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BL T MAGAZINE



THE TEAM



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EDITOR'S NOTE

Dear Reader,

A line of students gathers, adorned in graduation gowns and caps decorated with glitter and painted letters. One foot in front of the other, they make their way down the campus pathways they've walked so many times before.

Last issue, Blot took a dive into our past with the Nostalgia Issue. Now, as winter commencement approaches and students prepare for their lives after college we look to the future with Blot's Future and Innovation Issue.

In this issue you will find articles focused on the future of various industries. From sustainability within the food industry to the evolution of Title IX to the future in the mental health field. Our reporters tackle innovations in technology within the Virtual Technology and Design department.

The centerpiece for this issue focuses on the future of social media and how members of the

media and marketing use social media platforms. In creative writing we have a letter to the future and a poem about winter weather.

There are also many more stories on our website blotmagazine.com including a story on population growth in Moscow, a new addition to our Humans of Moscow series and many new creative writing pieces.

The world shifted in a big way with the COVID-19 pandemic, but change is inevitable. I hope that as you read this issue you can see the amazing changes happening around our community both from the pandemic and from outside innovation. Enjoy the issue.

B. Finnegan

Brianna Finnegan
Editor-in-Chief

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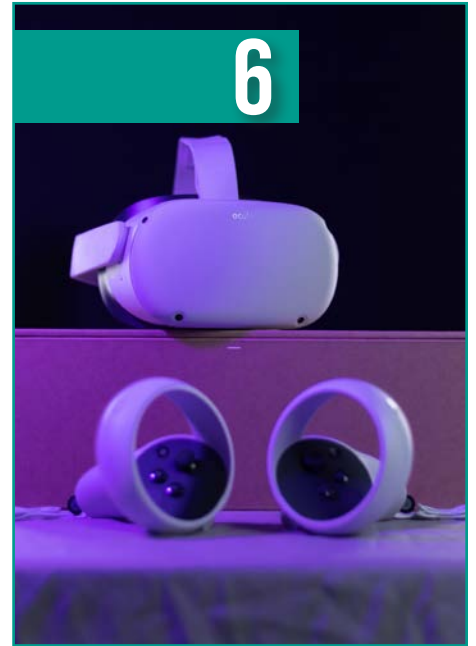
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SUSTAINABILITY STARTS AT HOME

HOW THREE MOSCOW PLAYERS IN THE FOOD SCENE PRACTICE SUSTAINABILITY

Story By | *Katarina Hockema*
Photos By | *Anteia McCollum*
Design By | *Gia Mazzarella*

We are nearing a future that accepts sustainable living, environmental awareness and local sourcing of ingredients, products and services. We must look at our own communities to see if they are riding this wave or trying to turn the tide in favor of more traditional practices.

One of the greatest examples of seeing these progressively popular ideals practiced is within local businesses, especially local restaurants and food service establishments that define and uphold the cuisine landscape of a community.

In Moscow, there are several locally-owned and operated restaurants, cafes and distributors prioritize serving their customers and patrons in the most beneficial ways possible. Whether it be through the

way they acquire their ingredients for their dishes, their cooking and food preparation techniques, the flow and design of the interior and exterior of their business or the small ways they encourage their patrons to participate in a more sustainable dining experience as well.

One World Cafe is a locally-owned and operated cafe that is often visited by the caffeine-driven college student, busy nine-to-fiver or cultural coffee buff. They have made a name for themselves in Moscow, credited to their wide selections of coffee, beer, wine, pastries, snacks, local art and musical performances.

Brandy Sullivan, the part-time owner of the cafe since 2005, feels strongly about making sure that One World functions sustainably and has implemented several ways to achieve



ONE WORLD CAFE'S SUSTAINABLE PRACTICES INCLUDE USING METAL SILVERWARE AND REUSABLE SPICE SHAKERS.

this goal.

"We try to get as much as we can locally, which means ingredients come from smaller, more environmentally sustainable practices versus from larger, higher impact sources," Sullivan stated in an email. "We purchase our produce from local small farmers seasonally when available. Our honey comes from Woodland Apiary (a Moscow family owned business), our sandwich meat is butchered and smoked by Hog Heaven here in Moscow, we always have a couple locally brewed beers on tap, and our coffee is roasted by a family owned business just outside of Troy (Landgrove Coffee). Landgrove features Fair Trade Organic coffee and has a direct trade relationship with the coffee farmers of Yepocapa, Guatemala."

The close quarters and collaboration of Moscow businesses and restaurants allows for easier local sourcing of products.

"The small businesses here in Moscow support each other, and we have personal relationships, usually texting orders and requests," Sullivan stated.

An interesting strategy of incorporating sustainability with a fun twist into a menu is creating seasonal dishes and beverages including ingredients easily found and produced at a certain time of year.

One World takes into account the ideas of its owners, manager, kitchen staff, baristas and customers

to create specialty seasonal dishes each year, according to Sullivan.

The environment these dishes are prepared in and the way they are presented also offers opportunities for sustainability and environmental awareness. "We use reusable dishes and silverware, provide "Hay straws" rather than plastic, have replaced kitchen equipment with more energy and water-efficient fixtures (and) we give incentives for purchasing single use cups/thermoses (first drink is free

with purchase)," Sullivan stated.

As a business, One World also participates in the Avista My Clean Energy program to offset carbon emissions, and has recently joined the Climate Action Working Group to work towards solutions to mitigate climate change, according to Sullivan.

At this time, One World does not have an established composting or recycling system in place due to the lack of an official commercial facility, although they have been in contact with Latah Sanitation and the City of Moscow to discuss this issue.

"From time to time we collect coffee grounds for various individuals and groups that request them for gardening/composting purposes," Sullivan stated.

All in all, One World's success comes from the support of the cuisine community and people of Moscow. Working with local businesses allows them to

sustain and grow their own business as well.

"UI Design Build class worked with us to design and create the recently expanded outdoor seating areas," Sullivan stated. "BookPeople of Moscow and Ampersand join with us for group purchasing opportunities, and we are part of a group of several businesses that help each other out, whether it's loaning items on back order, letting us use their ice machine when ours was broken, or sharing ideas and expertise."

