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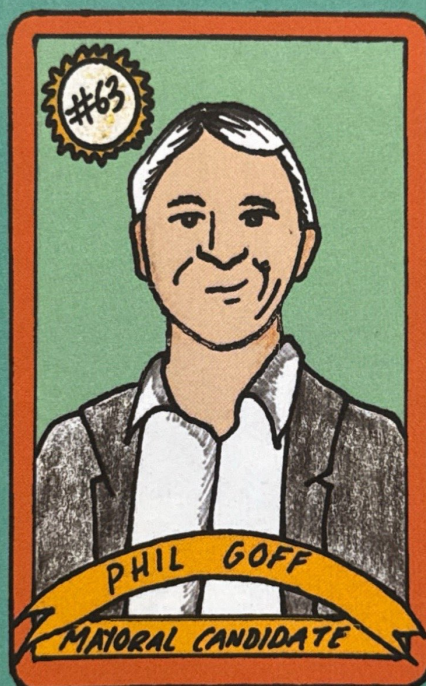
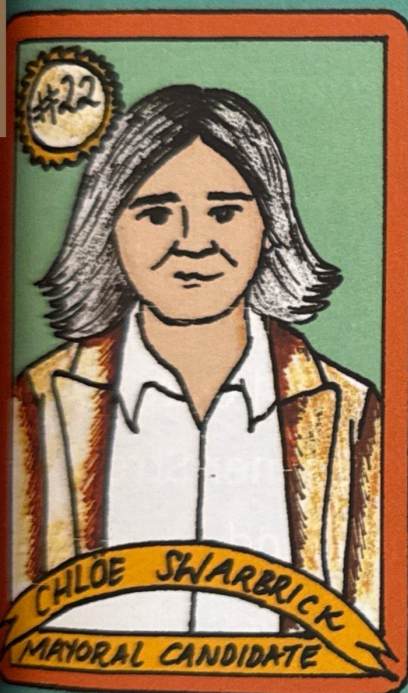
CRACCUM

magazine 22

UNIVERSITY OF AUCKLAND

14 OCT 2016

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MAYORAL LEAGUE

game changer

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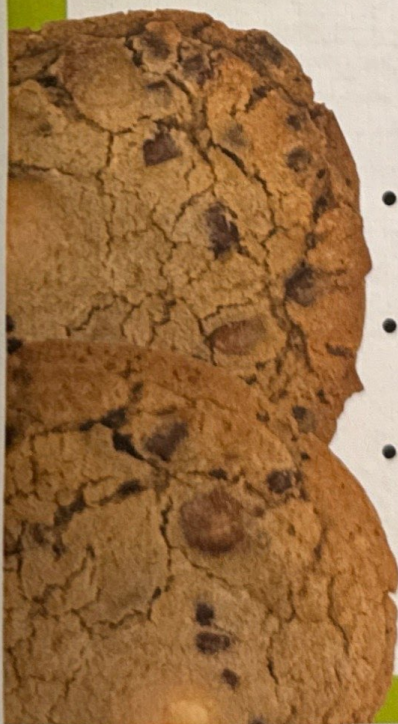
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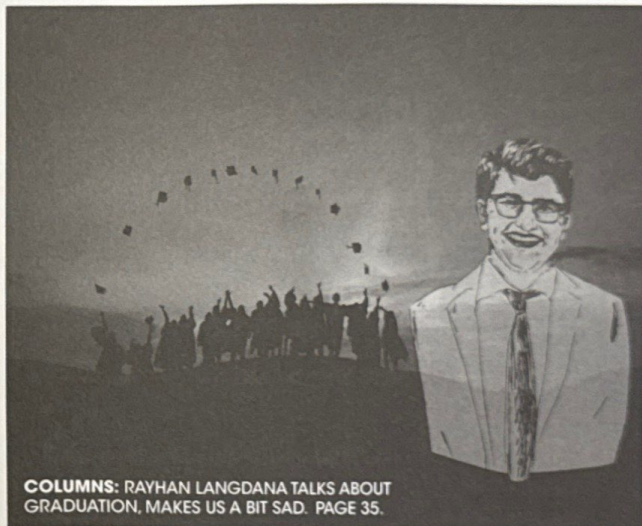
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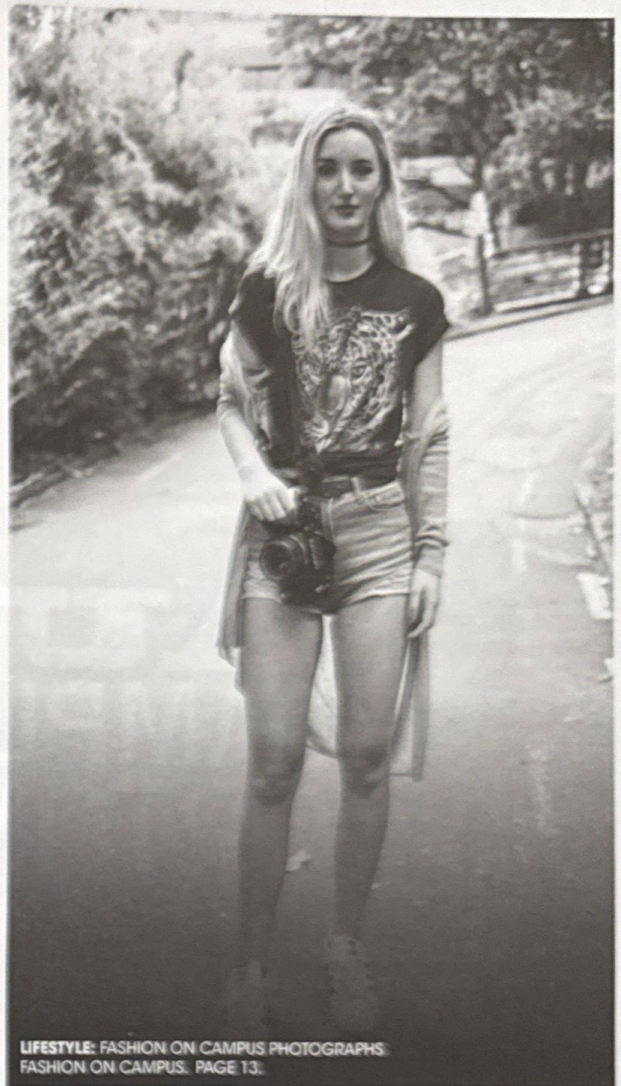




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“you’ve turned this into a circus!”

said the man in blackface

CAITLIN AND MARK EDITOR@CRACCUM.CO.NZ

Caitlin woke in a fit of terror. She glanced over at the clock. The slightly irradiated face stared back, flickering slightly. 2:47. AM? Probably. She peeked out the window but couldn't hear any birds. Yup, definitely AM. God she was thirsty. She looked around for her sippy-cup, but it was bone dry. It was times like these she hated having the top bunk. In the process of clambering down the ladder to get to the water cooler, she stepped on Mark's beslippered feet. He sat up with a howl, smacked his head on the slats, and wrenched off his sleeptime earmuffs.

Mark: Caitlin, you cannot be serious.

Caitlin: *Slurping directly from the water cooler* What?

Mark: We've used this terrible narrative device three times already, you really can't expect readers to put up with-

Caitlin: No idea what you're talking about. You just woke up, you're not making sense.

Mark: You and I both know that none of this is happening so why-

Caitlin: Since you're awake, what should I write my editorial on this week?

Mark: Fuck's sake. How about a dissection of racial politics in *The Real Housewives of Auckland*?

Caitlin: The Spinoff already did that one.

Mark: We could just copy it.

Caitlin: Nah we've done that enough.

Mark: Look we both know you want to somehow segway this dumb intro into an editorial about the local body elections, so let's just get on with it.

When they're not having imaginary pillow talk, Mark and Caitlin do lots of other things. Last week, they watched the *Lord of the Rings* trilogy (all twelve hours of it), they made a magazine and they attended AUSA's Anti-Debate up at Shadows.

Mark: Caitlin is a liar, she was at home watching

The Vampire Diaries. And she left halfway through *The Two Towers*, so that part was a lie as well.

Caitlin: I regret nothing.

The Anti-Debate was a perfect exercise in demonstrating why these candidates aren't invited to the normal debates. With the exception of Chlöe Swarbrick and (would you believe) the Communist League candidate, they were quite simply a bunch of fucking weirdos.

Penny Bright stood in front of the water jugs and glared at anyone who tried to get past her before the debate began, then talked about her various activist non-successes and how she was the female Bernie Sanders. Susanna Kruger doesn't let her family take prescription medicine and probably got along well with Tricia Cheel (say THAT name when you're drunk), who sounded fairly reasonable until she started talking anti-fluoridation and other tinfoil-hat faves. Aileen Austin didn't like the idea of intensification because it would mean more state housing for people who are "psychopaths" and "aren't properly socialised" ("What the fuck are you talking about," cried a heckler, to raucous applause). Adam Holland, dressed in blackface and a kaftan, didn't have a policy on anything apart from denying climate change and telling anyone who disagreed with him that they were "just another feminist." Alezix Heneti told us all about how she rewrote an essay once, how it isn't the council's responsibility to buy you a house (no-one said it was) and how her solution to Auckland's public transport system was to BUILD A DISNEYLAND ON THE NORTH SHORE.

By now we're sure you've seen the video - even CBS want a copy. It ends with the woman in the bright orange dollar-sign shirt yelling at the man "dancing a wriggling his bottom dance jig" (her words) and the man in blackface screaming at them for turning the debate into a circus.

This absolute shitshow is, obviously, pretty sad. Wearing blackface is terrible enough

(and if one more person says it's just a fucking costume, or just fucking makeup, we will personally tattoo their face with the words "I AM AN OUTRAGEOUS TWAT") but doing so while drunk off your tit, screaming "allahu akbar" as well-meaning students attempt to wrest the microphone out of your claws - that's another level of nasty. The argy-bargy between Heneti and Hay was less sinister, but it turned the debate into a rather abysmal showing of our alternative candidates.

However, optimists could draw some positives from the event. On one hand, the fracas has created far more press than any other mayoral debate has had, and interest in the election has spiked on social media. On the other hand, though many of the minor candidates are nuttier than a shithouse rat, it's actually pretty cool that any old wacko can run for the top spot on Auckland Council. Though you get the odd dickhead, it means absolute gems like Chlöe Swarbrick are able to enter the race without a load of money behind them. The accessibility of mayoral candidacy, so clearly evidenced by the lineup of the Anti-Debate, means that it's not only the wealthy and well-connected that can run to represent us on the Council.

The only way this will work to our advantage, of course, is if we actually vote. God forbid that voter turnout dwindles year after year until the dude in blackface wins by default. It's cool that anyone can have a crack at mayoralty, but even more cool that we decide whether or not they get it. Please, please, please just have a squizz at the pamphlet you got in the mail, and chuck a cheeky few votes down. Though the whole election may be a bit of a circus, you can be the ringmaster.

Mark: You're not going to end on that terrible analogy, are you?

Caitlin: Go back to bed, sweet boy.

Mark: *puts sleeptime earmuffs back on* ■



WORKING BEES

Auckland Council have launched a new initiative designed to help encourage bees and other pollinators to return to the Central City.

The project, *For The Love Of Bees – A City Bee Collaboration*, is a 'social sculpture', attempting to mix art pieces with practical improvements,

designed to make the city landscape a safer environment for pollinators more generally.

As part of the initiative, beehives have been placed at a number of community gardens across the city. Tracking technology has been installed in order to monitor overall hive health during the course of the project.

The programme officially opened October 1st,

with a tour of bee-friendly spaces around the city, including Albert Park, the Daldy St, Te Maara St, Columba and Symonds St Junction Community Gardens, Lot23, Kingsland Community Orchard, Hakanoa Reserve, and Kelmarna Organic Community Gardens and City Farm.

The project was commissioned by the Auckland Design Office at Auckland Council. ■

ACTIVISTS SEEK VICTORY AT VICTORIA

"RECLAIM VIC", a student-led activist group at Victoria University of Wellington, launched their manifesto last week. Spokespeople for the organisation called the document an "alternative vision" for the University.

The manifesto calls for the University to "honour Te Tiriti o Waitangi and actively support Māori tino rangatiratanga" – including "placing tikanga, Te Ao Māori, and mātūranga Māori" at the core of the academic curriculum.

The group also called for the introduction of a University Queerspace, gender neutral bathrooms on and around campus, for the implementation of a living wage for University staff, for the end of "discriminatory anti-union tactics" and that the University immediately "stop fee rises and begin a process of decreasing fees" – having almost doubled them (in real terms) since 1993.

Finally, the group also call for the introduction

of a mandatory University lunch break, to be held from 12.00 to 12.50 each day – "so that staff and students have a time to come together as a community".

A number of these issues have been hot topics for the University in recent weeks.

The VUW University Council voted this week to raise annual fees by 2% – the maximum increase allowed by the central government.

RECLAIM VIC has also gotten into a fight with VUW staff over the distribution of posters supporting the introduction of the living wage for University Staff. The posters featured a photograph of VUW's Vice-Chancellor Grant Guilford, alongside the text, "Grant Guilford, Vice-Chancellor, earns \$520,000~ a year. Some staff at Victoria are on minimum wage \$15.25 or \$29,000 a year. Grand Guilford makes minimum wage every four and a half minutes. Are these Victoria's Values?"

Those posters, pinned to community noticeboards around campus, were reportedly taken down "within hours". A spokesperson from VUW admitted that the posters in question should only have been removed if they were "not posted in the correct places – i.e. poster boards."

