Out-of-Stock

Opinion: Why is the Nintendo Switch So Hard To Get?

JOEL MAJANO
Cannon Writer

The Nintendo Switch has been hard to find in stock anywhere for months, and scalpers are one of the primary causes.

As the global pandemic began to unfold and lockdowns began coming into place, Nintendo Switch stock online and in stores was the last thing on most people’s mind. However, the console was already beginning to be hard to come by as more and more people began looking for ways to spend time at home. Things were made worse when on May 12th, Bloomberg reported that Nintendo “is struggling to procure some essential components for its popular Switch console due to government-imposed lockdowns in Malaysia and the Philippines...” The already scarce stock was about to become even harder to come by, and scalpers began taking note of the situation.

When I began looking for a Switch I did not realize the extent to which scalpers had taken over the Switch console market, and I was up for a rude awakening to the severity of the issue. I went on the local classifieds website Kijiji and searched for the console, and to my surprise, they were selling for at least a $30 CAD markup and oftentimes even worse. Pages and pages of brand new unopened consoles, some of them selling for $500, and special editions being sold for a ludicrous $800. To put these prices into context, the price, with Ontario’s 13% tax is around $450, so this markup was around 10-20% and sometimes up to 75%. It is truly unfortunate the lengths to which people try to get money, and maybe I can even call it ripping off others for their own personal gain. To think that something that is supposed to unite families off of the kitchen table will likely be a constant frustration for the rest of the year. And if you do have the space and money, consider buying a monitor to plug your laptop into to be able to multitask much more efficiently; which is especially helpful during exams.

Online University 101

JEREMY SHARAPOV
Cannon Editor

1. Buy a tablet with a stylus! As someone who has traditionally used pen and paper for taking notes in my first few years here and has just bought an iPad for this past summer semester, let me tell you, the difference is night and day. The amount of hassle you save by being able to download your professors’ slides onto programs like OneNote and simply write extra notes on top of them instead of rushing to get everything down again is invaluable. Having a tablet and stylus can also help you avoid having to print out exams just to have to scan them back into pdf form when you are done. Additionally, when we come back to campus eventually, your back will thank you for not lugging around heavy notebooks and binders! I will stress that any tablet with a stylus is enough, even just the base iPad or Surface Go.

2. Upgrade your setup! Some of you might not have a desk to dedicate to your studies, but this is essential for focusing on your online courses and being able to concentrate on doing work. Do ask your parents or roommates if you can rearrange some furniture to make some space for yourself; working at least a $30 CAD markup and oftentimes even worse. Pages and pages of brand new unopened consoles, some of them selling for $500, and special editions being sold for a ludicrous $800. To put these prices into context, the price, with Ontario’s 13% tax is around $450, so this markup was around 10-20% and sometimes up to 75%. It is truly unfortunate the lengths to which people try to get money, and maybe I can even call it ripping off others for their own personal gain. To think that something that is supposed to unite families off of the kitchen table will likely be a constant frustration for the rest of the year. And if you do have the space and money, consider buying a monitor to plug your laptop into to be able to multitask much more efficiently; which is especially helpful during exams.

3. Consider a better microphone! Too often in my online courses have I had a student try to ask the professor a question, only for them to be inaudible because of their low microphone quality. Any sort of microphone is probably better than the built-in one on your laptop, even one on a cheap headset, and considering the number of virtual conversations you will be having, I’m sure this will prove its worth. However,
Welcome to a new Skule™-year!

This year is starting off very differently than we are used to - but I wish you all the best of luck! Despite being online, I hope you all are able to experience the wonders of the UofT Engineering community.

To the incoming 2T4s, I hope you enjoy your first year in Skule™. In first year, I was able to learn about myself, my interests, and grow as a person. I met so many upper-years, professors, and joined clubs with people that shared common interests. There is something here for you. There may be challenges, but know that your health, both mentally and physically, comes first. You belong here.

In the meantime, I hope you are all staying safe, social distancing, and wearing a mask. This quarantine has, in some way, been an excuse to stay inside, work on my Animal Crossing island and binge-watching TV. This time has also brought about many important conversations and protests that I hope you have all had a chance to be informed about.

This marks the first edition of The Cannon of the year! I’m really proud of my team for being able to come together during a time and work on highlighting tips for online university, content on Frosh Week, thoughts on current events, and much more! It really shows what our newspaper is about - bringing together different thoughts, experiences, and topics. Don’t forget to check out our new website at www.cannon.skule.ca or send me an email at cannon@g.skule.ca with some memes, news, or your Animal Crossing islands. Enjoy this edition!

Writefully yours,
Alyson Allen
How I Utilized my Remote Summer

KIRTANA DEVARAJ
Cannon Writer

The COVID-19 pandemic has affected all facets of normal life ranging from mundane tasks such as grocery shopping to jobs and internships. Akin to everyone, I have found my summer impacted, especially my summer internship. This summer, I am doing a summer research placement under a professor in Chemical Engineering. When I got the opportunity, I was incredibly excited as doing summer research after my first year was a dream of mine even before I started university. Fortunately, despite the pandemic, my placement did not get cancelled and became a remote placement instead.

I was completely aghast when my placement became remote! It was predominantly supposed to be a wet lab position, something that cannot be carried out remotely. After I had a few days to mull over this, I started viewing this as a learning opportunity. Maybe I would learn essential skills! I approached the first day of my placement with some apprehension, however, I soon started learning skills that I probably wouldn’t have acquired had the placement been in-person. From writing literature reviews to developing image analysis algorithms, I am learning it all. In a situation like this, I believe the key is to approach it with an open mindset. I am approaching this summer as a learning opportunity. Apart from my research placement, I have been doing online courses, participating in COVID-19 hackathons and design competitions, doing work for the UofT clubs I am an executive in, all of which are helping me enhance my skill set.

A hackathon I recently participated in was held by the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and participants were given 48 hours to devise solutions to curb the impact of COVID-19 in Latin America. Initially, I was very skeptical about whether I was qualified to be a part of the event. As a student with coding skills limited to MATLAB and Python and limited knowledge of Latin America, I felt intimidated. As I looked at the Slack channel with all the exceptional participants, I knew I was in for a wild ride. However, despite all limitations, and the mentally draining 48 hours, it was one of the most profound learning experiences. It brought me out of my comfort zone, taught me how to work with people I hadn’t met before and most importantly, I learnt how to use my engineering skills in the real world.

The design competitions gave me a chance to utilize my skills to eliminate COVID-19 in Toronto, a city that has become my second home over the past year. Being an executive of various clubs has helped me meet new people and work for the causes I am passionate about, such as youth development. However, the most unusual thing I did this summer is pursuing a course in finance. One might ask, finance? A student with a financial mindset. I am approaching it with an open mind. In a situation like this, you might think, how does one get involved in university life and enhance their skills, especially when everything is remote? Don’t worry, I was in your shoes just last September. Well, except for the remote part. I started my first year at UofT Engineering as an over-excited frosh with just dreams and a desire to succeed. I have completed my first year having achieved far more than I had hoped for. Think about university life this way: it is a blank canvas waiting to be painted on with your dreams and experiences. Don’t be hesitant to explore the plethora of opportunities that UofT has to offer and you will have an amazing time!
Mental Health in the Times of COVID

VAMA DAVE
Cannon Writer

We are now a few months into dealing with life amidst a global pandemic. This period has been difficult for everyone across the globe. Every single day you wake up, you open your social media for the latest wave of news and you are hit with one more awful thing that has happened. One more death, one more atrocity, one more tragedy. So many lives hanging on the brink of uncertainty. The news cycle changes so swiftly that we have lost track of everything going on around us. 2020, seemingly the most unfortunate year that we have witnessed, brought with it a never-ending line of terrifying events. Moreover, it caused so many of us to be distanced from the people we love, who would otherwise be the only ray of hope in such tough times. It is absolutely impossible as human beings, for us to not undergo a myriad of emotions under such daunting circumstances.