In the future, One World is looking to promote their location in the Janssen Engineering Building on UI's campus, revitalize live music

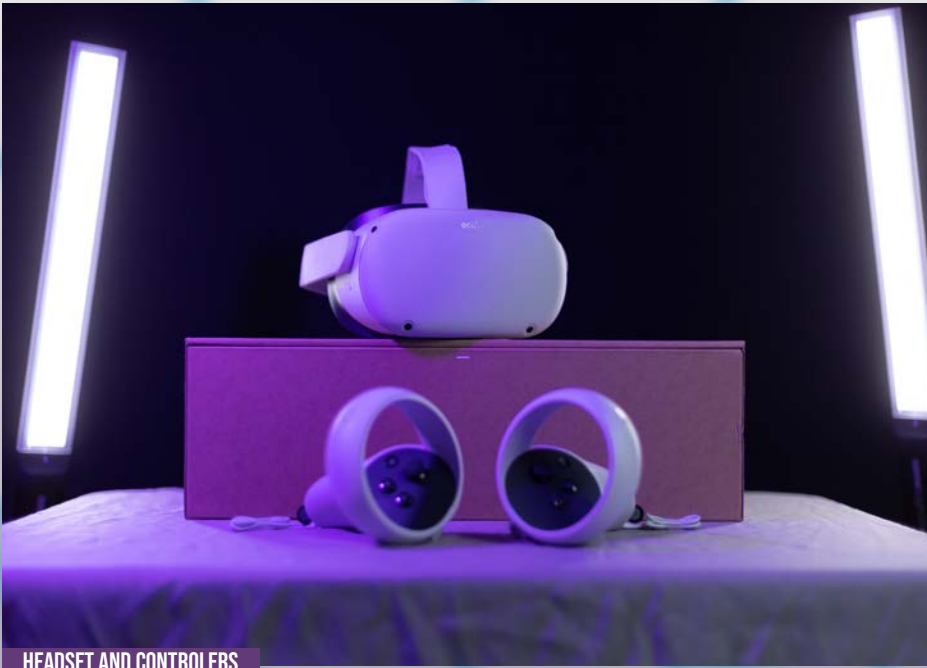
"WE TRY TO GET AS MUCH AS WE CAN LOCALLY, WHICH MEANS FOOD/INGREDIENTS COME FROM SMALLER, MORE ENVIRONMENTALLY SUSTAINABLE PRACTICES..."

and events pending the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic and expand their food menu and potential pub-themed offerings.

From the cafe, abundant with espresso and treats galore, we can explore the seemingly never-ending bar and restaurant scene that Moscow has to offer.

A BARISTA AT ONE WORLD CAFE STEAMS MILK WHILE MAKING DRINKS FOR CUSTOMERS.





HEADSET AND CONTROLLERS

VTD PROGRAM STUDIES DIGITAL WORLDS

STUDENTS IN THE UNIVERSITY OF IDAHO'S VIRTUAL TECHNOLOGY AND DESIGN PROGRAM PREPARE FOR A VIRTUAL FUTURE

For some people, images of holograms and self-driving cars come to mind when thinking of what the future might hold. Others think of robots and space travel. But, for those in the University of Idaho's Virtual Technology and Design program, the future is digital and we are living in it now.

Digital media has become increasingly more common in our lives. Social media, video conferencing and streaming services are just some of the many ways we've become connected online. More recently, Facebook, now known as Meta, issued a press release and video presentation

Story By | *Ivan Varela*
Photos By | *Daniel Ramirez*
Design By | *Daniel Olivo*

previewing its plans for virtual worlds. The University of Idaho's Virtual Technology and Design (VTD) program aims to be ahead of the curve in this rapidly evolving field.

Students in the VTD program take advantage of digital programs and virtual spaces to solve problems, tell stories and create new experiences. They become active creators of digital media. To prepare them for the collaborative nature of real-world organizations, projects are often done in group settings, where each person gets a say in the final product.

Rayce Bird, an assistant clinical professor in the program, said the program attracts a wide variety of students, ranging from those interested in video games to those interested in animation.

**“THERE’S A TREMENDOUS
AMOUNT OF ARTISTRY THAT
COMES INTO OUR PROGRAM”**

“There’s a tremendous amount of artistry that comes into our program,” Bird said.

Payton Finney, a fourth year in the program, decided to join because of his interest in animation and storytelling. Over the past four years, he’s learned a variety of skills, such as 3D sculpting, texturing and character design. He’s also learned how to use programs like Maya, an application used to create 3D models and assets; the Unity game engine, a digital framework used in the development of video games and interactive applications; and the Adobe product suite, a range of programs that allow users to edit photos, video and sound.

“It was the only thing that really sparked my interest when I looked at all the majors,” Finney said.

Jean-Marc Gauthier, a professor and program head of the VTD program, said an important aspect of the VTD program comes in preparing students for using virtual worlds in

real-world applications. For example, those working in biology could virtually fold proteins and engineers could digitally visualize machines.

The VTD program also aims to prepare students to work on the metaverse—a concept that describes immersive, interconnected virtual worlds. Current communication technologies, like social media or video calling platforms, already facilitate connections among people. However, the metaverse’s inherent virtual nature allows for a greater degree of connection.

The applications are numerous. Researchers could model in scales too large or too small to normally work in and perform experiments too dangerous for the real world. Educators could incorporate virtual worlds into their lesson plans and serve students who may otherwise be unable to attend class.

“Could you imagine coming into a classroom in a virtual universe?” Bird said. “And instead of reading a book with text, you’re actually finding yourself inside of a world.”

In addition to solving problems and preparing for the metaverse, those in



ROBOT

the VTD program learn to tell stories in new ways. 3D animations, game worlds and virtual sets are among the many methods used for storytelling.

“Even just designing a room, you can still be a storyteller in that sense,” Finney said. “How is it laid out when you walk in, what do you see and how does that tell a story of the space you’re in?”

Finney said his skills from the program will lead to many career

opportunities. He hopes his efficient workstyle will land him a job in the entertainment industry, where productions can be costly.

Gauthier hopes to see the VTD program grow in the future. Already, student work and knowledge is showcased every year. Now, he’s interested in having more graduates research the applications of virtual worlds in the fields of business and science.

