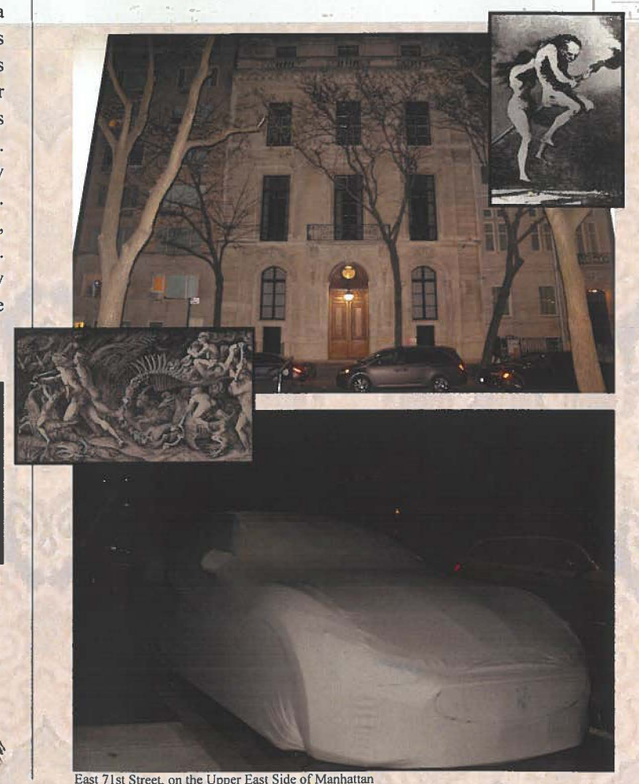
Due to the sensitive nature of this article, we included numerous citations to support its academic validity and allow readers to draw their own conclusions. It should be understood that this text does not mean to conflate actual Jews with Sabbateans or Frankists. This is a nuanced distinction since, to operate, they may present as Jews, Christians, even Muslims. This isn't a criticism of Jewish culture or heritage, but rather an inspection of secular cults with practices that invert Jewish laws. Criticism of Sabbateans/Frankists doesn't equate to criticism of Jews or Israel. Secondly, when reading, don't forget the distinction between Sabbateans, followers of Sabbatai Tzvi, and Sabbatists, those who strictly observe the Sabbath.

Continued on next page…





In case you didn't know, Israel as a country began as a direct resul of a deal between British forces and chemical manufacturer Chaim Weizmann, who also appened to be the president of he British Zionist Federation and later the first president of Israel. Zionism meant "the desire for a Jewish homeland," and in exchange for acetone, an essential ingredient in British explosives, the Brits agreed to help carve out a state for European Jews in Palestine. This had an ulterior motive, however, as the Allies also wanted the United States to get involved in the war. They thought they might accomplish this feat through the promise of a new Jewish state, enticing Zionist Americans to push for he US to enter the fray.



East 71st Street, on the Upper East Side of Manhattan

Photos taken by Argus Staff

Let's take a look at Epstein's bookshelf, as I believe it's a key to his psychology, interests, and ideologies. Multiple purchases relate to Kabbalah, Thelema, sex magick, and tantra. These are a lot of terms, so I'll break them down one by one. Kabbalah is ancient Jewish mysticism which forms the basis of Thelema and "Western sex magick" as described by Donald Michael Kraig in *Modern Sex Magick: Secrets of Erotic Spirituality* (one of Epstein's purchases). Many Kabbalah practices are part of Jewish tradition, such as holidays and liturgical practice, though most ancient rites have been phased out. Thelema is an occult order founded by Aleister Crowley through writing *The Book of the Law*. The main precept of Thelema is "Do what thou wilt (shall be the whole of the Law)," which isn't meant to invite hedonism, but to invite the individual to follow their "True Will," their authentic purpose in life. Much of Thelema's basis came from Aleister Crowley's interpretation of Kabbalah and Hermetic mysticism. Kabbalah and sex magick are closely intertwined, and it's important to remember that there are very distinct differences between Jewish faith and the Kabbalah. Sex magick specifically refers to rituals or practices involving sex that are performed for a specific purpose, either spiritual enlightenment or manifestation rituals. On their own, sex magick and Kabbalah rituals are a valid, if esoteric, tradition practiced by regular people. What leads to people like Epstein, however, is the misinterpretation and corruption of these foundational ideas.

