

mathNEWS

VOLUME 160 • ISSUE 2

JANUARY 30, 2026



“WHAT INGREDIENT WOULD YOU ADD TO THE EVERYTHING SOUP?”

What a week... the Monday snow day sure threw a wrench in our usual **prodNIGHT** plans. But as the great prophets (Chumbawamba) foretold in the sacred texts (“Tubthumping”), we got knocked down, but we got up again. You’re never gonna keep us down.

We are in the shittiest part of winter right now, so remember to dress warmly and drive safely if you absolutely have to drive. There was a car accident right outside my house the other day. If ever there was a time to be cozy and inside with a hot bowl of soup, this is it. If you’re looking for a recipe, look no further than the right side of this page, where you will see ingredients for a delicious Everything Soup. I would try it myself, but I can’t eat meat, so one of you is going to have to be the guinea pig. Aw rats I’m so jealous awww oh nooo oh shoot :(how unfortunate that I can’t eat that.

Other than that concoction, we’ve got a great issue lined up this time. There’s a lot of illustrations and cartoons, which I love. Since our word limit is a thousand words, should we also limit writers to one picture per article? Maybe one day a very authoritarian Editor dedicated to idioms will institute this policy. But for now, they’re safe.

We’ve also got some media reviews, including a book review and an opinion piece on the Oscars. These were cool to read, and quite unusual: I feel like we mostly get reviews for music and theatre. Looking forward to more of this! Special shoutout also to *Blue Period* by varicose — the editors all really loved it!

I’ve also been noticing more articles that I can only class as “life improvement”. Or maybe it’s just me being biased, since I’ve been trying to improve my life as well (hitting the gym, mostly). I always love these, because it’s nice to see a writer have a positive experience of some kind and then go “I want to share this with more people so more people can feel happy”. I hope they help some of you.

Stay safe ouy there! Hopefully the weather improves, and you (yes, you) can make it to next **prodNIGHT**.

barkED
Editor, **mathNEWS**

AURELIO	there is no escaping the soup
IS.ALL.ON	Broth
MOON DEBT	the wonders of the earth
MACINNES	vanilla extract
BEESKNEES	A whole chicken
ASPIRO	Sentience, but no eyes, ears, nor mouth; only the knowledge of its own existence.
SEASONEDSLACKER	Everything, obviously
APHF	Antimatter
USMAN!	toenail clippings 😊
JOCHEMIST	Jalapeños
NO PUN INDENTED	Welland, Ontario
FINGERSINSOCKETS	a spoon
DINGLE	magma cap
JUBBLE	I'll just dip my toes
PAPASMURF	Gargamel
VARICOSE	SSRIs
HAMI	Caffeine
ERALOGOS	love
LARS NOOTBAAR	A Stone to expand the cannon
SMALLMOUTHBASSHATER	a real nice bass
ABELIANKWYJIBO	The Everything Soup itself, to invoke Russell's paradox and blow up the universe
ABS(JESTER)	nothingburger helper
HYPERLYNX	mathNEWS covers
MOLASSES	>:)

ARTICLE OF THE ISSUE

This issue’s AOTI is macnisses’s *Has Your Counsellor Through Campus Wellness Suddenly Disappeared?*, which you should read on page 9 of this issue! We commend the independent journalism—macnisses, please pick up your prize in MC 3030.

barkED
Editor, **mathNEWS**

“here’s an [adjective] [adjective] [noun]”

NOAH NAZARETH, **mathNEWS** EDITOR FOR WINTER 2026
ALONG WITH OWEN GALLAGHER, SARA NAYAR, SASHA NOVIKOV,
AWAB QURESHI, TOM SI, AND RIVER STANLEY

mathASKS 160.2

FEATURING mathNEWS-CHAN

PAPAYABIRD: WHAT'S YOUR FAVORITE SODA?

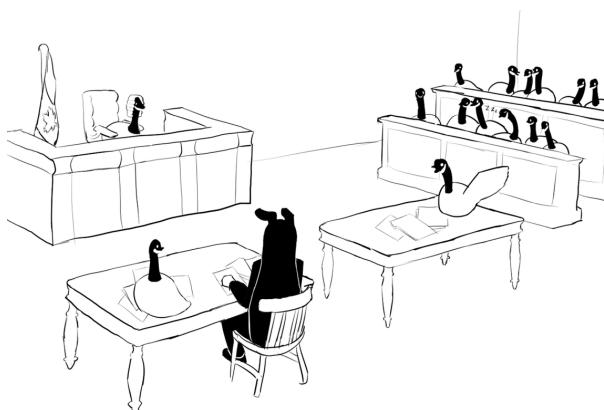


SMALLMOUTHBASSHATER: FAVOURITE FISH?



Orbitz!

USMAN!: COULD YOU PLEASE ADDRESS THE ALLEGATIONS?



You can't retry me! I'm protected by double jeopardy.

ヰ世界情緒: WHAT IS YOUR SUPERPOWER AKA PUBERTY SYNDROME?



My superpower is turning pizza into articles. Also, I absolutely hate Bunny Girl Senpai.

FINGERSINSOCKETS: EVER STUCK YOUR FINGERS IN SOCKETS BEFORE?



In your mom's sockets!

1000011: WHY DO THEY CALL IT AN OVEN WHEN YOU OF IN THE COLD FOOD OUT COLD HOT EAT THE FOOD?



It's obvious. When you put cold food into the oven, you can haphazardly shove it in, but once it heats up you take it out with a bit more caution. You can shove in the oven but you can't shove out.

JOCHEMIST: mathNEWS-CHAN, DO YOU HAVE A SENPAI? AND WHAT IS YOUR FAVOURITE mathNEWS ARTICLE?

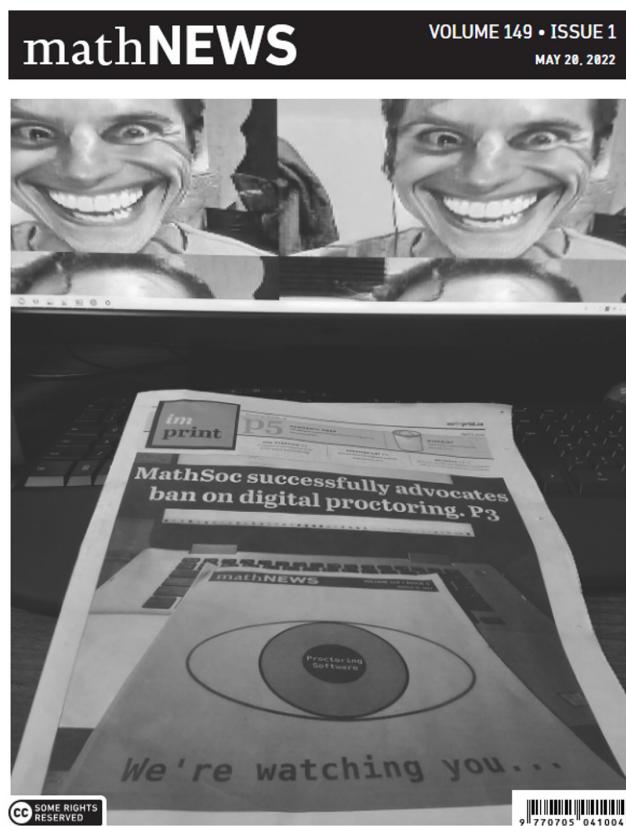
CRIMSON: WHAT'S YOUR OPINION ON 67?



Everyone sees the rabbit ears and immediately tries to clock me with a Bunny Girl Senpai reference. It's annoying! Mai Sakurajima, the inventor of rabbit girls, everyone! The inventor of long black hair and suits!

My favorite mathNEWS article is Episode 54968456854652 2222222234992385512194911485581119494199494924929 of mathNEWS Cartoons, in Volume 151 Issue 5.5.

IS.ALL.ON: WHAT IS YOUR FAVOURITE mathNEWS COVER?



67!

YALEVOYLIAN: FAVOURITE PLACE TO GET COFFEE ON CAMPUS?



I like the EC5 Tim Hortons. It feels like a little secret that nobody else knows. Also, I don't drink coffee.

Enjoying mathASKS?

**Thank Professor Furino.
It was his idea.**

A mathNEWS EDITOR WHO BELIEVES
IN CREDIT WHERE CREDIT IS DUE

ABS(JESTER): WHAT HAPPENED TO mathNEWS-SAN?



By the mechanics of Japanese honorifics, I AM **mathNEWS**-san. I could also be **mathNEWS**-sama or **mathNEWS**-senpai, etc. If you're asking about **mathNEWS**-kun, again, double jeopardy.

BEESNEES: WHAT'S YOUR FAVOURITE BUG?



MOLASSES: IN **mathNEWS** netWORK 3, YOU REPORTED ON THE PLIGHT OF A GROUP OF CHILDREN CAUGHT BY THE GLACIAL-MOVING ION. DID THEY ESCAPE? WHAT HAPPENED TO THEM? PLEASE I'VE BEEN THINKING ABOUT THIS FOR OVER A YEAR



THEY DIED!!!

WHY YOU AND EVERYONE YOU KNOW (INCLUDING YOUR GRANDMA) SHOULD WATCH HEATED RIVALRY

You may have been hearing about a hit show called Heated Rivalry. If not, where have you been? The two main actors literally just carried the Olympic Torch and NYC mayor Zohran Mamdani just told everyone to watch it. You may not know yet if you should join in and watch it, or you may have watched it and are unsure whether you should be recommending it. I am here to ease your concerns and inform you that you should tune in and be recommending it to every single person you know and meet.

You should watch it and then recommend it for the following reasons:

1. If you like hockey, there is definitely LOTS of that and it mainly focuses on hockey
2. If you don't like hockey, there is definitely NOT lots of that and there is barely any focus on hockey
3. There is gay representation, so if you don't watch it you hate gay people #stopgayhate
4. There is Canadian representation, so go and support Canada if you are Canadian or if you aren't go learn about Canadian culture
5. If you like guys, there is plenty of shirtless hot guys!! If you don't like guys you'll still like it (trust)
6. There is a deep emotional storyline (I promise this isn't a lie)
7. It has some humorous moments that will make you giggle (laugh?? chuckle???)
8. There are so many good edits on TikTok, if you watch the show you will be able to watch them and truly understand their greatness
9. It has good music. One example is the song *All The Things She Said* by t.A.T.u
10. You'll understand all of the Heated Rivalry references all of your friends are making and be able to make references yourself which will make you popular (trust)

I hope all of these reasons have convinced you to tune into heated rivalry and then share it with the world. If not then I hope you are okay with living a half life.

GO WATCH NOW

papasmurf



THE FAANG MONETIZATION EXPERIENCE

These opinions are mine alone and do not represent the ideas of any company, past, present or future.

Back in the fall term, I had finally managed to secure a “Cali co-op” in the form of a Meta internship. For context, I’m a grad student now, but I did my CS undergrad here. So after all those years of listening to my friends talk about how nice it was there, I was ready to take full advantage of all of the perks in Silicon Valley.

I unfortunately have to say, Canadian jobs simply cannot compete with those in the Valley. The weather is great; I spent many weekends with my sister hiking and biking around the area. Meta also covered food, lodging, transportation, as well as setting up intern events.

The crazy part is, Meta funds all this with mostly ad revenue!¹ I worked in the monetization org while I was at Meta, and it’s surprising to see how small tweaks in ad delivery can scale up to huge results.

Now, I research programming languages, not ad delivery (is that even a research topic?). I was actually hoping to get a job on the systems side, working on compilers or build systems. But I didn’t, so I ended up learning how programming in monetization differs from programming in school.

For one, you don’t want to spend too much time refactoring code or thinking about how best to write something. This isn’t because we’re trying to write bad code—it’s because it’s better to have one week of user data for your experiment than a clean codebase. Remember that monetization’s primary goal is generating revenue, which is very difficult to reason about ahead of time. As such, there’s no point in building out a beautiful feature with perfect documentation if the experiment turns out to be a bust. As someone more knowledgeable than me put it:

It is often (maybe always?) more important to build the right thing than to build the thing right.²

If you take too long to build out a feature and can’t ship it out before the holidays (or some other high value period), you could nullify a lot of the benefits of your feature. As an example, imagine if you ship a Super Bowl specific ad after this year’s Super Bowl.

Adding on to that point, you want to be cognizant of the amount of effort needed to build the feature for an experiment, as well as how likely it is to have a positive impact on revenue. There can be a lot of potential ideas on what would move revenue numbers, but if they require changing some fundamental parts of the app, then going after them is an incredibly risky play. The codebase is enormous, often with unclear dependencies between modules (again, it’s not because people are trying to write bad code!), so unless you’re really familiar with the code, other teams and/or AI prompting,

things that touch too many existing features can really blow up the engineering cost.

As an example, I was working on the “finishing touches” of migrating the rendering of a post from one framework to another. As it turns out, even if conceptually there’s only a few things to migrate, each one can require understanding hundreds of lines of code, drawing out a flow graph, combing through documentation and chasing down someone on another team that actually knows what’s going on. It was pretty insightful from a programming languages perspective, and a useful skill to develop; however, it’s not the best way to maximize your output.

So what does the coding pattern of someone on monetization look like? Create a feature flag for your experiment, then find the place in the codebase to start changing the existing behaviour. Build out the desired feature, making use of existing code. If the existing code kind of works, but also does extra stuff that you don’t want, make a copy of that function and edit it until it works.

Yeah, that might bloat the codebase and increase the risk of conditional bugs, but remember that “quality is fitness for use.”³ Messy code that generates revenue is, from a monetization standpoint, very fit for use. The organization can always organize a refactoring objective if the code bloat becomes too much.

Obviously, this type of job isn’t for everyone. Personally, I would really like to work in systems in the future. I might even say that research-based grad students could actually be at a disadvantage compared to undergrads, because they may spend too much time making things future-proof. It took me a few weeks to learn that’s not how things work in this org. That being said, there are many people who thrive in monetization. If you’re the type who likes coming up with your own ideas, building them up, and seeing how they do, monetization gives you that freedom to experiment. If you get a kick out of being responsible for a large chunk of a company’s revenue, monetization is one of the few places where you can see your efforts’ direct impact.

You might be looking to land a FAANG job in Cali; unfortunately, I don’t know much about that. I got my fall co-op because some recruiter reached out and invited me to interview. Another friend of mine only had one job application that made it far in Cali, and thankfully made it work. There’s a lot of luck and timing involved,⁴ where black swan events⁵ account for a lot of the average value. Of course you’ll want your resume to have “meat,” though even if it does, it can be a coin toss (I would guess it’s twice as hard as it used to be five years ago).

1. Meta reports \$165 billion in revenue in 2024 <https://investor.atmeta.com/investor-news/press-release-details/2025/Meta-Reports-Fourth-Quarter-and-Full-Year-2024-Results/>
2. <https://josvisser.substack.com/p/why-do-good-people-write-bad-software>
3. <https://josvisser.substack.com/p/quality-is-fitness-for-use>

4. "When early career folks ask me for advice, I'm genuinely stumped. "Be lucky" is probably top of my list. That's really not that helpful. I'm sorry."—Todd Underwood, former Head of Reliability at Anthropic https://www.linkedin.com/posts/toddunder_tldr-ive-left-anthropic-and-am-taking-activity-740377836225536000-eY9
5. *The Black Swan: The Impact of the Highly Improbable* (Nassim Nicholas Taleb, 2007)

DON'T KNOW WHAT TO COOK?

A REALISTIC GUIDE TO COOKING FOR YOURSELF IN UNI

One thing I hate about the internet is how cooking content creators like to call their recipes quick, lazy, or easy, and then pull out a fricking chopping board, or require marinating or handling meat or some bullshit. I like cooking a lot, but in uni I don't have time for all that, so here are some useful tips and a couple of recipes I do occasionally.

1. MOOCHING OFF YOUR PARENTS' COSTCO CARD.

If your parents have a Costco Card, you better start telling them how much you love them. When you're at home (after you tell your parents how much they mean to you), buy a rotisserie chicken and some cheese.

Shred the rotisserie chicken and freeze portion in ziploc bags. This is easy protein for soups, pastas, and stir fries without having to handle raw meat. The bones can be used to make broth and stored in containers. Portion out the cheese and also freeze (I recommend hard cheeses like gouda, havarti, or pepper jack). This is easy snacking material and generally has a lot of uses in cooking too. These are just a couple of things you can get at Costco that you can portion and freeze, and it'll be good to go after a few minutes of thawing!

EXTRA—A TIP FOR THAWING (scientifically proven btw): put your ziplocked, frozen food into a bowl/pot (preferably metal or smth). Make sure the faucet is running at a trickle and let it slowly fill up your bowl until overflowing. Let it run for 5–10 mins, depending on the size of your food. Warm water is your best friend. I fully thawed frozen shrimp within minutes with this method.

2. RICE COOKER BABYYY

You can cook literal meals in this baby. I'm Chinese so I have easy access, but ik my non-Chinese brothers and sisters (and in betweens) have this beauty too. So here's a recipe:

SALMON RICE BOWL:

Ingredients: Rice, Salmon (unthawed may work?), ANY vegetables (ex: Bok Choy, Yu Choy, Carrots, Drained Corn Kernels, etc.)

Seasoning: Soy sauce, Mirin, Sugar, Salt and Pepper.

Steps: Wash your vegetables and dump everything into the rice cooker and let it cook. You can sprinkle some furikake on top and drizzle on some kewpie mayo if you like. It tastes

better when you let the rice sit in the cooker for 10 extra mins after it beeps. My mom told me to do that.

Sometime next month I'll try making Hainanese chicken rice, curry, and bibimbap in the rice cooker. There's recipes for these but I wanna see how easy it is to make it so I'll get back to you about this later.

3. INSTANT NOODLES AREN'T YOUR ENEMY

Sure, instant noodles may have a lot of sodium and stuff, but it's better than eating nothing! I think some nutritionist online said something about "always adding to your meals," rather than taking away. Plus, there's a lot of reasons why people get instant noodles. It's cheap and quick to cook, so there's no shame. Here are things you can do to add!

- Ditch the seasoning packet and use the noodles for stir fry
- Replace water with chicken broth, add half the seasoning packet. Then add vegetables, sliced meat or an egg if you're feeling fancy
- Ditch the seasoning packet and make your own sauce (ginger scallion oil, lao ga ma and soy sauce, etc.)
- Add soup (brothy ones, not creamy ones pls)

This mindset works for almost all frozen or boxed pre-made food, so be creative.

4. STOCK UP ON QUICK PROTEIN

These are for the days where you only have tiddlywinks (like rice). It's always useful to stock up on quick protein like tuna and tofu. Then all you have to do is mix it into rice and add any condiment for a decent meal. Generally these are pretty cheap (like under \$2/serving) and tuna specifically is shelf stable. Shopping smart allows you to slack in the future.

I hope these tips are useful, because these saved me money and the stress of what's on the plate tonight. Sooo... Happy cooking! ^_^

WUSA ELECTIONS, THE DEATH OF STUDENT POLITICS, AND YOUR VOTE.

Hello everyone,

With the voting period of WUSA's elections flying at us quickly, it's a good time to reflect upon the state of the elections, and why *your vote matters*. Although the floors of campus are littered with posters, and election events are occurring left right and center, the state of student involvement is at the brink of collapse. In the past few years, there has been a notable decline in student engagement, especially in governance. While it may not be noticeable as you run to your classes, take a look around—the MathSoc President is always acclaimed, you see the same **mathNEWS** editors every term, and for a school of over 30,000 undergraduate students, *there really aren't that many candidates in the current election*. While it's sad to admit, student governance is currently dying, and it will have an impact. In the past few years, student leadership has reduced co-op fee increases by over 10%, ensured students have secure access to public transport, bolstered funding for clubs and student publications across campus [*Editor's note: huh?? this is news to us*], opened spaces such as the Bomber, provided affordable food options, and so much more. Every time you pick up an issue of **mathNEWS**, step foot in SLC, or hop on the nearest bus,

you stand upon the shoulders of the student leaders who have dedicated their lives to improving the experiences of all undergraduate students here at Waterloo. Now, this doesn't mean that you should cast yourselves into the life of a student leader. They understand that you're just trying to enjoy your undergraduate experience, and that's wonderful. What they do need you to do is spend a few minutes reading up on the elections, then cast your vote from February 3rd to the 5th. As student politicians grow few and far between, the work they do, and issues they advocate against, become more and more impactful. With very few candidates competing for a handful of seats in WUSA and on Senate, and pressing issues arising such as Bill 33, the vote that you cast will determine what the undergraduate student experience looks like for the next few years. So if you have just a minute to spare on from February 3rd to 5th, **please vote for the candidates that you want to carve the path ahead for all Undergraduate students.**

Thank you for your time,

Alex Lavallee, Team Horizon
Math Senator Candidate

WAFFLE'S BI-WEEKLY REVIEW POST

FIRST OF MANY, HOPEFULLY

Hello everyone, my name is Waffle, and welcome to review post #1. These review posts will work pretty simply, I'll name the thing I'm reviewing, describe it a bit or summarize it if it's a story, list some strengths and weaknesses, and then give my overall thoughts and a rating out of ten.

This bi-week (is that right?) I'll be reviewing a new manga I have just finished reading. Clocking in at a large 133 chapters, *A Hidden Side to my Crush* is a staggeringly normal rom-com. To start, while I have described it as a standard romantic comedy, it seemingly is aware of this fact and acts accordingly, playing well into stereotypes. Inside this one, you'll find the whole shtick that a traditional rom-com is known for, the misunderstandings, the blushing, the almost kisses leading to more blushing, all the good stuff. This manga is particularly a good read if you're looking for something light and simple. One good thing about this manga is the artstyle. Oftentimes, mangas in this avenue will be more generically drawn, however in this one the character's eyes are enunciated and expressions are drawn with care to support and communicate the exact mood. Another strength about this manga is the pacing. Even though it's 133 chapters long, I was able to read it in around four hours. On top of that, the character development for such a pace was better than I would normally expect. The story didn't end right after the kiss, or the confession, but instead it kept going to actually explore the relationship and work out some much needed

character growth, on both sides of the relationship. One final plus is that the story actually takes place in college, making it even more relatable than a high school romance would be. One weakness I would like to bring up, however, is that while I have mentioned all these good things, the story is still blissfully generic, to a degree. If you're looking for something more advanced or complex, this won't be the story for you, at least, not at that moment. Another weakness is there are a few... *scenes* (as is par for the course), although if you skip past these this drawback becomes obsolete.

Overall, I really enjoyed this story as a sort of quick and easy read. It did exactly what I wanted, which was to take up a bit of my spare time from waking up to a screaming man at 4am. As I mentioned above, I would recommend this to you if this is something you're looking for at the moment. After all, there's nothing like feeling extra single on a Wednesday morning. For the rating, I would give *A Hidden Side to my Crush* a 7/10. That's all folks, thanks so much for tuning in!

Waffle

THE TRIVIAL blackBOX

ON THOSE “FRIENDS”

I HATE STUDY TERM

I hate being back on a study term. I wish I could just work forever: 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 52 weeks a year. I don't have to worry about anyone bothering me or me bothering anyone. The worst thing about co-op is that it always ends at some point, whether after four months or after a day of work. It's always so boring after work on any given day for any given co-op term. I need something to fill my thoughts, so I usually just keep myself busy with chores or with some side project. Luckily (or so I thought), my one friend was working in the same city as me, so I wasn't completely isolated. We've been friends for years at this point, so I thought it was good that we could hang out in person when it wasn't study term. We see each other often enough at school, so maybe I was pushing her too hard with the DMs to see each other after work. Every time I ask her, she's always too tired. She must be lying because she does nothing all day. She'll be watching YouTube or playing video games in the middle of her shift. She's been doing nothing at work and nothing after work. She's probably just lying to me to get me off her back after I keep pestering her every day. Come to think of it, she definitely hates me, and that's probably my fault. I don't go down these doom spirals when I'm busy, but like the beginning of every study term, there's nothing to do.

