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ISSUE 05
23 MARCH 2026

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Aotearoa Student Press Association
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EDITORIAL:

I Became Friends with a Thirty-One Year Old - And You Should Too

I met David in line for a concert in Auckland a couple months back. I was faced with the feat of attending a gig alone, as someone who is a victim of a relatively insufferable music taste and introvertism. Despite not having mates by my side, it wouldn't motivate me any further to face my fears and talk to a stranger. I arrived with a long wait before doors opened, and stood silently in a zig-zagged queue, feeling what felt like real sun for the first time this summer.

An hour into the wait, David and I accidentally made eye contact and he began to speak. I couldn't tell you what that conversation was about now - all that mattered is that we had found a way to make time speed along. In that queue, I learnt David and I have almost nothing in common.

David is American, I am a Kiwi. I finished my bachelor's in 2025 - David in 2016. I studied genetics and David studied marketing. And so on. Despite my surprise in learning he was ten years older than me, our subsequent night together at this concert taught me an important lesson about life and friendship. There's a lot to learn from people who share almost no similarities with you.

I can admit that my friendships reflect the world around me. I'm a University of Otago student who grew up in New Zealand - most of my friends are exactly the same. A transgenerational friendship is a rare sight in my circles, but it's been interesting to see when lived experiences are shared with each other, despite the gap. Despite being raised in completely different environments, it can be surprising just how much you can have in common.

Once doors opened, David and I managed to snag two free seats close to the stage, and briefly stopped the chat to experience a couple hours of musical immersion. Afterwards, we quickly debriefed the concert as we exited the venue, and parted ways. Unknown to me at the time was that this wouldn't be the last time I saw David. Just over a month later we were having drinks in Dunedin. We both reflected on the ways we had deconstructed past beliefs, our hands both clutched around ice-cold Corona bottles. Ōtepoti was the last place I would have expected to have such sincere conversations that changed my world view - with a thirty-one year old.

Another lesson I have learned from David and I's friendship are our differences in communication. David doesn't have social media, whereas my social life revolves around it. David uses WhatsApp for the same purpose I use Messenger. I downloaded WhatsApp for David. We used it to talk a little bit, and send pictures of the Laneway mosh when we tried (and failed) to meet up for a set. From our conversations I have learnt about the different slang we use, how we communicate ideas and convey information.

Despite the lack of things in common, gaining a friend in another generation has exposed me to life experience and knowledge I would have never gotten. One consequence of North D is almost everyone is below the age of twenty-five. While it's awesome when it comes to student culture, it has come at the cost of meeting more people whose life does not revolve around being an Otago student. David and I's friendship made me realise I have missed so many opportunities to form fulfilling friendships like these.

So even if you're shy, I encourage you to befriend a thirty-one year old man. Or a forty year old woman. Whoever, so long as they've got some life lessons to share. The world is your oyster, there's so much to learn outside the shackles of our cold flats, and secularity of student life. (Just make sure your new friend isn't crazy).

Gryffin Blockley ☺

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LETTERS

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for all booklovers, everywhere

Kia ora Critic,

Our flat has been in deep debate regarding the nature of the sexy prize that was awarded to the winner of your o-week phallic colouring competition. We unfortunately did not win the contest but have spent weeks speculating on what the mysterious sexy prize could be. We are humbly asking if we could please know what it was??

xoxo,
a sexy flat with no sexy prize

Editor's response: Vibrator.

Send a letter to the editors at critic@critic.co.nz to be in to win a \$25 UBS voucher.

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Kia ora Critic

Are we allowed to [REDACTED] second years? If not what can we do to fix them?

Many thanks,
:(

Editor's response: Nah, choose kindness, it's free.

kia ora critic people :3

i just had the greatest idea to combat the tight budget you guys just got what if we make the critic black and white instead of colour (maybe make it colourful for pride month, i say this as a queer myself), and make it pocket sized, like a6 or something? its fine we just have to buy magnifying glass or something not only is it cheaper for printing, but i can just carry it around! i just saved the critic!!!! :DDDDD (also can we please bring back the snaps section we had last year, those were so funny)

big love,
sarah xoxo

Editors Response: Snap of the week will be returning in some form soon, so keep your eyes peeled. As for the pocket-sized Critic with no colour, that might make the Designers cry.

Dearest Critic editors,

A shitty matter, if you will. The longer I spend at uni, the more the bathroom conditions appear to decline. Most notably, the mysterious migration of used toilet paper away from its natural habitat (the loo) and onto the cubicle floors of St David and The Link.

Don't get me wrong — I'm not expecting beauty in the women's shitter. But I also don't particularly want used toilet paper acting as an accessory to my Doc collection. Surely we can aim for the bare minimum: paper in the toilet, not on the floor.

Yours in mild disgust,
A concerned (and increasingly cautious) student

Editor's response: We concur, the St Daves toilets have not been looking too hot this semester.

LETTERS POLICY

Letters should be 150 words or fewer. The deadline is Thursday at 12pm. Get them into Critic by emailing us at critic@critic.co.nz. Letters of a serious nature directly addressing a specific group or individual will not be published under a pseudonym, except in extraordinary circumstances as negotiated with the Editors. Critic Te Arohi reserves the right to edit, abridge, or decline letters without explanation. Frequently published correspondents in particular may find their letters abridged or excluded. Defamatory or otherwise illegal material will not be printed. We don't fix the spelling or grammar in letters. If a letter writer looks stupid, it's because they are.

TLDRA!

It's OUSA Diversity Week this week!

The University launched the Food Safety Culture Lab, an initiative aiming to improve food safety in Aotearoa New Zealand.

The Capping Show charity for this year is OCASA (Ōtepoti Communities Against Sexual Assault).

UBar has raised the price of Speight's Summit Ultra Pints to \$9, in devastating news for low-carb beer frothers.

Almost 700 Otago Polytech students graduated a couple weeks ago!

Thursdays In Black have a stall on Thursday the 26th march from 11-2 about how to have drunk sex in the link.

'Student's drug stash found as cops overhear call to lost phone', the ODT reports

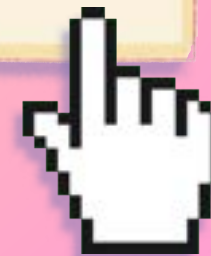
29th of March is the national day of action against recently-announced 'Move On Orders' by the Government.

University of Otago enrolments have increased this year by more than 5%.

The NZ Dental Students' Association is holding a Cultural Night on Friday March 27th, from 7:30-9PM. Taking place at the Hunter Centre, there will be over ten food stalls and some cultural performances.

COMSA is running a Wine and Cheese night on Thursday, 26th March. Tickets are \$15 per person, taking place at ADJØ from 8-10pm.

THIS PUBLICATION IS AI FREE.



The News

ISSUE 05

KAWEPŪRONGO

23/03/2026

SEMESTERS DROPPED TO 12 WEEKS FOR 2027

By Hanna Varrs
Co-Editor // critic@critic.co.nz



[Editor's Note: Ofc this happens right as I'm leaving uni]

This just in – the University of Otago is planning to change our semesters from 13 weeks to 12 starting from 2027. The saved week will be used as what they're calling a "reading week" for students.

It's well known that Otago's hick cousins, Lincoln and Canterbury University, both get three-week semester breaks. Up North, all five Universities (Vic, Waikato, Auckland, AUT and Massey) get two weeks. Otago students have always drawn the short straw on that front, but that's all about to change. Sort of.

We won't actually be blessed with an extra week of midsem break, but rather a "reading week". The idea for this reading week seems to have stemmed from feedback given by students requesting time to integrate and strengthen their learning, as well as catch up on assessments. Despite saying that he was disappointed that it wasn't an "actual break", second year Accounting major, Will, seemed pleased to hear the news. "I think it's a great idea," he told Critic Te Ārohi. "Lots of my papers seem to put tests on the week back from midsem break [...] I feel like I often end up using the entire break to study for those tests. So it'll be good to hopefully have some extra time."

When asked about whether students would have lectures or tutorials and whether teaching staff would be permitted to set due dates for assessments over reading weeks, James kept it mysterious, referencing the need to bring Otago University into line with other universities. "We are also responding to longstanding requests from students for a dedicated reading week to consolidate learning and catch up on assessments within the mid-semester break. More detail will come in [the] future."

While now confirmed, the idea for the change first came on to Critic's radar in April 2025. Around November of 2024, the proposal had been put to the University Senate, driven by concerns about special examinations, graduation timing, and StudyLink processing. While student misery about having such a measly break was not cited at the time as a driver, it seems the University may have heard our pleas.

While some details are yet to be fleshed out about how the reading week will operate, some students are concerned that lecturers will just reallocate work back into the rest of the semester. Third year Management student, Maria, told Critic that she hoped that it wouldn't "just create more work for [staff] during teaching periods", and that she hoped lecturers would find ways to deliver their content "efficiently" despite the shrink.

When approached with these concerns, James told Critic that the change would "require us to be thoughtful and strategic in how we adapt our papers to ensure academic standards are maintained within slightly fewer teaching weeks", and that there was ongoing work to address this. Guess we'll all just have to wait and see.



SECOND YEAR LAW CAMP CANCELLED "FOR THE FORESEEABLE FUTURE"

By Hanna Varrs
Co-Editor // critic@critic.co.nz



R.I.P ig

Law Camp was a fixture of the second year law experience at the University of Otago. Hosted by the Society of Otago University Law Students (SOULS), they quietly cancelled for this year's iteration of the camp. The event was traditionally a getaway to the country – featuring skits, drinking, no phones, bonding activities and jokes only someone willingly taking a degree with an 100% exam would find funny. If you weren't lucky enough to stay in a cabin, getting up close and personal with some hardwood floors and a UniPol sleeping mat was part of the experience too.

According to a joint statement provided to Critic Te Ārohi from the Dean of Law, Associate Professor Bridgette Toy-Cronin and the SOULS president, Jack Evans, Law Camp was replaced with two events, Law Day and Law Night. These events both occurred on the Friday of the second week of the semester, after classes finished for the day. Second years were treated to "activities on the inflatables, cricket, backyard sports/activities and a sausage sizzle. Law Night was held at a licenced venue in town with a DJ."

Bridgette and Jack explained that in October 2025, the Faculty and SOULS ran a joint student survey and there was support for a "more inclusive event" from the student cohort. "SOULS believes in the need for a key event for second years to get to know their cohort outside of the lecture theatre," they continued, describing Law Day as the "blueprint" for an "inclusive and relaxed day". (Critic is yet to ever see a relaxed law student). Students were invited to take part in activities that focused on team-building, as "Law Day is the event where friendships are made that last through law school!"

But what do taurira think? "Out of the people I talked to about it, there was basically just a group consensus that it was super mid," second year law student Maia* told Critic. "Everyone just kinda wished they'd gone to the beach instead on what was pretty much the only Friday with good weather we've had so far this sem." She felt unsure as to why SOULS thought "a bouncy castle was gonna excite a bunch of second year law students", but appreciated the exec were doing the best with the resources that they were given. Maia admitted that it was "pretty funny" watching Bridgette get beaten in inflatable jousting.



Only 70 of the 300 students in second year law attended Law Day. Maia pinned this due to the event being pretty late notice. "[O]bviously law camp is pretty infamous, and with the fact that it went ahead last year I think quite a lot of us had assumed it would this year as well." When asked when advertising began, Bridgette and Jack explained to Critic that as a student run event, the "organisation [for Law Day/Night] didn't occur until the SOULS exec was back on campus. Advertising began during week one of semester." Formal advertising was done in lectures the week of the event (week two). Maia speculated that this meant a lot of people couldn't make Law Day or Night "due to work or other prior commitments". Hard to compete with the roster of flatwarmings at the start of the year.

