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FALL/WINTER 2021

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Editor's Note



WORK SHIFT

Where we work, how we work, and what we do for work are all in a state of flux.

Experts predict that millions of people will need to transition livelihoods within the next few years, as advancing technologies change the landscape of the job market and the skill sets required.

In addition, COVID-19 has necessitated sudden large-scale shifts in how we work, some of which will likely be permanent. The abrupt halt to traditional work routines and conditions has demonstrated that alternatives are possible, and presented an opportunity to rethink organizational structures, strategies, and priorities.

On an individual level, lockdowns and virtual work arrangements have altered the mindsets of many workers, giving them cause to question the rigidity of a 9-to-5 regime and the necessity of commuting to work. The growth of digital platforms and online connectivity is providing alternatives to traditional work arrangements and increasing the feasibility of self-employment.

Whatever new work norms emerge from this mass disruption will be particularly influenced by the expectations and predominant values of Gen Z-ers and younger Millennials, who will soon account for the majority of the workforce. Adaptable, independent, diverse, and connected, these younger workers are capitalizing on their digital savvy and challenging traditional employment relationships. They also expect greater social responsibility and accountability from their employers, including equality and inclusion for women and minorities.

Change is happening fast and presents both opportunity and threat. How do we deploy technology so it serves people as much as it serves productivity? How do we ensure that the flexibility of the gig economy doesn't come at the expense of job security and hard-won employment rights? How will (or should) organizations use these unprecedented times to evolve for the better?

As centres of innovation and discovery, universities have always been at the heart of change. They not only contribute to the advancement of new technologies, but are also invested in monitoring their sociological impacts and fostering public dialogue. As centres of learning, they are responsible for preparing the next generation of professionals. And in this rapidly changing world of work, it's clear that lifelong learning will be a crucial factor for success.

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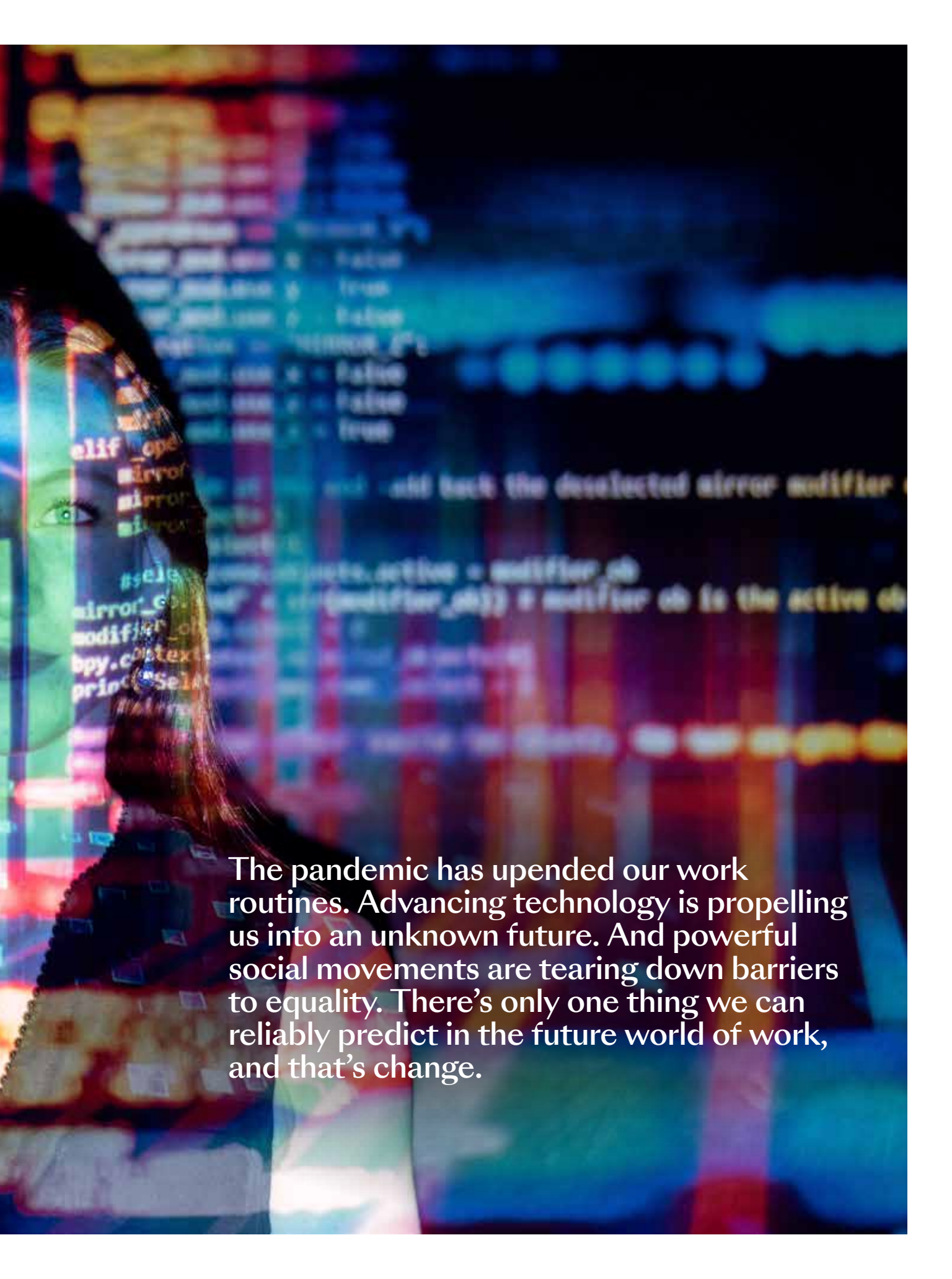
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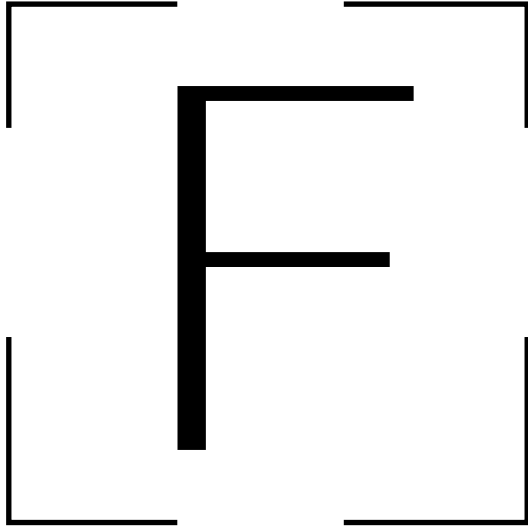


The pandemic has upended our work routines. Advancing technology is propelling us into an unknown future. And powerful social movements are tearing down barriers to equality. There's only one thing we can reliably predict in the future world of work, and that's change.

Robots need not apply

Artificial intelligence is reshaping our world of work, but it's emotional intelligence that will be a key component for thriving in it.

By Martina Valkovicova



FIFTEEN YEARS AGO, Facebook was in its infancy, Twitter was being launched, and nobody had an iPhone. Jobs now considered common – social media manager, Uber/Lyft driver, Blockchain analyst, cloud architect, data scientist (the list goes on) – did not exist. Neither did Instagram or TikTok.

Technology and the world around us continue to evolve exponentially, and within a decade we will probably be using technologies that have yet to be invented. For that reason, I do not think we can predict the job market much beyond the next five to 10 years. But what we can say with certainty is that rapid change is our new normal.

Full disclosure: I do not consider myself a subject matter expert on “the future of work,” merely a synthesizer (some would say hoarder) and translator of information. There are thousands of reports, articles, videos, podcasts, and books on this topic, and a Google search produces well over a billion results.

Perhaps this is an indication of the anxiety around advancing technologies disrupting the world of work and the stability of occupations. But while there’s little doubt that digital literacy will be – already is – essential, there is also every indication that it’s the ability to leverage their uniquely human qualities that will give workers the edge in a high-tech future.

THE FOURTH INDUSTRIAL REVOLUTION

We cannot discuss the future of work without touching on the fourth industrial revolution. Klaus Schwab, founder and executive chairman of the Geneva-based World Economic Forum (WEF), published his book *The Fourth Industrial Revolution* in 2016 and coined the term at the Davos meeting that year.

The first industrial revolution used water and steam to mechanize production, the second used electric energy to create mass production, and the third used electronics and information technology to automate it, says Schwab. And the world fundamentally changed each time, although it required decades to adapt.

In contrast, the fourth industrial revolution uses more advanced technologies, such as artificial intelligence (AI), and a dramatic increase in computing power and data to bring about rapid change that is both complex and unpredictable. “It is characterized by a range of new technologies that are fusing the physical, digital, and biological worlds, impacting all disciplines, economies, and industries, and even challenging ideas about what it means to be human,” says Schwab and the WEF. “In its scale, scope, and complexity, the transformation will be unlike anything humankind has experienced before.”

AI: FRIEND OR FOE?

AI is already influencing our everyday life, reshaping our digital and financial worlds in ways we barely register anymore. Ever find yourself going down the rabbit hole of endless YouTube videos? Why does Amazon seem to know what you want to buy before you do? Amy Webb in her book *The Big Nine* summarizes the current world of AI well:

“Artificial Intelligence is already here, but it did not show up as we all expected. It is the quiet backbone of our financial systems, the power grid and the retail supply chain. It is the invisible infrastructure that directs us through traffic, finds the right meaning in our mistyped words, and determines what we should buy, watch, listen to and read. It is technology upon which our future is being built because it intersects with every aspect of our lives: health and medicine, housing, agriculture, transportation, sports, and even love, sex and death.”

According to *Fortune Business Insights 2021*, the global AI market is expected reach \$360.36 billion by 2028 (in 2020 it was valued at \$47.47 billion). But AI is proving to be a double-edged sword – with very sharp edges – and many experts are calling for tighter regulations and global cooperation in AI deployment and development, as it will have a long-lasting effect on society.

Some major risks associated with AI that everyone should be aware of include social manipulation (I think we all still vividly remember the Cambridge Analytica scandal); autonomous weapons; invasion of privacy – a prime example being China’s social credit system, which is expected to give every one of its 1.4 billion citizens a personal score

based on how they behave; and data bias (for example, certain populations being underrepresented in the data used to train AI models).

For many people, AI is scary. Will the world of the future be ruled by robots? And as far as the future of work goes, will they automate us out of our jobs? Although automation has dominated the discussion of AI and the future of work for the past decade, another scenario I find far more dire is a class-based divide between the masses who work for algorithms, a privileged professional class who have the skills and capabilities to design and train algorithmic systems, and a small, ultra-wealthy aristocracy who own the algorithmic platforms that run the world (as described in Mike Walsh's book *The Algorithmic Leader: How to Be Smart When Machines Are Smarter Than You*). The key solution to this issue is education designed for the 21st century.

It should also be noted that AI affects work in ways besides automation. For example, AI is already involved in selecting candidates for jobs. A couple of years ago, *The Washington Post* published an article ("A face-scanning algorithm increasingly decides whether you deserve the job") on a recruitment system that "uses candidates' computer or cellphone cameras to analyze their facial movements, word choice and speaking voice before ranking them against other applicants based on an automatically generated 'employability' score." It caused a big discussion in the industry, and the article noted that some AI researchers regard the system as "digital snake oil – an unfounded blend of superficial measurements and arbitrary number-crunching that is not rooted in scientific fact. Analyzing a human being like this, they argue, could end up penalizing non-native speakers, visibly nervous interviewees or anyone else who doesn't fit the model for look and speech."

Only time will tell if technologies like this become a norm in hiring and recruitment. We have certainly seen new trends; for example, many large organizations are using Applicant Tracking Systems (technology that sorts and highlights résumés before the hiring manager or any other human even has a look) and various online assessments when making their hiring decisions.

The main concern for a lot of people, however, remains the question of the security of their chosen profession: will it (and they) become obsolete?



**MARTINA
VALKOVICOVA,
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is assistant dean and director for the Hari B. Varshney Business Career Centre at UBC Sauder. For her practical advice on honing your soft skills, see page 44.



Her 21-year career covers three continents, nine roles, and six organizations.



Her experience ranges from managing a portfolio of \$250 million in venture capital and seed funding to teaching social entrepreneurship in Africa.



She is an avid reader with a goal of 100 to 150 books annually.

THE LUDDITE FALLACY

Reports of the death of human jobs have often been greatly exaggerated. This phenomenon is called the Luddite fallacy, in reference to a group of 19th century textile workers who smashed the new weaving machinery that made their skills redundant.

In reality, technology has created more jobs than it has wiped out. In its *Future of Jobs Report 2020*, the World Economic Forum estimates that 85 million jobs will be displaced while 97 million new jobs will be created across 26 countries by 2025. Newer research adds the caveat that, while there might be more jobs in the long term, in the short term there will be losses. And according to McKinsey research, as many as 1 in 16 workers may have to change occupation by 2030, with job growth more heavily concentrated in high-skill jobs.

Workers should be prepared to frequently shift their career trajectory and keep upskilling. I still think that nobody said it better than the futurist Alvin Toffler: "The illiterate of the 21st century will not be those who cannot read or write, but those who cannot learn, unlearn, and re-learn."

Since not all existing occupations are created equal, which are most at risk of becoming obsolete in the fourth industrial revolution? There is an interesting book called *Rise of the Robots: Technology and the Threat of a Jobless Future* written by futurist Martin Ford, who explains that the jobs most at risk are those that are routine, repetitive, and predictable. AI has already produced self-driving cars, robots that clean buildings (UBC has one), and even a robot that can pick berries.

Some commentators suggest that we are single-digit years away from AI that is much more intelligent than humans. A well-known survey of machine learning researchers (the results of which were published in the 2018 paper *When Will AI Exceed Human Performance? Evidence from AI Experts*) predicted that AI will outperform humans this decade in tasks such as translating languages (by 2024), writing high school essays (2026), and driving trucks (2027). Other tasks will take longer: working in retail (2031), writing a bestselling book (2049), or working as a surgeon (2053). In fact, the experts predicted a 50 per cent chance of AI outperforming humans in all tasks in 45 years and of automating all human jobs in 120 years.

THERE IS EVERY INDICATION THAT IT'S THE ABILITY TO LEVERAGE THEIR UNIQUELY HUMAN QUALITIES THAT WILL GIVE WORKERS THE EDGE IN A HIGH-TECH FUTURE.

For workers trying to predict the more immediate future, it might be more helpful to think about job categories than specific job titles. Ford's book (and loads of additional research) identifies three main job categories that are likely to survive. The first category covers jobs that require genuine creativity. These are not only roles we associate with the arts, like acting or games development, but also roles that require creative thinking – for example in developing a new strategy for your company, or launching a new product. Another category is jobs that are highly unpredictable. And a third covers jobs that require building complex relationships with people – as leaders and managers, doctors, social workers, teachers, career and leadership coaches. Lots of reports generally show us that the 21st century worker is a relationship worker. Robots need not apply.

THE HUMAN TOUCH

This phenomenon is echoed by the growing value placed on soft skills by hiring professionals. They seek employees who exercise empathy, are highly emotionally intelligent, and have the ability to communicate and collaborate effectively. A global survey of 5,000 human resource professionals and hiring managers conducted by LinkedIn, combined with behavioural data analysis, found that 80 per

cent considered soft skills to be growing in importance for business success, and 89 per cent thought that a lack of soft skills was actually a sign of bad hires in their organizations.

The human-centric approach is being elevated, and, if anything, COVID has accelerated this workplace trend. During the pandemic, many have experienced challenges with mental health, and more and more organizations are putting the well-being of their staff front and centre. Mental health support will be the new normal, and organizations who do not provide support in this area will not be as sought after by job seekers. In fact, employees are more vocal than ever before about their employers paying attention to more than just profit. They want to see social engagement; equity, diversity, and inclusion; and investment in the green economy.