There have been also increasing tensions between Tertiary Education Union representatives and VUW leadership over recent months, as the two negotiate an updated pay schedule for TEU members.

The University offered two options to affected staff:

The first option would give some staff-members pay increases, but would leave the rest of the staff on earning as much as \$10,000 per year less than non-union members completing the same work.

The second would involve pay increases for all TEU staff, but asks them to forfeit their right to initiate pay negotiations with the University – meaning that the Union would be unable to renegotiate if the University made further reforms.

More than 850 TEU members conducted protest action, playing the Split Enz song "I See Red" every hour on the hour across the University, in response to the offer.

Since the Manifesto's launch, Vice Chancellor Guilford has reportedly asked to meet with leaders from the group in order to discuss their concerns. ■



THOUSANDS OF STUDENTS GRADUATE. THE CRACCUM EDITORS DO NOT.

More than 3000 University of Auckland Students celebrated their graduation last week.

More than 2200 students received their qualifications in person at the four graduation ceremonies held last Tuesday. The ceremonies, held at the Aotea Centre, were webcast, allowing families and friends to watch the event internationally.

Graduating students departed from a marquee outside Old Government House, proceeding through the city in ceremonial order down Bowen Avenue, Victoria Street East, and up Queen Street down to Aotea Square.

There was a more than fifty year age difference between the youngest and oldest graduates – the oldest was 72 years old, and the youngest was aged only 20.

356 Māori and Pasifika students graduated

as part of the ceremony, along with 75 people gaining more than one qualification, 72 gaining two, and three people gaining three.

159 doctoral students graduated as part of the ceremony. One quarter of those students were from the Faculty of Science, followed closely by Engineering, which had 28 doctoral students, and Medical & Health Sciences, which had 24.

More than 10,000 students have graduated from the University this year in total. ■

RACISM REPORT

Non-Māori offenders are significantly more likely to get off with pre-charge warnings than Māori offenders, according to a new Independent Police Conduct Authority Report.

Pre-charge warnings can be handed out to people who may otherwise face charges for crimes with maximum punishments of less than six months' jail and in some regions are used nearly half the time.

They are designed to help reduce court appearances, allow for the faster processing of arrested offenders and swifter redeployment of police staff, reduce the requirement for prosecution files, as well as produce better outcomes for the justice system.

Offenders given pre-charge warnings were 13%

less likely to re-offend, so long as they hadn't committed any offences beforehand. They are currently used in 37% of all eligible cases, with some regional variation: nearly 50% of eligible offenders in Southern Police District receive pre-charge warnings, compared to only 23% in Waitemata.

As part of the report, the IPCA noted the proportion of pre-charge warnings issued to both Māori and Non-Māori offenders during recent sample periods, the most recent being April 2016.

During that month, in Waikato – the area with the highest discrepancy between the proportion of pre-charge warnings – 52% of non-Māori offenders qualifying for warnings were given one, compared to just 39% for Māori. In Northland, those numbers dropped to 46% of New Zealand European offenders compared with 22% of Māori. In Counties Manukau, 36% compared with 18%, and in Canterbury, 36% compared with 26%.

A directive from Police Headquarters to Local Police Districts to address discrimination between Māori and Non-Māori offenders seems to have had no effect on the number of pre-charge warnings issued, despite the directive having effects on other areas of policing.

The report notes that part of that discrepancy is that Māori offenders are more likely to have previous convictions, making it harder for police to make the call not to press charges. ■

[news ed: to come to this conclusion, the report notes that 51% of non-Māori who received pre-charge warnings had no prior criminal convictions, compared with only 26% of Māori. they then assume that those statistics will also roughly apply to those who did NOT receive pre-charge warnings. which... might be the case. but the whole issue at hand is that Māori are in general more likely to be charged when they could be let off with a warning. it's a weird point to make].



THURSDAYS IN BLACK LAUNCH STUDENT SURVEY

Thursdays In Black – in partnership with NZUSA – have launched a new student survey, designed to help researchers better understand how sexual harassment and sexual violence manifest in student communities

The survey is open to anyone who has attended a New Zealand tertiary institution over the last five years, including those who began a course but did not complete it.

The survey asks students about provided levels of sexual education, both at secondary and ter-

tiary level, any sexual harassment and sexual assault that they may have suffered, either on or off campus – and both before and during tertiary education – as well as discrimination based on their gender identity, their sexual identity, their ethnicity, or any disabilities they may have.

Representatives from TIB say that they've received a "huge" reaction to the survey since its launch.

Izzy O'Neill, National Coordinator of Thursdays in Black, says that the information is an important part of developing effective responses to the sexual violence epidemic.

"This survey intends to understand the sit-

uations where violence in student communities occurs. It is not about prevalence per institution, it is about the context and nature of sexual violence. Survey findings help to paint a picture of what violence looks like in our diverse student communities and its particular nature and patterns."

Once the survey has been completed, Thursdays in Black will publish a report summarising trends and outlining planned programme developments. This report will be released by early November 2016. ■

[news ed: if you want to complete the (confidential) survey, you can, at: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/tibnzweb>]

***THURSDAYS
IN BLACK**
Towards a world
without rape
and violence

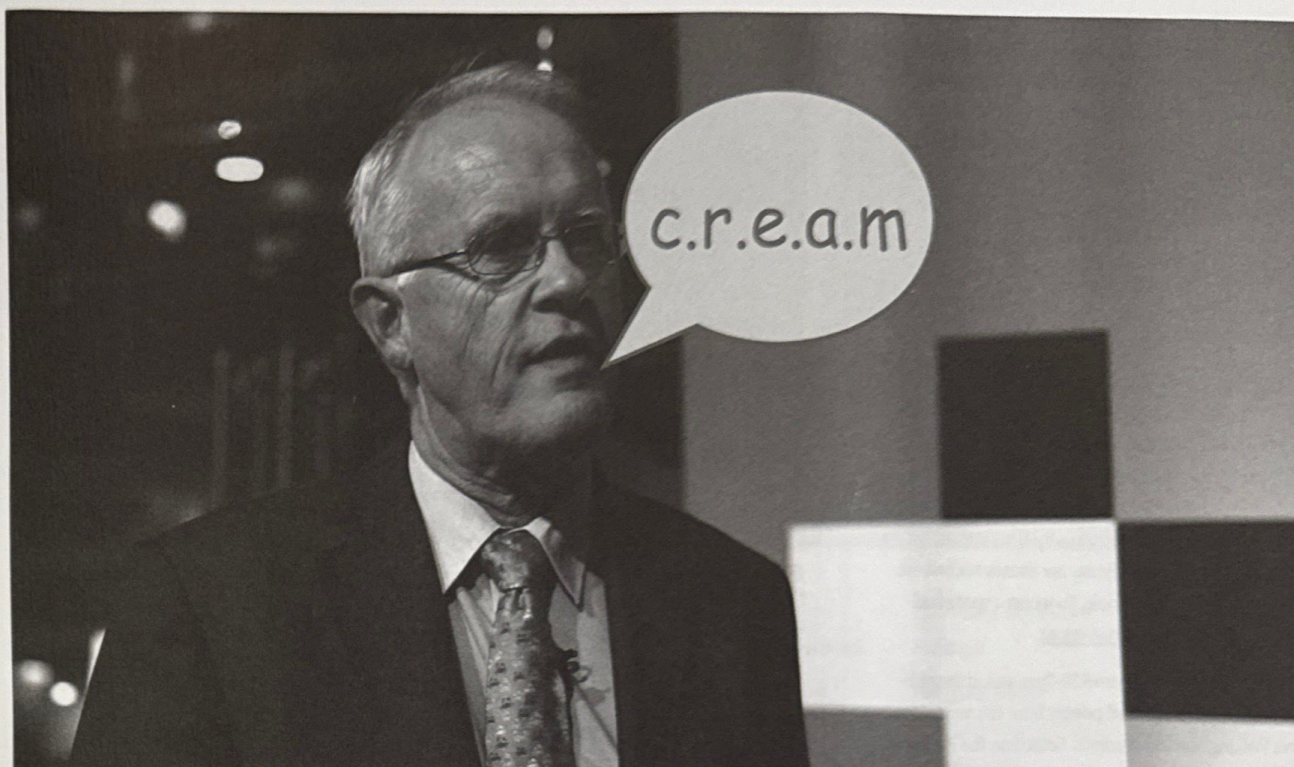


**On Thursdays,
we wear black.**



www.facebook.com/TIBNZ

***RĀPARE
KĀKAHU PANGO**



UOA PAYS STUART MCCUTCHEON ALMOST \$700,000 A YEAR, WONDER WHERE THEIR MONEY GOES

The University of Auckland has begun its biggest-ever fundraising campaign, aiming to raise \$300 million dollars over the next four years.

The campaign, "*For All Our Futures*", will focus on achieving funding to boost the quantity and quality of academic research pursued by the university.

The University has already fundraised more than half that amount already – \$152 million – through a series of major donations. The other half will be generated through an "extensive" outreach to University Alumni. University fundraisers hope to reach at least half of the 200,000 person strong alumni base during the course of the campaign.

Annual University funding has gone up 20 per cent in the past seven years – with Auckland University in particular receiving a whopping 26 per cent increase in financing from the Central Government.

Furthermore, the average annual fees for a Bachelor's degree at the University of Auckland have increased by \$2401.50 since 2005,

including a rise of \$1409.10 since 2010. Last year alone, student fees were increased by an average of \$200 per year for full-time students – with the University Council choosing to implement the maximum possible increase allowed by the Central Government.

Tertiary Education Minister Stephen Joyce has talked about potentially reducing the maximum limit on fee increases in response to the repeated decision to increase course costs.

Further, TEU-affiliated members of the University Staff began limited strike action last week, in response to the University's refusal to enter discussions to begin reforming their dysfunctional performance-pay system.

What's more, a number of courses have seen their funding slashed over the last few years, resulting in staff cuts in a number of departments. In particular, a number of staff members from the University Law School have left to join other Universities, meaning certain courses have had to be discontinued until the faculty can find suitable replacements.

The University finished construction on a \$200 million science and technology building last semester.

Of the donations announced at the launch gala, at least \$23.7 million has been pledged to medicine, with \$9 million going toward business and innovation, \$7 million towards the environment, \$2.6 million towards education, and a "substantial" but undisclosed amount of money "to support creativity in business and society".

To break down those donations more specifically – \$2.5 million has come from Auckland Medical Research Foundation in order to establish a "scholars' fund" to recruit talented medical academics globally.

Portions of donations made by PwC, Beca, and the Chau Hoi Sheun Foundation will be used to fund the establishment of a 'PotentialLab' – a type of business incubator, where students will be able to prototype their ideas before taking them to market.

\$5 million from the George Mason Trust will also establish a "Centre for the Natural Environment".

None of the announced donations were pledged towards Arts or NICAI subjects. ■

WHAT'S ON 3-9 OCTOBER

New Forms of Political Organisation Symposium will be held at the University this Tuesday from 9-5pm. Speakers engaged in the radical left in Aotearoa will come together for a symposium exploring new global and local political developments! Attendance is free but space is limited so please register by emailing Shannon Walsh at s.walsh@auckland.ac.nz. If you're intrigued the schedule can be downloaded via the Facebook event.

If you love Crown Lynn, unearth its history in New Lynn! **The Remains of the Clay** reveals the storied landscape of New Lynn and the whenua below our feet. Meet local historian Robyn Mason at New Lynn War Memorial Library for a walking tour to unearth the region's clay and ceramics story. Bookings are essential. Thursday and Friday are already booked out but Saturday is still available. To secure a spot email info@portageceramicstrust.org.nz.

On Thursday evening from 5:30-7pm attend the **public reading of prose and poetry** from this year's Creative Writing Masters students. Settle into the Auckland Central Library and hear this year's emerging talented writers. Free entry, no booking required!

Instead of hitting Academy Cinemas up on their cheap night Wednesday, mix things up and enter their **October Quiz** on Tuesday! From 6:30-8:30pm compete against some of their super-cinema-savvy regular teams at their monthly quiz - there are prizes to be won! Call (09) 373 2761 to sign up a team of 3-6 people. ■

AGONY AUNTIES

Dear Aunties,
I am having serious trouble with procrastinating!!!! Please help - do you have any tips that can help me focus?

Head-in-the-clouds

Dear Head-in-the-clouds,

We are fairly certain that 99.99% of students will relate to you on this one. Our recommendation would be that if you can't help procrastinating, you may as well make it a productive sort. Why not give 'procrasticleaning' a go - you will undoubtedly feel better in a tidy, clean environment. An uncluttered space makes for an uncluttered mind and all that. If you have tried that and are still not feeling the study/writing vibes, how about some 'procrastibaking'? A great way to provide yourself with the satisfaction of lovely homemade snacks to fuel you through those relentless study hours - or, make a double batch and invite some friends over for a serious group study session!?

Love,

The Agony Aunties xxx ■

PLEASE SEND YOUR PROBLEM IN 50 WORDS OR LESS TO LIFESTYLE@CRACCUM.CO.NZ. ANONYMITY GUARANTEED.



WHANGAREI: WHY AUCKLANDERS NEED TO STOP HATING

Sometimes you just need to get the fuck out of Auckland. Don't get me wrong, I love our great city - home of K Road, The Fed, Silo Cinema and all our country's fine eight-thirty coffee shops. But it can be draining, soul-sucking and at times repetitive. Sometimes, a trip out of the 'big smoke' can be just what the doctor ordered. Relax, clear the mind and return to business feeling fresh.