Despite it all, the Faculty of Law and SOULS do reckon that replacing Law Camp with Law Day and Night for the "foreseeable future" was the right thing to do. "Law Camp has become increasingly difficult to run. With inflating costs and decreasing attendance, SOULS made the "tough decision" to cancel Law Camp. Bridgette and Jack told Critic that "shifting away from Law Camp better aligns with SOULS' kaupapa of inclusivity and moving beyond expensive events that put law students out of pocket."

Maia agreed that this reasoning was "totally valid", but still felt like SOULS could do more with an event to bring second years together. "There has to be some other option that actually gets students excited to socialise within the cohort without the price tag." Critic hopes they snag an invite to the inflatable jousting next time.

*Names changed.

Cancelled! LAW CAMP



TAMATHA PAUL TALKS HOUSING

Plus: Trauma Dump your Flating Horror Stories

By Stella Weston

News Editor // news@critic.co.nz



Tamatha Paul, Green MP for Wellington Central, and Party Spokesperson for Housing (among other things), caught up with Critic Te Ārohi for a chat about the Green's upcoming housing campaign.

Housing is something that affects everyone, whether you're "a student living in a shit flat constantly getting sick, someone who's rough sleeping at the moment... [or] a young person who doesn't want to rent for the rest of their life." Tamatha described the housing policy as four pillars that would address the overwhelming need in New Zealand today: ending homelessness, fixing renters rights, building public housing, and helping people to buy their first home.

Tamatha wanted to launch this campaign in Ōtepoti, "because when people think about the quintessential 'shit student flat' they're imagining houses on certain Dunedin streets." She is well aware of the massive number of horror stories that come out of the Dunedin flating experience, and how often they're brushed off as some kind of rite of passage. Tamatha said this concept and the fact that it's so normal has always "pissed her off", and we "absolutely have to reject that. How can you do well at your studies, and be able to focus and absorb what you're learning, when your living environment is constantly making you sick."

"On top of a loan that you're going to be paying off for a large chunk of your life, on top of the fact that there are not that many jobs for you once you graduate, we shouldn't also expect you to live in poverty while you get that degree." While it all sounds a little depressing when put that way, Tamatha described the following policies as having "something for everyone." And there is certainly a lot for taurira.

The first of these important aspects of the campaign is a cap on rents, ensuring that landlords can't increase their rent by anything more than 2% each year. Currently landlords don't need any real reason to increase rent "crazy amounts", and the increasing need for student housing in Dunedin only leaves us vulnerable and desperate. Tamatha added that this cap would "mean you'd have more money to live your best life and have a good time studying."

They are also looking to implement a rental warrant of fitness scheme, which Tamatha noted "really appeals to students." She is adamant that there should be a strong standard for anyone looking to rent their house out. "It shouldn't be mouldy, or growing mushrooms, or lack ventilation or heating," and while these may sound dramatic, in Ōtepoti if it's not you living under these conditions, it's someone you know.

Tamatha emphasised that after putting so much time, effort, and money into our education, it's completely reasonable to expect to own a home in our futures. Or at least to expect that it might be possible. "Students are working towards their degree, imagining the lives they want for themselves [...] I think part of that is owning a home at some point." She added that people often forget that "students are doing us a service" by educating ourselves and stepping into crucial roles in society, and asked why we should "have a society and Government that further punishes students for doing things that benefit all of us." Instead, she argued that we should be supported, most of all in the rental market.

Tamatha added that housing should be treated as a "human right, and not as a commodity". Implementing policies such as a capital gains tax means that people don't see housing as a "business opportunity". Instead, she reckons the tax would posit owning a home as something accessible and give more Kiwis the security that comes with home ownership.

Critic asked how soon students could expect to see these changes in a hypothetical world. Tamatha said they could be done overnight. They would essentially cost nothing, other than the monitoring that would go into the rental WOF scheme. Other changes, like building public housing, are certainly more expensive and time consuming, but are also needed as "that's what's going to bring house prices down, house all of our people, and create jobs in the construction industry."



Tamatha believes that Universities and Polytechnics absolutely have a role to play here, and thinks they should be "role modeling what it looks like to be a good landlord, and providing affordable and healthy student accommodation wherever possible." She agreed that halls of residence are crucial for the University experience, but pointed out \$20k for accommodation was a tough ask for many families. She wants universities to be thinking about how to expand beyond just first year, and how to help students deal with a broken rental market.

While Tamatha does think that some mainstream media had certainly helped to shape and normalise the narrative that students should be struggling for 'the experience', she believes that media has also helped shed light on the level of student poverty around the country. She also thinks that student media has been instrumental in showing the quality of living conditions that students are facing. Student media challenges whether these conditions should be normal, and holds politicians to account for "allowing things to continue the way they are." We love a little flattery over at Critic.

Tamatha acknowledged that "life is really hard, and really expensive at the moment". For frustrated students, the biggest thing you can do right now is sign the open letter below to show how much demand there is for policies like these. Whichever way you vote, this campaign undeniably favours students, and demonstrating the demand for these policies will encourage other progressive parties to think about what they can do for renters. According to the 2023 census, there are 1.5 million renters in New Zealand – in theory a powerful group more than able to influence policy changes "if we get organised." And although students are typically a bit unorganised, this one matters.

Share the open letter. Lobby your local Members of Parliament. Share your rental horror stories with Tamatha. "If a landlord has ever put your rent up unexpectedly, evicted you for no good reason, subjected you to living in something that a dog wouldn't even live in, let us know." These stories show what it's like to be renting in Aotearoa in 2026.

"The Green Party is the party for renters," she told Critic, giving her final pitch to students. Don't forget that there's an election this year! "We're not trying to play the middle, we're not trying to fight over the landlord class like Labour or National, we're putting ourselves out there as the party for renters. We are the party that is not going to treat housing as an investment scheme for people. If people support that they should vote Green."

Rental horror stories:

tamatha.paul@parliament.govt.nz

Sign the open letter:

https://action.greens.org.nz/housing_2026





YOUTH ORCHESTRA UNLOCKS NEW SOUND

International artist tells Critic the (piano) key to success

By Stella Weston
News Editor // news@critic.co.nz



In a grand collaboration with Dunedin Youth Orchestra, international performer and composer Daniel Verstappen (yes, a relative of the F1 driver) will be playing at Hanover Hall on the 1st of April. Belgium-born Daniel fell in love with New Zealand when he visited two years ago, and he hopes this collaboration will inspire and encourage the next generation.

The collaboration will involve five days of rehearsing with the Youth Orchestra, and then a final concert performance. The concert will mix Daniel's original compositions with film music that everyone knows – such as Hans Zimmer's soundtrack of the film *Interstellar*. Then he'll also be spicing it up with more modern takes on classical pieces such as Tchaikovsky's *Swan Lake*.

Daniel emphasised that the concert “won't be too heavy”, and he finds that most people like his music because of how he reimagines classical works for the modern and commercial world. Daniel enjoys working with student musicians, as he himself went through a musical education when he was very young. He feels strongly that young musicians need to be “inspired and surrounded by good coaches”, and that someone “from another world” like himself coming in to change things up can make young people “feel part of something bigger.”

Arranging and conducting Daniel's concert is Dr. Joe Harrop, director of production company Project Zed. Harrop is the brain behind the collaboration with the Dunedin Youth Orchestra, giving them the chance to work with someone with

Daniel's international experience and education.

This visit is also not just about performing – but also creating new music. Daniel's music is very visual, drawing a lot of inspiration from nature. He tells Critic that the taonga that is Aotearoa's landscapes and scenery is “also part of this journey” as a result.

It wasn't just the nature of Aotearoa that lured Daniel to swing by either. He also loved the quality of the food and wine, losing his steak and cheese pie virginity with no regrets. Daniel lived in the Canary Islands for a time growing up, and being back on an island like New Zealand and being surrounded by the sea was “really quite special!”

Daniel also added that he was always interested in seeing how cultures can work together, and he'd seen that in New Zealand. In Auckland he invited a Polynesian choir on stage, an experience he could only describe as “beautiful”. He wants to take some time to focus and use his love of New Zealand to create music that reflects it.

Having played the piano since he was five years old, Daniel now lives off touring, a privilege he is extremely grateful for. He said that while he's “had a long journey, that's just how it goes.” And now, through his work and this collaboration in particular, he wants to show us young people that “it's possible to make it if you have that dream. Really wanting something [...] That's the most important thing.”



DEAF RACCOON

Deaf Raccoon are one of Dunedin's most exciting new alternative punk bands, and are a testament to the importance of having all-ages gigs. Having only played their first gig in April of last year, the four-piece have already released a single, played the Rockquest National Finals, and made noise at the Dunedin City Council's New Year's Eve show at the Octagon. The four-piece are not even out of high school yet, and are already creating music catchier than most of us could ever dream of making.

Critic Te Ārohi caught up with the band right before their sold out show at Pioneer Hall, over in Port Chalmers. This is where they played on a hefty lineup of Dunedin's best young bands; Sogg, Talking Furniture, Eris, and SEEK HELP!

Deaf Raccoon consists of Noelle (vocals/guitar, she/they), Chris (bass/keys, he/him), Jamie (drums, he/him), and newest addition Benji (guitar, he/him). The members have known each since “back in the sandpits” as Jamie playfully puts it, and have been making music since about the age of 12 – in various bands that Noelle refused to name. After cycling through guitarists, the trio of Noelle, Chris, and Jamie became Deaf Raccoon. The name “Raccoon” came from an old band name generator website, and “Deaf” coming from the fact that Noelle “can't hear shit.” (Please wear earplugs, y'all).

The band speaks fondly of their involvement in the Amped Music Project, a music mentoring programme for high schoolers, which Benji describes as “how you go from your bedroom to going to gigs”. Through this programme, the young musos were able to gain valuable knowledge and connections in the local music scene, and were able to really soak in the experience of playing live. “This [all ages] scene probably happened because of Amped,” says Noelle, and Jamie agreed that we're “very lucky to have something like Amped in Dunedin. Not many other cities have something so supportive.”

When asked about their musical influences, each member had their own list, including highlights such as Weatherday, Built to Spill, Geese, and Muse. Jamie said his “biggest inspiration is the tambourine player from the Brian Jonestown Massacre. He wears very cool glasses, I aspire to be like him.” These kids know ball. Given this diverse set of music inspirations, the band struggled to pigeonhole themselves into a specific genre, with Noelle eventually going with the description: “the punkest a not-punk band could be.”

Their debut single, “Burns Like Hell”, begins with Noelle's whispered vocals accompanied by a scratchy guitar, before opening up into the catchiest hook you'll hear this year. Eventually the track breaks into a mesmerising waltz section before a grand finale that leaves you wondering what the hell you were doing at age 17.

This track is just a glimpse into the band's kinetic live show, and already shows hints of their constantly-developing musical arsenal. When playing live, the band incorporates various keys and electronic elements courtesy of Chris, and the addition of Benji as a second guitarist has already elevated the band's musical dynamic.

Deaf Raccoon are proving to be a must-watch band amongst the Dunedin scene, and they're showing no signs of slowing down. They're deep in the writing process for an upcoming EP, which they are hoping to release “later this year, if we're lucky”. They've also been announced as the opener for the upcoming Pearly* x IVY show in May, which is sure to be a party.

Deaf Raccoon's debut single “Burns Like Hell” is out now! Follow them on Instagram @deaf.raccoonband to keep up with their latest gigs and releases.

