

The capstone Chronicle

M A G A Z I N E

A Collection of Stories, ideas and
experiences from YukonU Students

The International Student Experience

The challenges and joys of
moving to a new land



Adventures in the Yukon

Stories about students
favourite places to visit

Poetic Insights

Searching for understanding
in the North

Volume No. 1

April 2025

FREE

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Letter From The Editor

*W*elcome to the first issue of Capstone Chronicle!

This student-led magazine is the bold creation of the 2025 Multimedia Communication (MMC) capstone cohort at Yukon University.

Each year, the capstone class undertakes a major project to tell stories for real-world clients. This year, their clients are you—the students and community of YukonU.

The magazine you hold in your hands is the result of an ambitious challenge: producing a publication entirely from scratch. For seven students new to media and communications, this was no small feat. They navigated a steep learning curve and embraced each challenge with dedication and enthusiasm. I am incredibly proud of what they have accomplished. The result is an engaging and meaningful magazine that sets the stage for future cohorts to build upon.

We hope you enjoy reading this first issue as much as they enjoyed creating it!

Jon Gelinias

Instructor, Multimedia Communication

Note: Past capstone classes have published their work online at The Capstone Chronicle. Check it out here or scan the QR:

<https://capstone.yukon-multimedia.design/>



Capstone Class



Sergio Illanes
Visual Media Producer

Specialist in creating and producing visual content for different digital platforms. With solid training in audiovisual media and advanced technical skills, they dedicate themselves to producing high-quality multimedia content that combines creativity with technical efficiency.



Shanshan Jiang
Multimedia Artist & Gymnastics Coach

Shanshan Jiang is a multimedia artist and gymnastics coach with a bachelor's degree in Broadcasting and Hosting Arts and a Certificate from Yukon University in Multimedia Communications. She loves working with children, but her true passion is storytelling through photography and video. Resilient and always eager to learn, she embraces challenges with strength, embodying the Chinese proverb: "One grows stronger when facing the strong; true strength is immeasurable."



Abhishek Avii
Business and HR Consultant

Abhishek is a skilled Business and HR Consultant with a strong management and organizational growth background. He holds a bachelor's degree in business administration and has expertise in hiring, employee engagement, and improving business processes. Recently, he expanded his skills into Multimedia Communication, combining business strategy with creative storytelling and digital branding. His ability to think analytically and communicate creatively helps businesses grow while building a positive work culture.



Dale Henry Tinga
Multimedia Artist

Dale is an aspiring multimedia artist with a passion for editing photographs, digital images, and videos. He loves going on adventures to engage himself with nature and capturing the world around him. He has a Bachelor's degree in Information and Communication Technology before being into Multimedia. His journey in multimedia is fueled by his passion for technology.

2025



Pardeep Singh Illustrator and Photographer

Pardeep Singh an illustrator and artist who loves photography. He captures the world through both art and my lens. Pardeep originally from India, and I had an amazing time as an international student. He went from the warm weather of home to the cold weather of a new place. His work shows how different cultures and climates can be, and it's all thanks to my creativity."

Jasleen Kaur Photographer

Jasleen is passionate about photography, particularly capturing the beauty of nature through landscapes, sunsets, and various seasons. She has honed her skills in photo editing, experimenting with color, lighting, and effects to enhance the visual appeal of her images. Jasleen is eager to apply her creativity and knowledge to future opportunities and projects.



Jeevika Jolly Certified Beauty Specialist

A certified beauty specialist from Punjab, India, now living in Whitehorse, Jeevika is passionate about beauty and focused on leveraging her new found multimedia and design skills to supplement her practice and build her career. When not working you can find her living her best life, chasing her dreams and seizing every opportunity.

“

You don't go to university to be able to punch a clock. You go to university to be in a position to make a difference.

- Janet Napolitano

Behind the Devil's Mask

By Sergio Illanes



Photo by pixabay

For my Digital Illustration course (MMC123), I wanted to create something from my cultural heritage in Bolivia and chose to reproduce a traditional mask from the Oruro Devil Dance. This festival, declared an Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity by UNESCO in 2001, blends indigenous and European influences, with masks playing a central role in both its ritual and symbolism.