Bird sees the program expanding into the metaverse, servicing students not only on campus, but also from around the world. He also sees the VTD program continuing to adapt to new technology and innovations in order to better serve students.

ROBOT AND OCULUS HEADSET



“IT’S A PROGRAM OF THE FUTURE.”

“It’s a program of the future,” Bird said. “We’ve always felt like that, and it’s what we’ve pushed towards. It’s why we’re willing to change our curriculum every semester if that’s what needs to happen.”

THE EVOLUTION OF TITLE IX

THE PAST, THE PRESENT AND THE FUTURE OF WOMEN'S SAFETY IN MATTERS OF TITLE IX AT THE UNIVERSITY OF IDAHO

Story By | *Angeline Silva*
Photos By | *Nataly Davies*
Design By | *Maria Estrada*

An engulfing of despondency and entanglement of confusion, grief and vulnerability are just the beginning of emotions a victim of sexual assault may experience. While feelings cannot be concretely labeled as every woman holds her own story, one thing remains consistent and true; silence must be broken.

While incidents of sexual assault have tragically occurred in past years, a new light of transparency seems to be dawning among the younger generations. The acceptance of remaining silent after an occurrence of sexual assault seems to be dimming, with increased women coming forward with their stories. Experiences of sexual assault someone has endured cannot be taken away, but the individual can be provided with an open, nurturing space.

THE PRESENT

Amber Feldman, a civil rights investigator at the University of Idaho is here to do just that. Growing up in Moscow, as well as graduating from the UI, Feldman holds an impactful and salient role on campus.

"When I attended college here, I was completely unaware of any of the resources provided for women, such as Title IX," Feldman said.

So, what exactly is Title IX, and what role does it play for students?

"Title IX is a federal mandate, so as an institution we have a duty to prevent or renegade any occurrences of discrimination," Feldman said. "It is our job to provide an environment free of discrimination and harassment, so students feel comfortable to attend class and outside activities."

Feldman investigates any reports of discrimination, harassment or any type of sexual misconduct that occurs on or around campus. Once notified of such occurrence, Feldman can reach out to the student, where she then provides a set of listening ears, as she assists them while they navigate the many emotions and decisions that may come with what they have endured.



Feldman also noted that although Title IX provides great means of encouragement and support to students, the event of sexual assault itself cannot be erased. While individuals who are dedicated to the safety of students, they cannot rid the underlying issue of sexual assault themselves, they can support the individual to the best of their ability.

"WE ARE HUMAN. WE HAVE GREAT EMPATHY. AND WE HAVE A GOAL TO PRESERVE THE SAFETY ON CAMPUS."

"We can always try to air on the victim's side and request," Feldman said. "We are human. We have great empathy. And we have a goal to preserve the safety on campus, and we stand for the students, while also remaining respectful and private of their information."

Shane Keen serves as the clergy compliance officer at UI. Keen believes that crimes such as sexual assault are underreported.

"I want to make sure there is no confusion about where and to whom survivors can make a report; as well as resources available to them," Keen said.

With a background in criminal and civil investigations, Keen's position allows him to use that experience in a different manner.

"Instead of investigating crimes and policy violations, I am now in a role that allows me to look at crime trends on campus and work with different groups across campus (and beyond) to better support members of this institution," Keen said.

With a motivation to support members residing in our community, Keen believes in a proactive approach toward campus safety. For many women, reporting sexual assault can be an intimidating and daunting process. With supportive community members such as Feldman and Keen, the hope for a future where women can share their experience without judgment, bias and ridicule seems bright.

GLIMPING INTO THE FUTURE: A STUDENT'S PERSPECTIVE

Creating a future oriented goal, dedicated toward the safety of women on college campuses requires the fundamental diligence of all community members, including the active participation of fraternities. *Carter Kolpitcke is the vice president of health and safety for his fraternity, Theta Chi.

"My job is to make sure the members of my chapter are adhering to all of our policies, the universities policies, and overall being responsible men," he said. "More logistically, I plan events that cover various health and safety related topics, such as sexual assault prevention programs, fire safety, and responsible drinking habits."

Theta Chi has also incorporated programs such as Mobilizing Men, an organization on campus that addresses the notion of toxic masculinity, and how that can relate to matters of sexual assault. Kolpitcke claims that Theta Chi aims to provide a safe and comfortable atmosphere for women who come in and out of their chapter.

"We are also implementing IFC (Intrafraternity Council) trainings, where an organization comes in and gives the men a chance to listen to an educational seminar on multiple topics, one of them being awareness to sexual assault and ways to prevent incidents from occurring," Kolpitcke said.

While women's safety is focused around women, anyone can play a large role in this issue. Members of Greek life such as Kolpitcke are here to promote the overall well-being and safety of women, while also encouraging their peers to partake in the same actions. Although there is much more to be done, this is the start of a new awareness of the heavy impacts sexual assault can have on not only women, but men as well.



FEMALE STUDENTS STAND IN SUPPORT OF BANNING DISCRIMINATION.

Olivia Redmond, a member of the sorority, Delta Delta Delta, is hopeful that the community of Moscow can Sexual Assault can be a heavy topic to process not only for the victim, but for the victim's friends and family as well. One of the biggest components of support one can offer a survivor is to simply listen. Listen to their story, their experience and their emotional needs and longings.

"Often times we want to fix things," Feldman said. "Your natural instinct is to take action. Just be the support to listen. To listen and support as a non-judgemental friend."

UI offers a multitude of resources for those who have endured an act of violence, discrimination or harassment. Feldman recommends reaching out to the Dean of Student's office, prepared to support a student in a variety of ways, whether it be an email to one's professors excusing them for their lack of attendance to other supportive, personal measures that may need to be taken. The Women's Center is available to provide resources to those in need. Despite the name, The Women's Center is inclusive to all, including those who prefer gender neutral pronouns. Additionally, the Counseling and Testing Center, as well as Alternative to Violence on the Palouse are both resources prepared to offer supportive measures for those in need.

A CALL TO OPEN YOUR EARS AND SIMPLY LISTEN

The community of Moscow has a long and winding road in front of it. To provide women with a safe and warming atmosphere and future generations with the proper tools and educational means to prevent more cases of sexual assault from occurring. Listening to those who come forward with their stories, is providing deserved validation and support to survivors. A new light of transparency is just the beginning.



