

THE DETAILS

The Blue Devil is in The Details



“I miss you.” by
Erica Lin, Grade
12

Left

How poetry can
interpret hope and
politics

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Read reviews of
Netflix Original
series

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Laurier Welcomes New Clubs

Zain Khurram
Grade 11

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a huge impact on our daily routines, whether it's working from your bedroom, trying to not fall asleep during your teacher's lecture, or even nearly forgetting your mask

for school. One fundamental change is our extra-curriculars. With clubs no longer being hosted in school, students have gotten creative with keeping the tradition going these past few months. The 2020/21 year so far has seen the creation of many new clubs, of which we'll be highlighting six. Fully virtu-

al, these clubs aim to connect Laurier during the closure. Whether it be sharing various art forms, or simply learning about finance, there is something for everyone!
MEDLIFE@Laurier

The first club prides them-

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Clubs Undeterred by COVID

selves in fighting for equal access to healthcare and education. MEDLIFE@Laurier is part of a non-profit organization which aims to partner with low-incomes incommunities in Latin America and Africa. When asked what they would like to achieve with this club and initiatives, co-presidents Elizabeth Wang and Sudipta Saha (Gr.11) say they want to address the immense impact COVID has had on the world. One of the few things MEDLIFE stands for is equality and equal access to education, health and infrastructure. Sudipta added on, "By starting this club we hope to educate our Laurier students and give them an opportunity to help those in need within our community and globally!" While the club faced difficulties with fundraising as well as spreading awareness, they were able to succeed due to the efforts of their committed members. The co-presidents would personally like to thank each and every one of their members. MEDLIFE has definitely shown how resilient the Laurier community can be during the pandemic.

Laurier Finance

Perhaps you would like to learn the secrets of money management and investments with Laurier Finance, the second club on our list. After

realizing that the Ontario curriculum does not teach personal finance, co-presidents, Asvin Sathiyalingam and Aadit Shah (Gr.11), decided to educate Laurier's youth. As many youth are expected to have a good credit score, file taxes and open up savings account despite the fact they have not been taught to do so, they hope this club will help prepare students for their journey after graduation.

"We decided to start the club because we noticed that a lot of people that we knew were interested in tech (and) did not know how to code."

Computer Science Club

Additionally for all those geeky students out there, Laurier's Computer Science Club may be the one for you! The club covers a range of programming languages from the classic, more traditional languages such as Java and C++

to more modern and advanced languages such as Turing. Club co-presidents Abdul Malik, Muhtasim Khan, and Arrad Mustafa (Gr.11) decided it was time to revive coding within the Laurier community. "We decided to start the club because we noticed that a lot of people that we knew were interested in tech or even if they weren't interested a lot of people did not know how to code." Muhtasim also mentioned that other teams and clubs were in dire need of coders, especially the robotics team, which has been experiencing a shortage of coders for the past few years, saying "Our main goal is to improve people's technical literacy and to help more people learn how to code. A lot of the students at Laurier are also in the IB program so they might not be able to take a lot of computer science courses as their electives tend to be very limited. Our club serves as an alternate way to learn how to code for those students as well."

K-Pop Club

The fourth club is Laurier's first K-Pop club and aims to create an environment for K-Pop fans. Originally, Laurier students Arani, Nashrah, Saruka, and Sherin (Gr.10) wanted to start a wellness club to keep people connected during COVID. However they quickly

realized they shared an interest in the music genre of K-Pop and realized they could still accomplish their original goal by connecting people together through a K-Pop club. When asked if this club was specifically for K-Pop listeners, Arani Hiri said “While our club may be focused on K-Pop, we are a safe space for everyone! Anyone can drop-in to just talk or hangout with friends and peers!” The club has also announced they will be accepting applications for their executive team. If you are interested and would like to promote the genre of K-Pop, then fill out the Google Form application found on their Google Classroom.