Being in quarantine for the past few months has put a lot of things into perspective, whether it’s the social inequalities within our communities or our relationships with our loved ones. We were given an opportunity to spend some quality time with ourselves and with our thoughts. While some people were able to use this time productively, most of us struggled to make it through the day. On the global front, our army of practitioners was fighting day and night to treat patients infected with the contagious Coronavirus due to which so many lives were constantly being lost.

On the other hand, there were people battling mental health illnesses ranging from anxiety and depression to the PTSD caused due to this extremely stressful environment, inside the four walls of their homes. With the onset of the new academic year of 2020-2021, University of Toronto is delighted to welcome the new First Year students, and welcome back its returning students. This year has been testing, and we expect it to be no less challenging to deal with in the upcoming months. Due to the outbreak of COVID-19, there has been a shift in truly amazing you are and how our first area of concern is to make sure that you remain healthy: physically, and especially mentally. Every single student at this University is unique and special and deserves to be here. The University of Toronto Engineering ranks 9th in the world and competing with top students from places all across the globe is not an easy task. The fact that you made it into this University is a cause for celebration itself. There will be times when things may get dark, but it is in those times that you need to make sure that you prioritize your mental health above everything else. Everyone has a complex life, and there are many different reasons that may cause a person to struggle with their mental health. One of the main stressors for students is academics, but University of Toronto Student Life provides students with a number of helpful and easily accessible resources like workshops, learning strategists, and advisors to support students academically.

Academics aside, there are so many other factors of your life that can take a toll on your mental health. And the moment you become mentally unwell, it has a huge impact on every single aspect of your life. That is why the University of Toronto strives to provide help in areas concerning the mental health of its students. For this, the University provides a number of resources including help lines like My SSP (for immediate counselling support available in 35 languages), Good 2 Talk (for professional counselling, information and referrals for mental health, addictions and well-being), Gerstein Crisis Centre (a 24-hour community based mental health crisis centre), etc. There are a number of therapy and support groups, namely Big White Wall, Umbrella Mental Health Network (UMHN) and Black, Indigenous, and People of Colour Peer Support Group amongst others, which strive to help and support people undergoing mental health illnesses. In addition to this, the University provides counselling facilities along with some projects and social media pages set up in order to propagate knowledge and a feeling of compassion for all those experiencing the different sides of mental health.

The Cannon recommends you to seek help the moment you or someone you care about feels even the slightest bit of mental, emotional or spiritual turmoil. Whom you seek help from: a family member, a friend or a confidant, is completely up to you. In case you feel like you have no one you can confide in, you can always seek help from mental health professionals. The earlier you get help, the easier it will be to deal with the mental health illness.

Just as important as it is to take care of your own mental health, it is equally essential that you pay attention to the people around you. It is not always easy to pick out a person with an unhealthy state of mind but sometimes based on small observable changes in a person’s routine, like loss of appetite, the appearance of fatigue, restlessness, loss of interest in activities, etc. you can tell that they might be going through a hard time. Just recognizing that someone around you is experiencing mental turmoil is not enough. We request you to educate yourselves about mental health illnesses, some common reasons why they happen, and the standard methods by which you can help people experiencing them. You are not expected to have any advice for mental health patients, and neither are you expected to have solutions for their problems. All you have got to do is to try and be a good listener and to be a good friend. A few kind words, filled with genuine positivity or even just a simple smile, can go a long way in brightening someone’s day. Be kind, to yourself, and to others, and remember that you are beautiful inside out, you are loved, you matter and there will always hope, for you and for this world!
A Guide for TrackOne

PRERNA ANAND
Cannon Editor

Welcome, TrackOnes! I hope you are excited to start your new life at Skule™. As you all are starting university during a volatile time, I thought of giving you a little bit of advice on how to make the most of this year, which could help you make the right decision about which discipline to choose next year.

Being a TrackOne (T1), you need to remember that you have the chance to try anything you like. T1 provides you with the ability to get to know about all the fields and try out courses related to all disciplines. During your next two semesters, you will be doing at least one course of each discipline and your schedule will be very similar to ECE. It is very important to remember that just because your course looks very similar to ECE does not mean you need to focus more on ECE. The schedule is similar to ECE to make it flexible for you to move between disciplines, but not to direct you towards it.

Your courses such as CIV100, MIE100 and APS110 give you a very brief idea of some of the other disciplines, but you need to take a little bit of extra effort to make sure that you understand each discipline by first not assuming that the entire discipline will be similar to the one course you did. You will face this dilemma while doing CIV100 and MIE100. These courses are a small section of CIV and MECH but many students struggle with them and start assuming that these disciplines are heavily dependent on these courses.

T1 offers a seminar course to help students get an understanding of other disciplines. These seminars are a good way to get an idea of what to expect and a great opportunity to interact with people who are more experienced and work in these respective fields.

Another way to get hands-on experience would be by joining a design club where you could take on the position which you don’t have a lot of ideas about and give it a shot. This will give you a good idea about how knowledge from a particular discipline is used in the industry and also meet new people from various disciplines. Some of the clubs such as UTAT, UTRA and RSX are good clubs to get an idea of Mech, ECE and EngSci.

The best way to get a better idea of other disciplines is by interacting with upper-year students from different disciplines. You can always find them hanging around the EngSoc office or the Pit. If you feel shy to go up to them, you could send them a message and they will definitely get back to you. If possible you could go to different common rooms to talk to more people as well as look at the social culture of the students in that discipline. You could ask them about what they like about their discipline, what they wish to do with the attained degree and even what the drawbacks are of choosing it.

Making a decision that creates a path for the future is always a difficult decision. Self-introspection of what your interests are is a good way of determining what you like. Remember that every field is very dynamic and with the flexibility in choosing courses at UofT, you can always learn things related to different disciplines and nothing is constant. You may never know what you like unless you try. Even if you don’t like something, you will get the chance to choose something that you will.

Start university with an open mind and you will discover everything you’re looking for. Take this as an opportunity to learn new things, meet new people and have a great time at Skule™.

Online F!rosh Week: Inside the Exec Mind

ALYSON ALLEN
Cannon Editor-in-Chief

F!rosh Week is one of the first times that the incoming engineering class gets introduced to the Skule™ community. It’s welcoming, fun, and a great way to meet classmates and upper-years.

Typically, this week-long event is paired up with the summer sun, exploring campus and Toronto, wacky events on campus, and filling up the air with cheers with large groups. But, with COVID-19, this approach had to change.

However, this didn’t mean that the spirit of F!rosh Week was going to be missed or that students were going to miss out. This year’s Orientation Team, led by Orientation Chair Gabe Sher (ECE2T+PEY), decided to take F!Week online. When planning an event for over 1000 students, lots of collaboration, planning, and students come together to make the events the best that they can be. It’s a lot of hard work and the 2T4s best interests are at heart.

As someone who has helped out with Orientation Week before, I decided I wanted to learn more about what’s happening with this year’s plans and reached out to the Executive team! Let’s get to learn about the team and some of their experiences so far!

Introduce yourself and your role in F!Week 2T0

Aidan: Hiya! I’m Aidan, an EngSci 2T2 Aero, and this year’s VC Logistics - this means I lead a team of 16 people in planning many of the events you’ll get to experience during the week. I also work with the rest of the executive team to set the vision for the week, and get everyone excited about welcoming our newest peers - the 2T4s!

