

THE

GAUNTLET

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UNIVERSITY OF CALGARY

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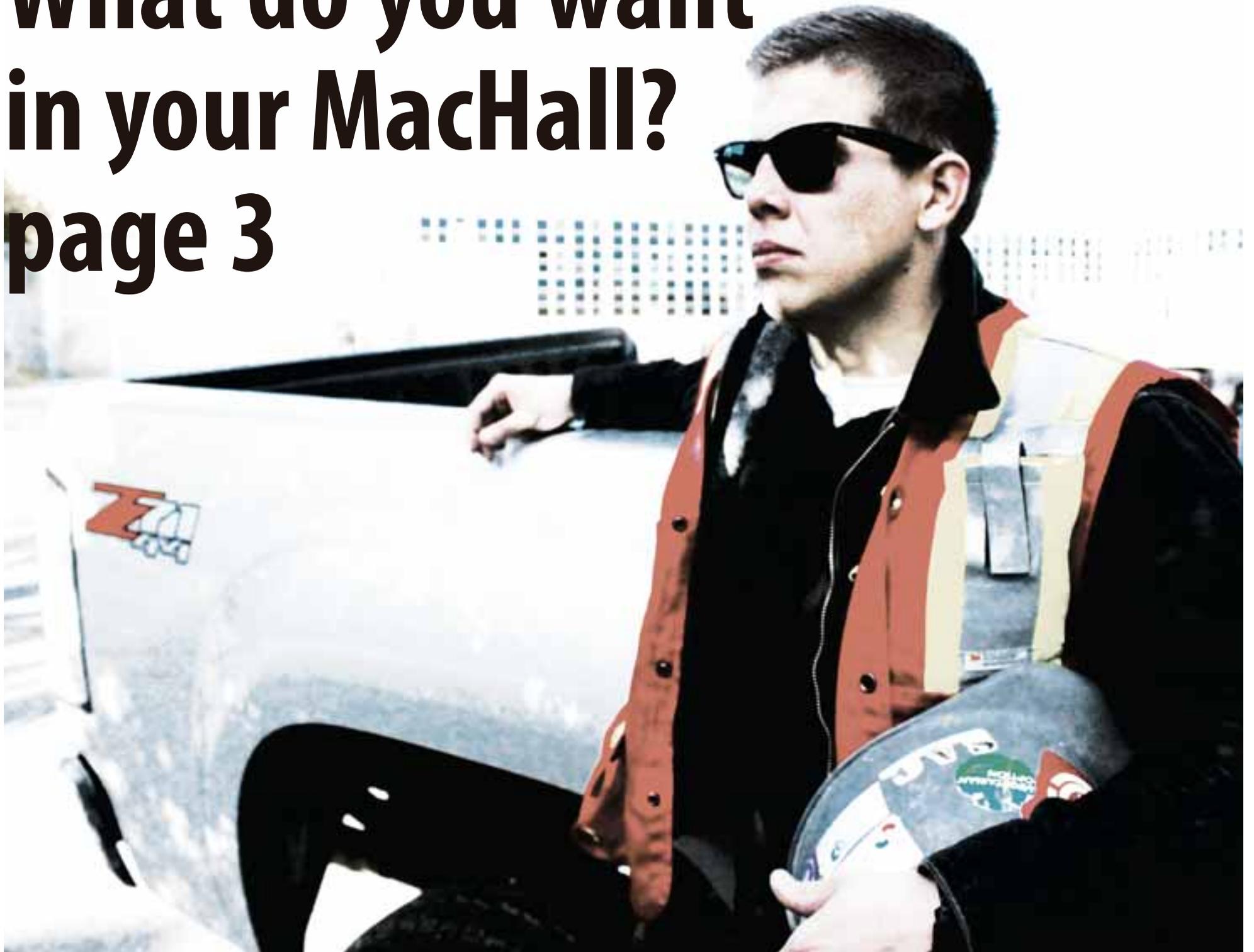


OPINIONS

After city council approves a ban on shark fins, two writers debate whether this decision was for better or worse, page 8.