Sabbateanism began in the 1700s as a Jewish messianic movement (messianic means relating to a messiah) and was led by Sabbatai Tzvi, who proclaimed himself the Jewish Messiah, and Nathan of Gaza, Tzvi's prophet. Through various means, these two took an antinomian approach, meaning redemption through sin and the inversion of Kabbalah and Jewish law. Nathan of Gaza proposed that the Messiah must "descend into the realm of darkness" to redeem "divine sparks" trapped in shells of evil. Without getting into whether or not this had any basis, it meant that Tzvi and his followers were justified in breaking and often directly inverting Jewish law. Tzvi, for disputed reasons, converted to Islam, and the Sabbateans followed. This led to generations of crypto-Sabbatean Muslims spread out through the Islamic world, especially in Turkey, where they were called the Dönme. The Dönme were not allowed to mingle or intermarry with the rest of the Muslim population. Through the secret Committee of Union and Progress, largely made up of Dönme members, they played a pivotal role in the Young Turks revolution. Later, another figure would take this antinomianist attitude even further.

In 1755, Jacob Frank returned to his homeland of Poland, claiming to be the reincarnation of Sabbatai Tzvi after studying with the Dönme in Turkey. He came back presenting as a Muslim, though he was really a Sabbatean in secret. You will see that Sabbateans commonly do not publicly claim to be Sabbateans. For them and their practices, it's essential to have a private inner self while presenting a distinct outward personality. Jacob Frank took the inversion of religious law even further than Tzvi. He commonly held secret ritualistic orgies, reportedly involving children. These rituals directly mocked and inverted Jewish liturgical tradition. This is where Kabbalistic law was fully inverted, and those practices were corrupted to serve evil ends. In 1759, Frank orchestrated a mass conversion of his followers to Christianity, winning him favour among the Polish Catholic Elite. Frankism would continue after Jacob Frank's death through his daughter Eva Frank.



To Frankists, she was both the female incarnation of God, the Shekhinah, and the reincarnation of the Virgin Mary. Statues and iconography of Eva Frank became important symbols of crypto-Frankists. With secretly Sabbatean Muslims in the Middle East and secretly Frankist Catholics in the West, esoteric practice became widespread all the way up to the highest levels of society.

A 2025 article by Israeli news site Israel Hayom revealed multiple cases of organized rape and sexual abuse under a ritual pretense. These cases portray only a small portion of a widespread practice. Most of these cases are in Israel's ultra-Orthodox communities. To give you an idea of scale: Israel Hayom interviewed Dr. Joanna Silberg, an international specialist in treating dissociative disorders, who guided the treatment of 70 children who experienced organized sexual abuse over the course of five years. Curiously, despite coming from separate instances and different communities, many of the cases follow the same course and share similar features. Of the more than ten women (ages 20-45) interviewed, all of them recall a common ritual framework: Victim, Sacrifice, Punishment, Correction, Transcendence, Redemption. Examining ritual sexual abuse worldwide, these themes are common, usually serving to justify the abuse. However, while the Israeli cases also used ideology to justify violence, it also served to form the foundation of the abuse. Ritual abuse is cruel and frequent, according to a private ultra-Orthodox court, happening as often as every two weeks and often led by an important Rabbi. Victims also recall their abusers recreating "The Binding of Issac" directly prior to the sexual abuse happening. I won't describe the extent of the abuse here, but I implore you to read the full article, titled "Bottom of Darkness."



These actions point to a continuation of Frankist and Sabbatean ideology, which also aligns with Epstein's trafficking ring. These practices might not have been Sabbatean or Frankist; their structure and ideological drive of purity through sin are the same. While I can't say that Epstein is expressly subscribed to either, he was clearly a sadist in real life who had an intense interest in various religions that sanctified his desires and actions. While Epstein's interest in the occult may have been innocuous, emails and objects found throughout his estate hint at his direct involvement. An email chain speaks of Epstein dressing as Jesus to sexually assault a young girl as an effort to mock her devotion to Christianity. There's a building on Little St. James, his infamous private island, modelled after the Kaaba in Mecca and topped with a gold dome like the Dome of the Rock in Jerusalem. A bookshelf inside features both a straight and a twisting pillar, directly related to the Freemasonic Pillars of Boaz and Jachin. He clearly had a passion for esoteric beliefs, but to what end? Overall, it's a mishmash of pagan, Jewish, Christian, and other symbolism, its purpose unknown.