So, where does one go to do this? The great news is: not far. I offer to you, the Northland metropolis, Whangarei. For some reason, this city has a bad rep. Maybe it's an Auckland thing, as we do tend to be a tad judgemental. Few people would get excited about visiting this part of the country, but having grown up spending summer at our family bach in nearby Ruakaka, I have several reasons why Whangarei is great.

1. The Op Shops

I've always loved op shopping, but I had no idea how insanely great it could be until I was able to drive into Whangarei myself. There are five absolute gems in this city: a Hospice, a Sally's, a Red Cross, a SPCA and a Paperbag Princess. There's also a Savemart just 10 minutes away in Kamo. I would go for the Hospice alone. I have never been op shopping in Whangarei and come home empty handed. And I'm not just talking about clothes (though a \$3 denim jacket and \$3 Berkeley University tee can't be complained about). The furnishings and general 'things' one finds here are crazy. I'm talking art, ceramics, 1980 lounge suites, real Mexican rugs - this shit is insane. Go and see for yourself.

2. The Beaches

We might have the best black sand beaches around, but Northland has some pearlin' white ones - all within a 30 minute drive of Whangarei. There's Ruakaka beach, Uretiti and One Tree Point. Venture over the other side of the city and you'll find Parua Bay,

Ocean Beach and McGregor's Bay out in the Whangarei Heads. If you're up for a slightly longer drive, Waipu Cove isn't far away.

3. The Food

I won't try to compare Auckland and Whangarei's food, but I will say that Whangarei has some awesome offerings. For the most amazing pizza and buttery pastries try the corner cafe, La Familia. This is where the locals go, and it's clear the owner takes great pride in her business. If Middle Eastern food is more your jam, then Fat Camel can't be missed. Then of course there are your usual cafes situated around the (really pretty) Town Basin to try.

4. The Hikes

So many great walks up this way. The stroll around Whangarei Falls is short, easy and worthwhile, while there are longer day and overnight hikes like Peach Cove at the very end of the Heads. Mount Manaia is a must-do for the best views in the area, and it only takes about 2 hours return. For those that are more adventurous, there's the Waipu Caves. You'll need boots, gators and head torches for this one, though. If you can get someone to pick you up at other end, there's the Waipu Coastal Trail.

5. The Piggery

If you love books then you need to visit The Piggery, Northland's largest secondhand bookshop. It's not super cheap, but you won't be disappointed with the range - it has just about everything. There's also a solid pig theme about the place, and a shop cat, which is great. There are literally books everywhere - in shelves, on tables, in piles on the floor - but they're all ordered by genre and author, so finding what you want is pretty easy. You do get some definite scores - I once found a History textbook for \$27 which UBS wanted over \$130 for - and they offer a 10% discount for students, too.

■ NIKKI ADDISON

FLAT OF THE WEEK - PT CHEVALIER

We're a group of students and young professionals living in Point Chevalier. Our flat is a traditional NZ bungalow, with four bedrooms (one with a curtain for a door), a small bathroom and no insulation, painted a now-peeling sunflower yellow. We call the place Mellow Yellow and our wifi password is kendrickisgoat. We're not wrong.

So, what are you all doing with your lives?

Bonnie: Fourth year Auckland Uni, studying Law (Honours) and Arts, in Politics.

Harriett: Studied communications at AUT, majoring in Television and Screen Production, now working as a junior director at Film Construction

Tiernan: About to start a job as a trainee storyliner on *Shortland Street*, and attended university once upon a time for a semester.

Felix: Fourth year at Auckland Uni, studying Fine Arts and Arts, in History.

How do you know each other and how long have you been flatting together?

H: We all went to Takapuna Grammar, Felix and I are dating. We moved into this flat two years ago, and Tiernan moved into the flat at the beginning of the year.

T: Bonnie and I are old friends!

H: Me and Bonnie were friends first. Stop winding me up. FLANTER

B: ...was that flat banter...?

Do you have flat roles?

B: Am I flat baby?

F: I'm probably flat dad, Tiernan is flat mum.

H: Max was flat disappointment. He's not here anymore. We've actually assigned ourselves *New Girl* characters: Bonnie is Winston, Tiernan is Jess, Harriett is Nick and Felix is Shmidt.

Do you have any flat traditions?

F: We all eat Harriett's food.

H: Bonnie keeps bananas in a cupboard in the kitchen.

F: It is literally a whole cupboard.

B: We've started going to BYO once every couple of weeks. Cheap and delicious.

F: Flat panic cleaning before the landlady comes around. And we do flat shops. And flat meals, sharing food is always great.

T: All of this stuff when we say it out loud makes it sound like we are thoroughly average people...

What TV shows are you watching?

H: *The Office*, *New Girl*, *Brooklyn Nine Nine*, *Parks and Rec* on repeat. And *Planet Earth*!

F: Harriett doesn't let us watch scary serials.

What do you like about your neighbourhood / any good neighbours?

B: It is so pleasant!

H: The people behind us have jumpstarted my car



7 times....

T: Someone left 4 beers from a 6 pack on our porch today! And it was anonymous.

F: There is great coffee around the corner, and Pt Chev is a fast food mecca.

H: Also Tiernan's car got egged on his first day of flatting ever.

Honorary flatmates / regular visitors?

F: My mate Jack Rapson crashes on our couch regularly after drinks, North Shore is a mission after all.

B: Our friend Maxwell comes around often, to watch sitcoms and talk drama with Harriett. He also does ballet with me.

Most notable flat story?

B: All those times we have all seen Felix naked.... On separate occasions.

F: How do I even go after that. Is that the most notable flat story?

H: That time Felix left the gas on.

B: Yeah!

T: For 8 hours.

H: That time Felix left the backdoor open all day and didn't apologize about it.

B: Yeah.

H: Thanks for giving us this opportunity to shit on you Felix.

B: Roast me guys.

T: You broke Felix's nice red pot.

F: Still haven't forgiven you for that one.

H: Don't roast me I'll cry

B: Remember that time you were putting salad in the bin and missed, then just went out, and it was still there that night.

T: Or that time you missed the washing machine with the washing powder.

H: Or that time I went into the bath and broke my laptop and tried to fix it by putting it in rice, but missed the bowl when pouring the rice and it went all over the lounge.

F: Roasted.

H: Tiernan's unroastable. Flat angel.

B: Flangel.

Flat party trick?

H: We can do a synchronized dance to *The Office*.

B: No we can't!

H: We can clean the whole house in thirty minutes!

F: That's not a trick, that's desperation.

Could you sum up your place in a sentence?

H: Mellow yellow messy nightmare family. Tiernan you're a writer, do better.

T: Like a sitcom without the unrealistic apartment.

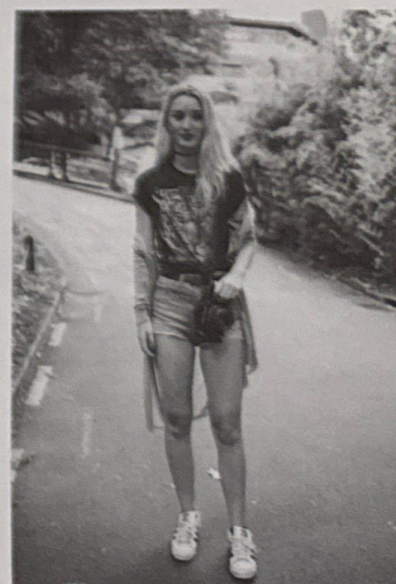
H: Or the laugh track.

B: We laugh at Felix.

How's ya landlord?

F: Uncommunicative. I'm fairly sure she didn't read our note last time she did the inspection. But the rent is fair, and the place is a lovely bungalow. ■

FASHION ON CAMPUS





What's on at AUSA?

Love Bus Visit

The Auckland Council Love Bus is visiting the University of Auckland next week to collect your vote for the 2016 Auckland elections!

Find us in the Quad and cast your vote in our on-board ballot box on any of the following dates:

- Monday 3 October, 11.30am – 2.30pm
- Tuesday 4 October, 11.30am – 2.30pm
- Wednesday 5 October, 11.30am – 3.00pm

Not sure how to vote or who to vote for? For more information on the process and to see what the candidates have to say, visit showyourlove.co.nz

And don't forget - if you want to vote, you'll need to bring your voting documents with you from home!



Young NZ First Presents: Tracey Martin on Up Front Investment

Young New Zealand First want to go beyond the headlines and get Tertiary Education spokesperson Tracey Martin in front of students to talk about their new Up Front Investment policy, which will provide free tertiary education to students who stay around to pay off their 'skill debt'. Check it out and RSVP on Facebook. Wednesday October 5th at 6pm. Engineering 423-342. Pizza and refreshments available after the event!

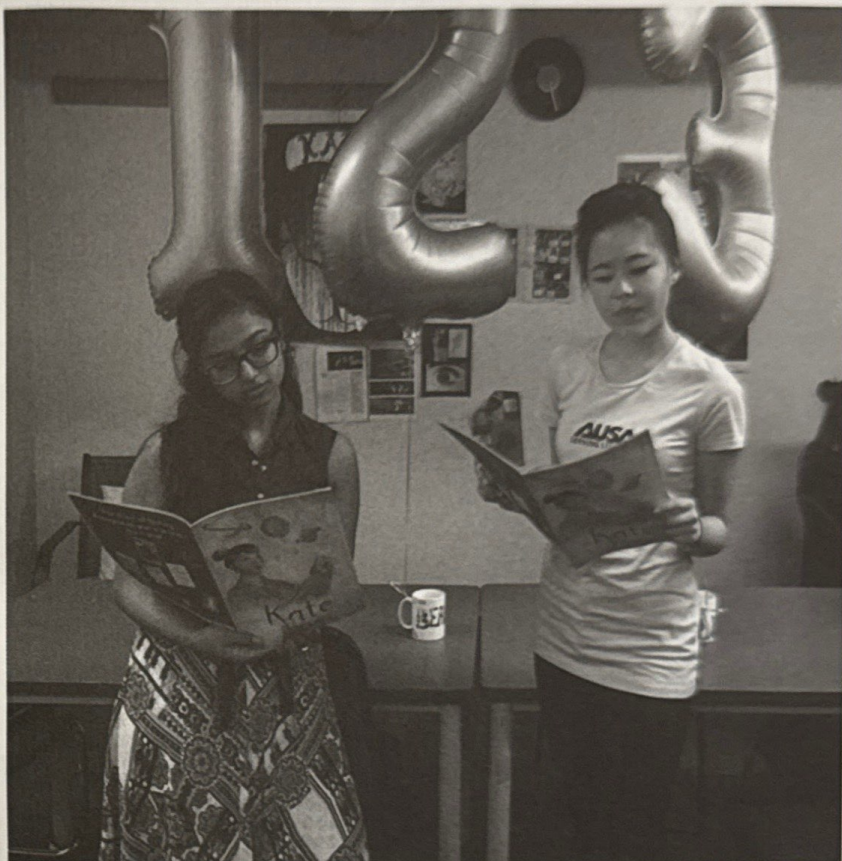
Give feedback on your courses on your phone!

You can now give feedback on your teachers and course from any device at any time due to the Summative Evaluation Tool launched last semester. From the 3rd of October, you may be invited to complete a SET evaluation online. Your feedback will be kept secure and anonymous, but now lecturers and course co-ordinators can get aggregated data and start acting on it sooner! The evaluation period only lasts for two weeks, so go to www.auckland.ac.nz/evaluate for more info, or contact your class rep.

Sexual Health

Did you know that Auckland Sexual Health Services comes directly to campus to offer students free and confidential advice? You don't have to book an appointment, but you can just rock up to room 315-387 (opposite University Health and Counselling Services in the Kate Edger Information Commons) for STI testing, free condoms and non-judgemental advice! You can drop by any time from 12pm to 3pm on the first Wednesday of every month - the next one is on Wednesday 5th October. ■

Eye on AUSA - What have your student representatives been up to recently?



