

A FREE NEWSPAPER FOR TEENS BY TEENS

# INTERVIEW-CEPTION

## Interviewing the Interviewers Behind New Short Film *Queering the Interior*

Article by **Mika Elkuf-Warthe of Queen's Bay, age 17**

**Q**ueering the Interior is a Touchstones Nelson Museum-commissioned short film documenting the history of the LGBTQ2S+ community in the Kootenays. Recently, I interviewed director Amy Bohigian and camera assistant Oscar Usher to get the inside scoop on the film, which will be released in early 2022. Bohigian chose her interviewees by centering her story “around the pioneers of the community.” She continued: “if somebody really took charge of an event or they broke new ground, I’d feel like they were an important voice.” According to Bohigian, the conception of this documentary comes from “the desire for the museum to start documenting the history of the queer community.” Fortunately for the film, Nelson resident Michael Wicks has been compiling an archive on that very topic, with a partial focus on the communities of queer farmers that were present in the Kootenays during the seventies. “Michael was a queer activist, and still is, and is very active in trying to build archives that are LGBTQ-focused for Touchstones, so that there’d actually be, on record, everything that’s ever happened that is related to Pride.” As the LGBTQ2S+ community is evolving and working on being more inclusive, Bohigian made sure to include “Two-Spirit voices and trans voices, as many different voices of the queer community as possible.”

With the film being a documentary, finding resources that contained historical information was crucial, making Michael’s contribution all the more important. “Michael is one of the major reasons we could even think about doing the film because there was just enough archival information to work with,” Bohigian explains. In addition to the history of the gay communes, and of Pride celebrations, Bohigian says that representation was a very important element of the film: “Given that we call ourselves, or at least most people refer to our community as the queer community and/or the LGBTQ2S+ community, I thought, well I’m going to try my best to represent those aspects.”

Highschool student Oscar Usher worked on *Queering the Interior* as a camera assistant. Usher came to work on the film when his media arts teacher recommended him for the position. When asked about his role in the film’s production, Oscar said: “I did archival work; so I went to the library and collected images that we needed scans of, I did some bulk editing of finding good quotes from the interviews, as well as assisting to film the interviews, managing cameras, checking audio, that kind of thing.” He decided to be a part of the project because “it sounded like a really cool experience and I didn’t have a ton of knowledge of the local community, in that aspect.” He also wanted to establish himself and find resources “within the film community in the Kootenays.”

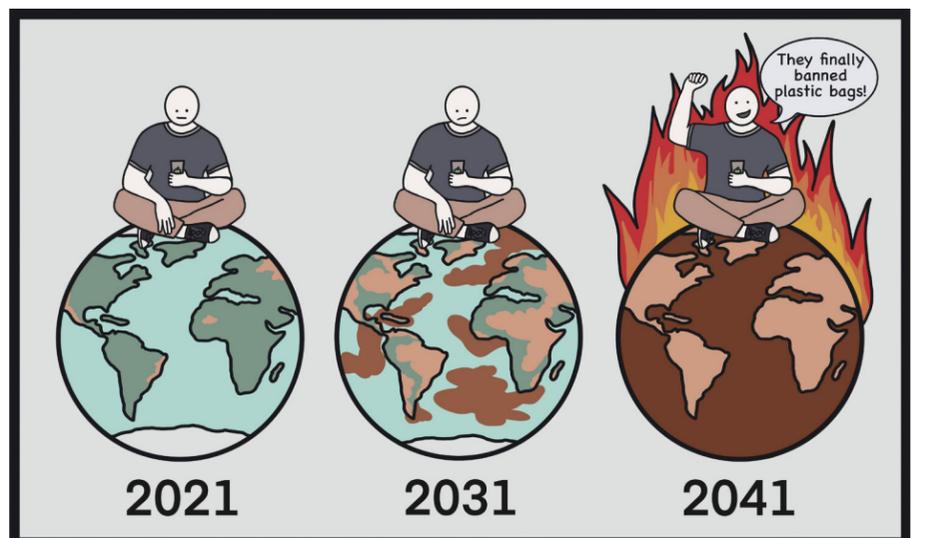
To LGBTQ2S+ people starting out in filmmaking, Amy Bo-



Photo by **Oscar Usher of Nelson, age 17**

higian said this: “We have to make space for ourselves, and how do we do that? We find allies, we find other people who believe in what we’re doing. And we have to make it happen that much more because the way that it works out, in this filmmaking world, is that people take the space that they’re given, and so we have to actually make the space for ourselves, we have to actually give ourselves the space and ask permission later... By whatever means necessary you get your stories out there and you share them as much and as widely as possible.”