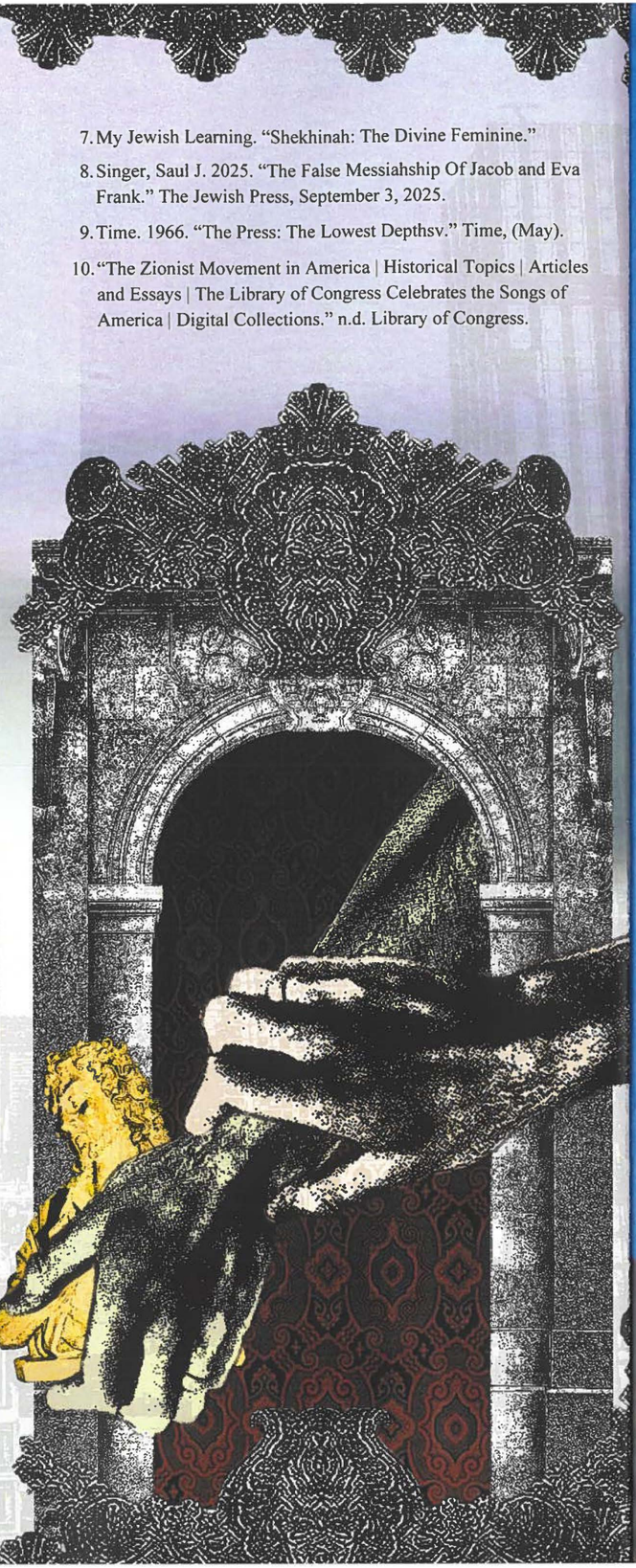
We don't have the information we need to determine his deeper motives; censorship has buried it. Who else has it buried? Who else is wearing a mask over their ideologies? ■

