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# TORONTO RENTAL MARKET COOLS

PRICES FALL 20 PER CENT, VACANCIES UP

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CHANGES IN ONT.

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# Changes to Ontario post-secondary sexual assault policy 'just the beginning,' says OUSA

**Klaudia Kryczka**

NEWS REPORTER

The Ontario Undergraduate Student Alliance (OUSA) says changes to the province's policy about sexual violence at post-secondary schools is a step in the right direction.

But there's much more than needs to be done, said Julia Pereira, the president of OUSA.

"I think that campus student safety is incredibly important," she said. "When we think about how students interact with their colleagues and their peers on campus, we want to create a safe environment."

The alliance, a student-led advocacy group representing about 150,000 undergraduate students across the province, played a central role in advocating for a change, known as Ontario Act 131/16, a Jan. 27 government press release said.

The revisions prevent students who allege instances of sexual violence or harassment from being asked irrelevant questions about their sexual history. As well, students will not face repercussions for violating a postsecondary institution's drug and alcohol policy, the press release said.

"There's lots more work to be done," Pereira said. "This is just the beginning."

Ross Romano, Ontario's Minister of Colleges and Universities said its known many instances of sexual violence and harassment on and around campuses go unreported "and often this is because students are afraid of reprisal or concerned that they will not be taken seriously."

Jill Dunlop, associate Minister

of Children and Women's Issues, wants to support sexual assault survivors in their healing process.

"These amendments will help reduce potential re-traumatization and encourage more survivors to come forward," she said.

Colleges and universities are required to have sexual violence policies to inform students on how the institutions will respond to survivors of sexual assault and harassment, the release said.

When the original bill came into effect in 2017, there wasn't much oversight on what was included in the policy. Instead, it was more about mandating that each institution must have a policy, Pereira said.

OUSA members realized most of the policies were not survivor-centric or trauma-informed.

"It's not about what was bad about [the policies], but maybe what was missing," Pereira said regarding the original version of the regulation.

According to the 2019 Student Voices on Sexual Violence Survey, 75 per cent of the 163,000 university students who responded

online reported they did not disclose a non-consensual sexual experience.

Similarly, 82 per cent of 42,000 college students, did not reveal a non-consensual sexual experience.

Although Pereira can't speak for everyone, she believes the best way to encourage sexual assault survivors to come forward is to have policies that are trauma-in-



Julia Pereira, president of Ontario Undergraduate Student Alliance, said the changes to sexual assault reporting are a beginning. OUSA

formed and survivor-centred.

"I think [it] can help lower those barriers and potentially help more students see that there is value in disclosing their

**"It's not about what was bad about [the policies], but maybe what was missing,"**

-JULIA PEREIRA  
OUSA PRESIDENT

story," she said.

OUSA members prioritized gender-based and sexual violence during their meetings in 2019. Pereira and her colleagues continuously initiated the conversation about gender-based and sexual violence prevention

and the recommendations to improve the safety of students on campus when conferencing with MPPs, ministry staff, and Romano.

"Based on this advocacy, this is how we were able to get that conversation going," Pereira said.

Students became an active part of the process, where OUSA consulted with them about policy recommendations or engaged with them in meetings. Their suggestions were included in their 2020 policy paper, Gender-based & Sexual Violence

Prevention and Response.

The policy paper includes the presentation of the problem, student education on sexual assault, and 20 suggested policy changes to the law, many of which were pitched by students.

"We couldn't have done it without the student voices," Pereira said.

Despite the win in amending two policies, OUSA is still advocating for at least 12 more recommendations to be implemented.

Two of those policy changes include the explanation of rules governing the adjudicative process and hearings, as well as, the inclusion of examples of potential sanctions against respondents.

# COVID-19 causes 20 per cent drop in Toronto rental prices

**Melike Hilal Gumus**

NEWS REPORTER

Rental prices in Toronto decreased significantly since the beginning of COVID-19 as the demand for rental units continued to drop.

Toronto was known for its expensive rental market in the past, but because of the pandemic, the city experienced its lowest prices in the last three years, and many people are taking advantage of these more affordable prices before the demand starts rising again in 2021.

"Tenants are moving into condos that they wouldn't have been able to afford a year ago... and people are moving out of the family home because they can now afford to be on their own and rent a condo due to the reductions in lease prices," said Melissa Thornton, a real estate sales representative.

"Many tenants have not renewed their leases as they

have moved in with friends or family because of job loss or a reduction in their hours due to COVID-19," Thornton said.

Isabella Miller, a recent university graduate, is one of the people who decided to take advantage of the lower rental market.

"I decided to move because my lease was up on my previous place, and I did not want to continue living there," Miller said, leading her to start online apartment hunting journey with her current roommate.

Job losses due to COVID-19 appear to have had the greatest effect on rent prices. The latest national rent forecast reported the loss of income, immigration slowing down, and Toronto losing its central demographic of tenants from the market as factors in dropping rents.