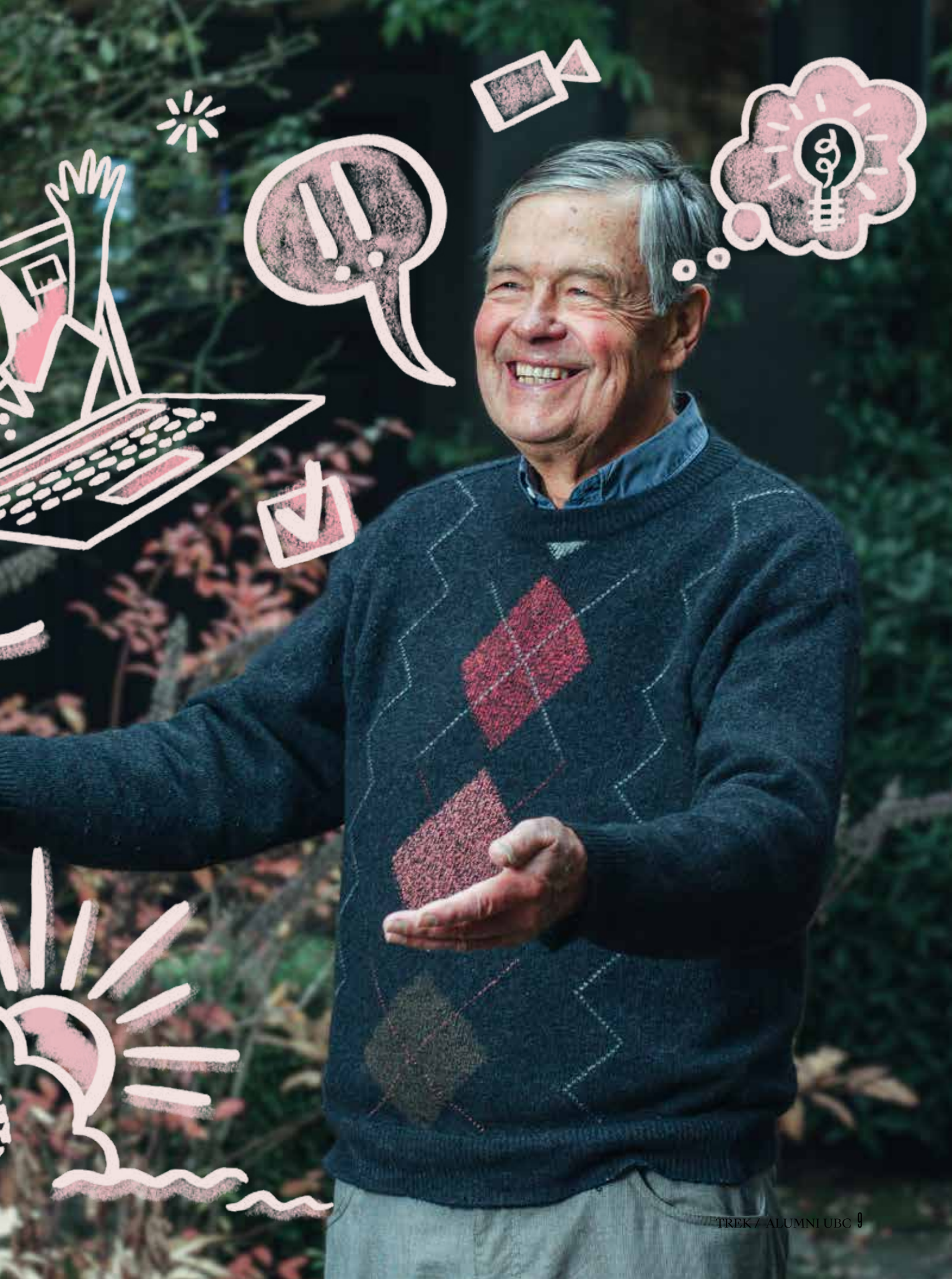
Employers need more from their people than ever before if they're to stay relevant and competitive. And similarly, employees expect more – even demand it – from the organizations they work for. Artificial intelligence is a potent force that is rapidly reshaping our world of work, but it's emotional intelligence – together with skills in critical thinking, problem solving, and how we govern the roll-out of AI from an ethical perspective – that will enable both businesses and individuals to successfully navigate the change.

JOB SATISFACTION AND THE COVID EFFECT

COVID forced an abrupt change to the daily working lives of millions. In terms of our well-being, are we worse or better off for it?

BY RICHARD LITTLEMORE
ILLUSTRATION BY NINA CHAKRABARTI
PHOTOGRAPHY BY ANITA LEE







IT SHOULD COME as no surprise that The Happiness Guy thinks the world of work might actually get better thanks to the lessons we've all learned from COVID-19. After all, John Helliwell seems resolutely positive about nearly everything; why wouldn't he find the bright side in a pandemic?

But Helliwell is no thoughtless Pollyanna. He's built a remarkable career by proving his happy hypotheses, so if he's recommending optimism, it wouldn't hurt to give him the benefit of the doubt. Research shows that just embracing his sunny view will make you happier in the meantime – even if things *don't* turn out for the best.

Helliwell is an emeritus professor in UBC's Vancouver School of Economics, a Distinguished Fellow of the Canadian Institute for Advanced Research, and co-editor of the *World Happiness Report*. Looking at his résumé, you can't imagine he's had a spare minute to indulge in idle pleasure, and yet we've been told that all work and no play makes Jack a dull boy. Then again, Helliwell's fellowships, honours, and awards perhaps suggest that hard work is precisely what makes him happy. From the Rhodes Scholarship to the Order of Canada (Officer!), he's had every manner of academic and social recognition.

The man himself would tell you that effort and well-being are, at the very least, highly correlated. You don't get happy by pursuing happiness; that's a trap. For example, Helliwell says the research shows that giving to charitable causes will increase your level of happiness – but only if you do so for its own sake. If you donate specifically because you hope it will make you happy, it doesn't work.

But work makes you happy. As reported in the most recent edition of the *World Happiness Report* (in the chapter "Work and Well-being

◀ John Helliwell at home in Vancouver.

during COVID-19: Impact, Inequalities, Resilience, and the Future of Work”) “One of the most robust and well-documented findings in the economics of subjective well-being is that the unemployed are significantly less happy than the employed.” And it’s not about the money (or not all about the money). Respondents in a major US study reported that their biggest happiness driver at work was having a sense of belonging, which they said was more than three times as important as being fairly paid.

That might lead you to think that the pandemic should have been a downer, as so many employers’ first reaction was to send their workers home, where they were physically isolated and subjected to endless mind-numbing Zoom calls instead of enjoying actual human interaction. But Helliwell isn’t having it.

First, as becomes obvious when we begin our interview with quick commentary about our relative workspaces, he’s a big Zoom fan. “This is so much better than the telephone,” he says. Having spent decades flying around the world, meeting with others in the top tier of happiness researchers, he was delighted to connect instead from the off-grid beauty of his family’s bit of Hornby Island during the first year of COVID, and now from their Vancouver home in the rainy months. He also gets to meet more regularly and easily with a host of different people. For example, there is a new weekly happiness seminar at Oxford University that he previously would have been able to attend only infrequently – and in a jet-lagged state. Now, he can attend regularly, meeting with new young scholars and senior ones from Oxford and around the world.

Zoom also gives his work a wonderful sense of immediacy that was lacking before. For example, if he has a revelation about a joint project, “we are delighted to be able to hash this out together when the idea is fresh, not at a conference 10 months out.”

In triggering what Helliwell calls “the astonishing pivot to virtual,” COVID also delivered a lot of people from the costly and time-consuming process of travelling back and forth for work. “Often,” he understates, “the commute is not a place to generate happiness.” And yet commute we did, thanks to what Helliwell calls “an overemphasis on where people live and what they earn – something that made them travel further and further for a bigger home.

“COVID broke that link.”

Some people may never return to an office, which means they can go even further to find a home that is both affordable and, by other measures, happiness inducing. Others may downsize to move closer. But either way, Helliwell says, “the future will never be quite the same. And a lot of people – net/net – will be better off.”

But some won’t. The *Happiness Report* chapter points out that, despite its immediate benefits, the liberating shift to a distributed workforce model could also do some harm in the long term. It states: “For workers, social and intellectual capital is built by shared experiences with co-workers and unplanned social interactions that broaden one’s thinking.” As well, “Building meaningful relationships with co-workers, especially management, is critical to job and life satisfaction. Working from home all the time does not allow for that to the same extent as the office.”

Another issue, at work and in other contexts, is trust. Helliwell says it’s easier to settle disagreements or resolve difficult issues if you feel you can trust the other parties. And trust is most easily built face to face.

Even now – even for Helliwell – there have been aspects of the COVID crisis that have directly undermined people’s well-being. Some of those who lost their jobs altogether found themselves facing economic insecurity for the first time, undermining the confidence they might once have felt to pursue

work that was meaningful ahead of a job that is financially rewarding. In response, the *Happiness Report* piece speculates that some stubborn optimists might still search for employment that provides meaning and a strong social network, “while others may begin to prioritize earnings and job security.”

For either group, Helliwell says it pays to remember that happiness can be a matter of attitude or expectation. He has two favourite illustrations, both rooted in real-world research. The first, touching on the matter of attitude, arises in two of the most common traffic interactions. If someone gives you the finger when you’re driving, both parties wind up unhappy, whereas if someone waves to let you in, it winds up being a nice moment all around. It didn’t cost anyone anything, and yet there was still a happiness dividend.

As for the power of positive expectations, there are international studies on what happens to dropped wallets. The answer, perhaps surprisingly, is that in every jurisdiction most are returned, cash intact. Helliwell says that when they did the first experiment in Finland, 10 out of 10 wallets were returned. That’s not what people expect, but when they hear about it – when they refocus on all the honest people instead of obsessing about the thieves in the news – they’re inclined to feel better about their community, their neighbours, and themselves.

So, Helliwell concludes, whether it’s work or anything else, “I tend to be optimistic about these things. I cherish the positives and put the negatives in the drawer.”

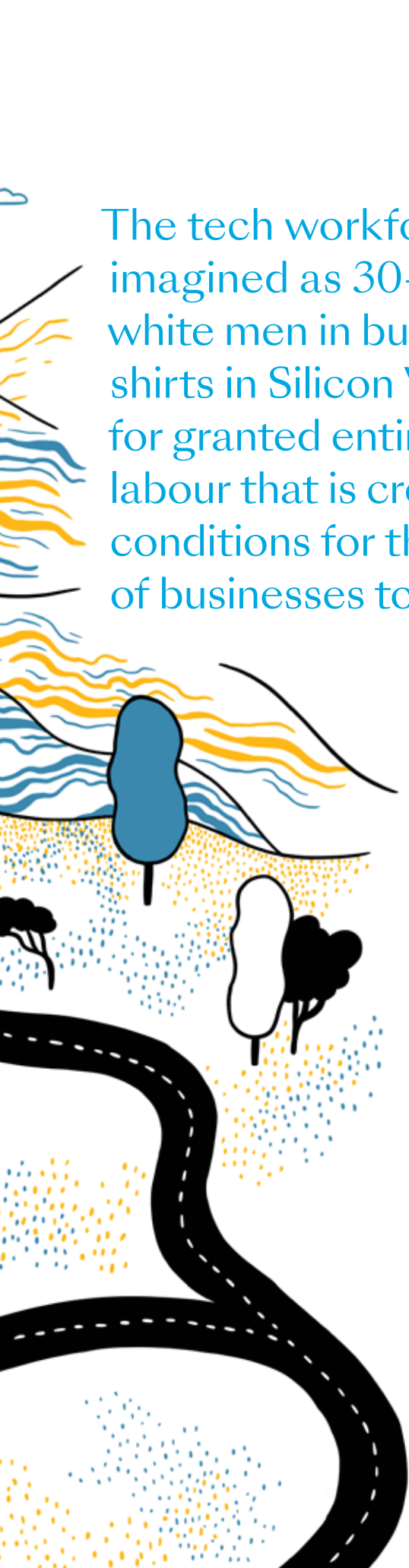
It seems like an example worth following. Then, even if you *do* lose your wallet – or your job – you can still be cheerful in the meantime.





Film professor Shannon Walsh's new documentary offers a glimpse into a dystopian digital economy and the workers getting by one gig at a time.

BY JARED DOWNING
ILLUSTRATIONS BY LAURÈNE BOGLIO

An illustration on the left side of the page depicts a winding black road with a white dashed center line. The road curves from the bottom left towards the top right. On the left side of the road, there are stylized trees in black and white. Above the road, there are wavy lines in blue and yellow, suggesting a sky or a landscape. A large blue oval shape is positioned above the road, and a yellow sun with rays is visible in the top left corner.

The tech workforce is often imagined as 30-something white men in button-down shirts in Silicon Valley. It takes for granted entirely the actual labour that is creating the conditions for these types of businesses to thrive.

IN THE OPENING shots of *The Gig is Up*, a new documentary by UBC film professor Shannon Walsh, a column of blue-clad delivery bikers in Beijing stand at attention chanting their sales lines: *Please verify your order is correct! Please leave a good review!*

We are then shown a rideshare driver sitting in San Francisco traffic. An on-demand carpenter assembling an IKEA wardrobe in a London suburb. An UberEats delivery biker zipping across Paris with a Big Mac. The montage finally comes to small-town Florida, where a gangly 30-something, arms patched with tattoos, stares into the glow of an old laptop.

"I can't get a regular job because I got a mouth full of permanent gold teeth," says Jason Edwards, taking a moment to grin for the camera before turning back to a list of online surveys, which he completes for a few dollars each.

Jason is a "human in the loop," one of the hundreds of millions of organic, task-based workers nestled in platforms like Google, Amazon, and Tinder that make up the \$5 trillion gig economy. Subtitled "A very

human tech doc," *The Gig is Up* tells the stories of small time workers around the world lured by the promise of a new economic frontier of flexibility and entrepreneurialism, only to find themselves surviving from gig to gig in a brutal, unregulated industry.

"So often what we see about tech imagines the workforce as 30-something white men in button-down shirts or T-shirts in Silicon Valley," explains Shannon Walsh, who began shooting in 2019. "It takes for granted entirely the actual labour that is creating the conditions for these types of businesses to thrive."

Many platform-based gig workers are completely invisible, performing small human tasks for Amazon and Google to fill in the gaps where the AI falls short. Others, with platforms like Uber and TaskRabbit, are visible. We see them, maybe exchange a few words. But Walsh, who intersperses shots of people frantically pedalling, driving, or drilling with customers idly scrolling through phone apps, gives the sense that even these interactions are unwanted noise – human static in an automated realm. The system can cut pay rates at any time. Workers can find their accounts deleted in an instant, for any number of system-determined reasons. *The Gig is Up* offers a glimpse into an almost sci-fi dystopia most of us only encounter when a guy in a bike helmet arrives with a sack of food.

A DIGITAL FRONTIER

"The thing about companies being unregulated is that they can change their rates, they can change what your pay is, they have no responsibility to you whatsoever, and you have no recourse," Walsh says.

Walsh travelled from California to Nigeria to China, and beyond, trying to grasp a new economic frontier that knows neither nation nor boundaries.

She follows delivery riders in Shenzhen, China, forced to square off in a physical turf war as their platforms vie for digital real estate. In Paris,



▼
Humans in the loop
(stills from *The Gig is Up*).

Leila Ouadad, a single mother of two, blows through red lights on her bike just to make her deliveries on time, even though a colleague died in a crash just months before.

Other gig work is less visible. In one interview (that didn't make the final cut), Walsh speaks with a man who spends his time curating people's Google search results. In another scene, she interviews a man in Nigeria who uses his human eye to rate user photos on a dating app. Another spends his days on Mechanical Turk, a.k.a. MTurk, Amazon's vast distributed labour network in which an army of users throughout the world performs tiny, subjective tasks for pennies each.

"Anything you can think of that would have a human mediating with a computer, what they call 'human in the loop,' it exists," Walsh explains. "That's why the idea that this kind of tech is taking over elements of all of our jobs is really a lot closer than people imagine. But there will always be people in that process."

LIFE, ONE GIG AT A TIME

Almost all of these workers agree on one thing: things used to be better.

In San Francisco, another single mother quit a steady job to drive for Uber and Lyft because the pay was high and the work was flexible. Then Uber dropped the rates.

"I was making really good money. We didn't really have to think about 'let's go get a treat' or 'let's go to the beach,'" the driver, Annette Rivero, says, breaking down in tears from behind the wheel. "I don't even get to drive to go see my parents in Los Banos anymore because I can't afford the gas."

Rivero fell victim to a kind of winner-take-all phenomenon called the "network effect," described in the film by Nick Srnicek, author of *Platform Capitalism*. Basically, services like Uber or Grubhub only work if they can become ubiquitous, and are willing to lose money in order to

build an initial userbase. The result resembles a toxic romance: platforms seduce workers with steady gigs and artificially high pay, but when they reach critical mass, rates drop, and workers become disposable.

The Gig is Up and my conversation with Walsh inspired me to do a little first-hand reporting in my own neighborhood in New York City. I called a Lyft, and the driver turned out to be Ali Alghazali, an immigrant from Yemen who spent more than 25 years as a traditional taxi and limo driver before the rideshare wave all but obliterated the industry.

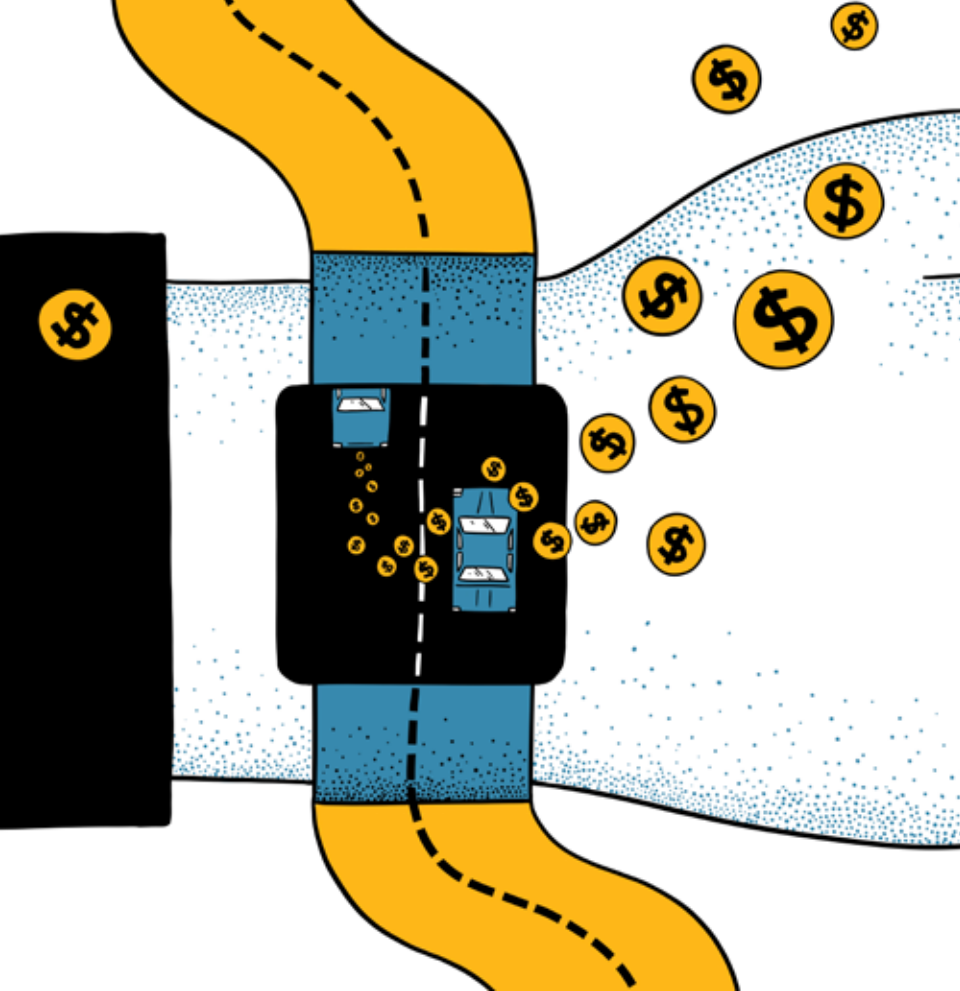
Alghazali's story could have been one of Walsh's deleted scenes: Like the drivers in the film, he earned decent money when he started, and he had the flexibility to help his wife take care of their six children. Then, as the network effect set in, rates plunged. He found himself working eight, then 10, then 12-hour shifts just to make ends meet.