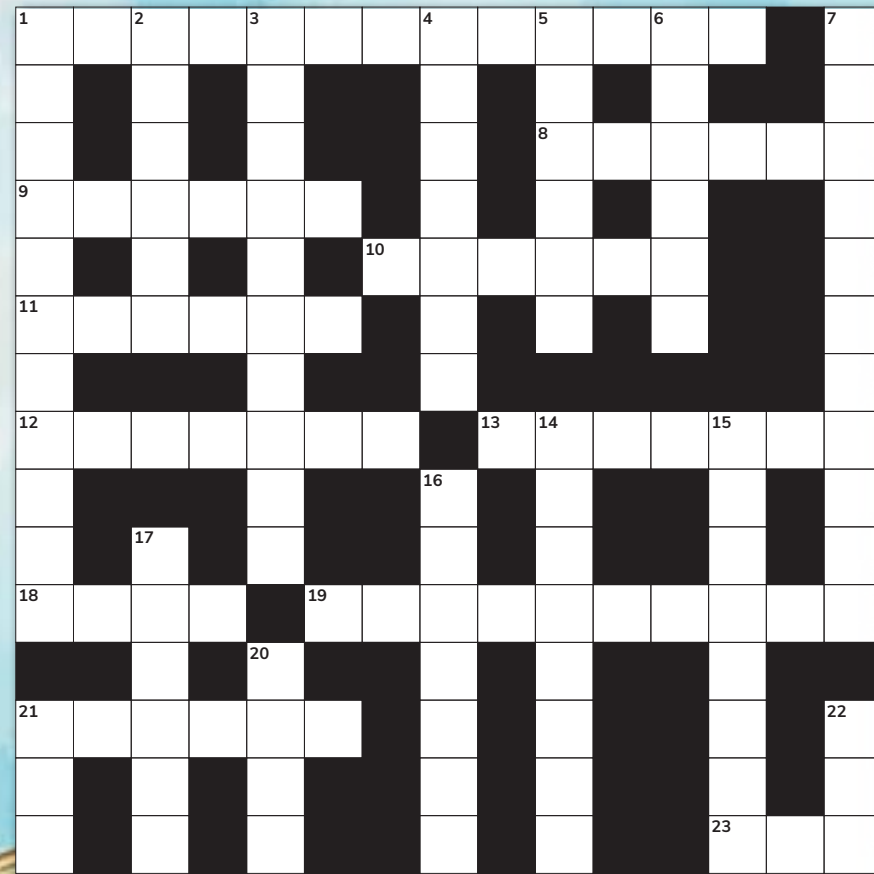
ACROSS

- 1 Metal band responsible for songs like 'Chop Suey'
- 8 Broadcasting
- 9 Book of the Bible containing hymns and such
- 10 Common version of Google
- 11 Doing nothing
- 12 Teased and mocked
- 13 Mythological warrior women
- 18 Transferred from parent to offspring
- 19 Cool, venomous spider species (2)
- 21 A Reddit moderator might wear one
- 23 Molecule carrying genetic instructions

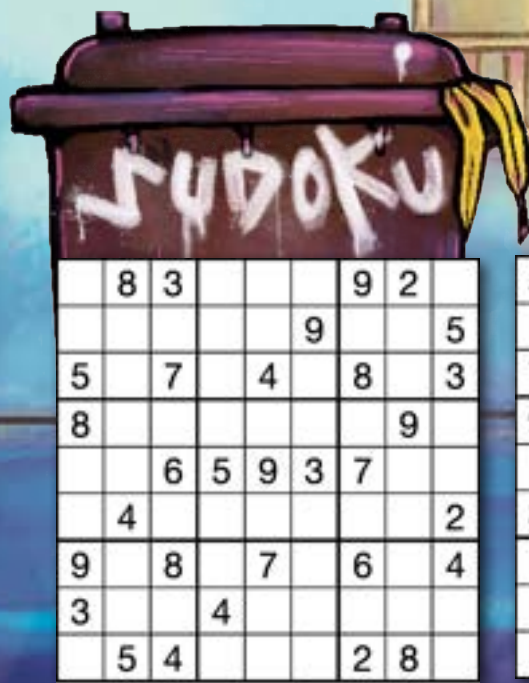
DOWN

- 1 Store thievery
- 2 To lie down with your limbs spread
- 3 Removed from a game show
- 4 Last year's theme for The Capping Show, 'How to Train Your _____'
- 5 Smaug, for example
- 6 The W in 'WB'
- 7 Show about a blue jay and a raccoon
- 14 Discount
- 15 Expired
- 16 Song lyric: 'Sweet home _____'
- 17 Director of '300' and 'Watchmen' (surname)
- 20 Sideways-walking critter
- 21 Annoying insect
- 22 Can be found in a pod

Crossword St



FIND ANSWERS ON CRITIC.CO.NZ



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HARD



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- RAINBOW
- LUCKY
- CHARM
- SHAMROCK
- LEPRECHAUN
- OSMOSIS
- VOTING
- BARS
- RACCOON
- INSTAGRAM
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A Personal Essay Dissecting The Male Loneliness Epidemic

By Harry Almey

CW: Mentions of suicide

The male loneliness epidemic. As a man with many many women friends, I've heard plenty of discussion about it. "The male loneliness epidemic isn't real, y'know," my colleague told me one day. "Guys suck anyways, they deserve to be alone." In another instance, a good friend was shitting on men, all jolly with me in the car. I snapped at her, but I wasn't sure why — it was obviously a joke. She was doubly confused, because when she said "fuck all men," she earnestly hadn't meant me.

I think the issue with framing male loneliness as an epidemic is that epidemics require a cure — and so, a doctor. The inference often made in this framing is that men are owed a cure from someone. We assume that someone is a woman, and the cure is their attention. In the great Internet world, male loneliness is always made about romance. It goes on and on: Reddit threads filled with wanton incels, podcasters preaching a return to "traditional" gender roles in relationships. "Oh, the agonising torture, women won't date me!". But no joy lies down that path — I think it's a load of drivel. However, I have come to appreciate that there seems to be increasing demand for it. The conversation is being spun into webs by fucks like Andrew Tate.

Call me naive, but when I think of male loneliness, I think of the suicide rate. Men are more than twice as likely to kill themselves as women in Aotearoa. For every 26 women who took their own lives in the 2024/25 financial year, 79 men did. In that time, per 100,000 people, there was a 10.4% gap between the male and female suicide rates. Look to your left, look to your right. There is undeniably a social problem.

I've come to realise that I came from a culture that made hateful rhetoric and battles of the sexes feel alien to me. My wider family is from Norfolk in the UK, from traditionally fishing-centric villages. Historically, the men were responsible for the vital voyage to sea, so they never kept a dime. Instead, they forked it all over to the wife, who allowed them a small drinking allowance. Anything more risked drowning with the husband. The women looked after all of the things their men

held dear: the house, the money, the community, the children. It took strength to provide that cohesion. My ancestors respected each other, and slogged together. I think this is why I was surprised when so many women heard male loneliness, they saw red. I get it, upon reflection. But no, this isn't your fault, and isn't yours to fix. But nevertheless, this epidemic spreads.

I have my diagnosis, and my remedies, but only because I carry years of being a man (whole life, in fact), observing how Aotearoa responds to men's mental health. I've come to the conclusion that men are just socialised differently. Many Kiwis attend single sex schools, not raised alongside their opposite sex and are deprived of the valuable social lessons co-ed schools teach. I think many men scoff at the idea of a male loneliness epidemic too, which isn't on: we talk about men's mental health as easily as we dismiss guys sobbing their guts out. The echoes of early settler and post-war culture — chopping down trees and never talking about your feelings — can be heard loud and clear. Just work, work and work, and the awkward emotions will stay at bay.

I'm not above or beyond the social lessons men are taught. Casual affectionate touch between male friends still feels a little weird, and remains infrequent. With the tools we have, we try to be there for the bro's. But one day, a mate might tell you they tried to take their own life. He would have made 79 into 80. He will be bawling his eyes out, in pain, and you won't know how to comfort him. Maybe like me, you'll say nothing. And there is nothing more regretful than that. I just sat there, on my thumbs, mute and useless.

People in this place are vulnerable, and it can be hard to know how to respond. I think some people might picture an aisle dividing traditional gender roles, and feel scared that reaching across that aisle would make you any less feminine or masculine. Sure, stereotypes are stereotypes for a reason — men are often expected to be stoic and bold, provider and protector, while women are emotionally available and nurturers. But anyone

who tells you that "femininity" is making society, or you weak, is lying. Being emotionally open and available is essential in learning how to take care of one another as men, and we should strive towards it. It takes strength, as does nurturing and protecting. This lesson alleviates loneliness. Reach across the aisle and within you. We'd be fools not to see that necessity as we wage war for men's mental health. Blokes are deserving of a shoulder to cry on, and a friend to take them seriously.

I'm, admittedly, not a particularly blokey guy, but I think being comfortable with that helps me embrace masculinity on my own terms. I look up to positive male role models in my life, such as my dear old Dad. I remember him walking with great purpose to find someone who had abused someone, and have a "chat". Indeed, I've learnt that masculinity strongly features that red-hot desire to strangle those who abuse women in word and deed. Because of the positive masculine influences in my life, male friends who did vile things were dropped like a rock.

On the flip side, I lean into my female friendships a lot. I still remember a sleepover (the only time men really talk about their feelings) and a friend said I was "one of the girls." That was not entirely accurate, but not offensive either. I saw them able to do things I struggled with, I asked for remedies, and the women in my life over the years have had an incredibly healthy impact on me. I became unafraid of reaching across the aisle with loneliness survival tactics. I borrow catching social coffees with mates from my sister, for example. My mother always reminds me to ask my friends the important questions. My masculinity includes social lessons from the women who have taught me, one of many guiding lights. One cannot live without the other.

But I'm not "one of the girls." They have a special bond that leaves you outside of the inner circle, as would surely be the case for a girl on an otherwise all-boys sports team. I am a man, and comfortable with that. Yin needs yang, but yin is not yang. Sure, I don't know what I'd do without those lessons — I don't actually know what the average lad's-lad, the target of this piece, does to stave off the lonely abyss. Drink, guaffaw, and chill out, probably. Plus I'm not one-in-a-million, and yet the epidemic rages through our community. But here's the clumsy confession from me — I think blokes are jealous of the bond women have with each other. We don't even have kiki's, whatever those are. Men aren't women.

We can't have that exactly because we have different journeys. Learning from each other makes us better men, but we need more in the self-treatment of this epidemic.

There exists a dichotomy where society was built around championing masculinity, and male roles are expected to be providers and leaders. But at the same time, there are clearly wide-spread feelings of loneliness and isolation that many men do not feel like they can voice.