"I personally know a lot of people that weren't able to renew their visas because of

COVID-19, so I think a lot of people are going home, and people just physically can't afford places like that anymore," Miller said.

The national rent report for January 2021 showed the rent of a one-bedroom unit in Toronto reduced by 20.4 per cent since the start of the pandemic, followed by 17.5 per cent for a two-bedroom unit.

"The price probably would have gone up if we had not moved here during COVID-19," Miller said. "We were able to get that slightly reduced price."

"I've lived in other places before that were still quite expensive," she said. "Prices have definitely gone down, and I think that's partially because you can't use the amenities that would have raised the price of a unit."

Thornton said landlords are nervous now because of the job losses since the pandemic began, "and are looking for what



RACHAEL ANNABELLE/UNSPASH

Rents in Toronto have been going down since COVID-19 pandemic hit the area.

we refer to as A+ tenants."

The challenges of the pandemic forced landlords to come up with incentives and offer additional bonuses to find tenants, including a month or two of free rent, gift cards, and move-in cash discounts.

"I wish that I'd waited a little bit longer, I was actually getting a bit of a rush to move out of my previous place, [if I] had waited longer I feel like I would have

been able to negotiate a much better price," Miller said.

The data from December 2020 from Bullpen Research and Consulting reported rental prices in the city are expected to keep decreasing for the next three to four months until mid-2021, then the rental market will start increasing with a modest rise.

"I'm going to try to sign a lease early summer," Miller said. "Hopefully somewhere cheaper."

# Bell Let's Talk launches fund for student mental health plan

**Vrajesh Dave**

NEWS REPORTER

Bell Let's Talk launched a new fund to support mental health on college and university campuses across Canada, allocating \$2.5 million for post-secondary institutions.

Along with the Mental Health Commission of Canada (MHCC), Bell Let's Talk developed a set of flexible and voluntary guidelines for post-secondary student mental health programs to help spread awareness, minimize stigma and create healthier learning environments on campus.

However, not everyone is so optimistic.

Cameron Yung, a policy analyst in Calgary and former Rector of Queen's University, said the Standard's general wording and loose restrictions don't ensure transparent and responsible allocation of the funds.

"It's an amazing effort on the part of Bell and the Bell Let's Talk campaign. At the core, it's an outstanding idea but often times, universities just end up funnelling this money to mental

health student clubs that host coffee houses and fundraisers," Yung said.

He said he believes the time for awareness is over and both Bell Let's Talk and post-secondary campuses need to show more concrete action.

"Ideally, the funding would help hire more mental health counsellors, psychologists and specialists to support student needs. A student facing a mental health crisis shouldn't have to wait over three weeks to see someone for help," Yung said.

His idea has scientific backing. A study by researchers from the Centre for Global Mental Health at King's College in London talks about how there are short-term benefits to positive attitude change, but that long-term attitudinal changes don't simply come from more awareness.

According to a media release from Bell Let's Talk, most students in Canadian post-secondary institutions are age 24 or under, which includes the demographic most at-risk for mental health concerns, where 75 per cent of people with a mental illness were first diagnosed by age

24.

Jennifer Hamilton, the executive director of the Canadian Association of College and University Student Services (CACUSS) said the fund announced on Jan. 13 allows colleges and universities to implement important mental health recommendations outlined in the National Standard of Canada for mental health and well-being

for post-secondary students.

The fund's first phase requires institutions to apply by Feb. 26 with a second round of funding available in the spring for campuses that demonstrate diligent use of the initial grant.

Despite the grey area with the new fund, more than 200 colleges and universities across Canada participated in Bell Let's Talk late last month,

including Humber College. The largest-ever corporate commitment to Canadian mental health focused on four key pillars: anti-stigma, care and access, research and workplace leadership.

The Ontario government joined in the message.

"We encourage everyone to get involved, speak out and help break the stigma around mental health," it partly read.



CARLA/FLICKR

Bell just finished this year's Let's Talk Day raising more than \$113 million, which will be used to promote mental health initiatives.

# Contaminated water remains a nightmare for residents of Rio de Janeiro

**Anna Beatriz De Santanna**  
NEWS REPORTER

RIO DE JANEIRO — The city's water supply has once again been infected with a non-toxic but foul-smelling bacteria called geosmin according to Rio's state water and sewer company Cedae.

Ana Barbara de Mello, a physiotherapist who lives in the west of the city, said this is an eerily similar situation to the one Rio citizens faced already.

"The first time I saw a difference in the water was last year, about the same time, at the beginning of the year," she said.

This year, Marcela Cutier, a psychology student at Rio's UNISUAM university, realized the water was different in mid-January.

Like everyone else in Rio de Janeiro, the student noted a weird taste in the water.

Cutier has children at home

and as an alternative, she tries to "boil water and when I don't boil unfortunately we drink like that."

She believes the fault is with the state, as it would not be the first time, and expects it won't be the last time. But it's made worse by the pandemic and "that we see the government neglecting the population," Cutier said.

One of her classmates, Brenda Monaliza, said she thinks it is "absurd" what is happening with Cedae.