"Back in the day – 2014, 2015 – you made good money. Uber didn't have so many drivers, you had surge prices," he says, referring to Uber's system of raising prices during peak hours. Over the years, Uber has reduced drivers' cuts of surge fares even though prices remain the same. "Now Uber has maybe 25, 30 thousand cars in New York City. Uber cared about the drivers before. Right now? They don't care. They got so many drivers."

Alghazali says he has clocked in more than 30,000 rides with thousands of five-star ratings. But it all counts for nothing when one bad customer, perhaps angry because he can't drink or smoke in the car, types a complaint.

"They don't even ask you, they just deactivate your account. They close it right away."

He has always managed to get his account unlocked, but he hates the feeling that at any moment he could be deleted like a line of faulty code, with hundreds of other drivers to instantly take his place. He says that



human brain,” Walsh continues. “That’s really cool. It can be amazing and it can be revolutionary.”

But there is a lot of work to be done. *The Gig is Up* ends on a cliffhanger, with hundreds of Uber and Lyft drivers picketing and blocking roads in San Francisco to oppose California’s *Proposition 22*, which excluded them from certain protections and benefits. Their fight was ultimately unsuccessful, and *Proposition 22* would eventually be passed.

But it was just the beginning. “We’re at the crest of a wave right now. We are literally at the very beginning of the workers’ movements for this stuff. And they’re already mobilizing a lot,” Walsh says. “I don’t think all is lost.”

Information on upcoming screenings can be found at thegigisup.ca

during the pandemic, when New York streets were empty and prices were at an all-time low, he once called Uber to try to negotiate a better deal.

“And do you know what he told me? Stop driving. Find some other employment.”

I ask him why he doesn’t do just that.

“I’m a driver, sir,” he says. “That’s my job.”

CLOSING THE LOOP

Quitting, finding a traditional job with a traditional employer, seems simple from the outside. But Walsh says on-demand gig work has a way of spreading its roots into one’s daily life and routines. “You’re constantly hustling,” she explains. “You don’t have time to look side to side at what could be on the horizon, because you’re just trying to get the next job. In that mode, you kind of get swallowed.”

Plus, there are problems with traditional work as well.

“It’s hard to go back to someone and say, ‘This is very precarious work, but how about you work nine-to-five with a manager who’s going to tell you to work Saturday even though it’s your kid’s birthday?’ Nobody wants to go back to that,” Walsh says. “Labour has always been a space of contestation.”

Despite the dystopic images in her film, Walsh doesn’t believe the gig economy is a simple failed capitalist experiment. After all, it has allowed Jason Edwards, shut out of the mainstream labour market with his criminal record and gold teeth, a way back in. It has allowed Alghazali the freedom to log out and take care of one of his kids when they get sick without worrying if he’ll lose his job (even if it means working through the night to make up the loss).

“The creative intelligence of some of the people I met in Nigeria, for example, who might otherwise be inaccessible, but who are brilliantly creative, can now plug into this big

UBC Film prof Shannon Walsh ▲



Rethinking labour law for the new world of work



“Without our brain and muscle not a single wheel could turn.” The Ontario Labour Relations Board recently ruled in favour of Foodora workers who wanted to form a union.
Photo: Steve Russell

Bethany Hastie, an assistant professor at UBC's Allard School of Law, is exploring ways in which Canada's labour laws can evolve to serve a rapidly shifting 21st century labour market. With a growing divergence between the legal regulation of work and its reality on the ground, she investigates what a meaningful system of labour rights must account for, and aims to make collective workplace representation more accessible, suitable, and effective for today's workers.

WHAT CHANGES ARE WE SEEING IN THE 21ST CENTURY LABOUR MARKET TO NECESSITATE A REFORM OF CANADA'S LABOUR LAWS?

One key issue we've seen since the turn of the century is the decline of the standard employment relationship: full-time, full-year, permanent employment with one employer. There are reasons to question whether and for whom it really ever was the norm, but certainly today we're seeing far fewer people in standard employment, and more people in forms of precarious or non-standard employment – whether it be part-time, seasonal, casual or, more recently, gig work associated with the rise of the platform economy.

Precarious work is characterized by unstable hours or pay, as well as the insecurity of not knowing if there's ongoing employment. There's often a lack of access to secondary benefits. And (although not all definitions of precarious labour require this) I tend to focus on forms of precarious labour that are characterized by low wages.

The explosion of platform work, along with the onset of COVID-19, has rendered visible a lot of gaps in current labour laws, which were designed with the standard employment relationship in mind. And as standard work declines, we're witnessing a direct correlation with

a decrease in access and entitlement to the labour and employment rights that have historically attended that kind of relationship.

WHAT IS PREVENTING PRECARIOUS WORKERS FROM ACCESSING EMPLOYMENT RIGHTS?

Many platform workers, say in food delivery or ride-sharing services, have been unilaterally designated as independent contractors by the corporations with whom they work. That means they are responsible for their own working conditions. They're viewed as an equal bargaining party in a contractual relationship, and not as an employee.

Because of this independent status, they have no access to employment

rights, simply be, from a practical point of view, very difficult to successfully form a union.

HAVE PLATFORM WORKERS LAUNCHED ANY LEGAL CHALLENGES TO THEIR INDEPENDENT CONTRACTOR STATUS?

Platform-based workers have challenged their statuses as independent contractors in many places, including the US, UK, and Australia.

In determining whether someone is an independent contractor or an employee, one quite significant criterion is the question of who owns the tools of the trade. Is the employer providing the tools and the material conditions for the work, or does the worker own them? If the worker owns

“Law reform needs to be attached to larger conversations about dignity at work, and what that looks like today.”

– Bethany Hastie

standards laws, which set out things like minimum wage, and, depending on the particular laws of the jurisdiction where they work, questionable access to labour law in terms of organizing a union.

COVID has also highlighted the precariousness of other forms of work that clearly fall within labour and employment laws. Many restaurant servers and retail clerks, for example, are not in full-time, full-year employment, and don't have access to benefits like paid sick leave. In industries with high turnover rates, a casualized workforce, and a lot of part-time workers, it can

them, that could weigh heavily in finding them to be an independent contractor. And with ride-sharing and food service delivery in particular, a lot of the discussion has started from an assumption that the tool is the vehicle.

In one recent case, however, the Ontario Labour Relations Board ruled in favour of Foodora workers who wanted to form a union. In its decision, the board found that the tool is not the vehicle, but the technology that facilitates the work. It's the app. And that app is owned by the corporation, which uses it to exert significant control over the workers. The

board concluded that Foodora workers were dependent contractors who could legally form a union under Ontario labour laws. Shortly after that decision, Foodora closed its operations in Canada, citing a lack of profitability and increased competition in the marketplace. Despite that, the board's decision represents a significant shift in how labour law is defining platform-based work.

Ensuring that work is properly categorized under law and that benefits and rights apply broadly to all forms of work is an important first step in law reform. When there is significant dependence on the corporation with whom one's working, that corporation should be properly understood as an employer and not just a party to a contract.

HOW ELSE ARE WORKERS MOBILIZING?

One of the interesting things we've seen since COVID struck, and basic and material work issues like wages, security, and sick pay benefits have resurfaced, is some movement towards unionization in historically under-represented industries that have proven quite challenging to unionize. For example, in BC there were successful unionization drives in 2020 in long-term care homes, food services, and retail businesses.

In the case of platform workers, who have questionable access to unionization or employment rights, some jurisdictions have crafted specific regulatory instruments to address core issues. The city of Bologna in Italy, for example, passed a Charter of Fundamental Digital Workers' Rights that gives platform-based workers some basic rights, such as access to a minimum wage. New York City recently passed a similar legislative package.

There have also been a number of one-day strikes by precarious workers in a variety of industries in the United States in the past few years. These lie outside the traditional understanding of strikes as union-led action against an employer to disrupt their economic operations. The goal has been to garner public awareness of and support for the workers' legal causes. That has been a notable trend, because some of them don't have an employer, ostensibly, to bargain with. But even for those who do, it can pull leverage to their side.



**PROFESSOR
BETHANY
HASTIE**



She completed her doctorate in law at McGill University, where she held an O'Brien Fellowship in Human Rights and Legal Pluralism and a SSHRC Doctoral Fellowship.



Other projects include a review of BC and Ontario human rights law on sexual harassment, and a comparative study on migrant worker recruitment legislation across Canada.



She is currently a 2021 Wall Scholar at the Peter Wall Institute for Advanced Studies.

Researchers have documented that platform-based workers are utilizing technology effectively to connect with each other and to have that public-facing visibility. They are even creating technologies of their own to compete with these larger corporations.

HOW DO YOU SEE EMPLOYMENT RELATIONS AND THE LAW CHANGING OVER THE NEXT DECADE OR SO?

Since COVID, we've seen a lot of calls in BC and across Canada for the introduction of paid sick leave for all workers, and not only employees who might have it written into their employment contract. Labour and employment laws certainly need updating to better reflect contemporary landscapes, but I think that law reform needs to be attached to larger conversations about dignity at work, and what that looks like today.

The extensive and significant publicity that platform workers have been able to attract could be a catalyst for a deep and renewed conversation that will hopefully lead to substantial change in how the law understands and accounts for work and workers, and how labour and employment laws extend both formal entitlement and practical access to rights at work.

The system has been in need of change for some time, and this may be the moment that finally produces that change.



Meeting Location: spaceship

A UBC prof adds some zip to our Zoom

BY JARED DOWNING

SOONER OR LATER, the pandemic will end. But Zoom is here to stay. That *Jetsons* future of speaking with disembodied faces on a screen has finally arrived – and it’s kind of a drag.

“There seems to be a big gap when working at a distance,” observes UBC professor Patrick Parra Pennefather (speaking, as it happened, over Zoom). “What’s missing is building team culture. We were so used to doing that in person.”

Thus, Pennefather’s new project, Virtual Co-Locator, aims to make our digital workspaces a little more bearable – and maybe even fun. The platform syncs with Zoom, Teams, and other platforms, extracts attendee faces from the normal rectangular grid, and superimposes them into vibrant new scenes. Attendees could interact with one another from the bridge of a spaceship, under a circus tent, or even within a Dali-inspired surrealist painting.

“It was more to encourage creative play – to encourage people to be able to have fun, take a break from this seriousness of a Zoom

call,” says Pennefather, who teaches design and production in UBC’s Theatre and Film department.

He and his student team, working with UBC’s Emerging Media Lab (where Pennefather is faculty in residence), originally designed Virtual Co-Locator for virtual improv comedy. He says the same principles apply to the modern workplace: dropping people into strange, new contexts helps them communicate and collaborate. Before the pandemic, those contexts were such humble spaces as a hallway, break room, or water cooler.

“Taking five minutes and walking around, hanging out with a colleague, those quick rapid conversations that can occur... not much needs to be said, but you do need to check in for two minutes – those instances are important.”

So far, Virtual Co-Locator can transport up to five attendees to its brave new digital worlds, which work within existing co-working platforms to handle the audio and video.

“We can find different uses of the technology to support our work, and we can still uncover the gaps.” To illustrate, Pennefather’s on-screen image suddenly morphs into a Pixar cartoon version of himself. “Eventually you and I will have a conversation and we’ll be able to flip back and forth between characters... like I did just now.”

He says as more industries become automated and more of us take our work to the digital realm, technology will be ready to connect us quickly, efficiently, and effectively. And, maybe, it will also be more fun.



Illustrations: Ada Tam

Equal Measures

A powerful social movement to counter systemic racism and inequality is translating into policy and practice at increasing numbers of organizations, including UBC.

BY **ROBERTA STALEY**
ILLUSTRATION BY **TIFFANY ZHONG**

CANADIAN SOCIETY'S HISTORICAL reluctance to bring women and visible minorities into positions of power, be that upper management, the executive suite, or as a board member, has been a barrier to equity, diversity, and inclusion in both the business world and on university campuses.

Changes are afoot, however, due to pressure from shareholders, consumers, regulators, and legislators.

In the corporate world, a major change was invoked last year in the *Canada Business Corporations Act*, which issued mandated disclosure requirements relating to women in leadership positions. Disclosure requirements are now also in place for Indigenous peoples, visible minorities, and persons with disabilities. Such changes impose greater responsibility for Canadian businesses to commit to diversifying boards and senior management.

The well-worn trope that “the best person for the job” and employment equity are incompatible is no longer acceptable to stakeholders, says Dr. Ismaël Traoré, who is dually appointed at UBC as director of faculty equity in the Office of the Provost, and as institutional initiative strategist in the Equity and Inclusion Office.



Traoré facilitates collaboration between the two offices, using the university's Inclusion Action Plan as a framework to advance the university's equity, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) commitments. His position includes co-managing the operationalization plan of 36 EDI actions organized into five goals that ensure students, staff, and faculty are part of a respectful and supportive community. It is part of a national trend, with Universities Canada reporting in 2019 that 77 per cent of post-secondary institutions reference EDI in their strategic plan.

While Traoré is helping advance EDI at UBC, he sees parallel progress in the business world. Two main events helped to propel this new zeitgeist. One was the discovery this year of more than 1,300 unmarked graves of Indigenous children on the grounds of former residential schools. The other was the death of George Floyd, whose 2020 murder by a Minneapolis cop sparked global support for the Black Lives Matter movement.

There are considerable social and economic incentives to embracing EDI policies, Traoré says. Clients and customers are prepared to utilize the powerful tool of social media if they perceive a company is engaged in EDI "tokenism" (when one or two women or a minority group member are appointed for appearances' sake), says Traoré. Businesses also have to be cognizant of the concerns of government, whose contracts may increasingly be awarded based upon effective EDI policies, he says. A 2019 study of 452 US firms ("From tokens to key players: The influence of board gender

and ethnic diversity on corporate discrimination lawsuits") published by *Human Relations* indicates an additional economic incentive: more female and minority board members "reduces the likelihood of large-scale discrimination lawsuits given their propensity to advocate for underrepresented groups in the workplace."

For universities, a strong EDI framework enhances its global reputation,

discrimination, but there is a growing understanding that racism is also systemic. This conceptual shift means that people are more receptive to organizational anti-racism transformation. "People are saying, 'I would like to know my role and what to do to address racism.'" Traoré also points to the rise of racial justice consciousness, whereby people adopt a "cultural humility, which is an orientation

Cultural humility: "An orientation of curiosity, a willingness to learn, change, and share power, and awareness of one's racial socialization."

– Dr. Ismaël Traoré

which appeals to greater numbers of international students who are seeking campuses where their culture and racial background is represented, Traoré says.

Connected to this is government's growing role in enhancing EDI policies at universities, he says. "Whether it's federal or provincial funding, there should be a strong requirement that colleges and universities show meaningful progress on employment equity."

All this is happening, says Traoré, thanks to a more sophisticated awareness of what racism is. Previously, the dominant narrative was to blame "a bad apple" for racial

of curiosity, a willingness to learn, change, and share power, and awareness of one's racial socialization."

At UBC, Traoré leads and supports the development and implementation of numerous EDI initiatives. These include using an intersectionality lens to understand the differing impact that COVID-19 curtailment has had on tenure-track faculty. Preliminary analysis shows a higher degree of negative impact on faculty from systemically marginalized groups, including racialized, Indigenous, and women faculty, and faculty with physical disabilities. It also entails performing a comprehensive assessment of UBC's EDI data ecosystem. In addition,

Traoré is organizing educational seminars on racial literacy for staff in the Provost's Office. "There is a real appetite to discuss issues of racism and anti-racism," says Traoré, who was born in Burkina Faso and grew up in several countries.

Leadership appointments at UBC also need to reflect EDI policies to enhance diversity.

This goes hand in hand with cluster hiring, which Traoré says is to make sure there is more parity. Cluster-hiring in academia is increasingly being used to tackle diversity gaps by hiring, for example, half a dozen Indigenous professors into a faculty lacking diversity. Cluster-hiring can also enable retainment, as faculties can build community and look to one another for support and collaboration.

Pay equity gaps also need to be tackled, he says, as well as the "cultural taxation" borne by minority groups. This is the unrecognized and unpaid service portion shouldered by faculty and staff who promote diversity on campus on their own time. "This is just the surface of many actions that need to be taken," says Traoré.