What do you want in your MacHall? page 3



Anti-heroes: Skipping Hollywood

“Batman madman,” “Batman psycho shoots 12 dead,” “Killer: I’m Joker,” “He yells ‘I’m the Joker’ then blasts 71 inside cinema” are all headlines on newspaper covers under a blown-up photo of a deranged 24-year-old after a horrific massacre in Colorado last Friday night. These shocking titles are representative of how acts of mass violence are portrayed in the media, and they have one thing in common: a complete disregard for the tragic loss of life.

Will oversized images of James Holmes or intricate details of his life cause perpetuated acts of violence and copycats? We don’t know. It seems, however, that the media is giving Holmes exactly what he wants, perhaps even fulfilling his ‘motivation’ for the crime.

The underlying motives for someone to commit such an act can be intricate and difficult for a sane person to comprehend. But we do know one thing for certain: he did what he did, and now



the media must figure out how to move forward and properly cover the massacre. Of course, covering such a heinous crime is necessary — not covering it would do just as much harm as too much coverage. But the way the information was disseminated functionally equates fame and infamy. Fame can, in essence, be achieved through acts of heroism or through acts of savagery, evident from news coverage over the last week.

The 2011 Norway massacre is a striking example of how one de-

ranged man can use notoriety to propagate a message of hatred and racism. Just as thousands are uniting to mark the first anniversary of the devastating attack, Anders Behring Breivik is undergoing a trial and is “pleased . . . that there is an interest in the case,” his defense lawyer explains. The extensive coverage of the perpetrator of a mass murder creates a pedestal for a megalomaniac to gain infamy. Last week, the Norwegian newspaper *Morgenbladet* published a cover with “Look at me! Look at me!”

pasted over Breivik’s face — this showcases both his desire for media attention and the media’s willingness to provide it.

In 2009, Charlie Booker interviewed a psychiatrist that gave media outlets the following advice in order to not propagate more mass murders: “Don’t start the stories with sirens blaring. Don’t have photographs of the killer. Don’t make this 24/7 coverage. Do everything you can not to make the body count the lead story.” The argument was simply to honour the victims more and spend less time on the murderer’s story.

Tragedy, like the one that occurred in Colorado, shouldn’t be exploited to resemble a story of riveting entertainment. Coverage of this nature tends to make certain media sources seem like beneficiaries of horror. We don’t want to wake up to see an overblown image of the *Calgary Sun*’s daily anti-hero pasted on their front page.

Gauntlet Editorial Board

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Editor-in-Chief: Erin Shumlich 403-220-7752
eic@thegauntlet.ca

News Editor: Michael Grondin 403-220-4318
news@thegauntlet.ca • @GauntletUofC

Entertainment: Sean Willett 403-220-4376
entertainment@thegauntlet.ca • @Gauntainment

Sports: Taylor McKee 403-220-4376
sports@thegauntlet.ca • @GauntletSports

Opinions: 403-220-4376
opinions@thegauntlet.ca

Features: Susan Anderson 403-220-4376
feature@thegauntlet.ca

Photo: Adrienne Shumlich 403-220-4376
photo@thegauntlet.ca

Production: Sarah Dorchak 403-220-4376
production@thegauntlet.ca

Illustrations: Morgan Shandro 403-220-4376
illustrations@thegauntlet.ca

Business Manager: Evelyn Cone 403-220-7380
business@thegauntlet.ca

Advertising Manager: John Harbidge 403-220-7751
sales@thegauntlet.ca

Graphic Artist: Evangelos Lambrinoudis II 403-220-2298
graphics@thegauntlet.ca

Contributors
Riley Hill • Emily Macphail • Matthew Parkinson

Golden Spatula
Emily Macphail for doing all the work with none of the pay. It’s great to have you around!

Furor Arma Ministrat
Room 319, MacEwan Students’ Centre
University of Calgary
2500 University Drive NW
Calgary, AB T2N 1N4
General inquiries: 403-220-7750
thegauntlet.ca

The Gauntlet is the official student newspaper of the University of Calgary, published most Thursdays throughout the year by the Gauntlet Publications Society, an autonomous, incorporated body. Membership in the society is open to undergraduate students at the U of C, but all members of the university community are encouraged to contribute. Opinions contained herein are those of the individual writers, and do not necessarily represent the views of the entire Gauntlet staff. Editorials are chosen by the majority of the editorial board. The Gauntlet is a forum open to all U of C students but may refuse any submission judged to be racist, sexist, homophobic, libelous, or containing attacks of a strictly personal nature. We reserve the right to edit for brevity. Grievances regarding the Gauntlet follow a three-step process which requires written decisions from the Editor, the GPS Board of Directors, and the Ombudsboard. The complete Grievance Policy is online at: thegauntlet.ca. The Gauntlet is printed on recycled paper and uses poop based ink. We urge you to recycle/finish on the Gauntlet.