Used exclusively during the Oruro Carnival's "Entrada," a twenty-hour uninterrupted procession, these masks represent the eternal struggle between good and evil. Dancers, portraying Lucifer and Archangel Michael, bring them to life through intricate, generationally transmitted choreography. Their pearls and sequins gleam in the sunlight as performers traverse the four-kilometer route, reinforcing their deep connection to the festival's spiritual and cultural significance.



Photo by pixabay

With nearly 30,000 dancers and over 10,000 musicians participating, the Oruro Carnival is a breathtaking display of collective identity. The synchronized movements and vibrant masks transform the procession into a living testament to Bolivia's enduring cultural heritage.

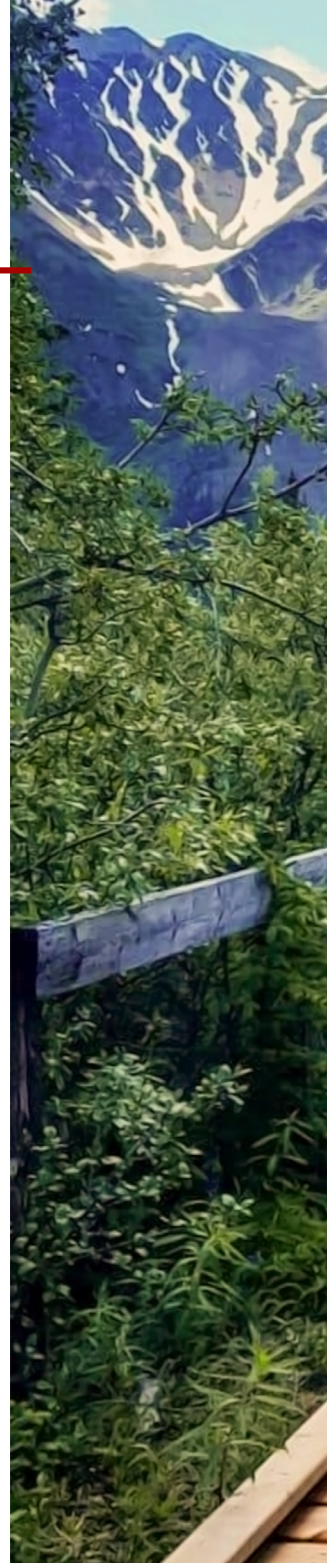
Through this digital reproduction, I hope to honor and preserve this extraordinary tradition. By capturing the artistry and significance of these masks, I aim to contribute to their legacy and share their cultural importance with Yukoner's and my fellow students.



Beyond their visual impact, the masks carry profound symbolic meaning. They serve as both divine protection for miners and the community and as representations of good's triumph over evil. Their elaborate designs incorporate zoomorphic motifs—snakes, toads, lizards, condors, and ants—creatures central to Uru (Indigenous) tradition, believed to have been protected by the Wari civilization and later petrified by the Inca princess (Ñusta Incaica).



Mask design by: Sergio Illanes



Being An Immigrant Father, Worker And Student In the Yukon

By David Rojas Lasso

Can a man's heart explode from loving too much? Because that's what it feels like being an immigrant father of three small kids, a two part-time jobs worker, and a full-time student pursuing a degree in Northern Outdoor and Environmental Studies at Yukon University, all while navigating the vast wilderness of parenthood in a foreign land.

I still remember the day we arrived in Whitehorse during late summer 2023, my kids' eyes wide with wonder as we stepped off the plane into the crisp Yukon air. We had left behind our lives in Ecuador, seeking a new adventure and a brighter future. But nothing could have prepared us for the challenges and

joys that awaited us. As a father, I have come to realize that my role is not just about providing for my home, but about being present, being patient, emotionally available and being a rock for my children to cling to. Being a father is about being the safe haven where they can find peace, guidance, and love. And it's about being the example they look up to, the one who shows them what it means to be a loyal person, a visionary, and a perseverant who does not abandon and does not give up on his principles and his dreams.



Photograph's by Belen Mendez

As a father in Canada, I have learned to cherish the smallest moments: the way my children's eyes light up when we see the Northern Lights dancing across the sky during autumn, the sound of their giggles as we play in the snow

during winter, and the feel of their tiny hands wrapped around my finger as we explore the campgrounds and the trails of the Yukon during summer.