Dana: Hi! My name is Dana (ECE2T0+PEY) and I am this year’s Vice-Chair Marketing for F!rosh Week! I oversee all the marketing initiatives for F!rosh Week including social media, graphics, videography, photography, outreach and the web team. My job is to make sure that the word about F!rosh Week gets out to YOU and that you register for a super HYPE first week of university (that being said, head on over to www.orientation.skule.ca to sign up!)

Gabe: I’m Gabe, I’ve just finished my third year in ECE and I’m working at an Electronics company downtown for PEY. I’m the Orientation Chair (OC), so I lead this lovely bunch of people and help support the entire organization that makes F!rosh Week happen.

Hanna: Hiya! I’m Hanna, VC Operations for F!week this year and I oversee a team of 14 amazing Subcom Chairs responsible for different events/groups of F!week and work closely with the other execs to make it all happen. I’m finishing up my PEY at Inkbox

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(making semi-permanent tattoos) and am coming back for 4th year EngSci Robo.

Lisa: Hi y’all, I’m Lisa (ECE 2T1 + PEY) and I’m Vice-Chair Leadership for Frosh Week 2T0, yay! I work with leedurs over the summer to provide them with the training and support to take you through our events and make sure you have the best time.

Puru: Hello, I’m Purushoth (Chem 2T2) and I am this year’s Vice-Chair Finance for Frosh Week. I look after the Frosh Week budget and manage where our money is being spent so that we can have an awesome Frosh Week full of fun activities for Frosh!

What inspired you to get involved this year and/or previous years?

Aidan: F!Week was a really special time for me in my first year. As someone from abroad, I felt unsure about arriving in a new city and new place. F!rosh Week quickly quelled a lot of my concerns about starting university; I found friends and my feet in the Skule™ community. Since then, I’ve been involved with F!rosh Week each year as one of the organizers, and the spirit of the Orientation Committee is so infectious. We’ve all been in first year, and we know how important orientation is!

Dana: I was positively influenced by my F!rosh leedurs when I was a F!rosh, and really enjoyed being a part of the F!rosh Week team as a leedur, subcom and now a VC. I’ve made so many friends through being involved with F!rosh Week and wanted to help organize and plan this amazing event to give back to the community, and ensure that all the first years are welcome in the most positive way possible.

Gabe: I remember making great connections with some of my Leedurs during F!rosh Week, and later on in my first year meeting upper years who really helped me find my comfort at Skule™. After being an HL twice, I ran for OC sort of on a whim because these sorts of leadership and people-oriented roles are super comfortable and interesting to me. I haven’t regretted it once!

Hanna: The caring and passionate atmosphere is for sure what draws me back to F!Week each year. Coming into uni, I was super stressed about a lot of things like academics, making friends, and having the freedom to just be my weird self. I felt like U of T Eng was a good place to be, so getting involved was my way of passing that amazing feeling to future generations of Frosh. Cycling through my roles of Skule™ Patroller to Subcom to Photographer to HL to now VCOps, I’ve realized that F!week is the kind of thing that brings amazing people together from all corners of Skule™

Lisa: F!Week was such an incredible experience the first time around. I had so much fun and met so many people that later on went to become some of my bestest friends and people I looked up to. However, I recognize that not everyone’s experience is as great as mine! I’ve been involved in F!rosh Week since my second year because I want to be part of the changes to make our events more inclusive and deliver this magical experience to all incoming students.

Puru: F!Week was a valuable time for me where I met a lot of people and I started to get out of my comfort zone. I really enjoyed making the connections I made through F!rosh Week and I want to help future students have the same great experience or even greater in whatever way I can.

Describe the differences in planning for an online orientation vs an in-person one.

Dana: I find myself on my laptop a lot, constantly checking messages and video-chatting with all the members of the marketing team. My subcommittees had to pivot a lot of the work they are doing to reflect the online shift this year. For example, the photography subcommittee has been learning to operate Zoom-photoshoots and using Photoshop to make exciting promotional material.

Gabe: It’s been really weird getting to know the team online - even the Exec team only met in person 3-4 times before school went online, and we brought on all our HLs and SubComs through a remote interview process. In many ways, we’ve had to rework F!rosh Week from the ground up.

Meet the 2T4s!
The Cannon sent out a survey to the incoming class; here’s a summary of the 75 responses!

what is your discipline?

what is a secret talent of yours?

Is Pluto a planet?

which do you put first?

Cats or dogs?

Credit: Dina Castelletto & Alyson Allen

Favourite Sci-Fi movie?

1. interstellar
2. the Martian
3. avatar
4. divergent
5. inception
6. Wall-E
7. Starwars

Cats or dogs?

either both
cats
dogs

Credit: Dina Castelletto & Alyson Allen

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challenge and demands of doing all this thinking have really brought us together, even as we all work separately from home. Usually, you come on campus, you’ve left your house (for the day or for the year), and you’re in a standard University environment - this year, you do Frosh Week at your house!

Hanna: [There are many differences including] things like screen fatigue, wondering what “engaging” programming looks like online, keeping the Frosh online space safe/comfortable/accessible, accommodating for different time zones, what “leading” looks like in a digital space, planning for the technical/logistical worries that come up when you have 1000+ people in video calls at the same time, and much more. On the upside there are some things that are no longer issues like room bookings and bad weather. It’s more vital than ever to keep everyone on the team up-to-date on the ever-evolving plan and working as a team to put it all together.

What is an unforeseen challenge you have faced so far with planning and how are you working through it?

Dana: One unforeseen challenge I’ve faced was finding ways to bond with all the members of the marketing team! We have been trying to get to know one another better by having ice breaker questions at the beginning of our video calls, and having online board game socials.

Lisa: Figuring out meaningful ways to present content and engage our Ledeurs in important discussions that will help them throughout Frosh Week. Luckily, Head Ledeurs have been running activities and bringing real life experience that helps me shape the training content.

Puru: We realised that since orientation will be online, Frosh Kits will be the sole tangible item they can have from that week. With all our Frosh living around the world and taking part in Frosh Week we took the mission to ship our Frosh Kits to every Frosh’s home around the world. It may be hard but we are determined!

What are some ways you and your teams will be spreading Skule™ spirit through the online platform?

Aidan: Did someone say PURPLE? That’s right - our fabulous D!ye Subcom has not taken a break, and instead went straight into figuring out how to spread our purple spirit across the globe. This year, everyone will get a special purple item in their Frosh Kit, and D!ye will lead an activity during Campus Tours, as is traditionally done. Now, I won’t spoil the surprise - but know that, in the words of the D!ye Subcom, the vibes will be scrumptious.

Dana: Check out our social media (Instagram: @froshweek Facebook: @froshweekouoft) to see all the exciting Frosh Week content getting posted regularly! Our awesome website (orientation.skule.ca) and YouTube channel (froshtube) have tons of Skule™ spirit, and I highly recommend you check them out.

Hanna: We are spreading the spirit by embodying the human aspect of Skule™, building in lots of chances for genuine connection through things like speed friending, study buddies/upper year commuter buddies programs, smaller chat rooms during activities, and more. Also, having chances to engage with Skule™ tradition and the club’s space in a authentic way through things like fireside chats about Skule™ traditions in Nightlife (now the Twilight Zone), Zoom room surprises by some special guests during Campus Tours and Downtownwalkaround (now the "Downtown Spacewalk"), real talks with fellow students from clubs at the Exhibition (new subcom!), and much more.

Lastly, what’s your favourite shade of purple?

Aidan: It’s a tossup between #6F1E88, #4C2679, and #DCC7E3.

Dana: Definitely #4C2679

Gabe: #6F1E88 is one of our official ones that I love because it has all of the punch of a strong purple, but there’s something about the slightly more subtle

Lisa: #6E2B88 (not an official Frosh Week colour!) that does it for me.