The Cover
Design by Adrienne Shumlich
Right image: Courtesy U.S. Fish and Wildlife

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Redeveloping MacEwan Student Centre

Students get a say in the MacHall Master Plan

Michael Grondin

News Editor

MacEwan Student Centre officially opened on Nov. 17, 1967. It is the heart of campus and is a place where University of Calgary students come to meet, eat and study. Over time, however, MacHall has become dated and redevelopments and maintenance are needed in order to continue providing valuable services for students.

The MacHall Master Plan, a planning project that will look into a possible overhaul and redevelopment of the building over the next few years, is currently in the beginning stages. Stakeholders, most importantly students, will be consulted so the building best meets their needs. About 5,000 students will be part of the process and consulted about improvements to many spaces.

The university administration, the Students' Union and the Graduate Student Association are part of a committee to create and develop the Master Plan.

At this point, a majority of students are concerned with food options, more space and better study areas. The MacHall Master Plan will look at all possibilities to decide how to best move forward.

"MacHall is all right as it is, but it would be cool if it were more modern," said second-year economics student Jeremy Fernando. "We have the [Taylor Family Digital Library], and we have the [Energy, Environment and Experiential Learning building], so MacHall would fit in more with all of these nice, new buildings."

According to SU president Hardave Birk, it is important that a



Adrienne Shumlich

MacHall may undergo \$200 million in redevelopments and maintenance upgrades.

strategic roadmap with a long-term vision is set in place for MacHall.

"The university is essentially creating a document to move

forward, a master planning exercise with a goal of ensuring that [MacHall] meets students' needs, and if any redevelopments happen, they work for students and

were decided by students," said Birk.

Two years ago, the SU and the university administration engaged in a small consultation



/// We at the SU personally feel that students haven't played a large enough role in the process, and now it is very important for us to get out there and reach out to students and ask them what they want in their student centre.

—Hardave Birk, Students' Union president

process and asked students what changes they wanted to see. Birk said this process must become larger and reach out to more students.

"We at the SU personally feel that students haven't played a large enough role in the process, and now it is very important for us to get out there and reach out to students and ask them what they want in their student centre," said Birk.

Birk said between \$150–200 million is the estimated cost to revamp the entire building. Upgrades, maintenance and ensuring the space is well utilized is the main part of the process.

"We really do care about what students think about the building, especially if we are talking about doing millions of dollars worth of redevelopments," said Birk. "There's no point in changing a student centre if [students] aren't getting anything out of it."

There is already work underway, like the Stör renovation and bathroom upgrades. New waste bins were also installed last winter. According to Birk, more work is still needed.

The plan is still in its early stages, so the exact direction or timeline is unknown. Student participation is the first priority.

"An important question we need to ask is how can we make [MacHall] a place students want to be in, and the best way is to ask students themselves," said Birk.

Students' opinions will be gathered in a number of ways, including online surveys, interactive displays, town halls meetings and canvassing, said Birk. He also hopes students can inspire new ideas on how to make the space in MacHall better for all who use it.

campus quips

What do you think should be changed in MacHall?



"Timmy's lines are way too big, and we need better food."

— Faiza Choudhary, second-year education



"More seating, that's the general complaint."

— Daniel Coutts, fourth-year geology



"Healthier food options that aren't so expensive."

— Marisa Makin, fourth-year communications



"More seating. Cheaper and better food options."

— Sharon Ctse, third-year business

CareerLink makes job posting easier

Students have new system to find jobs and contact possible employers

Emily Macphail

Gauntlet News

On June 26, the University of Calgary's Career Services launched CareerLink, a new program where students and employers can connect with ease. The site takes the place of JobLink, which formerly hosted job postings from a variety of employers advertising to U of C students and alumni.

The system allows students to search for jobs, upload resumes, review submitted applications and view scheduled interviews and events, like job fairs.