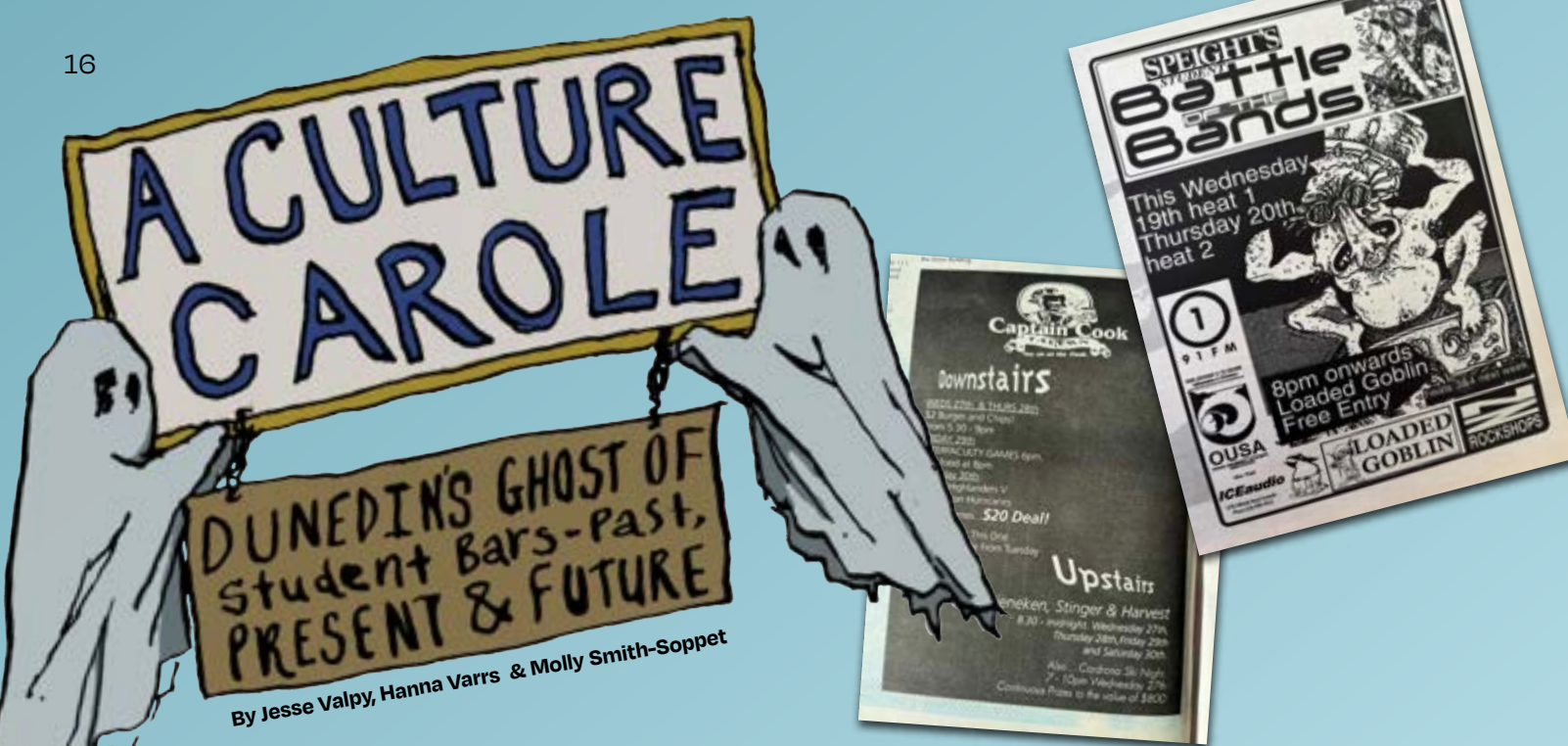
So, how do men attack the issue of loneliness from this side of the aisle? It's our community, and our lives. Let's get chopping wood, but find time to talk in between. Join a tramping club, a hockey team, or a theatre project. Find that downtime between practice, and get to know people. See them, hear them, even if it feels silly or boring. You'll become familiar with who they are, and they'll be more comfortable around you. Compete — arrive to practice early, put your all into your team. Elbow the opposition on the pitch, and laugh and talk about it with them afterwards. Those who sweat together are forced to feel for each other, and crucially care. You won't be able to be vulnerable overnight, but the people will be there, looking out for you. Because, through that community, and those shared bonds, it won't feel so hard to say you're feeling a bit rough.

Grab a mate for a coffee yarn, people. Don't be strangers. We will march on into that sickly sweet sunset. Together.

Free call or text 1737 anytime to access mental health support, or you can call YouthLine on 0800 376 633 or text 234. On campus there are a plethora of support options available: Chaplains, OUSA Student Support and Student Health. And keep looking out for your mates.



Illustrated by Eddie Fenton



Dick is a Castle Street man, through and through.

Everyone knows a Dick. If you've spent longer than ten minutes North of the campus, you've probably met one. Dick lives in a mouldy flat halfway down Castle, swears flat parties are the pinnacle of student culture, and believes that smashing a bottle in the street is the ultimate form of self expression.

Bars? Dick isn't having a bar of it. Too many rules. Too many bouncers. Too many people telling you that maybe you shouldn't climb behind the DJ booth if you have 3 drinks in one hand. No, Dick prefers the freedom of the flat party: the sticky kitchen floor, the Bluetooth speaker that cuts out at every beat drop, the bathroom door that hasn't locked since Ori. This, Dick insists loudly and often, is the real Otago culture.

But Dick is wrong.

On one particularly mystical Saturday night, as bass rattled the windows and a lone Campus Watch car idled patiently on the end of Castle, Dick was about to receive a visit. Not from the cops. From the Ghosts of Student Bars Past, Present, and Future.

With music blaring over the beginning weeks of the semester, and partying at an all time high, the veil of Dunedin's student culture is at its thinnest. The Ghosts have appeared to show Dick what he's missing: actual establishments with a roof, a door, and a duty manager to cut you off if you get too rowdy. It was a place to drink, dance, flirt, and make questionable life decisions before going home at a semi-reasonable hour. At least that's what the Ghosts said. Now we're left with Castle Street, and people like Dick.

So tonight, in the spirit of Dickens and social commentary, the Ghosts are here to show Dick what Dunedin night life was, is, and what it might be again.

Dick cracks a fullcream Speights. And the Ghost begins.

The Ghost of Student Bars Past:

The Ghost takes Dick to a conversation he's heard a hundred times before: an Otago alumni reminiscing about their glory days. John, who graduated in 1969, kept it simple. "A typical weekend night always started at the pub," John says to anyone who will listen, as they attempt to feign mild interest. During the late 60s, John had a plethora of places to choose from. Whether he was in for a long night at the Gardies or getting in the mosh with all of the other munters at the Cook, there was a pub to host any occasion.

It was a time where having a few drinks almost always meant leaving the flat. "People didn't preload at home in those days. You'd go to the pub first, have a few drinks there and then on the way to the party you might stop at the bottle shop to buy a beer to take along." Dick raises an eyebrow at that. The pub was never an afterthought, or somewhere you only go when Mum and Dad's credit card was around, the Ghost explains, looking nostalgic. It was the centre of gravity that the student's night out revolved around. The Ghost leads Dick out of the living room.

Stepping out of the door leads Dick to a wet street, lined by rows of flats. He can hear laughter and voices nearby. By the 90's, the night out rituals had evolved slightly. The Ghost takes him to meet Andrea, who graduated from Otago in 1993. Her typical Saturday night piss up started with drinks at her flat or a friend's place. After a few and feeling good, you could wander into town and pick whatever bar you felt like that night. "One of the best things about going out in Dunedin back then was simply how social it was. You could walk into almost any bar or club and see heaps of people you knew, have a few drinks, dance, and catch up. It was pretty easy-going and a lot of fun," Andrea says. Dick listens. Properly listens.

As the Ghost guides him through the past, the buildings rise again. Dick can see it all.

The Cook, which is rumoured to boast the busiest ATM in New Zealand, with hoards of students lining up to shell out for another pint. *The Gardies* pulses with life before its eventual closure and renovation. *The Oriental* – later known as *The Ori* and then *Starters* – filled with generations of students. Then, just as quickly as it appeared, it's gone. Brick by brick, Starters is demolished. A car park takes its place. Even Dick looks a little emotional watching on.

Dunedin's drinking culture was renowned back then. Students have always known how to have a good time, but the chaos had to go and had to find a new home, the Ghost tells Dick. The Ghost urges Dick forward, and we arrive in 2026.

The Ghost of Student Bars Present:

Dick finds his voice. "See? This is what I'm talking about." The Ghost of Student Bar Present says nothing. Instead, the Ghost shows us an average Saturday night.

It no longer begins in a warm pub surrounded by your friends. Instead, it unfolds across the suburb of North Dunedin, where students huddle in damp courtyards around shitty speakers. The DJ is someone's friend's flatmate who bought

decks off of Facebook Marketplace two weeks ago. The bathroom is nonfunctional and people have taken to pissing in the corner of the garden. Unfortunately, that is where the Ghost and Dick are watching, so they shuffle slightly out of the way. The walls are sweating too, which can't be good, because even Dick looks a little grossed out. Eventually, the whole function spills onto the street – it's a disaster waiting to happen.

Students have noticed this. The Ghost tells Dick that some have been outspoken about the issue, like Hold On To Your Friends (HOTYF), a student-led organisation focused on improving Dunedin's drinking culture in line with the Sophia Charter. The charter was created after the tragic death of Sophia Crestani at a flat party, striving to improve safety, encourage students to look out for each other and create safer spaces to socialise. The Ghost brings us to meet HOTYF executive member, Maddy Barnes, who tells us that HOTYF is an "incredibly pro student bar" organisation, working closely in line with the Sophia Charter. The Ghost nods wisely.

"The lack of student bars is seriously concerning," Maddy continues. "It breeds a really dangerous flat culture, especially on Castle Street, with people rushing to one host to the point where it gets really dangerous and overwhelming."

We've all been there – losing your mates at some random house party, or stuck in the mosh at Castle Street. It's fun till it's not. Going out should be fun and chaotic, but not unsafe. There should be protections in place, the Ghost suggests. HOTYF actually runs street clean ups, bar takeovers (involving local DJ's performing in safe environments) and flat chats, during which second and third years are given the opportunity to speak up about their experiences with flat culture.

"Dunedin gets a bad rep," Maddy says, as we begin to feel the pull of the Ghost of Student Bar Future. "But really, its issues lie at the core."

As she speaks, the Ghost begins to pull Dick forward again. Dick starts to finally understand what has been happening all along – what the core of student culture Dunedin is. When you remove the bar, the party and culture doesn't disappear. It just moves somewhere that is less equipped to deal with it.

The Ghost of Student Bars Future:

The air shifts as the future unfolds before Dick and the Ghost of Student Bars Future. Dick begins to feel slightly motion sick.

In 2025, the Otago University Students' Association president Daniel Leamy ran a successful campaign partly built on the promise to bring back a student bar. It struck a chord with students who have grown increasingly aware that something has been lost from Dunedin's social landscape.

Daniel, compelled to appear before Dick by the Ghost, tells us that a student bar remains an important focus for him and OUSA. "It wasn't just to make noise, it's a personal issue for me," he explains. "I've seen firsthand how unsafe many flat parties can be."

For him, the goal isn't just to provide students with a place to have a good time. Without centralised, monitored spaces for students to gather, the risks associated with large flat parties continue to escalate. Harm reduction, the Ghost mouths to Dick.

"We've seen the damage and loss of life which has occurred, and very little being done to responsibly improve the situation." The Ghost nudges Dick, telling him to ask the question he's starting to wonder. Dick wants to know what stops a student bar resurgence in the future.

As with most things, the answer is money. Running a genuine student bar means doing it properly: ensuring drinks are affordable, staff are well-trained, and safety measures are in place. That level of infrastructure requires funding, which could potentially come from an increase in the student services fee (the Ghost shakes its head vigorously), or greater financial support from the University itself (the Ghost cheers). "It needs to be up there on the Uni's priority list," Daniel says.

Student culture doesn't exist in a vacuum, the Ghost explains. It's shaped by the spaces that exist – or don't – for students to gather. If those spaces disappear, the culture will adapt, often in ways that are less safe, less inclusive, and far less resilient to change.

The question isn't whether students will drink, because they will – they always have. That's the lesson the Ghost has imparted. The question is where they will drink. The Ghost shows us two futures: in one, students drinking in overcrowded flats, surrounded by broken furniture and unpredictable crowds. In the other, we can see them in spaces built for exactly that purpose.

Right now, the future leans largely toward the first option. But it doesn't have to stay that way.

Dick's Return

Dick is quiet when the Ghost returns him to his Castle Street flat. His flatmates are waiting for him as he walks through the door. For the first time in a long time, he has nothing to say. He has seen the past, felt the present and stared into the future of student bars. The Ghost turns to him. Dick looks down, somber. He thought chaos was the culture. That louder meant better. That more people meant more fun. But now he is starting to see the difference. The way a place for it all to happen could help.

The two possible futures flicker in front of him, and as Dick stares at them he realises one feels familiar, but the other feels... better. He turns to his flatmates. "Reckon we head into town?", he whispers.

It's quiet, small and barely a decision at all. But a couple of his mates glance up. Someone shrugs and says "Yeah, could be the move." It's a start.

If Dunedin's past proved anything, it's that the student bars once worked. While they weren't perfect, still sticky, still chaotic, they provided a safe space for the culture. Maybe we will find something like the stories the Ghost showed us.