"I believe that the government is doing it on purpose so they can privatize the company and sell in parts, as they have been doing over the years," Monaliza said.

Daniella Faria, a biology professor who graduated in biological sciences with a specialization in environmental management, said the agencies that work with sanitation

have developed several pieces of research showing geosmin doesn't have a direct impact on physical health.

It does, however, have a great psychological impact, creating more of an emotional than physical discomfort.

"Because when a person consumes the water and feel the taste and smell, they imagine a dirty water that is not fit for consumption," Faria said.

Geosmin is a natural substance produced by some organisms, mainly bacteria.

In polluted environments, there will be an increase of the substance, which gives the earthy smell, similar to the odor of soil after a rainfall.

The substance is not responsible for any discolouration of the water.

But a blurred colouring indicates a more serious case of a possible lack of treatment.



JONATHAN CHNG/UNSPLASH.

The non-toxic but foul-smelling water doesn't directly impact health but residents of Rio de Janeiro argue the recurring problem reflects the government's neglect.

The increase of pollution in Rio de Janeiro's water source, the Guandu River, is expanding this concentration of geosmin. As a solution,

Faria said authorities should "reduce this supply of sewage in the river."

She said the faster option, which is what is being used, "is to increase the purification using

activated carbon, which is not precisely efficient but has contributed more to remove that taste and smell from drinking water."

According to the Cedae website, the water distributed in Rio de Janeiro is within the standards of potability and

consumption since Jan. 28 despite the reported colour and smell.

# Brazil consumes less meat as number of vegetarians double

**Julia Alevato**  
NEWS REPORTER

RIO DE JANEIRO — The number of vegetarians in Brazil, the world's leading exporter of beef, has doubled over a six-year period, according to research by the Brazilian Institute of Public Opinion and Statistics.

About 30 million Brazilians reported being vegetarian or vegan in 2018, a 75 per cent surge compared to 2012, according to the privately-owned marketing research company.

Another study from GlobalData shows a third of Brazilians are buying less meat, and 14 per cent are adding meat replacements to their shopping carts.

"There are many studies that show the numerous benefits of becoming vegetarian, such as prevention of chronic non-transmitting diseases, like diabetes and hypertension, and improved lipid profile, reduced risk of heart attack and stroke," said Dr. Beatriz Beltrami, a nutritionist from Rio de Janeiro.

Beltrami said a vegetarian diet prevents diseases because fruits, legumes and vegetables, are rich in fibre, nutrients and



ANNIE SPRATT/UNSPLASH

Brazil is the world's leading exporter of beef which is a major cause of deforestation. A recent study shows that one third of Brazilians are buying less meat and 14 per cent are buying meat replacements, while the number of vegetarians has doubled.

antioxidants.

According to GlobalData, since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, more than 34 per cent of Brazil's 212.6 million people are buying less meat.

"Since I started working, I notice a big demand for vegetarian people seeking care and also for patients interested in changing their diet," Beltrami said.

"I think people are becoming

more aware of their food choices and also concerned with causes such as environmental issues and their love for animals."

"Eat real food and avoid consuming a lot of processed foods, even if they are vegetarian," she said.

"Most of the time they have many additives, preservatives and are not healthy at all.

"Always include vegetable proteins such as cereals and

legumes," she advised those trying to become vegetarian.

Awareness of environmental issues is a strong influence on Brazil's fast-growing vegetarian population.

Pasture for cattle makes up about 60 per cent of deforested areas, according to Greenpeace Brazil.

"I've always wanted to become vegetarian, but I only stopped eating meat once I got disgusted

by it.

The food started to taste and look like an animal," said Pamela Oliveira, 21, an art education student and tattoo artist in Rio de Janeiro.

Oliveira, who's been a vegetarian for almost two years, had a thyroid problem, but the issues caused by it have decreased since she changed her diet.

"The red meats are inflammatory, so my nodules should have got worse," she said.

"As soon as I spoke to my endocrinologist, she recommended cutting red meat, but I was already a vegetarian, so it was great."

Isadora Moreira, 21, of Rio de Janeiro, became a vegetarian about two years ago as she started to take her major in veterinary medicine and believes all lives have the same value.

"I studied the vegetarian movement and realized how much the human race explores and has always explored other species," she said.

"I had contact with farm animals during college and studied about animal origin products, learning about what the animal goes through until it becomes a carcass and reaches our plate."

# Sia's film *Music* sparks controversy about treatment of autism on screen

Nicholas Seles

ARTS REPORTER

This year's Golden Globes nominations swirled in controversy almost immediately after they were announced.

Diversity was once again a point of concern with a near-total absence of Black women.

But those slights overshadow another controversy centred around the Golden Globe-nominated film *Music* and its portrayal of an autistic, non-verbal teen being restrained.

The film, which was nominated for two Golden Globes including Best Picture in a Comedy or Musical and Best Actress for Kate Hudson, drew heavy criticism for its lack of restraint as well as casting a neurotypical actress to portray an autistic character.