According to Career Services manager Colleen Bangs, this change was in the works for a while. A contract with a new provider was signed in February and communication regarding the switch began last June. She said the main reason for moving to a new system was to increase ease of use for students and employers. She also said Career Services' main focus is employer relations.

"We had noticed, just in working with the old system when we



Adrienne Shumlach

CareerLink helps make searching for a job easier.

had JobLink, that it was cumbersome. [CareerLink] is really offering the same services, but it's an enhanced user experience and when you go in, it's very intuitive."

The software provider for JobLink was Simplicity, an

American company that caters to large-scale organizations. Orbis Communications Inc., the new provider, is Canadian and focuses on educational institutions, which makes it more suitable for Career Services. Bangs says the Canadian aspect was an impor-

tant factor in the decision.

"They use the same privacy laws and we're also supporting a home-grown company," she said.

Orbis is also the same company that the co-curricular record and the Student Success Centre currently operate with, allowing bet-

ter integration between the three services.

The student login for the system is now linked with myUofC, decreasing the number of passwords students must keep track of for university services.

The new software is also beneficial for employers because it allows them to track how many people are viewing, interested in and applying for jobs. This increases employer retention with the service, which increases the opportunities available to students.

"We've had lots of feedback from employers and what we're hearing is that they're really enjoying it and finding it easy to use," said Bangs. "We've actually had an increase in postings and information sessions on campus."

She said Career Services has also made an effort to increase accessibility to charities and non-profit organizations, giving students a broader range of opportunities.

For more information visit ucalgary.ca/careers

Haskayne launches real estate studies program

Michael Grondin

News Editor

The Haskayne School of Business will be launching a real estate and entrepreneurship studies program in Fall 2012 to cater to important housing and entrepreneurship needs in Calgary.

According to director of real estate and entrepreneurship studies Jim Dewald, the real estate industry is driven by growth, and Calgary is expected to continue to be one of the fastest growing cities in Canada.

"Calgary is therefore a logical place to learn real estate," said Dewald in an email interview. "It was important for the University of Calgary, and specifically the Haskayne School of Business, to take a leadership role in educating Albertans about the critical skills required for success in real estate development."

Real estate and entrepreneurship courses were initially only going



Adrienne Shumlach

The U of C is introducing a real estate studies program to match the needs of a booming city.

to be offered as elective courses. However, Dewald said an increasing interest in the program led it to expand. The program is available for Masters and undergraduate students in business.

"As the interest grew, other

goals were added, including developing a sophisticated research program, and in developing speaker programs and opportunities for more community engagement in the issues and topics prominent in real estate development, invest-

ment, and entrepreneurship," said Dewald. "There have been no setbacks, and to be honest I am very impressed with the constant and increasing interest and support of this initiative. Clearly there was a need from the industry's perspec-

tive, and establishing this initiative is timely and promises to be very effective."

There are two main areas of focus: understanding the basics and diverse sectors within real estate development and investment and real estate project analysis.

Dewald said this program is unique in that the real estate industry is heavily invested in it. There are industry-active instructors, guest presenters and use of local projects for effective teaching.

"Real estate and entrepreneurship studies is consistent with the strategic direction of the Haskayne School of Business to build up our expertise and capabilities in the field of entrepreneurship," he said. "This initiative fits like a glove, pulling together industry need, student demand and school expertise."

For more information visit haskayne.ucalgary.ca

U of C strengthens ties in China

Internationalization efforts look to expand U of C's horizons

Riley Hill

Gauntlet News

The University of Calgary is developing close relationships with various institutions in China. Partnerships were made and old ones strengthened during U of C president Elizabeth Cannon's May 18–28 visit to Beijing and Hong Kong.

The U of C aims to secure ties with institutions that share mutual goals and to improve the U of C's international profile by meeting with Chinese regional governments, oil companies and universities.

The U of C is partnered with esteemed schools like Tsinghua University, Shantou University and the University of Hong Kong, as well as oil giants Sinopec and China National Petroleum.

Cannon said strengthening relationships in Asia aligns with the goals in the Eyes High strategic plan of "enhancing the quality of teaching and learning, and to make [the U of C] a top-five Canadian research institution by 2016."