Plan Canada

Our fifth club focuses on raising awareness about social issues that aren’t always talked about in our community. Plan Canada’s initiatives in high schools throughout the country have educated young people about the importance of children’s rights and gender equality, among other important topics, and club leaders Aunkita Roy (Gr.11) and Elma Mallick (Gr.11) wanted to bring that to Laurier. Aunkita told us “Our students are passionate about global issues, and this is an opportunity to create a positive change in our school through our work with Plan Canada. Despite the ongoing pandemic, this still felt like the time to bring Laurier students together and remind them that

their voices matter, and that they can still access opportunities to learn from each other and other young Canadians.” Most recently, the club competed in a national competition! Similar to the DECA format, teams are given case studies in which they need to provide effective remedies! Laurier has done especially well for a new team, bringing home two awards!

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Laurier Creators

Finally, last but not least on our list is a very creative club. Rocking the title Laurier Creators, the club sets out to share the creative works of all students. Anything is accepted and will be shared on their Instagram. Co-Presidents Aathiga Pathmakaran and Sarah Wong

(Gr.11) decided to initiate a club encouraging the students of Laurier during the isolation and boredom we face during the pandemic. “We thought, why not creative work? It’s really hard to get your creative work promoted by people other than yourself, so we thought posting others’ works on our page will spread their talent to the school! We also thought this was a great way to have Laurier unleash its creativity and motivate fellow classmates to try something new!” said Sarah Wong in a statement. While the club did face trouble with logistics and organization in the beginning, they are now proud to be the biggest club in the school, with an amassed membership of more than 120 students. The club plans to continue organizing workshops featuring the amazing work of Laurier students, and plan to host a secret project very soon!

These new clubs will be tons of fun, and an amazing way to spend your free time throughout this quad and next! They are definitely a great solution to cure the boredom and isolation we all have been experiencing these past few months.

Amanda Gorman's active hope

Anjali Mookerjea
Grade 12

On Wednesday January 20th, 2021, Joe Biden was sworn in as the 46th president of the United States of America. If you watched the inauguration or have been following it on social media, then you likely already know the highlights: the notable lack of crowds, the impeccable fashion, and Bernie Sanders sitting in a chair wearing mittens. However, despite the buzz around all that (and the new president), an indisputable high point of the ceremony was 22 year old youth poet laureate Amanda Gorman reading her original poem "The Hill We Climb".

It may seem strange to choose a poet who is very much at the beginning of her career to deliver the inaugural poem as opposed to a well-established poet. Before Gorman became the youngest ever inaugural poet, the title was held by Richard Blanco, who was 45 when he read at Barack Obama's second inauguration. However, I'd argue that Gorman and her poem were the perfect choice to match the image and message the Biden administration was trying to project.

Gorman's poem echoes the sentiments of Biden's and Harris' speeches perfectly in its call for unity and its acknowledgement of the hardships faced by Americans, particularly Black Americans, not just in the last 4 years but since the inception of the country. In particular, there is one element to her poem that I think best ex-

presses the sentiments the administration seems to be projecting—its emphasis on action.

The theme is prevalent throughout the poem but is particularly apparent when she says "It's because being American is more than a pride we inherit / it's the past we step into / and how we repair it". Here, Gorman is contrasting two ideas about what it means to be an American. The first option is inherited patriotism while the second, which the poem presents as the better option, is an active reckoning with the past with the intent of creating a better future. The first option is stagnant and passive. She presents blind patriotism not as radical but as an outdated idea about what it means to be a citizen. The second option is active. It calls on the people listening to step into roles of respon-

sibility and improve their country by reckoning with their past.

The repetition of action-oriented motifs is woven throughout the entire poem, including the title. It is, after all, "The Hill We Climb" and not "The Hill We Sit Atop and Gaze Down From". If I had to summarize the Biden-Harris administration's message at the inauguration, it would be action. They say that yes, America has undergone a period of turbulence and it has likely always been in one, but the only way to move forward is through hope. Hope is action, work, climbing up that metaphorical hill even if it feels like all you will ever and have ever seen is the valley. Healing, growth, and reconciliation can only be done through collective action. They (we) must climb that hill.