But it is not all snowflakes and rainbows. There are days when I feel vulnerable, like I'm drowning in a sea of responsibility, when the weight of providing, and pursuing my academic dreams feels like it is crushing me. At some point of this life experience, I have had to juggle multiple jobs, one on-campus and two off-campus, just to make ends meet. I have worked overnight shifts three days a week, and been on-call on weekends. This has turned into a delicate balancing act, one that requires precision, commitment to succeed, and a willingness to sacrifice. And yet, despite the physical, mental, and emotional fatigue that comes with it, I wouldn't trade it for the world. Because being a father is not just about what I do, but about who I am. And I know who I am: a source of strength, of comfort, and of inspiration for my children (and perhaps for others, too). It is about being the man they look up to, the one who shows them what it means to be fit, to be brave, to be resilient, and at the same time to be kind.

And yes, as men, we can do it all, while also taking care of ourselves and our personal needs.

Moving to Canada from Ecuador has been a journey of discovery, but also of vulnerability. I feel so thankful with life and with this land as I have had to confront my own limitations, my own weaknesses and shadows, and my deepest fears. I have had to learn to ask for help, to accept that people – even your closest ones – can change, that I don't have all the answers, and that sometimes it is okay not to be okay.

As I look to the future, I know that I will continue

“ Because being a father is not just about what I do, but about who I am. And I know who I am: a source of strength, of comfort, and of inspiration for my children (and perhaps for others, too).

to face challenges, but I also know that I will continue to grow, to learn, and to evolve. As I look at my children, their faces aglow with the magic of this new world, I know that I would do it all again in a heartbeat. Because being a father, a worker, and a student in the Yukon is not just a challenge, it is a privilege. It is a chance to experience the raw beauty of nature, the resilience of the human spirit, and the depths of my own heart. And it is a reminder that, no matter how tough things get, I am capable of overcoming anything, as long as I have myself and my kids by my side.

People You May Know

By Graeme Tennant

The day I got the Facebook notice that
you'd died.
Taken your own life.
Leaving other behind, to pick up the pieces.

I checked up on you.
And found out, you unfriended me.

I sent you a friend request anyway.
A friend request to the dead.
Hoping that maybe part of you sees it.
But, it was more for me.

So you know I still want to keep in touch.

If you need support

Suicide Crisis Helpline
24/7 | Call 9-8-8

**24-hours Residential
School Crisis Line**
Open 24/7
1 (866) 925-4419

**Hope for Wellness
Help Line**
Open 24/7
1 (855) 242-310
Online chat at
hopeforwellness.ca

Through My Lens: Ontario's Hidden Gems

Story and photos By Jasleen Kaur



Traveling is one of the most fulfilling and enriching experiences one can have. It opens up a world of new places, cultures, and people, offering countless opportunities to explore and learn. Personally, I have always been drawn to

travel— not only for the adventure it brings, but also for the chance to connect with nature and capture its beauty through photography.

One of my most memorable trips in Canada, where I visited some of my favorite places in Ontario: Central Island, Blue Mountain, and Tobermory. Each location offered something unique, and they left lasting memories.

Despite being only a short ferry journey from the metropolis, Central Island which is in Toronto seemed like a whole different place. A peaceful escape from the bustle of downtown Toronto, it was. I loved exploring the parks,

walking along the beaches, and admiring the breathtaking far-off views of the Toronto skyline. The island's peaceful and natural environment made it an ideal location for photography. The area's calmness, with its green lawns and stunning lake views, offered several chances to capture the captivating appeal of nature.

Another place I love is Blue Mountain, which is right outside Collingwood. In addition to having amazing hiking paths in the hot months, the area is well known for its slopes for skiing in the winter. I was amazed by the breathtaking views of the valleys and mountains when I went there in the summer. With its thick forests and hilly landscape, Blue Mountain's natural beauty was a photographer's paradise. In order to get a broad perspective of the surrounding area, I went to the summit and took a ton of pictures of the breathtaking surroundings.

One of the best parts of my trip was visiting Tobermory, which is on the Bruce Peninsula. I was mesmerized by the pure water and rocky

shoreline. The renowned Grotto, a stunning sea cave with blue water, is located in Bruce Peninsula National Park, which I had the opportunity to visit. My trip's most unforgettable memories were created by the distinctive scenery, which included pure lakes and limestone cliffs. One of my favorite spots in Ontario is Tobermory because I was able to capture the stunning natural beauty of the beach and the vivid colors of the sea.