*There is a ten-minute version of the film available to watch on the Touchstones Nelson Vimeo page, and the full version will be released to the Touchstones website as well as the aforementioned Vimeo page.*



Comic by **Landon Dales of Invermere, age 15**

# OLD GROWTH MATTERS

Article by Chloe Loveday of Nelson, age 14

Have you ever been in an Old Growth forest? Do you know that earthy vibe, that peaceful hum of the water and the leaves? Do you ever think, this is why I'm alive! If you do... you're right! This is why you're alive, and this is what life depends on! But, these trees on which we depend on? They are being wiped out by the minute by our very own species!

It's time to decide what we want our future to look like. To help answer some questions... Here are Ginger Osecki and Miguel Pastor, two Nelson based youth activists, making a stand for what they believe in. So... what do Old Growth trees really do besides produce oxygen?

Ginger: "So, the Old Growth trees help the young trees. They communicate with all the plants in the ecosystems."

Miguel: "And these massive trees, while they sequester so much carbon from the atmosphere each day, they're also an indicator of how old these ecosystems are; they have been evolving since the last ice age. They can't just be replaced by saplings."

Ginger: "The trees, connected to all the mycelium, filters the water and makes the dirty water drinkable and safe for the environment."

Miguel: "And the roots also hold together riverbeds, basically protecting the watershed. And when it's clearcut, the rain will wash all the dirt into the watershed, messing up a lot of water ecosystems."

Ginger: "Making that water undrinkable and killing all the animals that rely on that water source."

Trees clean the water, provide habitat for animals, and cool off the earth from burning temperatures... They are the key to having a 'cool' future... except only 2% of Old Growth is left in BC!

Miguel: "When a tree gets cut down, species that are vulnerable, like the Caribou, die. We are in the midst of the sixth mass extinction on Earth as a result of climate change caused by human activities, one of which is Industrial clear cutting of Old-Growth forests. Those ecosystems can never grow back."

Ginger: "And also the clear cuts are way more flammable so forest fires happen \*snaps her fingers\* like that.. Miguel and I up at Revelstoke saw this massive clear cut completely burnt. And as soon as the trees started up again where the clear-cut ended, the fire stopped."



Photo by Mica Hawes of Kaslo, age 16

Miguel: "All the growth forest holds so much more water than second-growth forest and clear cuts. In the trees, In the canopy that is constantly dripping down, And in the plants all around. And when it's clear cut, there is no more protection of these trees and the sun comes in and fries everything, releasing 40% of the carbon that the trees stored in the ground into the air. And all of that moisture is gone which is really what protects against forest fires"

Ginger: "The old-growth trees, just the sheer mass of them and their thick bark, just protect them from the flames."

But, what else can we use instead of timber?

Ginger: "Hemp is a big one. It is way more sustainable to use, takes a lot less water... and also bamboo. Bamboo can grow, like an astonishing amount."

Miguel: "And I also think that if we change our forestry industry, we can actually use and save a lot more wood by cutting down a lot less trees. If we did selective logging, value-added logging, and actually used all the wood that's cut down instead of just selecting the most profitable ones to get shipped away."

A mature tree absorbs carbon dioxide at a rate of 48 pounds per year. In one year, an acre of forest can absorb twice the CO2 produced by the average car's annual mileage. And that's not even an Old Growth tree -- that's a tree, maybe, half its size. A healthy 100-foot-tall tree has about 200,000 leaves. A tree this size can take 11,000 gallons of water from the soil and release it into the air again as oxygen and water vapor in a single growing season. Trees are amazing. We need to support them, so they can sup-

port us. It's a win-win!