Anne Borden King, the co-founder of Autistics for Autistics Ontario, an autistic-lead advocacy group, said it's scary and dangerous that a potentially fatal maneuver involving restraining the title character was demonstrated in the film.

"The fact that the scene was ever in the film kind of shows that the filmmaker was ignorant about the dangers of restraint and indicates that she's ignorant about other realities," Borden King said.

"The most important thing to do would be to consult with an autistic-lead group about the representation to make sure they don't get things wrong and that nothing dangerous is in the film and also that it's a realistic representation because when we have unrealistic

representations, this can cause harm and pain for people who are autistic and that's what's happened with this film," she said.

The act of casting someone outside of their real-life experience is not new to Hollywood.

Straight actors are often cast in LGBTQ+ roles or characters of marginalized backgrounds are white-washed.

The same unfortunately applies to autistic characters and a lack of care is shown all around.

That lack of care has extended

to the final product.

The poor reviews the film has been collecting is separate entirely from the issue of misrepresentation.

Charles Bramesco, in his review for the website *Little White Lies*, took the misrepresentation to task.

"Sia's poor direction enmeshes with and amplifies her rank insensitivity, chiefly in her fusion of her videos' performance style with the subject matter.

Kate Hudson plays a sobered-up drug addict getting by as a small-time pusher, completely devoid of the grit required to sell that profile," he wrote.

"Their neighbour Ebo (Leslie Odom Jr) is a broadly African immigrant, a stereotype of model-minority helpfulness even as he relates his own sob story."

Bramesco suggests Sia misses the mark on attempting to present herself as one who can advocate for individuals with autism.

"At one point, she makes a cameo as herself, detailing a



STUDIOCANAL

Maddie Ziegler plays *Music*, an autistic teen, in pop star Sia's directorial debut. The movie and its director have been criticized for the film's portrayal of autistic people.

clueless, tone-deaf outreach effort she's leading in a needy country," Bramesco said.

Sia tweeted and apologized for the insensitivity after her work was nominated for the awards. Not long after, she deleted her Twitter account.

"I'm sorry. I plan to remove the restraint scenes from all future printings.

I listened to the wrong people and that is my responsibility, my research was clearly not thorough enough, not wide enough,"

Sia said.

Sia concluded her Twitter apology by reaffirming that *Music* did not condone the use of restraints on autistic people.

"There are autistic occupational therapists that specialize in sensory processing who can be consulted to explain safe ways to provide proprioceptive, deep-pressure feedback to help with meltdown safety," she said.

The 2021 Golden Globes will be held on Feb. 28.

## Directors guild, actors union say Toronto film sets are safe

Nicholas Seles

ARTS REPORTER

Ontario allowed film productions to continue despite concerns of COVID-19 as the province entered its second lockdown on Jan. 2.

Toronto's film industry has seen exponential growth over the last decade and even with stay-at-home orders issued by Premier Doug Ford in early January, film productions got the go-ahead to continue their shoots.

Directors Guild of Canada member Mark Pettit said there is a higher level of awareness around safety protocols and that's what's kept productions running.

"It depends on the tier of the show. A tier-A show will actually test me two days before my first day of work," Pettit said.

"Any Tier A, B or C production have tripled their overheads in order to limit their liability their risk exposure to COVID —

they've tripled it.

We had an entire COVID team on [Star Trek Discovery] where I was COVID third, and I had a team of about six to 10 people that were wiping down surfaces and monitoring for social distancing reporting any cases of non compliance," he said.

Toronto has become Midway City for *Suicide Squad*, a futuristic Tokyo under attack by gargantuan Kaiju in *Pacific Rim* and even saw the zombie apocalypse for *Resident Evil: Apocalypse*.

What Toronto is dealing with currently, alongside the rest of the world, is the COVID-19 pandemic which has made large gatherings — something film sets are known for — nearly impossible, if not illegal.

As a result, companies are turning to areas outside the GTA for productions that can fly under the radar. Constantin Films' reboot of *Resident Evil* recently wrapped production in Sudbury, Ont., which is well

removed from GTA crowds and limits crew work to local residents.

Claude Joli-Couer, the government film commissioner and chairperson of the National Film Board of Canada, says work will continue and contracts will be honoured.

"A number of filmmakers are continuing to work remotely from home on their project, when possible, respecting the public health directives regarding physical distancing," he said in an open letter.

"As the crisis evolves, we will continue to adapt, to ensure that many of our productions continue and that post-production workflows can be performed remotely.

Based on public health and safety regulations, we will begin to gradually offer our complete suite of post-production services as well as our animation production spaces," Joli-Couer said



JAKOB OWENS

Toronto has doubled as other major cities in films such as *Suicide Squad* and *Resident Evil: Apocalypse*. Filming continues despite COVID-19 restrictions.

When the lockdown took effect, some unions and production houses sent letters to crew members to carry with them.

The letter was an identification form that would prevent any police disbursement under the COVID-19 bylaw limiting large gatherings.