Somewhere, not too far away, Dick stands at a bar – not smashing bottles, but waiting for a pint. The Ghost lingering in the corner. Watching. Just in case he forgets the lessons he learnt on this Saturday night.



GARFIELD AND OODIE

A JIM DAVIS FILM



CARINA PAGE

HOW TO CURATE THE PERFECT

Instagram Dump

BECAUSE NOTHING ON SOCIALS IS REAL

The Instagram dump is not just a post – it's an art form. A carefully curated collection of snapshots of your life. Whether it's blurry photos, sunburnt faces, or suspiciously aesthetic food photos, they all communicate one simple message: *I have a better life than you, see?*

Now that the dust of summer has settled, the sunburn has turned to tan, and your camera roll is bursting at the seams, the time is perfect for a summer throwback dump.

Here's how to do it properly:

Step One: Deciding the overall vibe

Instagram gives you 20 slides, but that doesn't mean you should use them all. Not even your mum cares enough about what you're doing to look at 20 pictures of you. Sorry! It's harsh, but true. The sweet spots are:

7-10 photos: Is effortlessly cool, gives enough content to tell a story but short enough to keep people engaged.

11-14 photos: Is a true dump. Has more potential to be chaotic, but still works. Be warned, it can be easily overdone: too many photos from the same night is BORING, unless it's a festival, birthday, or event dump. No one wants to see you and your three friends in different poses in front of the same background featured four times in one dump – rein it in.

Anything under 5 is not a dump. It's just a post. Don't spit on the name of Insta dumps.

Step Two: The Perfect Order (AKA 'The Recipe')

The biggest mistake people make is posting their dump in chronological order. Please take more care in curating the vibes than that. It's just lazy.

Slide One: The Hook

This photo is the most important. Not only will it be the first thing people see, but it will also be the one that shows up on your page. Some solid options are a solo pic where you look fire emoji, something visually aesthetic, or a good group photo. If you go with the last option, please, for the love of God, do not post the 'silly photo' as the hook. Trust that no one actually finds that funny.

Slide Two: The Interest Builder

This next photo has to hold interest to keep people swiping. This photo is the one to make or break that. If you've posted a solo shot, now may be the right time to slip in a group pic. It should be one where you look good, but in a casual, nonchalant way. This is also prime soft-launch time. If you've recently upgraded a sneaky link to situationship or, God help us all, situationship to relationship, the Interest Builder on your Instagram dump is the perfect place to show that off.

Other solid options for this slide are photos from long runs if you are training for a marathon, or other hints at attention seeking activities you are engaging in this year. Brownie points if it's HYROX. Think getting a Masters degree, buying a house at a young age, you get the gist.

By Molly Smith-Soppet
and Maddy Barnes

Illustrated by
Gemma McKinney

Slides Three to Six: Introducing The Story

This is where you start building the narrative of your summer.

These photos should look casual, but interesting. Beach days, blurry party pics, sunset shots, or the magnum opus of all Instagram posts, a film photo. The main thing in this section of the dump is to keep it interesting. No one wants to scroll through three identical beach pics, unless you are physically riding a dolphin (which is illegal, and you shouldn't do).

Instagram dumps are like Level 2 NCEA English essays. You want them to pack a punch at the start then follow a PEEL structure. Use this as your 'explain' section, to show what you have been up to since your last post.

Slide Seven-Ten: Only For The Fans

This is where you can introduce the slightly unhinged pics. At this point on the carousel, followers who lowkey don't give a fuck about you will have tuned out, so this content is for the Real Fans only. We're talking random screen shots, the drunk in Uber pics, or a good old fashioned festival shot of you on someone's shoulders.

You should care less about the technical quality of pics here. Grainy and blurry photos say "I was having too good of a time to properly document this moment." Therefore, they make it seem like you were having the most fun, which is the whole point and purpose of Instagram, is it not?

Final Slide: The Punch

Your final slide should feel reflective. Think sunsets, oceans, rolling landscapes, or another moment that has brought you enough peace to think "Yeah, I'll take a photo of that." It gives the impression that you are deep, thoughtful, and emotionally complex. Are you really that soulful? Probably not. But sometimes it's nice to think of social media as manufactured "real" life playing out in a little box in your hand.

You could also just chuck in a meme, or a bad photo of one of your friends as a true sucker punch. This method is essentially Pavlov-ing your followers to swipe right through if they want to see a little bit of your funny side. So if you would describe yourself as 'a laugh', go ahead with the funny last slide. However, if you want to play it extra safe, just chuck in a pic of your dog or cat or whatever furry creature your parents filled the void with when you left home.



Step Three: The Caption

The golden rule of the caption is effortless indifference. If the dump looks natural, but the caption sounds like you tried too hard, the whole illusion collapses. But if your caption is shit, then it means that your dump probably is too, and that just fucks up the whole vibe. Honestly, finding that thin middle ground is probably harder than most degrees, but luckily Critic has come up with a solid formula.

The key is short, vague, and slightly unserious. Your caption should suggest that you threw the post together in five seconds, even though you absolutely spent half the day rearranging the slide order and zooming in to crop out an ex.

Some safe formats include:

1. A single word: "Summer", "Recent", or "Life"
2. Something slightly cryptic: "idk what's going on either"
3. A niche reference only your friends will understand. This encourages your friends to join in on the joke in the comments, making it seem like there is literally no aspect of your life that you don't have together
4. Or the classic lowercase sentence fragment, because using capital letters is the opposite of effortlessly cool. Examples include: "some things from lately" or "proof i survived summer"

Now if you're brave, and only if you're brave, you could go with the secret fifth option of putting no caption at all, but that's just for the rebels.

Step Four: Post and Reflect

Take a deep breath, and hit post.

At the end of the day, an Instagram dump is chaos you can control. It should look spontaneous, even though it's the furthest thing from it. The best dumps feel like a scrapbook of moments, when in reality they were selected from 500 near-identical photos in your camera roll.

The truth is that nothing on social media is real. But if you do it right, you can make it at least look like you had the best summer of your life. And that's the entire point.



HOW NORTH DUNEDIN BECAME THE POT OF GOLD UNDER THE RAINBOW

A brief history of Saint Patrick's Day in Ōtepoti Dunedin

By Gryffin Blockley & Matilda Rumball-Smith

With special thanks to Professor of Sociology Hugh Campbell

Photos by Babacar Diallo @bbcrbk

If you live in North Dunedin, chances are you were woken up in the very early hours of March 17th. Some joined enthusiastic flatmates banging down their doors, while many more are rudely awakened by the distant boom of Bluetooth speakers. Thousands of students gathered to sink down six drinks before six in the morning, despite their University classes.

We all know how infamous Saint Patrick's Day is in Ōtepoti. We seem to go above and beyond. The rest of the country watches – Dunedin's performance makes the news every year. But behind the chaos, there is a story of how Otago became Aotearoa's biggest supporter of Saint Patrick. You may not expect it, but Dunedin's most infamous day is rooted in centuries of history, marketing campaigns, alcohol licensing and a good dollop of cultural appropriation.

Introducing Saint Patrick

March 17th became Saint Patrick's Day to celebrate, you guessed it, Saint Patrick. He was the Patron Saint of Ireland, becoming a Saint that acted as a spiritual advocate of Christianity. Paddy got this gig after being kidnapped and taken to Ireland as a slave at just sixteen, eventually returning to spread Christianity.

Saint Patrick spreading Christianity across Ireland involved the establishment of many institutions – schools, churches and monasteries, to name a few. The date Saint Patrick

was believed to have passed, March 17th, became a day to celebrate his life and the religious service he gave to Ireland. The day was traditionally marked with feasts and religious services, commemorating the teachings and abundance that Saint Patrick dedicated his life to spreading.

The reason why a religious holiday is associated with a bright shade of green is due to the shamrock. The shamrock was a key symbol Patrick used to convey his teachings of religion. The three-leaved clover was a perfect way to illustrate the Holy Trinity, the three persons God eternally embodies: The Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

Saint Patrick Becomes Secular

From Saint Patrick's death to the late 20th Century, celebrating the day looked very similar for hundreds of years. It was primarily a religious day of service, a key date in the liturgical calendar of the Catholic Church. But as the Irish diaspora overseas began to grow, so did the way it was celebrated.

For a while, Saint Patrick's Day was actually a public holiday in Aotearoa. For seventy-seven years, Kiwis were lucky enough to have a Government-sanctioned Saint Patrick's celebration up until 1955. At this stage, the holiday was still strictly religious, with any mention of all-day drinking marathons being very absent.

According to Professor of Sociology, Hugh Campbell, Saint Patrick's Day at that time was a holiday celebrated by the Irish community to appreciate their Irish culture. When he was an undergraduate in 1982, he remembers that the day was only recognised by a "tiny minority" of students. "It was not recognized as a major event for Scarfie life," he explained. But those who did feel they had a strong connection to Irish culture would make it their special day, dressing up in green, making flower and leprechaun trails to the various places where they'd hang out. The largest Irish population in New Zealand was in Auckland, which might explain why only a few dozen students on the Dunedin campus celebrated Saint Patrick's Day. "It was cute," Hugh recalled, but a far cry from the Saint Patrick's Dunedin hosts now. Overall, the day had the same level of cultural relevance that Halloween did in the eighties, which was only really observed by expats celebrating being American.

Speaking of the United States, Saint Patrick's was a great marketing opportunity for a country known for commercialising holidays more than any other. Post 1845 Potato Famine, Irish immigration to America exploded in popularity. With large amounts of Irish in the United States, far from home, the day commemorating the Patron Saint of Ireland became a chance to connect and celebrate Irish culture. Chicago started dyeing its river green every St Patrick's in the 1960s, attracting global interest. This was concurrent with the rise of consumerism and marketing in a post WW-II America.



The shamrock slowly lost its predominant reference to the Holy Trinity, instead becoming a symbol to represent pride and appreciation for a culture that had historically been oppressed by the British – and a great shade of green. This is aligned with the American psyche, with the United States emerging proudly as an independent nation after being established by Britain. Parades began to become more visible than church services. Saint Patrick's Day was a notable event, and a profitable cultural import.

Returning to how Paddy was coming along in New Zealand, things began to really take off in the 1990s. It was partially thanks to a beer brand you may have heard of. A struggling Irish beer company, Guinness, linked with the Irish Pub Company, working with Publicans to design pubs that had an Irish vibe to them. Irish pubs started popping up all over the world – such as The Bog and The Craic as our Dunedin locals, which helped continue to promote Irish culture. The creation of these spaces meant that when Saint Patrick's Day rolled around, there were only a few dedicated spaces to celebrate it. If you weren't a major city with a parade, heading to an Irish pub was likely your only option. Having Guinness on tap at any Irish pub is a staple, so it quickly became the drink that represented the Emerald Isle. These days, you're far more likely to see someone's hands gripped around a pint of Guinness than a Bible come March 17th.

Irish pubs and Guinness were gladly taken up by high numbers of New Zealand's population, where drinking has been a major part of post-colonisation culture. "[C]ultural historians in New Zealand have really noted that from reasonably early within the development of colonial Pākehā society in New Zealand, drinking was a major part of what we did," Hugh explained. New Zealand had liberated the alcohol market in the 1990s, and decreased the drinking age to 18 in 1999. When Hugh returned to campus in the mid-1990s to teach as an academic, he observed a major increase in binge drinking, and an increased emphasis of the "student experience" at Otago University. The student quarter was primed and ready to get on the rark.

Scarflies Meet Saint Patrick

With the major shake-up of liquor laws and many more students having (legal) access to pubs, there was an increase in drunken chaos but also the birth of Scarfie culture. Liquor was becoming more accessible as laws around purchasing and serving were modified, and pubs came under increasing pressure to attract patrons. Up until the change, Hugh recalls that any kind of excess public or visible drinking that got even remotely out of control would be shut down by the police turning up with "paddy wagons and [bundling] up everyone who looked underage down to the station." At this point, New Zealand's economy has also become increasingly globalised. Fast fashion and \$2 shops were popping up with cheap, imported goods, meaning there were ways to dress up in silly costumes that didn't break the student budget.