Such organizational changes won't be easy, and Traoré anticipates some "diversity resistance." A key way to minimize this is to ensure that leadership "communicates that this is the course the university wants to take." Faculty and staff must also be kept abreast of EDI initiatives to create buy-in and allay misconceptions, Traoré adds.

There can be barriers to implementing EDI policies at both universities and other workplaces. Changes are impeded by a lack of resources,

difficulties in attracting and retaining diverse talent, and a dearth of data on EDI best practices. These issues are more of a concern for smaller businesses that have fewer resources and are often dependent upon grants to fund operations than big-budget post-secondary institutions.

Overcoming society's "isms" – from racism to sexism, ableism to heterosexism – can feel akin to moving mountains. Traoré is helping propel the university into a place of inclusion and respect, where exciting young scholars have the support they need to explore innovative new ideas. The EDI advances that he is forging at UBC will provide leadership and inspiration not only to the wider university community but also to the business sector, which is increasingly embracing a mandate to be part of these enlightened changes in Canadian society.

Send in the robot

BY CHRIS PETTY



IN A WORLD where close contact with other humans has become a risky business, we must devise ways to maintain robust production while keeping our populations safe. Remote services such as Zoom have made this much easier for the information industries, but we haven't entirely solved the problem of doing physical work from a distance. Enter the robot.

While the drive to create more remote robotic solutions to dangerous physical work in mining and heavy industry is in full swing, more delicate tasks that require close physical contact are also being revolutionized. None of these is more intriguing than the challenges of personal healthcare, with robotic surgery a prime example. And now COVID has prompted research into the remote delivery of care for patients in long-term care facilities or health-challenged people in their own homes.

Kendall Ho, a professor in the department of emergency medicine, is part of Canada's Digital Technology Supercluster and lead medical consultant of the Digital Telework for Remote Physical Work project, headed by the company Sanctuary AI. The project is creating robots that healthcare providers can operate remotely using 4G/5G networks to gather health information now only available by visiting a medical office. Ho's UBC co-lead is Karon MacLean, a professor of computer science whose research interests include human-computer and human-robot interaction.

While much of the hardware for this project already exists, the challenge is to create a system to remotely acquire data – such as heart rate and electrical rhythm – from patients at long-term care facilities or in their homes, and deliver it in digitized form to an off-site practitioner.

With further advancements, this tool may be able to do blood work, test insulin levels, perform hands-on examinations, and even execute complex applications such as iron infusions, all under the supervision of a remote provider. As well, the AI upon which the technology is based has the potential to learn and automate some elements of the care provided, which would free up providers for care requiring higher-level skills.

But it won't always be a case of sending in the robots. "We need to deploy these technologies thoughtfully," says Ho, "so that when it's appropriate to be face to face, we can be."

While COVID-19 and the desire to keep both patients and healthcare workers safe has been a catalyst for the development of this technology, the applications for remotely controlled general purpose robots will likely increase in other labour-intensive industries.

The science of robotics is revolutionizing the nature of work by making it safer and more convenient, as well as saving time, cutting costs, and freeing up workers for other tasks.

And while robots have been the source of many science fiction horror stories, they continue to drive progress in all areas of human endeavour.

GENERATION FLEX

Young workers are nimble, connected,
and redefining employment relationships
on their own terms.

BY **CHRIS CANNON**
PHOTOGRAPHY BY **IRIS CHIA**

“I LEFT THE JOB, but my network stays with me.”

Kookai Chaimahawong is on the move. Yesterday she was working her dream job at a venture capital firm. Today she’s creating a workplace of her own, searching for a new way for investors to connect with innovative start ups. “I realized it’s time to create,” she says. “I want to come up with something that is more friendly to the founders of the companies I’m investing in, supporting them more than just providing capital.”

Chaimahawong is betting on the network she’s cultivated over her past few jobs to help her discover her path, a luxury afforded by an explosive growth in global connectivity over the previous decade. While she straddles the grey area between Millennials and Generation Z – workers less than a decade into their careers – Chaimahawong is part of the movement skewing workforce demographics in radically new directions of connectivity, entrepreneurship, and social conscience – fuelling a sea change in how we see today’s workplace.

RESIGNED TO CHANGE

Generation Z – born roughly between 1997 and 2010 – follow the Millennials, who followed Generation X, who followed the Baby Boomers. Each generation flows gradually into the next, and each generation’s vision of the workplace is an evolved version of the one they inherit.

Kookai Chaimahawong is on the move. ◀



But this new generation is something of a special case. The changing workplace has been kicked into overdrive by the rapid growth of digital technology, the advent of the gig economy, and the recent mingling of personal and corporate values.

The way the pandemic brought these other elements together to normalize the work-from-home option is the kind of sudden, drastic reshaping of the workplace rarely seen twice in a lifetime. Many workers simply do not want to return to a 9-to-5 grind, having seen the possibilities unlocked by a more flexible work-life balance.

“Right now we are experiencing what a lot of people are calling the Great Resignation, which is the kind of mass exodus of employees from organizations over the past year,” says Rebecca Paluch, assistant professor at the Sauder School of Business. “Organizations are really having a hard time bringing people back into the workforce. They’re rolling out new kinds of incentives to get people to come back to work.”

HUSTLE AND FLOW

While some, like Chaimahawong, are taking the big leap to self-employment, a much larger group is finding ways to keep some semblance of employment – either part-time or flexible hours – while exploring side hustles like blogging, vlogging, selling crafts on Etsy, or creating niche businesses using ubiquitous, low-cost innovation platforms.

“The gig economy gets kind of a bad rap sometimes, and rightfully so for promising worker power where it isn’t necessarily,” says Paluch. “But it also opens up opportunities for people to pursue entrepreneurial ventures that wouldn’t have been financially supportive in the past.”

As little as 10 to 15 years ago, freelancing or job-hopping was a sign of instability. Today it’s the norm, and in some places an advantage. Reid

Hoffman, the co-founder of LinkedIn, calls such gigs “tours of duty” – short-term contracts that help employers and employees squeeze as much out of each other as they can and then split up.

THE SPEED OF CHANGE

Until the 1980s, the workplace centred around loyalty. You were loyal to a company for your career, and you’d walk away with a gold watch and a livable retirement fund. But employers took advantage of heavy deregulation to squeeze their employees, breaking this unspoken contract and creating an aimless angst among the working class that helped shape the personality of Generation X.

Millennials inherited this distrust of their corporate overlords, but were able to capitalize on the new connectivity of the internet to take control of their careers. Gen Z grew up watching this rapidly evolving flexibility and connectivity, and are shaping their careers around those attributes they control – their marketable skills rather than their current job. It’s much easier now for people in the earlier stages of their career to see a range of paths ahead of them – and opportunities to pursue more than one of them – that weren’t as visible as they were to previous generations.

In a word, Gen Z is learning to move at the speed of change. Employers are being forced to keep up, and in many ways change their organizations to please their employees. “It’s not about blind loyalty anymore,” says Paluch. “It’s more about: What are your needs? What are my needs? Are we continuing to meet each other’s needs and requirements? If so, we’ll continue. But if not, we’re not going to view it as a major breakup, we’re going to just acknowledge we’ve reached that point in our employment relationship where it’s time for both parties to move on.”

THE NEW LOYAL

While the increased ability to network powers this new age of flexible options, the way Gen Z is flexing this muscle is intricately bound to their worldview. This is the generation whose childhood was bookended by 9/11 and a global pandemic, a generation whose very existence is threatened by the climate complacency of their parents and grandparents.

To them the whole world is ripe for innovation.

Spending their teen, college, and first-job years witnessing movements like Me Too and Black Lives Matter, Gen Z has flexed the might of their connectivity and independence to demand employer standards that reflect their own. “People are really starting to think about how work is aligning with their personal values,” says Paluch, “particularly on topics like diversity and inclusion. Companies have seen that employees do care about these issues, so large organizations are starting to adapt. It’s also their way of showing their customers and their employees where their values are.”

With employment dynamics growing out of its parent-child phase and into a partnership, the Gen Z-ers remaining in the full-time workforce have brought a fresh emphasis on maintaining relationships with employers and co-workers after parting ways. Employee alumni programs are common, allowing former workers to take their networks with them, potentially returning at some point as a partner or a client. While a Gen Z-er’s employment tenure has shrunk, their affiliations now enjoy a shelf life far beyond a line on their CV, creating, perhaps ironically, a better kind of loyalty altogether.



▶ Kookai Chaimahawong, MBA'19.

THE SOCIAL CAPITALIST

KOOKAI CHAIMAHAWONG

“Venture capital is seen as really cutthroat, but I can tell you the next generation is different,” says Kookai Chaimahawong, MBA'19. “More supportive, more inclusive, more transparent. We're sharing things like compensation surveys across the industry to reveal pay discrepancies. We're sharing resources to help everyone get to the next stage of their career.”

Before deciding to go solo this year, Chaimahawong worked for Pangaea Ventures, a venture capital firm that invests in start up companies tackling sustainability issues such as climate change, food and

water security, and waste management. Her previous experience developing sustainability initiatives for the United Nations Development Programme shaped her venture capital work and continues to influence her career path.

Not even a generation ago, venture capital was a profit-maximizing mechanism, where investments were valued solely for their potential return on investment (ROI). ROI still rules the roost, but a secondary focus on social responsibility has come into view. The “return” part of ROI is no longer strictly financial; there is a new drive to create social capital as well.

But social capital doesn't pay the bills. Start ups that rely on charity rather than a viable business model don't last long. More than a steady stream of donations, progressive-minded businesses need clear revenue models that not only keep the lights on, but make these companies attractive to larger corporations, who can buy the companies and incorporate these social and environmental solutions on a scale that makes a real difference.

Chaimahawong believes the timing is right to create a platform that doesn't just support sustainability initiatives, but is itself sustainable as a business model that people want to invest in, not just donate to. This is a radical rethinking of the venture capital model, but one long in coming.

“How do I create a blend of impact investing and profit maximization?” asks Chaimahawong. “How do I support and accelerate entrepreneurship and innovation to truly change the world?”

Despite striking out on her own to find the answer, Chaimahawong is not alone. “All my peer venture investors are really supportive,” she says. “They still want to connect with me. I got this opportunity to step up because of my job, but I still retain those connections because fellow venture capital investors, ecosystem partners, and innovation groups, they're all coming with me.”

THE NETWORKING ADVOCATES

FELICIA CHAN, BAHAR MOUSSAVI,
MIKHAELA TORIO

What does a diverse workplace look like?

Bahar Moussavi asked herself that question after a classmate told her she didn't look like someone who studies computer science. The incident led to a conversation about diversity with her other classmates Felicia Chan and Mikhaela Torio, which led to a search for underrepresented groups in their cohort, which eventually inspired C.O.D.E.

The C.O.D.E. Initiative – Creating Opportunities and Defining Education – is a non-profit the trio launched in 2017 to address an invisible underrepresented group in the computer sciences: the neurodiverse. Initially focusing on autistic youth, C.O.D.E. has grown into a program of STEM workshops and coding classes tailored to kids who struggle with the traditional school system and need more personalized teaching.

“We saw a lot of potential for individuals who are neurodivergent, who didn't really have these opportunities before,” says Chan, who heads up C.O.D.E.'s marketing efforts. “But when we went looking for classes that have more inclusive environments for individuals with special needs, there was nothing like that in Canada for coding or STEM education.”

With no business training, the group advanced their project with guidance from e@UBC, an entrepreneurship mentoring program that helped them establish the network they would need to get off the ground.

Connecting with mentors and like-minded people was a game

▶ Felicia Chan (R), BSc'20, and Bahar Moussavi, Bsc'20 (now studying for a master's in educational psychology and special education)



Tony Liu, BCom'13 (left) and Billy Lan, BCom'14.
Photo: David Degner

changer. “You can just hop on a coffee chat online to connect with mentors and people in the same field as you,” says Chan. “I think networking is a lot easier and more casual now, which makes the whole entrepreneur space a lot more welcoming. People say, *I’m here to help you. Here’s my expertise, I want to support you.* It opens up a lot of doors.”

With 16 programs serving 850 students so far, the C.O.D.E. Initiative recently scored a significant grant from the BC Tech Association’s Digital Lift program, which will pay for 200 workshops for neurodiverse students to learn coding and break into the tech industry. The founders are hoping this is a stepping stone to a nationwide program.

Although all three founders still work full-time jobs, they believe today’s networking platforms provide them the opportunity to carve their own career paths by connecting with like minds. “Our goal is definitely to become full-time with this organization,” says Chan. “We want to continue growing by partnering with other organizations serving similar audiences, and then seeing what we can build together.”



THE INCLUSIVE INNOVATORS

BILLY LAN AND TONY LIU

Despite the breakneck speed of change in employment practices over the past generation, some customs have barely moved the needle. When Sauder grads Billy Lan and Tony Liu joined the part-time workforce in their teens, they thought nothing of using the same application process – cover letters and résumés – that their parents used when they first arrived in Canada and had to find hourly work.

But when Liu’s mother was laid off in 2018, he was surprised that the job application process she faced hadn’t changed in generations. “We’re in a world where we have LinkedIn and all these platforms for white collar workers, but we don’t have much support for hourly workers,” says Lan, who soon after co-founded JobGet with

Liu. “We wanted to build a platform where hourly workers can easily connect with hiring managers, because they need to know where their next opportunities are coming from. If they’re looking for new work, they need to get that quickly without having to worry about when their next paycheck is going to come.”

A Grand Prize winner of MIT’s 2019 Inclusive Innovation Challenge, and earning the duo a spot in Forbes’ 30 Under 30 Social Impact Entrepreneurs list, JobGet has grown from a single client in 2018 (the famous Cheers bar in Boston) to thousands of employers servicing hundreds of thousands of job seekers. By sharing their platform organically – tapping their clients’ networks for like-minded hiring managers – they’ve spread to 10 major US cities and plan to enter the Canadian market next year.

Like many lean start ups, the company has no central office, except for a shared WeWork desk in Boston. Their employees and contractors work virtually, with 50-70 workers spread across four continents.

Also in common with many of their peer companies, JobGet is trying to hit that sweet spot of creating a viable company that also serves a social good. “If you just focus on profits and not people, eventually it’s going to come and bite you,” says Lan. “If you only focus on people and not profit, that’s usually not viable. So we tried to figure out a business model that works for both. It’s a big part of why people join our company – we have amazing retention in our employees, and a very compassionate team. I feel like a lot of that is because our underlying business model ties in with our social responsibility.”

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Congratulations to this Year's Recipients



YOUNG ALUMNI AWARD

Dr. Jacquelyn J. Cragg
BSc'07, MPH'11, PhD'15

Dr. Jacquelyn Cragg is an emerging leader in the field of data science, drug safety, and neuro-epidemiology whose research is improving our understanding of devastating spinal cord injuries and neurological diseases, including Parkinson's and ALS.



FACULTY COMMUNITY SERVICE AWARD

Dr. Sally E. Thorne
BSN'79, MSN'83

Dr. Sally Thorne is a highly regarded and influential nursing scholar whose work has measurably improved the quality of healthcare provision. She specializes in the fields of cancer and chronic illness care, prioritizing the humanization of nursing practice.



VOLUNTEER LEADERSHIP AWARD

Warren M. Spitz
BCom'81

Entrepreneur, philanthropist, and investor Warren Spitz is founder and CEO of the Spitz Group of Companies. He chairs the Faculty Advisory Board at the UBC Sauder School of Business, where he and his family created the Spitz Fellows Program for Indigenous Women.



HONORARY ALUMNI AWARD

Arran and Ratana Stephens
OBG

Arran and Ratana Stephens started Nature's Path in 1985, and it has since become North America's largest certified organic cereal brand. The Stephens are loyal supporters of the Faculty of Land and Food Systems, as well as trusted advisors.



GLOBAL CITIZENSHIP AWARD

Dr. James Watt
BSc'62, MD'67

Dr. James Watt is a compassionate physician and Salvation Army Officer who served the oppressed and underprivileged in Zimbabwe (formerly Rhodesia) during civil conflict in the 1970s, and subsequently contributed many more years of service.



RESEARCH & INNOVATION AWARD

Dr. Sarvajna K. Dwivedi
MSc'88, PhD'92

Dr. Sarvajna Dwivedi is a researcher, executive, and entrepreneur whose work developing pharmaceuticals and devices for the treatment of respiratory issues has improved the quality of life for millions of afflicted people around the world.



ALUMNI AWARD OF DISTINCTION

Dr. Eric L. Peterson
BSc'72, MSc'75

Over a long career, Dr. Eric Peterson has built from scratch several enduring organizations in spaces where science, technology, and social purpose overlap – including the BC-based Hakai Institute, a highly respected independent ocean science organization.

Find out more at trekmagazine.alumni.ubc.ca/AAA-2021

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Vancouver-area
journalist

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Next challenge:
Writing a chronicle
of Richmond's
Asian malls –
“which are to the
city what piazzas
are to Rome.”

Read his story
on page 33. >>

CHANGE/ MAKERS

LIFE ESSENTIALS

Selina Chan is helping deliver critical supplies to a nation in crisis.

BY JARED DOWNING

How do you go from purchasing Fitbits for a major retailer to helping feed more than a million people in Lebanon?

Selina Chan could tell you. After a career in the air-conditioned offices of companies such as Target and TELUS, the UBC alum now spends her workdays in a Beirut office or travelling from village to village helping the United Nations World Food Programme (WFP) deliver critical supplies to a nation in crisis.

“I left my job at TELUS, where I was a buyer for wearables, Fitbits, smartwatches,” explains Chan, who graduated with a commerce degree in 2009. “I was wondering to myself, ‘Do I want to sell \$500 accessories to people who have \$1000 phones?’”