"Forty"
by **Alexandra Kay**
Grade 12

Social Trends of Quarantine

Ushananthi Umashankar
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The majority of 2020 was different than other years due to the quarantine and being stuck at home. However, this change has caused us to binge entertainment faster than we ever have before. Through the internet, we can access an overwhelming amount of media, all meant to grab our attention. The combination of those two factors created fast-moving trends across all forms of entertainment throughout the quarantine. In case you blinked, here are some of the biggest trends in games, TV, and social media!

In *Among Us*, players become crewmembers aboard a spaceship where they must complete various tasks, acting as maintenance workers around the ship to ensure their safety to go back home. However, crewmembers must beware the anonymous imposter(s) whose goal is to kill the crewmembers while pretending to be part of the crew. In this space-mafia game, 4-10 people can play over their phones or computer to either fix their spaceship or catch the imposter to win!

The game rose to popularity from mid-2020 as famous Twitch and YouTube streamers (Disguised Toast, Valkyrae, Corpse Husband, Pokimane, JackSeptic-eye, xQc, and PewDiePie to name a few) began streaming their *Among Us* games. YouTube reported that videos about *Among Us* were viewed 4 billion times in September 2020. TikTok videos related to *Among Us* had over 13

billion views in October 2020. By September 2020, the game exceeded 100 million downloads. In November, the leader of the New Democratic Party, Jagmeet Singh joined U.S. Representative Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez for an *Among Us* game with different streamers to discuss issues such as universal healthcare, living wages, and politics and raise money. Soon, *Among Us* will transcend onto different gaming consoles as well, already making the transition to Nintendo Switch and eventually Xbox. If you want to join the fun, you can play the game for free on Android or iOS platforms.

The *Queen's Gambit* is a Netflix limited series set in the Cold War era that shows the coming-of-age of Beth Harmon and is based on a novel written by Walter Tevis. The magnificent Anya Taylor-Joy plays Harmon, an orphaned chess prodigy that battles her drug and alcohol addiction to become the greatest chess player in the world. Through the seven episodes, Scott Frank, the creator and director of the show, uses innovative and invigorating cinematography that raises the stakes for every chess match. The show received critical and public acclaim as it became Netflix's most viewed limited series to date and was watched by 62 million households from its release date to the end of November. The chess community also responded positively to the show and commended its accuracy as well as the boost it gave to the popularity of chess. Sales for chess

sets went up several hundred to over a thousand percent due to the series. Anya Taylor-Joy and the show won two Golden Globes.

TikTok is the widely popular social media platform where one can create various short-form videos that range from dance, comedy, and education, lasting 3 seconds to 1 minute.

Recent statistics from April 2020 show that Tik-Tok has been downloaded more than two billion times and has 800 million active users worldwide. The social media app has popularized some users into becoming mega-influencers such as Charli and Dixie D'Amelio, Addison Rae, Bella Poarch and others. They were able to gain deals from Hollywood, sponsorships from brands like Hollister and Prada, as well as other endeavours. Famous actors and artists have also joined the app to promote themselves such as Will Smith, Jason Derulo, Dwayne "The Rock" Johnson, Selena Gomez and more. The user base of the widely-addicting app is growing larger by the day.

GameStop and the Stock Market

Dharrshanan Sakthitharan
Grade 10

GameStop is a retail store that sells games and entertainment products and is the US equivalent of EB Games in Canada. During the COVID-19 pandemic, many customers of GameStop had to resort to online gaming since their stores were closed. GameStop lost around USD 470 million and had to shut down many of its stores due to the lack of customers buying games in person. This also meant GameStop stocks were crashing.

Before getting into the real story, there are a few terms that you will need to know. A day trader is an investor who buys and sells stocks to gain small profits during one day. Short selling is a strategy used by day traders where they bet that a stock is going to fall. A hedge fund is a business that collects money from a group of people and invests the money on their behalf. Hedge funds make use of more complex trading practices than retail investors like you and me.