So, how can people do that, you ask?

Ginger: "Voice their opinions! Voice them to the political leaders, voice them to their school principals... Anywhere they can. Go to the frontlines and support those on the front lines. Donations, or just sending your warm loving thoughts. It is really important to keep the emotions of the people on the front lines, keep them up. 'Cause without them, there's nothing."

Ginger and Miguel have been to the Fairy Creek blockade, as well as the Revelstoke blockade. At Fairy Creek...

Miguel: "It is estimated that, as of October 2021, \$30,000,000 of civilian tax dollars have been spent for the RCMP presence at the blockade, While the amount of money they would earn from logging Fairy Creek is only \$ 13,000,000."

If they just pay the loggers the money, then they will SAVE loads of money and we will still have 1,ww800 year old trees. So, if you want to stand up for the environment, the animals, and YOUR human rights, educate, protect, and protest today! Go follow: Fridaysforfuturewestkootenay, xr\_westkootenays, and laststandwestkootenays on Instagram and Facebook for updates on what strikes you can attend. "All of these groups organize events! It's pretty awesome," says Ginger. Everyone makes a difference.

## Shirts Hung for National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women



Article by Ashleigh Germaine of Nelson, age 13

On December 6th the organizers of the Nelson Memorial hung shirts on the fence surrounding the cenotaph outside city hall for the National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women.

On December 6th 1989, 14 young woman were murdered at École Polytechnique in Montreal. Over 45 minutes, 14 female engineering students and staff were shot because they were women.

Each year Canada commemorates the National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women and recognizes the issue of violence against

women and all gender based violence.

With the pandemic, the risk of violence against women has increased, and the services and help for women has decreased. We all need to support and believe the women who have experienced and survived gender-based violence. Together we can stop the violence against women and all gender based violence, to create a safer, stronger future for everyone.

If you are in danger of gender-based violence, call the Youth Against Violence Line at 1-800-680-4264 and talk one-on-one to a YAV Line support worker 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, or e-mail at [info@youthagainstviolenceline.com](mailto:info@youthagainstviolenceline.com).

# SELF-HARM AFFECTS MANY KOOTENAY TEENS

**Article by Lily MacKenna of Cranbrook, age 17**

*Content warning: this article contains descriptions of self-harm*

Today hundreds of teens struggle with self-injury, using self-inflicted pain to find relief from overwhelming emotions such as anger, grief, anxiety, fear, and hurt. The most common forms of self-harm are cutting one's skin, burning one's skin, and self hitting. In a survey conducted by the National Center of Biotechnology Information that focused on nearly a thousand fourteen to sixteen year-olds, the majority chose "to get relief from a terrible state of mind" as the reason they engaged in self-harm. In some cases, they explained that they were emotionally numb, and it allowed them to feel something.

Most self-harm behaviours begin between the ages of 12 and 15. In 2013-2014, 2,500 youth age 10-17 were hospitalized for self-

harm in Canada. Self-harm hospitalization numbers tend to be higher among females, especially younger females.

I went around interviewing students and friends at my high school to ask some questions and have a different point of view. It didn't take long to find teens who struggle with self harm or have experiences to share. One fifteen year old girl was more than willing to share her story with me.

"It started when I was thirteen. There was so much going on in my life with my parents divorce, and I had my own problems at school. I didn't know who to talk to or where I could go for help. I started to physically hurt myself. It started small. I would burn myself or make small slits on my arms. At first I would do it rarely, but it soon became an addiction. When I finally told a friend, she asked if I was trying to get attention. That hurt. It really wasn't that I wanted people to see... in fact, I hid it. But at the same time it was my plea for someone to notice and care." She tells me that even today, seven months clean, she finds it hard to talk about. Although she wishes to

remain anonymous, she wants to help other teenagers who are fighting similar battles. "I guess I'm just hoping that people hear about my battle with self harm, and know that they can learn to love themselves just like I did. I reached out to a school counsellor after years of continuing to cut. I'm so glad I did, he helped me so much with weekly check-ins and resources for me to stay clean."