Making the magic happen with Womensfest

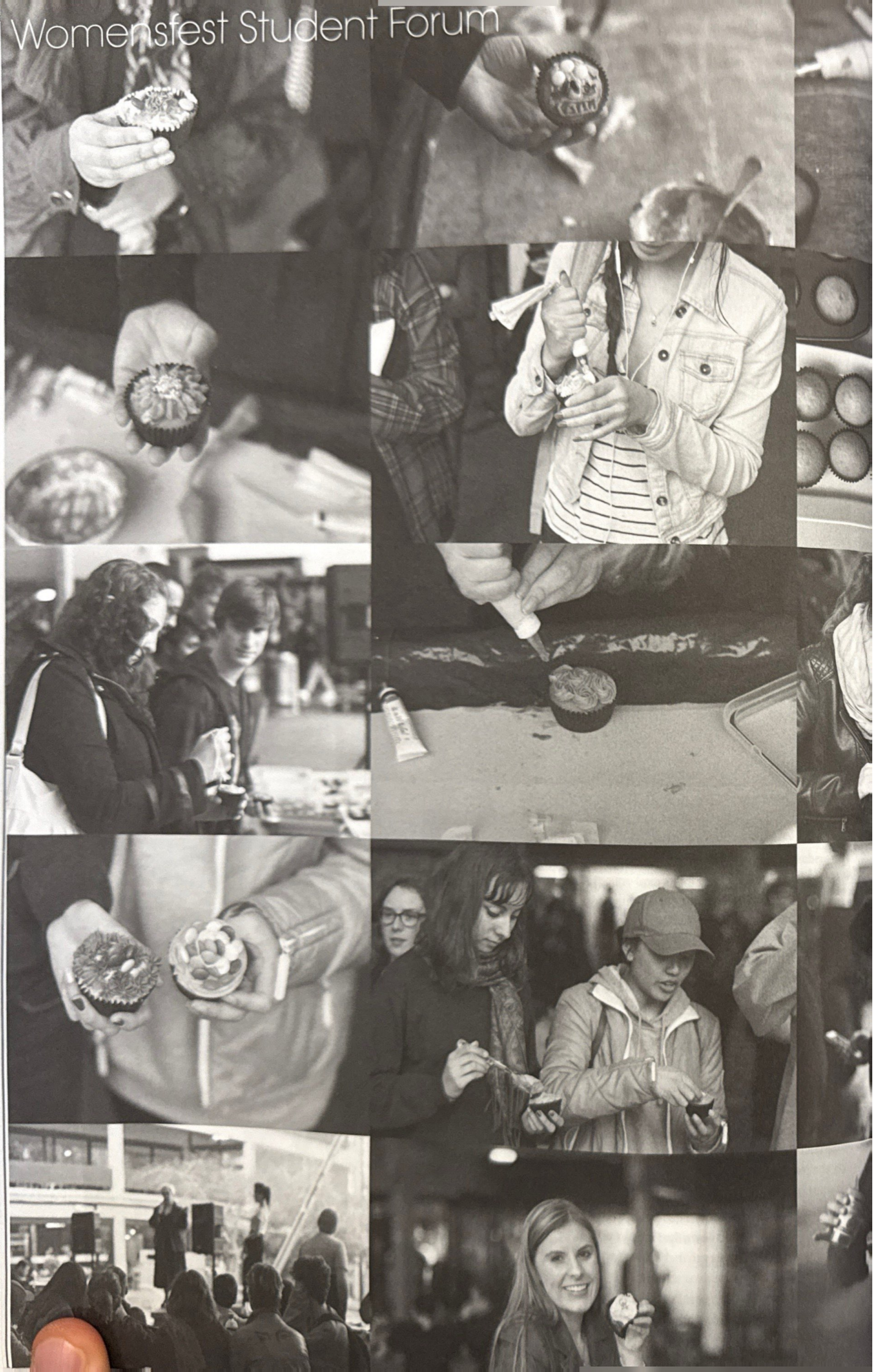
Did you go to Womensfest? It was a fantastic week, filled with panels, debates, events and quizzes that discussed and celebrated women on our campus and in our world. Week long events don't just materialise out of thin air though. This amazing celebration was the result of weeks of hard work from your Women's Rights Officers, Diana Qju and Aditi Gorasia. Well done D&A, you've done an amazing job and should be proud!

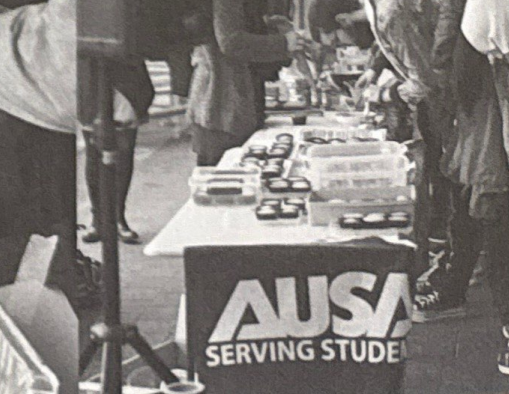
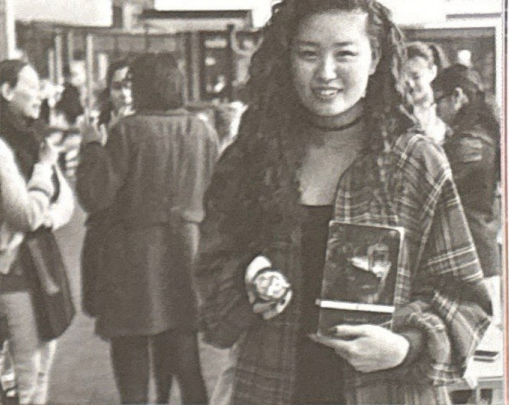
Standing with staff

The AUSA Executive officially endorsed the strike held by the Tertiary Education Union over the refusal of University leadership to offer a fair pay deal to our academic and professional staff. The strike was attended by about 200 people, who marched down Symonds Street and to the clocktower to make sure the Vice-Chancellor heard their voice. AUSA President Will Matthews was present at the strike, and addressed the crowd to lend them a little student solidarity. ■



Womensfest Student Forum





game changer

eugenia woo chases consequences
in role-playing video games



Decision-making in games has been a sore spot for a lot of us since a very young age. I remember the first time that I had what seemed like an impossible choice to make: Squirtle, Bulbasaur, or Charmander. I played through *Pokémon Red* three times, each with a different starting Pokémon.

I treated each choice with the same sense of import that I had during my first playthrough, despite already knowing which critter I was going to choose. I thought that choosing a different starter Pokémon was going to make a definite difference to how the game ended up, even though I basically kicked the Elite Fours' asses each time with almost identical teams. Call it youthful stupidity or some ingrained desire to catch 'em all – each time I picked a new starter Pokémon, the act of doing so and its result both felt meaningful. That same feeling has become increasingly hard to replicate in my later years, even as narrative choices in RPGs have advanced way beyond picking an animal to fight other rowdy teenagers with.

I've had a crack at most of the popular games that have been lauded as having noteworthy moral decision-making worked into them. Af-

ter a Christmas spent reuniting with family and with my old nemesis, *Pokémon Red*, I decided to play through some acclaimed RPGs to see if I could capture the same sense of satisfaction when it came to making various choices for my character. I wanted an experience that wasn't one-dimensional, and I was determined to get it.

My first port of call was *The Witcher 3: Wild Hunt*. The franchise has always been known for forcing players to make decisions, both large and seemingly inconsequential at first, that drastically affect the way the game pans out in the end. I ended up engaging in a series of outwardly trivial, timed decisions that had to be made in situations ranging from getting on the munt with some soldiers in an inn to turning down some money from a holier-than-thou noble with a penchant for corporal punishment.

In the first instance, I had a matter of seconds to diffuse the tension between myself and some dickhead soldiers who seemed more than happy to lop my head off at the slightest provocation. Not only did I have to try and get them off my case, but I had to continuously make choices for the next minute or so to ensure that we didn't get into a punch-up. "Care for a drink?" ended up saddling me with a sense of trepidation; it seemed like my choice to pass around some vodka would be rejected in favour of the soldiers accosting me in a misguided attempt

at a robbery. Geralt of Rivia's permanent scowl didn't help much in convincing them that I was friendly and not some kind of serial killer. As my chosen dialogue was delivered in his signature deadpan tone, and the expressions on the soldiers' faces ranged from insulted to "wow, what a douche", I was convinced up until the very end of the dialogue tree that the night would end in bloodshed despite me giving everyone in the pub free shots.

Dialogue options in *The Witcher 3* usually result in one of two options: 1) the hesitant approval of your conversation partner, or 2) their imminent death. It doesn't matter if you're talking to a villager who's just been attacked by some creature that looks like a *Ghostbusters* reject, or someone that you've just had a one-night stand with – the outcomes remain.

I remember doing absolutely everything that I could to make sure that two minutes of fun with a sorceress became something more meaningful: I buttered her up, I did a number of her boring side quests, and unwittingly released the plague onto an innocent village. Even when she let slip that she had a friend who'd been experimenting on humans and she planned to sell his research to the highest bidder, I was reasonably supportive but I did say "Hmm, maybe you shouldn't do that right this instant". The fact that I disapproved at all meant that my dreams of a whirlwind romance



with a morally-grey seductress suddenly vanished in smoke when she decided to duel me to the death.

My inability to see some animated breasts aside, it wasn't as if *The Witcher* left a bad taste in my mouth. I mean, since then I've bought all the bloody DLCs for the game, and I think Geralt's insatiable appetite for women who constantly berate him for being an idiot has also rubbed off on me. However, for all my griping about how I should be known as the Grinch of Rivia, I found that more often than not, I was just an annoying do-gooder. Sure, I can make choices that end up in a love interest dying rather gruesomely by someone else's hand but for all the posturing and swearing and casual sex, Geralt isn't very rock-n-roll.

The entire premise of this game rests on me and my vastly more chilled out mates saving the world. There isn't a "Fuck Everything Up" option for Geralt here – the naughtiest thing I did in my last playthrough was to make off with an old woman's frying pan. I feel like Geralt as a character could definitely have destroyed an ancient evil whilst also having realistically awful relationships with the people who were roped into helping him. I can save the world because I'm a selfish bastard! Your bark is definitely worse than your bite in *The Witcher 3*, and it was with much regret that I put this down and picked up another Game of the Year title – *Dragon Age: Inquisition*.

I really enjoyed the love-hate romances in *Dragon Age 2* that gave your party members various buffs according to whether they were a) Tinder material or b) Fetlife veterans, so I had pretty high hopes for *Inquisition*. While I could never ascend to villainy in the other titles, when I played this game on release and heard that I'd get to lead an entire army and be stupidly powerful it sounded like a recipe for making me Thedas' Next Top Dictator.

For a while, everything went according to

plan. Sure, I helped a few townsfolk out if I felt like it, but only when I felt guilty for looting and pillaging their ancestors' graves. I killed a bunch of people when I could have otherwise recruited them. I let my love interest down so much that I ruined his life – all he did was disapprovingly drink tea and tell me that I made shit life choices so I punched him in the face and told him to fuck off. NPCs would exit your life if you did things that they fundamentally disagreed with. People hated me for what I did, but they begrudgingly showed me respect because they recognised the power of an enormous fucking army. Hell, the DLC ends with me being court-martialed because the national powers are getting sick of me causing a ruckus. Being bad was starting to feel really good.

60 hours into my first playthrough, just as I was enjoying passing judgement on those who wronged me from the comfort of my gilded throne, the plot gave me a rather rude kick up the arse – "Hey, dude. Time to save the world from Corypheus." It'd been pretty generous in accommodating my proclivities so far, so I went along with the mission to kill the baddie and to bring relative peace to a world being ravaged by faux-French fashion sensibilities and the occasional undead invasion. I saved the world and went back to my castle – the site of numerous public executions – and surprise! Everyone was throwing me some sort of victory tea party. They had nothing but praise for my efforts to date. I understood them being happy that the immediate threat to their existence was gone, but I'd been a Grade A asshole otherwise. What few companions I had left were absolutely falling over themselves to tell my character what a top bloke he'd been. Everyone wanted to have a cheeky beer with the Inquisitor and have a yarn about the benevolent Chosen One. It felt like the biggest farce in history – me, with the blood of innocents on my hands, sitting next to a nun regaling me with tales of my purity and conviction.

That's when it dawned on me – being mean and killing everything that so much as looked at me the wrong way meant pretty much nothing. They didn't see me as some sort of scheming antihero. In hindsight, I probably just acted like an idiot who got excited every time someone said "Stab them!" For all the killing and the screaming and the punching, I hadn't made any meaningfully Evil decisions that would ruin the world going forward. Everyone went back to their peaceful agricultural lifestyles and I sat in my empty castle with a handful of disgruntled servants, preparing to chase the spectre of the next Big Bad Villain in the upcoming *Dragon Age 4*. My character was less Le Chiffre and more the dude that the mafia gets to loudly kick some doors in. Close, but no Charmander.

After having a sulk about striking out with two huge Game of the Year titles, I was advised by a friend (read: evil genius) that if I wanted to truly feel like being the asshole to end all assholes, I should play *Fallout: New Vegas*. I'd just had to sit through a flatmate playing *Fallout 4* and telling me how the dialogue was the worst thing since her BIOSCI 101 introductory lecture, so I was understandably sceptical. However, shortly afterwards there was a fortuitous Steam sale and I found myself diving helmet-first into the Mojave Wasteland. Initially, there didn't seem to be much going on. I was shot in the head and then revived. Some lady's dog died because I didn't kill some radioactive lizards fast enough. I made a decision to not let a gang (aptly named the Powder Gangers) run rampant in a town, and then I was sent packing with some bullets to head to the nearest outpost to find... something. However, where *Fallout: New Vegas* really got me to sit up and take some bloody notice was in the quaint little town of Nipton.

Without giving away too much, the road to the mayor's office was lined with lovely, well-pruned trees. The trees may have been made

I like to think that it makes me more conscious of the importance of certain choices; can't be too reckless if I'm going to have a wife and child to feed in the epilogue.

I felt like I could do whatever I want in the Wasteland, and I could be whoever I wanted to be. I even worked with the gay murder Romans for a bit, just for kicks.

out of corpses. I may have screamed a bit. *Maybe the mayor's like my Inquisitor*, I thought. *He's probably a dumb, ham-handed murderer.* To my delight, the reason for the fucked-up human trees was far more fascinating. A group of men dressed like Roman legionaries was assembled in front of the stairs. One, ostensibly their leader, strode towards me and greeted me with an affable "Don't worry. I won't have you lashed to a cross like the rest of these degenerates." Clearly he was a superior breed of villain compared to the feeble efforts I'd made as Geralt of House Grouchy McGrouchface, and it wasn't just because he was wearing a coyote as a hat. I was slightly disgusted by the burning bodies lying around, but also intrigued. I agreed to spread awareness about the cult of Caesar and went on my merry way, eager to confront the person who left me for dead. It wasn't until later on, after being introduced to the dynamics between the various warring factions, that I began to appreciate the things that I could do in the game, and how the dudes cosplaying as gladiators would start to seem like alright lads considering the circumstances.