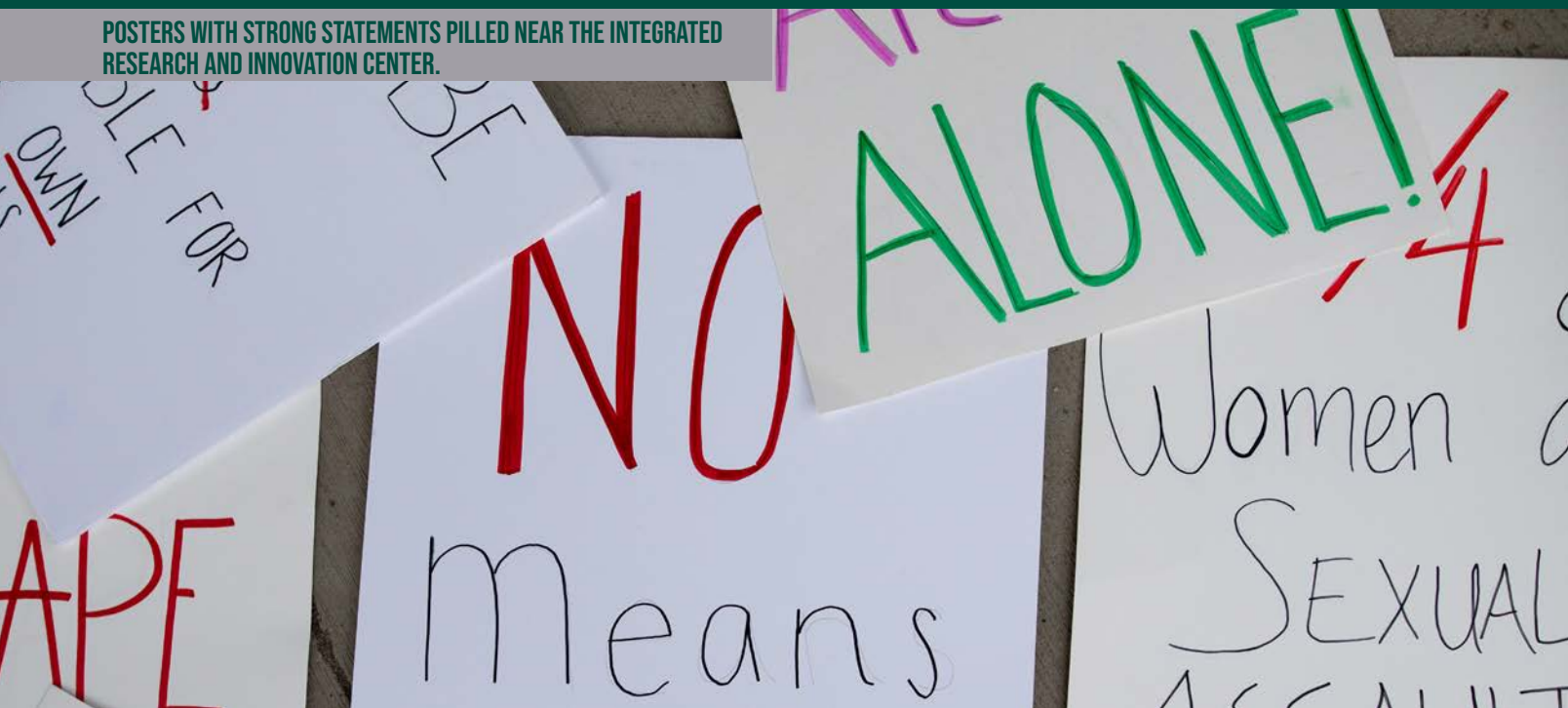
GREEK MEMBERS STAND IN SOLIDARITY AT THE IRIC WHEN IT COMES TO VALIDATING SURVIVORS STORIES.



KOLPITCKE WANTS GREEK LIFE TO REFLECT AS A SAFE PLACE FOR WOMEN DURING HIS TIME AT UI AND AFTERWARDS.

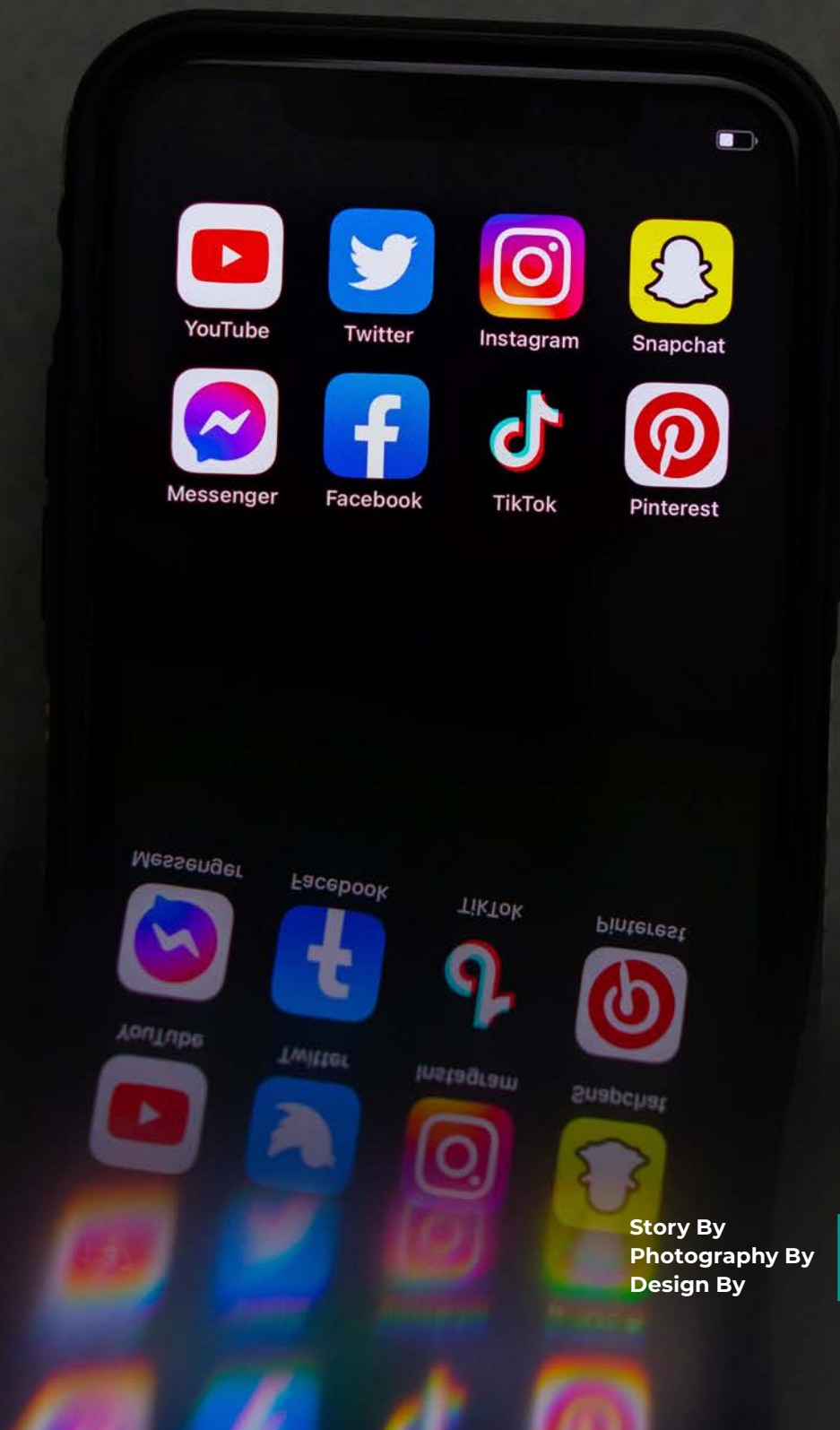
*Carter Kolpitcke was a former member of student media.