Much of China's interest in collaborating with the U of C stems from research being done at the U of C's Schulich School of Engineering, particularly in oil and gas. This is due to China's expanding energy needs and investment in Alberta's oilsands.

the future of both our nations."

However, the partnerships do not exclusively deal with the energy sector. The U of C's faculty of medicine works closely with Capital Medical University in Beijing.

Internationalization efforts like these are common among universities looking to expand their influence and improve their international reputation.

U of C director of international relations Glynn Hunter views internationalization as beneficial not only for faculty, but for students as well.

"If you're looking at China specifically, what you're trying to do is make sure you're finding relationships that provide our students an international experience, or the opportunity for one," said Hunter. "If you believe that knowledge is global, then you need these connections."

Although many of these partnerships have been established for several years, the U of C has had a difficult relationship with the Chinese government in the past. The U of C was briefly removed from the list of accredited schools in China after the Dalai Lama was given an honorary degree during his visit to Canada in 2010.

Since then, however, efforts have been made to improve the relationship between the U of C and the Chinese government.

"When [Cannon] became presi-



courtesy Riley Brandt

U of C president Elizabeth Cannon develops close relationships with partners in China.

China will be a key part of our international strategy and I really look forward to building more partnerships in the future.

— Elizabeth Cannon, U of C president

Cannon met with leaders of government, industry and academia on her visit. She received a warm welcome from her Chinese hosts.

"Industry leaders spoke highly of our energy research and education programs," said Cannon. "Chinese industry has made significant investment in energy projects in Alberta, and it is an example of an area that has a real significance for our university and

dent, one of her first priorities was to look at the relationship with the government of China and to look at repairing that relationship and rebuilding it," said Hunter.

Ultimately, Cannon said these partnerships will be long term and beneficial for all parties involved.

"China will be a key part of our international strategy and I really look forward to building more partnerships in the future," said Cannon.

A promotional graphic for CJSW Radio 90.9FM. The background is a bright yellow with a subtle pattern of small white dots. In the center, there is a stylized green signature that reads "Elizabeth Cannon". To the right of the signature is a cartoon illustration of a panda's head and shoulders. The panda is white with black ears, eyes, and limbs. It is wearing large, green headphones with orange earbuds. Below the panda, the text "WWW.CJSW.COM" is written in a simple, black, sans-serif font. Below that, "90.9FM" is written in a large, bold, black, sans-serif font. At the bottom left, there is a small logo for "CJSW" in green. At the bottom right, there is a small logo for "CJSW" in green. At the very bottom, there is a line of small text: "CJSW Radio 90.9FM Your Campus and Community Radio Connection. Listen online at www.cjsw.com".

A new beginning for The Magnetic North

The Magnetic North and SAVK reunite to form Dark Red Dark Blue

Sean Willett

Entertainment Editor • @Willettton

This year's Calgary Folk Music Festival will serve as the end of an era for The Magnetic North. The beloved local band, helmed by brothers Paul and Stephen van Kampen, will go through both a change in direction and a change of name, becoming the more driven and coherent Dark Red Dark Blue.

After breaking up their previous band Beija Flor in 2009, the duo started their own separate projects — Paul started The Magnetic North, while Stephen started SAVK. Each project was defined by the respective brother's unique vision despite both siblings playing in each of the bands. Over time, however, this split became more hindering than helpful.

"It got to the point where we were splitting our focus," says Stephen. "We were doing two bands okay instead of one band awesomely."

This sparked the decision to merge the new projects, creating a band that combines the best aspects of The Magnetic North and SAVK while still being something entirely new.

"It's kinda like a TD Canada Trust

situation — it's a merger where we take each other's visions and put them together," says Stephen.

"There's no money though, that's the big difference," jokes Paul.

This melding of visions is reflected in the group's new name, which encapsulates the different emotions each brother brings to their music.

"Paul's stuff has always been very aetherial, dark and brooding, and if it was summed up in a colour, it would be blue," says Stephen. "My stuff has always been more fierce and raw and angry, and . . . it would be red. So we settled on the name Dark Red Dark Blue as a band name."

Joining Paul and Stephen will be percussionist Distance Bullock from Reuben in the Dark, along with The Magnetic North's bassist Stefan Smith.