It's not as if every faction I encountered had some sort of Secret Bad Shit that they'd done – in fact, it was almost the opposite. *Fallout: New Vegas* was a strangely humanising experience. People made tough calls every day in the Wasteland and even as a transient gun-toting passerby, I was made privy to all kinds of decisions that seemed either morally repugnant or laudable until I unearthed the entire story. Sons are exiled for the evils of their fathers, brainwashed slaves try their best to survive in a militaristic death trap, and leaders are so concerned with preserving the traditions of their factions that they meet their end doing so. Here, my decisions meant something because I

actually had to stop and think about them.

My choices sometimes had immediate repercussions for the game world, which was something I wasn't used to on the backside of *Dragon Age: Inquisition*. Even when I was pissing someone off, it felt organic; it was a sliding scale of asshole. In the radioactive apocalypse, a setting that many studios have used for a zombie shoot-em-up, nothing was written in black and white or set in stone. I had to work to get people to like me, and if I fucked up, they put some serious effort into hating me. I felt like I was actually making a difference to the people that I interacted with, even if that difference was divesting their corpses of clothes and having their gang brothers decide to shoot me on sight. *Fallout: New Vegas* hit the Poké Ball out of the park.

Pokémon metaphors out of the way, all game studios seem to do nowadays is bang on about choices and failed multiplayer modes (sit your ass down, *No Man's Sky*). If I wanted to kill some orcs and call it a day without anyone so much as batting an eye, I'd just go back to being addicted to *World of Warcraft*. I was tired of being the hero no matter how many babies I stole from right under their mother's noses, and I was tired of games blatantly ignoring my efforts to be Chaotic-aligned. To put it plainly, I was sick of the illusion of choice. Maybe playing *The Witcher* and expecting to be able to make my own version of Geralt was a bit ambitious given the fact that the series is based on books that someone's written. However, after having a grand ol' time in *Dragon Age: Origins* being a downright menace to the population and being recognised for it, I probably expected too much from the latest incarnation of the game and should have realised that before I put in 270 hours.

This isn't to say that I don't love playing the Bachelorette mini-game that almost every RPG seems to have nowadays. I like to think that it makes me more conscious of the importance of certain choices; can't be too reckless if I'm going to have a wife and child to feed in the epilogue. However, it seems that having a veritable buffet of romantic companions is now more important than the ability to effect meaningful change upon the game world.

What *Fallout: New Vegas* did right was to make sure that I didn't just feel like a generic asshole wandering about the desert shooting things. I was an asshole who had friends with genuinely heart-breaking backstories. I agonised over whether or not I'd done the right thing in blasting a cult of ghouls in rockets into space – it was what they wanted, but they definitely ended up dead. I confronted the guy who shot me in the head and didn't immediately kill him because I wanted to make a selfish decision that would benefit me financially. I felt like I could do whatever I wanted in the Wasteland, and I could be whoever I wanted to be. I even worked with the gay murder Romans for a bit, just for kicks. People didn't sweep my horrible life choices under the table when they met me – sometimes they damn near chased me out of town before I got ahold of my trusty grenade launcher.

What I did didn't magically vanish from game history – I wasn't "that mass murderer who conveniently also did that one good thing, once, so he's forgiven". My actions had consequences – my choices had results. Sometimes they were good, sometimes they were bad, but it was all about how I played the game. I could be a mass murderer if I wanted to be, or I could try to be the very best, like no one ever was. ■



MAYORAL LEAGUE

electoral dysfunction

patrick newland begs you to please, please vote

New Zealand's general election in 2014 had a voter turnout of 77%. The Brexit referendum in the UK had a turnout of 72% of registered voters (excluding the four million people that aren't registered). The last UK general election had 60%, the US had 57.5%. These elections all had one common factor – they were all decided by less than 2% of the vote.

By comparison, the last Auckland mayoral election had a voter turnout of 35%. This is not ideal. Engaging in local politics is like a visit to grandma's place – a bit dull and stuffy, but a necessary trip. Though in Auckland there are no hard numbers to back it up, if you look at national trends voter turnout is even lower for those of us under the age of thirty – otherwise known as "those who have the most to lose". Every election the same call goes out; newspapers editors, Green Party politicians, and the

little orange man all plead for young voters to get involved, and yet we never do. The only young people who do vote are the ones that are already polarised; the people who are not going to change their vote, regardless of the climate they are in.

The main argument against voting is the idea that one vote has no effect. The problem with that argument is too many people use it. Elections tend to be very close. Even with National so far ahead of Labour in the raw vote, a small swing could easily have led to a Labour-led coalition. If everybody in New Zealand who didn't vote went and voted for a new party, they would receive the second-highest number of votes. While some argue that it's complacency that leads to low turnout, this is easily disproved by looking at demographics. The more someone earns, the more likely they are to vote.

The only country in the OECD that seems to have the right idea is, scarily enough, Australia. They have a compulsory voting model, with a \$20 fine for those who don't turn up. While it

slightly reeks of government overreach, it gets people involved – if you have to lump yourself down to the local polling booth, you might as well know what you're voting for. And though the rate of informal votes (primarily in the form of drawing dick and balls on the ballot) is quite high, there is a much higher rate of voter interest, which is something that we could desperately use.

The air of inevitability around Phil Goff's victory is well deserved; he is undoubtedly a highly-seasoned politician, but much like the US President he does not have control. In order for the Auckland Council to enact decisions, there has to be agreement among the whole Council, including the locally elected councillors. And with all of the life and interest sucked out of the campaign, a reduced turnout will lead to a council that will not represent the interests of the majority. Goff himself has done nothing to help with this lack of interest – he has run the most blasé, cruising campaign you could imagine. From his uninspiring platform to his campaign promises like "let's sort out housing", Goff knows that the only thing that could hurt

his chances is people getting involved, because he is the default choice.

Local body elections suck. We all know it. However, buried in your thirty-odd votes in six categories, there are two or three important jobs – and none of them involve the Portage Licensing Trust. When it comes to the things that affect you as an individual, most of them are controlled by the Auckland Council, not the government. Through the administration of public transport, roading, garbage collection and the building of new homes, the Council plays a major role in knitting together the fabric of our city. Councillors, elected by less than a majority of Aucklanders, have substantial control over our lives. The issue is that the important roles of Mayor and councillors (the equivalent of Prime Minister and Cabinet) are on the same ballot that asks you to rank your top 7 out of 16 people to run the local DHB, all of whom you have never heard of, are unsure of what they do, and are pretty sure have no effect on your life at all.

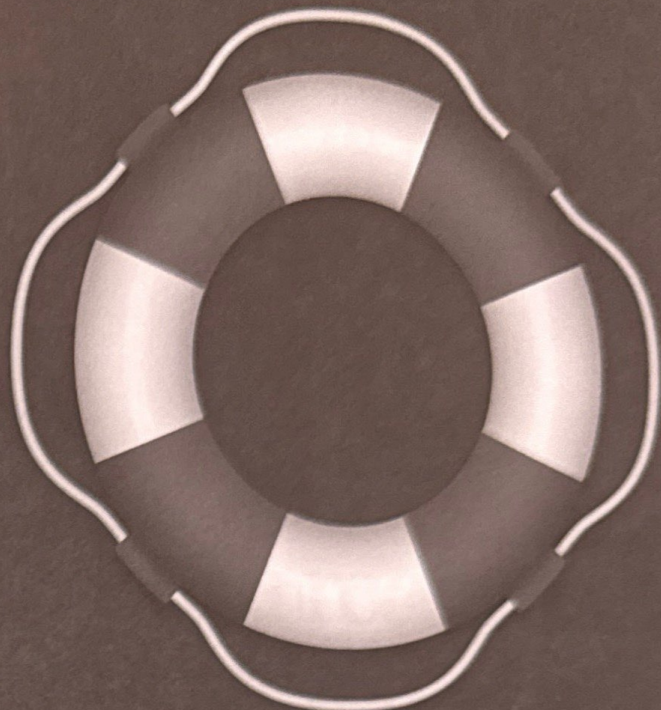
So if you haven't already (and let's face it, that's most of you), find the voting pack that was sent to your home, tick a few boxes, and put in the huge effort of placing it in a post box. It takes no real effort, and you might just make a difference. **me ■**

Through the administration of public transport, roading, garbage collection and the building of new homes, the Council plays a major role in knitting together the fabric of our city.

Goff knows that the only thing that could hurt his chances is people getting involved, because he is the default choice.

It can be really hard to decide who to vote for, especially when you know very little about the candidates, so here are so hints and options.

1. **See if anyone has already done your job for you.** Internationally, it is not uncommon for political parties to hand out lists of candidates they endorsed, even if they have none of their own running. In Auckland, *The Spinoff* has endorsed candidates in each major category, based on who they believe fit in with their "War for Auckland" platform. While they may not be in line with your views, you can go to their website and have a look at their reasoning.
2. **Ask a friend.** Again slightly less than ideal, but if you are stuck, look for that one politically-minded friend we all have – preferably someone who is not affiliated with a particular party. Just ask them their opinion, because "politics" shouldn't be a dirty word.
3. **Have a bracket.** Get a couple of similarly undecided friends and have a bit of fun. Draw up a knockout bracket and fight the candidates one-on-one. It doesn't have to be all that serious, especially for the smaller races, and when you get to the end you'll find that you will be making an informed decision, and also voting for Woody from *Toy Story* (Neil Henderson) because he is wearing a hat. **■**



AUSA FINANCIAL HARDSHIP -GRANTS-

If you are struggling financially we are here to help! The AUSA Financial Hardship Grant provides up to \$250 (or \$400 if you have dependants) to students experiencing unexpected financial difficulties. Money is granted to assist students with food, accommodation, medical or travel costs.

We can also help you with optometry costs thanks to Campuspecs.

Apply at AUSA reception or online at
www.ausa.org.nz/hardship

Questions or Problems?
welfare@ausa.org.nz

AUSA



The conch exploded into a thousand white fragments and ceased to exist

ARTS EDITORIAL BY SAMANTHA GIANOTTI

In the throes of a Daylight Saving-induced stupor, a bunch of *Lord of the Rings* fans gathered en masse in my (very small, very cramped) living room to watch all three extended versions of Peter Jackson's original trilogy. The weeks leading up to the event were marked by mirth, anticipation, an overblown sense of purpose; we were going to do it. We were going to scale the heights of cinematic stamina. We were going to form our own Fellowship.

The Facebook event professed that *The Fellowship of the Ring* would begin at 11am precisely. There was no time for dilly-dallying or mildly interesting chit chat when there were six discs, eleven hours and twenty-two minutes of movie to churn through. Mark, who was supplying the *Lord of the Rings* extended edition boxset he has had on display on his night stand since he was ten, called me frantically at 10.43am.

"Look Sam, I'm walking in the pissing rain like it's the bloody Battle of Helm's Deep out here."

"Okay Mark I don't really know why you're calling m-"

"Honestly, it feels like I've been walking for hours. I'm wasted on cross country, we dwarves are natural sprinters."

"Could you stop talking in *Lord of the Rings* references and tell me why you're ringing? My mulled wine tastes like shit and I'm trying to figure out how to salvage it before everyone arrives."

"The beacons are lit."

"MARK"

"It's just... the event starts quite soon. Could... could your mum come pick me up?"

The beacons are lit. Mark calls for aid. And Karen will answer. My mum was sent off in her bright pink dressing gown, roaring into the driveway at 10.59am, Mark sopping wet in his longjohns in the passenger seat.

Five of twenty-three attendees had arrived at this

time.

"Do we wait?" I asked, reflecting on my very terse Facebook posts that warned those who were tardy would be dead to me.

"No way," Mark replied. "All we have to decide is what to do with the time that is given to us, and I'm decid-"

"Oh my FUCKING god, just start the fucking movie."

Additional members to our filmic fellowship dribbled in around 11.30am. *We thought there would be at least a half an hour leeway*, they breezed. *Well, I told you there wouldn't be*, I replied curtly. Caitlin, forever efficient, arrived uncharacteristically late at 12.13pm bearing a metric tonne of toaster waffles; her Nokia 109 from 2008 did not automatically update her clock. She and I promptly began a heady discussion of the veritable merits of making out with Sir Ian McKellan.

"Guys, it's the forming of the fucking Fellowship" Mark interjected, quickly destroying his status as Cool Dad, instead becoming Lecturing Lameo. "Fine," I replied, swiftly losing my appearance as Nonchalant Host and quickly taking up the mantle of Petulant Child. I fished the last sausage roll off the platter on the table between us, greying and flaccid. "No one is allowed to talk unless they're holding this sausage roll."

This worked well until another movie-goer frantically popped the listless saus into their mouth, a desperate attempt to gain some sustenance as we realised it had been four hours and we were less than halfway through *The Two Towers*. With our singular symbol of democracy and decency gone, the room became divided. Mark sat on one side loudly lauding the fact that Caitlin had once been deemed the Frodo Baggins of her friend group, Caitlin and I on the other, proclaiming that anyone (us) who has ever said (repeatedly) that Mark resembles Aragorn (he does) must be blind and stupid because Aragorn is *hot* and Mark is *gross*.