POSTERS WITH STRONG STATEMENTS PILLED NEAR THE INTEGRATED RESEARCH AND INNOVATION CENTER.



SWIPE, SCROLL, RETWEET, REPEAT

THE FUTURE OF SOCIAL MEDIA



Story By
Photography By
Design By

Bailey Brockett
Nataly Davies
Becca Ebenroth

SWIPE, SCROLL,



STUDENT SCROLLING THROUGH UI'S INSTAGRAM.

Necks hunched over a cellular device of choice, faces illuminated by the hazy glow of Instagram and the distant clicking keyboard sounds of someone passionately Tweeting their latest opinion. This is familiar, this is our reality like never before.

To say that social media has a chokehold on society may be an understatement. It has captivated the minds of each generation in its own way, bringing about unforeseen benefits and disadvantages, but constantly evolving to meet the ever-growing demands of its audience. But how will this phenomenon continue to evolve, and what does the future of social media hold?

Megan Dobson is a University of

Idaho microbiology student and director of public relations for the Associated Students of University of Idaho. A typical day for Dobson involves being the liaison between ASUI and the student body, whatever that may entail. She manages the ASUI social media, creating infographics, mainly for Instagram and Facebook, to inform students about campus events and resources. She creates posting schedules, responds to student questions and develops new ways to reach the student audience more efficiently through social media.



RETWEET, REPEAT

With the amount of time she spends on media platforms and her extensive knowledge of social media as a communication tool, Dobson already sees a growing change in social media culture.

While social media has facilitated a platform for the public to engage with their favorite celebrities, it has inadvertently created a new kind of celebrity.

“We’re seeing this weird hybrid where people are gaining fame to from social media,” Dobson said. “They’re just social media famous, they’re ‘influencers.’ It’s interesting because people already compare themselves to traditional mainstream celebrities, but now there are these influencers who have a lot more in common with you than these celebrities ever did, and it can make it way easier to compare yourself.”

Dobson has also noticed social media becoming more of a staple in social justice movements and influencing political change. She cites the 2020 Black Lives Matter movement as a turning point for this.

“I don’t think you could go on a social media platform without being exposed to

some kind of information about it,” Dobson said. “Whether that’s performative activism or not depends on the follow through of each individual, but to me it exposed me to a ton of resources that I’d never seen, and it gave me a lot more information.”

Social media has not only evolved into a way for individuals to connect, but it has also become a crucial tool for brands and businesses to grow their consumer following. John Barnhart is the senior director of Marketing and Creative Services at UI, where he oversees the production of the marketing team, including its social media management. He sees social media as a necessary tool for brands to have a more direct connection to their audience and learn the demographics in which to accommodate to.



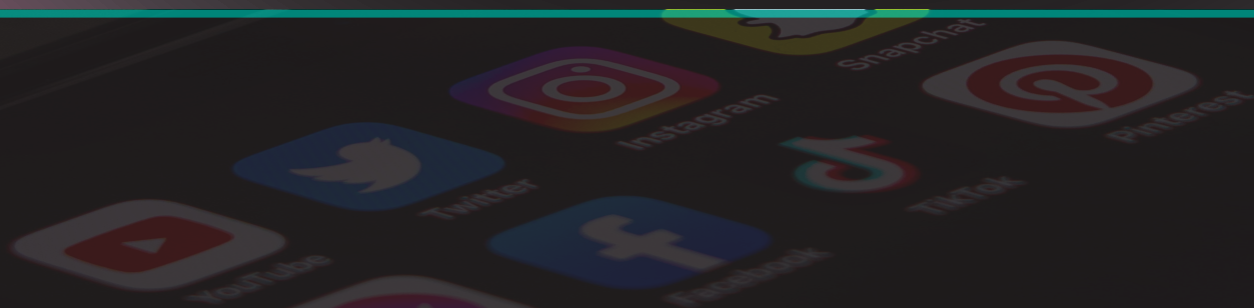
“From a university perspective, our audience, whether it’s high school students all the way through alumni, they connect with us using those social channels,” Barnhart said. “What makes social media such a great way to connect is it’s so immediate. An example is our alumni magazine here. It’s beautiful, but those stories are really a recap of the last six months, where what we put through our social channel is immediate. It happened six seconds ago, not six months ago.”

Holli Sampson is the content marketing strategy manager for Vandal Story Machine at UI and is very familiar with social media development and management. She has seen social media evolve into a branding tool as well as a place of creativity and innovation.