The last message exchanged between us was on Wednesday at 10:44 PM when she sent “gn!” Thursday morning, we had, we felt like to me, a huge fight about her absence over co-op. She said the issue “didn't matter,” which essentially means our friendship doesn't matter, and that we should “let it be.” It's clear she wants nothing to do with me anymore. So I'm waiting. I try to work on my projects, but without the prospect of punishment under the watchful eye of an employer, I have no will. I mentally log every time she comes online and every time she goes back offline. She hasn't messaged since, except for a single “hey” (half-assed text so that she doesn't feel guilty). It must be because she's intentionally ignoring me. She's probably logging on, going afk, then logging back off just to torment me. I was only further validated when she didn't show up to the prod night today. Is she so petty as to miss **mathNEWS** just to dodge me? This was the nail in the coffin. She couldn't have made it clearer. If you're reading this, L, we're through.

SharksPlayingPokemon

[Editor's Note: This article was intended to be published last issue. It is a work of fiction.]

FUCK LET ME WRITE A DEPRESSING ARTICLE AGAIN

[Content warning: self-harm]

honestly i don't know where to begin here, i kinda wanted to share this because i know these are common yet isolating feelings and if you relate, i just want to remind you you're not alone <3

anyway, i guess it's hard for me to write my feelings out because i've been so numb and empty for maybe a month now, and it's driving me kinda crazy ngl. i can't feel any drive or spark in my chest, and i'm surprised i'm still studying or working because i can barely feel anything good. i don't feel satisfied after a grand meal, cheerful hanging out with my friends, curious in my classes, well-rested after hours of sleep, or proud knowing i finished a task; it's all just dread, or worse. i know it's just my brain chemistry interacting with these anti-depressants but feeling this nothingness drives me mad. it's gotten to the point where i try harmful things, just to feel that hint of dopamine.

of course, the harmful things do harm me, yet i trade losing myself for an ounce of emotion, because i'm already fighting a losing battle, a continually downhill spiral, against myself. and sure, that sounds overly hopeless or pessimistic given that i'm getting help, working on myself, and somehow functioning but i feel like a forever cold body without any fire in my heart, nor with any future fuel to set alight. i'm scared i will never be happy, i will never know the warmth of love radiating in me and i will continue trudging along. makes me wonder why

i'm even trudging along in the first place when it feels like nothing will get better

and honestly, i didn't think i'd still be going along. i thought i would have stopped so many times in the past few months, and part of me still wishes i could end it rather than keep on going and presumably suffer. i also feel like a nobody or a burden to others, so it would just make sense right?

however, i just can't seem to do it. i don't want to not exist, not feel anything, be gone from the world and not see the future i'm missing out on, so, i'm grateful that i'm still going, still able to watch the buses pass, and feel the cool breeze on my skin.

i just wish things could feel better.

Dollar Store Person

SLIGHTLYSTRETCHED

X² LIBEL

Fake archcel. Truecelz know catenary arches mog parabolic arches.

archaeodontosaurusslightlystretched

TRIPLE GOLD CLUB: ICE HOCKEY AT THE 2026 OLYMPICS

hockeyNEWS' PREVIEW OF MILAN!

Heightened geopolitical tensions between countries, increasingly erratic behaviour from world leaders, and a rink that won't be finished in time for the tournament to start? Sounds like the perfect moment for the most renowned international sporting competition in our world's history. Welcome to Milan, the site of the 2026 Winter Olympics! (If you're not reading this in Italy, sorry for reminding you of all the snow we're experiencing.)

By the time this issue releases, the Olympics will be starting in less than a week, and we'll be gearing up to watch the top athletes in each sport push the boundaries of human achievement. You might be a fan of figure skating, snowboarding, or curling, but there's one winter sport that captures the collective heart of this country more than any other: ice hockey.

On the men's side, this year marks the first time NHL players have been able to attend the Olympics since 2014, which was also the last time Canada won Olympic gold. Until the NHL's 2025 4 Nations tournament, hockey fans hadn't experienced best-on-best international men's competition since 2016. NHLers are itching to represent their countries at the Olympics again, and Canadian captain Sidney Crosby will be playing for his third gold medal in what could be the last Olympics of his career.

The women's team are defending Olympic gold medalists, winning gold in 2022 thanks to Marie Philip-Poulin's overtime game-winning goal. With her third game-winning goal in a gold medal game, "Captain Clutch" became the only ice hockey player ever to score in four consecutive gold medal games at the Olympics. She's looking to make it five.

Of Canada's hockey teams, the para ice hockey team has gone the longest without winning gold, winning their first and only gold medal in 2006. Since then, the United States has won gold in every Olympics, making it four straight for the Americans. Canada's looking to snap that streak.

In any international competition, and especially one with as much history as the Olympics, the athletes and their sports can never exist in a vacuum. For example, Russian and Belarusian athletes are currently banned from competing in team sports under their countries' flags within the Olympics and many other international sporting federations; they have prohibited the competition of these athletes as a sanction against the Russian and Belarusian governments' ongoing propagation of the Russian-Ukrainian war, preventing these governments from continuing to use their athletes as propaganda.

Even before Russian hockey players were banned from international competition, the United States had already supplanted Russia as Canada's most prominent rival in ice

hockey. With Donald Trump's repeated antagonization of Canada throughout his second term in office, these Olympics have once again taken on a cast beyond the scope of the literal sports. The athletes are more than just the colours of the jerseys they wear on the ice; for the duration of the games they play, they become embodiments of a nation's hopes, ideals, and ambitions. The degree to which we connect emotionally with these sports is dependent on the level to which we have incorporated them into our identity, both personal and national, and there's no sport Canada loves more than hockey.

Hockey Canada is going into these Olympics with the goal of becoming the first country with all three of their ice hockey teams winning Olympic gold in the same year. If they do, it will reiterate the relationships we have with Canadian national identity and hockey: the claim to something uniquely ours, which has always intertwined them together. This is our game, and our country. You can't take it from us.

aurelio

CHESS PUZZLE 5

BECAUSE 2 DIMENSIONS CLEARLY WASN'T ENOUGH

Black to move, mate in one. Rules are available online (search up "5D Chess with Multiverse Time Travel"). I suggest reading a Steam guide.



Hint: You can make a move in all timelines in The Present.

Notation for solution: The *original timeline* is the timeline on the bottom. The *split timeline* is the timeline on the top.

Solution: Move the rook in the original timeline up 2 squares and the rook in the split timeline left 2 squares. The rook in the split timeline checks the king 2 turns ago, and the rook in the original timeline protects the rook in the split timeline.

crimson

HAS YOUR COUNSELLOR THROUGH CAMPUS WELLNESS SUDDENLY DISAPPEARED?

Disclaimer: I am not affiliated with Campus Wellness and speak only to represent myself.

I struggled getting this article started because I couldn't decide how, exactly, I wanted to go about writing it. I'm used to writing for various different audiences, and even within my **mathNEWS** articles I've used a range of tones and writing styles. My first reflex with this piece was to get straight to the point, but since I've been hesitating, I think I'll just start by telling a story.

So for various reasons (excellent insurance coverage among them), my parents have had me in some form of therapy since before the age from which I started having any coherent memories. As anyone who's been through the talk therapy process will know, finding the 'right fit' can take a lot of trial and error, and throughout high school I went through the intake process a lot of times with a lot of different professionals. My 'right fit' ended up being a counsellor from Campus Wellness here at UWaterloo. I won't gush too much—both for length and privacy reasons—but my counsellor understood how my brain worked from the very first meeting. It was so freeing to be able to just talk without feeling like I had to sandwich every sentence in justifications for why my thought process is the way it is. One time, while at a casual faculty event with some friends, I started gushing about my awesome new counsellor. It turned out that some of my friends had also been seeing this counsellor, as they had specialized in the specific intersectionality that was part of what my friends and I bonded over.

Fast-forward to the end of 2025. I'd run out of sessions with Campus Wellness and was on my own, therapy-wise, until I'd be allowed to start the process over again, but one of my friends who had been seeing the same counsellor through Campus Wellness messaged one of our many group chats to share that they'd gotten an email from their counsellor saying that their contract hadn't been renewed for the new year. Any sessions booked for 2026 would be cancelled. This was not the counsellor's decision, it was not related to their work performance, and they were sorry.

I was lucky in this case to have run out of sessions because that meant that if nothing else, my counsellor and I had at least ended our last session with some degree of closure. My friends, and the rest of the dismissed counsellor's caseload, were cut off in the middle of their therapy cycles. As of when I'm writing this, and as far as I know, Campus Wellness hasn't connected with any of the former caseload to make sure they have access to resources they need or find them another counsellor—they're just suddenly on their own.

My friends and I did some digging, and while all of this is hearsay, it turns out that this isn't the first time this has happened—we heard stories of counsellors being told their contracts weren't being renewed and being 'walked out.'

Apparently, this email was an anomaly—because counsellors lost access to their school emails after being 'walked out,' most allegedly did not get the opportunity to warn their caseload of what was happening.

From what we've been able to tell, it looks like Campus Wellness doesn't have a process in place for caring for the students who are left behind when a counsellor is dismissed. As you can probably imagine, students seeking mental health therapy through their school are vulnerable, and a sudden cutoff of services with no closure or direction to alternate resources could be damaging. If indeed there is no procedure in place, we'd like to propose the implementation of one.

So this brings me to the point of this article: **if you've had an experience with Campus Wellness where your counsellor has disappeared, we want to hear from you.** To potentially take any action, we have to first understand the situation, and to gain understanding, we need to hear stories from more people. Plus, the more perspectives we have, the more likely Campus Wellness is to listen to our feedback.

If you have an experience related to counsellors leaving Campus Wellness to share, I invite you to share it with us at forms.gle/kj45dmERCX69y5XU6 (blue form). Whether or not you have an experience to share, if you're interested in being contacted if a report or petition comes out of this, you can provide your email at forms.gle/vtobiNSWKT1KF9h9 (green form).

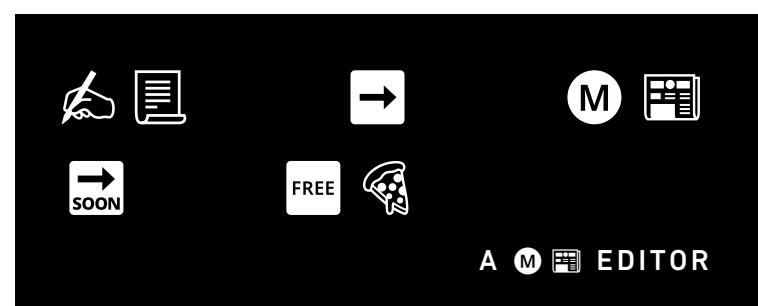
macinnes



SHARE YOUR EXPERIENCE



SIGN UP FOR UPDATES



GUP IN MY ELEVATOR

FOREWARNING TO ALL: MORTAL EXPERIENCE RECOUNTED, READER DISCRETION IS ADVISED

I am writing now only to warn any potential readers of these Gups disguising themselves as “people,” be warned: there are most definitely Gups among the people of Kitchener-Waterloo at the very least. I fear they may even be nation- or world-wide.

Typically a Gup is to be gelatinous, round, very orange, with solid yellow eyes, and possessing a few small ball-tipped tendrils on the top and bottom sides of their mass. They are very large in size and difficult to miss. The only way you can use to sense such a creature in its (previously unknown ability to) disguise is to smell the aromatic scent of sweet strawberries, a very notable trait of their species. Be warned. The slimes are upon us. Pictured below is the standard appearance of a Gup.



This is meant to be a cautionary tale of my first discovery of the creatures outside of *Risk of Rain 2*. It is a chilling tale that covers life and death, readers’ discretion is advised.

I entered the elevator today, or maybe yesterday, with this girl who was wearing this overpoweringly aromatic perfume that completely drowned my nose trills from having any comprehensible sense of smell other than the perfume that she was wearing. It was an unpleasant experience, and the smell was this incredibly sweet and slightly tangy strawberry. Now normally I would just stand in the far corner of the elevator away from her and simply bide my time until it reached the second floor (we were on the seventh) but I began to realize that this exact scent was how Tharson in his logbook entries described the scent of Gups. Not the Genitourinary Pathology Society: GUPS, not the Octonauts v-hickle, not Girls Und Panzer, Gups, Geeps, and Gips. Prelude in D-Flat Major began

playing in my mind as I contemplated my options of escape from this dangerous creature, which were incredibly limited as I did not possess the capacity to break the building’s structure and exit the elevator before this creature would send spikes from its gelatinous body out to puncture me. How the Gup, a single-celled unintelligent life-form that typically has the mass of several rhinoceroses (now found only on Petrichor V following its movement by the hands of Providence) not only arrived at Earth but has disguised itself as a human being is beyond me. Frankly, this proves to be a grave concern for matters both scientific and national. At least within this star system, the community for biology now has to deal with a plague of incoming requests (if no one then from no more than those poor souls atop the varied lands of Petrichor’s fifth innermost planet) regarding how a single-celled organism not only possesses the capability to disguise itself as a human physically but also behave intelligently enough to not be discovered during its time here (given the floor that it came from and the inside of the building, even if it appeared spontaneously within the elevator, at least several minutes to realistically several days.)

Of course, the creature is obviously very proficient with its means and mannerisms of blending into the unsuspecting populace. Were it not for my chance encounter, it likely would have scurried (or rather I should say bounced) away without detection to some other kind of hunting ground. What it even does to its prey I do not want to know, for I have only ever witnessed its vicious method of propelling hardened gelatinous mass (in formations only able to be considered spike-y) in order to harm its victims.

Ultimately in that elevator as I processed only a fraction of what I have written here did I begin to realize how grave the situation I had found myself in was. Realizing my likely imminent death, I began to think over my life and how my choices had led me here. My thoughts, in my final moments, went to my family. I wondered where they were then. I would not want their hearts to ache with the burden. Closing my eyes, I accepted my fate, but luckily the Gup, either by some divine miracle or through displaying pity (lucky for me—but concerning for anyone who read the above sentences), let me live. It exited the elevator before I did. I waited shortly in the elevator and exited before the doors closed, hurriedly scampering off in the opposite direction lest I wish to be impaled.

Again, I am recalling this now only to warn any potential readers of these Gups disguising themselves as “people,” be warned: there are most definitely Gups among the people of Kitchener-Waterloo at the very least. They may even be nation or worldwide. Beware of anyone who has a strawberry-like scent to them, and if you do detect it, it may just be too late. Luckily, the Gups don’t appear to move very fast (they, in fact, often bounced slowly in their home of Petrichor V), however their disguised form (given its legs) may lend them the ability to sprint.

I am unsure if any local authorities are aware of this, as all of my attempts to contact the UES (United Enterprise Shipping Company, as they are the only body of humanity to ever have made contact with this planet) have borne no fruit. I understand most of the cargo aboard the Safe Travels was meant for 2056, but I'm sure the UES would take inquiries a few decades earlier given the timescale of spacefaring transit. Perhaps the lack of the planet's presence on any star map was an attempt at a cover-up by the UES. Regardless, beware these foul (but pleasant-smelling) creatures.

Matthew mathNEWS

PLACES I HAVE SEEN ANGELS IN THE LAST THREE YEARS

The first time I saw an angel was two summers ago, while I was crossdressing in the Basilique Notre-Dame de Montréal.¹ The basilica is this beautiful building with deep blue ceilings, dramatic lighting, and a fractal-like complexity in the design. A signature of Neo-Gothic architecture.² The golden accents complemented the spanning deep blue ceiling work. When I looked up it felt like falling into the sky. Anyways, the interior was loud and bustling with tourists dying to catch a photo, so I slipped into a secluded prayer room attached to a side hallway. I knelt behind one of the pews. I didn't really know what to think about because I didn't believe in god, so I analyzed the room instead. It was simple, with clean beige pews, generous natural lighting, and a quiet that filled my ears. The squeak of destroyed black sketchers punctured the silence, and I looked up. This was the first time I saw an angel.

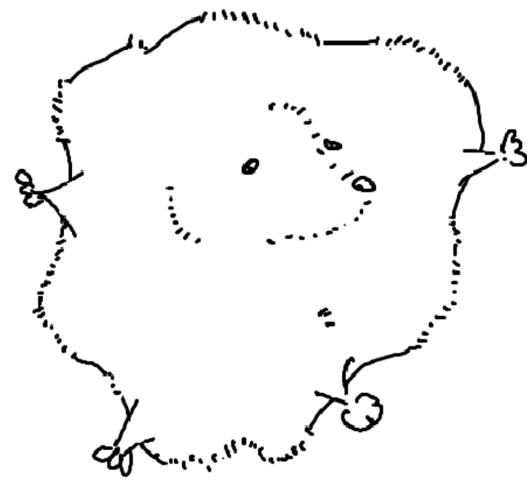
They were wearing a lousy black skirt, fishnets, and smudged eyeshadow. An amused smile played at their deeply tinted lips as they craned their neck around the empty chapel, gripping the strap of their leather purse. They paused beside me, the light catching them in a perfect, gleaming moment. I believed with thorough conviction, and still do now, that this individual was an angel. They looked down at me, and winked, then squeaked back out. I stumbled to my feet, back into the Baslique, but they were nowhere to be seen. Subsumed by the crowd. I returned back to my friends, asking if any of them had seen the angel, but none had.

The second time was a couple weeks ago. I was walking to Walmart in the snow, lost in some November night. I swear I caught a glimpse of one in the halo of artificial streetlight. The sky was blaring snow. Whiteout.

alba_z

1. It feels a bit on the nose to have my first angel sighting in a church, but I am simply narrating my own life events here, so maybe my life is just a long sequence of cliches.
2. Cher also got married there.

THIS CARELESS SHREW GOT SQUISHED BETWEEN THE PAGES OF mathNEWS



Oh no, what a mess. It must have run in during printing. This will be unpleasant to scrape off.

aphf

ISSN 0705-0410

UW'S BASTION OF ERUDITE THOUGHT SINCE 1973

mathNEWS is a normally fortnightly publication, funded by and responsible to the undergraduate math students of the University of Waterloo, as represented by the Mathematics Society of the University of Waterloo, hereafter referred to as MathSoc. mathNEWS is editorially independent of MathSoc. Content is the responsibility of the mathNEWS editors; however, any opinions expressed herein are those of the authors and not necessarily those of MathSoc or mathNEWS. Current and back issues of mathNEWS are available electronically via the World Wide Web at <https://mathnews.uwaterloo.ca>. Send your correspondence to: mathNEWS, MC3030, University of Waterloo, 200 University Ave. W., Waterloo, Ontario, Canada, N2L 3G1, or to user id mathnews@gmail.com on the Internet.

mathNEWS is overseen by the Board of Publications, an autonomous board of the Federation of Students, University of Waterloo, hereafter referred to as Feds. mathNEWS is editorially independent of Feds and the Board of Publications. mathNEWS has never been requested to withhold Improper Content as defined under Feds Policy 71.

Except where otherwise noted, this work is licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution-Noncommercial-No Derivative Works 2.5 Canada License. To view a copy of this licence, visit <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/2.5/ca/> or send a letter to Creative Commons, 559 Nathan Abbott Way, Stanford, California 94305, USA. Terms may be renegotiated by contacting the mathNEWS Editorial Team.

IT'S TACO TUESDAY

RECIPE N°2: WHITE PEOPLE TACOS

In honour of **mathNEWS** prod night being on a Tuesday (snow day got us good), I've got for you guys the best white people tacos you'll ever have. They're beginner friendly, really quick to cook, and full of protein and veggies. Despite their name, they are very well seasoned. And best of all, they're customizable. My mom used to cook these a lot as a kid because they were so fast to make, and everyone liked them. So don't take my word for it—make them yourself. Btw this makes two servings (4 tacos, two burritos, two bowls) (if you want more multiply it by some number, most of you are in math so it shouldn't be too hard).

NECESSARY INGREDIENTS:

- Any protein ever. The following are common proteins and measurements for two servings: ground beef, chicken, turkey ($\frac{1}{2}$ pound), cut up chicken breast (1–2 depending on size), tofu (300 grams).
- 2 $\frac{1}{2}$ tbsp cumin
- 2 $\frac{1}{2}$ tbsp chili powder
- 1 tbsp garlic powder
- $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp paprika
- $\frac{1}{4}$ tsp seasoning salt or normal salt
- $\frac{1}{4}$ cup water
- A carb: pick rice (see note at bottom), taco shells, wraps, whatever you want.

TOPPINGS (CUSTOMIZABLE):

I suggest:

- Onions (a must, about $\frac{1}{2}$ an onion)
- Bell pepper ($\frac{1}{3}$ of a pepper)
- Lettuce (as much as you can each)
- Tomatoes ($\frac{1}{2}$ a tomato)
- Cilantro (if it doesn't taste like soap)
- So much cheese (like $\frac{1}{2}$ cup shredded minimum. more is better)
- Sour cream
- Salsa
- Avocado if you're feeling it

DIRECTIONS:

1. First things first, cut/shred up all your toppings to your liking. Keep them on the cutting board or move them to a bowl and put them aside, idc. But please practice knife safety, cut away from yourself and check that your fingers aren't under the knife.
2. Now for the meat. You're gonna put it in a pan on the stove at about temperature seven (medium-high), add some oil if you're worried it will stick, mine usually doesn't. You're gonna fry until it's just cooked. "How do you know it's cooked," you ask???? It's not pink anywhere, it's starting to get brown, or

you take a piece out and cut it open to check. Trust me, you will know, it's not trying to trick you.

3. Now, you're gonna turn down your meat to a 4. Dump in all your seasonings, and stir it around a little until everything's covered. Now here's the magic trick: dump in the $\frac{1}{4}$ cup of water. This helps bind the seasoning to everything, and reduce some of the fat in your meat. Trust me, it will not dry it out.
4. Cook the meat until most of the water is gone. Then, turn off your element (please make sure it's off, I've left it on before it's not fun) and move your pan to somewhere where it won't burn anything to cool off.
5. Ok last step: assemble. Wrap everything up, put it in the tacos, mix up a bowl. My favourite is quesadillas: put your toppings on half a tortilla, fold it up, and put it back in the pan to melt the cheese and get the wrap all crispy.
6. Top with sour cream and salsa.
7. Eat.
8. Do all the dishes you made (rip).

See, I told you it's delicious. Better than overpriced taco bowls from [unnamed brand] even, I would argue. And the best thing is you can put in absolutely anything you want, except cucumbers, that's kinda weird lol. Good luck and enjoy!

BOTTOM NOTE:

For rice, if you're unsure about how to cook rice, here's my quickest instructions ever on how to cook rice on the stove:

For two servings you need: pot (required), $\frac{1}{2}$ cup uncooked rice, $\frac{3}{4}$ cup water (it's a 2:3 rice to water ratio), $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp salt, 1 tbsp oil.