Her journey of self-discovery eventually led Chan to a job at the WFP headquarters in Rome and then its country office in Lebanon. Today, as head of the retail division, Chan works with a network of around 500 grocers – from small corner stores to major supermarkets – to deliver food aid to their local communities.

Chan oversees the organization’s food cash assistance program,



under which people are provided with a debit card they can use to buy food at WFP-contracted stores. Others are given food parcels containing rice, lentils, sugar, and other food items. When Chan arrived in January of this year, Lebanon was experiencing new food shortages stemming from the country’s 2019 economic collapse. The number of people receiving WFP’s support had swelled to 1.7 million.

In 2020, WFP was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize for its efforts. Yet Chan says battling world hunger is far more complicated than simply giving away cash and supplies. When she speaks with us, Chan has just returned from a grocery store forced to empty its freezers during a sustained blackout.

“The fuel crisis has a lot of impact on the supply chain. When there’s no fuel, there’s no electricity. When there’s no electricity, there’s no food

storage, and you have spoilage. It’s really a multi-layered effect.”

Chan approaches her new career with humility and respect. During her time in the private sector, even working between the United States and Canada meant navigating a quagmire of cultural, political, and economic differences. “And then imagine you’re working in Rome” – where WFP is headquartered – “with 90 different country offices across all continents.”

Yet Chan says the Lebanese people are facing the crisis head-on. She has witnessed businesses develop new ways to store and preserve food, use informal transportation networks and fuel sources, and install solar panels to keep the freezers online.

“Seeing how people are being creative and surviving in this economy is very encouraging.”



THE HIDDEN CITY

Journalist Christopher Cheung is showing Vancouverites the true diversity of their city.

BY ERIC DAVENPORT

A city, like a work of art, is full of meaning in every detail. Christopher Cheung, a UBC journalism grad working at Vancouver-based online news magazine *The Tyee*, sees a potential story in each newly discovered brushstroke. As an on-the-ground reporter, Cheung believes that writing about Vancouver demands close, careful, and honest investigation of local people and their concerns.

A skilled photographer as well as a promising young writer, Cheung's work begins with his alert and finely tuned eye for detail. He has always observed Vancouver from close up. He traces his interest in the city's culture back to his teenage years, and a few failed driving tests that forced him to explore Vancouver more intimately than some of his friends: on foot, by train, on his bicycle.

His reporting focuses particularly on Vancouver's minority communities, to counter the typical portraits he reads in the media that can often veil important stories about racialized and marginalized people. "It's either there's no representation, or, when there is representation, it's done in a cartoonish, stereotypical way," says Cheung. He offers as an example articles covering heritage festivals and cultural holidays, which he says often don't engage honestly with people living in these communities.

Cheung's writing focuses on perspectives largely ignored by the media. Recently, he's written profiles of Vancouverites living in RVs, and Chinese seniors without proper language support because of the BC government's failure to translate COVID-19 information into Mandarin and Cantonese at a number of vaccination sites on the city's East Side.

Cheung wants to be a counter-voice. He's started a new *Tyee* newsletter, *Under the White Gaze*, which aims to expose the biases and assumptions of journalism in Canada. His recent *Toronto Star* article "Blind Spots" touched on his own experience with stereotypical reporting and won the Dalton Camp Award for best essay on media and democracy. He is a careful, nuanced critic, with sincere concern for the problems he brings to light.

For many of the people Cheung meets in underrepresented communities, media seems like a foreign entity, uninterested in their stories. "Why do you want to talk to me?", people often ask him before an interview. The answer lies in Cheung's commitment to helping Vancouverites see the true diversity of their city and changing the culture of local reporting. Broad strokes lead to blind spots. Cheung's impulse as a journalist is to illuminate the rich but often hidden detail.

Selina Chan,
BCom'09



Head of Retail
for the World
Food Programme,
currently based
in Lebanon



Next challenge:
Improving
purchasing power
in a time of
hyperinflation

CHANGE/ MAKERS

WHAT TO DO IN AN EMERGENCY

When the first wave of COVID-19 hit New York City with force, recent arrival Kartik Suri stayed put and helped out.

BY ERIC DAVENPORT



Dr. Kartik Suri recalls a time when the novel coronavirus now known as COVID-19 seemed a distant concern. In February 2020, he was a recent UBC dental school grad in a residency program in New York City. Reports about the virus caused some worried murmurs among Suri and his peers, but there was no sense of urgency.

Less than a month later, the virus that began for most North Americans as a topic of conversation turned with devastating quickness into a crisis. New York was hit hardest. “It hit us very suddenly,” says Suri. “It was a matter of days.”

Everything turned on a dime. For the past few months, Suri had been helping to provide dental care in an underserved area of the Bronx, but the dental clinic was promptly shut down, and dental residents willing to stay in NYC were relocated to St. Barnabas Hospital, where COVID patients were beginning to overwhelm medical personnel and basic medical equipment.

By mid-April, the city’s hospitals were dealing with 13,000 hospitalizations and nearly 1000 deaths daily. Instead of providing medical care, Suri found himself working with the internal medicine team managing floors in the hospital, checking

vitals, and administering medications as patients flooded the wards. Often, he was responsible for 40 to 50 COVID patients at one time.

There was intense stress and trauma for frontline workers in the city. Suri remembers a palpable sense of fear, as doctors and nurses were worried for their own lives as well as for the health of their patients. Suri saw people die in front of his eyes, something he wasn’t used to in dentistry. The virus’s long-term effects were unknown, and the environment of the hospital was frightening, filled with sickness and a feeling of heaviness.

But Suri stayed in NYC because he believes a sense of moral responsibility should inform his work. He returned to Vancouver last summer, after the end of New York’s first wave. Looking back, he remembers moments of peace amidst the chaos – walks through the city with colleagues and the sound of New Yorkers drumming on pots and pans for health-care workers returning home for the day. Ultimately Suri values this memory of mutual support most of all, and the deep sense of community he felt in the face of a global crisis.

**Kartik Suri,
BSc’14, DMD’19**



Dedicated dentist



Next challenge:
Building dental
outreach initiatives
in underserved
communities
across BC.

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alumni UBC Study Leader
Philippe Tortell,
Professor of Oceanography
at UBC and Head of the
Department of Earth, Ocean
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research expeditions from the
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Marathon swim across the lily pond

BY RACHEL GLASSMAN



Photo: UBC Archives, UBC 1.1/2103-4

“SHE MADE IT! ‘Canada’s Honeybun,’ marathon swimmer Carol Gregory, conquered the chilly waters of UBC’s Lily Pond in three minutes, 37 seconds.”

This was emblazoned on the front page of *The Ubysey* in October 1956. The occasion was UBC’s very own epic open water swim – the Lily Pond swim, that is – organized by the student paper and the Pep Club to promote that year’s Homecoming, and staged with loving and ludicrous attention to detail.

The Ubysey solemnly reported that before Gregory was cleared to swim the whopping 30-foot distance, an “examining physician” inspected a small mole on her back and plied her with hot compresses and swimming grease. When Gregory launched into the water (with the Pep Band blaring a rousing “God Save the Queen”), “coaches” in a rowboat spoon-fed the weary athlete “thin warm gruel” for sustenance.

Reader, she was triumphant. “Now I end the most important chapter in my as-yet young life,” Gregory wrote. “I don’t think I could ever recapture the thrill of yesterday, and so I think I’ll stop swimming for good.”

The swim was over, perhaps, but *The Ubysey* imagined the athlete’s circumstances as thrilling indeed. The paper announced that in recognition of her feat, Gregory received \$100,000 for the movie rights to her life story, 35 live koala bears with a three-month supply of eucalyptus leaves, and a guitar pick donated by Elvis Presley – prizes, no doubt, worth their weight in gruel.



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alumni UBC VOLUNTEERS

THE BIG PICTURE

ROBBY THE ROBOT

The newest member of UBC's Athletics & Recreation team is an autonomous line-painting robot, known to his colleagues as Robby. Robby may not be very talkative, but he paints lines with the precision of a master – using GPS to create sports field pitches in a fraction of the time it would take a team of several people, and using less paint. The first of his kind in Canada, Robby can even be programmed for logos.

“Robby and I have the closest relationship, and I do refer to him like he is a co-worker,” says groundskeeper Andre Dionne. “There are days when we don't get along, mostly because he glitches and doesn't connect to the satellite transmitter or loses Wi-Fi connection, but I'll still take him on his bad days. With Robby on the team, we're able to focus more on sports field maintenance and irrigation repairs, or ongoing tasks, like mowing, weeding, and line trimming.”



Photo: Paul H. Joseph / UBC Brand & Marketing

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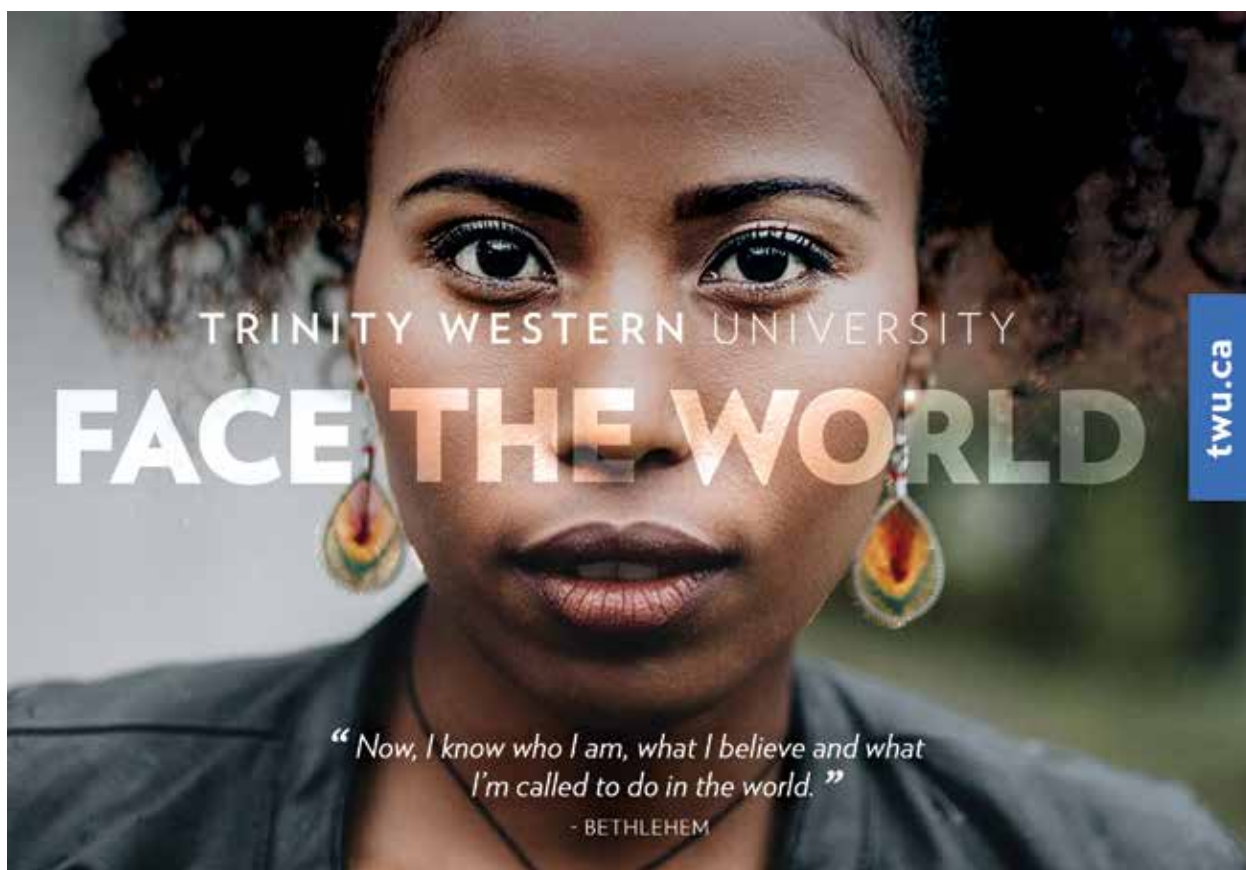
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- BETHLEHEM



It's not too late to save the night sky, but governments need to get serious about protecting it

BY **AARON BOLEY**

Associate Professor, University of British Columbia

SAMANTHA LAWLER

Assistant Professor, Astronomy, University of Regina

ILLUSTRATION BY **MARGIE AND THE MOON**

In early 2021, just after the Perseverance Rover landed on Mars, a purported image of the Martian night sky went viral. In that image, above the sleek metal of a Mars rover, the clearly defined Milky Way cuts from horizon to horizon, crossing a sky filled with so many stars that there is no darkness.

Millions of people were excited to see the unblemished night sky from another planet, with no light pollution from cities, no flashing aircraft, and no significant satellite presence.

The photo is not real; rather, it is a clever juxtaposition of NASA images and long-exposure astrophotography. So why did it go viral?

THE THREATENED NIGHT SKY

Urban light pollution has vastly changed our relationship with the night sky: 80 per cent of North Americans cannot see the Milky Way from where they live today. Electricity is so cheap and plentiful that we use it to shine lights into the sky for no reason other than laziness and poor planning.

The lack of darkness that many people now experience due to urban light pollution has been linked to many physical and mental health issues, both in humans and wildlife.

But we are now faced with a new source of light pollution: systems of tens of thousands of communications satellites. The construction of these so-called megaconstellations is already changing the night sky.

Indeed, observations by professional astronomers have shown that many of the current Starlink megaconstellation satellites are visible to the naked eye when sunlit.

Megaconstellations have the potential to significantly benefit society by increasing connectivity of isolated communities, a significant challenge in many parts of Canada. At the same time, the negative effects of megaconstellations must be understood by decision makers and properly regulated.

While urban residents might not notice this change, many people around the world will – especially those from cultures that have strong ties to stargazing and

traditional knowledge of the sky.

Canada has an obligation to consult with First Nations so that each may independently make a decision before allowing development of a resource that Indigenous Canadians have traditionally had access to for cultural practices.

THE DAMAGE TO SCIENCE

Astronomy organizations worldwide are concerned about the damage to science that will be caused by megaconstellations and other forms of light and radio pollution, and have responded through efforts such as the “Dark and Quiet Skies Report” and the “SATCON1 Report.”

Astronomers will require more telescope time to carry out the same taxpayer-funded science goals, and will need to spend time and money studying the brightness of these satellites and developing new software for mitigation efforts.

Radio astronomers expect to lose even more of the radio spectrum to megaconstellation communication noise, requiring additional investments in research and development.

At the request of the Canadian Astronomical Society, we wrote a report that contains a list of recommendations for what Canada can do to address the many negative impacts of megaconstellations at the national and international levels.

A SATELLITE-FILLED SKY

We ran a simulation with 65,000 satellites on their proposed orbits (this includes Starlink, OneWeb, Kuiper and StarNet/GW). We found that there will be more than 1,500 sunlit satellites at any given moment all night, every night in the summertime from Canada. Not all of these will be visible, as their brightness depends on the shape, reflective properties, and orbit of each satellite. But there are currently no regulations that limit their brightness.

There are currently about 20,000 tracked objects in orbit, including active satellites, defunct satellites,

rocket bodies, and pieces of space junk. There are 10 to 100 times more pieces of untracked space junk that are small but still dangerous: tiny bits of debris from rocket launches, satellite deployment, fragmentations (explosions), and even tools dropped by astronauts.

These small objects seem innocuous, but in Low Earth Orbit (LEO), they travel at speeds over seven kilometres per second, many times faster than a bullet, on randomly crossing orbits.

Companies are making substantial progress toward placing at least 65,000 satellites into LEO. Current leader SpaceX has over 1,600 Starlink satellites already in orbit, in a region inhabited by a troubling density of untracked debris.

When two satellites collide (as happened for the first time in 2009), they produce a spray of fast-moving debris. One destroyed satellite makes hundreds to thousands of pieces of trackable space junk, each of which could destroy other satellites, producing still more space junk. Any major fragmentation event will place limitations on space use, endanger crewed space habitation of LEO, and could cause widespread disruptions to services that we rely on every day.

SPACE JUNK RE-ENTRIES

As highlighted by the recent uncontrolled re-entries of the Long March 5B rocket booster over the Indian Ocean in May 2021 and the SpaceX Falcon 9 rocket stage over the Pacific Northwest in March 2021, re-entries are not without risks. A portion of the March 2021 Falcon 9 rocket even survived to impact with the ground in a farmer’s field in Washington State.

The current rules date to the Space Race era. There is a framework for liability, but the only time this was tested was when a USSR satellite spread nuclear waste across the Northwest Territories in 1978.

There are also environmental impacts, both from rocket

launches and disposal of satellites. SpaceX plans for 42,000 Starlink satellites, which will be replaced every five years. This means on average six tonnes of satellites will be destroyed every day. That material will be deposited in the upper atmosphere upon re-entry. While this is less than the 54 tonnes of meteoroids that hit Earth’s atmosphere every day, the composition is very different: Starlink satellites are mainly aluminum by weight; meteoroids are one per cent.

We do not know what could happen when several tonnes of aluminum are deposited in the upper atmosphere every single day. SpaceX is going to run this experiment without any environmental oversight.

Because of the orientation of the proposed satellite orbits, much of Canada’s population will sit under some of the highest densities of satellites, so we can expect to see a disproportionate share of de-orbiting space junk.