With Irish pub culture spreading, and Scarfie culture rising, a perfect match was beginning to be made. When Saint Patrick's day rolled around, pubs were ready to try to get punters through the doors. From the Celtic roots of Dunedin, to the Irish ancestry many Kiwis now have – there was an aspect of identity behind the drinking. It was only inevitable this would pique the interest of North D students. The historical context of the day meant that it was on people's radars, so it spread through student culture with little unfamiliarity, hastened by the deregulation of television in New Zealand. Students were able to watch

wild Saint Patrick's parties from all over the globe, such as the classic ones still happening in Boston today. It also helped that March 17th is only a few weeks into lectures, so many students did not see missing a day of University as problematic as it would become later in the semester.

By the early 2000s, Scarflies also gained access to the Internet, and were more exposed to much more global pop-culture. Hyde Street Party was gaining serious momentum at this point – costuming was becoming cool. Jumping forward to 2011, we see the finished construction of Forsyth Barr Stadium, just in time to host the Rugby World Cup. Ireland had been one of the teams playing, and brought their fans in tow. "They had absolutely a total party vibe," Hugh explains. Hundreds of fans and students all piled into the stadium, dressed in Saint Patrick's Day gear – "an absolute riot". Ireland quickly became the "cool" rugby team to follow, and pubs continued to lean into the frenzy for all things Irish. The Green Wave had swept across Dunedin.

Dunedin, The Culture Culture

It's a well known and long-term theme within sociological studies of Aotearoa that, being a colonised island nation, Pākehā use a patchwork of other cultures to piece together their national identity. "I think Irish ancestry becomes something you can lean into a bit," Hugh says. But on his walk to work on the morning of Saint Patrick's Day, he couldn't help but wonder how many students on the street celebrating were conscious of having some kind of Irish connection. "Irish ethnicity was never something that was particularly celebrated in New Zealand, due to its colonial roots. Certainly not compared to English or Scottish, even though [Irish heritage] is definitely there."



Traditions that warp from the original religious identity of Saint Patricks, like Six Before Six, are bolstered by what Hugh described as the "transient" nature of the North Dunedin community. "People are usually coming from somewhere else to live here for a period of time. They're making new friends and new communities and new networks," Hugh explains. And (especially) before the age of social media, being known for inventing a tradition was sure to be a major achievement – the crazier the better. "Can you imagine being in the flat that started the original Hyde Street Party?", he says. Nowadays, you'd probably be thought to be a bit of a legend to come up with Goon Before Noon, or Line Before Nine. History repeats itself, and these now iconic challenges seem to be part of Otago student's cultural identity. Just like the broader theme of patchworked Pākehā cultural identity in Aotearoa, we can see the same borrowing from Irish culture in Dunedin from students, arguably accelerated and more dramatic.

One student who roamed the streets last year to honour Saint Patrick is Qwenton, a bagpiper. He's not Irish – Scottish, actually. If you lived on Castle Street last year, you would have heard the warble of his many pipes as he made the rounds through Studentville. He woke up at 3:30 in the morning to get ready for the big day. "And then I put my kilt on, my shirt, my tie, jacket, socks, shoes, sporran," he recounted. A sporran is Scottish Gaelic for purse, where he puts his phone as kilts don't have pockets. When asked if he just has kilts laying around, Qwenton tells us he has three kilts. "They are lying around though."

One of them is his Mackenzie kilt, for his last name, and another is his band kilt. The third is for if the other two are dirty – just a swap. “You know when your clothes are in the wash? So you have to wear some other clothes? Like that.” He comes from a community of bagpipers – apparently there’s more around than you’d think. “Like two or three,” he says.

He acknowledges that he feels a bit bad being Scottish and playing the bagpipes on an Irish day, which is quite refreshing. He says he has “imposter syndrome”. “I don’t even think I should be playing on an Irish day. But no one seems to actually know, so.”

He says there’s some people who leave hate comments on the videos people take of him piping, but there’s always haters. “I just play them anyways” – bigpipes and haters. Even though he humbly says “he’s a little bit better than the average person” at playing, he’ll be competing in the Nationals in New Plymouth the day after Saint Patricks. “That makes it sound so dust, because why would it be there? It goes around the country, this year it’s there, but that makes it sound so dumb.”

If any other prospective bagpipers are out there, Qwenton could really use the help. Well, maybe. When asked if he lets other people touch his bagpipes, he says yes, but not on Saint Patrick’s, because they’ve got to be in top shape for the day.

Saint Patrick Becomes Saint Paddy

The student culture of Dunedin for decades revolved around pubs and student bars, supervised spaces with cheap pints. A big scarfie tradition was Kegs and Eggs – punters would gather in the morning to line their stomachs before hitting the pub for a long day of Saint Patrick’s Day drinking. While chaos was always inevitable, it allowed it to spiral out of control as Dunedin slowly lost its spaces for students to drink.

Flat parties becoming the default allowed Saint Patrick’s Day to spiral to new heights. With flats becoming the destination for celebrations, there was no reason to line your stomach if there was no risk of being cut off or causing a ruckus in public. Kegs and Eggs became an all-day affair, and it was gamified.

Hugh reckoned that he’d witnessed “a lot more drinking happening behind closed doors” over the years he’d been around Otago. Managing the chaos of Saint Patricks has just become harder for everyone, including for police given the increase in drinking age. “It became much harder for police to manage public disorder and just go in, and arrest every young looking person [...] It’s just a different world [now].”

Six Before Six, Line Before Nine, or Goon Before Noon are now much more familiar terms than Kegs and Eggs. The catchy titles and daunting tasks gained notoriety, and consequences for getting too drunk were traded from being kicked out of the pub to being stationed by a toilet bowl. Ditching class to complete the challenges added an extra thrill for some, with the all-day endurance of Saint Patrick’s becoming a key part of its notoriety in Dunedin.

These are the types of Saint Patrick’s celebrations that are familiar to current students now. Take Richie*, for example: a second year Polytech student who’s been preparing for Saint Patrick’s day for weeks. Richie’s got his whole outfit planned out. “An I Love Beer shirt. One of those shitty ones from Look Sharp. Green glasses and a green necklace.” In fact, his whole flat has got their outfits planned. Some of the boys have dinosaur costumes. The plan is to just “go green.” He’ll probably wake up at quarter to five in the morning, and “have a few in the shower”. “All the boys will be showering and blasting music.”

From around five in the morning, their flat is hosting. He says that most students will probably do Six Before Six with their flatmates, but after that he’s expecting heaps of people to rock up. “We’ll definitely play some Irish tunes,” he assured. They’re only hosting until nine, though. The boys have got a deal with another flat close by, and they’re going to take over for the second morning host.

In lieu of a sold out Irish flag, Richie’s flat purchased an Indian one and are planning to get crafty. “We actually haven’t painted the middle bit white yet, so it’s just hanging outside our window, still Indian.” Staying on theme, Richie purchased green cruisers for his Six Before Six, which are “easier to get down in the morning.” He’s swapped out wine for a bottle of Nitro, and got his favourite vodka cran goon.

As Dunedin shaped its own take on Saint Patrick’s Day, other students began to take notice. With flat party culture growing, Dunedin became a destination for the day. It was a uniquely Otago experience – hyped up by mates who got to experience it first hand from other Universities, such as Canterbury or Lincoln. This level of hype created expectations of a day where students can get trolled with little consequence, and soon flights down South became crammed full of other young people wanting to experience the peak ‘Otago Experience’ on a day where the chaos of University life is exaggerated to the maximum. In some ways, Hugh says Dunedin became the Las Vegas of New Zealand.

The increase of chaotic student behaviour has driven media coverage of Saint Patrick’s Day in Dunedin to be overwhelmingly negative. Often behind these stories, the culprits are visitors and not University of Otago students (like the 2025 incident of a dead wallaby being barbecued on Castle Street). This is something Richie is experiencing first-hand for this Saint Patrick’s Day. He’s got nine boys living in his flat, and they’ve got another seven staying from Christchurch.

With parties mostly being confined to flats these days, drug usage has also seen a sharp rise over the years. With no need to sneak them into a venue, and its reputation as a mammoth day of partying – drugs instead of alcohol, are the centre of celebrations for many students. Drugs are a normalised part of Saint Patrick’s for Richie, he reckons he’ll power straight through the day and into the night, with tactical lines of gear or ket (“probably both”) throughout the day.

Students coming down to experience a crazy day that goes against the social norms of the rest of the country was a recipe for chaos. While Otago students had flats to make sure weren’t damaged, and a Code of Conduct they signed on enrolment – visitors did not have the same restraints. When young people don’t understand the nuances of North D culture, they could trash the place and leave a day later with little-to-no consequences.

Richie’s a bit more responsible than that. He’s saved up his Maccas points for food throughout the day, and he’s all for staying off roofs and keeping his partying to the ground. “I always try to stay off roofs. I’m quite accident prone, so Mum will have a rage.” If any of his mates got too fucked up on the day, he reckons he’d tap out of festivities to look after them, or pass them on to someone else staying in the flat – there’s safety in numbers. Richie also managed to move all his classes to the Wednesday after Saint Patrick’s, so he can party carefree. “I’m gonna get it on. Enjoy myself.”

What’s Next For Saint Patrick

All the media coverage and chaos has distanced itself so far from Saint Patrick, the spiritual patron of Ireland, you can’t help but wonder how we got here. While the current form of Saint Patrick’s day seems here to stay for now, conversations around the roots of the celebration have begun to gain more traction. A general awareness of cultural sensitivities has led some to question the departure from Saint Patrick’s roots. Some view the excessive drinking, the ranga roundups and ‘Kiss Me, I’m Irish’ costumes to be insensitive to a culture that has endured much across its storied history. While these conversations are unlikely to be a topic of conversation for a North D resident on Saint Patrick’s, it remains to be seen how the cultural significance of the day may morph as these discussions become more mainstream.

In his sociology work, Hugh notices an increasing cultural awareness around Saint Patrick’s Day. “Ireland was a colonised country. It was an incredibly vivid, historically rich and textured country that was colonised by the English and essentially suppressed.” Talking to the binge drinking and unhinged traditions that have arisen from Dunedin’s interpretation of the cultural day, Hugh wonders if people who were truly using Saint Patrick’s Day as a celebration would do those things.

It may not happen quickly, but Saint Patrick’s Day has slowly been evolving for hundreds of years to gain its identity today. Hugh thinks it’ll “be a while” before changes like that are seen in North D. Historically, Saint Patrick’s Day would involve Church and meals with family and friends. Then it became a parade, maybe a few cheeky post-work beers too. It’s still like the latter in most of the world, but it couldn’t be further from the reality of the student quarter in Dunedin.

As Richie and his mates stumble to the host, head-to-toe in green, Dunedin is showcasing its ability to be a city that does Saint Patrick’s like no other. Qwenton’s pipes warble mournfully at the mouth of a Scotsman. But this unique melting pot of culture is no coincidence. It was years of history, laws and pop-culture trends, all rearing themselves in the right place, at the right time.

* Name changed



radio one

RADIO ONE 97FM

A NEW LOOK AT UBAR PINT NIGHT

A typical Ōtepoti student knows the ins and outs of each club and venue in town. They know the sticky floors, vape clouds hanging above the dance floor, and the sickly sweet smell of alcohol in the air. The overpriced drinks and pint specials lure us into coming out night after night, just for the notion that we might stop at that banging Kebab joint on our way back down George St.

But UBar is different. Situated right here on campus, you may not first think that the nightlife is particularly rampant in this underground bar. But on Wednesday nights after 8pm, it becomes a hub for student activity and locally grown music. As an American international student, I'm not quite used to the bar atmosphere yet.