1. Put your rice in a bowl, add water and swish around. Then dump out water by blocking rice with hand and tipping the bowl. This is rinsing the rice. Do this around 3 times.
2. Put everything in the pot (required) and onto the stove at temperature 7 (medium high), and cover with lid. Watch it carefully until it's boiling.
3. Once it starts to boil, set a timer for 13 minutes and turn it down to 3 (low-medium). Keep it covered.
4. Once your timer beeps, take it off the element and turn that element off. Let it sit for ten minutes to cool down.
5. Eat it.

This is how I make rice. Make sure you don't have the temperature above a seven or it will dry out. And be patient. You got this!!

TO LOOK WITHOUT FEAR

“That was what drove me into it... to expose something to the public that I felt was being hidden.”—Gordon Parks

A childhood dream of mine was to be a photojournalist. I longed to travel to remote regions of the world to capture natural phenomena. By my bedside I accumulated a stack of LIFE and TIME magazines. While flicking through pictures looking for vacation destinations, I inadvertently caught glimpses of humanity that I wasn’t prepared for. The pages showed walls being built, overflowing boats, borders being redrawn, lives shaped by poverty and power.

As I got a little older, those fragments started to arrange themselves into context. Awe and unease settled in me as I began to see the stories underneath the photos, the desperation and the helplessness, the moral weight of a moment and its broader societal consequences.

It was around this time I discovered Gordon Parks. A man of many talents, but remembered above all for photographing the civil rights movement, he described his camera as a weapon against poverty and all sorts of social wrongs. For Parks, photography was a way to give evidence to those who would otherwise remain unseen. He looked, without fear, at American life in its most difficult and unvarnished forms, and asked viewers to do the same.

One of Parks’ most interesting works to me was his coverage of Muhammad Ali during a period where the boxer was sentenced to five years in prison for refusing induction into the US Armed Forces. Ali claimed conscientious objection on religious grounds, famously declaring “no Vietcong ever called me [a racial slur].” Parks captured not just the spectacle of the boxer, but the moral and political turbulence surrounding him. In doing so he refused to simplify or sanitize either, while also co-signing his stance by giving him the opportunity to speak for himself.

In the late 40s, Parks shot a series of photos that landed him a job at LIFE as their first ever Black staff photographer. For the assignment, Parks wanted to capture the life of a young man in Harlem. He befriended a seventeen-year-old named Red Jackson, a leader of a gang known as the Midtowners, and followed him through his daily life. Parks sought to reveal the complexity of Jackson’s circumstances, hoping to humanize those involved in Harlem’s suffering and to counter the judgment that often obscured the need for community support.

The most striking photo of the series shows Jackson staring through a broken window in a New York apartment. The story goes that leading up to this photo, Jackson and Parks were attending the funeral of a Midtowner when a rival gang ambushed them, leading to the two of them hiding in an abandoned midrise while police confronted the attackers outside. The photo captures Red, shrouded in darkness, looking cautiously through shattered glass at a life-threatening situation unfolding in front of him. A close call. He’s

not where he should be, but where he should be is not safe. The cigarette resting on the teenagers lips speaks to the exhaustion, resignation, and the overwhelming reality facing a young man, and a community of invisible young men, who needed their story to be told.

Parks’ photo isn’t an overbearing message compelling you to empathize, it invites it. Shot from an intimate vantage point, a space behind Red, it allows the viewer to share in the uncertainty rather than purely observing from outside. It’s a persuasive act of protest. Parks didn’t editorialize, he simply pointed his lens on a group of people that need their story told. Inviting the public in to a world ignored, or at best unseen, asking you challenging questions.

I’m reminded of Parks’ work because he got his start in St. Paul, Minnesota. A stone’s throw from where, in the past month, a handful of guerrilla photojournalists have been documenting an occupied life in Minneapolis. Their work matters all the more as federal authorities have misrepresented events, labeling citizens as terrorists while failing to protect them. It is this refusal to look away, this commitment to documenting reality as it is, that makes their work indispensable.

In moments like these, a camera becomes, as Parks described, “a weapon against all sorts of social wrongs.” If the recent behaviour of the US federal government spells a trend for where Western and global policy is going to go, a camera and a presence might be the only things that stand in the way of intimidation. I’ve seen strength in the unity of the community in Minneapolis, emboldening my belief in people, and the idea that all life is worth defending at great cost.

The responsibility, however, does not rest solely on those behind the lens. The life in these images and videos only exists if a viewer allows it to. To scroll past an image is not to see it. Which is important because so often, what allows for society’s cruelties to persist is a determination of the people not to see it. Attention requires effort, and effort carries consequence. Parks asked his audience to meet his photographs with seriousness, to accept discomfort as part of understanding.

Life online is lived on a knife’s edge. Truth is contested, narratives shift by the hour, the act of looking discerningly has become a form of civic engagement. To refuse fear and prejudice is to remain accountable to what is shown, and to what’s at stake.

Don’t be scared. Take a look around you.

FinallyToby

mathNEWS

WHAT'S THE BIG FUSS ABOUT CLAIR OBSCUR: EXPEDITION 33? [SPOILER FREE]

THIS GAME IS SO TIGHT...

Clair Obscur: Expedition 33 is a role-playing video game released in 2025 that launched itself into public discourse chiefly when it won the Game of the Year Award, alongside eight others, at The Game Awards 2025. The game received universal acclaim from critics, and overwhelmingly positive reviews from players. Regardless, the many awards (including the controversial Best Independent Game Award) drew criticism concerning the large budget not typical of an independent game, as well as the heavily exaggerated originality of the gameplay. Thus began the cycle of subjective discourse: hundreds of thousands of voices singing praise which inevitably drags up the small, yet significant and roaring crowd screaming “overrated!” and “not my game of the year!”

I will concede the following points: considering this game as ‘indie’ the same way that *Silksong* or *Balatro* is, would be disingenuous. This game admits a partnership with the publisher Kepler Interactive. Yet, for the purposes of the Independent Game Award, the game undeniably fits under the definition, since the game was made independent of the traditional publisher system.

Another concession is the originality of the gameplay. From Wikipedia, “the developers at Sandfall sought to create a high-fidelity turn-based role-playing game.” One of the ways they elevated the turn-based aspect is by adding quick-time-events during combat. This worked to maintain player concentration and add a layer of dexterous skill required to master the game. This added originality drew strong praise, yet it is not the first to do have these quick-time-events, nor the first to implement its power/build system. The gameplay is not as original, balanced, or complex as many wished, especially those familiar with the genre, or other turn-based games.

While the game may not rope in longtime fans of JRPGs or turn-based min-maxers, it does do well with a general audience. I’ve read a barrage of anecdotes from players who claim to hate turn-based combat, or aren’t partial to video games at all, who loved *Clair Obscur: Expedition 33*. This game has so much to offer beyond my two concessions, and I believe that this game truly has something to offer any player, whether you’re a gamer, a reader, or even a listener.

This game shines not only as a game, but as a piece of art. The visual style is Art Deco, set in Belle Époque France with visual themes borrowed from painting. Every locale, character, and living creature oozes with personality and visual distinctness that makes this game feel truly inspired. Paired with a photo-mode that allows players to snap perfectly procured screenshots (even during cutscenes!), this game is a pleasure just to look at.

More than its visual art is its music. Composed by Lorien Testard, and Alice Duport-Percier, the music is eight hours worth of epic French opera, jazz, and more, that stands as a

unique and brilliant composition even divorced from any narrative or game. Layers of meaning are imbued into each song, from foreshadowing lyrics in French and other made up languages, to leitmotifs that herald dark twists. As a fan of scores, *Clair Obscur: Expedition 33*’s soundtrack is the pinnacle of my collection.

More than its music is its writing. The characters come alive on your screen, brilliantly acted by Ben Starr, Jennifer English (who also voices Shadowheart from *Baldur’s Gate 3!*), Charlie Cox, Andy Serkis, and others. The dialogue is sharp and realistic, and the themes are tackled with nuance and depth that, as a player, you can never find one right answer. This was the first game, movie, or TV show to make me cry (twice), and it did it in the prologue alone.

So far, I have hopefully addressed what personal preconceptions you may have about *Clair Obscur: Expedition 33*, and given my own opinion for why the praise this game has received is so deserved. All that is left is to urge you, the reader, to play the game yourself and experience this piece of art unadulterated by pessimistic bias or spoilers. It is my sincere desire that you don’t just believe my opinion, but are influenced to make your own.

For those who come after.

Aspiro

JOHN LENNON GAVE US THE BEST STRATEGY FOR WALKING IN THE SNOW

You know that image of John Lennon walking funny? The one where his feet are pointed outwards and he’s taking comical steps and he also looks ridiculous? Yea so that’s the best way to walk in the snow.

I tried it. It’s amazing. Your feet are wider across when you’re walking which makes you spread your weight out across your whole foot instead of just going heel to toe, and that gives you better traction on the snow. It’s tiring, sure, but a whole lot better than your feet slipping behind you every step and risking a tumble that makes your walk even more miserable.

Thank you John Lennon for giving us this amazing walking method, this completely makes up for you being a not so amazing father and an otherwise questionable person.

fingersinsockets

THE PERIODIC TABLE OF ELEMENTS

IF THE ETYMOLOGICAL ORIGINAL WORD OF EACH ELEMENT NAME WERE PUT INTO GOOGLE TRANSLATE AND TRANSLATED BETWEEN A BUNCH OF LANGUAGES A BUNCH OF TIMES

abs(Jester)

OHMYGODOHMYGOD
OHMYGODOHMYGOD

I HATE STUDY TERM (PT. 2)

OhMyGodOhMyGodOhMyGodOhMyGodOhMyGodOhMyGod
OhMyGodOhMyGodOhMyGodOhMyGodOhMyGod
OhMyGodOhMyGodOhMyGod. I'm so sorry, L. No one's been able to find her or contact her since that fated Monday. No one has reported any sightings of that "rickety shack" that she was talking about. She vanished without a trace. The recent snowstorm hasn't made things better. She could be lying dead somewhere, buried under layers of snow, for all I know. I'm so sorry, L. I'm so sorry. I thought she was ditching me, I thought she hated my guts that much and that she was so through with me. I thought so many things, all of them as wrong as things could be. I must've read her last **mathNEWS** article several dozen times. Every agonizing detail I obsessed over could've easily been thrown away. Every narrative and every simulation I conducted in my brain was completely off the mark. I just wish I could see her again to tell her I'm sorry. I need to stop letting everything get into my head. Maybe she's not dead, and maybe she's somewhere safe and no one can find her because maybe she misreported her directions (she loves to wander off, lol). If all I can do is speculate, I might as well be optimistic. I feel so helpless and scattered. Luckily I'm good at focusing all of my neurotic energy, which coincides neatly with the rise in busyness when it comes to school. When we find her and she comes back, we're gonna hang out every day, because I know that's what she would want. I hate study term.

Sharks Playing Pokemon

YOU SHOULD REACH OUT TO YOUR FRIENDS

even if it's been a while

just shoot them a text!

source: a couple weeks ago I texted a friend I hadn't talked to in fourteen months

and then we got dinner and it was really lovely!

normalparameters

Take off your socks.

**SOMEONE IN THE DSC OFFICE WHILE
WE WERE EDITING THIS ISSUE
ON WEDNESDAY AFTERNOON**

WORST OSCARS SNUBS OF THE 2020'S

With the 98th Academy Awards fast approaching and shaping up to be a particularly exciting race in key categories, what better way to honor the august history of the Oscars than by going through some of their worst misses over the years. For lack of time, this article will only consider awards from the last five years in the major categories (Best Picture, Director, Actress, Actor, Supporting Actress, Supporting Actor, Original Screenplay, Adapted Screenplay}). In some cases the director and screenplay awards will be omitted, as they tend to overlap with Best Picture. Also to be clear, the quality of a win is judged by whether or not it was given to the right candidate, not the strength of that particular field. All judgements expressed below are the author's own opinion.

2024

Highs: All in all, this was a great year in my opinion. *Anora* was an exciting and well deserved best picture win, and more good wins for Adrien Brody and Mikey Madison for Best Actor and Actress respectively.

Lows: The worst snub of the night was Kieran Culkin's win for *A Real Pain* over Guy Pearce for *The Brutalist* and Yura Borisov for *Anora*. Guy Pearce gives arguably the strongest performance of the movie; magnetic, revolting, and terrifying in different turns. Yura Borisov gives a surprising amount of heart and humor despite having relatively few lines, and is one of the most memorable parts of the movie. In comparison, I was not moved by Kieran Culkin essentially playing himself again in a fairly weak and forgettable film. See *Succession* for more of the same, but in a context much better suited to him.

Zoe Saldaña's win in Best Supporting Actress for *Emilia Pérez* is also not thrilling, but the field is comparatively thin here, so it's not as notable to me. I would have rather seen Isabella Rossellini win for her great work in *Conclave*, but this was ultimately unlikely as it was a small role.

Other: Many wanted to see Demi Moore win for *The Substance*, but I think Mikey Madison was the right choice. *Anora* winning in Best Picture, Best Director, and Original Screenplay is not underserved, but it doesn't leave much breathing room for other movies.

2023

Highs: A pretty good year overall, largely helped by excellent wins for *Anatomy of a Fall* and *American Fiction* for Best Original and Adapted Screenplay respectively. Emma Stone and Cillian Murphy are also great choices for Best Actress and Best Actor, but a little more about Emma Stone's win later. Christopher Nolan winning for Best Director was unavoidable, and also fairly well deserved even though I liked other movies better.

Lows: I think *Oppenheimer* was a bad Best Picture winner. The script is clunky and suffers from endless Nolanisms, and the movie fails to capture the historical and social nuances of the source material, while also strangely enough not giving

a great sense of Robert Oppenheimer himself. The movie is redeemed somewhat by the superb direction, which is why I think it should have won just for directing. Read *American Prometheus* for the whole story, it's more interesting and satisfying in almost every way. Especially painful is that this won over *American Fiction*, *Anatomy of a Fall*, *Killers of the Flower Moon*, *Past Lives*, and *The Zone of Interest*, every single one of which is clearly superior in my eyes, and a fantastic slate of movies in any year.

One indirect snub this year was Lily Gladstone's loss against Emma Stone in Best Actress. Although I don't think this was the wrong choice, this is only because Gladstone is closer to a supporting performance in *Killers of the Flower Moon*, while Emma Stone is doing the equivalent of an acting decathlon in *Poor Things*. I believe Gladstone should have run in supporting actress, where she almost certainly would have won. Sad to see such an incredible performance not recognized with an Oscar.

In Best Actor there is yet another undeserved *Oppenheimer* win, this time for Robert Downey Jr. I didn't find his performance special at all, and was genuinely confused when he was presented as the runaway favourite. Literally every other candidate deserved to win more in my eyes, with special nods to Ryan Gosling for one of the funniest performances in recent memory and Robert De Niro with his best performance in years, portraying evil incarnate.

2022

Highs: This was a weak year in my eyes. Brendan Fraser, Ke Huy Quan, and Jamie Lee Curtis are good wins for Best Actor, Supporting Actor, and Supporting Actress, but I think there are problems in every other category.

Lows: *Everything Everywhere All At Once* essentially swept this year's Oscars winning Best Picture, Director, Actress, Supporting Actress, Supporting Actor, and Original Screenplay—every single place it was nominated. Although I liked the movie, I don't think it's nearly as strong as this dominant win would suggest and many deserving competitors were not recognized at all. Perhaps if *EEAAO* hadn't won everything I wouldn't complain about half these categories, but as it stands I think many of these picks have aged badly.

The single worse snub of 2022 and in my opinion of the decade so far is Cate Blanchett (*Tár*) losing to Michelle Yeoh (*EEAAO*) for best actress. This isn't because Michelle Yeoh isn't great in *EEAAO*, but Cate Blanchett as Lydia Tár is probably my favourite performance of the 2020's, and the entire movie rests on her back. Michelle Yeoh is only one part of a large cast in a movie that is itself less performance driven.

Similar to *Anora* in 2024, *EEAAO* winning all three of Best Picture, Director, and Original Screenplay is not totally undeserved, but I would have much rather seen *Tár* recognized for any one of these awards, and I think *Triangle of Sadness* or

Banshees of Inisherin could have rightfully won Original Screenplay.

2021 & 2020:

Both of these years were weird due to covid, and I am also running out of space for this article. I think *Drive My Car* or *The Worst Person in the World* should have won over *CODA* in 2021, although I understand why they didn't (and *Drive My Car* won Best International Feature).

There were no major misses in 2020 in my opinion, although this is a little weird as a Covid year.

Fin: Let's hope the 2025 Oscars don't add too much to the list.

JSSP

TBH I USUALLY DON'T DO THIS BUT

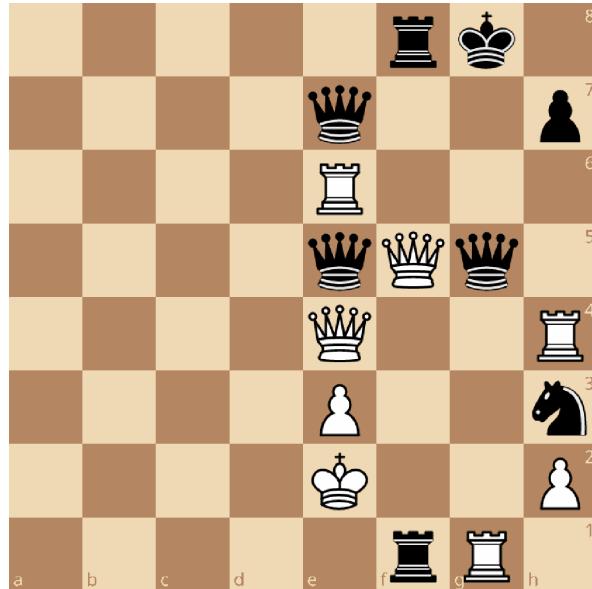
Yeah I'm just writing this for free food. Too lazy to think of anything to write rn. Also very tired.

easty

CHESS PUZZLE 6

67

White to move, mate in 2.



Solution: Qxh7+, Qxh7, Qxh7#.

crimson

HOW MANY KEY CLUES PUZZLES HAS YOUR TEAM SOLVED AS OF NOW? (TUES 8:30PM)

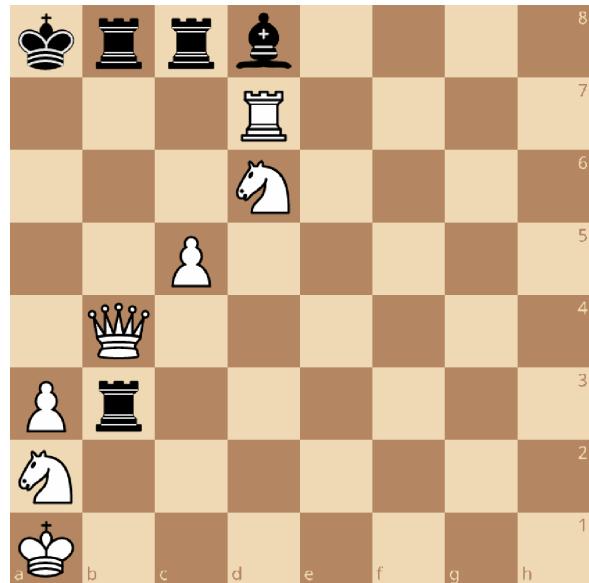
- I'm an Enigmatologist
- 0 (x19)
- 0.05
- 0.1
- 1 (solo and not registered for a team)
- every team I'm in has solved all of them (vacously)
- 3 (x2)
- -6
- 7 (x5)
- 6 or 7 (x3) (they are close to solving the 7th... probably)
- 8 (x3)
- I'm in Engineering I plead the fifth
- one hundred million
- I tested 10/20
- 10 but I'm on the testing team
- ALL OF THEM
- ... no comment
- ... even less comment

mathgeek

CHESS PUZZLE 7

(DOES THE 67 HAND THING)

White to move, mate in 2.



Solution: Qa4+, Ba5, Qxa5#.

crimson

N UNCONTROVERSIAL RECIPES

MOLASSES COOKIES

These cookies are so crowd-pleasing, you'll often find them in the pastry display window of Tim Horton's locations, even in the middle of nowhere and/or Komoka, Ontario.¹

DRY INGREDIENTS: 2 cups flour, $\frac{3}{2}$ tsp baking soda, 1 tsp cinnamon, $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp nutmeg, $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp salt

WET INGREDIENTS: 1 cup sugar, $\frac{3}{4}$ cup butter, 1 large egg, $\frac{1}{4}$ cup blackstrap molasses, $\frac{1}{3}$ cup hot water (optional, makes them crunchier)

DUSTING: $\frac{1}{2}$ cup sugar

INSTRUCTIONS: Combine dry ingredients. Combine wet ingredients. Combine wet and dry ingredients. Take two spoons, and between them repeatedly form little balls of cookie dough. Roll each in the sugar, coating them. Bake at 350°F for 10–15 minutes.

MOLASSES PANCAKES

While adding pancakes to molasses may seem like a bold endeavour, consider that in "N mathNEWS writers walk into a potluck" in mathNEWS 150.6, *u/alyssnya* described it as "very legitimately food," with mathNEWS writer alumnus *Not a N*rd* even going so far as to note that the "distinct lack of beef was an absolute positive."²

DRY INGREDIENTS: $\frac{3}{2}$ cups flour, 1 tsp baking soda, $\frac{1}{4}$ tsp baking soda, $\frac{1}{4}$ tsp salt, $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp ginger, 1 tsp cinnamon

WET INGREDIENTS: large egg, $\frac{1}{2}$ vanilla container lid of vanilla extract. $\frac{1}{4}$ cup blackstrap molasses. $\frac{3}{2}$ cups water.

INSTRUCTIONS: Combine wet. Combine dry. Pour dry into wet, then mix up to the point of it getting a bit lumpy *and no further*. It's really easy to overmix. Pour batter onto pan. Cake.

MOLASSES AND PANCAKES

While the avant-garde modern take on adding molasses within pancakes can win rave ratings from fans, I'm not certain that it's faithful to the historical canon. My great-grandfather had a different approach.

DRY INGREDIENTS: Normal pancakes.

WET INGREDIENTS: Blackstrap molasses, plain or vanilla yogurt.

INSTRUCTIONS: Bake pancake. Spread a spoonful of yogurt atop pancake. Pour blackstrap molasses atop yogurt. Spread to cover the pancake. Serve.

BEANS

Ideally paired with either a chopped Schneider's hot dog prepared minutes earlier in the same pan, or an actual Kitchener market sausage.

INGREDIENTS: Can of heinz beans, a few tablespoons of blackstrap molasses, a couple of teaspoons of worchestershire sauce, black pepper.

INSTRUCTIONS: Pour beans, worchestershire sauce, and molasses into pan on medium heat. Cook. Serve.

DATE SQUARES

Last Christmas, I made date squares for my family. Most date square recipes don't call for blackstrap molasses, but I recall my mom telling me that you can add molasses to bring out added flavour, so I did that. Unfortunately, when I told her that I'd added molasses, she was shocked by the very idea, and had never thought to do it herself. This leaves us with a bootstrap paradox I don't know how to solve.

INGREDIENTS: Normal date square recipe. 3 tbsp blackstrap molasses.

INSTRUCTIONS: Follow the normal date square recipe. When preparing the date paste, add blackstrap molasses for additional umami.

IMPROVED YOGURT

Sometimes, you go home for reading week, only to discover that your parents have forgotten how to grocery shop. Sometimes, it's breakfast, and the only thing in their fridge is the most bitter Greek yogurt known to the modern world. Modern problems, modern solutions meet.

INGREDIENTS: Yogurt. Blackstrap molasses.