The atmosphere grew tense. Some present gave their apologies ("I've got to head home I'm feeling pretty under the weather", "I've got an essay I'd better take off and finish", "I don't want to be here anymore you guys are awful") and departed swiftly. Others stayed, intrigued a little by making it through to the end of *The Return of the King*, and intrigued a lot by seeing who out of Caitlin or I would cry first after Mark repeatedly corrected our pronunciation of Karl Urban. ("It's *Urbahn* you idiots!" "It's just Urban you pretentious prick!")

Mark reached out and plopped the very last toaster waffle onto his paper plate.

Caitlin's eyes moved swiftly from plate to platter as she realised it was indeed the last of its kind. Slowly, she moved behind Mark, her eyes fixed on the maple syrup dripping over the waffle's edges.

"Give us that Mark, my love," she whispered.

"Why?" Mark replied.

"Because it's my birthday. And I wants it." Caitlin crooned as she outstretched her hand.

"Your birthday is in February Caitlin, what the fu-"

Caitlin attempted to wrench the plate from Mark's hands. He recoiled and so she launched forward, claspings his throat beneath her fingers and picking up the toaster waffle with her mouth. She took so long to eat her doughy fare hands-free that she forgot she was indeed crushing Mark's windpipe.

And so, in the Fourth Age of Middle-Earth, Mark Fullerton was lost to us. We took his body to Mission Bay and pushed him out into the waters on a blow-up lilo from The Warehouse. We played "Into The West" by Annie Lennox on a UE Boom as he drifted slowly toward the home of the Valar.

Mark Fullerton is at peace and he died doing what he loved: proving to people that he knew more about *Lord of the Rings* than they did.

Hannon le. ■



story of a recovering halloween-a-phobe

GEORGIA HARRIS

Growing up with conservative Christian parents was a tough time for many reasons. Things that most kids took for granted, like listening to Britney Spears, sex ed and watching *The Simpsons* were out of bounds. For me, it was Christian radio, an embarrassed explanation of periods, carefully researched PG movies and an unshakeable feeling of isolation from my peers.

To my parents (who I do love dearly btw), the world was full of evil influences lurking in wait for the chance to corrupt their darling daughters. Obviously they needed to make sure we weren't exposed to any of them. Near the top of the list of evil things to be avoided (just below abortion) was Halloween.

Instead of seeing Halloween as an excuse to wear costumes and eat candy as other kids my age did, my parents *knew* it was something far more sinister. To them, witchcraft and 'black magic' were real – so it was fundamentally un-Christian to celebrate it, no matter how lightly or jokingly. So while everyone else in my primary school classes attended Halloween-themed parties and went trick-or-treating in groups around the neighbourhood, I was doomed to sulking glumly by the window, watching my mother turn disappointed children away from our door. And it wasn't just Halloween. Any literature or movie that 'glorified' the 'dark side of the spirit world' was forbidden. *Harry Potter*, horoscopes, *Goosebumps* – even *Badjelly the Witch* were guilty of being evil channels through which the devil

could poison our innocent minds. I didn't even bother asking if I was allowed to watch horror movies.

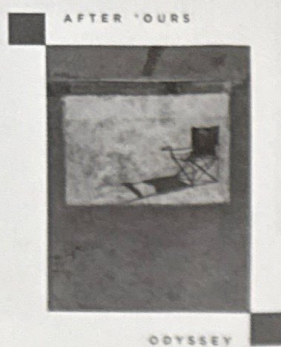
At first, I blindly agreed with it all – as you do when you're very small and believe everything your parents tell you. But as I got older and the bans stayed firmly in place, the restrictions just made me want to see what all the fuss was about. In the later years of primary school I got out books with witches in them from the school library, hid them from my parents and read them in illicit fascination. When I was twelve, my parents were just beginning to lax up the rules around sleepovers, and I was allowed to stay over at a non-church friend's house for the first time ever (the result of extensive waterworks). This was, of course, on the condition that no age-inappropriate movies were to be watched. Immediately after they left, a dilemma presented itself: my friends had rented out *Jeepers Creepers II* – an R16 gore-fest which my parents would never approve of. I wanted to watch it SO badly but I didn't want to break my parents' trust (or go to hell). We watched the beginning (up until that bus scene), but I felt so guilty that I begged them to change the movie. They reluctantly put on another one, and I felt embarrassed for the rest of the night.

Another time, during my Church's 'Light Party' – a 'positive Christian alternative to Halloween' – my friend and I snuck off to go trick or treating in our angel costumes. Upon reaching an actual door, we were too filled with guilt to follow through on our devilish intention, and went back to the Light Party. There, we promptly hid out of view and bum-puffed a half cigarette we'd found on the side of the road. I'm not really sure if that last part is relevant, but the two memories are linked in my mind as

defining instances of pre-teen rebellion.

Even throughout my early high school years, going to sleepovers involved my parents checking with friends' parents that no inappropriate movies were on the agenda for the night – a humiliating ordeal. Often, my friends' parents took pity on me and hired R16 movies anyway – for which I am eternally grateful. This was a thing all the way up until I was actually 16 and legally able to watch R16 movies (by which time you don't care anymore, obviously). By the time I got to year 12 and 13, I'd pushed the boundaries/let down my parents enough to eliminate most of the barriers to normal life. I watched whatever movies I wanted, stayed in class for sex-ed (which was woefully inadequate anyway), came to my own conclusions about religion (mostly a bs form of social control), and even did my Media Studies Scholarship essay on horror films. I read all the *Harry Potter* books and watched all the movies, albeit at an age far too late to experience their full magic. #NotBitter.

These days I think I have a far healthier attitude to all things Halloween. A few years ago I tried out an Ouija board with some friends and nothing happened. As far as I can tell, I'm not possessed by any supernatural demons. Last year, I took an ex-boyfriend's younger sibling trick-or-treating and had heaps of guilt-free fun. Although I can see where my parents were coming from in their ambitious attempts to protect me, I think it may have had the opposite effect, because I needed to discover it all for myself – not just Halloween, but lots of other things they told me were 'evil'. Anyway, I'm ok now – although Halloween retains a bit more of an eerie feel for me than most people. There's always a chance that my parents were right... ■



Odyssey

After 'Ours

ALBUM REVIEW BY JEAN BELL

Odyssey is the debut release of up and coming act After 'Ours, the project of duo Michal Martyniuk and Nick Williams. Both established musicians in their own right, After 'Ours was a fun and carefree venture for the pair. To learn a bit more about the guys, check out *Craccum's* interview in this issue.

The duo incorporates into their work a diverse range of sound with artistic flair. Consisting of a finely-tuned fusion of jazz and hip hop, at times with a hint of an electronic undertone, there is a track for every mood here. From the groovy synth and pulsing percussion of "Spiryt", to the mellow, yet rich, saxophone solo of "Gordon Blues", every song has something unique and special to offer. The work feels cohesive with its consistent (yet never monotonous) sound running throughout, with each track flowing from one to another. The work feels collaborative to its core, with a range of vocalists each showcasing their unique talents.

When a record is said to be in the making for five years, one may begin to suspect that the album produced will be overdone and excessive; a kind of situation where too many cooks spoil the broth. However, After 'Ours have proved to be a brilliant exception to this, with *Odyssey* sure to be a winner, its positive vibes making it a perfect jam for the coming summer months. *Odyssey* is proof that more often than not, good things just take time. ■



Sonderlust

Kishi Bashi

ALBUM REVIEW BY KELLEY LIN

The first thing you hear on Kishi Bashi's third studio album is an orchestral fantasia of violin, piano, and guitar in the first track titled "m'lover." As always, Kishi Bashi (the moniker of Japanese violinist Kaoru Ishibashi) transforms the experimental, psychedelic genre into joyful tunes. *Sonderlust* is produced by Grizzly Bear's Chris Taylor and assisted by several musical figures including drummer Matt Chamberlain of the band, of Montreal, which Kishi Bashi toured with earlier on in 2012.

The word "sonder" is defined in *The Dictionary of Obscure Sorrows* as "the realization that each random passerby is living a life as vivid and complex as your own." *Sonderlust*, in particular, is wrapped in the appearance of blissful dream-world, all while overlaid with somber harmonies. Kishi Bashi himself describes this album as one torn between the heartbreak and personal hardships of his own marriage.

However, the anguish might not be so clear in "Say Yeah", as it is in the slowed down and bluesy "Who'd You Kill." The old Kishi Bashi can still be heard here, mixing experimental pop with his expertise in classical instruments, although this time around, the songs seem to lean less towards experimental and more in the direction of pop. Even so, *Sonderlust* proves to be an album of masterfully composed melodies and detail. ■



Don't Breathe

FILM REVIEW BY JACK CALDWELL

Don't Breathe is a horror film that follows three delinquents in Detroit who attempt to rob a lone blind man's house. Their victim is a Gulf War veteran and has a fortune of \$300,000 cash in the house, but the three find out that taking money from this blind man won't be so easy. A basic setup, but what *Don't Breathe* does well is its ability to twist the circumstances of the three robbers. Having watched the trailer, it seemed implausible to have a movie length's worth of trouble robbing a blind man. Indeed, the longer they stay in the house, the more they find out about the man's past, and the less likely it seems they can ever escape.

Don't Breathe starts as a slow-building suspense piece, with beautifully smooth camera movements around the man's house as the three robbers first enter and search it. It grows much more intense as it goes along, though, exchanging between a teeth-gritting thriller and a brutal gore fest. This combination allows *Don't Breathe* to stand out from the shallow, pure blood and guts features that plagued much of the Saw franchise. Establishing the back stories of the robbers and their motivations for their egregious crimes makes it easy to sympathise with them.

However, some of the aforementioned tense, thrilling moments became repetitive and frustrating rather than gripping. The number of times we had to watch the robbers frantically search for keys to unlock what seemed like more doors than any house could possibly have dragged on. *Don't Breathe* had to try hard to stretch to 90 minutes, and had an excellent ending shot that ended up being two scenes from the credits.

Don't Breathe is well shot and acted enough to beat the mediocrity that dominates much of Hollywood's horror catalogue, but still falls below even this year's best. ■



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hallo-winners

craccum's reviewers serve up a fresh plate of halloween spirit



The Audition

FILM REVIEW BY EUGENIA WOO

It's hard to give someone a quick summary of *The Audition* without getting into the lack of plot. It's not dependent on the usual trope of a bunch of good-looking teenagers with zero common sense letting themselves get picked off by an angry dude with a chainsaw, but that might only be because it's Japanese. The film's flimsy excuse for a plot is just that – an excuse for bad things to happen to bad people. As much as I think that revenge-an-anything is a bit distasteful in certain situations, *The Audition* did spawn a tribute in the form of a My Chemical Romance music video, which to my 14 year old self was the peak of cool. There's a ridiculous amount of gore, a healthy dose of torture, and the film is actually pretty scary. While it's definitively a Japanese horror film, it's probably got more in common with the Italian *giallo* genre than some of its contemporaries; think a beautiful dual victim-antagonist and violent imagery that borders on lurid.

The film opens with a healthy dose of misogyny. The premise is pretty simple: Shigeharu Aoyama, a lonely widower, is convinced by his son that he has to start dating again. Instead of getting Tinder like the rest of the masses, however, he decides to hold a series of bogus auditions for a woman to play the 'part' of his wife. Yeah. It's not great. Enter the unlucky one to steal his withered old heart – Asami Yamazaki – who lives alone in an empty apartment with a phone and a single sack. You don't need to be a genius to realise that this endeavor isn't going to end well for either party, and you probably could do without knowing what's in the sack.

Where *The Audition* receives its praise is the fact that once you get on its wild ride of dread, insanity, and copious amounts of blood, you're not going to be able to get off. If you're tired of being bashed over the head with stuff like *The Blair Witch Project* this Halloween (let's face it, the remake sucked), then try this on for size. ■



A Nightmare on Elm Street (1984)

FILM REVIEW BY ANOUSHKA MAHARAJ

I forgot what a genuine, emotional banger this film is. 80s horror films are incomparable to much else, and this one is unique in its own right. Ominous, keyboard-based soundtracks and contrived religious sentiments bound beneath the Hays Code have become quirky tropes attributed to a genre yet to develop into the flashy tragicomedies they are now. Wes Craven mercifully revitalises the slasher genre with *A Nightmare on Elm Street*, creating an endearingly kitschy film that is a simple ode to youth, gore and metamorphosing villains.

Freddy Krueger is the original #relationshipgoals. His striped sweater hasn't been washed for 40 years, so you know that it'll be really comfy and worn-in. His arms are so long that he could wrap them around you six or seven times, and what good timing – he will probably murder your boyfriend then whisper sweet nothings over the phone like, "I'm your boyfriend now, Nancy". Romance!

There are many important lessons to be learned from this film. For instance, not sleeping for seven days straight is highly recommended, as it apparently makes you a natural at setting elaborate traps around your house. And, even better news – being a raging alcoholic comes in handy if a murderous predator is after you, as you essentially have many bottles of flammable liquid just waiting around to be ignited and thrown at said predator.

Craven raises a lot of relevant questions in this film, such as, 'where does Freddy go when he falls asleep?' or, 'what is Nancy's mother's drink of choice?' Other memorable and highly relatable moments include: Nancy waking up screaming in the middle of class; seductively telling Glen to turn off the lights so that they can entrap a burned-up creeper; but, most depressing of all, the scene where she looks in the mirror, gasps in horror, and cries, "oh, God! I look twenty years old!" ■



The Nightmare Before Christmas

FILM REVIEW BY DANA TETENBURG

I'm an absolute wuss when it comes to scary films, so it's obvious that my Halloween favorite is a '90s animated fantasy with children as the general target audience. But don't be fooled – this film is an Oscar nominated Tim Burton extravaganza, cleverly both Halloween and Christmas themed so the film can sneak its way onto screens throughout the majority of the second half of the year.