Putting it all up, my life has been greatly enhanced by my passions for photography and travel. They enable me to travel to new locations, engage with diverse cultures, and document the beauty of the globe in ways I will always cherish. Every journey offers fresh chances for exploration, learning, and adventure, whether in the bustling metropolis of Toronto or the serene settings of Blue Mountain, Tobermory, and Central Island. I'm excited to document and share many more moments with my camera.



From the Philippines to Yukon: A Journey of Hard Work, Growth, and Gratitude

Story and photos By Rainzelyn Eyan

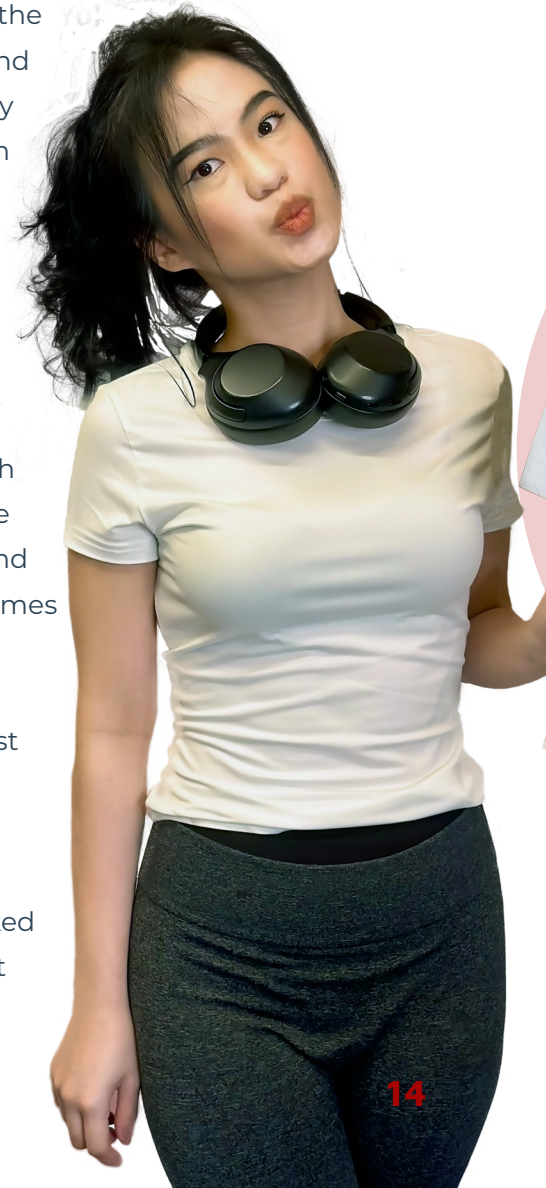
Hi, I'm Rainzelyn, straight from the tropical paradise of the Philippines, now braving the chill of Yukon! My journey as an international student has been nothing short of a wild and rewarding ride. The past fall semester was an incredible experience, and now, as I dive into the winter semester, I'm thriving by balancing not one, not two, but three jobs at the same time!

During the week, I work at the Office of The Registrar, and after school, I facilitate for Steam and Trades. It's been amazing to learn how to juggle work, school, and life outside the university. In the beginning of winter, things were quiet and a bit challenging, but the days are getting longer now, and you'll always see me up at the university by 7:00 am—getting my workout in before classes and diving right into work after that. It's a routine I've come to love.

Being an international student has its challenges, but I've learned that with a clear vision of the end goal, motivation, and

balance, you can make it through. Despite the ups and downs, I managed to achieve great grades during the fall semester and am crossing my fingers for even better results this winter. Balancing life, work, and studies can be overwhelming, but it's all worth it when you see the progress and growth that comes from it.

One of the most memorable moments was during reading week. As I walked down the quiet



hallways alone, I realized that even though I was still going to university while others were on break, this place had truly become my comfort zone. I'm excited to see what the next semesters will bring, especially with spring and summer just around the corner!