Hanna: #6800FF it’s just chaotic and I love that about it.

Puru: #4C2679 is eye-catching.
Online continued from page 1 for an even better audio experience...

4. Check out RTX Voice! RTX Voice is an application from Nvidia that uses some of your GPU power to help filter out your voice from background noises using AI. Despite the name, you can set it up to work on any Nvidia graphics card, and it has support for many of the common virtual meeting platforms that you will be using throughout the year. If you’re someone who shares a room with noisy siblings or sits right by the AC, this can really help improve your audio quality! For times when you need to record audio as opposed to speaking live, applications like Audacity are quite helpful as well.

5. Private messages aren’t really that private! One of the most common platforms used by professors for online lectures and tutorials is BlackBoard Collaborate. The chat is set to everyone by default; however, you might notice that there is an option to privately message a specific person in the room. Don’t be fooled by this, however! The professor and any other moderators in the room can see all of your private messages and even reply to them if they feel like it! If you want to trash talk a professor to your friend, stick to your BB Collaborate, which is quite awkward, but obviously can’t do it online, so they very well might not be able to see the chat. Additionally, I found that being active in the chat and participating often in tutorials gave me that fill of human interaction that I had been lacking, and these are both great ways to keep up, and come with the added benefit of interactivity that would not exist if you just watch recordings. However, if you do miss a lecture or two and want to catch up on the recording, or live in a time zone that does not allow you to participate in synchronous lectures...

8. Download an extension to help speed up videos! While websites like YouTube offer you the option to speed up your video by default, some platforms like BB Collaborate, which is used a lot in lectures, do not. However, you can circumvent this by downloading an extension that can speed up any videos on the internet. I am personally using one called Video speed controller - change video speed from the Chrome Web Store. Speeding up lecture recordings to 1.5x or even 2x speed can save you so much valuable time if you are able to concentrate and understand the speech at the higher speeds, especially if you are re-watching or cramming right before an exam.

9. Ask questions during the lectures! You may be intimidated to use the chat in lectures, but remember that if you are confused by something your classmates usually are as well! Many professors used to judge how the class is doing by looking at students’ faces to see if they are following, but obviously can’t do it online, so they very well might be doing too fast and confusing everyone! Additionally, I found that being active in the chat and participating often in tutorials gave me that fill of human interaction that I had been lacking, and these are both great ways to get to know classmates better!

10. Take advantage of office hours! Office Hours are times where you can join a session and ask the prof any clarifying questions, including going through long, confusing textbook problems and parts of past exams. In person, these do not tend to be the most accessible as going to a prof’s office is quite awkward, but online it will likely be a BB Collaborate session just like regular lectures so don’t feel intimidated! These will help you get the edge in the course, and get to know the prof a bit better as well, which is always helpful for approachability. Most pros are always open to feedback, but may not have the time to sit and talk to you after lectures, so office hours are a great time to discuss any potential issues in the course, such as any accommodations needed for those in other time zones for example. And if you can’t make it to office hours or just have a dying question, be sure to use the class’s Piazza discussion board if there is one available.

11. Take full advantage of your open-book exams! The biggest mistake I’ve seen students make with the transition to online learning is taking their exams in a similar manner to in-person ones. In actuality, these sorts of exams are designed quite differently from the old ones on courses.skule.ca. These exams can be grouped into three general categories: the markdown, the quizizzam, and the marathon. The markdown is essentially a souped-up version of your average exam, being extremely difficult. I honestly don’t have a good method of tackling these other than extensive studying and practice. Quizzams are much simpler, consisting of mainly fill-in-the-blank and multiple-choice questions that, while numerous, are not that difficult to solve. For these, have your textbook and notes open and ready to ctrl-f. Marathons are exams where you are given a large amount of time to complete them, and although pros say they should only take 3-4 hours, often take 2-3 times as long. For these, sleep in and wake up right at the start time, and use as much time as possible perfecting your solutions, while referencing lecture recordings and textbook problems because you do really have the time.

12. Remember to check skule.ca (and cannon.skule.ca) for updates and information! With the lack of in-person advertising and posters, skule.ca is more important than ever for information about how to join clubs, elections, and other important updates. Courses.skule.ca has past exams for all of your courses, so definitely remember to utilize that. There are also links to all sorts of Skule™ club websites on there, including our very own cannon.skule.ca!
A F!rosh’s Guide: From One Introvert to Another

NATALIA ESPINOSA-MERLANO
Cannon Writer

The exclamation mark in Frosh should tell you enough - it is, by its very existence, a “hype” event. Which is all well and good… except of course, “hype”ness isn’t for all. It certainly wasn’t for me. Now, Frosh isn’t perpetually hype: there is more to it than yelling, or chanting “this guy rocks!!” every time someone does something mildly impressive, or memorizing more chants or memorizing more chants or chanting “this guy rocks!!”, because impressive things into rigid categories is dangerous. I’ve been told that any respectable article on introversion will tell you that being an introvert does not mean you’re a shy recluse or not being a Hype Beast™. Yet, here I am, as introverted as possible, during F!rosh, and shyness isn’t the same as introversion. Introversion isn’t the same as being shy. You can be extremely introverted, lead teams and participate in environments you’re comfortable in, but you need time alone to recharge your batteries before jumping in the riveting conversation of what program are you in?... Don’t equate two seemingly similar things, and certainly do not assume.

Step 2: Understand introversion isn’t the same as shyness. Any respectable article on introversion will tell you that being an introvert does not mean you’re a shy recluse or an emotional wreck who can’t participate. Once again, boxing things into rigid categories is dangerous. I’ve been told that as an introverted person, I probably feel emotional effects more and am less comfortable leading. This is false. I love taking the lead. I’m comfortable doing it - this does not negate the fact that I have boundaries and require time away from screaming adolescents.

The point is that everyone is new during Frosh, and shyness is a natural reaction to meeting new people, as is nervousness. Those feelings can subside, but introversion isn’t a simple emotion. You can be extremely introverted, lead teams and participate in environments you’re comfortable in, but need time alone to recharge your batteries before jumping in the riveting conversation of what program are you in? Don’t equate two seemingly similar things, and certainly do not assume.

Step 3: Tips and Tricks
Finally, the actual “Guide” part. As someone who is quite reserved and observant when first meeting others, Frosh was rough for me. During the first half, I’d scoff at my teammates throwing their arms in the air and screeching their vocal cords raw. I would squint in mild distress at too many stiff bodies dancing awkwardly to KC & the Sunshine Band, in a dance that looked suspiciously similar to the macarena. Until, like a magnificent butterfly emerging from its cocoon, I too was nodding my head to the “nananananana” of the song. I would chant “this guy rocks!!”, because impressive or not, they tried. Earlier, I said I survived this week. But wouldn’t you rather thrive? Here, I think, is how:

1. No one cares about the way you act, so if it’s judgment you fear, you can take comfort in knowing not a single person will care. Or honestly, remember. Except, of course, if you behave unlawfully, in which case please do not. No maiming.

2. Frosh is for you, so make it YOUR week. Stop focusing on how utterly immature or ridiculous things can be. Those two adjectives can become pretty fun, once you focus on the good stuff: the cool merch, the people working hard to make you happy, the freakishly cool covvies you can get after a year, the cool people connecting you, and the exciting people you meet, and the excitement at starting what is arguably one of the hardest programs to get into. Flex that “#1 Engineering School in Canada”.