On the week of January 24th, many hedge funds took a large short position (short selling) against GameStop. This was noticed by someone on Reddit. So, a group of small investors on the subreddit r/wallstreetbets bought as many GameStop stocks as possible. This increased the price of the stock by more than 130%. Since their prediction that the stock value would decrease was wrong, many hedge funds lost billions of dollars and had to declare



bankruptcy. One hedge fund that was severely impacted by this was Melvin Capital Management.

Many more small investors then bought as many other crashing stocks as possible such as AMC (the US equivalent of Cineplex), Blackberry, and Nokia. Robinhood, an app that allows beginner investors to easily invest and check stocks, blocked investing into some popular stocks such as the ones listed above. Because it is an app for beginners, they did not want investors to lose their money in such a volatile market.

However, many believe that Robinhood should not have done this. Some say it is the choice of the individual to decide whether they should invest in the stock or not and that the app should not have a say in their private choices. Some others thought Robinhood favoured the hedge funds who would lose billions of dollars if the stocks' prices kept increasing.

During all the ruckus, many celebrities talked about the situation. Elon Musk, the CEO

of Tesla, posted a tweet saying "Gamestonk!!" on his personal Twitter account. This riled many more small investors to invest in the stocks. Dave Portnoy, the founder of Barstool Sports, cheered on the GameStop chaos and said "I love it!" on The Post Millennial. Who knows when the next "revolution" is in the stock market but we do know the events from that week changed the world of investing forever.

Top Five Netflix Originals

Samantha Smith-Fletcher
Grade 11

When quarantine was first sprung upon us it was warm and beautiful outside which made it even harder to stay inside, but we got through it and one thing that really helped us were Netflix Original tv shows. They helped save us from the boredom of just sitting in our rooms doing nothing, so here is the top five list of the most watched tv shows during quarantine.

1. Tiger King: Murder, Mayhem and Madness

This show took the world by storm when it first debuted on Netflix. It is a documentary that was based on the life of Joe Exotic, the owner of a zoo in Oklahoma that specializes in big cats. The show grew famous because of his feud with the infamous Carol Baskin. If you haven't already seen it, I suggest you do- it's a great laugh.

2. The Queen's Gambit

When this show came out, it created buzz, especially among people who love chess. People view it as a cinematic art piece. It is referred to as a smart, well-told story. Not only is the writing outstanding, but the acting is as well. Taylor-Joy is getting a lot of praise for her role since she absolutely killed it and made it a binge-worthy series.

3. Love is Blind

This reality tv show was a big hit when it came to Netflix. It is

a very non traditional take on the cliché saying of 'love is blind'. The twist of the show is that each person cannot see who they have chosen to couple up with until they actually do so. The show takes the viewers' emotions on a wild ride as we have to predict who will say 'yes' at the altar and who will leave their partner. *Love is Blind* showcases the reality that everyone is not as they seem when you first meet them.

4. Never Have I Ever

This show created a lot of talk because of the cast. While Netflix is a big franchise it had yet to show a cast with such diversity. In this show the main character along with her friends are all people from different minority groups which was very exciting and refreshing to see which is why it gained such a big audience when it came out. The show is also very entertaining. *Never Have I Ever* is a very well written,

well acted out show with a very engaging storyline.

5. Bridgerton

This show has been on the Netflix top 10 list since it came out. It is a modern love story that takes place in 1813. It has gained a broad audience, from adults to teenagers. The feel of the show is so tame yet so engaging. When you start an episode you just don't want it to end. I think there are a lot of factors that contribute to this: the clothes, the music, and the acting. In the show, they take our everyday songs and play them as they would sound during the era of 1813 which is amazing. This show is a very fresh idea that has yet to be explored and we can only hope for a season two.

There are many other shows that have kept us all entertained during this quarantine, what are some shows that kept you at the edge of your seat?



"Pigeon Passenger"
by Zain Khurram
Grade 11



“Katara” (above left and right)

by **Fatima Mujahid**

Grade 10

The first image shows the original work and the second one is what it looked like after being edited into an augmented reality piece and viewed through the app Artivive

“Shady Beach” (below)

by **Fabliha Subha**

Grade 11



“Pear my beloved” (right)

by **Anjali Mookerjee**

Grade 12