“It’s really as wide open as your imagination,” she said. “I’ve seen businesses lean into almost a personalized shopping experience. I’ve seen schools lean into storytelling. I’ve seen interesting product placement with beautiful photos. I think they have an opportunity to pay a little bit more attention to their marketing strategies and to do more work inside their existing business plan.”

For better or worse, social media will inevitably continue to evolve, whether that be in terms of privacy changes, new features or adapting to the boundaries the public is continuing to set on their social media consumption.

“I HOPE WE REACH A POINT WHERE WE AS SOCIAL MEDIA CONSUMERS AND INDIVIDUALS, HAVE GAINED ENOUGH DIGITAL LITERACY THAT WE’RE ABLE TO PUT UP HEALTHY BOUNDARIES BETWEEN OUR DIGITAL LIVES AND OUR REAL LIVES.”



Barnhart predicts a new wave of privacy updates, similar to the recent change in Apple privacy settings.

“What you’ve seen in the last six months with what Apple is doing is just going to continue,” he said. “What you’ll see from a social media perspective is the people that have the first party data are the people that are going to win. It’s the first party data that’s going to be so critical to the success of brands, as they try to market what they do and align that marketing with what they need.

The people that hold that information are the ones that are really going to control what the next digital phase looks like.”

Dobson optimistically looks toward the future of healthy, productive social media consumption and the progress of communication.

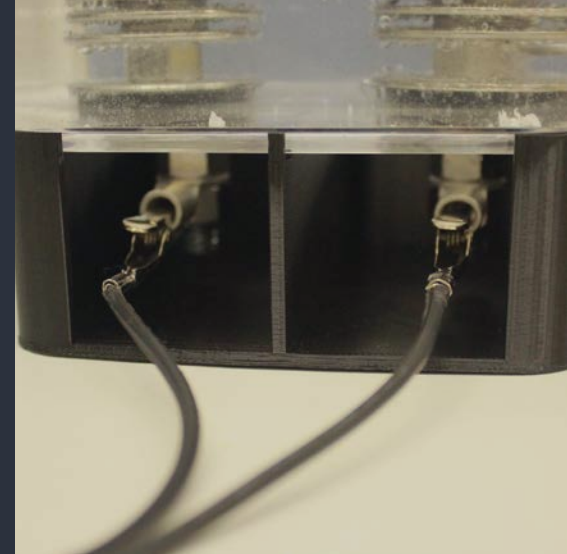
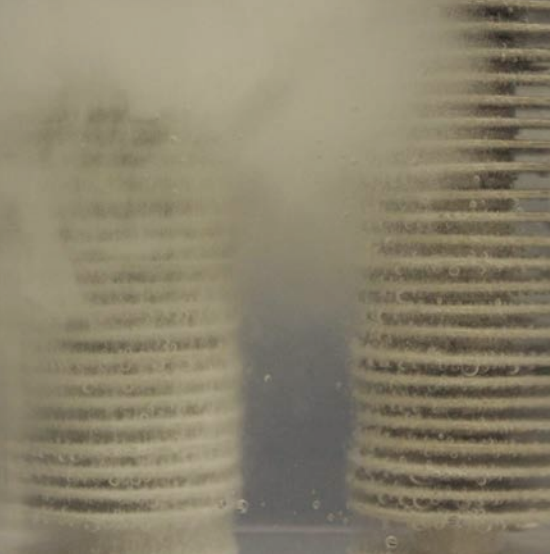
“I hope we reach a point where we as social media consumers and individuals, have gained enough digital literacy that we’re able to put up healthy boundaries between our digital lives and our real lives,” she said. “I hope we are cognizant of how we interact with this tool and are also using it like the platform that we’ve always dreamed of having, and we’re using it to share things, communicate things we are passionate about, connect with people and make progress.”

Sampson puts her faith in the early adapters to lead the way; those who are innovative and create new and enhanced features will continue to succeed.

“Media uses their data to refine features,” she said. “Once all the features are out there and people start seeing other people use them, then they’re widely adopted. I don’t see that stopping. I hope businesses don’t waste time in tactics that won’t produce for them.”



COURTESY OF MEGAN DOBSON, ASUI DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC RELATIONS



GOALS POWERED BY HYDROGEN

TWO MECHANICAL ENGINEERING STUDENTS START A CLUB WITH GOALS OF CREATING A HYDROGEN POWERED ENGINE

Story By
Photos By
Design By

Nataly Davies
Anteia McCollum
Maria Estrada

Four-year-old Andrew Schafer made his way into his dad's shop, determined to find the correct tools for the job. Moments later his parents found their treadmill taken apart, large metal pieces and bolts laid around Schafer as he continued to investigate this piece of equipment.

A young Asher Holden was similarly taking apart battery-controlled cars and attempting to put them back together in his hometown of Spokane, Washington. His parents would often stock up on tinker toys, Lincoln Logs and old radios for disassembling to feed his curious mind. It was the origin story of how two future Vandals developed an urge to figure out how things worked.

The Hydrogen Production and Combustion Club was started by Schafer and Holden, both mechanical engineering freshman, with the quest of creating a fully hydrogen powered engine. The idea was developed after Schafer gave a speech in a communications course about his interest in hydrogen engines. Holden approached him with the idea of creating their own model for



a chemistry project which would eventually develop into the plan of forming a club together. Since then, students across several different majors have joined in on this opportunity.

"I enjoy computer-aided design and had been wanting to make a transmission for something," Schafer said. "I told myself, 'If we have an engine, we can make a transmission,' so that's a large motivation behind all of this. We've also seen that Toyota and Mazda have an engine like this and think it'll be something up and coming."

A traditional internal combustion engine uses gasoline as fuel, whereas a hydrogen engine would rely on liquid hydrogen. Other types of powered engines include gasoline, diesel, natural gas, propane, biodiesel and ethanol. According to the U.S. Department of Energy, these fuels can also be combined with hybrid electric powertrains to increase fuel economy or plug-in hybrid electric systems to extend the range of hybrid electric vehicles.

Both Mazda and Toyota's websites state their hydrogen powered vehicles create zero emissions, advocating for clean fuel and environmentally friendly options.