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THE CANNON
Skule™’s Newspaper since 1978

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Reimagining Skule™ as Hogwarts

MINHA KHAN
Cannon Writer

“Yer a wizard, Harry.” The acclaimed line rings familiar to millions of children as the moment when the saga of Harry Potter began. The magic of Harry Potter has bewitched all our childhood imaginations in some way or another, but the time is now to truly experience it ourselves, at Skule! For the Class of 2T4, our frosh, rejoice for your Hogwarts letter has finally arrived.

Skule™ is the namesake for the Engineering Department at UofT, and a tightly-woven, incredibly supportive, and spirited community of 5000+ students. The struggles and pride of striving for a better future in an academically grueling undergrad like UofT Engineering weave us students as one, a phenomenon that's nothing short of magical. At Skule™, you’ll learn there’s a place for your unique interests and spirit.

It’s time you embark on your quest at our enchanted Skule™, with the Spirit Heads Of Skule™ ready to greet you: Mr. Blue & Gold, Godiva’s Crown, and Ultimate Frosh. Our very own Head Boy, Head Girl, and Head First-Year.

Skule™ is focused on forming meaningful human connections, our goodwill for Harry Potter is not all associated to J.K. Rowling, her characters, her brilliance, but the time is now to truly experience it ourselves, at Skule! For the Class of 2T4, our frosh, rejoice for your Hogwarts letter has finally arrived.

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Reimagining continued from page 10

TrackOne: If T1s could cast a spell to make them experts of all 8 disciplines, they would’ve already done it. These knowledge-hungry T1s have to choose just one path, but they shine wherever they go.

Prefect Emily Goridko: “[T1 is] Ravenclaw because everyone I know in T1 is so hardworking and so smart, and it’s such an empowering environment to be in as a T1.”

Materials Science Engineering: Materials wizards and witches have extensive practice in transfiguring material into its superior version. Their knowledge of materials extends to the quantum scale, making them astonishingly scientifically-wise.

Prefect Alyson Allen: “MSE falls quite well with Ravenclaw because we’re a creative and research-focused discipline - we’re always looking to gain more knowledge about materials.”

Gryffindor:
Mechanical: These wizards and witches are fascinated by studying motion and the design of systems. With a flick of their wand, they’ve daringly taken apart some object to study its parts or boldly picked up a Muggle tool to work it themselves.

Prefect Hasma Habiby: “Mechs are definitely Gryffindors, we’re the kings of the engineering jungle. We’re bold, chivalrous but can be reckless sometimes!”

Slytherin
Electrical and Computer Engineering: From electromagnetic fields to computer software, the friendly wizards and witches in ECE dabble in the technology that is revolutionizing engineering today. A clever and ambitious bunch, these students have big dreams for the future.

Prefect Casey Shao: “ECE got that Slytherin ambition in the best way!”

Skule™ students brandish their pride through their own kind of robes, witch hats, and cheers. With an assortment of Skule™ emblems to claim, choosing the right apparatus will prove exciting for you first-years.

Skule™ Emblems

The HardHat: This engineering witch hat is the telltale sign of an engineer. The classic yellow hardhat is for you Frosh, and coloured hardhats are up for grabs based on Skule™ involvement. Students also personalize their hardhats as a form of self-expression, like for the Frosh Hardhat Decoration Contest during Godiva’s week.

Aidan Lachine: “I really like the hardhat, it’s unique and when you wear it around downtown, people kind of look at you like, ‘What the heck?’ It’s kind of just cool to stand out and some people recognize what it is.”

The Leather Jacket: This jacket is the premium form of a robe and is a distinguished symbol of an engineering student. It sports your graduating year and discipline. Students can adorn their jacket with patches to showcase their clubs and Skule™ ties.

Anais Poirier: “For me, my engineering jacket is a really big deal because I remember telling my friends like, ‘I’m not getting a jacket incase I fail out of the school.’ Me getting one [was] like, ‘Okay, I’m set, I’m going to stay in this program.’ and now I have the jacket to prove it. Everytime I wear it I’m like, ‘Yeah! I’m a UofT Engineering student!’ And I feel really proud.”

The Bizarre But Trusty: The unhinged lunch bench in the Pit.

Aser Chowdhury: “I eat my lunch in [the Pit] everyday, and it’s just like a nice chaotic location.”

The Iron Ring: The occasion of choosing your wand from Ollivanders Wand Shop will come when you graduate. Upon graduation, engineering students in Canada earn an Iron Ring, a mark of their hard work and reminder to the wearer of their primary duty to safeguard society. The Iron Ring gives us power to make decisions, of which we must be heedful, based on our ambitions like a wand. The Spirit Heads revealed to us what they will use their wand to achieve.

Aidan Lachine: “Being in Toronto, I found out about the SickKids hospital, that might be a cool place to work because it’s not like a repetitive job. There’s the R&D side, but there’s also the side where it’s on a kid-by-kid basis. There’s a different need [each time], so sometimes when you’re like designing prosthetics, it’s its own little individual process, specific to that one person that you get to basically completely change their quality of life.”

Anais Poirier: “I came into engineering not knowing anything about it, and I’m gaining more interest [in my discipline] as things go along and I have no idea where it’s going to lead me. But I do know that my end goal will always be to use my degree- as I hope and I think that most engineers aim for- to do something good and use it to help change the world and make it a better place.”

Aser Chowdhury: “I haven’t really thought too much about my future, but [becoming] an engineer, it’s to be there to help people out, get in with design, being good at math and sciences. Also, just a good psycheque at the end. I think recently I’ve gotten a lot more interested in energy, so maybe finding new ways to have more efficient or more green [forms of energy].”

With your uniform and equipment at hand, you’re ready to meet your Professors. They will challenge your mind to great lengths, but never forget to seek out their exceptional guidance when you need it.

First-Year Professors
Professor Bazylak/Professor McGonagall-APS111, APS112

“[He]’s amazing, but also very down to business when [he] needs to be.” -Prefect Aidan Grenville

“He is so kind and so helpful and is always there for every student.” -Prefect Emily

Professor Varioawa/Professor Flitwick-APS106

“[He]’s properly funny and acts like a student himself at times. He’s also one of the few profs who actually allows chilling in class, something pretty much every coding student needs at some point.” -Prefect Ruknoon Dinder

Professor Cohen/Headmaster Dumbledore-MAT186, MAT187, MAT188

“[He] has class and charisma that is second to none on campus, almost like Dumbledore.” -Prefect Archit

Reimagining continued on page 12
Outside of your courses, you will face battles that test you. It’s imperative you let yourself grow into your full self through them. One of them will be adjusting to a pandemic, and its dements of isolation and loneliness. You’re equipped with Skule’s spirit armor, and allship of your professors to back your fight, but not without a kind word from your SpiritHeads.