INSTRUCTIONS: Pour a serving of yogurt into your serving bowl. Add a swirl of blackstrap molasses atop. Mix. Serve.

Note: Yogurt can be interchanged with oatmeal or ice cream to similar effect.

BREAKFAST

Sometimes, the yogurt economy is really bad, and for all your willingness to lug litres upon litres of yogurt back from Zehrs Beechwood, Galen Weston decides that all you'll find in your apartment is finally-no-longer-gouged bread. We can still make do.

INGREDIENTS: Bread, blackstrap molasses, butter (optional), cream cheese (optional).

INSTRUCTIONS: Toast bread. Optionally spread butter or cream cheese atop toast. Spread blackstrap molasses atop toast. Serve.

PEANUT BUTTER SANDWICH

yeah you read that right.

INGREDIENTS: Bread. Peanut butter. Blackstrap molasses.

INSTRUCTIONS: Toast bread. Spread peanut butter and molasses on bread. Serve.

GRILLED CHEESE SANDWICH

The molasses highlights the umami in the cheese. Bonus points if the grilled cheese sandwich is made on rye bread with mozzarella cheese.

INGREDIENTS: Bread, cheese (real, not American), garlic powder, za'atar spice (optional), blackstrap molasses, cooking oil.

INSTRUCTIONS: Pour a dash of cooking oil into a pan on medium heat. Atop, stack: slice of bread, cheese, garlic powder, za'atar spice (or other herbs), another slice of bread, and another dash of oil. Flip earlier than you think you need to in order to avoid charring the bread. Flip until desired cheese melt to bread toasting ratio is achieved. Serve with blackstrap molasses as a dip.

Note: in a pinch, this recipe's blackstrap molasses can be substituted by ketchup.

IRON SUPPLEMENT

A single tablespoon of blackstrap molasses contains 17% of your daily iron intake. It is also unequivocally a byproduct of sugar. This is not medical advice.

INGREDIENTS: Molasses.

INSTRUCTIONS: Pour molasses into spoon. Serve.

SCONES

The Gaspé peninsula is beautiful. It is defined by rolling Appalachian mountains, endless seas, and a quiet not found in the Windsor-Québec corridor. It's home.

It is not, however, overflowing in opportunity. About fifty years ago, my grandparents left it behind. They brought something with them, however.

Molasses.

It was a staple. When my uncles brought new partners home for Christmas, the marriage eligibility test was simple: how did they respond to a spoonful of blackstrap molasses? I left for Waterloo, and as soon as possible, stocked my kitchen with molasses. Not long after, I visited a cousin of mine for the first time; the first thing I saw on her kitchen shelf? Molasses.

A decade ago, my family went back to the Gaspé to visit. On the other side of the Appalachian wall, we pulled up to an old farmhouse; from the front porch, you could see Rocher Percé in the distance. My aunt welcomed us inside, sat my parents and I at the kitchen table, and brought out fresh-baked scones for us to share.

There was only one thing on the table to pair them with.

molasses

1. Recipe source: Ethan & Lauren from my kindergarten class
2. Recipe source: <https://www.allrecipes.com/recipe/214012/grandmas-gingerbread-pancakes/>

LOVE YOUR LIFE A LITTLE TOO MUCH? TRY L'INTERNATIONALE!

On January 27th, 2026, I concocted by far the most incredible pizza combination of ingredients available on the Pizza Nova website possible. I present: L'Internationale.

- Asiago Cheese (Italy)
- Spanish Onions
- Anchovies (Pizza Nova says they're from Morocco)
- BBQ Base (United States)
- Whole wheat, well done (to represent humanity as a whole unified, well done front)

This pizza would've also been not cut to emphasize the unity of the human race but unfortunately the editors shut that down. It is by far one of the pizzas of all time. The anchovies immediately hit you with incredibly pungent fishy smell. Upon first bite you are immediately thrown off with the most insanely horrible taste. The combinations of the various toppings and sauce create what I can only describe is the best recreation of vomit I have ever had. Plugging your nose isn't even enough to prevent the taste.

On that day, I also submitted a separate pizza that failed to make the cut that I dubbed the "mouth feels pizza," consisting of a well done crust with olive oil base, feta cheese, pineapple, and tomato in an effort to create the worst mouth feel of a pizza imaginable, trying to go for a "soft outside, crunchy inside" texture. However, I don't think even that would've held a stand against the mouth feel of L'Internationale. The Asiago and the anchovies crumbled upon a bite and scattered across the tongue, while the onion provided this soft, strand-like texture. Somehow the pizza also managed to recreate the feel of vomit as well, only drier.

Reviews include: "absolute vomit," "it's poison but it's a funny poison," and "I don't think I can support globalism anymore."

So when you feel a bit too good about life, think about experiencing L'Internationale, the lower bound of pizza.

fingersinsockets

I want to defeat you.

PROF. JASON BELL

BOOK REVIEW – THE GAME CHANGERS BY TIM CLARE

HOW PLAYING GAMES CHANGED THE WORLD AND CAN CHANGE YOU TOO

I love tabletop games, but I haven't thought of its significance in history until I read *The Game Changers*. In the past few hundred years, chess and playing cards were enjoyed by people all over the world. In the modern days, games like Uno, Monopoly, the Pokémon card game and D&D are taking over in popularity. The book encompasses the story of these creations and how tabletop games reshape the world.

When rolling a pair of dice and adding up their values, you probably know the frequency distribution of the result. For example, the chance of getting 12 is $\frac{1}{36}$. The chance of getting 7 is $\frac{1}{6}$, which is the highest. When playing Catan, you are supposed to learn those chances to play it well. However, in the ancient days, people didn't care about that. They believed that the result is determined by fate/god/aura/social credit. That was why rolling dice was very common for fortune telling. In Royal Game of Ur, one of the most ancient board games, players roll dice and move that many steps on a 3x6 grid. It is a simple racing game, but each grid on the board represents special meanings; some indicate good fortune, some indicate tragedy. The royal families from ancient Mesopotamia loved to play this game to learn about their fortunes. They even wrote down the rules of the game on murals, so archaeologists got to learn about how they were played. In ancient age, rolling dice was also used for resolving conflicts, gambling, determining who should be beheaded in a group crime, etc. Alea iacta est. The die is cast.

Playing tabletop games help people foster community. Warri, a board game being played by the Africans and Latin Americans, help unite people to fight against slavery. During the Ukrainian War, a father from Kyiv and his kid from Poland played many sessions of Blood Bowl online to keep in touch in real life. Molotov cocktails were used as pawns to play chess when soldiers were resting in the trenches. Despite language barriers, the refugees from Ukraine were greeted by regional chess communities at train stations across western Europe. They got to play a game of chess to ease their stress when coming to a new country. The first day when I arrived in Waterloo as an international student, I went to a local game store to play Magic the Gathering. Although I am not a native English speaker, I got to enjoy a game in a familiar setting. Games break the barriers between people naturally. It helps people with autism or other circumstances find a comfortable environment to talk.

The history of tabletop games can also be dramatic. When the Portuguese first arrived in Japan, they brought playing cards to the locals. Although they were officially banned by the emperors, people still loved to play them secretly for gambling or just for fun. They made localized version of the playing cards using plants and flowers as patterns. Later on, games like *Hyakunin Isshu* became popular. It was a memory game. The players need to memorize the poems that each card belongs to, as well as their locations on the board. As playing cards started to serve educational purposes, gradually they became accepted by the officials. In Meiji period, Fusajiro Yamauchi founded

Nintendo to sell hand-crafted hanafuda. As we all know now, Nintendo has turned into one of the biggest game companies, owning many famous franchises like Mario and Kirby. They still print hanafuda decks nowadays. You can stay tuned for their anniversaries for the special print. Karuta and *Hyakunin Isshu* have been spread out from Japan. There is even a Karuta club in Vancouver!

If you have played Monopoly, you know that it is not a fair game. You may have heard that Monopoly had been invented by an out-of-stock salesman during the Great Depression. That guy did exist. He got a copyright for the game in 1933. Later on, the game went viral and became the best-selling board game in 1935. People needed escapism during depressive time. The salesman became a multimillionaire and got to enjoy his life. He was a successful good entrepreneur that was admired by many. It sounds like a good story so far. Later on, the truth behind Monopoly had finally come to light. People discovered that the official account of its creation was inaccurate. Lizzie Magie, a feminist activist, poet, author, stenographer, actor and inventor, made an educational game called *The Landlord's Game* in 1904 to "provide a practical demonstration of the present system of land grabbing with all its usual outcomes and consequences." The "out-of-stock salesman" stole her creation in many aspects, design-wise and gameplay-wise. That is not the end of this irony—Monopoly is now owned by multinational toy and game conglomerate Hasbro. Unending different versions of Monopoly take over the board game shelves in department stores and supermarkets, muscling out competitors by sheer volume. Most new board games never get shelf space outside of special retailers. People like Monopoly for reasons. It is their American dream.

The book also touches on many of Tim Clare's personal stories. To write this book, he also did interviews and talks with many famous tabletop gamers in the world. Their stories feel relatable to me. I would recommend you give it a read. Even if you are not into tabletop games, you may learn a lot about this wonderful community.

eralogos

GOSPEL

It's `int* x;`, not `int **x;`.

Nothing you say could possibly convince me otherwise.

I don't care how the C syntax and grammar are designed. It's wrong.

Also, it should have been `int[] a;`, `int a[];` was a mistake.

the oracle

EDUCATION – A MIDDLE SCHOOL DROPOUT

A whole year ago now, January 2025, I decided to pursue an education. Prior to that, my highest level of education was the 6th grade, and I had a *whole lot* to catch up on. Most importantly, mathematics, as I'd set my sights on the University of Waterloo.

Seven months prior, July 2024, I had moved out for the first time at 16 years old, to re-explore my hometown in Waterloo, Ontario. Thanks to my business, I had achieved financial freedom, and I wanted to go out into the world and explore young adulthood.

After a summer of unadulterated freedom, I had changed in some ways. I wanted to stay longer. But as the months trailed on, I had grown lonely. I yearned for community, and looked towards California. Little did I know, I had everything I needed right in Waterloo.

I found a weekly gathering on campus, the UWaterloo Game Development Club. I was adopted by its members, and before I knew it, I was one of them. As time went on, I met so many incredible and interesting and funny people, that I had everything I needed in a community.

As a middle school dropout, I wasn't entirely like those surrounding me. Not only was I not a student—not at any university—but I hadn't finished the most basic levels of the education system. When they would talk of their courses, I had nothing to offer to the conversion. When somebody asked my program, I again, had nothing to offer.

I wanted to become a student, and I wanted it *bad*. I gave myself one year. One year to see it through, to see what it all has to offer. Around the same time, my work was gaining greater recognition, and I'd received an offer to work as the principal frontend developer for HD Admin. I wasn't willing to turn down such an opportunity, so I took them both on.

Through the months, I drudged my way through pre-algebra, then algebra and algebra two, acquired a GED diploma, and finally enrolled in the prerequisite courses for university. But with these official courses came heavy bureaucracy, much worse than I had imagined. Half of my course load wasn't a meaningful contributor to my learning.

That brings me to today. Between everything, I will not be able to finish my prerequisite courses. The workload has become unbearable, and the bureaucracy has made the possibility of completion a far cry at best. It's no longer feasible.

And you know what? I feel free. I had dug myself so far into these commitments that I had lost sight of my dearest values. The values that have gotten me to where I am in my career. So after a not-so-short breakdown, and the start of grappling with my failure, I feel free.

I don't regret the past year. I've done so much more than I ever thought possible, and I've grown as a person because

of it. I didn't think I'd ever graduate high school, but I got my diploma. And HD Admin was integrated within a hit video game, running 25M sessions concurrently, the new world record. My UI library is soon to go live in video games totalling >100B user sessions. It's not so bad.

I don't know exactly what comes next. I could continue pursuing university, I could work to grow my business, or I could try my hand at the traditional job market. I've been inundated for so long, the freedom is almost daunting.

Takeaways? I don't know. Do what you love. Don't abandon your values. Go crazy. You probably shouldn't drop out though, at least not before higher education. That one sure bit me in the ass.

Ava Lynch

WHY ARTIFICIAL NEURAL NETWORKS SUCK (ACCORDING TO mathNEWS)

- Not edible/don't taste good
- Not enough data
- Oversimplistic neurons
- No white-boy swag
- Idk I don't shower
- Cus billionaires love them
- Overfitting
- They're trained on reddit
- No nutrition
- No real neurons
- Neure-L networks (We need Neure-W networks)
- Skynet
- Not enough layers
- They have straws
- Not enough computing power!!!
- Not enough data
- No datacenter on the moon (yet) (for cooling)
- Don't capture full complexity of the brain
- They require prescribed labels and can't make their own judgements
- Cus they're modeled after humans (we're literally the best)
- Garbage in = garbage out
- Early training plato
- Pay to win on required hardware
- They're pretty cool
- They don't understand fundamental logic + no guarantees on correctness/accuracy

BLUE PERIOD

It had been three months since I bled, but when it happened, it was blue. Looking at the sorry slab of toilet paper in my hand, I decided that it was likely a hormonal imbalance—a matter of my own doing. After all, I had not adhered to the regimen prescribed to me by the traditional medicine doctor, whom Mom had taken me to when she learned I had started SSRIs.

This was my comeuppance, I supposed, for all the calls I ignored.

In the end, I decided to call up my roommate Johanna who was currently abroad in Leeds. I figured, of all the people I had a chance of reaching at the dead of night, she was the best bet. The phone rang out three times, then static came to the line.

“Lee?”

“Listen,” I said, “Has your period blood ever turned blue on you?”

“What?”

“Not indigo, or anything like that. I mean like sky blue. Cerulean, almost?”

There was a pause. “Uh, is this one of those personality tests again? You gotta stop listening to Myers-Briggs, that’s all phony stuff.”

“No,” I said, “I’m just wondering if I should go to the hospital. Would you go to the hospital if your period suddenly turned blue?”

“Sure?” In the background, I heard a voice calling her name. “Listen, Lee, I’ll call you back in a bit, okay? I think you should have a lie down maybe. Go to sleep, man.”

Before I could even bid my farewell, the line had cut out in three low tones.

Lingering on the toilet seat, I decided that I should listen to Johanna. She had a good head on her shoulders. Back in first year I used to bug her for everything when Mom was too busy to answer the phone. She taught me how to operate the dryer and how to scramble eggs on medium heat. I believed in her common sense.

Following her instructions, I spread a white towel across my mattress and lay down in corpse pose. It occurred to me that I should’ve asked her for next steps—there was little to do as I lay there waiting for blood to collect on my pad.

There was a point in time in my life—three minutes of hesitation before I’d submitted my OUAC applications to Mom’s nod of approval—when I dreamed up a career in fine arts. As I lay there nursing the slow-ache of my back, I flirted again with such a possibility: a solo exhibition called

Blue Period, after Picasso. I’d stand there naked in the room, bleeding on a blank canvas as the audience gaped at my biological oddity. Abramovic had done it—why couldn’t I? Surely, it would be a sensation.

Surely, I could—

But I was no artist. For all I could pretend to ascribe meaning to the mundanities of my life, I knew there was nothing marvelous to the day-night cycles that made up my existence. My period blood didn’t change that.

In the end, I scrolled TikTok until my screentime timer interrupted. Then Instagram, then YouTube Shorts. All the while, my phone collected the Do-Not-Disturbed notifications. I’d lost track of the days by now, but Mom never stopped trying to reach me. I’d long stopped checking my voicemail.

My mind toriled as *xxx.femboy.nun* bit into a biscoff donut with an emphatic *mmm*. I asked myself the same old questions—if I should change my major, if I should call her, if I should boil the licorice root, or if I should haul myself to the ER. Blue period blood wasn’t normal, was it? Johanna had only told me to lie down because she didn’t believe me. I was losing time, lying here, waiting for my blood to puddle. Maybe I would bleed out. Or who knew, maybe it was a novel bacterial strain and the scientists deserved a sample. Maybe I was patient zero, dooming the rest of the populace.

I was making the wrong decision again. I always do.

I turned off Do-Not-Disturb, and my phone became a glitter-bomb. Mom was on every platform—SMS, Messenger, Instagram, Whatsapp. For a minute, I just stared at my phone screen, gaping at her attention, her care.

Then I clicked one of the missed calls. The ringtone didn’t even complete the full cycle before her raucous voice came on the line.

“Lee,” she said, “Mommy’s been so worried! What is wrong with you? Why did you not answer my calls? Are you okay my baby?”

“I’m—”

“Mommy was going to call the police, Lee. How could you be so selfish, girl? I keep telling you to keep your location on, but you don’t listen!”

“Mom, I—”

“I’m driving to you right now, okay baby? We need to talk about this attitude of yours!”

“Mom, can you just listen to me?”

Mom huffed. "I am always listening to you. Every day I listen to you complain and complain. You're the one who does not listen."

"Mom, my period blood's blue. What should I do?"

There was silence on the line. Then, an exasperated breath.
"Baby, did you do what the doctor said?"

"I—"

"That's what I thought. You say you are sick, then you don't listen. You are so useless, Lee. Mommy works so hard for you, and you still ignore me. And you haven't even apologized."

"Sorry Mom," I said. "I'll take the medicine."

"You can say it properly when I am here, baby. And turn on your location."

"I'm sorry. I will," I said. "Thanks Mom."

"I'll be there soon. Love you, baby."

"I love you too, Mom."

For a moment, I kept holding my phone against my cheek. It buzzed—once, then again, until my head was swimming with the sound.

Slowly, I peeled myself off my bed, and walked out into the kitchen. I filled my noodle pot with water and turned on the heat. For a very long time, I stood in a daze, waiting for the water to boil.

varicose

THE DAILY GAMES I PLAY EVERY DAY

Since Wordle came out there have been a lot of daily games that came out, and here are the ones that I still play daily.

- **Wordle:** this is a classic that everyone knows. I play on hard mode because I think it's more interesting to think of the specific word that might fit the pattern you have, especially when it's a hard pattern to solve. It also discourages starting with a fixed set of 2–4 words every time which makes for more interesting games.
- **enclose.horse:** this is a relatively new game that came out this month. In this game there is a horse on a grid with land that it can walk over and water it cannot. The objective of the game is to use a predetermined maximum number of walls to enclose the horse, so that it cannot escape off the edge of the grid, while maximizing the number of tiles available. There are other features that can change the topology of the grid (i.e. portals) and items that can remove or add points. It's very interesting right now, but we will have to see whether it holds up over time.
- **Minute Cryptic:** This is a daily cryptic crossword clue. The general format of a cryptic crossword clue is that some part of the clue is the rough meaning of the answer, and the other part of the clue is some kind of wordplay that hints at the answer, and they are put together in a way that disguises which part is which. They're pretty hard, but the game provides hints to encourage you toward the answer. I like this game a lot, though I know a lot of people that are pretty negative toward the whole concept, which is fair because a lot of the clues can feel like bullshit, especially the format breaking clues.
- **catfishing:** Despite what you might think, this is short for Category Fishing. The goal of the game

is to guess the Wikipedia article from the list of categories. Each day you are given ten articles to guess, but it's extremely hard, so I usually only get two or three correctly, and often I don't know any of them. Despite the difficulty I think most Wikipedia enthusiasts would really enjoy this game and it's also a great way to learn about random stuff.

- Honorable mention to **Mapster** because it's not that compelling of a daily game but it has extreme comedy potential. You have to draw the outline of a country given a few major cities in it. I'm only slightly above average in geography so I'm pretty awful at this game, but it doesn't really matter because the scoring makes zero sense whatsoever. Honestly, I'm only including this because today (as of writing) the country to draw was Vatican City which was hilarious. Also, shout-out to the day it was Antarctica which for obvious reasons was impossible to determine the orientation of.

hyperlynx

Once, we got pizza with a charcoal-infused crust for Production Night.

Just the once, though.

A mathNEWS PIZZA CONNOISSEUR

profQUOTES

ACTSC 372: BEN FENG

“ I’m not sure if this room is old enough to remember a company called Nokia.

“ When I say that a significant amount of my money is in real estate, it just means that I borrowed a lot of money from the bank.

“ Show of hands, does anyone own any cryptocurrency? [*one hand raises*] Get to know his name, he will be very wealthy in ten years.

AMATH 353: FRANCIS POULIN

“ Yes, gravity is acting down. If you played a guitar with or without gravity, it would probably sound the same. I haven’t tried this.

AMATH 361: FRANCIS POULIN

“ If this term didn’t exist, fluid mechanics would’ve been solved a long time ago, and I wouldn’t have a job.

AMATH 373: GRAEME SMITH

“ You were tricking me? No, you were ragebaiting me. I’m like a DJ.

“ I’m not going to get derailed yet... Did anyone hear about the Greenland tweets?

AMATH 445: MOHAMMED KOHANDEL

“ I’m thinking of someone, you have six yes/no questions to deduce it... Is it Trump? Yes.

BIOL 239: JACQUELINE MACDONALD

“ If my grandfather had children with another woman before meeting my grandmother and never told anyone about it, we wouldn’t include those kids in the family tree, right? True story.

“ We can remember the order [of mitosis] by thinking of a dog peeing on a mat.

BU 405: REDWAN SIDDIQUI

“ You may not believe it, but reasons to make a thing are reasons not to buy it, and reasons to buy it are reasons not to make it.

BU 413: GERRY RAMOS

“ If you guys can come up with a reason for investing in crypto, I will give up teaching personal finance.

“ If people start running into the forest, its best if you follow them. ask questions later.

“ If you have emotional biases and your thinking is all magical and weird, with low standard of living risk, adapt. Everything is fine. You can afford to be eccentric and weird.

CO 353: KANSTANTSIN PASHKOVICH

“ I feel like I’m presenting simple things in complicated ways... Don’t worry, soon I will be presenting complicated things in complicated ways.

CS 146: BRAD LUSHMAN

“ There is the way that I do it and there is the way that is objectively wrong.

CS 146: ROSS EVANS

“ The important thing about Among Us is that it was the first ever video game.

“ ChatGPT? I don’t know what that is.

CS 146: BRAD LUSHMAN

“ Now, I caution you against the urge to be excessively cute.

CS 240E: ARMIN JAMSHIDPEY

“ This is an enriched course so I can do whatever I want.

CS 251: ZILLE HUMA KAMAL

“ ...except the transparency. We want that in our government, not in our storage systems.

CS 480: MARINA MEILA

“ We will make the problem easier. [erases half of the dataset]

CS 488: GLADIMIR BARANOSKI

“ I remember your name. You have a target on your back now.

“ You know about books, right? You guys ever been to a library?

“ As you can see here, I have very cool drawing skills.

“ With your eyes, you get perspective projection for free.

“ Good question. Find out and let us know.

ECON 201: JOEL BLIT

“ You can’t make new Picassos, because... Picasso is dead.

MATH 136: RACHAEL ALVIR

“ Planes are a pain! That’s how I remember a projection is a projection.

MATH 138: CARRIE KNOLL

“ Yay! I have done nothing wrong, but I have done... nothing.

“ Let’s take a function, capital F with respect to u.

“ It’s good to know that I am restricting u.

MATH 148: ALEXANDRU NICÀ

“ To prepare for the quiz, sleep, eat something sweet, and drink coffee.

“ We apply the squeeze theorem. Yes, yes, yes, squeeze it like a lemon.

“ That fellow with a big hammer. *[describing Thor]*

PHYS 359: ALAN JAMISON

“ You are an enormous eyeball. It’s kind of terrifying.