The club's goal is to harvest the fuel from water, but they found it difficult to separate the hydrogen from the water. Their next attempt will include a small compressor to compress the hydrogen and successfully store it. Once this process



is completed, a design for engine build will be the next step.

Since the club is not an official organization through the university, there is no current funding for it. The members must be resourceful using their own funds and even repurposing soda bottles into their experiments.

"We've been chipping in our personal income and buying materials at Ace Hardware or Goodwill," Holden said. "We actually got a great container there but the best resource on hand is the 3D printer here at the library."

However, the printer has a tough time developing a divider for the electrodes; the divider itself would fit into the fuel cell container to keep both gases separate and stable. A fuel cell container is a device which

chemically converts the fuel into electricity without the need to burn it or the need to recharge.

According to the United States Environmental Protection Agency, there are some manufacturers who are selling Hydrogen Fuel Cell Vehicles, most notably in California where some hydrogen fueling stations exist.

"We believe it's going to be the entire future and it's far more sustainable than what the media says about electric cars," Holden said. "The only emissions are water and heat when hydrogen combusts with oxygen. It's our best shot at a greener, better future. In theory this could be significantly better than electric vehicles."

"IT'S OUR BEST SHOT AT A GREENER, BETTER FUTURE. IN THEORY THIS COULD BE SIGNIFICANTLY BETTER THAN ELECTRIC VEHICLES."



While this is just the start of the Hydrogen Club, the members are planning to use engine development as their senior year capstone project. By then, they hope to be an official club with access to grants and funding to utilize towards a small car that runs on hydrogen.

WHAT THE FUTURE OF MENTAL HEALTH HOLDS

Story By
Photos By
Design By

Olivia Webster
Litzy Gomez
Ashley Isenberger

Throughout the last year and a half, there have been many struggles students have faced, taking a major toll on us mentally. But mental health professionals are confident in how the public's view of mental health is changing for the better.

Some of the biggest challenges the pandemic has created for many people have been regarding mental health. There have been several stressors put on us, such as being isolated from friends and family, the fear of contracting COVID-19, Black Lives Matter protests, the 2020 Presidential Election, climate change and much more. For many of us, this was a crisis we had never experienced before now. All these factors help explain why mental health has taken a steady decrease for the past year.

Having awareness of your mental health is a good first step in identifying the problem. Jamie Derrick, an associate professor at the University of Idaho, a licensed psychologist and the founder of the University of Idaho Mindfulness Education Program describes mental health during the last year and a half as, "a time of acute fear and anxiety, while also being isolated to some extent." There was a combination of things going on in the world that only added to the stress and anxiety people were already feeling.



JAMIE C. DERRICK, ASSOCIATE CLINICAL PROFESSOR AT THE UNIVERSITY OF IDAHO.

Derrick also mentioned it wasn't just the pandemic that added to the stress. On top of isolating in our homes, there were huge amounts of divisiveness about the pandemic, including drastic racial unrest and severe climate issues.

The difficult part for many is what does it mean to be aware of our mental health? Derrick suggests practicing mindfulness, being present in the moment and understanding your emotions better.



AUTUMN LEAVES AT THE UNIVERSITY OF IDAHO.

"A standard coping strategy for many of us that we've been taught or grew up with is to mask our feelings or deny our feelings which can be okay if it's a short-term strategy, but as a long-term strategy, like though a pandemic, it actually is more stressful for us," Derrick said.

The view of mental health has changed over the past decade and how people are receiving accommodations to help them through their struggles. Derrick said she believes people are much more understanding and accepting of the wide range of mental health experiences.

"IN THE LAST DECADE, PEOPLE HAVE VIEWED MENTAL HEALTH PROBLEMS AS A WEAKNESS..."

WALK TO CLASS WITH A VIEW OF THE ADMINISTRATION BUILDING AT U OF I.



"In the last decade, people have viewed mental health problems as a weakness, and people have been inclined to hide and they won't seek help... and then they're left without true support or the possibility of healing if they aren't seeking any support, which can exacerbate and affect other people around them," Derrick said.

Gregory Lambeth, a licensed psychologist and the director at the Counseling and Testing Center on campus, said that the stigma around mental health has fundamentally shifted repeatedly.



GREGORY LAMBETH, DIRECTOR OF THE COUNSELING AND TESTING CENTER, POSES OUTSIDE OF MARY FORNEY HALL.

“One of the most recent ways it’s happened is with Simone Biles and the Olympics and her willingness, among most young adults, to talk about mental health and its role in their lives, to acknowledge things like trauma,” Lambeth said. “To advocate for access to mental health resources, it’s really led by students,” Lambeth said. “Students are a very powerful voice on this campus for mental health services.”

“STUDENTS ARE A VERY POWERFUL VOICE ON THIS CAMPUS FOR MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES.”

There are several viewpoints when it comes to mental health and having resources around to help. Location is a major factor in how mental health is perceived. In more rural areas, like northern Idaho, there are not many resources available for people who struggle with mental health issues which has played into the influx of mental health crises during this time of distress.



Being aware of your mental health is an important tool for everyone to have. Lambeth words it as “being self-reflective.”

“The reality is most of us are going to go through really difficult things in our lives at times,” Lambeth said. “To be self-reflective is to be thinking about what, in that deeper sense of how these issues are all integrated for you.”

Looking forward to what the future of mental health and mental health accommodations hold. Amy Taylor, the director of UI’s Center for Disability Access and Resources, spoke for herself and for CDAR about their goals for the future.