Magical Moments

"During Godiva Week, a student performed a parody of Country Roads Take Me Home about Skule" and it felt magical to be singing along with the community around me." -Prefect Dina Bernstein

"Even though it’s been two years since Frosh, it still remains as the most magical moment [for me]. Purple dye, chanting around downtown, seeing LGMB for the first time, and many other activities... it was an unforgettable experience!" - Prof David Song

"Black Light suds! The Pit is completely transformed to the coolest most "magical" place on campus. There's even a Blue Man Group type show!" - Prof Christopher Kousinioris

"Every day and experience has been amazing but what has been magical is finding a community that's supportive and welcoming. Also every year Civ/Min Dinner Dance is a spectacular experience." - Prefect Karen Chu

"In 2nd year, we take a course where we are introduced to material characterization techniques and one of those techniques is TEM (Tunneling Electron Microscopy) and it's so fascinating to me (and a little magical) that we can see things to the atomic scale. The whole time you're in awe of the technology and just wondering how this is possible." - Prof Andrew Wuebolt

"Although exam season is really stressful, it's a great bonding experience and I've made a lot of new friends while studying for exams." - Alum Marie Florian

"Most magical moment I've been a part of in Skule” was Run-Through-Weekend for Skule Nite. In the course of a weekend the show gets very much developed. The show gets progressed from a bit of a mess to the final product over the course of a weekend from 100 sleep deprived students. And watching the comradery grow amongst the crew, cast and creative teams over this otherwise stressful time was genuinely incredible to be a part of! Magic if I've ever seen it." - Alum Jacob Foster

"I'll never forget leading my ECE war-band through the gauntlet that is the Godiva Week Chariot Race. Those ECEs were ravenous impassioned barbarians, and their warcries will live with me always. We came in second that year, but only because the other team cheated obviously." - Alum Adham Hussenin

"My most magical moment would be dying myself purple as a Frosh Leedur, and having all the Frosh do the same. It was an incredibly fun and unifying moment because everyone got out of their comfort zones and enjoyed the experience together." - Prefect Amanda Pasquallini

"All of the support I and all of the contestants received when we ran for Godiva’s Crown!! This community is so welcoming and they all cheered hard for us, it made it much easier to perform because we knew we had everyone’s support and attention" - Prefect Lisa Zaher

"There have been so many [magical moments]. I first felt the magic when I full body dyed at my Frosh and it's been around ever since. Whether it’s chilling with friends in the common room, late night degeneracy in the pit, wacky Cannon meetings, losing to other faculties in intramurals, dinner dances or all nights at Chestnut, every day there is something cool happening at Skule. So I think I'll say this place really has magic in its bricks and I want to soak it all up for however long I have left here." - Prof Ruknoon

"The most magical moment I’ve had was during Skule Nite 2020’s opening night, where our cast and crew were anxiously awaiting to present the magnificent show that so many talented people had put their blood, sweat, and tears into for months. That night showed me that I had found a place for myself in the amazing and wild community.(family) that we call Skule." - Prof Andrew Barton

"My most magical moment would honestly be my first few weeks with EngSoc. I used to be so lost back then, but the amount of care and positive feedback I got from the upper years really made things much much easier." - Prof Archit Bhargava

"First semester was difficult. I had a very tough time with calc, and once we went back for second semester, we had gotten all our final grades back, except calc, so I went to the first calc 2 lecture, [and] I was like, ‘Well, don’t know if I’m actually going to be [here] for long’ and like, ‘Oh no, what’s actually going to happen.’ And then, that night, there was Ultimate Frosh, and I won, and I was super excited and then I woke up in the morning, my voice is gone, I did not feel good, and I check my phone, and the calc final grades came out and I passed and I was just like, I was already up ‘here’, and it just took me way up. [It] was just a great feeling. And then that kind of motivated me to work a lot harder during second semester because I needed to do that and that was kind of like a turning point for me.” - Head First-Year Aidan Lachine
Black Lives Matter: Let’s Keep the Conversation

ALYSON ALLEN
Cannon Editor-in-Chief

Disclaimer: This article comes from a place of allyship, whiteness, and privilege. Its goal is to educate readers and members of the Skule™ community about the current Black Lives Matter movement. Resources and ways to promote allyship are included at the end of this article. Trigger warnings for this article: violence, murder, police brutality, racism.

George Floyd, Minneapolis: murdered May 25, 2020, by police officer Derek Chauvin who pinned him down with his knee for 8 minutes and 46 seconds while Floyd called out that he couldn’t breathe. Floyd, accused of purchasing cigarettes with a counterfeit $20 bill, did not resist arrest and his autopsy revealed death by asphyxia. Chauvin was charged for third-degree murder, which as of now, has been raised to second-degree murder due to public outcry.

Regis Korchinski-Paquet, Toronto: murdered May 27, 2020, with claims that police pushed her off her balcony. Korchinski-Paquet’s mother had called police for a domestic conflict last with a request to take her to CAMH. Korchinski-Paquet was left alone with the police, crying out for help, and then found dead from “falling” off her apartment balcony. An investigation is underway.

Breonna Taylor, Kentucky: murdered March 2020, by 8 shots from police in her own home. Police raided her home on a no-knock warrant for a narcotics investigation. As of now, this case is under FBI Investigation.

Willie Simmons, Alabama: life sentence without parole since 1982. He was guilty of a robbery worth $9, with appeals denied for the past 39 years.

Tony McDade, Dion Johnson, Belly Mujinga, Sean Reed: these are just a few of the numerous cases of police brutality against Black people, many of which have not been shared through social media.

In 2013, the Black Lives Matter (BLM) movement was founded after the acquittal of the officer responsible for Treyvon Martin’s death. Martin was a 17-year-old shot to death without justification while walking from a convenience store. Their mission is “to eradicate white supremacy and build local power to intervene in violence inflicted on Black communities by the state and vigilantes.” According to the Mapping Police Violence organization, in the United States, Black people are three times more likely to be killed by police officers, with 99% of killings resulting in officers not being charged.

For generations, systemic injustices have been ingrained within many parts of society, beyond prevalent and unjustified police brutality towards Black people and POC. Slave patrols were the first form of policing and were used to control slaves and protect white landowners. After the 13th Amendment to abolish slavery in 1865, slave patrols became sheriffs that would block labour strikes, control immigrants, and enforced segregation. The policing system was built from segregation and racism. During the Civil Rights movement in the 50s and 60s, Black Americans protested against this system and against legalized racism. They were met with violence from the police to silence them, yet eventually, the Civil Rights Act of 1964 passed. However, that was not the end of racism. This is not an exclusively an American problem either, Canada has its own history of slavery as well and systemic issues.

In Canada, systemic racism is a large, but hidden issue. In the investigative series, Deadly Force by the CBC, 17 years of Canadian police action was investigated. Of 460 fatal cases, only 3 police officers were charged with murder. Indigenous and Black people were disproportionately victims. In 2017, the Ontario Human Rights Commission shared an interim report including an inquiry into Toronto Police Services’ allegations of racial profiling. Between 2013 and 2017, seven of ten police-caused fatal shootings were against Black people, while they only made up 8.8% of the population in Toronto.

In recent years, protests against racism and unjustified violence have grown internationally. In 2016, football player Colin Kaepernick took a knee during the U.S national anthem as a silent protest against police brutality. The messages of the Black community about the systemic racism they constantly face was amplified by Kaepernick’s protest. However, the circulation of the video of George Floyd’s murder was the tipping point. People were not listening.

Protests in Minneapolis were quickly organized spread in all 50 states and other parts of the world, despite the pandemic. Health officials continue to support the cause - urging protesters to wear face masks, carry hand sanitizer, and get tested. In fact, structural racism is a health issue - generational trauma and the history of oppression directly relates to health statistics. Bias in healthcare delivery and the quality of health care for racialized individuals are a large issue. For example, CNN journalist Chris Cuomo shared statistics during his America is a Tale of Two Cities report with regards to healthcare and the pandemic. Black people most at risk for contracting COVID-19 because they are more employed in essential workplaces but have 20% less access to private healthcare. Alongside protests, social media platforms have blown up with information to share, reposts for support, and videos to show what is happening.

Peaceful protests are the most widely-used tool to amplify the messages of the cause. Black protesters are emphasizing the need for allies to help prevent participators from engaging in unnecessary violent destruction. Protests are being organized to ensure that water and medical supplies are available and with the safety of the protestors in mind. However, numerous protests have resulted in unnecessary arrests of peaceful protestors and strong use of force from the police.