I am truly grateful for the amazing people I've met here, from the professors to my wonderful bosses. Special thanks to Sam in the Registrar's Office, and to Liz, Marlee, and Dan in Steam and Trades—your kindness and support make all the difference!

As I continue this journey, I want to share this message with all international students and anyone who's balancing work, study, and life: Stay motivated, keep pushing forward, and remember to slay every day! Let's enjoy this ride, stay hydrated, and keep striving toward the future we're building.

Here's to more semesters and more success ahead!



Building Bridges

By Devashish Doppalapudi

Hi, I'm Devashish Doppalapudi, but most people just call me Dev. I hail from Tanzania—a land of warm beaches, breathtaking safaris, and some of the friendliest people you'll ever meet. In January 2024, I took a huge leap across the globe and landed in the frozen tundra of Yukon University to study Business Administration. Let's just say, the first challenge wasn't the coursework—it was simply surviving the cold. Adjusting to temperatures that could freeze your soul (and your eyelashes) was a struggle. But even harder was navigating life as an international student. bus timings seemed designed to test patience, and student life was, well...quiet. Too quiet.

Building Bridges

I soon realized that isolation was a choice, and so was connection. Instead of waiting for things to get better, I reached out. A classmate and I formed a small study group, which soon became more than just about academics—it became a support system. Proverbs 27:17 says, "Iron sharpens iron, and one man sharpens another." We held each other accountable, exchanged ideas, and found strength in our shared struggles.

This experience taught me that leadership begins with taking initiative, not just for yourself but for those around you. Often, the solutions to our challenges lie in building bridges with others.

One of those friendships led me to the world of VR. My friend David introduced me to his headset, and I was hooked—not just on the gaming but on the potential. What if more students could access this technology, not just for fun but for learning? That's how the VR/Gaming Club was born.

This wasn't just about games; it was about creating an



opportunity to explore emerging technology. Then, I saw a larger gap—students lacked a hands-on space to tinker with tech.

Enter Tech Club, a place for experimentation, discovery, and pushing boundaries.

Each step into leadership taught me something new:

The best way to create change is to step up and be the change. James 1:22 reminds us, “Be doers of the word, and not hearers only.” If we wait for permission, for

perfect conditions, or for someone else to take the lead, nothing ever happens.

The Power of Conversations

In my search for guidance, I frequently visited Mr. Ninad Dhawle in the Business and Leadership department. Every time I knocked, he would welcome me with, “We are here for you. Come on in.”

Through these conversations, another idea was born: Circle Time. It started small—just four people sitting in a room, discussing life, leadership, and learning. But like all things done with passion and consistency, it grew. Now, it’s a space where students and faculty exchange ideas, build relationships, and challenge each other intellectually.

One of the greatest lessons I’ve learned so far is that leadership is not about authority—it’s about service. Jesus himself exemplified this in Mark 10:45: “For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve.” True leadership is about lifting others up, creating spaces for them to grow, and ensuring they feel seen and heard.

The Weight of Responsibility

Between running clubs, contributing to the Student Union, working with the Ed-Tech Committee, and juggling part-time jobs, balance was a challenge. There were days I felt stretched thin. Days I wondered if it was worth it.



The truth is, not everything in life pays in money, but everything pays in experience.

Through these experiences, I have learned:

1. Growth is uncomfortable. Every new opportunity comes with new responsibilities, new challenges, and new failures.
2. Not everyone will understand you, and that's okay. Leadership is learning to communicate, to listen, and to adapt.
3. You don't need a title to lead. You lead by your actions, by how you serve, and by the impact you leave on others.

Shaping the Leader Within

Can someone be born a leader? Maybe. But I believe leaders are shaped—through struggle, through mistakes, and through the people who walk alongside them.

I have made peace with the fact that leadership is not about arrival—it is about continuous refinement. And like always a good friend of mine Kevin Ceninza reminded me of the Proverbs 15:32 says, "Whoever ignores instruction despises himself, but he who listens to reproof gains intelligence." The strongest are not those who refuse to bend but those who allow themselves to be shaped.



So, if you are standing at the edge of something new, wondering if you should take the leap—do it. The results will come. The rewards will manifest. The growth will be evident. And if all else fails, at least you'll have a great story to tell. Just like me.