REGULATION OF SATELLITES IS KEY

We need to recognize that LEO is intimately connected to our atmosphere, oceans, and land. We need regulation of satellites now, before there is irreparable damage to our sky. We hope the Government of Canada will act on these recommendations with an urgency that matches the frenetic speed of space development.

While several megaconstellation companies are already in dialogue with astronomers, the improvements they make to their satellites for the benefit of astronomy are entirely voluntary. We shouldn’t have to make a choice between the night sky and global internet. With proper regulation of satellites in LEO, we can have both.

This article was originally published in *The Conversation*: <https://theconversation.com/its-not-too-late-to-save-the-night-sky-but-governments-need-to-get-serious-about-protecting-it-158394>

THE CONVERSATION

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



The pandemic has given us the opportunity to rethink how we teach and learn.

UBC President and Vice-Chancellor
Santa J. Ono

This issue of TREK looks at the future of work. And indeed, changes caused by the gig economy, remote work, outsourcing, automation, and other factors are having a profound impact on how people earn a living.

But it's not only the future of work that's in flux. Higher education is also in a period of heightened uncertainty, due in large part to the pandemic and the need to abruptly shift from in-person to online learning and teaching.

The changes to our teaching and learning activities brought about by COVID have been immense. As an institution, we have been through

multiple cycles of having to rethink and redesign how we support the continuity of learning experiences for our students. The last 18 months have required remarkable and sustained individual and collective efforts, commitment, and resilience on the part of faculty, staff, and students. More recently, the academic community has turned its attention to how things will be different beyond COVID.

In April this year, while there were still many questions about the return to campus, we engaged a group of nearly 100 faculty, staff, and students in a conversation about what post-COVID learning and teaching could and should look like. What have we learned? What has worked (perhaps even better than we thought possible in pre-COVID times)? What has not? And what might work if we enact it under different conditions or with adjustments?

The move to online classes did bring increased flexibility, but how much of this flexibility do students want to retain in their learning in a "new normal"? Does this align with, or is it at odds with, the wishes of faculty and the needs of programs? What are the implications for faculty and student workloads? And what bearing will all of this have on our spaces (both physical and digital), our academic processes (for example, scheduling and degree requirements), and support staff?

The conversation is still ongoing, but some themes are emerging:

- A continued commitment to flexibility and compassion
- A genuine appetite for rethinking, redesigning, and enhancing the post-COVID learning and teaching future
- A hybrid future, blending both online and in-person experiences
- A deeper understanding of barriers to engagement
- The use of pedagogical goals to inform the adoption of technology tools
- New ways to create community and support students

The project will wrap up in December 2021 with a phase-two project report that highlights priority recommendations for implementation. The COVID-19 pandemic has given us the opportunity to rethink how we teach and how we learn. We will not let this opportunity go to waste.



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Want a successful career? Commit to learning every day.

If you read reports on the skills employers consider most desirable, you won't fail to notice that critical thinking and (complex) problem solving are almost always mentioned. These two specific sets of skills have appeared in reports for decades, and I do not believe they will go anywhere anytime soon.

In fact, over the past decade a much bigger emphasis has been placed on “soft” skills – among them emotional intelligence (EQ), communication, team work, and influencing. The truth is, there is absolutely nothing soft about these skills; they are hard to master and in demand. In a LinkedIn survey of 5,000 human resource professionals and hiring managers, 80 per cent said soft skills are growing in importance to business success, while 89 per cent highlighted a lack of soft skills among the bad hires at their organization.

Another must-have skill for the 21st century is digital literacy, which the American Library Association defines as “the ability to use information and communication technologies to find, evaluate, create, and communicate information, requiring both cognitive and technical skills.” Digital literacy is a prime example of essential knowledge that requires continuous learning and upskilling. It's hardly surprising, then, that lifelong learning is receiving more attention in reports on the future of work, and will continue to for the foreseeable future.

For long-term career success in the 21st century, then, I recommend focusing your learning efforts on the following core areas, which are highly interconnected.

PRACTICE YOUR CRITICAL THINKING AND PROBLEM SOLVING SKILLS

Although definitions of critical thinking vary, many of them operate on the same basic concept: careful thinking directed towards a goal.

According to the *Cambridge Dictionary*, critical thinking is “the process of thinking carefully about a subject or idea, without allowing feelings or opinions to affect you.” That's easier said than done, given that we are all human beings who experience feelings and form opinions on a daily basis. (You can probably already sense that critical thinking is closely connected to emotional intelligence.)

Just to get you started, here are a few key basic questions to ask when approaching any problem: What do you already know? How do you know it? What are you trying to prove, disprove, demonstrate, critique (or otherwise)? And what are you overlooking? Few things in life are black and white, but practicing your critical thinking skills will help you make sound decisions in an ever more complicated world.

RECOMMENDED READING:
Thinking, Fast and Slow
by Daniel Kahneman

DEVELOP YOUR SOFT SKILLS, ESPECIALLY YOUR EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE

Many of us have probably experienced a colleague “losing it” or a manager yelling at someone in

Few things in life are black and white, but practicing your critical thinking skills will help you make sound decisions in an ever more complicated world.

anger. Whatever someone's rank, this behaviour is not a recipe for career success in the 21st century. Self-awareness, self-regulation, flexibility, and adaptability are all traits associated with a high EQ, and they have positive bearing on the way we communicate with others and work in teams.

I should note that academics are beginning to throw light on more negative applications of EQ including the manipulation of others on an individual or larger scale. Emerging research led by University of Cambridge professor Jochen Menges, for example, revealed that when a leader gave an inspiring and emotionally moving speech, the audience was less likely to scrutinize the message and remembered less of the content.

However, in practical terms emotional intelligence means being aware that emotions can drive our behaviour and impact people (positively and negatively), and learning how to manage them – both our own and those of others – especially when we are under pressure. I think this is a particularly important aspect of career success.

RECOMMENDED READING:
Give and Take by Adam Grant

BE A LIFELONG LEARNER (UPSKILL AND RESKILL)

Let's start with a fun fact. According to an article I read on the website Seed Scientific, the amount of data in the world at the dawn of 2020 was estimated to be 44 zettabytes. I did not know what a zettabyte was, but I learned. One zettabyte is equal to a trillion gigabytes. In other words, one zettabyte has 21 zeros. That is a lot of information.

Information is "attacking" us every single day, and we need to be good at critical thinking to figure out what is relevant and what is not. Learning also requires a growth mindset.

A growth mindset is the belief that your intelligence and talents can be developed over time. (The opposite of a growth mindset is a fixed one, when you believe that if you're not good at something, you'll probably never be good at it.)

We need to take responsibility for developing ourselves instead of waiting for our employer to do it for us. There are many free courses out there and lots of affordable options to improve our skills, such as LinkedIn Learning, Coursera, or Udemy. And as director for the Hari B. Varshney Business Career Centre at UBC Sauder, I'd be remiss not to point out the availability of Sauder's Executive or Continuing Business Studies.

Committing time to reading will also serve you well. The week has 168 hours for all of us, and some of the busiest and most successful people in the world ensure that some of those hours are devoted to reading. Former US President Barack Obama reputedly read for one hour each day while in office. Warren Buffett estimates he spends 80 per cent of his time reading and thinking. And Bill Gates says he reads a book a week and sets aside two weeks each year for reading vacations.

In the words of Albert Einstein, "intellectual growth should commence at birth and cease only at death."

I hope you enjoy the journey.

RECOMMENDED READING:
Mindset by Carol S. Dweck

Martina Valkovicova (MBA'11) is assistant dean and director for the Hari B. Varshney Business Career Centre at UBC Sauder.



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alumni UBC



Stop Fidgeting!

Researchers explore the psychology behind a surprisingly common aversion to other people's fidgeting.

THE RESEARCH:

Misokinesia (or the "hatred of movements") is a strong negative emotional response to the sight of someone else's small and repetitive movements. Psychologists wanted to know how widespread it is, and what is happening in the brains of people who experience it.

THE BOTTOM LINE:

They found that approximately one-third of the population suffer from misokinesia and hypothesize that, because people fidget when they're anxious or nervous, individuals who suffer from misokinesia and see someone fidgeting may mirror it neurologically and feel anxious or nervous as well.

Led by UBC psychology PhD student Sumeet Jaswal and UBC psychology professor Dr. Todd Handy, the study is the first of its kind on the condition. It consisted of three parts involving a total of 4,100 participants. Those of them who self-reported having sensitivities to seeing people fidget were assessed for the emotional and social impacts of the phenomenon.

The researchers found that one third of the participants are negatively impacted

emotionally when they see others fidget, experiencing reactions such as anger, anxiety, or frustration, as well as reduced enjoyment in social situations, as well as work and learning environments. Some even pursue fewer social activities because of the condition. They also found these impacts increase with age, and older adults reported a broader range of challenges.

The researchers are looking into whether "mirror neurons" are at play.

"These neurons activate when we move but they also activate when we see others move. That's where the term 'mirror' comes from, because we mirror the movements of others in our brain," explains Jaswal. "These neurons help us understand other people and the intention behind their movements. They are linked to empathy. For example, when you see someone get hurt, you may wince as well, as their pain is mirrored in your own brain, and that causes you to experience their emotions and empathize with them."

Since anxiety and nervousness can be a reason for fidgeting, individuals who suffer from misokinesia and witness fidgeting may mirror

it and feel similar emotions. The researchers hope to explore this possibility in future research, as well as whether there's a genetic component.

They have created a website for those who are interested in learning more about the phenomenon: misokinesia.ca

ANIMAL-EATING PLANT

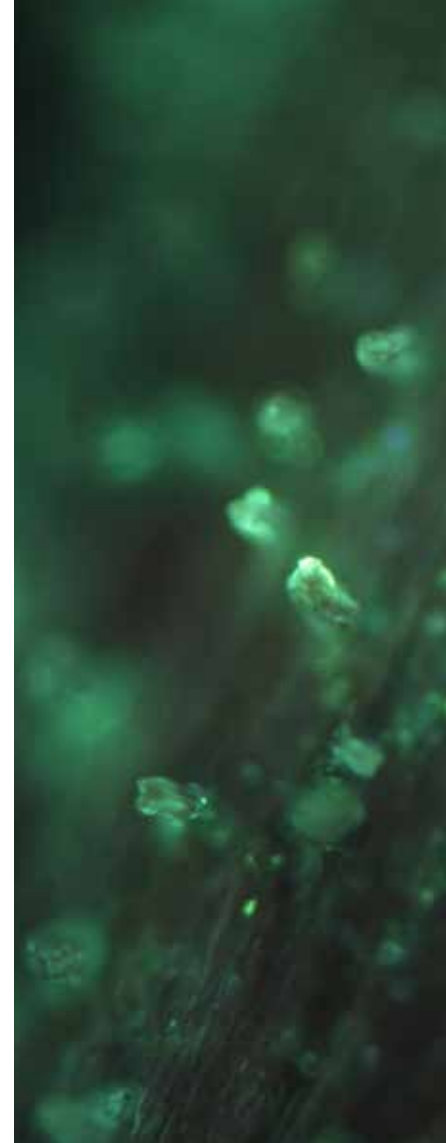
THE RESEARCH:

Botanists wanted to ascertain if the plant *Triantha occidentalis*, which grows in nutrient-poor, boggy but bright areas on the West Coast of North America, is a carnivorous species.

THE BOTTOM LINE:

They confirmed that *Triantha* feeds on small insects, thus identifying the first new carnivorous plant in 20 years.

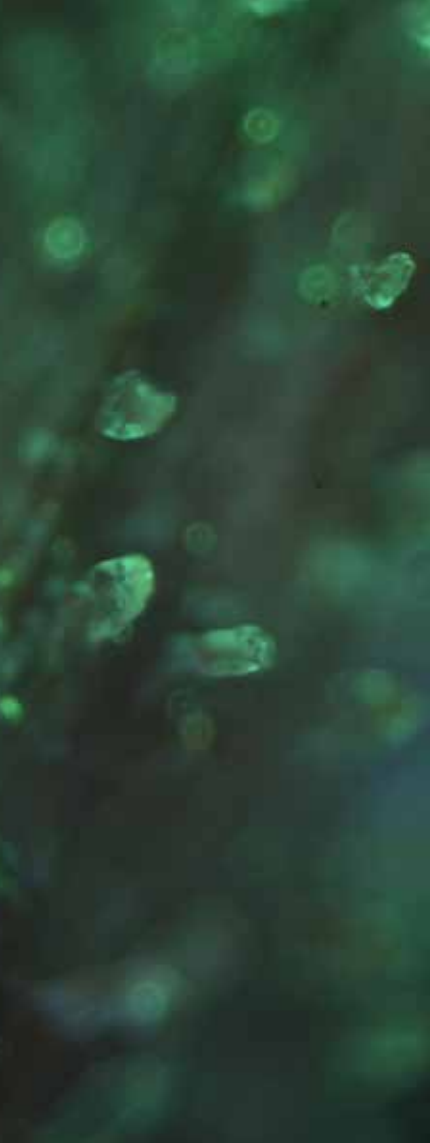
Researchers from UBC and University of Wisconsin-Madison investigated specimens of *Triantha* growing



on Cypress Mountain in North Vancouver. A species of false asphodel, it has a delicate stalk and pretty white flowers, and is notable for the unusual way it traps prey with sticky hairs on its flowering stem.

"What's particularly unique about this carnivorous plant is that it traps insects near its insect-pollinated flowers," said lead author Dr. Qianshi Lin, a PhD student with UBC Botany at the time of the study. "On the surface, this seems like a conflict between carnivory and pollination because you don't want to kill the insects that are helping you reproduce."

But the researchers believe that the plant balances both requirements by having



▶ Only sticky enough to trap small insects, the glandular hairs of *Triantha occidentalis* are harmless to larger pollinators such as bees and butterflies. Photo: Qianshi Lin

glandular hairs that are only sticky enough to trap small insects, with larger and stronger pollinators such as bees and butterflies escaping capture.

The research builds on previous work in Dr. Graham's lab, which found that *Triantha* lacked a particular gene that is often missing in other carnivorous plants. To ascertain if the plant feeds on insects, Lin attached fruit flies labelled with nitrogen-15 isotopes to its flowering stem and traced any changes in its nitrogen uptake. He then compared the results with those from other species from the same area, including a recognized carnivorous plant (a sundew) and several non-carnivorous plants as controls.

Isotopic analysis showed significant uptake of nitrogen by *Triantha*, which obtained more than half its nitrogen from prey – comparable to sundews in the same habitat. The study also found that the sticky hairs on the *Triantha* flower stalk produce phosphatase, a digestive enzyme used by many carnivorous plants to obtain phosphorous from prey.

CLEANER AIRCRAFT FUEL

THE RESEARCH:

A team of UBC Okanagan researchers is combining liquid fuels and nanomaterials to develop recipes for clean-burning, power-boosting aircraft fuel.

THE BOTTOM LINE:

They've found that the addition of graphene oxide nanomaterials into ethanol improved the burn rate by about eight per cent, which they say can help reduce the carbon footprint of aircraft and make them more powerful.

The addition of nanomaterials to liquid fuels alters the heat transfer and the fuel's evaporation rate, impacting the overall burning rate.

Getting just the right mixture of nanomaterials and liquid fuel is key to improving combustion, and the recipe for microscopic graphene oxide inside ethanol was developed by study co-author Ahmad Ghaffarkhah.

To investigate the combustion characteristics of the mixture, the researchers used ultrafast and intensified cameras and microscopy analysis to measure the ignition delay, burn rate and speed by which the graphene particles and fuel separate into smaller particles. They found that the addition of the nanomaterials increased burn rate by eight per cent.

"Working with our industry partner, ZEN Graphene Solutions, we are assessing how the burn rate of this mixture can potentially improve its combustion properties," explains lead author and doctoral student Sepehr Mosadegh.

"We have published the results for doped ethanol, and we have promising results for other liquid fuels such as jet A and diesel."

The project is a collaboration between the School of Engineering's Combustion for Propulsion and Power Laboratory and its Nanomaterials and Polymer Nanocomposites Laboratory.

▲ A droplet of fuel mixed with nanomaterials is ignited during an experiment in UBCO's Combustion for Propulsion and Power Lab. Photo: Sam Charles



Things to Do



UBC READS

***Finding the Mother Tree:
Discovering the Wisdom of the Forest***
By Suzanne Simard

Forestry professor Suzanne Simard invites her readers into her deeply personal journey as a forest ecologist researching the connectivity between trees. She brings to light some of the most topical issues of our time affecting the planet's forests. The book received glowing reviews and was a *New York Times* best-seller.

***The Ocean's Whistleblower:
The Remarkable Life and Work
of Daniel Pauly***

By David Grémillet

Daniel Pauly is a world-renowned marine biologist at UBC's Institute for the Oceans and Fisheries. The book covers his fascinating life story and ground-breaking scientific discoveries, as the whistleblower who alerted the public about the devastation caused to marine ecosystems by the global fishing industry.



UBC TALKS

**The Salish Sea in a warming world:
What might the future hold?**

November 30, 2021, noon-1:00 PM,
Webcast

The summer of 2021 brought unprecedented temperatures to BC, indicative of a warming trend that is undeniable. The combination of shoreline temperatures above 50°C and low tides led to a massive die-off amongst seashore animals along the Salish Sea coastline. As summers become warmer, and climate change ever-present, shocking events like this may become a regular occurrence. Join fellow alumni for a virtual discussion with leading UBC experts as they take an in-depth look at the impact of this summer's heat dome, what we might expect for the health of the Salish Sea in future years, and how we can all support a better future.