The escalation has been predominantly due to excessive force from the police, their reaction a stark contrast to April’s protests from a predominantly white crowd with guns protesting against wearing face masks while police did nothing. The New York Times reports, “Videos showed police officers in recent nights using batons, tear gas, pepper spray and rubber bullets on protesters, bystanders and journalists, often without warning or seemingly unprompted.” Undercover cops, military vehicles, police with full riot gear, and unexpected curfews have been claimed to set unease during the original peaceful protests.

As a result, protestors are defending the rioting and looting as a justified response to the force used. In 2014, author of the book In Defense of Looting, Vicky Osterweil emphasized that looting can be a way to take back against rich predominantly white corporations that have taken advantage of BLM continued on page 14
ARZAN TUREL
Cannon Writer

While sitting at home, I reminisced about something that was going through my head almost exactly a year ago: Is Frosh Week worth it?

This is my opinion on Frosh as someone who (regrettably) didn’t take part. I don’t particularly enjoy the thought of being thrust into forced social situations and I will admit that I am slightly introverted. It takes time for me to open up to people which doesn’t make for the best first impression. Meeting new people or more importantly, being forced to meet new people through awkward icebreakers is something I’ve always hated. This was the reason for my reluctance to go for Frosh, the thought of paying to fuel my anxiety was unfathomable, incomprehensible.

But that’s where I was wrong - the part of Frosh that I believe is the most important isn’t making lasting friends; it’s to dip your arms into vats of purple paint (I am aware that this doesn’t seem like a selling point, bear with me), getting your yellow hardhats, running through the fountain in Nathan Phillips Square, meeting the Skule™ Spirit Heads, hearing the Ye Olde Mighty Skule™ Cannon going off. This is all while surrounded by a thousand fellow students all going through the same exciting, daunting and at times scary experience that is Engineering.

If any of this sounds too far out of your comfort zone, there’s been some additions recently to the activities. These should hopefully cater to you, there are more relaxed and chill spaces where you and Leedurs can take a break from all the running around, charity events and alternatives to the nightlife events that maybe wouldn’t interest you. Also, you don’t actually have to go for any events you don’t want to, you can always skip the things you’re not interested in. This is what Frosh is about, the once in a lifetime Skule™ experience, which I sadly missed out on.

In an attempt to remedy this, I’ve decided to take a more active role in the Clubs and activities in my second year. I was hoping to join clubs like UTAT or UTRA, but due to circumstances I’m sure we’re all aware of, I am currently stuck abroad away from home. This led to me choosing instead to pursue a passion of mine that could, for the most part, be done from anywhere in the world - hence me writing this article. For those of you like me or for any reason couldn’t go for Frosh - don’t worry - even someone like me who at the very thought of “making new friends” would be reduced to a puddle of nervousness and dread is doing fine.

I won’t sugar coat it; it’ll be awkward and sometimes hard to talk to new people but Frosh Week isn’t going to solve that problem for you. The best friends you’ll make are going to be the people you sit next to in this semester, and hopefully for the next 4 years. Alternatively, if you stay at a student residence then the people around you, struggling and/or savouring the independence of living away from home.

So to my answer my own question; would it have been worth it?

In hindsight, yes. But I wouldn’t know would I, I never went.

BLM continued from page 13

their workers or assisted in gentrifying neighbourhoods. Additionally, Target’s CEO Brian Cornell wrote a statement after the Minneapolis Target was looted due to the location refusing to sell medical supplies and milk, items used during protests. He states that Target will be able to rebuild, that the company will make sure it has supplies ready to assist the protests, and that its employees will be protected. Cleanups have been hosted as well to show that rebuilding is possible but innocent victims’ lives cannot.

While people have questioned the effectiveness of riots and protests, it is important to look at the Stonewall Uprising as one of many situations where collective gatherings successfully fought for change. In June 1969, LGBTQ+ people gathered at the few bars and clubs in New York that were safe spaces, but police would often raid them. Stonewall Inn’s raid sparked the start of five full days of protests and riots against police brutality. One of the front-liners of the gay liberation movement was Marsha P. Johnson, a Black transgender woman. The following year marked the very first pride parades. Additionally, the Civil Rights Movement was not perfectly peaceful either - especially when met with resistance.

In the past few weeks, the protests have accomplished a lot - and they’re still going. Minneapolis is looking into disbanning its police force. The New York Police Department and New Jersey State Police are promising reform. The Los Angeles Police Department is defunding Breonna’s Law was put in place in Kentucky to prevent police from entering houses without knocking. Racist monuments and statues are being taken down. Companies are changing their racist branding. The protests are still strong and people must continue to speak up - even if it seems like the media is showing less and less of what’s happening.

When it comes to the BLM movement, it is important to be informed, educate, and speak up. In her article “On Making Black Lives Matter”, Black writer and social commenter Roxane Gay emphasizes that allies need to stand up alongside the oppressed, listen to marginalized people’s experiences, call out those who are being racist or speaking racist remarks, and understanding the struggle present. The Guide To Allyship, written by Black writer and designer Amélie Lamont, lists that an ally should be aware of their implicit biases, do research on the history of the causes, amplify the voices of those without the same privileges, and learn from mistakes.

Engineering Dean Yip posted a statement on June 5th acknowledging and planning to act against racism. He shares, “Equity, diversity and inclusivity are core values here in U of T Engineering, and critical to the engineering enterprise. These words are genuine — but they remain words until they are actions.” Along with the Black Inclusion Steering Committee, he states that U of T Engineering will open more channels of discussion to address concerns, gather more demographic data, and improve Black representation in the community. In addition, U of T’s Anti-Racism & Cultural Diversity Office (ARDCO) provides support for students, staff, and faculty across U of T via education programming, complaint resolution supports, and community outreach and engagement.

During this time, sign petitions, donate if you can, educate others by sharing information, listen to those speaking up, and contact those in positions of power are ways to assist with the movement. It’s okay to feel angry, anxious, and upset; utilize these emotions to perpetuate the need for change. Change won’t happen overnight, but we have seen it in small ways - let’s keep this going. Stand up for human rights. Black lives matter.
In recent days, popular old-school YouTubers Shane Dawson and Jenna Mourey (Marbles) have addressed past behaviours for which they have drawn criticism. Mourey and Dawson have been on YouTube for over a decade and were known for being edgy sketch comedians who exaggerated daily life.

Mourey was called out over Black-face done when she portrayed Nicki Minaj in a sketch, and over racist lyrics and an outfit in a parody song, which were offensive to the Asian community. In her video, A Message, Mourey plays clips of the videos, which have both been private for many years she says, and apologizes for her racist behaviour. She further apologizes for her once-viral “Girls vs Guys” videos in which she commented upon stereotypes of cisgender women and men. She stated that she felt remorse for the videos about gender stereotypes, especially because she felt they weren’t inclusive of non-cisgender people. Mourey is among the rare few Internet personalities to “self-cancel,” stating that she would take time off from her channel, either temporarily or permanently. This was met with both praise and criticism from the broader community. While Mourey has largely been met with widespread encouragement (hashtags in support of her trended world-wide the day she posted her video), Dawson has been met with a much different reception.

Dawson, most known for his documentary-style series on controversial figures like Jake Paul, Tana Mongeau and Jeffree Star, posted Taking Accountability in which he discusses past racist videos and comments “joking” about pedophilia. He begins by stating that Jenna’s video “inspired” his apology. Currently, the most publicly noted incident is a video that resurfaced of Dawson behaving extremely inappropriately in front of a poster of then-11-year-old Willow Smith (I can’t describe the video, but it isn’t very difficult to find online if you’re so inclined). In his apology, he claims that because of his traumatic childhood and own experience with child abuse, Dawson made those kinds of “jokes”.