With its central location, UBar is a perfect starting point for many of Dunedin's very own bands, musicians, and songwriters. The atmosphere is one that you can't help but want to create in, and the inspiration taken from students wanting to have fun is infectious. Many bands and singers start out their following at UBar, surrounded by peers who help to grow their following before they branch out into the wider Dunedin music scene.

With a hazy atmosphere and brightly painted walls, UBar has the kind of energetic vibe that can only occur when young people gather. The mural-adorned, wooden paneled walls might be mistaken for a nice restaurant, but the high tables and sticky floors are undeniably those of a bar. The hipster mixed with dive-bar feel is unique to UBar, a more diverse vibe compared to Vault 21 or Catacombs. The music is loud, and the seating is spread out enough to accommodate the students who want to mingle with other groups.

When you travel to the dance floor, the people there are piled up against the barricade, screaming for Purple Dog, Ammonita, or Monkey Do to 'PLAY ONE MORE SONG!'. The air is electric, and you can just make out the silhouettes of people dancing in the neon blue lights rimming the walls. This is an honest-to-God bar dancefloor, where the ceiling is less than a meter above your head and occasionally drips on you. The determination of this many Otago students to fit into such a space is admirable.

by Leah Romero.....full piece on r1.co.nz/blog

TOP 11



- 1 Deaf Haccoon (Dn) Burns Like Hell
- 2 kerning man (Dn) médecins sans flat whites
- 3 Ray Leslie (NZ) SEWED PIECES ft. Beckah Amani
- 4 Ani Saafa (NZ) SCUM
- 5 Havening (NZ) rix.o
- 6 Grace Gemmill (Dn) This Kind of Peace is Free
- 7 The Shenatica (Dn) At Hall Ma
- 8 scapegrace (Dn) bomber jacket (in your headlights)
- 9 Ripship (NZ) Bon Voyage (Alphabethead Remix)
- 10 sloer (NZ) Slaughter
- 11 Mic Sure (Dn) Paper

GIG GUIDE

RĀPARE THUR 26TH

Dave Flynn
Pioneer Hall...7.30..all ages

RĀMERE FRI 27TH

Italiks & Deep Fried Dub
Your Reward Ep Release
@ Pearl Diver...9pm

Dancefloorguru & Hoodaki
@ Moons.....8pm

RĀHOROI SAT 28TH

Round About Midnight:
Miles Davis Centenary
@ Hanover Hall.....7.30pm

Powder Chutes
@ The Crown.....8pm

Ani Saafa - NZ Tour
w/ Emily Esplin,
Logan Edwards
@ Pearl Diver...9pm

mazagran
hit picks
Loa Loa (Dn)
Give Me A Place
Monkey Do (Dn)
Plastake

add your own gig
guide listing or find
tickets at R1.CO.NZ



OUASA EXEC DANIEL LEAMY



Kia ora students,

Happy Saint Patrick's Day to all those who celebrated last Tuesday. Whether you were up well before the sunrise kitted out in green, or simply enjoying the sunshine between classes, the vibe around campus was unreal. The weather played ball in a rare Dunedin W, and there were no major incidents reported.

The annual wave of UC students came and went without leaving a trail of destruction, and even the University and Police were pleased with the behaviour of those who celebrated. The Bog even somehow ran out of Guinness, which is wild (you had one job), but it shows the dedication of Otago students who are willing to drink a pretty shit beer one day a year for their Irish ancestors (everyone has one).

For those who froth an event, never fear, Hyde Street is less than a month away. The lottery is open, so get your flat registered ASAP. But before the countdown begins, here's your reminder to look after yourself and your mates. Dunedin does a party like no other, but that doesn't mean your whole life needs to revolve around one.

Because honestly, there is a heck of a lot going on around campus that doesn't involve drinking. Clubs and Societies are pumping, everything from tramping to pottery, to squash and many incredibly niche groups that only seem to exist at Otago. If you're wanting to expand your horizons and try something new, now is the time to do it before your assignments start to pile up. Joining a club is the easiest way to find your crowd outside of your flat or degree, and actually feel part of the wider student community.

And for your wellbeing, go outside and enjoy the sun before the Dunedin winter sets in, eat a decent meal every once in a while, and try to get a good night's sleep. Uni goes by fast, and it's much easier to enjoy it when you aren't running on fumes.

Have fun, stay safe, and as always, look after yourselves and your mates.

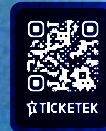
Ngā mihi,
Daniel Leamy
President



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THU 26 MAR

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FRI 27 MAR

Quiz & Queens

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FROM THE PĀTAKA

BITE-SIZED UPDATES FROM TE RITO

Brady Simeon – Ngāpuhi, Ngāti Hine (Communications Officer for Te Rito)
Heeni Koero Te Rerenoa – Ngāti Hine, Te Rarawa, Te Waiariki

A few weeks into the semester, and the pace has already picked up for Te Rito. Between fresher flu outbreaks, the tamest St. Paddy's Day of the decade, and the slow disappearance of week-one motivation, TRM has been doing its part to keep things interesting. Naturally, there are a few things worth talking about.

SOMETHING SPICY

First up: the recent Special General Meeting.

SGMs have a reputation, and this one delivered exactly what you'd expect – a packed room, some very direct questions, and a few moments where the temperature climbed in the whare, just a little. Under the Constitution, these hui are when proposed amendments are voted on, financial decisions are confirmed, and the direction of TRM kaupapa is properly worked through.

Funding decisions were where things warmed up properly, with proposed cuts and adjustments prompting the kind of kōrero where people start leaning forward and asking the questions everyone was thinking anyway. In terms of outcomes, the main focus landed around reregistration, constitutional amendments, and topping up the operational budget from the investment line – not the flashiest headline, but definitely the kind of mahi that shapes how things run moving forward and keeps the whare door open.

When taura show up, ask questions, and push the conversation, that's when these spaces actually mean something.

SOMETHING SWEET

Away from the hui, things have been rolling along nicely on the social side, too.

Social sports are back for the semester, and there's already been a good mix of returning players and completely new faces jumping in. Between basketball and waiata practice, dinners with the halls have been another highlight for Te Rito in particular. These nights are always a simple but effective way of bringing us closer to new taura Māori on the scene who might not usually wander into the whare.

Back at the whare, study wānanga (known as "study sesh") mentioned a few weeks back has officially kicked off, and, as expected, they've settled in nicely – kai on the table, books open (eventually), and a solid mix of productivity and catching up happening in the same room. Whether you're deep in assignments or just trying to get started without immediately getting distracted, the setup makes it a whole lot easier. That said, there's always room for more. The door's open, the kai helps, and no one's checking how much you actually got done – just that you showed up. Which, for some people, is already an improvement.

STILL COOKIN'

Between the sweet and the spicy, there are a few things still simmering.

If you've caught the tono making its way around, this is one of those kaupapa that's likely to come together quickly once people start showing up. There are plans underway to build a refreshed presence on the University's waiata page, and Te Rōpū Māori are looking for more taura to step in and be part of it. Whether you're a seasoned powerhouse or just someone who knows the words well enough to hold your own, there's space for you here – no audition necessary. In fact, most of the waiata are iwi anthems, so the focus isn't on polishing every note (that comes later), but about participation. So, if you haven't made it along to much this year, this wouldn't be a bad place to start. Low commitment, high visibility – do with that what you will.

Alongside that, Kai & Kōrero is heating up. Running fortnightly at the TRM whare, it's open to all levels – Māori and non-Māori alike – which keeps things low-pressure by design: just kōrero, kai (surprise!), and a chance to keep your reo Māori flowing. Sitting on the off-weeks between Study Wānanga, it's an easy one to fold into your routine. Consider this your way in.

Safe to say the kitchen's busy. That's what we've pulled from the pātaka this week. Kia pai te kai.

COLUMNS ★ RANGITAKI

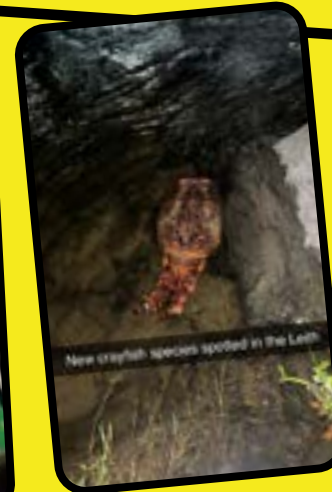
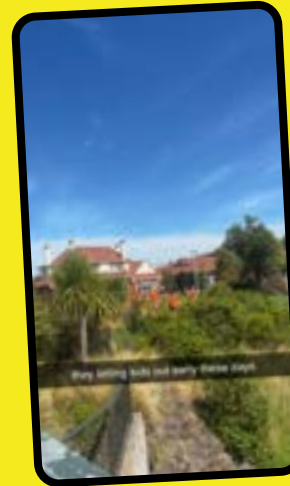
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PROCTOLOGY

Written and Illustrated
by Hanna Varrs



Like ships in the night, Critic Te Ārohi and the Proctor haven't been in direct contact for a while. Our communication has mostly been through Uni Comms media statements – like toxic exes that use their child to communicate. "Well, you can tell your father that I said..."

But we're back in the clinic now to talk about all things Proctor.

If you're new here, Proctology is the branch of medicine concerned with the anus and rectum. And, apparently, student life.

This Month in the Clinic

Proctor Dave Scott is probably the only University staff member who is actively trying to minimise the need for his job. The "vast majority" of students never meet him – which is exactly how he likes it. Still, his office sees everything that affects students: Relationship breakups, mental health crises, financial pressures and homesickness. The full spectrum of being twenty and away from home.

But we're here to talk about the students he *does* meet.

Scott has been in the role for nearly ten years now, and while he might've been a bit bemused when he first started working with students, he's a well boiled frog by now. So what's come through the clinic recently?

Flo and O-Week were, by historical standards, relatively tame – meaning bottles were only thrown accidentally and a good number of couches remain intact. In preparation, Scott had actually called all the Castle and Leith Street flats (and those adjacent) in for a PowerPoint presentation regarding their flat parties. It covered expectations, safety messages and how the Uni and OUSA could help out – a bit like your mum fretfully hovering in the corner of the room at your 18th. Here's to a safe, successful, and lawful year.

The content of his presentation, the Proctor explained, could be largely summed up by the sign stuck to his wall: a guide to "not being an asshole." There's only one step: Don't be an asshole. Critic laughs. The Proctor doesn't.

As for partying advice, the Proctor has a wise piece of wisdom to bestow. "Do your partying on the ground," he advises. "Then you've only got that far to fall." Critic seconds this. Don't get on roofs.

While the presentation garnered "mixed reactions", it was an ultimately successful first lecture for the Uni's newest paper offering, CAST201.

With the Council of Castle called and adjourned, the beginning of the year ran with scholarly precision. However, the Proctor's office has been dealing with another problem: Sticky fingers. And it's not due to whatever new iteration of raspberry and quadrillion distilled vodka Leith Liquor has on shelves.

If the Proctor could telepathically beam anything into the minds of students right now it would be to "lock your door". With the grace and naivety of newborn deer, North Dunedin operates on a "high trust model", but non-students know this and can take advantage. While a little bit funny to think of someone going food shopping two doors down, it's actually fucking weird to have a stranger poking around in your flat.

Proctor's Prescription

The Proctor isn't here to crucify students – just help them not get things wrong. His advice is pretty practical: lock your doors and talk to your landlord about a lockbox or spare key solution. Don't nick furniture from campus, like one student did from the Marsh Study Centre. Te Oraka has some affordable options.

The University has the Pūtea Tautoko Student Relief Fund to help with students experiencing financial pressure and four pātaka kai (food pantries) at Te Huka Mātauraka Māori Centre, the Pacific Islands Centre, Recreation Services Unipol and Te Pou Whirinaki (Student Wellbeing Hub) at the Information Services Building. OUSA Student Support also has food bags to give out on a 'no questions asked' basis.