 **LISTEN AT**
alumni.ubc.ca/events



UBC CONNECTS

**A conversation with Fran Lebowitz
and Eleanor Wachtel**
February 18, 2022, 6:30-8:00 PM,
Chan Centre and online

In a cultural landscape filled with endless pundits and talking heads, Fran Lebowitz stands out as one of our most insightful social commentators. Her essays and interviews offer her acerbic views on current events and the media, and *The New York Times Book Review* calls her an "important humorist in the classic tradition."

Eleanor Wachtel has earned a reputation as one of the world's best literary interviewers during her more than 30 years as host of Writers & Company on CBC Radio. Five books of her interviews have been published, including *Random Illuminations*, a collection of reflections, correspondence and conversations with Carol Shields, which won the Independent Publisher Book Award.

 **FOR DETAILS, VISIT**
events.ubc.ca/fran-lebowitz



"Words" by Shamsia Hassani. Image © UBC Museum of Anthropology. Photo: Shamsia Hassani.

Explore an exhibit

CONTEMPORARY GRAFFITI ART FROM AFGHANISTAN

Museum of Anthropology, ongoing

Shamsia Hassani is regarded as the first female graffiti artist from Afghanistan, and three pieces of her work are on permanent display in MOA's Multiversity Galleries. They were originally part of the exhibit *Traces of Words: Art and Calligraphy* from Asia, which showcased the varied forms of expression associated with writing throughout Asia. The image above, *Words* (2012), was originally painted on a building in Kabul.

DRIFT: ART AND DARK MATTER

Now until December 5, Belkin Art Gallery

Invisible matter is having a gravitational effect on everything. Without this "dark" matter, galaxies would fly apart. For this exhibition, four artists of national and international stature were invited to make new work while engaging with physicists, chemists, and engineers contributing to the search for dark matter. The project reflects on forms and energies that connect physics to art, labour, landscapes, cultures, and histories.

DID YOU MISS THIS?

National Forum on Anti-Asian Racism

UBC's National Forum on Anti-Asian Racism took place in June with 126 panelists and 2,100 attendees. The forum addressed the ongoing crisis of escalating anti-Asian racism in Canada. All discussions were recorded and are available online, along with a final report.

AVAILABLE ONLINE:
events.ubc.ca/national-forum-on-anti-asian-racism



Monthly contests on the alumni UBC App!

DECEMBER

Three \$500 MasterCard gift cards courtesy of alumni UBC's Pillar Partners

JANUARY

Two tickets to see the Vancouver Canucks in action at a 2022 home game

FEBRUARY

One month of healthy and delicious chef-designed meals from Fresh Prep

MARCH

Spring cleaning for your vehicle with a service appointment courtesy of Dilawri Automotive Group

APRIL

A relaxing one-night stay at the Swarovski crystal-infused Sparkling Hill Resort in Vernon, BC

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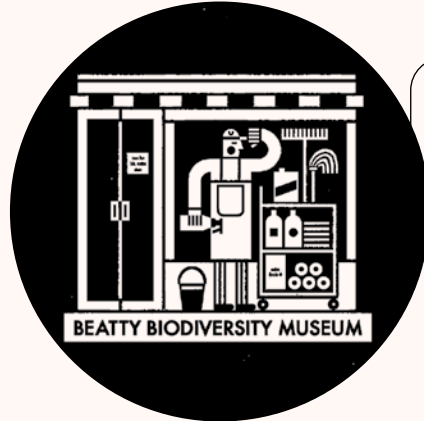


THE SCOOP

Primates, Playwrights, and Pantaloons

1. UBC THUNDERBIRDS ALUMNI WON TWO MEDALS IN WHICH SPORT AT THE TOKYO OLYMPICS?

- a) Rugby
- b) Swimming
- c) Rowing
- d) Gymnastics



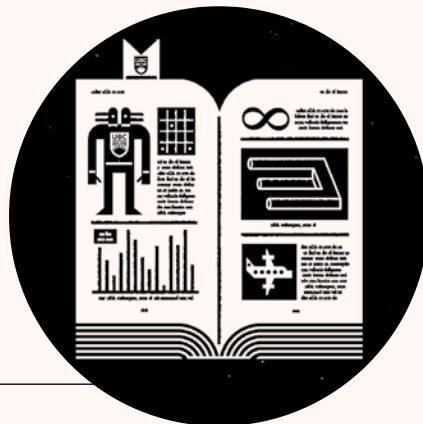
2. WHICH ARTIFACT IS NOT LOCATED IN THE MUSEUM OF ANTHROPOLOGY?

- a) Neanderthal stone tools
- b) A 1922 letter from the Dalai Lama
- c) A mirror dating to the Han dynasty
- d) Nigerian chess pieces



3. WHICH STRANGE BOOK CAN BE FOUND IN THE RARE BOOKS AND SPECIAL COLLECTIONS SECTION OF THE UBC LIBRARY?

- a) Shakespeare's collected works annotated by Milton
- b) A rare translation of the Bible in which Adam and Eve's clothes are described as "breeches"
- c) A collection of Jean-Jacques Rousseau's writings scribbled with Voltaire's angry notes
- d) A rare version of the Bible in which the sixth commandment mistakenly reads "thou shalt commit adultery"



4. THE UBC LIBRARY HOUSES A COLLECTION FROM WHICH FAMOUS VANCOUVER LOCATION?

- a) Vinyls from Red Cat Records
- b) Movies from Videomatica
- c) Illustrated books from McLeod's Books
- d) Film from the Ridge Theatre

5. A SKELETON OF WHICH ANIMAL IN THE BEATY BIODIVERSITY MUSEUM IS VISIBLE THROUGH THE WINDOWS FACING MAIN MALL?

- a) An orca
- b) A mammoth
- c) An albatross
- d) A blue whale

6. WHICH WRITER WAS NAMED A DISTINGUISHED WRITER-IN-RESIDENCE AT UBC IN 1980?

- a) Margaret Atwood
- b) Phillip Roth
- c) Tennessee Williams
- d) Pierre Berton

1: c) Rowing: Hillary Janssens won a bronze medal in women's pairs and Kristen Kit won gold with the women's Eight team.

2: a) Neanderthal stone tools: These are located in the Beaty Biodiversity Museum's fossil collection.

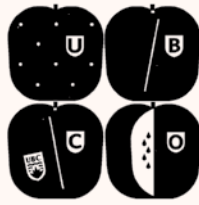
3: b) Breeches Bible: the verse reads, "then the eyes of them both were opened, and they knew that they were naked, and they sewed figge leaves together, and made themselves breeches."

4: b) Videomatica: Three years after the beloved Kitsilano movie-rental store closed in 2011, the UBC Library acquired its extensive collection of films, valued at \$1.7 million. The collection is open to all library users.

5: d) Blue whale: In the whole world, there are only 21 restored blue whale skeletons available for public viewing. UBC's blue whale, initially buried in Prince Edward Island before it was moved to campus, is visible to students as they walk to class on Main Mall.

6: c) Tennessee Williams: The great American playwright lived in Vancouver for some time and gave creative writing seminars to UBC students.

NEWS FLASH



VANCOUVER OKANAGAN

UBC LAUNCHES BEYOND TOMORROW SCHOLARS PROGRAM

In September, UBC launched its Beyond Tomorrow Scholars Program, which assists Black Canadian students who are transitioning to UBC from secondary school or another university. The program supports academically qualified students who would not be able to attend without significant financial assistance. It also offers leadership- and skill-building opportunities to help them thrive personally, academically, socially, financially, and vocationally. The program is part of UBC's partnership with the Black Opportunity Fund that began last spring. "This is a call to action," said President Santa Ono. "We invite others across the country to join us in supporting the next generation of Black leaders."

NEW ROLE CREATED TO SUPPORT STUDENT HEALTH

Noorjean Hassam (BA'92, MHA'05) has been appointed to the newly created role of chief student health officer. She will oversee health services and wellbeing programming for students on the Vancouver campus, as well as implementing health-related strategies in UBC's strategic plans, including the Indigenous Strategic Plan, the Wellbeing Strategic Framework and the Inclusion Action Plan. The appointment is part of an expansion of UBC's health and wellbeing services to help ease students' transition back to campus.

CANADA'S FIRST BACHELOR OF SUSTAINABILITY PROGRAM

Beginning in September 2022, UBC Okanagan will be home to Canada's first undergraduate degree dedicated exclusively to sustainability. The Bachelor of Sustainability is a four-year program that will inspire students to address complex environmental challenges by integrating knowledge from different academic subjects with hands-on and community-based learning. It offers concentrations in environmental analytics, environmental conservation and management, environmental humanities or green chemistry. The new credential will strengthen UBC Okanagan's leadership in sustainability and promote a greener future for British Columbia and the planet.

92%

percentage of student respondents to a UBC survey who declared themselves vaccinated against COVID-19 in September

10

number of UBC professors elected to the Royal Society of Canada this year

40

number of UBC Thunderbirds alumni and current student athletes who participated in the Tokyo Olympic Games



NAOMI KLEIN AND AVI LEWIS

Journalists and climate activists Naomi Klein and Avi Lewis have joined UBC's department of Geography. Klein, a *New York Times* best-selling author, is known across the globe for her work in climate justice and critiques of global capitalism. She became the inaugural Faculty of Arts Chair in Climate Justice in September and will take a leadership role building a Centre for Climate Justice to bring together activists, policy makers, elders, scholars, and frontline communities to combat the climate crisis. Documentary filmmaker Avi Lewis is a part-time faculty member teaching courses on social and political change, communication, and documentary filmmaking. Klein and Lewis say that there's no better time to create break-through solutions for a more sustainable and just society across British Columbia, Canada, and the world.



NGAI PINDELL

Professor Ngai Pindell has been appointed Dean of the Allard School of Law. Professor Pindell's research and teaching interests are in the areas of property law, wills and trusts, affordable housing, community development, and local government law. Pindell brings to the role a strong commitment to teaching, learning, and research excellence; equity, diversity, and inclusion; and academic leadership. Professor Pindell joins UBC from the University of Nevada, Las Vegas, where he was the International Gaming Institute Professor of Law at the William S. Boyd School of Law and held a number of academic administrative roles, most recently Vice Provost and Special Advisor to the Executive Vice President and Provost.

IN MEMORIAM

40s

ALEXANDER F. SHIRRAN, BA'47, MA'50

It is with deep sadness that we announce the peaceful passing of A. F. (Dick) Shirran on June 27, 2020, just shy of his 100th birthday.



Dick enlisted during WWII, serving with the RCAF as part of Bomber Command. After the war, Dick returned to Vancouver and enrolled at UBC, obtaining degrees in psychology.

As a registered psychologist, Dick spent the better part of his working life at UBC contributing significantly to the development of the university. He served in a variety of senior administrative positions, retiring as director of Student Services. He also lectured in psychology. His contributions to UBC were many, and after retirement he was recognized for his service by the UBC Senate.

Throughout his life Dick had many interests, from athletics to intellectual pursuits to the simple pleasures of working in his garden and playing bridge with a variety of groups. He was a voracious reader who reveled in spirited debate. Dick remained in good health and was quick-witted even in his final days, living independently and enjoying time with his loving family.

DR. HAROLD C. NORDAN, BA'48, BSCA'50, MSA'54

Dr. Harold Cecil Nordan passed away on January 10, 2021.



Harold was born in New Westminster, BC, on January 21, 1925, where he spent his early years. His family moved to Prince Rupert in 1936, where he gained a love for fishing and spent many hours on the water. Moving back to Vancouver in 1942, Harold completed high school at Duke of Connaught and began his

long academic career at UBC. He then completed his PhD at Oregon State University.

Returning to UBC, Harold taught biology and zoology from 1958 to 1985. He also contributed to the UBC community by serving as chairman of the Men's Athletic Committee and as the faculty representative to the UBC hockey team.

Harold was a long-time member of the masonic lodge, where he followed in his father's footsteps as Grand Master and in 2013 joined the Order of the Eastern Star.

Harold is predeceased by his wife Doreen and survived by his son Doug (Terry), daughter Jan, grandchildren Ashley (Rob), Ryan (Whitney), and Kerri (Ayo), and great-grandchildren Emma and Jaxon. Harold will be sorely missed by many he touched throughout his life.

DICK M. QUAN, BASC'49

We are saddened to announce the death of Dick Mon Quan, aged 94 years, on May 12, 2020. He was predeceased by his wife of 66 years, Ida; parents Harry Gow Quan and Der Shee; brothers Allen, Ben (BASC'47), and Joe (BCom'55), and sisters Jean and Mary (BA'45). He is survived by sons Gary and Brian and many nieces and nephews.



Upon graduating from UBC, Dick pursued a career in engineering and received his MSc in mechanical engineering from Caltech in 1952. Upon graduation, he joined his brother Ben at the National Research Council in Ottawa.

Dick and Ida were married in Vancouver in September 1952 and settled in Toronto, where he worked at Orenda Engines. When he retired in 1989, Dick held the position of director, Corporate Research & Development, for Hawker Siddeley Canada. He was a lifetime member of ASME and PEO.

Dick was an innovative craftsman who was loyal to family, friends, and work, who will be truly missed. He will be remembered with much love. In lieu of flowers, donations to the

UBC Quan Memorial Scholarship are gratefully appreciated.

PAUL W. RICHARDSON, BASC'49, MASC'50

Paul Richardson passed away on June 6, 2020, in Kitsilano. Paul was predeceased by his wife Erlyne and is survived by his children Christopher (Alison), Patrick (Sandra), George (Dionne), Sheila (Don); and grandchildren Kirk, Matthew, Sheila, Anna, and Paul.



Paul grew up by the PNE and attended Hastings Elementary, Templeton Junior High, and Britannia Secondary before earning his UBC degrees in geological engineering. During this time, he commuted daily by bus from the intersection at Hastings and Renfrew streets. Years later, when he returned to Vancouver, he bought a home at 10th Avenue and Camosun Street to spare his children the same routine.

After UBC, Paul attended MIT and in 1955 received a PhD in economic geology and geochemistry. From 1955 to 1966 Paul worked at Dome Mines in Toronto, dividing his time between remote parts of Canada and the company office on Bay Street in Toronto's financial district. In 1966 he moved back to Vancouver to manage the Newconex Canadian Exploration office before opening Richardson Geological Consulting in 1978.

Paul's patience and cheerful good humour in the face of the challenges of Parkinson's was unflinching.

CHRISTINE "SHEILA" (WEIR) NELLES, BA'49, LLB'50

Sheila passed away peacefully at the Rockcliffe Retirement Residence in Ottawa at the age of 93. She was predeceased by her parents Robert Morrison Weir and Katherine Janet (Menzies) Weir, and her husband Malcolm "Mike" Kenyon Nelles. She is survived by her children Stephen (Kathleen), Celia (Stan), and Kate (Paul); and her grandchildren Alexander, Duncan, Claire, and Phillip.

Sheila was born in Montreal and



**“I wouldn’t be here if not for the
Beyond Tomorrow Scholars Award!”**

“Thank you for the opportunity to make an impact! The fact that people are willing to support students is so amazing.”

Shauna Ndoping

First-year student, UBC Faculty of Science



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grew up in Vancouver. She became head girl of York House School, which began a lifelong commitment to helping her community and inspiring others. She had the innate ability to acquire and impart knowledge. She graduated from UBC with a degree in law. After being called to the bar, Sheila moved to Ottawa to begin her career as a civil servant, joining first Health Canada then External Affairs as a Foreign Service officer. She was a woman before her time. She enjoyed postings to Poland and then to the International Control Commission in Vietnam. Sheila and Mike raised a family in Ottawa, as well as in London, England; it was a time of adventure and travel.

She was a selfless volunteer and was awarded the Governor General's Caring Canadian Award in 1997 in recognition of her voluntary contributions. Her volunteer work included serving as a counsellor for the village of Rockcliffe Park, as well as volunteering at family service organizations and at her local library. She also particularly loved volunteering at the Rockcliffe Park Book Fair.

Once her children were older, Sheila re-entered the workforce, first as a partner in The Bookery, a children's bookstore in Ottawa, and then at Transport Canada, a job that saw her posted back to London as policy advisor to the Canadian delegation to the International Maritime Organization and as a counsellor to the High Commission. After her retirement, Sheila was able to visit more corners of the earth.

Sheila's sharp wit, generosity, gracious spirit, love of books, and a knack for doing things the "proper way" will always be remembered. She will be deeply missed by all who knew her.



**JOHN CIRIANI,
BA'52, BED'57**

John was born on May 12, 1930, in Fernie, BC, where he graduated from



high school. During the summers, he worked in the nearby coal mines at Coal Creek and fished the Elk River.

John graduated in 1952 from UBC with a BA (mathematics), and Walter Gage served as a great inspiration and well-loved professor to him. John taught mathematics in junior high school, then senior high school in Trail, BC.

Obtaining a Bachelor of Education from UBC and a Master of Arts in mathematics education from Washington State University, John accepted the position of chairman of the Math Department at Cariboo College (ultimately Thompson Rivers University). During his time in this institution, he was awarded a Teaching Merit Award and a Master Teacher Award. He also founded the Provincial High School Mathematics Contest, which now attracts students from across the province. He retired in 1995. In 2006, Thompson Rivers University bestowed John with an honorary Doctor of Letters degree.

He is predeceased by his wife of 62 years, Lorna, and his daughter Jean (BA'86), and is survived by sons Gerry and David (BSc'82, DMD'87).

**EDWARD J.
VALENTINE,
BCOM'53**

Edward John Cuthbert Valentine (Ted) died on August 9, 2020. Ted was born on February 24, 1930, in Calgary to Evelyn (LaMarche) and Cuthbert John Valentine (Bert). After attending Holy Angels and St. Mary's Boys School, he received a Bachelor of Commerce degree from UBC, where he was a member of the Delta Upsilon Fraternity.