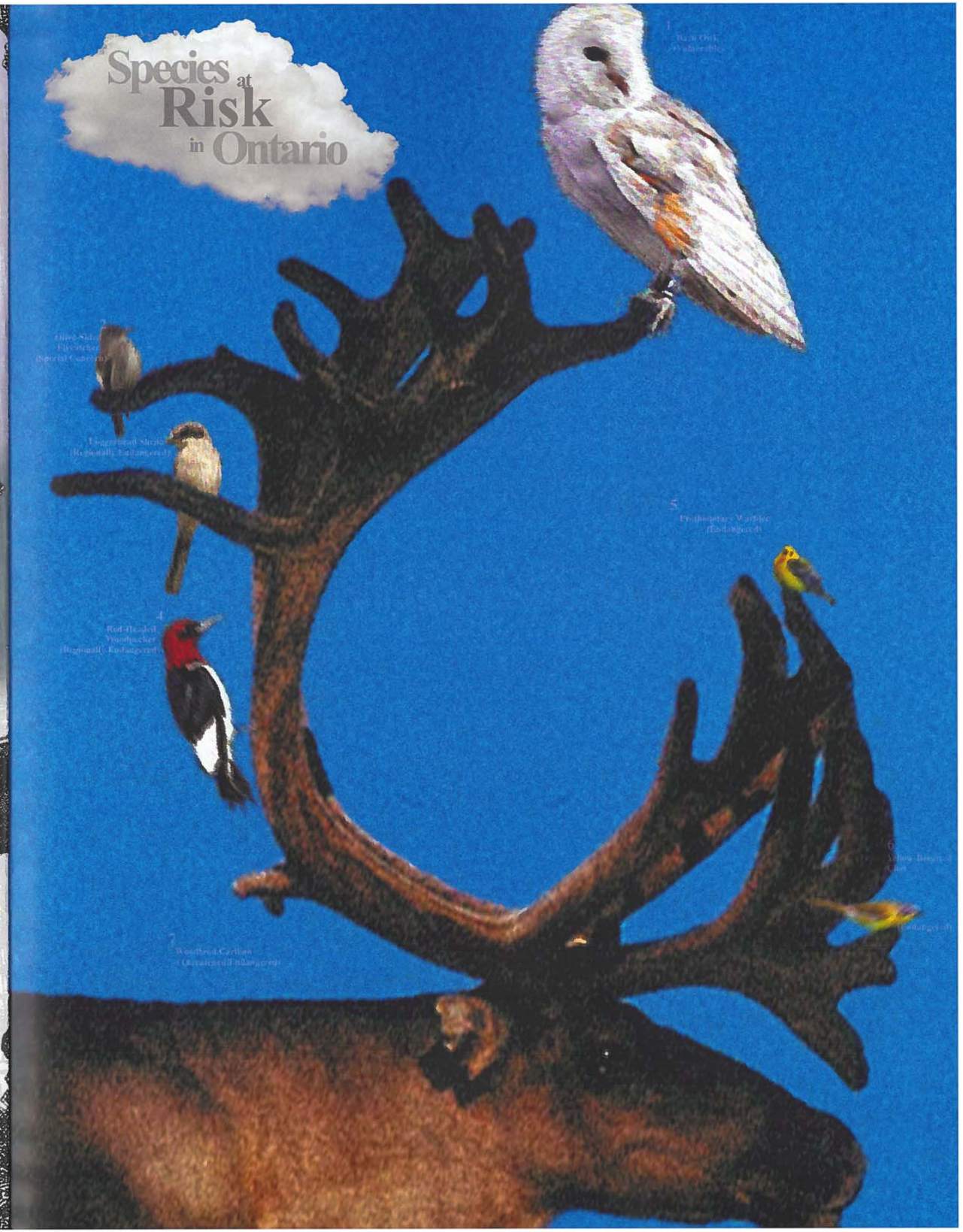


Landon Horton-Shine is a writer for The Argus, reporting on Epstein and the Occult Elite.

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Daisy Drop Out

A short fiction by Claudia Bachinski

Alone in a valley of shining giant Easter eggs painted with green and pink and gold swirls detailed like ancient cathedrals, lives Daisy. A Ukrainian girl who walks on her tightrope many times a day. It is a deep, plum purple and made of cow leather that she braided strongly. On her tightrope, she plays a game with herself, although out of impulse or addiction rather than pleasure. If she falls off on the right side of the rope, she will automatically see herself and her life as absolute perfection and divinity. If she falls off on the left side, it is the opposite. Doom pours over her like a waterfall causing her to lay flat on her back. In this state, sometimes the fawns and robins of the valley will cover her with her sheet of soft yellow silk that is usually hanging from her clothes line.

Last year, Daisy was a student at a nearby university studying music and poetry. She was very social and passionate about her work. She was often complimented on her abilities and dreamt of being a star like Marilyn Monroe. She still dreams of this everyday, walking on her tightrope, and believes her dreams will still come true one day. Although she enjoyed parts of university, she struggled to feel like her work was good enough and grew cynical. She also felt unimpressed with the education she was receiving and decided to leave.

Now, Daisy's pastoral life among the glistening, reverent Easter eggs has left her only with the company of the wildlife, apart from her evening phone calls from a soldier she encountered and fell in love with one day in the forest. He spent a few days with her in the valley before returning to battle and promised her children one day. They have a joyous relationship apart from Daisy's outbursts of hysteria, where distrust washes over her like a stinging bleach and leaves the devoted soldier sore in the heart. This pains Daisy and pushes her to play her tightrope game.

Today the air is calm and sunshine is pouring into her valley, keeping it warm. Dust coats Daisy's guitar like powder on the face of a glamorous woman. She loops the new Charli xcx album on her golden gramophone record player, singing along. Certain tones in Daisy's voice are like butterflies she is trying to catch with a net. Certain feelings arise as she sings that look like lily ponds of baby pink glittery water in her mind. She flinches as she walks past her keyboard laying in the grass, and she leaps weightlessly towards her copy of *Johnny Panic and the Bible of Dreams* by Sylvia Plath. The fire of art within her does not die, and she notices that she has not walked on her tightrope once today. In fact, she has spent most of the day studying frequencies held in the round, white scars on her arms from picking scabs as a child. These frequencies are adjoining those of the rosaries worn by Madonna in 1983.