PMATH 352: JASON BELL

“ Of course it’s true! It’s true for $n = 5$, and so by induction it’s true for all natural numbers.

“ I’m lowkey eating an apple.

“ To use Gen Z language, this theorem lowkey goes hard.

“ I feel like millennial didn’t give us any cool slang... their slang doesn’t go hard.

“ All these definitions make me want to do an integral.

“ You’re in the complex plane, so it’s like you’re on the floor.

“ *[about parametrising paths]* What if you need to stop? Well, first of all, don’t.

“ I would love to teach a class where I could teach people how to read.

“ You know, like when you have your car and you’re like “I love my car!”, but then your car gets a dent and is concave and you don’t love it anymore?

PMATH 445: ALEX COWAN

“ I’m not assuming anyone knows anything about category theory. It’s just drawing arrows; it’s very easy.

PMATH 445: JIAHUI HUANG

“ I’ve seen Blake Madill write \mathbb{F} . No one ever does that. They use k .

“ You have a diagonal map of g being sent to (g, g) . That’s what I said after my midterm.

“ I met Serre once, he came to give a talk at my university in Switzerland. But they didn’t know who Serre was, so they booked a room the size of this room [RCH 308]. The entire math department came. So you had a bunch of old bald professors sitting in the chairs and the PhD students standing at the back. The master’s students couldn’t even get in the room.

PMATH 454: NICO SPRONK

“ No wants to call anything Spronkian, that’s horrific.

“ Try to insert your name in there and see if you deserve a place in history.

“ *[Writes “mise-en-scène” on the board]* Let’s pretend for a moment that instead of watching videos on YouTube and Netflix, we watch fine cinema.

“ If you aren’t interested in functional analysis, daydream for 36 seconds.

“ Sesquilinear, which means 1.5 times linear. I feel it’s dishonest because it’s more than that. It’s like 1.9 times linear.

“ I find that standing in front of a whiteboard drops us by like 6 IQ points, I don’t know why.

PMATH 863: NICO SPRONK

“ Spronk: What’s your favourite nontrivial finite group?
Student: The unique nonabelian group of order 4301.
Spronk: What the hell is wrong with you?

PMATH 945: JASON BELL

“ Nerds wanted to upend the social hierarchy. Jocks wanted to maintain it.

“ You know how in CS they have currying? They’re really smug about it. It’s not all that impressive.

“ If you want to go back in time, you shouldn’t jump a motorcycle over a flock of dinosaurs. It’s a bad idea. It turns out, you might, like when you land, crush a tiny shrew-like creature. And in time travel you can cause a

lot of damage. Maybe, it turns out that shrew was our common ancestor, so when you come back to our time, Donald Trump is no longer president of the US.

“ It’s like when you go into a bar with a bunch of bikers. At first you’re like, a little scared. You’re like “man I just want to get out. I just want a beer without getting, you know, beat up.” You don’t want to cause any trouble. I’m sure everyone here has experienced that at some point

STAT 341: ALEX STRINGER

“ That was my wife. Just goes to show you that there’s someone for everyone.

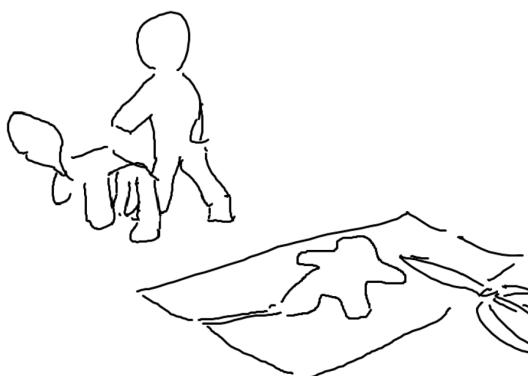
“ I didn’t realise when I started talking that I had an actual answer to your question.

STAT 443: REZA RAMEZAN

“ The next day, Trump says some dumb stuff.

“ I don’t know why random walk works [as a model for the stock exchange]. Maybe people drink and buy shares.

PLEATED RIVALRY



aphf

BORED IN THE BEST WAY

Co-op term is so funny what do you mean you can just do whatever you want after work and not have to have homework and studying on your brain 168 hours of the week and you can just randomly start playing Animal Jam again and try to collect every plushie obtainable from the claw machines?

AbelianKwyjibo

LAUNDRY DOESN'T HAVE TO BE THIS BAD, GUYS

Are we all doomed to fold clothes for two hours a week for the rest of our lives? Someone on Reddit asked that,¹ and I thought to myself, “Ya, what a hassle, but surely I only spend like half an hour a week folding...”

So I timed myself, expecting maybe 25 min. It took 8.

I guess I had never tapped into my true folding power before. I was always half folding, half watching brainrot on YouTube or something. My friend tried the same thing, and her expectation of 20 minutes was slashed down to 6 minutes.

I ran a poll. I asked people how long they thought a load of laundry took them to fold.

Me: 25 min

Stephanie P: 20 min

QUAAAAAAAACK: Um like 10 minutes

avahhh: 10–15 min

awED: 50 minutes

befuddlED: 20 min

maj1ckED: I don’t fold my laundry

revivED: To fold? Like 5 minutes I think. I have a really bad sense of time.

Then, I asked them to time themselves folding their laundry, and asked them what the results were.

Me: 8 min

Stephanie P: 6 min

QUAAAAAAAACK: Ya still like 10 minutes, it takes a quarter of a TV show episode. I usually watch Star Trek.

avahhh: Uh one hour.

awED: Epsilon? NaN?

befuddlED: Whooaaa! With 5 As, no 10 As, no 15 As. We can go higher!

maj1ckED: What the f**k?

revivED: what??

My point is, on average, **people (Me and Stephanie) thought folding laundry took three times as long as it actually did.** Now, go time yourself folding your laundry, and be amazed.

no pun indented

1. https://www.reddit.com/r/NoStupidQuestions/comments/1omtstu/are_we_all_just_doomed_to_fold_clothes_for_2/

mathSNEW

WHEN IN EFFECT, RES +70

COOL ARKNIGHTS MECHANICS I LIKE

As a tower defense gacha game, *Arknights* has some pretty interesting gameplay mechanics specific to certain stages and enemies, which creates quite a bit of variety in how each stage can be tackled.

- **Hole:** Instantly kills ground enemies that walk over them.
 - Instantly kills bosses!
 - Pretty much the only use of Push Strokers and Hookmasters (though they can do funny stall strats, and things outside of shifting) as long as the enemies are too heavy.
 - Also instantly kills Civilians!
- **Identity:** Certain enemies can either be Civilians or Spies.
 - Identities are gradually confirmed when blocked by an unit or within the attack range of an allied unit.
 - Laneholding, but purely block focused or something.
- **Farmland:** Heals operators on them, but when filled with Blight, damages operators on them instead.
 - Blight spreads across adjacent Farmland, but spread can be blocked by Throttle Valves.
 - Pumping water from other Farmland can either dilute or spread Blight.
 - Gotta be mindful where enemies spread Blight and protect Blightless Farmland.
- **Salt Flat:** Slows enemies walking on it and eventually sinks them.
 - Certain enemies construct rope bridges over them.
 - Finding ways to make enemies stay on them long enough is fun.
- **Variation:** Depending on whether the music is passionate or melancholic, allies and enemies gain buffs and debuffs.
 - Variations can switch after reaching certain points in the stage, or by specific enemy abilities or Tuning Nodes (after hitting them a bunch, perhaps from a specific side).
 - Music dynamically changes too!
- **Yumen Catastrophe Defense:** Ranged tiles that provide high ground advantage, but enemies can climb on and walk along them.
 - Lets melee enemies get close to your squishy ranged units.
 - Best to stop them from getting on, or find ways to have your ranged operators tank head-on attacks.
- **Transverse Plate:** Requires operators on them to be linked to another nearby operator by a Stabilizer Chain.
 - Each operator can hold up to two Chains at once.

- Create funky webs to trip enemies or avoid heat conduction.
- **Certain Fates:** Giant pachinko balls shot from a launcher, rolling down a specific path.
 - Gain points when colliding with enemies and when caught by operators standing on certain tiles.
 - After gaining enough points, your most expensive operator can be deployed for free with full skill charge for a short while.
 - If you can keep gaining points in time and keep balling, you can refresh the duration and continue deploying operators for free.
- **Gravity:** Easier to move and attack along the Gravity direction, harder when against.
 - Planetary Debris drift along the Gravity direction, crushing everything in the way.
 - Gravity Switches changes the direction when operators with at least 1 block or heavy enemies step on them.
 - When one button is held down, the opposite can't be pressed (can be used to maintain desired Gravity direction).
- **Tattered Pillar:** After reducing its HP to 0, and hitting it one more time, collapses in attack direction, instantly killing most things in the way.
 - Instantly kills your own operators if you aren't careful!
 - Bypasses revival mechanics!
 - Leaves behind roadblocks, affecting enemy pathing.
- **Camera:** Emits a beam of light when an operator is placed behind.
 - Certain enemies get stronger or weaker in the camera light.
 - Often requires changing camera direction.
 - Interacts interestingly with deployment direction and order.
- **Intrusive Call:** ◇◇◇◇The tutorial pointer hand is placing towers and activating stage devices too :)◇◇◇◇
 - ◇◇◇◇◇◇◇◇Don't worry about it :)◇◇◇◇◇◇◇

Refraction

MY THOUGHTS ON ARKNIGHTS: ENDFIELD 1 WEEK AFTER RELEASE

I wanna be surtrs ice cream the way she can pop my cherry

moon debt

ACCIDENTALLY INTRODUCING DEMOCRACY (FOR REAL THIS TIME)

CHOICE QUOTES: EMBRACING DEFEAT

Welcome to the first in a series about what happens when a math student discovers the concept of reading. Today's book is *Embracing Defeat* by John W. Dower, a comprehensive and very accessible introduction to the postwar occupation of Japan after WWII, an era that nobody ever covers ever unless they went to school in Japan.

Instead of giving you a summary, I will instead be pulling out choice quotes, anecdotes, ideas, and things which could be.

THE PROSTITUTE AND THE GI

A popular children's game at the time was black marketeer and prostitute.

At the time, vast numbers of women were initially pressed into service as "comfort women;" the local government itself proposed this idea itself, building what were essentially vast complexes of legalized brothels. These women were told that they would be protecting Japan's chastity... just, not their own. A truck carrying women who were told that they were going to be office workers rioted when they learned of their true destination. One woman lost an eye in the fighting.

And the thing is... it kind of worked. Rapes and rates of sexual assault went up significantly after the MacArthur administration banned these brothels out of concern for STDs. And these legalized brothels moved into the informal sector anyways.

Thus, the first image that the American GI had of Japan was through the prostitute, dressed up as geishas, and that informed America's postwar conception of Japanese women for about a generation. At the same time, American pornographic magazines were being imported into Japan. Just as American GIs were learning to objectify Japanese women, so too were Japanese men learning to objectify American women. This would influence the development of, amongst other things, *hentai*, and modern women's beauty standards in Japan.

THE ROYAL REGALIA

The number of thieves, murderers, and men carrying knives grew to be so great, that a popular radio program suggested that they, like other professions, should form a union.

The other side of this were thieves, murderers, and black marketeers. Once upon a time, there was a judge who tried to live honestly. He died of malnutrition.

His widow's mournful comment: "It is horrible these days to be married to an honest man."

The kamikaze, once the most venerable and respected warriors of the ancient regime, were nothing more than petty thieves

and murderers. A society that was rigidly hierarchical found itself rounding overnight.

Toughs flaunted their defiance of "good" society by attiring themselves in what became known as their "three sacred regalia," an irreverent takeoff on the sanctified regalia of the emperor. In place of the imperial mirror, sword, and jewel, they were identified by their predilection for aloha shirts, nylon belts, and rubber-soled shoes.

CONQUERING THE CONQUEROR

For the American GI, a minor bureaucrat in America found himself promoted to a minor noble in Japan. Immediately he moved into the mansions of the former upper class, which were mysteriously still left standing in the rubble, while the houses of the common man were all burnt to the ground. He would find for himself several servants paid for at the occupation's expense (the entirety of which was paid for by the local government). The first priority was given to bringing up these houses to the latest in American suburban hospitality, things like indoor plumbing and electrical wiring.

But it wasn't all quite one sided. The most coveted luxury for such a minor despot was to be taken duck-hunting in the Imperial Palace. Amongst other luxuries, the conqueror was taken in by the trappings and refinement of the nobility, for he came from a republican tradition without such kings and aristocrats.

ACCIDENTAL DEMOCRACY

For all the "old Japan hands" who were looking forwards to working in the occupation administration would be sorely disappointed. MacArthur in fact, hired anybody who had NO experience in Japan. He hired random people to run his administration. By all conventional wisdom, it should've been a disaster. A "Great Man" comes in, planning on introducing democracy through the bayonet in a foreign country he knew nothing about and made an active effort to keep his ignorance.

And by all means, MacArthur was mostly ineffective except when it counted. All conventional wisdom suggested that "the Japanese people are not ready for democracy;" and conventional wisdom was wrong, because those old Japan hands took their advice from aristocrats, who weren't exactly inclined to a republican tradition. He recklessly removed the pre-war censorship laws and introduced mass democracy.

And it sort of worked, for one very important reason. Before the first allied troops had even set foot on Japan, school-teachers had their pupils black out their history textbooks. If there was one constant in Japan at the time, it was iconoclastic change; the Meiji era had prepared them for that. One

could even call it tradition. At the time, Japanese intellectuals were in a fervent national debate about the future of the country. They concluded that the problem was that, unlike the

Americans, the Japanese were too individualistic, and unable to cooperate. (How things change).

Antigone of Toronto

DSC DATASET 2

THE SNOW WILL NEVER STOP ME SHITWRITING AS "MARKETING"

hello everybody!! hope you've been enjoying all these snow days! personally i have but rescheduling events is not fun :(speaking of that...

upcoming events:

- are you looking to hear some tips and takeaways from upper-year students so you can have an ounce of hope this co-op season?? bc i am :(if so, join me at our upper year co-op panel on feb 3rd from 7-9 and ask away
- cxc is happening in a week aaaaaaaaaa i'm so excited!!! enjoy our clash tournament, karaoke, pitchathon and so much more so keep your calendar open feb 6th-8th hackers!
- i can't really advertise BOT since this is coming out the day after so this is why we follow us on insta at @uwaterloodsc and have notifs on for our discord server okay? bc you don't want to miss another opportunity for free boba and snacks all while having a good time

office hours:

are you looking to chat with our lovely smart amazing exec team or just want to chill in mc's coolest hang out spot? then come to mc3031 any time from 10-5 and i will let you in bc i kinda live there... feel free to take a peek at our merch for our hackathon or cry on the loveseat, we're open! also we're working on a method to rent textbooks so stay tuned guys

i already advertised socials so this feels a lot more empty, but if you needed another reason to follow, how about our pretty curated posts? our doomscrollable reels? or for me? for all the baddies in the club? please? 😊

pleading aside, look at the clock! it's exec quotes time! honestly my fave time bc i get to read old discord messages and be a stalker :) anyway here is a collection of some of my favourite recent texts! very hard to pick bc we were very chatty last few weeks

- join me in the military industrial complex
- wo shi ni baba
- my ears are scared of you too
- I cannot see younger guys and think damn u learning induction
- WO HEN XI HUAN ZHONG GUO REN
- or hit me queen
- Im telling u this is the year of younger guys

- i only know 美奴
- teehee!!!!Hteariutrsjdyti6r5ehargbualrrul4heigrd
- i ahve a long ass
- if you're innocent then I'm vietnamese
- we just need to buy 51% of csc's shares
- social but if you socialize you pay
- nyooo gib the ppl furryzzzzzz
- We are NOT charlie kirk
- my tax money going into soft gay corn 😊
- wait am i just offensive to michaels
- icl unemployed after grad we going furry art route
- 我是女权主义者
- citations are so tasty
- a-arigatou kale-san, hon-hontouni a-arigatou
- LOL ppl want to see furry club will give us free promotion
- UR MICHAELIST
- wish my parents were in a chinese time of life in the 2000s bc following one child policy i would not exist 😊
- hop on the canadian tax payer funded yaoi!
- bible has an ending ????
- sáu bàyyy

istg i am milking our exec server for sm content, but don't we seem like a very cool funny sociable team? perhaps you should join us for spring 26 then! then you can come play badminton and get poke bowls with us :D

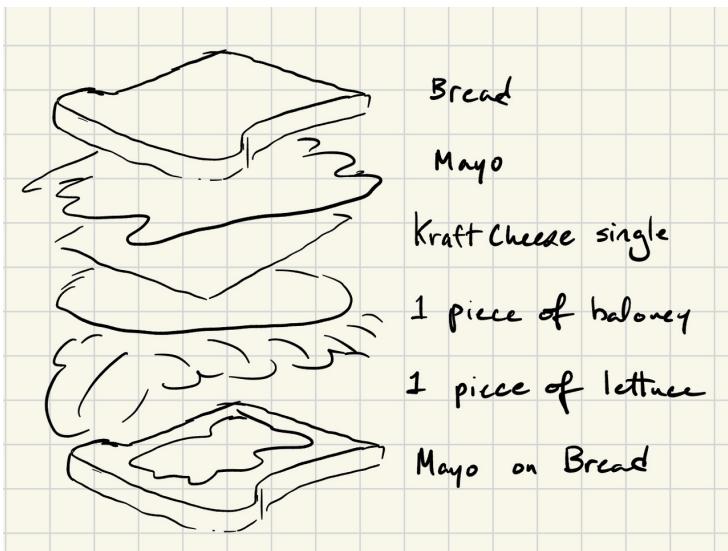
finally, because our bot event is was lunar new year themed, here is a festive message from our funny amazing design execs



(based on a drawing on the office whiteboard!) have a good week dsc baddies!!!

BREAD QUESTION

Let's say you have a sandwich (see diagram below)



Specifically, the components are:

1. Two pieces of plain white untoasted Wonder Bread
2. One knife scoop of Hellman's mayo (the jar is about a month old)
3. Kraft Singles American cheese slice
4. Slice of baloney meat taken from Loblaws late-day clearance section
5. Plain iceberg lettuce. The edges are like wilting a bit but it's not gross.

Consider the bottom mayo and bread slices in the same category as components one and two.

This is a very solid school-issued free lunch you might expect alongside a whole orange and apple juice at a swim meet. Now, let's say that suddenly, spending on school swim meet lunches was subsidized so much that everything was free. Sadly, you as the chef preparing these lunches only have enough time to place a bulk order on one ingredient.

So what singular component, when pushed to its "maximum" form, creates the most positive impact on the sandwich overall?

OPTION #1 — THE BREAD

An issue when talking about bread is that you have to consider it as a component of a sandwich. Thus, amazing bread options such as garlic naan or milk bread are excluded. I'm imagining a really nicely toasted french sourdough with some really nice honey or garlic butter glazing. The issue with that is the harmony with the rest of the ingredients. You could argue that the bread is the only truly "essential" ingredient (i.e. a few pieces of bread with nothing in between them¹ is still a

sandwich), so you could just have some really nice bread by itself. Anyways, my point is I have no clue what I'm saying.

OPTION #2 — THE SAUCE

I mean, like, it's sauce. I feel like mayo is like already a pretty good option, idk what you could replace it with. Like, better mayo, maybe? My point is the mayo won't ever be bad. The month old jar gives it a certain irreplaceable aura.

OPTION #3 — THE CHEESE

Cheese, imo, is a sandwich amplifier. Like, really good cheese is gonna make a sandwich go from great to insane. The issue is if we have all of our other ingredients, the cheese will just be overpowering (and not in a good way). Also I think I'm, like, lactose intolerant or something?

OPTION #4 — THE MEAT

I feel like this the heavy hitter. There's, like, some very strange appeal to a slice of luncheon meat in this very specific sandwich, but in general I don't think you can argue that a really good piece of meat will make a sandwich worse. I fear, however, that we run into a similar problem with the cheese where a *peak* meat (some really fancy Spanish ham, perhaps?) is just too strong for the sandwich.
Overall, super strong contender.

OPTION #5 — VEGETABLES

Limitless options. Need I say more. Just make like a lettuce wrap or something and take it out of the sandwich and eat that (though perhaps that's gaming the system?)

I'm just a bit hungry.

moon debt

1. See https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Toast_sandwich

PLAY GEOGUESSR?

JOIN UW GEOGUESSR CLUB!

We play Geoguessr together every Thursday at 6pm in EV3 4412, including live challenges, team duels, and other party games!

- Bring your own laptop
- No pro account needed
- All levels welcome

Join our Discord! linktr.ee/uwgeoguessr See you there :)

Whole Number Haver

WHERE AM I

I HATE CO-OP TERM (PT. 2)

You guys, strange stuff is befalling me. I left off my last article sitting in an infinite stairwell, with no bottom in sight, and too many steps to climb to go home. I was tired from all the walking, so I submitted my article and thought I'd take a quick nap, making the ascent whenever I woke up. I don't even know how long I was asleep, but when I woke up, I was not lying on that stairwell anymore. None of my stuff was with me either. I awoke on this cot in this very bureaucratic looking office. It all seemed normal in my hypnopompic state, but I noticed so many off-putting details. Like firstly, none of the words on anything were in English. In fact, it was from a script I've never even seen before. Secondly, although all the shuffling, busy figures were all humanoid looking, they were definitely not human. They had two arms and two legs, but their heads were long and disk shaped, extending backwards like the alien from *Alien*. They had four eyes, seven fingers, and many of their proportions were unusual by human standards. I must've stuck out like a sore thumb.

Within moments of waking up, this computer-looking device next to my station started beeping and making unintelligible noises. Did I mention this place was loud? So much beeping. One of the figures, wearing an unrecognizable outfit, came rushing to my cubicle. They were shuffling around this toyish looking device until they passed it off to me. I had no idea what to do with it so I just started randomly fidgeting with it. Abruptly, they took it away from me and made me rise from my bed, and began leading me out of the building.

On my way out, I saw no other humans or similar stations. All the other beings were wearing similar clothing, so I guess this was the office garb of whatever world this was. The place gave off the vibe of an office, but all the walls were so much more rounded, with more twists and turns than the human world, and nothing looked quite right. For instance, there were no doors. Instead, to leave this enclosure, the being led me through to an alcove that had an infinite looking stairwell that looked like the one I lost myself in. They picked me up and sat me on their shoulders (like at a music festival), pranced around, up and down the steps, left and right, playing with the banister, in a seemingly calculated manner. All of a sudden, a few steps below, a portal to the outside started opening up, which the being stepping through, still carrying me.

To say the outside was overstimulating would be an understatement.

The sky was red, for one, and we appeared to be in a trinary star system. I couldn't even begin to recount all the tiny details of the bustling metropolis I'd found myself in. The being let me down, signed some gesture with their fingers, and stepped back into the portal, closing it behind them. I was in the middle of who knows what or where, with no idea what anything was or how to communicate with any of these beings. Everything was too overwhelming, so I did what I do best: I walked. I walked aimlessly, purposefully not registering

anything I was seeing, until I noticed one building, sticking out like a sore thumb. It was a bland, cube-like building with a set of doors and the only English text I'd seen so far posted above the doors: **mathNEWS**.

I ran in, thinking I would be somehow teleported to prod night, but I wasn't. It was a small room that looked like an elementary school computer lab, with a bored looking alien sitting behind the counter at the back. I tried to converse with them, but they didn't know any English. However, they somehow figured I was hungry, and gave me a rather nice looking meal (chicken and mashed potatoes—something humans would eat). Beside each computer was a printed set of English instructions on how to submit a **mathNEWS** article from here. There was no WordPress, instead being done through this custom software that somehow beamed it up to the editors I guess.