"It's kind of a dream lineup for the new group, and we're hoping it will do well," says Stephen.

With The Magnetic North's current drummer Dan Wilson leaving the group to focus on his other band, Geist, the group's upcoming July 29 Folk Fest performance may be the last chance for fans to see the band's original lineup in action.

"Folk Fest is our last big thing with The Magnetic North, and with



courtesy The Magnetic North

(From left to right) Paul van Kampen, Stephen van Kampen, Stefan Smith and Dan Wilson will be playing their last show as The Magnetic North at the Calgary Folk Music Festival.

drummer Dan Wilson as a member of the lineup," says Paul. "So I think we're going to celebrate in a big way, we'll play all of our best stuff and leave the schlock behind. This will be the last hurrah for The Magnetic North, as The Magnetic North."

As for the festival itself, the brothers are looking forward to playing at one of their favourite Calgarian events.

"Our first time playing Folk Fest is still in my mind as one of the most blissful things I've ever done," says Paul. "It felt like

Christmas or something."

"It's strange, the people there are so good to you that you keep expecting something bad to happen or for someone to be a jerk, and it just doesn't happen," adds Stephen.

The newly formed Dark Red Dark Blue will be recording their first album at the end of August, with local musician Lorrie Matheson as their producer. With a new lineup and a new direction, the van Kampen brothers look forward to a future that will hopefully be much brighter than their group's new name.

"Now we can go and play shows, and we can take the best of The Magnetic North and the best of SAVK," says Stephen. "Paul and I can co-write again, which is the best part, because when we co-write it is always better than when we write on our own. We're not losing any songs, we're not changing any visions, we're just making it bigger and better. Our hope is that we don't lose any of our momentum."

To listen to the music of The Magnetic North visit themagneticnorth.bandcamp.com

Calgary's food trucks take to the street

Sean Willett

Entertainment Editor • @Willettton

Over the past few years Calgary has welcomed a new restaurant breed with open arms: the food truck. What was once a rare novelty has quickly become a staple in the city's dining scene with over 30 mobile eateries across the city.

A large part of the explosion in popularity of food trucks in Calgary can be attributed to Mayor Naheed Nenshi, whose pilot program has allowed food trucks to begin operating in the city. The program has also provided information and aid for potential vendors, encouraging more people to start their own food trucks.

"What you see today is the result of all the work of Nenshi and his staff," says Aman Adatia, University of Calgary alumnus and co-founder of The Naaco Truck, a

food truck that has steadily been gaining popularity since it hit the streets in June.

Founded with fellow U of C alumnus Stephanie Shields, The Naaco Truck is one of the many food trucks that have been founded since the launch of the pilot program last summer. For business owners, food trucks present many advantages over traditional restaurants, including a much lower cost.

"To open up a food truck today, you could probably do a reasonably good job with about \$50,000," says Adatia, "which is a lot better than a brick and mortar restaurant, which can easily cost over \$250,000."

The low cost of food trucks also opens more opportunities for culinary creativity that may be too great a risk in a traditional restaurant. The Naaco Truck, which specializes in unconventional neo-



courtesy The Naaco Truck

The Naaco Truck is one of the many new Calgary food trucks.

retro Indian cuisine, is a prime example of this phenomenon.

"I think being unique is the only way you're going to survive," says Adatia. "If we only did traditional Indian food, like what you would find at an Indian buffet, we would probably fail. I want to show that

there is a lot more to Indian food than butter chicken."

The recent influx of food trucks in the city has helped draw significant media attention, including coverage on the Food Network show *Eat St.* The show, which documents food trucks in North America, is return-

ing to Calgary for the second time this summer, and will be filming from August 10–12. The Naaco Truck, Mighty Skillet and Braizen Food Truck were chosen to be featured in an upcoming episode due to their unique approaches to street food.

"*Eat St.* tries to show something different in the community," explains Adatia. "When it comes to our truck, they've only shown one or two other Indian trucks in the series."

Although many of Calgary's food trucks will not be gracing the silver screen, there are few hard feelings in the world of Calgary's food trucks.

"It's a really tightly-knit community for the most part, we're good friends with a lot of people in the business," says Adatia. "We're actually going to see *Batman* with the Los Campadres guys."