Daisy thinks of going back to school again, perhaps for a different subject. Although, she knows that it will simply be a stepping stone in her journey, and a tool to achieve her goals. She has discovered that her true power comes from catching the frequencies of things that inspire her like butterflies, and keeping them locked in her heart, so that whoever hears her sing can feel them too.





Photo courtesy of Life Magazine's *World's Best Pictures 1930-1940*

THE BOOKISH COMMUNITY HOT TAKE!

By Kwahish Khan — Arts & Culture

The bookish community is marred. And honestly? It's our own doing.

We've given mega-conglomerates the idea that a rosy image of stacked books and dimly lit rooms, is our equivalent of an ice cream truck circling a neighbourhood. Replace "Softee" with phrases like "Book Lovers" and "Bookish," and we need no more persuading.

The "bookish" cultural moment has grown so popular that it has caught the attention of fashion brands, celebrities and influencers. Coach collaborated with Penguin Random House to launch bag charms that are actual mini books, Miu Miu hosted a book club night, Dior dropped a Dracula bag that's designed like the book's cover. Celebrities like Dua Lipa, Dakota Johnson and Natalie Portman, have all launched their book clubs. Suffice to say that books are now in season.

While in retrospect such a popularity of books is a great way to promote the culture of reading, it doesn't necessarily equate to people actually committing to the practice of reading. An example of this is "bookish" social networking platforms. Goodreads dominated the market until we saw the rise of Fable, Storygraph and now ThingsBook, amongst other platforms. All these apps share common denominators: set a reading goal, track your progress, build reading lists, engage with the community and write/read reviews.

One could argue that Fable and ThingsBook each have a slight advantage over the rest since Fable introduced a book club feature where readers could engage in chapter-wise conversations, while ThingsBook expanded the categories of interest beyond books to include manga, television and games.

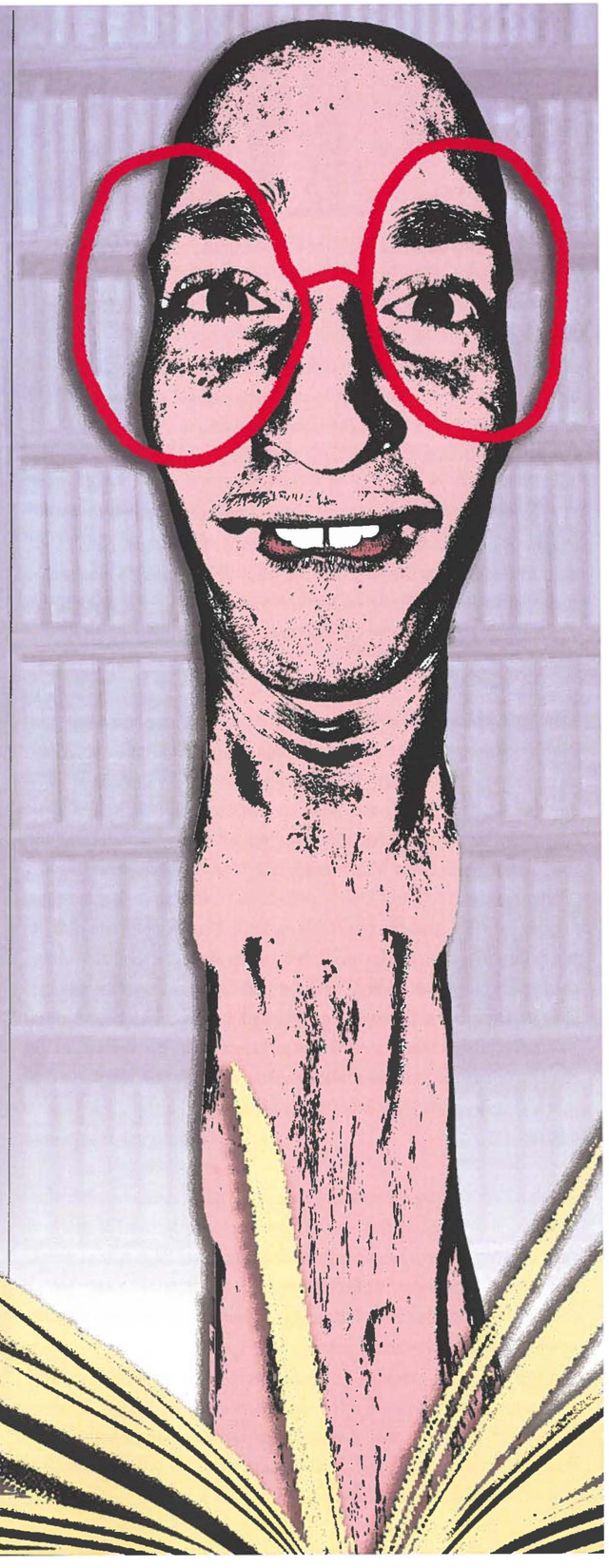
However, the goal for all the apps remains the same: community building. And yet, I would argue that the apps defeat that very purpose. The audience is stretched thin in choosing between the numerous apps. The pros and cons list of each platform has flooded the internet with each reader highlighting their #1.