After graduation, Ted returned to Calgary to join the family business, Halford & Valentine. Under his leadership, it became the largest Volvo dealership in Canada: Valentine Volvo.

Ted's passions included the Calgary Flames, the Notre Dame Fighting Irish, and the Calgary Stampeders. His one true love was his wife Shirley. Ted and Shirley married in 1958 and built a beautiful life for their

six children and 18 grandchildren. A devout Catholic, Ted attended daily mass. He played hockey for the first Calgary Buffaloes team, then football for St. Mary's High School and UBC.

A true gentleman, Ted will be remembered for his eloquence and grace, his profound kindness, and his resolute sense of humour, which remained intact until the very end.

**JOHN C. EDWARDS,
BCOM'56**

John Crispo Symons Edwards died on February 29, 2020, in the presence of his loving family.



John was born in Ottawa to Commodore John Crispo Inglis Edwards and Dorothy Elizabeth Edwards (Symons). He was raised on both coasts because of his father's naval career. John studied at Victoria College and UBC, where he was a member of the Zeta Psi fraternity. He obtained a Certified General Accountant designation and spent his working life primarily in the federal public service, retiring in 1999.

In addition to his long career of public and volunteer work, he was deeply dedicated to his family. He is survived by his wife of 49 years, Helen, and four children: John (Heather), Susie (Jessie), Edie (Dave), and Diana (Andrew). He was a loving grandpa to his three surviving grandchildren, Brooklynn, Aaron, and Dylan, and another – Henry – was born in July. In addition to his parents, he was predeceased by his sister Susan and grandson Caden, who both died in infancy.

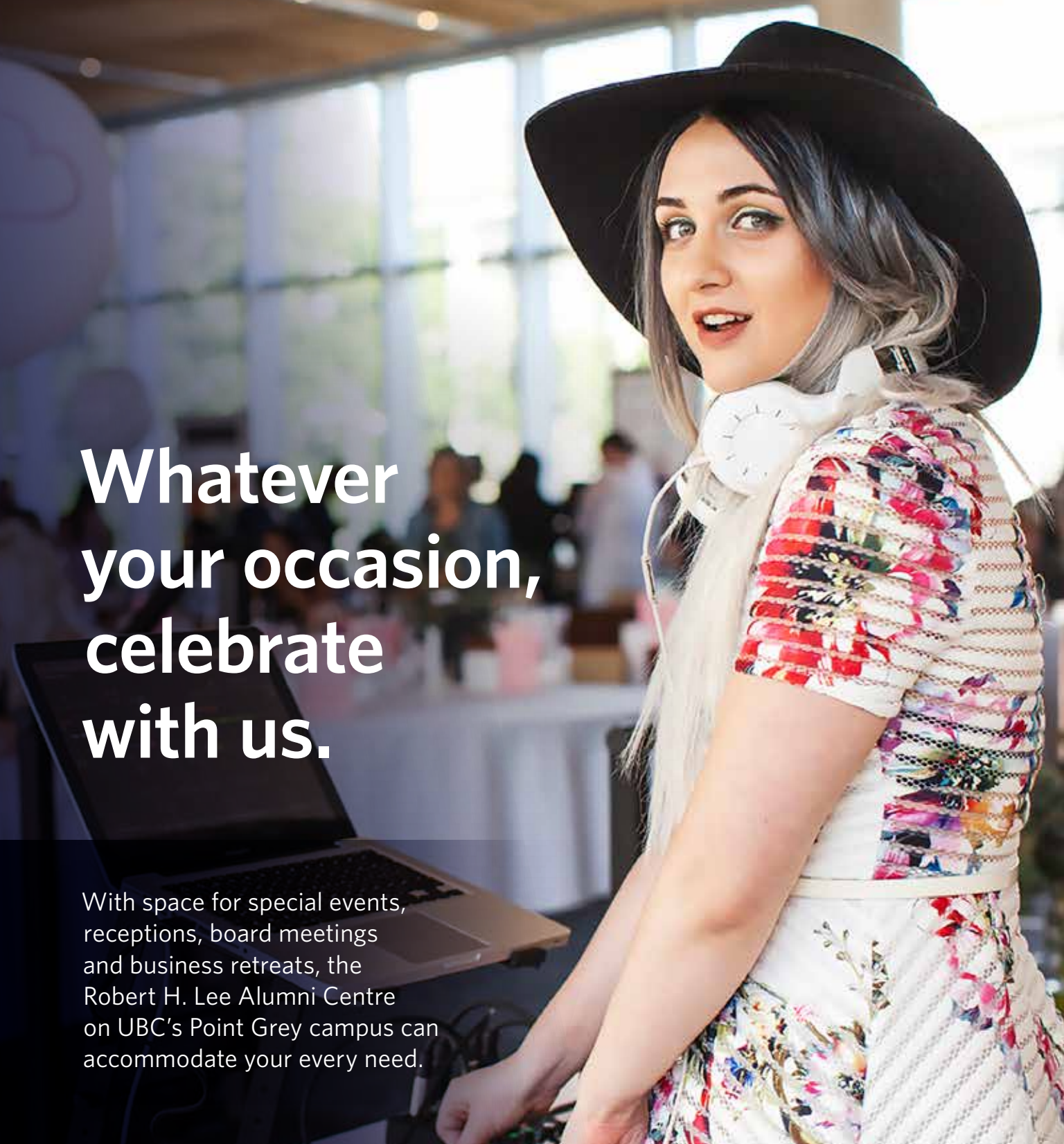
John enjoyed connecting with UBC and attending many alumni events.



**MARGARET E.
HARDY, BASC'60**

Margaret (Marg) E. Hardy, born Margaret Lewis in Edmonton on March 20, 1938, was the only daughter



A woman with long grey hair, wearing a large black hat and a colorful, patterned dress, is standing at a DJ booth. She is looking back over her shoulder towards the camera. In front of her is a laptop on a stand. The background is a bright, modern event space with large windows and other people blurred in the distance.

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Alumni receive a 20% discount.



Robert H. Lee
Alumni Centre

of Mary and William Lewis. She died at home with her husband present on August 29, 2020, two days after their 60th wedding anniversary. Marg grew up in Ottawa, graduated from Lisgar Collegiate and completed hospital-based training at Vancouver General Hospital in 1959 and UBC in 1960.

She and her husband attended the University of Washington on fellowships from the National Institutes of Health. She earned an MA in 1965 and PhD in 1970. Her thesis on role stress was among the first interactive mini-computer-based sociology research.

Marg then joined the Boston University School of Nursing. She had a novel approach to teaching: she would incorporate small group projects and presentations into her large classes. Marg then focused on stress, crisis, and adaptation theories to be used in clinical settings.

In 1973 she published *Theoretical Foundations of Nursing* and in 1974 a major theory article in *Nursing Research*. It propelled her to the forefront of theory in nursing. In 1978 she co-edited *Role Theory, Perspectives for Health Professionals* with Mary Conway, dean of the School of Nursing at the Medical College of Georgia. Their book had great international recognition. Marg was headhunted by several universities to become dean but always declined.

In 1977 she was elected a Fellow to the American Academy of Nursing (AAN), then to the AAN Governing Council. In 1986, Marg was recruited by the University of Rhode Island to establish a PhD doctoral program in nursing. There she chaired the doctoral program and taught both doctoral and master's students. She retired from the university in 1993.

Marg proudly remained Canadian.

LINDA NIAMATH (NEÉ SPLATT), BED'62

Linda Niamath passed away peacefully on September 16, 2020, in Vancouver at the age of 81. She is sadly missed by her husband of 55 years, Kent, daughters Wendy and Cheryl, and son-in-law Paul Lesack.

Linda was born and raised in Vancouver, later moving to Richmond,

where she lived with her family. She was an elementary school teacher for eight years and later taught piano from a studio in her home.

Linda was a loving mother and a kind and compassionate person with a wonderful sense of humour. She had many strong and enduring friendships and took great pleasure in connecting with others.

Linda was a highly regarded composer and Honorary Fellow of the Royal Conservatory of Music; several generations of children around the world have learned to play her wonderful and expressive pieces at their piano lessons. She is best known for her 11 albums of piano music for young pianists – her legacy for future generations.

HUBERT E. MORGAN, BA'63

Dr. Hubert Eric Morgan passed away on April 8, 2020, aged 79, following a stroke.

Born in Toronto, Hubert finished high school in Quesnel, BC. He began studies at UBC in Zoology, but then discovered "Chaucer and the boys" and switched to English. Following an MA and PhD from the University of Washington and a BLitt in English from Jesus College, Oxford, he joined the English Department at Dalhousie University, teaching there until he retired in 2004. He specialized in Old and Middle English, Beowulf, and Old Norse and Icelandic sagas.

Hubert was a wonderfully kind, gentle man. He did his own roofing, plumbing, wiring, car repairs, dry stone walling, carpentry, and more, and took pleasure in teaching these things to his grandchildren. He played the violin, painted watercolours, skied, and sailed the lake at his cottage. Sabbatical adventures in England, France, and Austria, and work with refugee families and new arrivals to Canada, gave Hubert and his wife Sylvia a network of friends all over the world.

Memorial donations may be made to the Canadian Cancer Society or to a charity of your choice.



ALAN C. MCLAUGHLIN, BSC'67

Born in 1945 in North Vancouver to Dr. Graydon and Penny McLaughlin, Alan died in 2019 and is survived by his wife Teresa (Sinnwell), sons Vihor and William, older brother Stuart, and twin sister Marney Ward.

Alan graduated from Delbrook Secondary School and received his BSc (Hons) in Physics from UBC. With an NRC Fellowship, he earned a PhD from the prestigious Johnson Research Foundation at the Department of Medicine, University of Pennsylvania, then took a post-doctoral fellowship from the Canadian Medical Research Council to Oxford University. After Oxford and some years at the Brookhaven National Laboratories on Long Island, Alan devoted the rest of his career to medical research at the National Institute of Health in Bethesda, Maryland, where he was director of the National Institute of Biomedical Imaging and Bioengineering, working with nuclear magnetic resonance imaging.

Alan lived a rich and full life, blessed with a happy childhood, a long and loving marriage, and two wonderful sons. Through his distinguished career and his kind and generous nature, he made this world a better place and will be deeply missed.

JEAN E. MAKEPEACE, BED'67

Born on May 5, 1945, Jean Eleanor Makepeace died on October 7, 2019.

Jean received her Bachelor of Education degree in 1967 and spent her entire professional career as a teacher/librarian in the Richmond School District, where she was well-respected and well-liked by colleagues and students alike. Jean was very active in the Richmond Teachers' Association and spent several years on the executive board. Jean was a tireless fighter for public education funding and teachers' rights.



She is survived and dearly missed by her husband, Fred Valle; her son, Darren Bayne (Maria Preovolos); her niece, Leslie Mason (David); her two grandsons, Leo and Andreas; and her two grandnephews, Zachary and Nicholas. Jean loved her family, good books, good friends, margaritas, travel, and long walks. A toddler would invariably bring a twinkle to her eye and a smile to her lips. She enriched all those whose lives she touched.



WILLIAM J. PIERCE, MED'71

On Thursday, April 30, 2020, William (Bill) Joseph Henry Pierce, loving husband of Donna and father of Matthew, passed away at the age of 78 at St. Joseph's Auxiliary Hospital.

William Joseph Henry Pierce (BA, MEd) was born on November 19, 1941, in Saint John, NB, to Joseph Henry and Mary Louise (Conway) Pierce,

both of New Brunswick. He served with the 8th Canadian Hussars and then received multiple degrees from the University of New Brunswick and UBC.



Bill married Donna Ruth MacLeod on July 17, 1967, and taught or worked in education for more than 30 years in Tanzania, Thailand, and Canada.

Bill will be missed by friends and family. He was a loving eldest brother to Robert Pierce, Marie Thorton, Margaret Price, and Gertrude Brown, and was predeceased by Harvey (Lenny) Pierce. Bill had many cousins, nieces, and nephews, and was also close to the extended family of wife Donna, of Montague, Prince Edward Island.

WALTER JANZEN, BASC'78, MASC'88

Walter Frank Janzen: An engineer extraordinaire, handyman, and athletic legend – with a side of

stubbornness. On July 5, 2020, God reclaimed one of his brightest. Walter faced his cancer battle with true grit.



Walter was a talented engineer. Solving problems was in his DNA. He obtained a BAsc in engineering and later a MAsc in structural engineering from UBC. Athletically, Walter excelled in track and field and had a passion for volleyball. He enjoyed life through travel, woodwork, science fiction, and classical music.

Walter had a strong work ethic and compassion for others. His spiritual connection with God allowed him to find peace, and for that we are forever grateful. Rest in peace our dearest husband, father, and friend. Donations can be made to Engineers Without Borders, MCC, or Union Gospel Mission.



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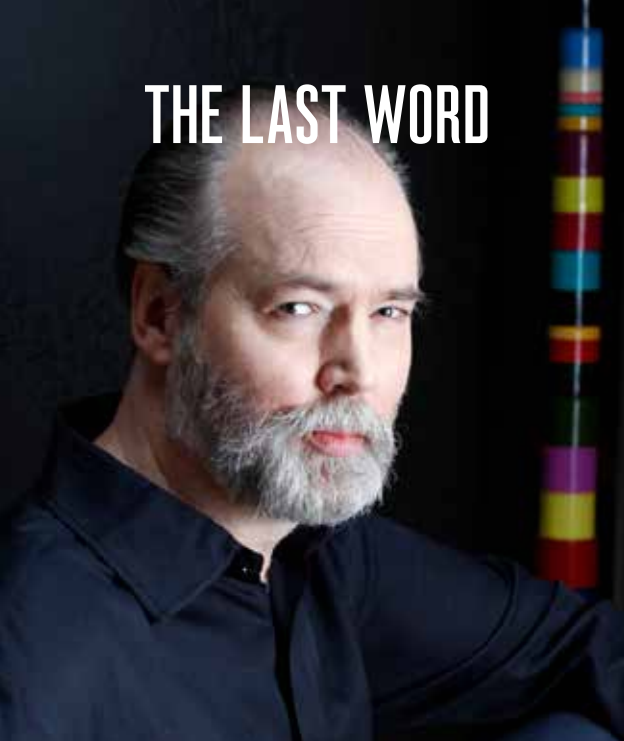
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THE LAST WORD



Douglas Coupland DLitt'10

“The ability to experience time, our free will, and a respect for living things is all we have in this world, and how we work with this knowledge is what defines us.”

WHO WAS YOUR CHILDHOOD HERO?

Andy Warhol.

DESCRIBE THE PLACE YOU MOST LIKE TO SPEND TIME.

Walking in Kyoto.

WHAT WAS THE LAST THING YOU READ?

Chuck Klosterman's *Raised in Captivity*.

WHAT OR WHO MAKES YOU LAUGH OUT LOUD?

Drag queens.

WHAT'S THE MOST IMPORTANT LESSON YOU EVER LEARNED?

The moment you stop meeting new people, it's all over.



LANDMARK LIT

Coined the term “Generation X” in his 1991 novel *Generation X: Tales for an Accelerated Culture*.



LATEST VISION

Photographic project to capture 1970s-90s West Vancouver, inspired by his 1998 novel *Girlfriend in a Coma*.



BACK PAGES

Donated 122 boxes of his archival photographs, texts, and artworks to the UBC Library in 2010.



MORE Q&AS WITH DOUGLAS COUPLAND AT trekmagazine.alumni.ubc.ca

WHAT'S YOUR IDEA OF THE PERFECT DAY?

In London with my UK art posse.

WHAT IS YOUR MOST PRIZED POSSESSION?

My Canadian passport.

WHAT WOULD BE THE TITLE OF YOUR BIOGRAPHY?

Well, That Was Interesting.

WHAT ITEM HAVE YOU OWNED FOR THE LONGEST TIME?

What an odd question. I think it would be handmade magazines I made back in kindergarten. They had everything: features, short bits, a table of contents... and they were as good as most zines from the 1990s.

IF YOU COULD INVENT SOMETHING, WHAT WOULD IT BE?

A Dr. Doolittle machine that allows us to speak with animals.

WHAT IS YOUR LATEST PURCHASE?

Two criminally expensive COVID tests (\$780 CAD in total) just to get in and out of Los Angeles for three days of business. Scam.

NAME THE SKILL OR TALENT YOU WOULD MOST LIKE TO HAVE.

Adobe Illustrator. Or a nice French accent; mine is awful.

WHICH THREE PIECES OF MUSIC WOULD YOU TAKE TO A DESERT ISLAND?

This is essentially asking me what music I would like played at my funeral: “The Lonely Bull,” Herb Alpert
“Aladdin Sane,” David Bowie
“Jerusalem,” Herb Alpert

WHICH FAMOUS PERSON (LIVING OR DEAD) DO YOU THINK (OR HAVE YOU BEEN TOLD) YOU MOST RESEMBLE?

Believe it or not, I think I most resemble my father (Dr. D.C.T Coupland, 1926-2016) who, from the outside had a ridiculously different life than mine, but what we both had/have in common is the shared belief that the ability to experience time, our free will, and a respect for living things is all we have in this world, and how we work with this knowledge is what defines us.

WHAT IS YOUR PET PEEVE?

People who are incompetent at their jobs who block my path. I have no patience with these people. None. Zero.

WHAT IS THE SECRET TO A GOOD LIFE?

Try and use all your brain across the course of a given day.

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