I realized the next prod night wouldn't be for another who knows how long, so I've spent the past couple of days just wandering around. I don't have the energy to learn what any of this crap in this world is. Walking around aimlessly is always nicer. Besides, I have plenty of time to figure out how to get out of here. The being at the counter gives me three meals a day, so that's nice. Maybe I should first try learning their language?

Too much work.

Anyways, that's how I'm writing this article. I guess it has been like two weeks since anyone's seen me so they're probably looking for me. Thought I'd give you all an update.

LavenderTownEnjoyer

CAN YOU TEACH A RAT TO PLAY POKER?



Artist's rendition of a rat looking swag as hell.

WHAT IF WE RELOCATED ALL US-BASED MLB TEAMS TO ST. CATHARINES - NIAGARA?

While I was browsing the r/baseball subreddit, as I do from time to time, I came across a post titled “*What if we relocated all US based MLB teams to Canada?*”¹ This post discussed what the MLB would look like in the alternate reality where it was 29 Canadian teams and one American team as opposed to vice versa. They used the census metropolitan area population totals of each country to try to match each American team to its Canadian counterpart, creating teams such as the Thunder Bay Guardians and the Montreal Angels of Longueuil. Fun! They also tried to create a reasonable geographic alignment for the divisions that these new teams would play in. That’s where the trouble started...

Since there were too many teams in Southern Ontario, they decided to take the team from the 11th largest metropolitan area (St. Catharines—Niagara) and move it to Halifax to add an extra Atlantic team. But instead of replacing the next lowest population city with St. Catharines—Niagara, they just SKIPPED IT. Brantford got a team! Chatham got a team! (No shade). But they skipped it! They skipped me!

Niagara has a rich baseball history that deserves to be recognized. In St. Catharines, Carlos Delgado used to ride his bike to the Dairy Queen near my Granny’s house. Where Baseball Hall of Famer Jeff Kent got his career started, the same year someone tried to kill the beloved giant metal Giraffe named Gerry at Chico’s bar a few blocks away.² Shannon Stewart, Pat Hengten, Vernon Wells, and Reed Johnson all got their start in the Garden City. In Welland, Tim Wakefield made his first switch from hitting to pitching. Before his improbable 2001 World Series run, Tony Womack was playing in the Rose City. The Welland Jackfish just won the Canadian Professional Baseball League championship last year!

So in order to rectify this, I will instead relocate all 30 teams of MLB to St. Catharines—Niagara instead. I analyzed census district tracts to create rough estimations for the communities in Niagara and matched the top communities with their American major league counterparts. The results are presented here.

I feel like the results turned out well. I think I agree with St. Catharines, the region’s financial centre as NY, glamorous Niagara Falls as LA, and Welland with its Welland-ness as Chicago. I consulted with a Welland expert and would like to clarify that the Welland White Sox play on the East Side and the Welland Cubs play on the West Side. The St. Catharines Yankees vs Thorold Red Sox parallel also plays quite well. The Rangers and Astros also stay together in the suburbs of Niagara Falls so that’s nice.

So anyways... This’ll teach them not to mess with us. Think twice before you snub Niagara Region,³ because I’ll be waiting for you.

Niagara League		
West	Central	East
Niagara Falls Angels	Welland White Sox	St. Catharines Yankees
Westlane Rangers	Port Dalhousie Tigers	Thorold Red Sox
Stamford Astros	Fonthill Twins	Buffalo Blue Jays
Western Hill Mariners	Port Robinson Royals	NOTL Rays
Dain City Athletics	Fenwick Guardians	Chippawa Orioles

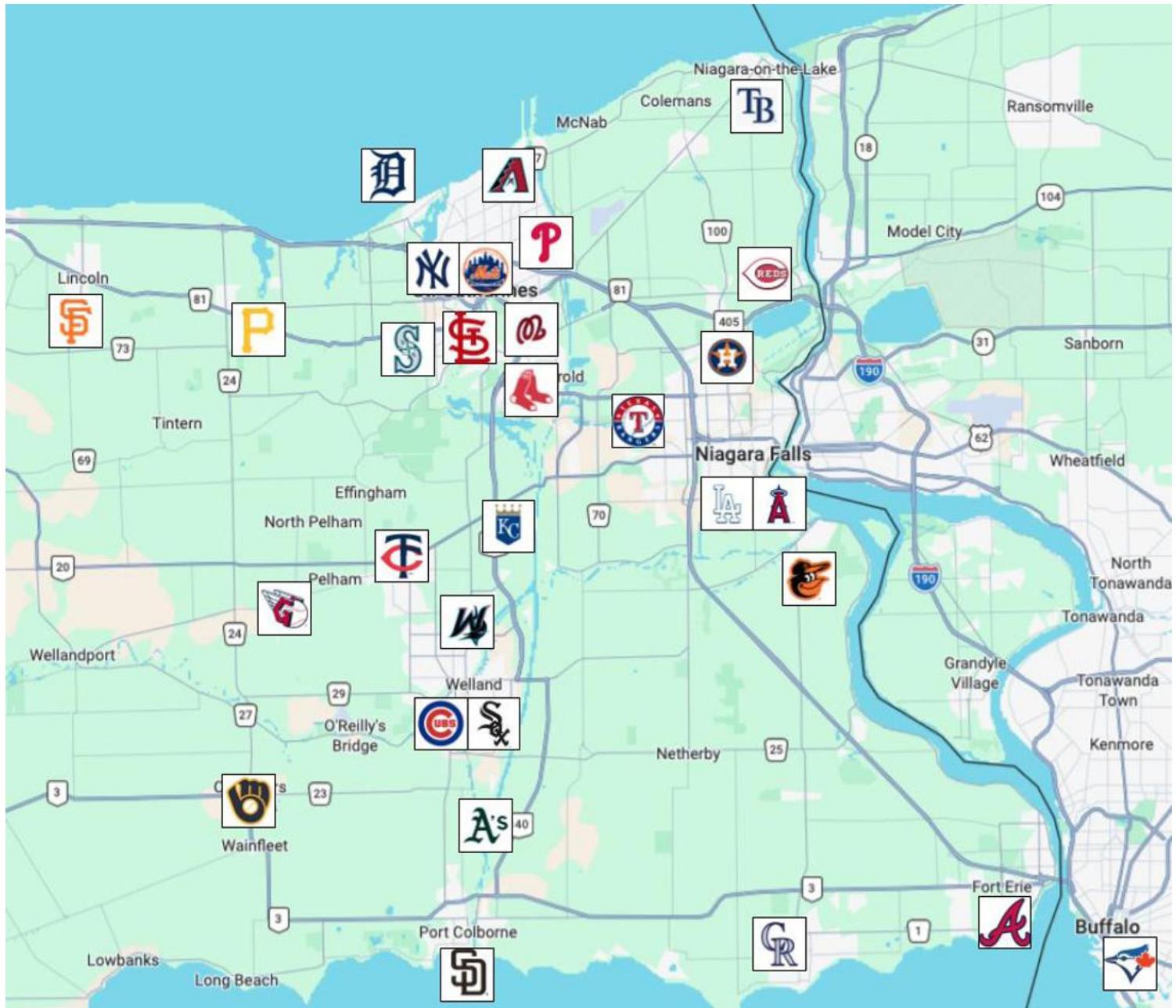
Regional League		
West	Central	East
Niagara Falls Dodgers	Welland Cubs	St. Catharines Mets
Port Weller Diamondbacks	Glenridge Cardinals	Merritton Nationals
Beamsville Giants	Vineland Pirates	Facer Phillies
Port Colborne Padres	St. Davids Reds	Fort Erie Braves
Crystal Beach Rockies	Wainfleet Brewers	Seaway Marlins

Lars Nootbaar

1. https://www.reddit.com/r/baseball/comments/1q4zd05/what_if_we_relocated_all_us_based_mlb_teams_to/
2. Gerry luckily survived this attack and lives on today.
3. I missed Grimsby and West Lincoln, bite me! They’re more Hamilton-adjacent anyways.

I’m going to beat the author to death with my bare hands.

ABSTRACTED, mathNEWS EDITOR



STARDEW VALLEY TOP 10 LIST

1. Krobus
2. Krobus
3. Clint
4. Abigail
5. The Wizard
6. Willy
7. Linus
8. Robin
9. Leah
10. Harvey

N THINGS MY SUBLET LEFT ME

- 2 pieces of used floss
- a toenail
- a crumpled go transit receipt
- strange faintly brown stains on the bathroom door
- an odd chunk of unidentifiable black plastic
- dried grains of rice scattered across the carpet
- scratches in the drywall
- a suspicious scent that did not go away for days despite my best efforts
- horrendous brown gunk weaved in tiny hairs stuck in the sink strainer (almost made me vomit while cleaning it out D:)

cruz

phisoup

GO ON EXCHANGE!

This article is roughly a year and a half overdue. I've wanted to write it ever since I arrived in Lausanne in August of 2024. But, it just kept getting pushed back... and back... and back... and finally, trapped in MC by metres of snow, reminiscing of alpine meadows and sandy beaches—I have found the motivation to encourage you all to go on exchange!

I was lucky enough to be selected for two international exchanges (one wasn't enough). In Fall 2024, I travelled to the Ecole Polytechnique Fédérale de Lausanne in Switzerland. Shortly thereafter, in Winter 2025, I travelled to the University of Queensland in Brisbane, Australia. Both of these trips were phenomenal, and each in their own ways. The Swiss education system is brutal, but there was an abundance of activities to reset: hiking, climbing, swimming; the list goes on. Also, Switzerland, being in the middle of Europe, was also excellently positioned for travel. Throughout the term, I travelled to France, Denmark, and the Czechia, among other places. Australia was completely different: their culture was far more relaxed and laid back, which was tricky to adjust to after spending time in Switzerland. There, I joined the university's "Mountain Club" and joined a dozen-or-so hiking, climbing, and canyoning trips. I also travelled down to Sydney, and spent two weeks road-tripping up New Zealand. (And before you ask: no, I did not go surfing; no, I don't regret it.)



A common misconception worth addressing is that exchange is expensive. It certainly can be, if you travel frequently—but it's also possible to budget well and keep your exchange semester cheap. For instance, the combined cost of my two exchanges was less (yes, less) than my second year here, living on campus at St. Jerome's.

(I miss 1-franc rolls of Brie; take me back 

I would not hesitate to recommend an exchange semester to any student here. Waterloo can be... uninspiring, at times. An international exchange is an opportunity to get out of Waterloo, and spend a few months getting to know a new city or country; all with support from the host institution. It's also

a fantastic chance to meet people who aren't, like, doing math all the time. If this sounds appealing... you can do this too! All you have to do is apply. The deadline is typically around the end of October (for the next academic year), but it's never "too early" to start researching host schools!

I'll end with a miscellaneous amalgam of tips:

- If you received the President's Scholarship of Distinction when you were admitted to the University, you're automatically eligible for a \$1,500 International Experience Award that you can use towards your exchange semester. Also, if you go on a second exchange term, then you can convert your \$1,500 Research Award into an International Experience Award.
- If you end up in Europe, find yourself a good train pass. In Switzerland, you have options like the Half-Fare Card (which makes all tickets half-price) or the Night GA (which makes all trains from 7pm to 5am free). I also purchased a three-month Eurail pass for \$800, which gave me unlimited train travel across Europe. I used this to take sleeper trains between Copenhagen, Stockholm, and Oslo, and also between Zürich and Prague. (According to my budgeting, I saved over \$3,000 across my train passes!)
- TooGoodToGo. It is phenomenal in Europe.
- Finally, consider using Wise to transfer money and convert currency. It Just Worked travelling across Europe and Oceania, which was such a relief.

Now get out and go see the world!

thirddoffive

PLEA FOR DIVINE INSPIRATION

Over my years at Waterloo, I am faced bi-weekly with the most pressing issues to face students across the globe. I cannot think of a funny **mathNEWS** article. Every other week, Monday rolls around, and I realize that I forgot to buy groceries for the week, and must write for my food, and each time, my well of finite ideas comes up dry. This is why I am accepting applications for divine inspiration. If you are a deity interested in giving me a spark of inspiration, please send me a Omen in the next two weeks. In return, I will write a **mathNEWS** article in your honor. In the meantime, I will be seeking another deity to help me write my assignments.

outofIdeas

TO ALL THE SHITTY DRIVERS OF WATERLOO WHO'VE NEARLY RAN ME OVER

HATE. LET ME TELL YOU HOW MUCH I'VE COME TO HATE

Halogen headlights—or rather, LED these days. The road is slick with snow and ice and I'm on the side, feet wedged into a snowbank, eyes peeled open for a chance to cross. I'm on Phillip Street, and I'm setting the scene for you.

It's fucking blistering out here. Snow is falling sideways and my fingers are like frozen sticks, somewhere in the midst of numbness with occasional firework-like sparks of pain. Blooming across my knuckles like flowers, I want to get *home*.

My eyes dart to and fro—University to Columbia. But it's dark and the traffic lights look more like silly string than guiding stars, the way they slice my vision. I squint, trying to gauge the distance of the cars. No dice, they look equally as far away as they did previously. *Do I just go for it?*

My feet rock back and forth, uncertain. My odds look good, but I've always preferred being safe than sorry. Unfortunately, the traffic lights have timed themselves against my favour, there being an ever constant flow of cars, and my patience is starting to run out. *I've seen people make worse crossings*, I start to reason. *I'm overly cautious, too.*

A gap in the cars. Now or never, I guess. I take the leap of faith across the snowbank, and suddenly the sound of a car horn floods my ears.

A car has come to a screeching halt in front of me. Lights in high-beam—no wonder I didn't see them. The brighter the lights, the harder it is to gauge how far away they are. *Holy fucking shit*, that was close. My heart is beating out of my fucking chest, sweat prickling my neck despite it being -20°C, and Hatsune Miku is still blasting in my AirPods: もしこで僕が殴ったり 領石が落ちてたら,¹ she sings.

The driver is making some kind of gesture at me, but I can't see much through their tinted windshield. But I was looking, *I know I was*. The only way they could've caught me off guard, then, is by hitting the gas and presuming—*audaciously*—no one would be in their way. On Phillip Street, of all places? There's a handful of pedestrians looking to cross at any given time. Shame and fear and anger is thick in my throat, choking me.

Despite the winter air, my face is warm with indignation. I shouldn't let this slide. Personal justice begets revenge. In the darkly lit sidewalks of Waterloo, the law would never conclude with anything satisfactory, nor would it be worth it with the time and money needed. But I have the power in my hands to correct it.

もしものはなし, are her final words before I take my AirPods out, sliding them neatly back into their case. A tall, imposing figure steps out of the car. I straighten my posture.

For a split second, I can see it—in another world, I'm running up and violently choking them for all they're worth: maybe enemies to lovers, maybe comedic. Is *that* the power in my hands? Pulse underneath my thumbs, a spasming windpipe?

Under the streetlights the flurries of snow twinkle like stars, and the world seems silent. My breath steams, drifting away like smoke. In the first place, am I fully in the right? No. I could've waited. But in this lawless land of no crosswalks, is it my fault I grew impatient? I could cite a thousand reasons why the driver is in the wrong, and I'd probably sound rather convincing, but I'm primarily looking to prosecute this driver for the crimes of all those before them, not them as an individual. Is that okay to do? I don't know. Is there ever a right answer?

I see paths ahead of me. Many, in fact. I berate, I punch, I cry. *You almost ran me over/Hey, watch where you're going/Fuck you, asshole*. But none of these seem right. I want to be kind. I want to protect myself. I want to make a difference in the world. Is this where I start? Will my words be enough, or must I resort to my body?

I look the driver in the eyes. A man—that doesn't surprise me. But he has crow's feet and drawn eyes and his face is square. A person. Maybe he looks more like his mom than his dad, the way his nose is slightly crooked. I won't remember him. He won't remember me. I don't know anything about him. Exculpable. Who am I to deem myself judge, jury, executioner? I want to be kind. Does he feel the same urge? Will he see my tired eyes, my frozen eyelashes, and grant me the same mercy? I don't know. But I see his gloves, the flush of his cheeks, and I know he, too, is feeling the cold.

I can be enraged all I want. A few weeks ago, someone got hit by a GO bus here. No vehicle is coming out of a collision worse than a pedestrian. *Do you know that?* I wonder. Maybe that's why you were speeding. But it is wrong of me to ascribe that ill intent to you—I don't know enough.

You search my face, eyes flickering from my oversized jacket to my white pom-pom hat. Something in your gaze hardens and you appear to have made a decision. Your mouth parts, breath puffing out in white -

In front of your car, inches away from collision, my solemn face looking at you, I hope you have chosen to be kind.

planet b612

1. Alkaline Adult - TadanoCo. Later in the song the singer says, 19 で事故でも遭ってたら こんな事考えなかっ/例えのはなし. I am in fact 19 so I think it works very well here. I didn't want to use the exact lyric, as that feels too on the nose, so here you go.

HOW TO FOCUS

SOME TECHNIQUES THAT WORK FOR ME AND MAY WORK FOR YOU TOO

If I'm ever in a funk and can't seem to focus, one of the simplest ways I've found to snap myself out of it is to physically uproot myself and start working from a new location. Most people seem to underrate the effect that being in the wrong location has for focus. It's especially hard if you're trying to work in a space that your mind associates with an activity like socializing, such as a living room, or that it associates with sleep, like a bed. Your mind shifts into the mode it associates with the space, which is usually not "work mode." This reality is particularly tough for university students with limited apartment space, and it's why I try to leave my room and work on campus if I ever need to get serious work done. It's hard to lock in if I'm cozy in bed.

A common optimization technique in computer science is to take advantage of Spatial Locality, the idea that it's faster for a computer to read memory that's closer to the memory it's currently using, as opposed to having to find and load bits of memory from disparate parts of the system. The human brain works in a similar way. There's a lot of mental energy required to context-switch between multiple different tasks, so it's a better use of your focus to try to manage one task at a time rather than attempting to multitask.

This is kind of an extension of the point above, but I find that even if I'm focused on a single task, having a bunch of in-progress tasks I'm leaving half-done takes up a lot of mental bandwidth. I liken it to having a bunch of old browser tabs open in my brain, clogging up RAM I desperately need for other things. Once I start something, part of my brain is dedicated to thinking about it and rolling it over in my head until I actually finish it and can "close the tab." Handling a bunch of small, quick tasks before my big ones kind of feels like cheating (aren't I just putting off my harder work?) but the benefits to only worrying about one thing at once seems to really make a difference for me.

You've probably heard the advice to block distracting apps before. Most of you have probably tried it at one point or another, only to need to disable the block for some reason and then never turning it back on. I've realized that it's a big ask to try and get people to NEVER use those distracting apps (big tech has done a really good job making itself indispensable). Instead, try blocking it only at specific times which you know are particularly problematic. I used to have a big problem getting off my phone when going to bed or waking up. I think this is because when I'm tired, my self-control is weakest, and the easiest thing to do is just keep scrolling. So I set my phone to deactivate basically all apps from 12:30am to 10am, and it's made a huge difference for me.

One of the most powerful, primal human emotions is shame. If you're smart about it, you can use this force as a natural counterweight against your brain's other primal urge for novelty and distraction. Try to set up a situation where it would be embarrassing to get distracted by something. One easy way to do it is to work with a friend near you who you

know would bug you if you spent too much time doomscrolling. If you can't find a friend on short notice, I find a substitute is to work with your screen facing the people behind you, so they can kinda see what you're doing if you close LEARN and start watching YouTube videos.

Sometimes, your body is telling you that you just need a break, and no amount of trying to work will accomplish anything. Don't deny this feeling. I can't tell you how many hours I've wasted trying to work because I had things to do, but my body wasn't going to budge. It's the worst kind of situation because you're not getting any work done, but you also aren't really resting so you won't be in a position to get any work done anytime soon. If your body is telling you that it's really not having it, don't waste time trying to force something that isn't going to happen. Let yourself actually rest for 30–60 minutes, and you'll save 4 hours of pretending to work.

Finally, make sure you keep your eye on the ball. Remember, you're not just fighting your own impulses here—there are thousands of very smart people at some of the largest corporations in the history of the world who spend all day thinking of new ways to distract you. Keep your eye out, stay self-aware, and you may realize you've started to spend more time than you want on a particular website or app. Maybe you tried to spend an hour studying but you just started doomscrolling Reddit and couldn't stop. Maybe it was Instagram. Maybe it was Wikipedia. Whatever it is, you should accept that you'll probably need to keep "plugging the holes" in your focus strategy, and be self-aware enough to notice the things taking more of your time than you want them to. Most importantly, don't take it personally. Getting distracted is just part of the human psyche. It's not your fault unless you choose to not try and do something about it.

Dick Smithers

GUY WHO'S FINALLY ABLE TO MAKE IT TO A PROD NIGHT FOR THE FIRST TIME AND DOESN'T REALIZE IT'S THE EXEC TABLE:

hey can I sit here

macinnes

[Editor's note: yes but only if you sell your soul to Adobe InDesign]

GAY GEESE (NOT) IN YOUR AREA

SWIPE RIGHT ON HONKER



SG LOOKING 4 LTR

Heterosexual monogamy, although very common, is not always the case for our (not so) friendly Canada geese.

Geese can love geese.

Geese can divorce each other.

Geese can enjoy the presence of humans over geese.

And sometimes, geese might decide to join a polycule. Or maybe they just want a friend.

Researching Canada geese is one of my hobbies (to no one's surprise), so sometimes I come across some nice bits of information.

I've attached some excerpts I've had the enjoyment of reading.

Birds that did not pair normally were likely to seek the company of others of their own sex, resulting in some definite unisexual pairs. [...] One male attached himself to the caretaker whom

he apparently regarded as his mate, for he would drive other geese from the caretaker's vicinity, and give the snoring call [which is often done by the male to their mate] only to the caretaker, whereas he would hiss at other humans. He often waited at the gate for the caretaker to appear each morning, and would honk a greeting while the man was still some distance away

Unisexual pairs of males or females not infrequently engaged in pre-coitonal display, but none of these displays was ever seen to lead to copulation¹

Many of the students at uWaterloo will undoubtedly become well acquainted with honking-mad heterosexual goose pairs during nesting season and the uni/municipality will continue attempts to reduce goose populations in our area. Due to this, might I suggest an alternative?

We should turn the geese *more* gay.

TotallyNotAGoose

1. Collias, N. E., & Jahn, L. R. (1959). Social Behavior and Breeding Success in Canada Geese (*Branta canadensis*) Confined under Semi-Natural Conditions. *The Auk*, 76(4), 478–509. <https://doi.org/10.2307/4082315>

I showed you my goose, pls respond :(

JUST GIVE UP...

You hate your job... just quit.

You're failing your course... just drop it.

Your girlfriend dumped you for a woman... just date a snowman.

Your girlfriend starts dating your best friend... just download Grindr.

You can't pay your bills... just evict yourself.

You can't find housing... just go back to your parents' basement.

You can't find a co-op... just accelerate (plural).

Your credit card got declined... just blame TD.

You failed your test... just blame it on your assignment due at 11:59 am.

You can't understand your prof... just sleep through the lecture.

You're really hungry rn... just starve.

Your roommate doesn't clean up after themselves... just smash their dishes.

You're out of groceries... just take from your neighbour.