When crew members have tested positive for the virus, the production is shut down immediately, even midday if necessary.

ACTRA, the Toronto-based

union for actors in Ontario, put a number of safety measures in place including paying dues online, continuous screening for their members and mental health support links.

The union's president David Gale reaffirmed ACTRA is ready to manage the pandemic.

"No one ever really knows what lies around the corner.

We must be able to turn on a dime.

We must be prepared for whatever is thrown our way," Gale said.

## EDITORIAL

# Bell once again shows Canadians its true colours

Bell laid off more than 200 employees with no notice despite receiving federal wage subsidies totalling almost \$123 million

Once a year Canadians' social media feeds are filled with an influx of support for mental health, centred around Bell Let's Talk day.

The campaign, which began in 2010, has faced numerous criticisms over the years, often based on the simple fact people should be vocal about these problems year round rather than for just one day.

But this year, leading up to Jan. 29, some hoped the effort would be different. Bell pledged \$2.5 million in grants for post-secondary institutions to implement the new National Standard for Mental Health and Wellbeing, marking real action supported financially.

Then the layoffs began.

More than 200 employees were dismissed with almost no notice three days after the social media campaign with the company citing COVID-19, leaving notable names like Dan O'Toole and Lucas Meyer without a job.

This is despite Bell receiving federal wage subsidies totalling almost \$123 million — which it should return to Ottawa — and had almost \$23 billion in revenue in 2020.

O'Toole was especially outspoken about the decision, as well as the entire notion of Bell Let's Talk.

"So I have to wait for a specific day, and then mention a specific company, and only then,

will the company give money to mental health," he said in a tweet. "Only when I mention them? But shouldn't they just do it, since they are a billion dollar company?"

The decision has led to outcries against Bell Let's Talk, with a petition to cancel what some are calling a clear example of Bell's desire for good press all while showing ambivalence towards the mental health of their own employees.

This is not the first instance of Bell saying one thing regarding mental health and doing another. In 2017 more than 600 employees reported severe anxiety due to sales targets, and told CBC News the pressure was "created from the top down."

Bell has been using this one day a year to justify questionable behaviour for years, even involving the charity in their acquisition of Astral in 2012. In their pitch to the CRTC to allow the merger to go through Bell cited the \$3.5 million that would be going to Bell Let's Talk, a move that received ire from other communication companies.

Companies using charitable donations for good PR is nothing new. But by focusing the attention around one day of the year and then turning around and laying off hundreds of people despite getting a government handout with the very purpose of preventing that, Bell has managed to blot what could have

been a noble effort in corporate social responsibility.

The solution is to stand up and fight for these issues not because it looks good on social media, but because it is the right thing to do, to not give a company like Bell the green light to do whatever it wants by singing their praises for what is, at its core, a PR stunt.

Stand with the journalists and broadcasters who were let go this month and remember these events when the next Bell Let's Talk day rolls around. Because all the PR in the world shouldn't make us forget the only time Bell is concerned with mental health is when it is good for the bottom line.

## OPINION

# Canada's newest travel restrictions are a necessary burden



Jayvon Mitlum  
NEWS REPORTER



KEN YAM/UNSPLASH

Canadian airlines are cancelling routes and laying off employees due to travel restrictions but its essential to curb COVID-19 cases.

This year continues to promise improvement despite everything that has happened since the surprise appearance of the coronavirus in 2020.

Vaccines are now being administered throughout the province, giving citizens the opportunity to protect themselves if they want. Toronto appears to be recovering from the spike of cases that started this year off badly. The city recently extended restrictions and orders until the summer to ensure the number of cases continue to drop.

But a federal and provincial

restriction, for example, that targets international travellers arriving at Toronto's airport to enter quarantine hotels to be tested for COVID seems both prudent and excessive.

Prime Minister Justin Trudeau introduced the plan on Jan. 29, in part because of the new strains of COVID-19 variants that are more contagious — and deadlier — than the original strain. There's the U.K. variant, the South Africa variant and the Brazil variant.

If arrivals prove clear of COVID-19, they would be able to start their 14-day process at home. But if not, they would need to be quarantined in a hotel at their expense, which can be up to \$2,000.

At first, I thought the whole plan was going to be a bad idea, considering that people would have to pay out of their own pockets. International students are not generally awash in cash and \$2,000 is prohibitively high.

Also, Canadians already over-

seas are often at the mercy of quickly changing protocols involving air travel, and trying to return could be disastrous for them. They have to choose between cutting their vacation or travel time short or being stranded until April, which I think is a little longer than it needs to be. Mid-March seems to me to be more appropriate, to see if the plan is making progress.

But after mulling over the situation, I realized maybe there's a positive outlook in everything

that's being said and that's being put into action.

I now understand the Ontario government is trying to limit travel, because of the appearance of these new variants, apparently being brought into the city from travellers arriving at the airport. I now understand it's trying to uphold the good, to ensure a third wave doesn't make the province enter into another serious incident.