Horoscopes

PISCES

Time to decompress. As an uptight student, you need to mellow out. Try to do some yoga and spend a little time in downward dog. It always helps to loosen those muscles and the blood rush to the brain can make you feel loopy. It's like drinking without the hangover.

Weekly mish: Actually attend everything on your timetable.

ARIES

Stop blaming yourself for what's happened in the past. You're finally going to end your internal turmoil – it's time to self-heal, and nurture your confidence. Don't be anxious – instead, grab a sweet treat and the biggest cucumber you can find. It will make you feel better about the sugar consumption because it'll all cancel out.

Weekly mish: Make a Tiktok recipe.

VIRGO

Shopping addiction is a slippery slope. It all starts with the gate way Temu, and slowly extends to spending your whole student loan payment at the Salvo. Just because it's from the op shop doesn't necessarily make it affordable to buy a whole new wardrobe. Remember, when you're next begging your parents for more money to buy that next hit, you already have clothes at home.

Weekly mish: Ask your CHEM191 tutor to fuck in the lab bathrooms.

GEMINI

The stack of dishes by your sink is starting to look like two really tall towers. Be sure to tread lightly, because a small accident may just cause another Twilight saga to be written. Honestly, we really don't need to see more of Jacob rizzing up a minor more then we already have, so just clean the fucking dishes.

Weekly mish: Deep clean your flat. Like that spot-your-ex-never-managed-to-reach-in-you deep.

AQUARIUS

It's time for the annual deletion of all of your social media apps. This year I give it three days before you re-download Instagram, convinced that you're only going to use it to message the flat GC. Unfortunately, you're going to go right back to stalking your crush's posts and doom scrolling to a point where time warps in weird ways and what feels like one hour is actually four.

Weekly mish: Say "bonsoir" to your lecturer as you leave your class.

SCORPIO

You have spent more time hungover recently than you have in your tutorials – it's time to sober up. Your flatmates are so fucking pissed that you pee in the shower when drunk that they're going to make a group chat without you in it to arrange an intervention. Yikes.

Weekly mish: Drink 2L of WATER (not vodka) in one day.

TAURUS

Your inner child is running away from you. As you sit through your unnecessarily long lecture, you will wish you were still a kid who didn't have to put up with lectures and assignments. But enjoy the phase you're in right now, because you'll graduate eventually and forget all those crucial student life skills, like how to make \$20 stretch the whole week.

Weekly mish: Take some nudes for future you to look at.

CAPRICORN

You overthink everything! It's wearing you down, wearing your friends down and wearing your grades down. Please, for the love of God, make a peppermint tea, take your meds, use that rose toy you got from Shein and finally understand that the whole world isn't watching you.

Weekly mish: Find joy in one small thing you do everyday.

LEO

Karma's a bitch, you should've known better. If I had a wish, you would've never effed around! I cannot believe this, but Joelle Siwa may have been talking about you in that song. Your roster is on to you, so it's time to decide where your loyalties lie before you lose all of 'em.

Weekly mish: Be single.

CANCER

It's time to finally make good on that paint and sip night you've been talking about since last year. Pull out Bob Ross's calming voice and put some ice cubes in your wine, and if anyone spills some on the carpet just remember it's only a happy little accident.

Weekly mish: Invent a new shot.

LIBRA

You're sweating – midterms are around the corner! But right as this realisation happens, your phone will blow up. It's important to stay locked the fuck in. No gossip is worth compromising that GPA you need to get an internship so that you don't wind up homeless at the end of all this. So turn your phone to DND, and ignore the seductive calls from hot singles in your area.

Weekly mish: Drive up Baldwin St in your friend's shit box car.

SAGITTARIUS

When test stress causes you to over pluck your brows and consider shaving off all your hair, rather than buying a cheap razor, spend it on something you really need, like overpriced matching glittery things with your friends. And if your friends tell you a buzz is a good idea, they are NOT your friends.

Weekly mish: Listen to Tame Impala's 'Let It Happen'.



By Sam Jones

DO NOT BLOW ME LIKE A FUCKING WHISTLE, BABY!

From the clickbait title, I would like to preface that I am a woman and not a whistle.

There was a guy I was seeing and he was a bit of a freak, unfortunately not in a good way. Like he was just straight up weird. However, I succumbed to the idea of us having D1 basketball babies as he was 6'5 – really the personification of tall, dark and handsome.

Unfortunately, he lived in the scrunge of Castle St. At this stage I was too icked by the state of the flat to have sex with him, I wasn't ready to tackle some crusty navy sheets and skiddy undies flung all over the place, no matter how much he looked like Temu Jacob Elordi. Also, having rats for flat pets isn't exactly a panty dropper (men – take notes). So, I invited him over to mine to finally get down to business – a lil 'try before you buy' if you will. He came over, and I knew as a 6'5, gangly man, he would be packing a python. Let's just say I wasn't wrong. We were starting to make money moves, pulses were being raised and vibes were all on. He picked me up, and in a breathy voice I said, "Can we do doggy?"

As a good man does, he placed me on the bed, turned me around and spread my legs. To add the the vibes because he was a fucking giant he was stood next to the bed looming over me. I was ready to be taken to destination: pound town. Then he started to go down on me from behind(hot), but then he blew hot air straight into my asshole. I have never puckered up so tight, and been taken off guard like that. WTF – I turned around and hit him with a "Did you just blow in my asshole?" He laughed and said "Yeah haha, I thought it would be funny." I told him to go home, and never to contact me again.

Moral of the story – stay away from Castle men. They are... Odd. A few years later, I can say thanks for the funny story, letting me drive your BMW, and good luck with your failing Tiktok career.



HAVE SOMETHING JUICY TO TELL US? SEND YOUR SALACIOUS STORIES TO MOANINGFUL@CRITIC.CO.NZ SUBMISSIONS REMAIN ANONYMOUS.

BOOZE REVIEWS

MIAMI WINE COOLER

By Joan of Rark

Here lay the bodies of Swig60, our former and beloved Booze Reviewers... Nah. Sike, cuz! They just got a little too rowdy on Paddy's and now can't even look at alcohol. Let alone write about it. So this task falls to me, Joan of Rark, the 2025 Booze Reviewer.

Grab your Venetian shade glasses, stupid-ass shoulderpads, and any other nostalgic '90s paraphernalia you can dig out of your parents cupboard that hasn't seen the light of day since 2006. It's time to crack open one of these winey bastards. This dated, but not aged, trio come in the standard lemon-lime, pineapple, and a peach and guava mashup. Always good to see a new flavour combo to keep us on our toes.

I've only had the dis/pleasure of trying two of the flavours, but if I had to hedge my bets, I'd say the pineapple would probably be nice – can't really fuck a pineapple up. The peach and guava flavour is a pretty fucking splendid mashup that goes down shockingly well for a mixed beverage. This being said, the primary focus of my review is on the lemon-lime, which for some reason has become the standard for RTD flavours. Given that Miamis predate anyone reading this (I fucking hope) they could very well have set a trend in the Bev-o-sphere that all these youngins chose to follow.

As far as lemon-lime beverages go, Miamis are quite the outlier. They're a mix of white wine and vodka, arguably the least scullable beverages out there. They are 5% however, which doesn't hurt. The citrus is clean, not like Spray 'n Wipe clean but just kinda summery. Surprisingly refreshing for something that looks like it came out of your Granddad's retro beer fridge, with a sweetness that cuts through the wine dryness. It's perfect for a night of watching shitty rental movies, making love to your partner in a shitty hatchback or having a shitty time in town.

TASTE: 6/7
SCULLABILITY: 6.7/10
PAIRS WELL WITH: '90s neon windbreakers
HANGOVER RATING: They needed coke in the '90s for a reason



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MICHAEL ZAVROS: Brother (Bourdin) 2024. Oil on board. Private Collection. Courtesy of the artist.

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Hmmm, I hope they adopted a better art style for the critic. It had quite a gross color scheme that resembled vomit... probably fitting considering the puke that must accumulate considering the number of dedicated drink up days Otago has. I don't remember reading anything of real value in the Critic in my years there and the fact that it was paper was probably a waste of money. Let's see the stats on how many copies actually get picked up off the stands... social media may be the way to go...Just link the content to a website...Time to move with the times.



Think I'm going to be okay



#3605
Dafuck we need student influencers for? V
So OUSA has no more monux for Critic bu

It doesn't take a BCOM student to know that the \$\$ OUSA critic, this latest issue has nothing, im not American, I already read an article on meningitis, Idc about friends. I'm not an ad slop glazer.
the Critic route - I'm not an idiot
KilneyStones
But # Critic Te Ārohi please guys... we need a bit more substance (pun intended) to our reviews, food reviews, quality of uni life tips and tricks, library study spots
Wher mago again

I know this Critic saga must be a massive headache for OI but, surely all the fuss shows how much Critic is valued by
I don't want to see some tiktok fuckstick vlogging Hyde. C
anyway you munters.

- Fund Critic not those weird Dunedin influencers



Anonymous member
19h · 🌐

Patty of Gower

And have the editor actually do their job and stop rage baiting me with their awful crossword mistakes every week

ng critic be a thing when

the government can just print more money? Don't hit me with that voodoo economics shit I don't fuck with the bad vibes that pseudoscience puts off -

Ticklemonster 1979

Life be simpler when you nonchalant, soon as you start chalanting shit go left



Hawk Tuah

This post was made with a nick

Report nickname



Hawk Tuah

16 March at 19:08 · 🌐

oh no bro

critic, this latest issue has nothing, im not American, I already read an article on meningitis, Idc about friends. I'm not an ad slop glazer.

reviews, food reviews, quality of uni life tips and tricks, library study spots
g there's been a survey to find which study spot you are, maybe see if it's actually accurate to the location)

do better mahi

- 🥺 feeling worried.

fuck

better days are ahead
twin

- 🥺 feeling heartbroken.



UoO: Meaningful Confessions

11 March at 09:00 · 🌐

#3582

Critical students

Crack up how students have long been complaining how shit critic downsizes and suddenly boom, a petition is launched, the Exec staff and former editors wade into the debate.

Lady Whistledown



UoO: Meaningful Confessions

10 March at 12:00 · 🌐

#3580

CRITICAL

CRITIC WHY IS THE CROSSWORD SO SMALL ITS THE C WFFK



26 February

#3558

sukodu shrinkflation

am i the only one who is devastated over the lack of sudokus in the critic?? procrastination is at an all time low due to the one (!!) puzzle in the critic as opposed to three and i am NOT happy about it. and don't try telling me the quiz thing is better.

- numbers girly



Hawk Tuah

2 March at 11:14 · 🌐

dear critic te ārohi

just get more funding fam, quit moaning about prices going up and saying "change is inevitable", expected change is writing style from author to author, not 36 pages to a measly 16. that's not change, that's accepting the fact that our beloved magazines hold. they're growing but our budgets are shrinking (whilst still pumping it full of ads) all so we can continue to exist. I'm in charge of funding the magazine and I can't do anything to help it grow away from its potential because of budget cuts that did not need to happen.

- 🥺 feeling heartbroken.

Critic Te Ārohi

like this comment if critic fell off

2w

Like

Reply

94



that gets me to uni on a cold winter morning is the k. A new cross word, snap of a week and some funny rise when on the first Monday of the year I rock up to ead of my life. The crossword which usually has all my ing copy and pasted out of chatgpt and only ONE (!)

sudoku NO SNAP OF THE WEEK and about one readable story. Now first week of year understandable if there's not much news, but words could not describe the heart break I felt this morning when I discovered 'critic lite' a version that has more ads than story STILL. NO SNAP OF THE WEEK and another chatgpt like cross words. Now I understand why budget cuts which make publications difficult and this isn't an attack to any of you're all doing gods work. I just miss the old critic 🥺 I love having printed magazines and not common anymore so to feel like we're losing the critic is something I can't describe. #savecritic2026

- A crossword lover :xoxo