You've hit your limit... just l'Hôpital it.

You got convicted for grand larceny... just blame your prof's wife.

You feel like trying... just give up.

ON POINTLESSNESS

One of my favorite episodes of “Pretty Good,” an online documentary video series by Jon Bois, is episode eighteen, titled “GOD HATES A COWARD.”¹ The episode covered minor league baseball catcher Joe Sprinz, who attempted the world record for highest catch, trying to nab a baseball dropped from a blimp twelve hundred feet in the air. This was a story that could have been told in about thirty seconds, but was instead expanded to over forty minutes. Of course, those forty minutes were not exclusively used on said story. In fact, the story barely was present in about five minutes of the video. Pretty Good Episode 18 was more importantly about, in Bois’ own words, “our love affair with pointlessness,” which he talked about primarily through the lens of baseball.

I think that his explanation of pointlessness conveys its role in our lives very well. Humans have been on Earth for 300 000 years, and the agricultural revolution only happened 12 000 years ago, meaning the majority of our existence was hunting and gathering. They spent their entire lives where almost every moment was for a tangible point in survival, but now, our lives are surrounded by what they would consider pointlessness. Take soccer for example. How do we explain this to our hunter-gatherer ancestors? Sure they played around, told a couple stories, but everyone was contributing to each others’ survival in one way or another. Oh there’s an activity where we spend all day kicking around a ball to each other, and maybe into a big box? Well why don’t you just pick up the ball and run it into the goal? That surely sounds easier than just kicking it. Oh you can’t? Why? What do you mean rules? You’re just not allowed? That sounds stupid. Oh there’s people that spend all day just doing this? Well do they also help do stuff to keep us alive? No? Well surely they don’t get much food or shelter if they don’t help contribute to survival. Oh we give them everything they need? Oh they actually get more than most people do? Even people who gather food, make clothes, or build shelter? Well then they must be doing it all the time for this to make sense. Only once every four or five days? Sometimes more? And they get weeks off? Insane.

When you put it that way, it seems a lot less useful. Just a bunch of people being paid indescribable amounts of money to do something that, when you think about it, really is useless. And when you bring out the scope even further, most of our jobs seem useless. What does a tour guide provide to further human survival? What does a journalist provide to put food in stomachs or houses for others? Can you make shelter out of photographic film?

They seem pointless. And yet we intrinsically know they aren’t. Tour guides help people learn about the places that they’re exploring. Journalists help to document the world around them, reporting their findings to us, who in turn are given an opportunity to learn about the things that are happening around us. Film may be a flimsy sheet that can’t build anything or hold things together, but they capture us, our emotions, our heights, and our lows, giving us the opportunity to see our world from different points of view and learn more about it. None of these roles really contribute to

survival and yet we have always seen them as important. All of these roles are useful because we see them as useful.

My life can be seen as nothing but pointless. I’m a math student. I will finish my degree, spend the majority of my life working some job that generally does little for the average person, retire and spend my last decade of life in retirement doing even less for people, and then die. That is by textbook definition pointless. But it’s not pointless. I’m important to my parents. I have friends and as such I make an impact on them by being their friend. My spiritual footprint that I will leave behind anywhere I go will inevitably leave behind an impression that will affect someone. At no point is my life truly pointless.

Our everyday activities can seem pointless in matter. And we are better for it. There’s nothing else about our existence that is so profoundly human than doing these pointless endeavors because we ourselves have given it a reason for it not to be pointless. Every waste of time, every stupid idea, every meaningless act is proof that we are human, and that we are alive in a way that nothing else can be.

fingersinsockets

1. Bois, J. (2025, May 16). GOD HATES A COWARD / PRETTY GOOD, EPISODE 18. YouTube. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=10R_45wZL2I&list=PLUXSZMIiUFFSCYW1o-4whWtepV1sfuCC&index=17

CS246E > CS246

So basically:

CS246: Object-Oriented Software Development
CS246E: CS246 (Easy)

CS246E is basically the Brad Lushman C++ Show (which also covers OOP on the side). The course is basically the brainchild of Brad’s enjoyment of C++. He created the course, and it is very evident he enjoys teaching it. Some say the E does not stand for easy and instead stands for “enriched,” but I think it stands for both. I will say, however, that your hand might get sore from constantly racing to copy down everything he writes on the board. Definitely sitting towards the front instead of the back makes the class much more engaging and easy to follow, especially if you have bad eyesight. The assignments are long, but also extremely rewarding, and upon completion you feel a sense of satisfaction. The assignments also help to gain an understanding of the content, as often things would seem very random in class. However, when working on the assignments and flipping through the countless pages of scribbly notes, it all starts to make sense.

I highly recommend taking this course.

ihatecoding

PIAZZA APPRECIATION POST

With assignments and quizzes upcoming, and beginning to study for midterms, I want to take a moment to truly appreciate Piazza.

Personally, I have been an avid Piazza user since first year. There have been many times where I was stuck on a concept in one of my classes, and when I go to Piazza, someone has already asked the question. I then feel validated that I was not the only one confused and (usually) an answer to the question is already provided. I can always ask a followup question if I need, but this does save me some time.

Sometimes, especially in math courses, when you are stuck on a practice problem, you just need help figuring out the next step. It is easy to hyperfixate on a question so much that you become more focused on the fact that you can't solve the question instead of actually working on it. Doing a quick glance on Piazza, or posting a question can help you fall out of your spiral.

Since some professors' office hours are during some of my other classes, this is a great alternative that I think lots of courses should take advantage of. I will specify, sometimes it is better to go to office hours if you are confused about more general topics and feel you need more one-on-one help, but Piazza is great for smaller questions. I always love the classic: "Will [insert concept] be on the quiz?"

Piazza also has some pretty interesting/helpful features. I frequently use is the anonymous post feature. I often think

my question might be viewed as too silly, so the anonymous feature allows me to ask my questions with no fear. Plus, they have some fun names; "Anonymous Atom" is my personal favourite. I also love a "good question" moment. Anytime I can somehow let someone else know that they aren't the only ones seeking clarification, I will gladly take that opportunity.

Finally, I do want to thank every professor, TA, or anyone else who takes the time to answer questions on Piazza. Speaking from experience, this tool has really helped me better understand course material (and it may have prevented a crash out or two). I have seen questions being answered on Piazza answered at all hours of the day (especially before assignments are due or midterms). That truly does take dedication!

So yeah, that's basically my sales pitch for Piazza! Definitely take advantage of this tool if it is available in your classes. You never know, someone might ask a question that helps you better understand a course concept, or give a hint for a practice problem you have been stuck on for days. Maybe, if you are feeling up to it, be the person who isn't afraid to ask a question. This may sound cheesy, but if you have a question, chances are someone else has the exact same question. Even if you just take five minutes out of your day to check Piazza for all of your courses, and learn one thing new, I say it is worth it! Until next time, Anonymous **mathNEWS** writer signing off!!

is.all.on

IF YOU EVER FEEL LIKE YOUR LIFE IS MEANINGLESS, JUST REMEMBER

In the English-speaking world, "yaoi" has caught on as a catch-all term for all kinds of BL stories. However, historically speaking, "yaoi" was a word reserved for a specific kind of BL story.

Stories called "yaoi" were characterized by a few key traits. For one, they were self-published works, usually derivative of existing manga and often made by amateur manga artists. Secondly, they were focused on gay relationships, which is the part that stuck overseas. Finally, these stories were focused on sex at the expense of everything else, and it was due to this trait that they came to be self-deprecatingly known as "yaoi."

"Yaoi" is a portmanteau of the phrase 山なし、落ちなし、意味なし (*yama nashi, ochi nashi, imi nashi*), which was a phrase the legendary mangaka Osamu Tezuka allegedly used to describe poor quality manga. That phrase translates to "no climax, no point, no meaning," which in the context of yaoi refers to how plot and character development was an afterthought in light of all the boning that was happening on the page.

There is no way to finish this article without sounding corny and horribly out of touch, but I don't have any other ideas now and I'm committed so I'll go ahead and say it. Despite having no climax,¹ point, or meaning, yaoi is appreciated by millions of people around the world today. Your life is yaoi. Your life is in fact better—it also has the benefit of not having a fanbase that's large enough to be annoying. More differences can be found by looking at how your life's most appealing parts probably do not include copious amounts of anime boy sex and how your life actually does have a point, meaning, and climax to be discovered, but there's no need to poke and prod at the metaphor too much.

Instead, it's better to just always remember: your life is yaoi.

the government's only spy

1. Ok this part of the description I don't really agree with, dudes are definitely climaxing all the time in yaoi

N ISLAND FACTS - DIEGO GARCIA

This issue's island is Diego Garcia, but some of the facts talk about the territory it's a part of as a whole. This is because it's the only sizeable island in the territory, and it means more interesting facts



- In the 1970s the British and US Militaries began construction of a joint military base on Diego Garcia
- As part of the construction of the base, the US army oversaw the forced removal of all native peoples not just from Diego Garcia, but from the entire Chagos archipelago. Some 10,000 people were displaced, most now living in England. A 2016 court ruling rejected their right to return to the island
- Currently the only thing on the island is the fairly large military base, home to ~4,000 soldiers. It's spread all around the island, connected by one long road hilariously called the 'national highway'
- International courts have repeatedly ruled that the BIOT should be transferred to Mauritius. Various plans have been proposed for this, last I checked there were plans to transfer it this year, but now Trump overruled that. If it ever does get transferred, it means the sun will set on the British empire for the first time in ~400 years
- The US currently has 10% tariffs on the island, even though the only thing there is a US military base
- The island's website country code is '.io.' That's right, slither.io, agar.io, and all your favourite browser games have URLs registered there

That's all on this island, let me know if you have an island you want me to cover (fatcullen2@gmail.com).

FATCullen

THE EVERYTHING SOUP RECIPE

MY MASTHEAD ANSWER WASN'T JOKING

1. Raid the fridge for any grocery items near expiry: meats, veggies, even fruits if you are daring enough.
2. Put in pot, submerge in water, and boil.
3. Raid the seasoning stockpile for salt, MSG, and anything else available that you think won't cause dangerous reactions when mixed. (If you don't have at least the first two, you are not cooking, you are kinda cooked. Go to the grocery store first.)
4. Season soup to taste.

As long as you are not my friend who almost burnt down the kitchen trying to make HelloFresh meal kits, this will probably turn out fine and tasty. The same principle can be applied to stir-fried rice, with boiling replaced by stir-frying in cooking oil. Since this basically also tells you how to make fried rice, it absolves my guilty but lazy conscience from finishing the stir-fried rice article that I had intended to write since a year ago.

SeasonedSlacker(资深咸鱼)

GIVING YOURSELF A KICK IN THE ASS

Recently, I've been making a lot of decisions I knew I would hate in the future.

Now, this (mostly) isn't because I'm trying to sabotage my life or happiness. Actually, most of these decisions come after a good look in the mirror, a stiff cup of coffee, and a realization that I have flaws which aren't going anywhere unless I do some things I don't like. It sure would be nice if the road to self-improvement was smooth, well-paved, and lined with convenient rest stops for when I was tired. But realistically, if I improved and learned exclusively in comfort, I'd crash the car as soon as I hit a pothole. The road ahead has ice, snow, and evil monsters trying to take advantage of me, so I may as well prepare. And isn't a little rebellion exciting, even if it's just against yourself?

Take my (terminal) indecisiveness. It's a real miracle that I can make it through board games, order at restaurants, or be trusted to make life decisions given my track record. A few years of facing things that felt impossible, of screaming "I don't know what to do" while the world crumbled around me, shaped me into somebody who could barely decide whether I even wanted happiness. Every decision felt enormous, and so I started with the smallest things possible. I picked up some tiny threads of spontaneity, and used them to make small decisions. I went for day trips to other parts of Ontario and ate alone in restaurants, with little planning or thought. None of this really felt like me, or more accurately the person I had become. But it definitely felt like the opposite of what I didn't want to be, so I persisted.

A year later, and the wheels were turning again. I decided to move abroad for a term, essentially on a whim. I knew it would probably suck for the first month (and it did), because I knew I was starting to get tired of trying, tired of leaving everything behind. So, this was exactly the time I had to do something like this. After month two, things clicked. I remembered I was allowed to make temporary friendships and dove into the life that I had decided for myself. Now, this has caused some problems in my life, but overall it's been a huge win for killing my indecisiveness.

Don't get me wrong though, I'm not on a quest to put myself through hell to learn. In a trial by fire, you by definition get burned, and sometimes it's better to slow-cook yourself by deciding to give yourself too many good options. My current struggle by design is for graduate studies, and I've devised a clever experiment in which I apply to seven programs. Even if I don't get many of these options, the simple fact of writing so many applications, mostly in different fields, forces to consider very deeply about which life/career path I choose and why. How do I feel writing each personal statement? Do I feel like each school is actually different, or some copy of a different program elsewhere? In particular, my decision to apply to Waterloo, an option which I am very vocal about not liking, comes from this. Waterloo is the comfortable, easy option, and I should want to leave this behind for something

I consider important and worthwhile. But do I? I do, and I wouldn't be certain unless I had applied.

Now, this is all well and good, but I'm starting to be worried that this is bad for me. Fundamentally, I struggle to be compassionate with myself, so why do I persist in viewing my own mentality as an enemy to be fought? And beyond this, it encourages polarization in my actions. I can't always get away with not doing something by doing the polar opposite, because that way I'll never find a balance. I think this has served me well for a while, but it might be time to leave this behind.

Shahabee

I COMMITTED INCEST. RESPONDING TO THE ALLEGATIONS

It is with a heavy heart that I address you today, dear readers. I have been found guilty of the very thing I drew your attention to a few issues ago. Yes, I have made a severe and continuous lapse in my judgement.

You see, back in **mathNEWS** issue 159.6, I highlighted the significant amounts of **incest** between PMC (otherwise known as the Pure Math, Applied Math and Combinatorics and Optimization Club) and **mathNEWS**. Back then, I didn't think it would turn out this way. I was someone who made this concept of club incest clearer to you, dear readers. But, in the process, I became the very thing I sought to destroy.

I committed incest. Yes, this is true. I write for **mathNEWS**, and I am now a PMC exec. You see, in my quest to highlight how these organizations are truly rife with incest, I lost focus. Genuinely, **mathNEWS** and PMC: it may be incestuous, but is it so wrong?

However, I wish this were the only thing of which I was guilty. But, I mentioned a severe and *continuous* lapse in judgement, didn't I? I didn't just commit incest the one time, no: I committed incest with far deeper roots. You see, I wasn't being completely truthful when I unveiled the PMC-**mathNEWS** incest two issues ago. I didn't know the extent of it then, but apparently the incest is threefold, between **mathNEWS**, PMC, and MathSoc.

And it is with that that I reveal the full extent of damages. I have committed incest threefold. I lost focus, and had a consensual workplace relationship, that is all. As in, is it truly as if I did anything wrong? Anything incorrigible? I made a mistake, yes, that is true, but dear readers, is my incest truly unforgivable?

I hope you will find it in your hearts to forgive me.

burgerqueen

THE SIZE OF NUMBERS

A THREE BY ANY OTHER SIZE COULD STILL BE A THREE

What's the biggest number you can think of? It might not be too hard to come up with something, a fun-named one followed by many zeros, a whole bunch of nines, or some kind-of infinite value. On the other hand, what's the smallest number you can think of? To me that's harder, is it zero? Is it the number you had before but made negative? When you order all the numbers, where does the line between small and big lie?

When I was in grade 2, my teacher once started a math lesson by drawing a 3 and an 8 on the board and asked us: "which one is bigger?" Very obviously to the class of 7-year-olds, the answer was 8. Then, she erased the 3 and re-wrote it, much larger than the 8 beside it. "Now which one is bigger?" Chaos ensued because now, size had two meanings. Up to that point, the size of a number was pretty much about as complicated as the amount of your fingers needed to count it. But in her effort to introduce us to the concept of greater/less than, my teacher set off a question that I still think about. How do you give a number a size?

In our minds, we all have some feelings about numbers and their sizes. Even if they're not the same as everyone else, your brain loves to categorize information by thinking about how it relates to the things around it. There are mathematical discussions to be had about what numbers are and their weights, but my search for understanding is solely about people's conception of numbers. Regardless of what research can bring us to, inherently you already have an idea about the sizes of numbers and I want to talk about it.

My favourite size-of-numbers question is as follows: in your mind, is negative infinity a really small number or a really big

negative number? You might feel very strongly that it's one, but if you ask a few people you'll quickly see it's controversial! If you visualize a number line of positive numbers, it's easy to understand it as getting bigger as you move right. But when you add the negative numbers on the left, does moving left mean you are still getting smaller? Or is size about how far from zero you've gone? What does your decision imply about something like -50, is that small? You don't have to come to an answer, or do any real proving to defend what you do think, just ruminate on how you personally imagine numbers and why you might see them that way. We can properly define all sorts of qualities (i.e. greater/less than) to numbers, but size in this case is more about how you feel and think than any actual property.

Tired of thinking about negatives? Consider the earlier-mentioned line between small and big numbers. If you had to pick some place in your mind where numbers start to feel big, where is it? Why? An answer is easy to pick out when we start to apply units (5 dollars is not a lot, finding 5 birds in your apartment might be concerning), but try to think about it completely devoid of context. Based solely on how big numbers seem to you, and what the word big means to you, you'll likely have a different answer to anyone else you ask.

As a bonus, see if you can come up a new way to test your own version of size and numbers, or ask your friends about it and see all the weird ways we think about numbers without even noticing! The possibilities are truly infinite (or at least, a very big number.)

BeesKnees

REST IN POWER, MICHAEL PARENTI

Michael Parenti passed away earlier this month. He was a political scientist, historian, professor, and Marxist. He wrote about mass media as a state tool for justifying imperialism; he wrote about fascism and how it operates; he wrote about labour movements and revolution around the world. He had a way of writing and speaking about these subjects in refreshingly clear language, and was widely admired as the first introduction to socialism for many people. Parenti had a profound impact on me, many years ago, and I ask you now to take the time to engage with his work. It's more relevant than ever.

Who benefits? Who decides? What is allowed to matter and be relevant? And why are certain explanations treated as "neutral" while others are dismissed as ideological? He had a great talent for pointing out that what we're taught to see as accidents, inefficiencies, or human nature often have clear structural roots.

Two entry points stand out. *Blackshirts and Reds* is a short book that reexamines 20th-century history, particularly fascism and socialism, with an eye toward what tends to get erased when power writes the narrative. Whether you agree with it or not, it's hard to read without rethinking many things.

The other is a widely circulated lecture, known online as the "yellow lecture"¹ (you'll understand when you see it). It's just Parenti talking, laying out how ideology, media, and empire fit together in a way that many people find easy to understand. I wholeheartedly recommend watching this.

Things are terrifying right now, but if we organize, we have a world to win.

sunrise parabellum

SUGAR CONSIDERED HARMFUL

What do yogurt & granola, coffee, leafy salads, and a Big Mac have in common? It's not about food... almost the opposite. They all often come with a hefty dose of sugar, whether they're supposedly healthy or not. You might be surprised how much sugar is put into every mass-market food out there. Maybe you wouldn't if you have a habit of checking ingredient lists (which you should, it's far easier than reading terms & conditions or privacy policies :)), but the problem is real. Even if you are indulging in a cake or other baked good, is there any reason for a 4 oz serving of cake to have 45 grams of sugar?! Daily values shouldn't be taken as fact, but 50% from one item is slightly terrifying.

Sugar isn't really a "food" per-se. Processed sugar in the form of sucrose (glucose + fructose) is a "constructed" additive, with no nutritional value beyond being fairly high in calories and a source of glucose. Your body needs glucose to maintain blood sugar, but what's all the fructose good for? Diabetes? In the past, sugar either used to be a spice like honey or tree syrup, or it was from fruit and packaged with fiber and vitamins. It was hard to over-indulge, and if you could, you probably should. In the warmer seasons when fruit is plentiful, it makes good sense to eat a little more at the cost of putting on weight, if it helps you perform when food gets scarce. But nowadays, even our fruits are higher in sugar than they used to be. Countless generations of selective breeding have increased the sweetness without regard for declining relative concentration of nutritional value.

But hey, I certainly don't blame the people buying the sugary foods and beverages. Something like Coke has marketing that suggests it makes you happy. It gives you a hit of sweetness, comes packaged with caffeine and fun bubbles, what's not to love? Well, consider that it used to literally have cocaine in the recipe. When the government stepped in and said "ok hold up, don't do that," what did they do? Increase the sugar and caffeine—other *legal* addictive compounds. I have less issue with caffeine, and it's outside of the scope of this article. But sugar? It's a cheap and legal substance that's both addictive and harmful.

Any accessible action or substance that creates dopamine in the brain can (and will) be exploited. Sugar bothers me so much because of how prevalent it is, and how damaging it is to metabolic health. I think most people have a decent idea that sugar is bad for their body. Diabetes, obesity, sugar crashes, it's definitely considered unhealthy. But I don't think most people understand the effects on their brain. Sugar is strongly linked in many animals to dopamine; the motivation neurochemical. This causes them to seek out higher calorie food which are easy to process into energy that can be stored for later. But having as easy access to powdered (or syrped) dopamine as we do today down-regulates your receptors and creates addiction. It motivates binge eating because food is quick to process and highly rewarding, and can lead to eating disorders. Dopamine exploits pervade the free market nowadays, but sugar is the one causing heart attacks and straining the medical system with people on statins and Ozempic.

But so what? I've now written at length about how bad I think sugar is, but why bother if many people already feel similarly? Realistically it comes down to individual response to the societal structure evolving around us. There's a great deal of financial motivation to continue pumping corn syrup down our throats, but you **can** avoid it. Not completely, mind you, I think mostly avoiding gets you most of the benefit. I've been avoiding sugar for many years now, and I've almost completely rid myself of cravings for chocolate, baked goods, and sweet drinks. At this point, I'm extremely sensitive to foods being "too sweet," and often don't enjoy myself when I try them. I do still love cheesecake, but only rarely, and I wouldn't want more than a slice. Moderation is difficult, but so important.

None of this comes down to personal responsibility, whether for the abundance of sugar on the market or for an individual's addiction. Still, only you can help yourself. Next time you are getting coffee, looking at the fudge in SLC, or shopping at the grocery store, perhaps give this some thought. More resources on support with working through cravings and towards a stable low-sugar lifestyle can be found online.

blather

INTERVIEW HORROR STORIES

Had a bad interview? This will be a pick-me-up.

1. THE 90-MINUTE GRIND

I went through an online assessment, a behavioural round with the CTO, and a "vibe check" with two engineers. This whole process took over two weeks. Then came the final round. It was a pure technical round with a question I had no idea how to approach. I had a whole repository downloaded and 1.5 hours ahead of me. I slaved away trying to figure it out while the interviewer muted himself and just left. After over an hour of slaving away, knowing full well it was over, we ended the call... and it was over.

2. THE "OOPS I CAN'T SEE THE QUESTION"

At a really popular, massive quant firm, I passed the OA only to get to the next round where the interviewer tried to share a HackerRank with me. I wasn't able to see it. After we tried to fix it (for literally just 2 minutes), he just said, "Well I'm really sorry, do you wanna talk about something or should we end it?" I asked some template random questions, expecting to have the interview rescheduled. The next morning I checked my inbox... and I was rejected :)

hami

MAJOR FIELDS OF LAW RANKED BY VARIOUS ARBITRARY MEASURES

ALCOHOLISM NOT RANKED DUE TO 9-WAY TIE

While a difficult topic to distill into a relatively small number of fields, here are our contenders:

- Corporate Law
- Criminal Law (Private Practice)
- Criminal Law (Public Defender)
- Environmental Protections Law
- Family Law
- IP/Patent Law
- Personal Injury Law
- Real Estate Law
- Tax Law

HOW HIGH CAN THEY JUMP?