The film follows Jack Skellington a.k.a. The Pumpkin King, who lives in Halloweentown in Holiday Woods. He feels that Halloween is not as exciting anymore, and after stumbling upon the splendor of Christmas Town he aims to convince the residents of Halloweentown to understand and cherish the newly discovered holiday as well, and ultimately help take over Christmas.

Doesn't sound like a very good film for getting psyched for Halloween if the main character, a seasonal icon, doesn't even like Halloween too much anymore himself. However, the music is top notch at creating some spooky vibes. I've put off mentioning that this film is a musical because it shouldn't dictate your perception. Don't decide that you don't like it before you've heard "This Is Halloween", the opening number of the film, which is played as the camera glides through Halloweentown in all its mystical glory. The soundtrack is literally award winning. But if that's not your thing, the classic dark and shadowy cinematography as well as the creepy yet unique inhabitants of Halloweentown are also top notch at getting you in the spirit.

It's just a great feel-good movie. New Zealand isn't all that into Halloween in general, but holidays are fun to get excited for. So if you're keen to relax and unwind but also still watch something relevant and in-theme, *The Nightmare Before Christmas* is a great October go-to. ■



The Descent

FILM REVIEW BY JACK STEPHENS

Absolute trash but absolutely terrifying. Five words to sum up the 2005 film *The Descent*, directed and written by Neil Marshall. I genuinely still have a fear of going underground after this watching this film – the family trip to Waitomo Caves has been permanently postponed.

This British horror film is the perfect combination of thrills, gore and betrayal that is necessary for your Halloween night. It tells the story of six British women who enter an unmapped cave system and become trapped. Faced with the sudden reality that they are essentially physically stranded with no hope of rescue they are then confronted with a more sinister reality: they are not alone.

Sometimes I wonder who comes up with these monster-villain-horror creatures (please don't get me started on how terrible *The Hills Have Eyes* equivalent of these creatures are). The creatures faced are pretty ridiculous but also pretty terrifying. The film turns into a survival film in the wild minus Bear Grylls. The six women are being hunted in an unknown cave system while their food and power sources are running low. It's not the best situation to be in. Chuck in a bit of internal conflict among these lovely ladies, and you have an excellent Halloween horror film.

If you feel like staying above ground and indoors this Halloween and don't have some party to go to (although exams will be pretty close by then – another horror story to soon be realised) I would highly recommend this film. It will genuinely keep you engaged, terrified and it's the fact that afterwards you know it is so goddamn ridiculous that it's hardly a situation you'll face on a day to day basis. ■



A Cult Classic Remade: The Evil Dead (1981) and Evil Dead (2013)

FILM REVIEW BY NIKKI ADDISON

A lot of classic horror films have been remade over the years, usually to the despair of diehard fans. Nine times out of ten, the remakes are shite. Better quality, sure; better special effects, definitely. But a better film? No sir. You can't beat a classic, even with a bigger production budget. So when I found out that Sam Raimi's 1981 cult classic *The Evil Dead* was being remade, naturally I was not happy. When I later found out that Raimi and the original's lead actor Bruce Campbell were producing the remake, I felt slightly better. Okay, they were on board – so it couldn't be that bad, right?

The 1981 version was great (still is) because it was original. There had been nothing like it up until that point (or so my dad, who was actually alive when it came out, tells me). He saw it in the cinema and said that there was a mixture of "nervous laughter and screams". That pretty much sums up my first experience with *The Evil Dead*. It's funny, because from a 21st century point of view it is just terribly terrible – the awesomely dreadful acting (sorry Campbell), the horrendous script ("she's your girlfriend, you take care of her" – seriously?) and the fake blood and guts (creamed corn, apparently). But these are also what make it so entertaining, unique and great. You'll be laughing (nervously) and then that jarring, eerie music will start playing and just like that, you're scared. The film mixes (unintentional?) humour with good old-fashioned tension and frights that don't rely on special effects to be... effective. *The Evil Dead* also has some of the most creepy moments in horror film history, such as the basement scene – that broken record player and the lightbulb filling up with blood still gives me shivers. Plus, let's not forget

dear Sheryl and her wonderful rhyme. Now's the time to look that up on YouTube if you haven't seen it.

On top of all its weirdness, *The Evil Dead* is also just a great 80s horror flick. It's got all the stereotypes down-pat: a group of teenagers, an old cabin in the woods, a storm which destroys the only bridge out, a scary looking book and a recorded message warning not to read said book... What. A. Classic.

Then there's Fede Alvarez's 2013 remake. It actually isn't bad. In fact, I liked it. If you can step back and separate it from the original, watching it simply as a horror film and not a remake of a horror film then yeah, it's enjoyable. Comparison-wise, it's basically a strictly-scary version of the original. No humour this time, kids, just straight scary. The story follows pretty much exactly the same structure as the 1981 film, and includes all of its predecessor's most notable moments: the Book of the Dead reading; the finding and using of the famous chainsaw, and of course the "there's something in the woods" scene. It also uses the same groundbreaking filming techniques that Raimi established in his version, mimicking the camera-chases-actor effect that was so chilling.

As far as remakes go, this is a good one. While it isn't as great as the 1981 version, it doesn't tarnish its memory either. If you haven't seen *The Evil Dead* then this is just an enjoyable horror movie, and if you have, you can appreciate Alvarez's nod to *Evil Dead's* father film. Maybe, hopefully, this remake will inspire a few more people to go and watch the original. You know you want to. ■



After 'Ours

INTERVIEW BY JEAN BELL

Fresh and exciting new act on the scene After 'Ours have accomplished much in their short time in the spotlight. Their premier album *Odyssey*, which fuses an eclectic mix of hip hop and jazz, was quietly released to overwhelmingly positive reviews in mid-September and since then they have had their music video for their single "Be Around" featured on MTV Australia. A couple of days before *Odyssey* was released, the guys had a yarn one sunny afternoon over some coffee and beer about the album.

Nick Williams and Michal Martyniuk form the core of the band and are both talented musicians who had their passion for music cultivated from a young age. Nick's forte is drums, something for which he showed a natural talent. "My parents were into music, and it was all around me," Nick says, "I got a drum kit and started smashing that." Michal, whose grandfather is a classical piano player, started playing piano and listening to music at a young age. "I remember my dad gave me my first record, and I chucked it on CD where I left it there and listened to the same album for four years."

Both mention Steely Dan as a significant influence, with Nick highlighting acts such as J Dilla, Robert Galsper, and A Tribe Called Quest as sources of inspiration for the album. "We weren't trying to sound like anyone but

I wouldn't say our stuff is completely new or original," Nick explains. "The way I see it is modern old-school. So kinda doing the stuff we love which is an older style of music, but it's got a little bit of a modern touch on it." As evident in the range of sound offered on the album, Michal tried to include a mixture of genres in the album – "Sometimes you can get bored of jazz or pop albums so we wanted to mix it up. From classical to techno, I've tried to find good things in every genre of music, and we mix it all together into different songs."

The album is refreshingly collaborative in nature and includes creative input from multiple other vocalists and musicians. These artists brought their own influences to the work as well, with Nick and Michal giving few specific instructions on what the two wanted. "There was a common feeling and positive vibe towards the album," Nick says. Some of the lyrics were penned featuring artists, such as on the leading single of the album "See The Light." Written by vocalist Kevin Mark Trail, Michal adds, "Kevin wrote lyrics about being positive, and about how the song felt at the time."

Odyssey did take five years to complete, but it never felt like slogging away. "It was a musical journey. It wasn't that we had an album that took five years to record, it's that it evolved along the way," Nick reveals. "It happened naturally and we didn't force it." With no time frame set to finish the album, they never felt pressured to rush it. "It was always fun and kind of an escape from other work," says Michal. "It was something we could do for fun, not money."

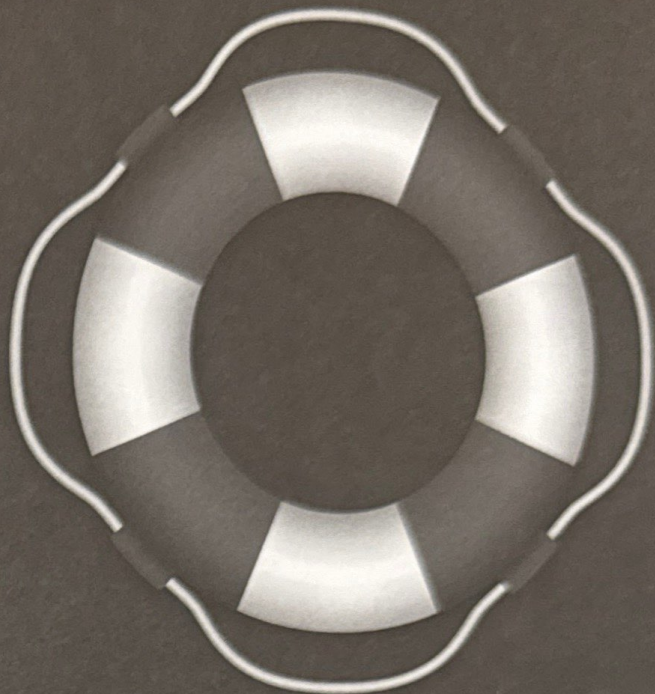
Adding to this, Michal says they wanted a record "that we would be happy with in ten

years." While the recording process was relaxed and exceptionally enjoyable, the two are serious about their craft and are self-confessed perfectionists. "We were aiming for everything sounding like it belonged and didn't want to let it go before it was one hundred per cent ready," Nick says. The pair took advantage of the self-directed recording process by taking the time to meticulously craft their album. "Sometimes we'd record a piano part then replace it with a guitar part because it added to it, just little things like that," adds Michal.

The pair has garnered much wisdom along their way, offering plenty of advice to anyone wanting to give music a go. "Learn as much as you can from other people," Nick recommends, "and ask yourself: what's your intention? What are you trying to say in your music?" They believe having some focus in your work is a good idea, with Michal saying it's good to have a message or intent in mind – "I think you have to believe in it to feel it in the music as well." Michal recommends working hard as the dedication will pay off – "Not just working, but know what you're doing and working towards a goal. And party hard."

So where from here for After 'Ours? Michal says it depends on how the album is received. "We'll leave it up to people. If we get a good response we'll get a band and start touring, and if not we'll try to record another album to follow up and see what happens. We're already writing stuff and will always be doing music, but we'll see what people want us to do... perhaps a punk rock After 'Ours?"

To give *Odyssey* a listen, search After 'Ours up on Spotify, Bandcamp, or iTunes. ■



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Being A Single Mum For A Week

WITH ELOISE SIMS

"Eloise."

"Yeah, I'm listening." I say absently. It's my first day back home in Wellington for the holidays, and I am gazing into my parent's pantry with a beatific expression on my face.

Look at this, I think longingly. Organic couscous? Avocados? Cheese sticks? Jesus, it's a veritable Garden of Eden - is that coconut milk?? Why did I ever leave home? Why would I ever leave home when there's LITERALLY a shelf for fifteen different bloody spices -

"Are you alright?" My mother asks.

I've been staring into the cupboard for twenty minutes. There is a single tear on my cheek.

"Fine." I sniff. "What's up?"

"Dad and I are leaving in the morning," she reiterates, handing me the house key. "So it's you, your brothers, and the animals for a week."

By the animals, she means 1) a fat old ginger terrier called Muntz (short for Munted. Hilarious at the time), 2) a hopeless dope of a Labrador called Bessie, and 3) a neurotic cat called Morgan who my mother fondly refers to as "my third son" or "BaggyPants The Third".

My family is pretty normal, yeah.

By some miracle of God, I actually do know what is going on right now.

My Mum and Dad are going on holiday together for one of the first times since they've had kids. Accordingly - for their wee soiree to take off - I've been royally summoned down from Auckland for a week's worth of babysitting duties.

Easy as, I think. After all, I've been flatting in a disgusting student house for six months now, right? I've fought rats! Mould! Sickness! Damp! The people in the flat above me having loud sex at three in the morning!

How could babysitting my two younger brothers - and a virtual menagerie of pets - possibly be any worse?

It begins at 7am the next day.

"Eloise, you gotta wake up." My ten-year-old brother whispers, pulling my arm.

"Aye?" I mutter. I'm midway through a *really* great dream. Sigur Rós have just asked if I'll come and drum for them in their international

tour.

"We can't do it without you, Eloise." Jónsi implores. He's dressed as an astronaut for some reason. The other band-mates nod gravely.

"I'd hate to let you down, my Icelandic chums," I mutter. "I'll have to fit it in with The Last Shadow Puppet's tour dates but I'm sure."

"What?" My brother asks.

I open my eyes. His face, complete with a milk moustache, is hovering directly above mine.

"Jesus, Charlie"

"You need to wake up. The dogs have done poo in the laundry." He says in a matter of fact way.

"What?" I howl. "Oh - for God's sake, I mean - bloody hell."

He watches me intently, while methodically sticking a raisin up his nose.

I leap out of bed, clean up the dog mess, make breakfast, feed the cat, and set about unpacking the dishwasher.

My sixteen-year-old brother surfaces a minute later, quietly removing the new multitude of raisins from Charlie's nostrils.

"Could you pack Charlie's lunchbox for me?" I ask.