There's something here that I want to reiterate for emphasis. The primary function of all these apps is tracking your reading journey. That's it. In spending time choosing the right platform, readers, I would argue, are losing sight of what's more important: reading the book itself. There already exists a community of active readers on BookTok and Bookstagram that are ever so involved in discussing books. And to track your reads, a dedicated reading journal does wonders.

That's what I've done. I deleted Goodreads, Fable, Storygraph and ThingsBook (yes, I had all of them), and instead switched to tracking my reads on paper and finding my community on platforms that I'm already familiar with. Because what matters at the end of the day is that I read the book I committed to.



Kwahish Khan is an Orillia Bureau Writer.



The 10 Year Gap Year

By Danielle McPherson



Going into her second and final year of the English and Cultural Studies Master's program, Natalie Baker is eager for the school year to start but knows that, as with every other school year, it will be a roller cóaster. Before enrolling in her current program at Lakehead University's Orillia campus, Baker holds two previous post-secondary accreditations, one being an Honours Bachelor of Arts and Science from Lakehead in English and Geography from 2013, and a Diploma in Creative Photography from Humber College, which she graduated from in 2017.

"I'm going to be so real and say I don't remember how I felt about it. I imagine it's similar to see now, though: definitely bittersweet. I don't want it to end, but at the same time I'm ready to keep going. I'm sure that come winter — when I'm writing my research project — I'm going to be screaming, crying, throwing up while managing everything. For now, though, I'm excited to start the new school year."

Between the years of her diploma and her Master's, Baker became a dabbler of many pursuits, which included taking the odd creative writing or geography class. It was through these courses that she started to question whether her post-secondary journey was truly over. Baker credits Dr Pendea from Lakehead's Geography department with being the final push to apply to the Master's program.