If you or someone you know is fighting a battle with self-harm, self hate, self medicating, or depression, know that you are not alone. There are people who care and want to help you. If you need emotional support to deal with a concern or feeling, or are looking for information on mental health resources or services, call or text HealthLinkBC at 310-6789. Youthspace.ca Online Chat is a community of volunteers who can provide emotional support, crisis response, and more. It is available online from 6pm to midnight Pacific Time by text at 778-783-0177.

# FROM THE HEART: THIRD TIME'S THE CHARM

**Article by librarian Melodie Rae Storey of Nelson, age 42**

From the Heart, a group of Indigenous youth and non-Indigenous peers who are committed to exploring anti-racism, activism and Indigenous resurgence themes in creative ways, is back for its third cycle. The first year the youth produced a theatrical performance at the Capitol Theatre; the second year saw a new group of youth create a documentary film. What will the third cycle create? Many ideas and direction are emerging, and time will tell.

On a late October afternoon, with the sun shining through the surrounding orange and yellow deciduous trees, the From the Heart group gathered for an opening circle on Zuckerberg Island. The youth group has always been supported by a large network of Elders, Knowledge Keepers, artists and volunteer mentors, and they came to make connections with the new intake of youth. As we all sat in a circle around a bonfire, Brittany Haugen, Gitxsan educator at JL Crowe in Trail and a coordinator with Circle of Indigenous Nations, opened the circle with these words: "Everyone who is meant to be here is here. If one of you weren't here, the circle would not be complete." With a mug of hot apple cider or hot tea in hand, we intro-



**Photo by Greg Maslak of Nelson**

duced ourselves and our ancestry, and then sat back and listened to some of our special guests. Ever heard of birch bark biting? It is a delicate art form that once was well known across the prairies, but was suppressed along with all cultural knowledge, as colonization swept across the land now known as Canada. Pat Bruderer, a Cree artist whose traditional name is Halfmoon Woman, is dedicated to bringing the art form she loves back to prominence. Decades ago, she connected with ancestral knowledge to learn the art of peeling off a very thin layer of birch bark, folding it several times, thinking of a design, and then translating that design from her mind onto the folded bark using only her teeth. She now teaches about 4000 children a year, determined that this piece of her culture will never be forgotten. She shared with the circle her stunning, one-of-a-kind pieces.

Another guest was Jesse Halton, Piikani, an educator at LV Rogers Secondary in Nelson who identifies as Two-Spirit. He brought life and laughter to the circle, and taught about the importance of language learning, along with valuable understanding of the deeply inclusive ways of being that Two-Spirit teachings provide. He taught that Two-Spirit people embody the restoring of traditional fluidity in gender, sexuality and community roles; and a return to the celebrat-

ed gifts that were taken by colonization. Jesse explained how he is committed to transcending boundaries in a visible way as an educator because it is so crucial for queer youth to see. The opening circle was a joyous celebration of Indigenous culture. Keep an eye out this Spring for the youth's project reveal. Interested in being involved? Email FTH.Kootenays@gmail.com to get connected.



**Photo by Jake Maslak of Nelson, age 15**



**Photo by Jake Maslak of Nelson, age 15**

## HOW DIFFERENT CAN CHRISTMAS BE?



**Article by Diana Gerbershagen of Cranbrook, age 17**

Christmas is the most beautiful time of year. The smell of cookies and turkey fills the room. The sound of Christmas songs create atmosphere. The sight of unique Christmas trees in every neighbourhood makes everyone smile. Still, Christmas traditions differ from country to country and from family to family and not every home eats turkey for dinner.