The Dark Knight Rises, but not too high

Christopher Nolan's epic conclusion doesn't quite live up to the hype

Matthew Parkinson

Gauntlet Entertainment • @Martertwit

The *Dark Knight Rises* serves as the grandiose finale for Christopher Nolan's extremely popular Batman trilogy. It is one of the most anticipated movies of the year, and while it doesn't quite live up to the hype — although there was no way it realistically could — it is still an enjoyable movie for the vast majority of its running time. It is in no way better than *The Dark Knight*, but it does reach the height of *Batman Begins*.

The film begins eight years after *The Dark Knight* concluded, and presents us with a retired and reclusive Bruce Wayne (Christian Bale). He has hung up his cape and mask, opting for a life of solitude with his butler Alfred (Michael Caine). Nursing a knee injury, presumably because of all the torture it went through in the many years he was Batman, Wayne barely goes out in public.

Of course, Wayne sitting alone at home would make for a boring movie, so a threat in the form of a masked mercenary named Bane (Tom Hardy) appears, threatening to wreak havoc on Gotham City. Wayne has to rise up and once again don the mantle of Batman in order to save the city he has called home his whole life.

Despite this fairly basic premise, Batman does not have as prominent a role as one might expect. The uncostumed Wayne gets far more of Bale's screen time, with Batman only shows up for a select few sequences. Those moments are fantastic, as you might expect, but if you're hoping to see a Batman-focused film, you may be disappointed.

The supporting cast gets a significant chunk of time as well, allowing for more of an ensemble film than previous installments of the series. For instance, Wayne has two love interests, both of whom play important roles in the narrative. The first is a master thief named Selina Kyle (Anne Hathaway), who meets Wayne while stealing both his pearl necklace and his fingerprints, while the second is an environmentalist named Miranda Tate (Marion Cotillard). Two other major char-



courtesy Warner Brothers

Bane and Batman grapple for the fate of Gotham City in Christopher Nolan's *The Dark Knight Rises*.

acters are members of the police, although the veteran Jim Gordon (Gary Oldman) spends a significant portion of the film away from the action. Taking over the force is the hotheaded John Blake (Joseph Gordon-Levitt), a new addition to the cast with a surprisingly prominent role. The only character who felt unimportant was Lucius Fox (Morgan Freeman), as he and Alfred get far less time to shine than the rest of the cast. Alfred does, however, get one or two very touching scenes.

Hardy's Bane is not Heath Ledger's Joker, but he still manages to become an imposing force — almost effortlessly vicious and threatening. He is enjoyable to watch, and there is even an attempt to make him slightly sympathetic. However, Bane's voice was obviously re-recorded in post-production, and it sounds like it's coming from everywhere, not the character specifically. It takes you out of the film every time he talks, which can lessen the impact of some of the film's more dramatic scenes. It's still better than Bale's Batman voice, which sounds like it'll do significant damage to the actor's throat.

The Dark Knight Rises struggles most in its story structure. The first hour or so is setup, with little accomplished and some of it becoming meaningless later on. This wouldn't be as much of a problem if the film wasn't so long, but at 164 minutes it's a major issue. This is far from the tightest cut of the film that could have been made, and while fans will probably want an even longer version, cutting down certain portions would have benefited the film as a whole. There aren't too many times when it starts to drag, but when it does it's very noticeable.

Despite issues with pacing, *The Dark Knight Rises* is still a wholly enjoyable film, even if it might not be the masterpiece everyone hoped for. If nothing else, it's just

as good, if not better than *Batman Begins*, and it logically concludes Christopher Nolan's trilogy — even if it might play things a tad too safe.



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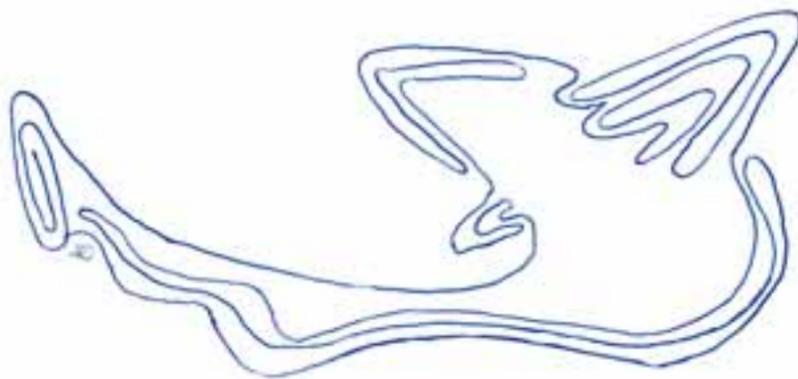
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Debate: Banning shark fin soup in Calgary