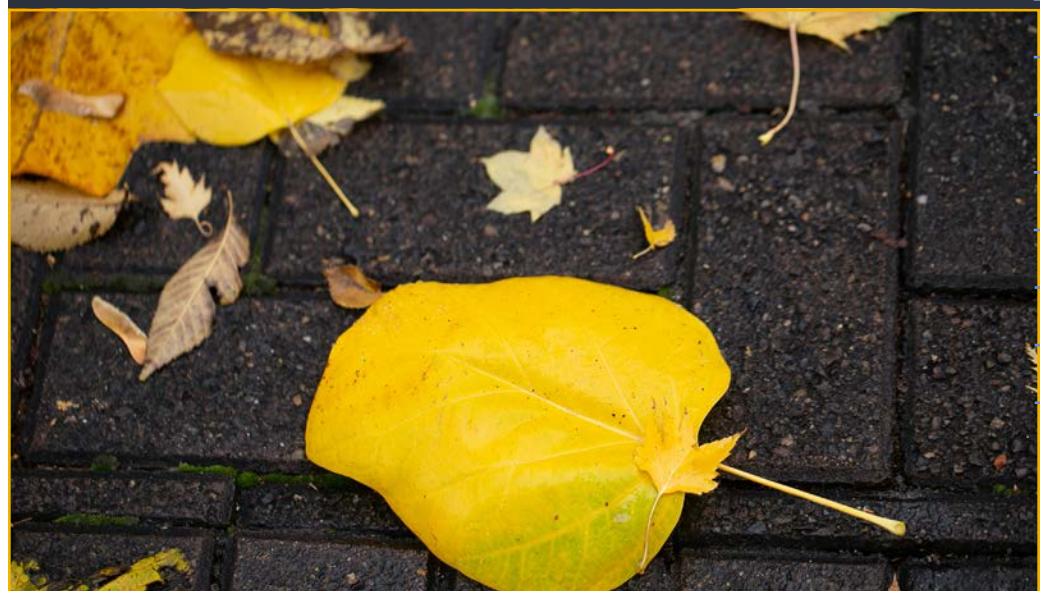
“CDAR would love to see less reliance on accommodations for students to access their education and more built-in structures for flexibility through universal design for learning,” Taylor said.

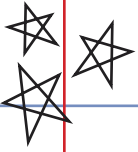
Derrick said that she tries to be more understanding with students when it comes to deadlines or being willing to help students out in this time of need in her classroom and she urges other teachers and professors to be doing the same.

“My classroom policies are far more lenient right now than they have been in the past to accommodate all the stuff that’s coming up and it’s really clear to me that there’s a lot of struggling going on,” Derrick said.

There are several resources for students on campus to use at their disposal, whenever necessary. CDAR is a great resource for students to use, and the Counseling and Testing Center on campus is free for students to get help, offering several group therapies for people who need them.

AUTUMN LEAVES FALL TO THE GROUND ON CAMPUS PATHS.





Dear Future Self,

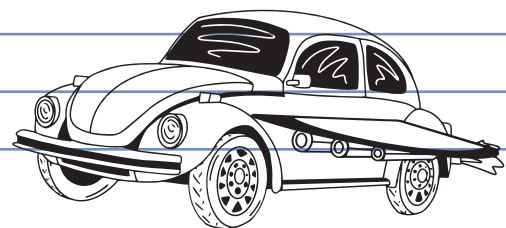
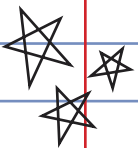
Tell me, how will things be in the future? Will there be flying cars? If there are, I bet they'll be invented soon by Elon Musk. Anyway, I'm writing this as a senior year project. Mrs. Donaldson says we need to write a letter to our future self that will be mailed to us after we graduate college. "It'll be good to see how far you come" blah blah blah. I don't even know if I want to go to college. And what if my address changes because my parents have moved? What if I do go to college and I don't graduate on time? All I'm saying is that this is a very flawed plan on her part. I'm humoring her for an easy grade and writing this like it'll find me many years from now like it prevented me from reaching my grasp because of some sort of unfortunate accident.

When I see the future in my head, I see something out of the Jetsons with flying cars and cities in the sky. Personally, I think the most unrealistic thing about the Jetsons is the names. You expect me to believe there will be people named Judy or George? No, my great-grandchildren will have names like Vexx or Andromeda, something stupid and pretentious except it won't be either of those things because it's the future and the rich have colonized Mars.



I realize that I'm talking like I think all these things will happen in four to five years which I know they won't. I haven't actually thought about the future in a realistic, "I need to plan for it" sort of way. I don't know what I want, but I need to leave this stupid town. There's nothing for me here, but maybe there's nothing for me anywhere else either. I'm not one of those innovators working on colonizing Mars, I'm a girl who tries to get out of taking any sort of science and math class, and works the register at her dad's tool shop on weekends. If we're mining for natural gas on Uranus it won't be because of anything I did.

This wasn't a problem before, the guidance counselor just kept telling me I had time, but now it's the beginning of my senior year and I'm expected to seriously think about where I'll be in five years. When I think about it, I don't know where I'll be, but I can't imagine it'll be anywhere good. I guess I have to start somewhere, by thinking about what future me wants. You would want me to go to college, right? Get something started?



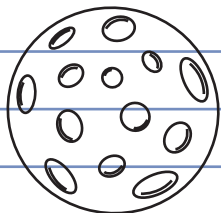
That's reasonable, but also expensive. Remember, Dad owns a hardware store in a small town. I feel like the default is always college, but it's a lot of money for so much uncertainty.

Remembering Mrs. Donaldson has to read this just gave me chills. I might delete all of this and write some bullshit letter about hope, love and happiness. If anything, I hope I can achieve something like love or happiness. There has to be some place I can start with that, right? You obviously have all the answers but since I'm not actually a time traveler, I have no idea what you would say. I hope you're happy, and you're more sure of yourself. You can find some sort of happiness doing whatever it is you discover you're passionate about. Give your best, will you?

Love,

Your Past Self

P.S. I just Googled it and apparently Uranus is made of gas so you can't mine it? That's a joke all in of itself. You probably already knew that but just thought I'd pass along the info.



Ravishing Cold, you

Poem By | *Emily Pearce*
Design By | *Gia Mazzarella*

The cold is humbling,
Its brisk wind,
Kisses noses and cheeks red.
Dressed in warm, comforting clothes,
Hugging frail skin, cracked in dry air.

The cold is kind,
It kills quietly,
Hushing life to sleep, to dream sweet dreams,
As it lullabies goodnight.

The cold is beautiful,
Swirled white flakes gather,
Falling from the clouds.
Coating the world in silky blankets,
Seemingly soft and pure.

The cold is patient,
For all its charms and beauty,
Come long nights.
Illuminated by ice shimmering,
Chilling the earth, chilling the world,
Chilling you.

The cold is honest,
Honest,
Honest.

Dreadful,
Dreadful.

Ravishing cold,
You.



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