My Mother

By Cindy Ngo

My mother
She left her home in Vietnam.
She left her comfort and security.
She left the literal warmth and the warmth of her
family.
She left for more than what Vietnam could offer.
She left for a better life and more opportunities.
My mother's dreams were not sacrificed, but
instead evolved, so that I could dream.

But there's hesitation to dream.
When I think of life years from today and the
possibility of total climate collapse, how could I
possibly dream of a thriving and peaceful future?

Today, my thoughts are uneasy
Today, my thoughts are not about landing my
dream job or having the opportunity to purchase a
home
Today, my thoughts are of a little girl, scavenging
for
materials on top of a garbage mountain that
poisons her drinking water.
Today, my thoughts of the money hungry
billionaires that fail to see the little girl and the
millions like her.

Today, my thoughts are of lost culture. Where
future generations may never see caribou, eat its
meat, hold its fur, or wear its hide while jigging.

Today, my thoughts may be dark and dreary, but
I have no choice but to hope.
Unlike my mother, I have no home to leave for a
better life.

This is my home, and this planet is my only
choice.

So today my only dream is that we unite. We
unite for the better of our planet, for our only
home.

My mother used to say, *tôi làm việc chăm chỉ vì
ban*, meaning I work hard for you.
So, let's work hard for our only home.

A Memorable Trip to Dawson City

Story and photos by Pardeep Singh

Last year, I arrived in Whitehorse, Yukon as an international student. I came in January, so the cold was a big shock for me! When summer arrived, I was talking to my friend who lives in Toronto. He told me that he and his friends were planning a trip, but they didn't know where to go. I asked them if they wanted a busy city trip or a peaceful one, and they said they were looking for a long drive. I suggested they visit Whitehorse and Dawson City.

They came to visit in June, and we spent some time exploring Whitehorse. After that, we planned a trip to Dawson City. The drive to Dawson City was almost 7 hours long. We started at 8 in the morning, and since my friends are from busy Toronto, they were amazed by the beautiful mountains and the peaceful views. They kept saying it looked like heaven!

We spotted some bears, which are quite common in the Yukon. These bears are usually





between Gravel Lake and Flat Creek, our tire blew out in four places. The worst part was that we didn't have a spare tire with us. There were no gas stations or shops nearby, and very few people on the road. We were stuck.

After 2 or 3 hours, an old man stopped to help us. He had a chain to fix our tire, and he said he was also heading to Dawson City. He told us to follow him. We continued the journey with him leading the way, but after driving about 200 kilometers, we ran out of fuel. The man stopped again and asked what had happened. When we told him we were out of gas, he gave us some of his extra fuel in a jerry can. He told us that if we were going on a long trip, we should always carry extra fuel.

We felt really bad because we hadn't thought about carrying extra fuel, a spare tire, food, or water for such a long drive. That day, I learned an important lesson if you're going on a long trip, always bring extra supplies, like a spare tire, extra fuel, water, and food. If that man hadn't helped us, we don't know how we would have managed.

Thanks to the kindness of a stranger our trip was success!

seen near forests and rivers, looking for food. We also saw a moose, a huge animal and a symbol of the northern wilderness. We also saw some big horned, Dall sheep; big, beautiful creatures who peaceful unless they feel threatened.

When we finally arrived in Dawson City, we were amazed by its beauty. It's such a peaceful town, with old buildings and lakes that reflect the calmness of the area. We spent almost three days in Dawson City, exploring the lakes and trails. Since it was our first time visiting, we wanted to see everything, and we loved every moment of it. The town made an unforgettable experience.

This trip taught us a very big lesson, sometime things didn't go as planned. When we were



A Cozy Afternoon at North Bean Coffee Roasting

Story and photos By Jeevika Jolly



Spending an afternoon at Bean North Coffee Roasting was just perfect. It's a cozy little spot on Takhini Hot Springs Road that feels warm and welcoming, especially when it's cold outside.

I went there with my brother and sister-in-law to escape the chilly weather. As soon as we walked in, we were hit with the amazing smell of fresh coffee beans roasting. The place had a relaxing vibe, with wooden furniture and shelves full of books. You could just grab one and start reading while enjoying your drink.