1. Crim (PD)
2. Corporate
3. Enviro
4. Family
5. Crim (PP)
6. IP
7. Real Estate
8. Tax
9. Personal Injury (lest they slip and fall)

SKILL AT TRIVIA

1. IP
2. Tax
3. Corporate
4. Enviro
5. Crim (PP)
6. Crim (PD)
7. Real Estate
8. Family
9. Personal Injury

BALATRO HIGH SCORE

1. Family
2. Enviro
3. Personal Injury
4. Tax
5. Crim (PD)
6. Crim (PP)
7. Corporate
8. Real Estate
9. IP

HIGHEST NUMBER EVER COUNTED TO IN ONE SITTING

1. Tax
2. IP
3. Corporate
4. Real Estate
5. Crim (PP)
6. Crim (PD)
7. Enviro
8. Personal Injury
9. Family

ABILITY TO DO PARTIAL DIFFERENTIAL EQUATIONS

1. IP
2. Tax
3. Everyone else

LIKELIHOOD TO DEFAULT ON A LOAN

1. Enviro
2. Crim (PD)
3. Real Estate
4. Family
5. Personal Injury
6. Crim (PP)
7. Corporate
8. IP
9. Tax

LIKELIHOOD TO BE ABLE TO HIT AN MLB SLIDER

N/A

LIKELIHOOD TO BE ABLE TO TEACH ONE TO DOUGIE

1. Crim (PD)
2. Enviro
3. Personal Injury
4. Crim (PP)
5. Real Estate
6. Family
7. Corporate
8. Tax
9. IP



LIKELIHOOD TO HAVE WATCHED HEATED RIVALRY

1. Personal Injury
2. Family
3. Real Estate
4. Enviro
5. Crim (PD)
6. Corporate
7. Crim (PP)
8. Tax
9. IP—Expert consultant credit to normalparameters

HOW LIKELY AM I TO INVITE THEM TO A PARTY

1. Enviro
2. Crim (PD)
3. Family
4. Crim (PP)
5. IP
6. Personal Injury
7. Corporate
8. Real Estate
9. Tax

LIKELIHOOD TO SOLELY CALL MOVIES "FILMS"

1. Corporate
2. Tax
3. Crim (PP)
4. Real Estate
5. IP
6. Personal Injury
7. Enviro
8. Crim (PD)
9. Family

QUICKFIRE ONES:

- Most likely to have a mullet: Personal Injury
- Best at Civ 5: IP
- Worst Tie: Real Estate
- Most likely to sound like a conspiracy theorist: Antitrust lawyers (not previously mentioned)
- Happiest lawyers: Tax (unexpected but they're so jolly)

cruz

THIS WEIRD DREAM I HAD

i had this really weird dream which is only explainable by the fact that i collapsed immediately after lecture in the mc comfy

so you know that hallway of club rooms in mc, right? for some reason i dreamt that one of the unused rooms on that side housed some secretive hangout space that had the rule that if you ever found out that it existed, you could never mention ~~fight club~~ its existence to anyone, and that if you ever went there it had to be when the hallway was vacated and you had to leave the door closed

anyway they appeared to be developing some kind of secretive game. some fighting game it seems. with all our favourite characters. well, maybe not yours. they just happened to mention characters from media i either am a fan of or have heard of enough times for it to become part of my internal discourse.

anyway, i hope we'll do something like that. notwithstanding getting shut down by mathsoc of course.

kumo

THE BALLAD OF THE WEIRD MELON

I wrote a little something for the two of us. No need to thank me, I mainly wrote it for me, but you can enjoy it too if you get a bit creative with it.

For this next part to make sense, I want you to imagine an old watermelon.

Older... older... older... okay, now that's good.

Okay, now imagine you have a fucked relationship with your mom. Like actually putrid.

More fucked up... think more fucked up... super fucked up... even worse...

Okay. Now I think you're ready. Behold, the ballad of the weirdmelon...

•



You hold the watermelon with your hands. Where the rind is supposed to be rigid and firm, it is soft and spongy. It is lumpy and misshapen in ways that are unnatural; nature could have never made something so ugly. This sort of rot and decay is irregular, something your mother cursed you with.

You hold it over your head, and momentum sends it crashing to the floor. The acrid scent fills your nostrils, and you gag immediately. The rotten thing hisses as it deflates, like a bloated corpse. Every curse you swore at your mother spews out in difficult spasms, your body convulsing with choked out sobs and screams. The mushy mess leaks through the expensive floorboards. The voice of your mother nags in your head, and you know how she hates this. The sour juices seep into the cracks and go against the grain, a frothing foam of mould and hatred.

What was once discernible flesh and blood has since been liquefied into a rotten puddle. You lift your fists and they come crashing down, up and down, and finally back up again. The discoloured fizz gets under your nails and trickles down your wrists. The balloon full of rot has finally popped.

You wish she were dead.

Your mom comes running down. She shrieks when she sees the mess you've made. She kneels down, and her hands sift through the remains of the watermelon.

She speaks wistfully, tears beginning to well at her eyes, "What have you done?"

You simmer in this heat, swallowed by your own tears. And your mother continues to sift her fingers through seeds and mush, trying to salvage what she can of this. You ruined her.

golgotha\$Terror & not a mango

RESPONSE TO "ENTERING WITHOUT LEAVING"

I would like to respond to the article *Entering without Leaving*, on page 38 of mathNEWS 160.1.

You seem to have missed an important constraint: any evacuation route should consist entirely of "push" doors, to the extent possible. In an emergency, a "pull" door can be unintentionally blocked by the crowd of evacuating students.

How does this affect your analysis?

finegeometer

Does my greed sicken you?

CHAT, ARE WE HAGEY HALL ENJOYERS?

[Content warning: disordered eating, mental health]

I've become a micro micro-celebrity. Or at least, that's how it feels. I've been recognized on campus, by former classmates and friends and club members [UW Film Club, heyyyy]. I'm even known by those editing this paper I've come to love, and my fellow writers. This never used to happen before, and it's an odd feeling, being seen when you thought yourself invisible. It does give me joy to catch up with people, being social, being here. A part of this community we call University of Waterloo. My life is nothing without the people in it, so I'm grateful for everyone in these halls that have said hello to me. That being said, I'll continue to reside in Hagey Hall where I study and socialize.

In other **jtvNEWS**, the term's start has brought about snow days and movies (yippee :D I get cuddles and snacks it's great) and a touch of seasonal depression (booooo) in the sense that while mine is every season, it's a different flavour with the cold. I've barely done any work that is tangible, I don't want to do graphic design related things (RED ALERT), and I'm not getting enough calories each day: I need 2100, I average 700 a day. How I'm not dead yet surprises me. NOT! That I want to die.

For the first time in my life, I do believe my life is worth living (because of the people that float in and out of it), but there's not much motivation to maintain the systems that keep me alive. My faith (I'm a Christian) is in a spot where I'm putting in effort to pursue God but it feels like He's telling me that I'm not doing enough, that I'm not enough.

My fellow Christians will say that's the Devil but maybe there's a grain of truth in the shame. My anger issues are at risk of having me kicked out of places, namely my class and the bus SINCE YOU IDIOTS CAN'T RIDE IT EFFICIENTLY—

However, I remain joyful amidst the chaos. I have friends everywhere. I take time to de-stress. I keep a gratitude calendar. I talk about the things that bother me. My outfits are ice cold, and my lip gloss is popping. I'm still that girl, but...

I know it's only a matter of time before I crack.

But Hagey Hall has banana bread and the Texas Brisket Panini Sandwich, so I can't be THAT depressed, right??

Jochemist

FEELING BEHIND? DON'T LET THAT STOP YOU!

You will likely experience this at some point in your time here. You will look at someone else, and see that they achieved something that you didn't yet do; that they are better at something than you are; or that you have fallen behind when you were confident you would remain ahead. It's very common to feel that you are inadequate, or that you failed; but this isn't the right way to think of it. Yes, you might be behind, but you are only seeing where you are now with where they are now. It's important to keep in mind that either of you can get better or worse with time, based on your actions.

Every expert was a beginner at some point, and there was a point in time where the person you are looking up to was exactly where you currently are. Given effort, it's only a matter of time until you also reach, and possibly exceed where they are.

Yes, it goes without saying that it took you a bit longer to achieve the same thing, but remember it's "better late than never." When you achieved something is nowhere near as important as whether you achieved it or not, and future you would be much happier if you had started "late" as opposed to feeling behind and never starting at all.

Most importantly, take some time to appreciate the fact that you noticed something that you want to improve in, and internalized the goal. Some say ignorance is bliss, but it also causes inaction, and your understanding gave you the opportunity to take action. It's up to you now whether to take action and

cause change, or to remain worried about being "late" only to never do anything.

I will leave you with this thought. Countless people think they can massively change the present by going back in time to make a small change in the past, but most overlook the fact that they could also massively change the future by making a small change in the present.

Next time you feel like a change is needed, don't feel sad knowing you can't change the past to fix the present, feel empowered knowing that you can change the present to fix the future.

Amol Venkataraman

ON STAYING IN WATERLOO

I thought I was definitely moving on immediately after graduation, but something particularly shiny has come up.

Do I stay? Do I go? I don't know.

Tune in next issue to find out!

A Mysterious Entity

I HATE SNOW REMOVAL

SOMEONE HAS TO SAY IT

My second biggest thing I don't like right now, not including pertinent world issues of course (pls don't cancel me), is snow removal, or the lack thereof. It's only second to smallmouth bass, which I mean like can't really be topped, but trust me it's getting VERY VERY close.

Maybe my standards are too high. Maybe I'm used to shovelling myself. Maybe I'm going crazy. But I swear the snow plough DOES NOTHING. The streets and the sidewalks are perpetually covered in snow. Like what even is the point. You have to JUMP OVER A SNOW BANK to get onto a bus. And god forbid you miss the curb.

Don't get me started on the packed snow which turned into ice. THRICe, have I almost slipped and fell crossing Columbia. If you see snow that looks shiny DO NOT AND I MEAN DO NOT step on it. You'll die.

And get this right, when they FINALLY plough the sidewalks around my place, after it's all done snowing, they do so at 3am. WHO THE HELL IS WALKING AROUND AT THREE A M. They just end up waking me up. All for what, to plough another time at 6am, so I can get woken up again?

And I get it. There's a lot of snow to plough, and not a lot of people to do it. And it is a hard job, with a lot of really hardworking people, and I am more than grateful for the privilege of not shovelling (believe me I am so happy). But I know multiple people who have gotten injured by slipping on ice, and many more who fear even walking to campus, or crossing streets, because they are afraid they will slip and fall (totally 100% valid, I support that decision).

So if you're going to plough at 3am, that's fine. But please do a good job. Please clear as much snow as you can. Please salt/sand every place where anyone may walk/drive ever. And please, to my fellow walkers, all drivers, and I guess everyone who can fly, be careful out there.

Anyways, anyone heard about Heated Rivalry? My friend recently recommended it to my grandma.

smallmouthbasshater

KEY CLUES :)

More people should do keyclues.

These have honestly been the most enjoyable few days this winter so far.

Is this message a puzzle? Who knows ;)

10 MORE BIRDS

NORTH AMERICAN BIRDS

1. Pileated Woodpecker—What A Striking Creature!
2. Blue Jay—isn't it beautiful that we live in a place with blue jays?? Thinking about blue jays. what a gorgeous and beautiful thing to appreciate in this imperfect world.
3. Mallard Duck—These are very common in the lake by Conrad Grebel, if anybody is interested in seeing ducks. They are dabbling ducks, which means they dip their upper bodies underwater to forage, and they also have cool courtship behaviours in the spring!
4. Hairy Woodpecker—almost the same as the Downy Woodpecker but slightly bigger. What's the point?? The point is to see one more type of woodpecker.
5. American Woodcock—peent peent :]
6. Peregrine Falcon—holy crap it's fast!!!!
7. Chipping Sparrow—this bird goes chip chip chip chip chip!
8. Red-bellied Woodpecker—this bird has a red head!
9. Red-headed Woodpecker—this bird has a redder head!!!
10. Mourning Dove—hoo ee oo. hoo. hoo

iLikeBirds413

N VOCALOID LYRICS

あああああああ あああああああ

AaAaAaA AaAaAAa

あああああああ あああああああ

AaAaAaA AaAaAAa

あああああああ あああああああ

AaAaAaA AaAaAAa

あああああああ あああああああ

AaAaAaA AaAaAAa

“ああああああああああああ”

Produced by Nashimoto Uj featuring Hatsune Miku

papayabird



puzzlenjoyer

A BAD CASE OF...

gridCOMMENT 160.2

good snow day to my friendly **gridWORDers**,

it's no longer a snow day, but it was when i wrote this! or will it be again... we shall see..... to be honest, i'm feeling rather down. it's a drag. the snow sucks. the only thing keeping me going throughout the week is looking forward to the release of the new **mathNEWS** issue..... the light of my life.... **mmmmmathhNEWSsss**

anyway. last time, i asked how you would all be observing national do nothing day, and you all said:

- *thirddoffive*: I was not aware of do-nothing day, so arguably I could not possibly have observed it in any meaningful capacity. I did, however, work on four different assignments, and prepare a USRA application—which is also arguably not a good way to observe do-nothing day. So overall, I've done a terrible job.
- *rutabaga413*: I am going to spend nothing day playing alto saxophone!
- *pac_gym_playlist*: for me, everyday is nothing day, and I observe the holiday by procrastinating and watching random video essays on youtube.

Therefore, on actual nothing day, I decided to

switch things up and actually do my work for once in a twist of irony 😊

i feel the spirit in each of your answers, and i'm very happy to see that you guys figured out the empty circle in the middle. you call it “clever” and “on theme,” i call it “too lazy to come up with more clues,” which was my own homage to do nothing day. seeing as rutabaga413 was the only one who properly observed do nothing day, please pick up your prize at the **mathNEWS** office!! i am disappointed in the rest of you, but also myself, because i did nothing but do everything on do nothing day. perhaps next year, we will all do better and do nothing for do nothing day.

this issue's **gridQUESTION**: what is an accomplishment you are most proud of? yeah that's right, we're going hopecore. someone has to do something about how disheartening all the snow is. please submit your answer, pseudonym, and completed **gridWORD** to the **mathNEWS** office (mc 3030) or to mathnews@gmail.com by feb 9, 2026, 6 pm for a chance to win PRIZE

toodles :p

spaghettiinhalers

ACROSS

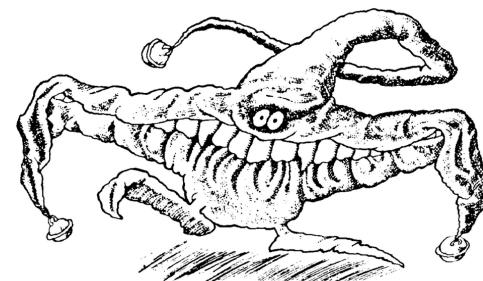
1. Fancy-schmancy
5. Recipe amt.
8. Textile pattern commonly found on fuzzy blankets owned by Asian immigrant parents*
14. Common crossword clue cookie
15. Feverish
16. Be a go-between
17. Beige
18. Good thing to make with your audience when giving a speech
20. Bacchante
22. Slangy town
23. Fleur-de-__
24. Pieces of time
26. Swarm
28. What must be broken for a chick to hatch
32. Exam originating from the University of Cambridge
36. Me
37. Little dog's cry
39. Pass
40. African storyteller
42. Slippery swimmer
43. Dining establishment, informally
44. Fur capitalist
45. Product of transcription in your cells
46. A-lister
47. Took five
49. It might get covered by 48-Down if the City of Waterloo doesn't clear the snow
52. Tortoise racer
54. Alternative to truth
55. Type of Reddit post
58. Window ledge
60. Grow choppers

64. Textile pattern commonly used in battle and hunting*
67. Variegated
68. Kind of duty
69. Ruin
70. Scraped (out)
71. Sink clutter
72. Butt
73. Depend (on)

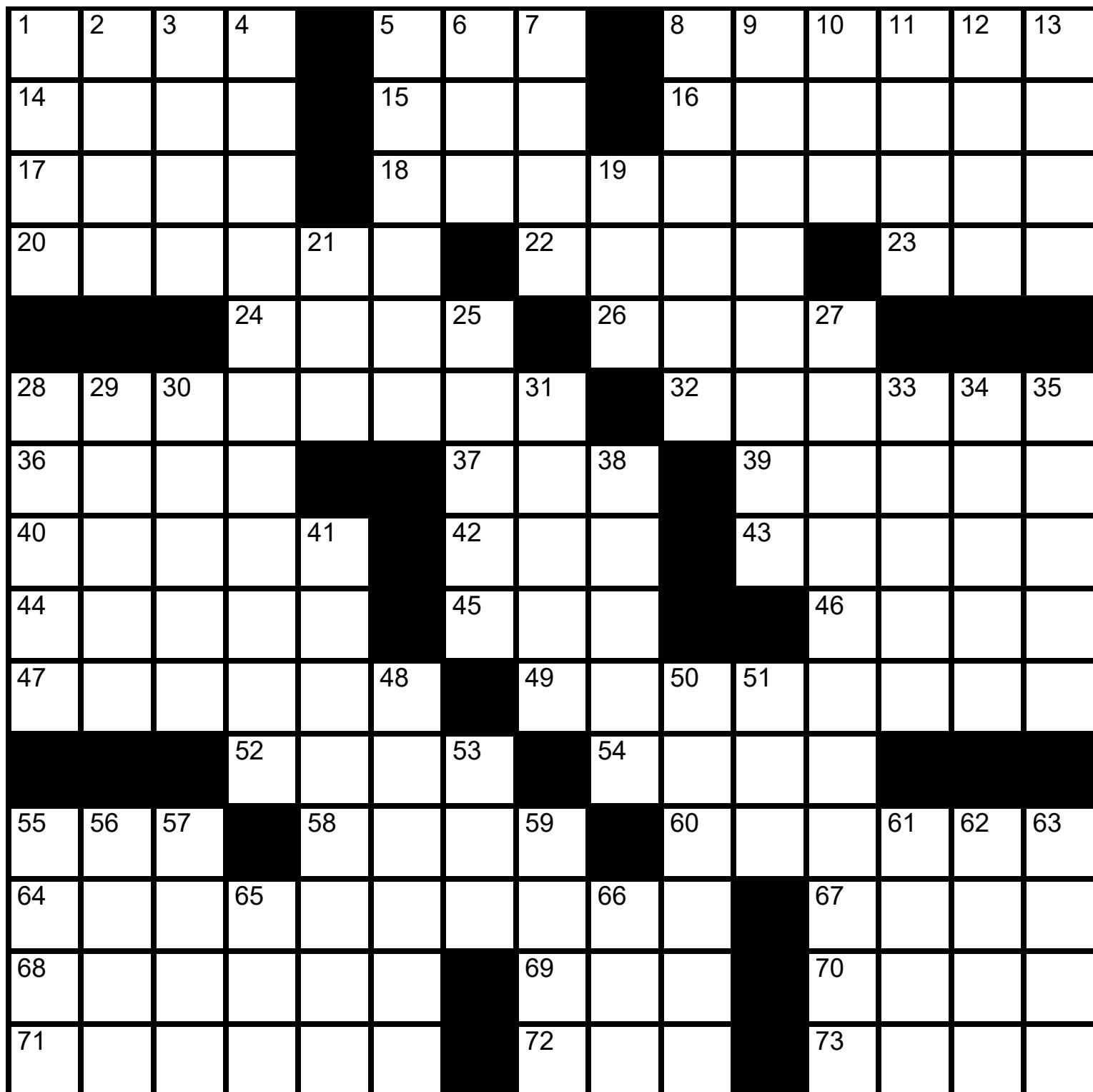
DOWN

1. Ode
2. Ocean predator
3. Dry
4. Textile pattern commonly known for its distinct duotone tessellation*
5. Textile pattern commonly found in a fashion aesthetic that features peace signs and beaded accessories*
6. Crafty
7. Commoner
8. Small blossom
9. Someone who persists
10. Bit of horse chow
11. Iranian coin
12. Fungal spore sacs
13. Answer to “Shall we?”
19. Hurt
21. 65-Down and __
25. More cunning
27. NP-complete logic puzzle game that is Turing-complete when infinite
28. Actress Samantha
29. Shrub of sorts
30. Walk types
31. Legal claims

33. The **gridMASTER** might enjoy inhaling this food
34. Of base 8
35. Baby bird?
38. Textile pattern commonly seen on bagpipe players*
41. Cherish
48. Result of blizzards
50. Library stamps
51. Bard's “before”
53. Corner piece
55. Breezed through
56. Long skirt style
57. Electrical current units
59. Dalai __
61. Small fellow
62. Back of the foot
63. Vortex
65. __ and 21-Down
66. Car's need



According to a 1977 **mathNEWS** editor, the above image depicts a “stressed, smiling fool.”



You have to pray to the dark lord under the moonlit sky
with seventeen candles just to get Adobe InDesign to
do anything remotely normal.

LOOKAHEAD

SUN FEB 1	MON FEB 2	TUE FEB 3	WED FEB 4	THU FEB 5	FRI FEB 6	SAT FEB 7
UW Game Jan Showcase QNC 1502, 5:30 PM	Groundhog Day Candlemas	WUUSA election voting Period begins Course selection period ends			Winter Olympics begin WUUSA election voting period ends	

SUN FEB 8	MON FEB 9	TUE FEB 10	WED FEB 11	THU FEB 12	FRI FEB 13	SAT FEB 14
	mathNEWS 160.3 production night PHY 145, 6:30 – 9 PM		Cycle 1 rankings release		mathNEWS 160.3 released Aphrodite results released Cycle 1 matches released Man in the bean released	Valentine's Day

LAST ISSUE'S gridSOLUTION

1	K	2	E	3	N	4	Z	5	I	6	P	7	F	8	O	9	D	10	O	11	M
12	L	1	R	A		13	I	D	E	A	S	14	E	L	A	N					
16	S	W	A	T		17	L	Y	R	I	C	18	F	I	N	O					
19	D	I	S	I	20	N	C	L	I	N	A	21	T	I	O	N	S				
					22	O	O	H				23	R	A	N						
24	A	25	G	I	N	G	27	28	29			30	T	I	D	32	A	33			
34	N	U	G	A		35						36		37	T	A	C	O			
38	N	A	L	L		39						40	E	C	H	O					
41	A	N	O	A		42						43	A	H	E	M					
44	S	T	O	N	45	E						47	B	R	A	S	S				
48	T	A	P									50	B	A	T						
51	A	52	N	T	H	R	O	54	55	O	L	O	G	I	57	S	58	T	S		
60	H	A	R	E		61	A	A	R	O	N	62	C	L	U	E					
63	A	D	A	M		64	C	L	Y	D	E	65	L	A	N	E					
66	A	D	S		67	H	E	X	E	D	68	E	G	G							

**otherNEWS is made
technically possible
by club executives of
the Math Faculty.**

I say "technically"
because if they had
sent us more news
this week, this box
wouldn't be here.

THE mathNEWS EDITOR WHO
PUTS THE "NEWS" IN mathNEWS