He pulls out his headphones. "What was that?"

"Charlie's lunchbox. Could you pack it?"

He checks his wrist. "Oh bugger - I'm so late for school."

"You don't... you don't even have a watch on your wrist." I interrupt.

"-love you guys, I'll be home after football practice, bye!"

Christ on a bike. I sigh, get Charlie out the door, and set about combing my hair. Thirty minutes later, I rock in the door on a record-late-time to my new internship.

"Sleep in?" Someone asks chirpily.

"The kids are doing my sodding head in." I mutter without a trace of irony.

And so, the week continues in much the same vein.

On Day Two, I permanently scar myself with an oven tray I'm cooking dinner on. Charlie, in sympathy, plops one of his stuffed toys on the burn mark to solve the issue, and waddles off.

On Day Four, the cat spits out his medication

into my eye. It throbs all afternoon.

On Day Five, one of the dogs escapes, necessitating a three-hour manhunt around the entirety of Wadestown before she's delivered home by a cheery bloke in a ute. He has the decency to only look mildly frightened when I cry on him.

By the end of the week, I'd thoroughly had enough. *How do single mums do it?* I wondered. *It's been a week and I have about three more grey hairs, two new scars, and an urge to murder at least twelve people.*

At drinks that night with friends, they're all in amicable moods, chatting about parties that upcoming week. "You wanna come?"

"Don't know if I can risk it." I sigh. "Have to make dinner for the kids and everything, get them to bed - then work the next day! You know I caught Charlie trying to watch TV past 9:00 the other day when I wasn't around? He just thinks he can get away with it if I'm asleep by then."

There's a pause as they look at me with thinly veiled horror.

"Christ." One says brightly. "Eloise has gone housewife on us."

My brief stint with domesticity ends a few days later, when my parents return home. They look windswept and refreshed. I am filled with indescribable bitterness.

"How'd it go?" Mum asks chirpily, showing me holiday pictures of gorgeous landscapes.

I glare at her. "If I ever have children..."

"Yes?"

"Just shoot me in the head instead." I conclude.

Single mums are officially underappreciated.

And no one should trust me with a position of responsibility, ever again. Cheers. ■



SEX, DRUGS & ELECTORAL ROLLS

A Sea-Change On Government Attitudes To Protesting

WITH CURWEN ARES ROLINSON

In 1973, New Zealand Prime Minister Norman Kirk sent our frigate, the HMNZS Otago, to the French nuclear testing site of Mururoa Atoll. On board was the cabinet minister Fraser Coleman. The stated – and, indeed, officially mandated – purpose of those two hundred and forty three men was to put themselves in the path of foreign military activity as a protest action.

This was a pretty proud moment in New Zealand history – a real David vs Goliath sentiment pervades domestic remembrance of that time a small group of Kiwis took on the military (and, earlier that year, legislative) might of an Old World nuclear-armed former colonial power.

I open this piece by referencing the exploits of the HMNZS Otago (and, immediately subsequent to this the HMNZS Canterbury) not simply because it is an incident worth remembering in these modern days of our Government tiptoeing around the internationally expressed wills of the Great Powers. But instead, because there is a clear, present, and utterly immense difference in terms of both principle and courage between what the Kirk Government sought to do 43 years ago, versus what the Key Government seeks to do today.

In case you missed it, the Nats are presently attempting to push through legislation which would criminalise protesting at sea. In fact, it's worse than that. With the bill as presently drafted, you would be liable to be labeled a "terrorist" if you disrupted the actions and activities of a foreign military vessel.

Government MP David Bennett supplied the rationale for deeming maritime protesters to be terrorists:

"This is a foreign power's vessel – a military vessel. You're getting in the way of it – so it's a terrorist act on a foreign country, isn't it."

That's a pretty pithy piece of legal reasoning. In the botanical sense of the term 'pith', of course, wherein it refers to the significantly less desirable bit under the rind of a fruit which surrounds the morsels you actually want to eat. Sounds like David Bennett all up.

Now here in New Zealand, we know a thing or two about nautical acts of terrorism committed against foreign countries. 31 years ago, the French carried out exactly such an act in our waters against the Greenpeace flagship, the Rainbow Warrior. It had been preparing to depart for Mururoa, to once again continue the mission of observation and disruption against illegal French nuclear testing

begun twelve years before by our own Navy.

What this bill therefore seeks to do, by apparent conscious design, is place legitimate protest actions such as those carried out in New Zealand waters against American naval vessels in the 80s upon the same opprobrium-heaped pedestal that we customarily reserve for craven and cowardly acts of *actual* terrorism like the Rainbow Warrior bombing.

And while this is a singularly egregious situation, it's not entirely accurate to state that the criminalization of potentially significant dissent is an exclusively National-produced phenomenon. The Terrorism Suppression Act brought into force by Labour in 2002 also has some problematic provisions which could effectively have rendered something as innocuous as the anti-TPPA road and motorway blockade action which took place earlier this year an apparent act of terror.

Even though the Terrorism Suppression Act contains a dedicated subsection which seeks to clarify that the mere fact of an action being protest-motivated is not, itself, grounds to call something a terrorist act, the fact that such a clause was necessary in the first place goes some ways to illustrate just how problematic previous New Zealand Government efforts at legislating against terrorism (or, more accurately, to punish 'terrorism' post-facto) have been.

Some cynics might even conclude that exploitable 'flaws' in the legislation such as that outlined above would constitute, as an IT professional would say, "a feature, not a bug".

And lest we think that the New Zealand security apparatus are far too 'benevolent' or 'Kiwi-casual' to want to do dodgy things with the powers we give them, consider the illegal spying which was carried out on Kim DotCom at the behest of what amounts to an ineluctable combination of a foreign government and big-name overseas corporate interests. We literally had our foreign intelligence service using military-grade hardware to stake out an eccentric German tech-magnate over a case of *copyright infringement* of all things.

The miscellaneous miscreantry of the NZ Deep State doesn't stop there, either.

I still vividly remember in 2013 getting a visit from the detective who'd been second in command of the Urewera Raids, accompanied by an intelligence service spook. Apparently, the fine boys down at the counter-terrorism unit of the New Zealand Police had had me under wiretap surveillance for the previous eighteen or so months. The reason why? We think they were trying to get Winston for something which they thought I was involved in (in connection to the 2011 Tea Tapes scandal) – and they thought that monitoring my communica-

tions would prove it. The official reason why? I was allegedly a "threat to national security".

Followed swiftly after by a sense of mounting horror as I realized that pretty much everything I'd said over the last year and a half via Facebook messenger, or through txt had quite possibly crossed the desk of at least one nameless analyst somewhere in the New Zealand security apparatus and/or Police. An acrimonious breakup with a girlfriend (and the resultant emotional fallout), personal secrets confided in close mates, all of it was now in the databanks of the state, and subject to easy, at-will perusal by those with the right security clearance. And all because I just happened to be in the right place at the right time outside a cafe in late 2011.

Also, if you're wondering just why I got a house-call – the previous relevant legislation governing search and surveillance mandated a duty to report to the target what had happened once the surveillance was lifted – something which is still somewhat present in the 2012 Act.

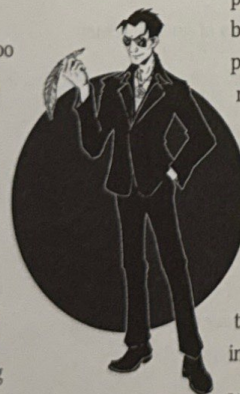
This is apparently a check and/or balance for their power – knowing that some judge, somewhere, will force them to front up to explain to the person under surveillance that all their deep dark secret-communications are now Official Knowledge. I guess the idea is that the (potentially mutual) embarrassment of getting the wrong guy and then having to look them in the eye and TELL THEM that, is supposed to keep our security intelligence services in line.

The reason why I cite this incident is because it handily demonstrates that i) laws put in place to protect us from terrorism can and have been misused even very recently in the past; ii) that the specific forms of that misuse very quickly cross over into the realms of the political; and iii) that even seemingly innocuous or rather small-scale acts of potential dissent (like standing outside of a cafe in the presence of a few TV cameras) can quite quickly conjure the Heavy Hammer of the State coming down upon you.

When we talk about not just criminalizing – but 'terrorizing' – protests, we go rather beyond the simple maintenance of public order.

We instead send chilling messages with chilling effects upon certain aspects of public participation in the hallowed apparatus of our democracy.

As I've said earlier, these increasingly seem to be 'a feature, not a bug', in the minds of many of our august policymakers. With the Key Government preparing to lionize itself for effectively normalising military relations with the US, sanctified by a potentially nuclear-armed ship-visit (the sort of thing we rose up in protest against back in the '80s) – it's not hard to see just whom this new kind of 'terrorism'-fighting legislation might be aiming to please. ■



The Unstoppable Ambition of Donald Glover

WITH ADITYA VASUDEVAN

Donald Glover has his own TV show! If you had given me omnipotence at any time in the last five years, one of my seminal acts would have been to bequeath to Donald what he has now achieved for himself. FX's *Atlanta* is five episodes into its first season and it feels like nothing else on television. It is a unique concoction of neurotic particularity when it comes to giving the show a sense of place, and *laissez-faire* mix-n-match when it comes to giving the show a sense of genre. Because that's what Donald Glover is about in every aspect of his creative life. He sees two doors in the wall and, rather than taking the trodden path, runs at the wall between them 'til he breaks a Donald-sized hole.

Atlanta is set in Atlanta – no surprises there. It follows a Stanford dropout (Earn a.k.a Glover) attempting to manage his cousin's (Paper Boi's a.k.a Alfred's a.k.a Brian Tyree Henry's) nascent rap career. When we meet Alfred, we also meet Darius (Keith Stanfield), who seems to have fallen out of a stoner comedy and into *The Wire* for the purpose of this show. Some of *Atlanta*'s most hilarious moments thus far have come from Darius interrupting a quiet moment with unrelated philosophical pontifications. While stacking salt and pepper shakers in a near-empty diner, he says "us humans are always close to destruction". Earn spends the show's airtime navigating a complicated mix of being black, poor and incredibly personally ambitious. The more you watch, the more it becomes clear that only Donald and his creative team could have made this show. There is no production line for this shit.

I will leave the rest of the show's infinite variety for you to discover yourself.

Donald has managed to do in *Atlanta* what I think he failed to fully achieve in rap, and that stems from the Renaissance that television is having at the moment. For those unaware, Donald's rap persona, Childish Gambino, has released a number of albums. What is notable about them, particularly *because the internet*, is that where they falter in delivery, they soar in artistic vision and ambition. They are distinctly un-gangsta; they try to remove the shroud of romanticism around being a 'thug' or being 'hood'. But they are still an authentically black experience, and one which Gambino shrouds in all of his charm and enigma.

In 'Hold You Down' on *Camp*, Gambino raps: "One kid said something that was really bad/He said I wasn't really black because I had a dad/ I think that's kinda sad/ Mostly cos a lot of black kids think they should agree

with that." Glover wants the definition of black life to be more than what it currently is in media.

In interviews, Glover speaks of his admiration for Kanye West. He sees a genius who has been put in a box by the public; and it seems there is an element of projection in this observation. Glover's rap career was met with opposition and, in some cases, ridicule. While it is true that he cultivated a dedicated following, it was not necessarily rap's conventional audience. He gets accused of being an Oreo (white on the inside) because his tunes don't match the timbre of the streets. He was seen as a privileged comedian trying to be a rapper.

Glover is a comedian (see his stand-up show, *Weirdo*), and he is also an actor (*Community*), a writer (*30 Rock*), and an MC (*Camp, because the internet, Kauai* etc.). What the world is starting to realise is that he's so proficient in all of his fields that he can no longer be called an *x doing y*. He is just an artist.

What, then, is the core of Glover's art? It is about proving you are more than just one thing, shaking that irresistible urge to essentialise people into boxes and categories. *because the internet* is a sprawling, disjointed album for the internet generation – it's about loneliness, parties, legacy, loneliness, parties... rinse and repeat. But this is particularly important for a black artist like Glover, who is sick of being told he is not 'hood' enough. Black identity can and should mean more. In *Atlanta*, he strikes the perfect balance. There is none of the reactive braggadocio that he uses to fight off his haters on tracks. He is telling a story about being poor, about uncomfortably increasing in fame, maintaining relationships, breaking relationships, mending broken relationships with false promises. And, at the end of it all, stripping back all the writerly tricks and genre-bending gimmicks, you are left with an incredibly charming performer with no end to his ambition.

In interviews on radio shows and magazines, Glover always speaks of searching for more creative freedom. I hope he never finds it, because it's in that endless striving that we've got one of the most exciting bodies of work an artist has produced in some time. ■



the people to blame.

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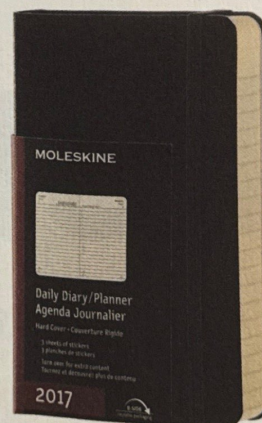
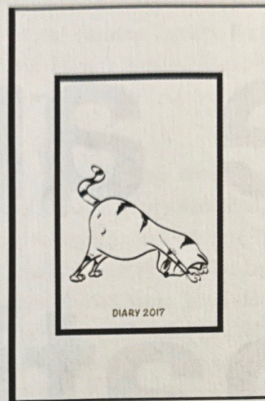
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