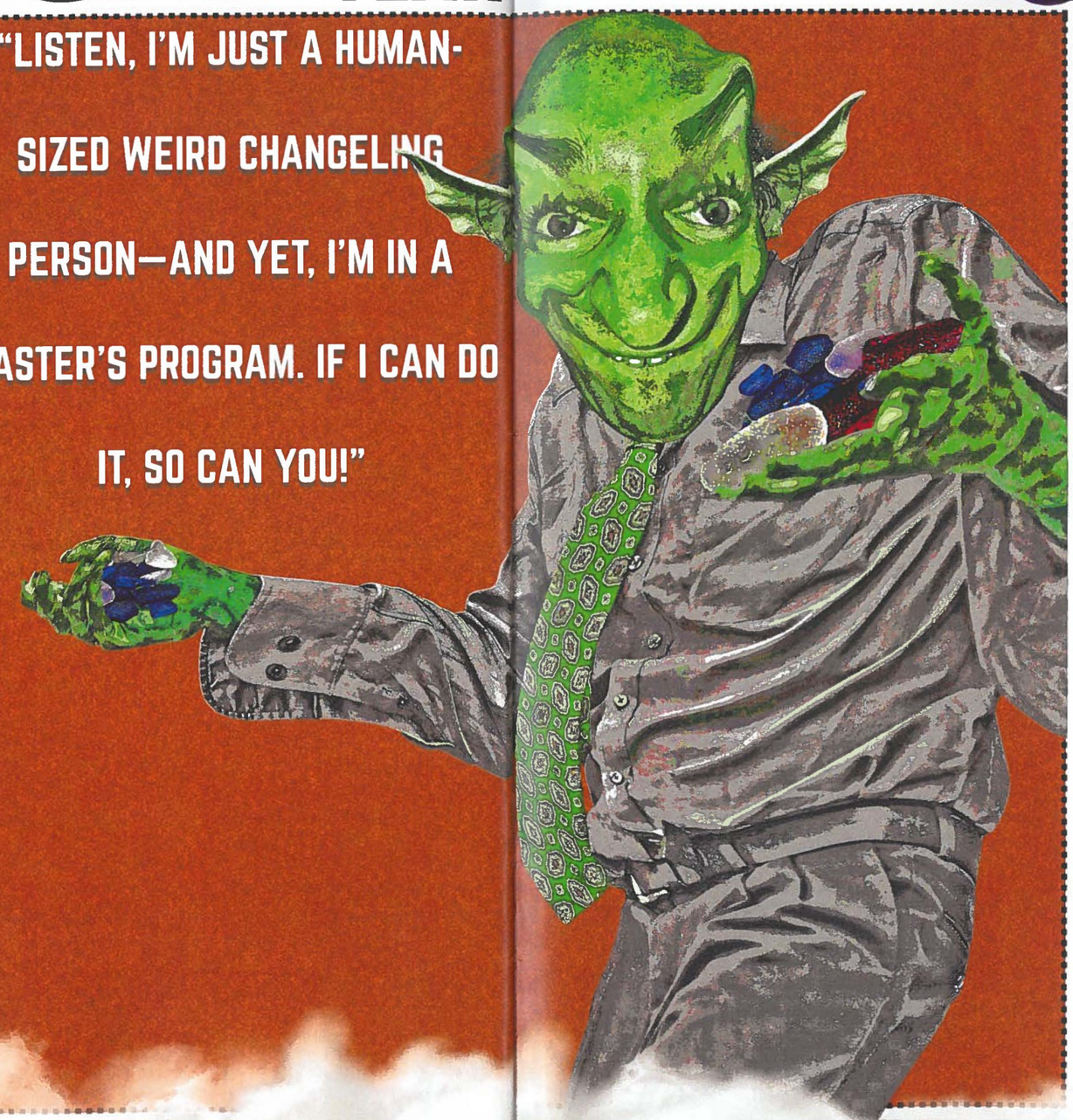
"I often joke that it was because I felt my brain atrophying in real time, which certainly was a big factor. Frankly, I was also bored and needed a change. Initially, I was taking single classes. I took a creative writing class with Dr. Olutola and Conservation Geography with Dr. Pendea, which was really fun, but I never intended to go beyond that. It wasn't until a conversation with Dr. Pendea, who asked me if I felt my academic journey was over, that I realized I wanted to formally pursue my Master's degree."

Without Pendea's guidance and ultimate push, Baker is unsure where she would be in her life and is grateful to be where she is. Within the twelve years between Undergraduate versus Graduate, Baker takes note of the student she has become since her first round at Lakehead. The immense confidence she now has in herself brings completely different experiences into her student and personal life.

You wouldn't have known it at the time, at least I don't think so, but I was pretty anxious for the first bit. It helps, too, being in my thirties, because I find a lot of the stuff I used to stress about is inconsequential now."

With her confidence and some life experience under her belt, she often wonders if there is such a thing as throwing too much caution to the wind.

"LISTEN, I'M JUST A HUMAN-SIZED WEIRD CHANGELING PERSON—AND YET, I'M IN A MASTER'S PROGRAM. IF I CAN DO IT, SO CAN YOU!"



"I'm a lot more confident. Sometimes I worry I'm bordering on wild, mindless, and reckless hubris, but so far I haven't become a supervillain, so it's probably okay. Overall, the switch was painless. I love school, and all my new classmates are super cool, intelligent, and interesting people who were immediately supportive and kind. It felt a lot like coming home."

Though no supervillain tendencies have come to light as of yet, Baker's thesis project centres around the literary genre known as "Romantasy." The Oxford English Dictionary describes the genre as "a subgenre of fiction that combines elements of both the romance and fantasy genres, typically focused on a romantic narrative that takes place in a fantasy setting." Popular titles include Sarah J Mass'A Court of Thorns and Roses series or Rebecca Yarros' The Empyrean series.

Although Baker did not go into detail on her thesis project, she explained the process as a quest for answers in a never-ending field of answers.
"So, part of the reason I felt like my brain was atrophying [during her academic hiatus] was because of how much Romantasy I had been reading. Now, don't get me wrong, it's fine to read whatever you enjoy! And I was enjoying it. It's fun. But the more I read, the more I noticed. A growing list of questions sprouted in the back of my head (envision mushrooms on a log), until I decided to formally explore said questions."

Baker's time to write her thesis project, the countdown has officially begun. Her proposal is done, research is well underway, the only things that are left are the last semester of classes and to write her project in its entirety come winter semester. After this, Baker hopes to continue into a PhD program, but has yet to settle on a single focus. Much like mushrooms on a log, her topics of interest vary while remaining connected to the Humanities field.