There's a growing fear of a third wave later this year if the variants aren't brought under control. Dr. David Williams, Ontario's chief medical officer of health, and Dr. Adalsteinn Brown, co-chair of the Ontario COVID-19 Science Advisory Table, told the media this week modelling shows the number of cases could skyrocket.

The government announced Friday the restrictions for incoming travellers will get even stringent on Feb. 22.

Despite the seemingly hard medicine of potential quarantining travellers at the cost of \$2,000, I feel it offers newfound hope the year is starting to get on the right track so far.

## OPINION

# A good restaurant meal is more than a \$5 burger with fries



**Erin Leblanc**  
NEWS REPORTER

Getting a burger in your hands in five minutes for under \$5 has become the norm.

It is becoming easier than ever to quickly order from fast-food restaurants on apps and the prices for quick meals, though rising, stay cheap.

But cheap and easy doesn't make it better.

We have become conditioned to food prices that are unreasonable for the average restaurant to sustain. Fast food restaurants work for years to streamline their services and recipes so that their products seem more appealing on the outside to customers.

Usually, these streamlining techniques involve using pre-made, cheap, frozen ingredients, and underpaying large staffs.

This technique harms small restaurants that do not have the funds nor time to do the same.

When customers get used to speedy service provided by mass-produced meals and an abundance of minimum wage workers, they expect the same from all restaurants. But this isn't possible.

Many restaurant owners see the business as their lives. It is not easy to run a restaurant and takes up most of their time and money. To make any sort of profit, restaurants need to continue to sell food and drinks.

As a customer, these dishes and drinks may seem expensive. But you are paying for your experience, not just your food.

The cost of rent, in Toronto in particular, is rising every year. Restaurateurs pay big time to have a nice venue for you to eat in.

Ingredients and equipment are other high costs. Some ingredients can be extremely expensive, especially when ordering them fresh. Stand mixers, indus-

trial fridges, and slicers can run for thousands of dollars. A large commercial oven alone can run a restaurant up to and over \$5,000 in costs to maintain.

Beyond the costs, restaurant owners and staff work tirelessly to make sure you have a good time.

Restaurants hire trained and experienced waitstaff, chefs, sommeliers, and bartenders. It takes hours of training and dedication to become respected in this field, and the price you pay often reflects the experience of the staff behind it.

Wine pairings and dishes are meticulously planned and prepared, all going towards the price you pay.

Often when going to higher-end restaurants, tasting menus are popular. Tasting menus can consist of multiple courses, from five to 10 to even more courses. When tiny plates are seen online, it's easy to jump to conclusions about the price of that dish.

But usually, the price includes multiple dishes, made of very expensive ingredients. These tasting menus are designed



DAN GOLD/UNSPLASH

for you to leave pleasantly full. Restaurants like these never want you to leave hungry, or feeling so full you feel sick.

Fast food restaurants have conditioned us to want to eat the largest portion of food for the smallest price. This may seem appealing to our bank accounts

but can make our bodies feel sick and encourage dangerous overeating habits.

So next time you think your meal is pricey, think of how it got to you. Spending more money to support smaller restaurants is better than throwing away \$5 for a burger.

## NEWS

# Student loan payment freeze needed until economy reopens

**Cristina Galle**  
REPORTER

Canadians struggling to repay student loan debt during the COVID-19 pandemic are asking for help from the government.

Patty Facy, the leader of the Freeze the NSLSC initiative, said student loan repayments should be paused until after the pandemic.

"At this point, it almost feels fair" to pause repayments, she said. "We think that it makes sense to keep them frozen until the pandemic is considered to be over when the economy returns to its normal functioning."

People are already struggling, and it's difficult to understand why they are expected to repay student debt during the

pandemic, Facy said.

Kien Azinwi, the national chairperson for the Canadian Federation of Students, called the government's freeze on federal interest for student loans a "slap in the face."

She said the freeze on federal loan interest does not help people repay their loans during the pandemic because they are still required to pay provincial loan interest, as well as the loan itself.

The government should freeze student loans so people can focus on getting through the pandemic without the added burden of debt, Azinwi said.

"This is not a game. These are people's livelihoods...We can't play politics when it comes to mental health. We can't play politics when it comes to their

wellbeing," she said.

Students cannot continue to be an afterthought in government policies, Azinwi said. She said all levels of government should take action to support the issue of affordable education and student debt in Canada.

Azinwi said students need a stable economic foundation to help rebuild the economy after the pandemic.

"Invest in us so that we can invest in the economy," she said. "You have to feed into what you want to produce."

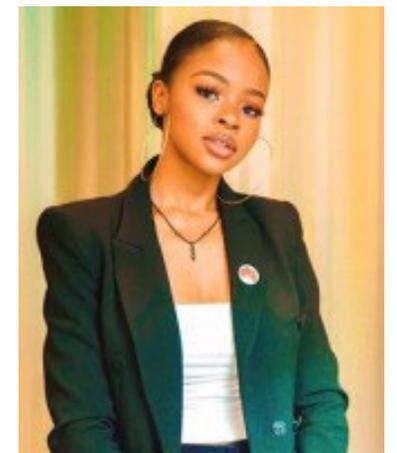
Ontario Green Party leader Mike Schreiner told Humber News he also supports a student loan repayment freeze until at least the fall, depending on the state of the pandemic and economy.