For

Against

Sean Willett

Entertainment Editor
@Willettton



When discussing the implications of Calgary city council banning the possession of shark fins, it is vital to first look at the barbaric process known as 'finning.' When fishermen are hunting for valuable shark fins, they want to optimize the amount of space on their boats. To do this, they store only sharks' fins, slicing them off with a hot knife and throwing the mutilated predator back into the ocean. The shark, unable to move, will either suffocate or be eaten. This is the process the ban on shark fins is fighting against — one of the most cruel and inefficient methods of hunting done today.

Besides the clear ethical issues raised by shark fin fishing, the practice also raises pressing ecological concerns. Sharks are apex predators, which means that they are on the top of the food chain. When animals like these are killed by humans, it is incredibly easy to throw ecosystems out of balance and just as easy to severely threaten these predators. Many species of shark are rapidly becoming endangered because of shark fin fishing, threatening the balance of our already weakened oceans.

The practice of consuming shark fin soup

is becoming more taboo as people are made aware of the issues surrounding this controversial food. Even in China, where shark fin soup is considered a traditional dish meant to symbolize wealth, people are increasingly condemning the practice of finning. Cities around the world are beginning to take steps to ban the possession of shark fins, including Toronto and other cities in Ontario.

So when taking all of this into account, how could city council have possibly voted down this legislation? Rejecting the bylaw would have sent just as strong a message as approving it did and would have sparked a chain of reactions condemning the city's decision. It would have added to the negative public image Calgary has been attempting to shed for years and would have resulted in scores of angry citizens.

Some may argue that it is not the city's place to enact such a ban, or that changes like this should be made at a provincial or federal level. However, with the current Alberta and Canadian governments, it would be highly unlikely that either would do much to resolve an environmental issue. Sometimes change has to start on a smaller scale, gaining momentum and traction before being introduced to the world at large. By passing a bylaw banning the possession of shark fins, Calgary has sent a powerful message, one that the entire world will hear.

Sarah Dorchak

Production Editor
@StegoSarahs



Last week, the City of Calgary voted 13-2 in favour of banning shark fin soup from being served within city limits. The new law will take effect in October 2012. This decision followed a quick debate in city council, not even offering affected Calgary residents and business owners time to hold town hall meetings to discuss the issue. In essence, the council members voted on behalf of their constituents without their constituents' approval.

The shark fin issue was brought to the busy-body council after a petition to ban the product reached city hall. It's unlikely that there would be much to debate regarding this inhumane and unsustainable food product. However, council members should have waited to discuss the issue with their constituents before deciding a dictatorial, outright ban of what citizens can eat and what restaurant owners can serve. Cutting the fins off live sharks is a terrible practice, but a municipal decision banning the sale of shark fin soup is a government intervention gone too far.

City of Calgary officials should not be worried about what restaurants serve or

what patrons order. There are far more important issues for these officials to debate (see southeast LRT line, taxes, budgets, etc.). Burdening an already strained police service with shark fin soup raids and crack downs on restaurant ingredients is redundant and does not serve the immediate interests of the majority of Calgarians. Most citizens would prefer affirmative action to ease their morning commute rather than banning unsustainable food.

Shark fin soup is most commonly served at traditional Chinese weddings. The practice is dying out due to environmentalist efforts, and most weddings only continue to offer it to appease older generations. Still, our municipal government took it upon themselves to intervene in the private lives of a portion of its citizens and waste tax dollars and effort to support this law. Social conventions are subverting the purchasing of this product, so why was government intervention even needed?

There are only four restaurants in Calgary offering shark fin soup on the menu. If the ban was put in effect in Vancouver or Halifax, where seafood dishes are more common, perhaps this decision would make more of an impact. But in landlocked Calgary, there are more important and less invasive decisions on council's radar that need attention.

COMICS

Imaginary Anomaly – Morgan Shandro