On her last note to readers, she encourages others to go bigger than their imagination and to try everything that comes their way.
"Listen, I'm just a human-sized weird changeling person wandering through life and trying to figure out what the hell is going on. I have a lot of rocks. I play a lot of horror video games. I excel at doing absolutely nothing. I deal with an ever-present yearning to eat sea glass. I am not listening to music. And yet, I'm in a Master's program. If I can do it, so can you!"



Danielle McPherson is an Orillia Bureau Writer

Orillia's Transit Problem

By Danielle McPherson

Originally built in 2010, Lakehead University's Orillia Campus has seen overall splendid success. Approximately 2,000 to 2,500 students attend, with half from Simcoe County rather than just within Orillia's borders. Unfortunately, for the 1,000 plus students who come from any number of communities outside of Orillia, there are only 366, each with a price tag of $6 for a day ($3 is the night rate), a fictional semester pass that is not even available for purchase but listed on the school's website for $164, a Rotary Place pass which includes a jaunt through a cornfield between Orillia's sportsplex and the main academic building an academic year pass (September to April) is $328, and lastly the annual pass at $492.

Did I mention that purchasing any of these passes in advance does not guarantee a parking spot? For the three years I was in undergrad, I paid for the Academic pass, and for at least the first month of each semester there was always a fight for parking spaces. A tradition repeated throughout the semester when the main campus hosts events such as craft shows or yearly conferences; all of which are amazing and key parts of our Lakehead community, but ultimately affect the usability of the campus parking lot.

Katherine Ketelaar, a recent graduate of the HBASc Interdisciplinary program, explains the pros and cons of being a commuting student with a drive that averages forty-five minutes.

"I purchased the parking pass in my third year, and it wasn't the main pass. It was for the parking lot on the other side of the field, which felt like a waste of money. It added 10 minutes to my commute in the winter since I needed to walk around to the front. Which wasn't maintained well by the city, so for my own safety and comfort, I would pay for the day pass in the winter, negating the point of the other parking pass."

While commuting in itself is not half bad, external factors such as parking or even weather often affect commuters of all types. Though a pretty drive in the spring or fall, Ketelaar calls the winter drive "Another story," as safety and road conditions became ultimate factors in her success as a student.

"Often I would find the early morning classes get too much when I would also need to spend an extra 30 minutes each morning to dig out my car. It becomes easy to justify skipping classes during bad weather, even if the weather in Orillia is fine. And it's not just the commute to school that becomes an issue in the winter. During my final year, in the first semester, I had a 12-hour day at school so I could complete a psychology paper because I wanted to just sit and lock in. When I left around 10 or 11 PM, the roads were icy. I couldn't see 5 feet in front of me. I called my partner, nearly crying, just wanting to be on the phone in case something happened to me. Genuinely, I was driving blind." She later added, "It would be nice to know there are resources for students who can't make it home when the weather is bad."

With commuting to Lakehead Orillia, it isn't just students who use personal transportation who are affected by a lack of adequate space or winter conditions. Julia Richmond, a first-year student in the Bachelor of Education program who previously studied at Orillia during her undergrad, is a frequent user of the student bus.

"I belong to a one-car family, so that leaves me with only a few options. My husband works, so I have to use the bus system for all my daily commuting. I am so thankful that my student card gives me free bus access, but I have found that bus arrival times are quite inconvenient with class times."

For most full-time students at Lakehead Orillia, the bus pass is automatically included with student fees at a price tag of $168 and is valid from September 1st to August 31st. For students such as Richmond, the bus pass is great but comes with strings of complications of its own.



Lakehead Orillia — Argus Staff Photo

"My success in in-person classes is entirely dependent on my ability to get to class. Often, because of road conditions, the bus line will change for the safety of its passengers. This is all well and good, except when it is my stop/road/bus line that they cancel. On several occasions, I have had to email professors to let them know that the bus lines are down and I have no way to make it to school."

Both driving and busing students go through acrobatic-like planning with their time. Yet there seems to be no specific plan to fix either issue for commuting students. In January 2026, Simcoe County and Lakehead Orillia announced an investment of 15 million dollars into the campus over the course of ten years. In an article written by CTV Barrie's Cheryl Browne, the money is for new campus space such as "teaching spaces, Indigenous learning and gathering centre, student programming space, and a new centralized student services hub," allowing the student population to increase up to 3,500. But no true plan to help commuters.

Between winter road conditions, construction, parking lot roulette, and bus schedules, there are multiple hoops a commuting student jumps through just to get to their seat in class.