"Once we're vaccinated and the economy has reopened, and we're back to reduced unemployment rates, then lifting the moratorium would seem appropriate. But it should be in place until that happens," he said.

Schreiner said the government should pause repayment of student loans during COVID-19. He said younger workers have been especially impacted by the pandemic's economic effects and are currently in no position to repay their loans.

Facy said issues faced by people repaying their student loans during the pandemic have uncovered a significant student debt problem in Canada.

Though student debt cancellation is an important



LINKEDIN

Kien Azinwi, Chairperson at Canadian Federation of Students, called the government's freeze on federal interest for student loans a "slap in the face."

issue, she said her main goal is a loan freeze during the pandemic to give people more time to repay.

# Dating during quarantine requires a commitment to your phone, apps

## Makayla Verbruggen

NEWS REPORTER

Messenger, Snapchat, and Instagram. They're all apps people are using to meet new people, connect, and hopefully find comfort in these difficult times.

But some are turning to other apps to gain connections that they're craving.

Alicia Ruggiero has been on two dating apps during the past year.

"Dating in the pandemic, it's tough," she said. "I feel like it's harder to talk to people and communicate, as well as you have to be socially distanced if you do meet up with them in person"

She said when it comes to dating someone through a pandemic, it's important to meet

up with someone a few times to ensure there is a real connection there. But it is a stressful event, even with a mask.

But what happens if things don't work out and the connection needs to be cut? Is there a way to stay safe online and physically?

Kara Brisson-Boivin, a director of research at Mediasmarts and an adjunct research professor at Carleton University's Department of Sociology, said using apps can be helpful during the lockdown, but be careful.

"That can be a good thing, as I said, especially in the pandemic, and we're all sort of hungry for social connection," she said. "But I think users need to know what they're doing."

Brisson-Boivin said app users should never use their primary

email or give out any personal information, ensure terms of service and privacy policies are understood, let friends know if a meeting was set up with a potential date.

But she said app users is was to trust their gut feelings.

Reese Lemos, a George Brown Media Foundations grad, said she was active on dating sites until she has found her partner.

She met her partner on Tinder and said she is glad she stopped using dating apps because of some "gross" experiences. The couple is trying to see each other as often as possible but COVID-19 is making it difficult.

"We try to see each other a couple times a week outside and socially distanced," she said. "Covid made dating very difficult."



MEDIASMARTS/UNION ELEVEN PHOTOGRAPHY

Kara Brisson-Bolvin said dating apps are helpful for dating while users are isolated.

# Daily routines needed to overcome COVID-somnia, anxiety

## Tina Nalova Ikome-Likambi

NEWS REPORTER

Gbekele Adenekan, a fourth-year communications studies student at York University noticed she sleeps differently since the pandemic began.

"I feel like I get the hours, but I don't get that restful sleep," she said.

"Sometimes it's very hard for me to sleep. I know my body wants to sleep but my mind is like 'you are going to be awake,'" Adenekan said.

She is one of many students in Canada who have noticed sleep disturbances because of the COVID-19 pandemic and lockdowns.

Experts refer to these sleep disturbances experienced by people of all ages as "COVID-somnia".



ANDREA PIACQUADIO/PEXELS

Some students said even when they get enough hours of sleep in a night, they feel it has not been restful.

Dr. Frances Chung, with the Department of Anesthesiology and Pain Medicine at the University of Toronto, said COVID-19 influences sleep because of the fears of the pandemic and isolation.

Adenekan said the uncertainty of the pandemic has made her anxious.

"It just feels a bit exhausting because my sleep area is also my work area. So, it just becomes a blur," she said.

Adenekan said sleep is important for students because of the constant workload.

"It's very crucial. It's absolutely cru-

cial because I can't do anything without proper sleep," she said.

Adenekan said she was able to find a routine that works for studies and sleep.

"I take a run and when I come back, I take a nice cool shower and once I am on my bed, I just pass out," she said.

Brock University student Nabiha Sabiree said she also has a sleep routine.

"I usually use my essential oil diffuser, I take a nice long shower, face mask, and then I play some music. It's just a really relaxing setup and I go to bed after," she said.

The sixth-year concurrent education student said she manages her time better now compared to when the pandemic hit.

"When it started, I lost a lot of sleep. I wasn't sleeping as much," Sabiree said. "I was waking up at early times going to bed super late."

She said the lack of sleep causes exhaustion and irritability.

Chung said people who do not have enough sleep have increased irritability, lack of attention, daytime sleepiness, and daytime fatigue.

"Young people, when studying, need to have adequate sleep and also have good sleep patterns," she said.

Chung said students and young people should have a consistent sleep pattern.

"You have a good sleep pattern when you have a consistent time when you go to bed and when you wake up. You actually feel really refreshed and restored," she said.