Justifications like these weren’t accepted by the wider audience, nor by Willow’s brother, Jaden, nor their mother, Jada Pinkett Smith. Pinkett Smith tweeted on June 27, “To Shane Dawson ... I’m done with the excuses.” Smith tweeted, “Shane Dawson I am disgusted by you. Sexualizing an 11-year-old girl include a racist caricature called “Shanaynay”, who was a mainstay on his channel. Notably, though Dawson has apologized for characters like “Shanaynay”, a t-shirt bearing her likeness is still available for sale online. In the last 30 days, as of June 29th, Dawson’s mainly used channel, as of recent, “shane” has lost 600 thousand subscribers, while over 1.2 billion views, all stemming from controversial videos, have been deleted. Jenna Marbles has also deleted nearly 2 billion views from her channel, all originating from the videos for which she has experienced criticism.

Another recent controversy of Dawson’s includes a 2015 video of Dawson playing a game with fellow Youtubers Nikki Limo and Steve Greene called “Talking Sh*t” in which the players had to make “jokes” about different people as pulled from a bucket of names. In the video, Dawson can be seen “joking” about the murder of Trayvon Martin, saying “Maybe you wouldn’t be walking around the streets if you had a job.” This regained attention after Jay Versace, an actor, comedian and musician most known from Vine, and of Jeffree, and not to document any “drama”. However, as many have pointed out, and as I will as well, despite Dawson’s seeming remorse for his racist sketches and attempts to distance himself from beauty drama, he in the same breath defends Jeffree Star.

Star has been the centre of many past controversies and claims of racist behaviours. These include him calling Black beauty guru Jackie Aina a “rat”; wearing dreadlocks in a 2020 photoshoot for his brand (and responding to the controversy by posting a photo of himself in cornrows in the following days); and “joking” in a skit about throwing battery acid on a Black woman to “lighten her skin” to match her foundation. Star did apologize in 2017 for the comments about a battery acid attack. Jackie Aina tweeted after Star’s comments against her in 2018, “Never forget that Jeffree Star will call Black women rats, uneducated, and broke when they do not worship him.” Dawson notably referred to Jeffree Star as “family” in his essay on the beauty community. The point being, it’s worth noting that there is a difference between distancing yourself from your own racist behaviours (saying you’re disgusted and “hate” the person you were a few years ago) and distancing yourself from people exhibiting racist behaviours around you.

I think it’s also crucial...
Some Thoughts on Thoughts

RUKNOON DINDER  
Cannon Editor

Old relationships are so bizarre, don’t you think? And no, I’m not talking about that ex from 3 years ago that you still hang up over. I’m talking about the kind that leaves the oddest little memory in the darkest depths of your mind. A memory that plays no part in your daily thoughts; it’s only job is to lurk. And lurk it will, until it’s time to make an abrupt appearance, usually when you’re in the shower or trying to sleep after an unnecessary Reddit fueled all-nighter. If you’ve read so far and can’t relate to a word I’m saying, I truly commend you. To the rest of you, kindly bear with me.

I wanted my first article this year to be somewhat for the first years but mainly talking about an issue rarely covered. And to be honest, I write how I act most of the time: like a clown. I thought that perhaps I could be reflective for a change. I have been stuck at home for quite a while now due to social restrictions, which allows me to be alone with my thoughts. And to be really honest, I watched too much Community so now I see everything through a meta lens. I hope this newfound wisdom helps you deal with some of your own thoughts in life.

We pretend relationships aren’t like an iPhone or a pair of Adidas; getting replaced over time. But think about it; there were once people in your lives who were practically irreplaceable. Where are they now; apart from maybe that one friend that somehow stuck by? That best friend you had in high school; that really close co-worker who just ‘got’ you. How often do you speak to them now? Maybe once a month? How many “we should totally meet up sometime” texts have you sent when they react to one of your Instagram stories? The people you dated, that restaurant you two have been at, those special spots, ‘your’ movie, ‘your’ song, spending long nights Facetiming, the DMs. All just random (hopefully sweet) memories now.

Let me give you an example of my nonna and dada (replace with your grandparent name of choice). As long as I’ve known them, their priority has been the family, us ‘kids’ mostly. “When will we visit, what will they cook for us, why am I so skinny, why didn’t we call her on Sunday?”, that is their entire world. Yet if you look back to when they were our age, we were never even a part of the equation. They have probably written love letters to someone they didn’t end up marrying, fought with their own parents once upon a time and felt like nobody got them. Isn’t it mindboggling to think that those people don’t exist anymore in their lives? Maybe they do exist in those specific memories, memories which are still hurting them in that weird, sweet, hurt you get when reminiscing something you lost kind of way.

To me, relationships are the children of necessity and emotion. Some are created and broken over the span of a night of partying, yet others form to last a lifetime. The only thing certain is uncertainty. Surprisingly, till death do us apart is probably the most realistic sentiment you can go into these things with: a person can keep coming back into your life, whether physically or in thought. However, contrary to physical presence, lingering memories have no rationale for me. You don’t have a need for them. They don’t evoke any particularly beneficial emotion in you. Yet, you just can’t seem to get rid of them. It often feels like a cruel joke. But that is the truth we must learn to accept.

This piece was for the Frosh issue so my advice now is mostly directed to you Froshies on the verge of diving into a new life; it can be okay to lose people from your old life, that is the whole point of it. Some people will come and go while others will stand by you all your life. Some of you are leaving your high school friends behind, maybe your best friend is going to uni at the other end of the world, some of you are moving to a new country with new people in these very uncertain times. The bright side is that, with every person who leaves, someone better comes into your life. University can be a fresh new start. And if you’re really lucky, you get to keep your old friends while making new ones. Use that to your advantage. Learn from the past, but also learn to let it go.

Because at the end of every day, when you are done hanging out with someone and leave, you don’t know if you will see them another time or if they will be a priority for you ever again. So, make the present count. Cherish everyone for what they are worth to you. And hey, for good or bad, the memories remain.

I wanted to end with a quote from Master Oogway but that kind of tally and everyone knows what the quote is, so I’m not going to. I think the lesson I’m trying to talk about here is that life is fleeting, so hold on to the people who are close to you, love them the most in this moment. So that when you leave, you stay behind as a beautiful imprint in their memories. Wear a mask, stay safe and, most importantly, have a wonderful first year!

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to note that I’m not trying to say whether people should or should not accept Shane Dawson or Jenna Mourey’s apologies. As of the end of June, Dawson’s apology video has more likes than dislikes, which you can take as you will. As a white person, I think it’s important I acknowledge that the apologies in these videos are not directed at me. I’ve seen many white fans “forgiving” both Dawson and Mourey, telling them that neither have anything for which they need to apologize. I’m sure there are BIPOC who accept their apologies, and there are those who reject them. The point I’m aiming to make is there is an important discourse to be had in the era of holding people accountable for racist behaviours.

It’s crucial to listen to the experiences of others around you and to accept and acknowledge the way the majority feel, even if it makes you upset or uncomfortable. There is certainly something to be said about the end of the “edgy” old-school YouTube era. Personally, I don’t believe this to be the result of Gen Z being more sensitive than the Millennials who were coming up on YouTube during the early years, rather, it’s indicative of audiences growing wise to problematic things their favourite creators have done. It’s also a product of people outside of minority groups learning and recognizing racist behaviours that went over their heads when they were younger; I’m guilty of not realizing Shanaynay was racist until I was around 12 years old. The fact that I used to watch videos with her and laugh at them is something that makes me feel really ashamed and uncomfortable. But, it’s important not to tell the groups affected how to feel, nor to impose your opinion on whether they should accept or reject the apologies. Even more important is to recognize when minorities tell you something is discriminatory and offensive - acknowledge that, and hold others accountable, especially at the expense of your own comfort and childhood nostalgia.