In my German-Russian home, Christmas is the time when the whole family gathers together. For us, Christmas is all about enjoying time together and having fun. We dress up festively and start cooking the morning of December 24th. While some people are just arriving, others are already drinking beer or wine and the house is full of voices. For lunch we usually begin with a salad as an appetizer. On the menu is baked chicken, rice and a carrot-mayonnaise salad. After eating so much, we go for a walk. And then, we come

to the best part: dessert. We have tons of chocolate pralines lying next to the cake... Napoleon. It is a layered puff pastry with vanilla cream in between each layer; chopped nuts and chocolate are the toppings. A delicious Russian tradition! From the afternoon till the evening, we tell each other stories and old memories. My family loves to play many games. I really like this tradition! The last thing we do is unpack presents from underneath the tree. Every family member makes a present for one person, so the present is individual. Slowly, we let the evening end. On the first and or the second Christmas day, we meet up again to go shopping, for a walk, bowling, to a restaurant or to hang out again.

Here in Canada, as an exchange student, I experienced some traditions that are similar and others that are not. On Christmas Eve we started preparing food for dinner and Christmas day. Everybody dressed up festively. In the evening the whole family came together and we had raclette. It was so good! Then Santa Claus drove by in a fire truck and waved to us. We ended the evening with a game of Settlers of Catan, a family tradition. On Christmas day, we looked in our Christmas stockings and opened presents from underneath the Christmas tree. It was followed by brunch and in the evening, we had turkey, stuffing, mashed potatoes and beans. This was an interesting new experience of celebrating Christmas!

Kootenay Teens! We need your submissions!

- 1) Hugs and Slugs: What things are driving you crazy in your community? Did something affirm your faith in humanity? We want to hear about it!
- 2) Do you have a problem or two? Send us a question for our advice column! All submissions anonymous! Email [mstorey@nelson.ca](mailto:mstorey@nelson.ca)

## HEARTWARMING STORY

**Book review by Israel Flesaker of Nelson, age 17**

I'll Give You the Sun by Jandy Nelson is a heartwarming coming-of-age story about family, secrets, love, loss, and art. It was one out of twelve books that I read last year that I rated five out of five stars which is saying something because I read seventy-seven books. I'll Give You the Sun is about twin siblings Jude and Noah who were once inseparable but are now estranged after a devastating event. It is from the perspective of Noah in their early years and Jude in their later years which leaves the readers to slowly piece together the cataclysmic event that led to their falling out.

It took me a bit to get into this book, and the first time I read it, I ended up only reading a little bit of it before I had to return it to the library. However, the second time I read it, I enjoyed it much more. This book slowly grew on me, and by the end I could not put it down. The ending was beautiful, but it left me reeling. Many truths were revealed, and everything fell into place in such a poignant yet beautiful way. My heart was aching but full.

Jandy Nelson's writing style was lyrical and emotional, and I really connected with her characters. I felt like I was right next to them, going through everything they were going through. Each relationship felt personal and relatable, and their familial relationships felt genuine and reminded me of my siblings. I love and recommend I'll Give You the Sun to everyone. Just bring some tissues if you cry easily like me.



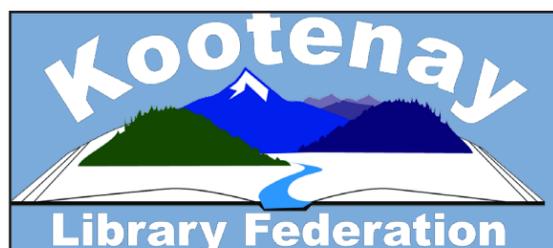
**SADNESS AND LAUGHTER**  
**Movie review by Landon Dales of Invermere, age 15**

You'll need to grab the tissues for *The Starling* starring Melissa McCarthy and Chris O'Dowd. Instead of her usual comedy, Melissa gives a great emotional performance. The story follows Lilly and Jack, a couple that lost their one-year-old to SIDS (Sudden Infant Death Syndrome) and struggle to recover from their loss. It's a raw look at how grief can appear and this movie does not try to pretty it up in any way. Get ready to cry from sadness and laughter at least five times while watching this, a great movie to watch with the family, and realize how important it is to keep the ones you love close.



## GET INVOLVED WITH KTN!

We are looking for teen journalists, photojournalists, graphic designers, artists, and reviewers. Interested, but never done it before? Don't worry! We can teach you! Contact Melodie Rae at the Nelson Public Library at [mstorey@nelson.ca](mailto:mstorey@nelson.ca).



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