"It's very easy to have deterioration in your health. You can have anxiety, you can have depression, and you do not go to sleep because you're worried, and you have fear," she said.

Chung said students need to have a goal, exercise and reach out to people to help raise their spirits.

Adenekan said fellow students need to avoid being anxious.

"Don't let school be another thing to stress about. Just have hope that we're going to be coming out of this," she said.



TINA NALOVA

Dr. Chung said students having goals, exercising are essential for raising their spirits while in lockdown.

# Northern Ontario man runs every street to raise \$5,000 for local hospice

**Danielle Dupuis**

NEWS REPORTER

SAULT STE. MARIE, Ont. — Jonathan Mogg has created a list of running goals for 2021 and is slowly checking them off one-by-one. The Sault Ste. Marie resident and realtor has been doing the unthinkable as a runner who only started three years ago.

Mogg runs more than 300 kilometres per month and has been running consistently since April 15, 2020. He is now working on his latest goal, to raise \$5,000 for the non-profit ARCH Hospice as part of the Great Bucket List Challenge by running every street in Sault Ste. Marie by the end of the year.

"When I started this year, I was 15 per cent done, and through running every single day at least 5 kilometres, I'm now two-thirds done," he said. "And for the half marathon I did the other day, I was able to complete 25 streets."

In two months, Mogg completed 55 per cent of the city, and as of Feb. 9, has run 594 streets out of 745. By running every street, he hopes to familiarize himself with the community.

"It all started with getting to know the city. I wanted to be able to know the city better than everyone else, and that was something that worked into my job," he said.

Once creating his map of the

city, he viewed it as a fun project, and it wasn't until a fellow runner suggest it would be a Great Bucket List idea that he pitched his idea to Bree Bennett, the fund development associate at ARCH Hospice.

"When Jon pitched his idea to us, we were really excited," she said. "Jon got a hold of us through our website and let us know he would be every street in Sault Ste. Marie and wanted to collect pledges for ARCH."

"It means a lot to us to have Jon's support towards hospice," Bennett said.

ARCH Hospice cancelled its major fundraising events since the arrival of the COVID-19 pandemic and has shifted its way to raise funds, Bennett said.

"We had to pivot the way we fundraise, and this is a great fundraiser because Jon can do it on his own, and people can donate by mailing in or donating online," she said.

Mogg has raised over \$1,000 since making his goal public on Jan. 29 and did not make his announcement until he was sure he could complete his goal.

"I wanted to see how sustainable the idea was. I didn't start the fundraiser until I was halfway done. To make sure it was something I could complete within a year," he said.

Mogg created his Great Bucket List Challenge for ARCH Hospice



DANIELLE DUPUIS

Jonathan Mogg plans to run every street in Sault Ste. Marie for ARCH Hospice after they were forced to cancel all events in 2020.

to commemorate its work to the community.

"I love their mission, supporting people at the end of their journey, and it's such a heartwarming place. That's where that idea came to, just helping people at the end

of their time," he said.

As Mogg tackles his bucket list, he has created a second commitment with his son: throughout his Great Bucket List Challenge, his son Alex, 7, will walk every day to help promote physical

activity and if he does so, he will get a dog by year's end.

"We've got it down to a dog breed," Mogg said. "We're going to get Nova Scotia Duck Tolling. It also works into my plans of making it an endurance dog as well."

# Humber grads win COPA gold for doc Pearl Under Pressure

Et Cetera Staff

Two Humber Journalism grads won gold at the 2020 Canadian Online Publishing Awards (COPA) for their feature report on child abuse in Uganda on Thursday.

Harmony Multani and Lucy Lau, post-graduate certificate grads, packaged a video and print story called *Pearl under pressure: The impact of violence against children in Uganda*. The duo beat out two submissions from King's College for the Best Video Content – Academic.

They trekked to Uganda with journalism professor Heather Kelly, joining a week-long mission by the Denmark Uganda Vietnam Exchange (DUVE), an

international project co-funded by the Erasmus+ Programme of the European Union that aims to end violence against children.

"I am honoured by the recognition our team has received from COPA, and want to congratulate the other reporters on their hard and incredible work," Multani said.

"A special thanks to Humber and the University College PH Absolon, for creating this opportunity to tell the story of Uganda's journey toward healing the widespread experience of childhood abuse," she said.

Lau said she's honoured by having their work recognized along with other "distinguished reporters, publications and sto-

ries from across Canada.

"I hope this award helps bring attention to the global issue of violence against children and the important work organizations like DUVE are doing to prevent it," she said.

Multani said the project shows that journalism is a powerful tool that brings attention to stories that need to be told.

"I am hopeful that the recognition from COPA can support initiatives like the DUVE project by bringing a lens into these experiences faced by the children in Uganda," she said.

"A special thanks to our Humber instructors who supported Harmony and I through this capstone project," Lau said.



HEATHER KELLY

Humber grads Lucy Lau and Harmony Multani reporting on child abuse in Uganda.