We ordered hot chocolate, and honestly, it was the best I've ever had. It was creamy, rich, and just what we needed to warm up. While we waited for our snacks, we found some board



games like chess and carom to keep us entertained. My brother and I played a game of chess, and my sister-in-law watched, smiling and sipping her hot chocolate.

When our food arrived, the carrot cake looked so good I couldn't wait to try it. It



was super soft, moist, and topped with just the right amount of cream cheese frosting. We also tried their special coffee blend, and it tasted so fresh and flavourful. Everything about that place made us feel right at home. We just sat there for hours, chatting, playing games, and enjoying the warmth.

Bean North Coffee Roasting isn't just a coffee shop, it's a cozy little getaway where you can forget about the cold outside and just enjoy good food, drinks, and company. I can't wait to go back!





The Quest: An Unforgettable Adventure in the Yukon

Story and photos By Anureet

When my friend first told me about the Quest Course, I had no idea how transformative it would be. A five-day outdoor expedition followed by seven engaging classes, this journey was more than just an adventure—it was a test of resilience, teamwork, and discovery.

Day 1: Into the Wilderness

The journey began at Sky High Wilderness Ranch, nestled deep in the heart of the Yukon. Excitement buzzed in the air as students from different states and countries gathered, eager to embrace the unknown. The legendary Rodney, a wilderness expert, took charge, teaching everyone how to set up a traditional wall tent—a skill crucial for surviving in the wild.

Once the tents were up, the group was split into teams, each competing in various challenges. Laughter and determination filled the camp as friendships began to form. As the

sun dipped behind the mountains, they gathered around a bonfire, sharing stories, cultural traditions, and playing games that bridged their differences. That night, under a sky bursting with stars, they retreated to their tents—exhausted yet exhilarated.



Day 2: The Great Hike

Morning arrived with a crisp Yukon breeze. After a hearty breakfast and some early-morning chatter, the day's challenge was revealed: hiking the rugged trails surrounding the ranch. For those who preferred a quieter experience, an Indigenous beading workshop was available, where they could learn the art of crafting traditional designs.

My friend, always up for an adventure, chose the hike. It wasn't just about the climb—it was about connection. Every 10-15 minutes, they took short breaks where instructors posed thought-provoking questions, sparking deep discussions that strengthened their bonds. With each pause, they switched partners, ensuring that by the end of the hike, everyone had shared a piece of their world with someone new.

had become their temporary home. With tents dismantled and backpacks strapped on, they returned to university, their hearts and minds brimming with fresh experiences.



Day 3: Farewell to the Ranch

The morning was bittersweet. It was time to pack up camp and bid farewell to the wilderness that

Day 4: The Adventure Continues at Helen's Fish Camp

The next stop: Helen's Fish Camp. Unlike the rugged survival of the previous days, today was about conservation and tradition. Local experts shared the importance of protecting rare fish species, teaching them sustainable fishing techniques.

Afterward, the real fun began. They competed in Tug-of-War and the legendary Cardboard Box Boat Race. My friend's team named their boat Santa Maria—a vessel built with determination, creativity, and maybe a little bit of luck. Against all odds, their boat didn't sink and they won the race, celebrating like champions. As the sun set, they returned home, victorious and proud.

Day 5: Conquering the Yukon River

The final challenge was the most thrilling yet—canoeing down the mighty Yukon River. For four hours, they paddled through breathtaking landscapes, racing each other, capturing memories through their cameras, and soaking in the beauty of the wild. For many, including my friend, it was their first time in a canoe—a moment of fear transformed into a lifelong memory.

As they reached the shore, there was a silent understanding among them all: this was more than just an outdoor course. It was a journey of self-discovery, teamwork, and pushing beyond limits.

The Quest Course wasn't just about learning survival skills or playing games—it was about finding adventure in the unknown and forming connections that would last a lifetime.



Gypsy Day

By Natasha Mooney

It's been a gypsy day
And a long, hard night
Just when I thought you'd gone away
You came back into the light
All I saw were purple and blue
The smiles, there were so few
I saw the tears reflected in your eyes
My eyes shifted to the ground
But I still don't know what made me realize
That my sobs were the only sound
I turned away, it was all I could do
But turn around and run from you
My world crumbled and fell before me
Gone was all I'd ever known.
But they came, helped me up, helped me to see
That I was me, that I was their own.

It seems there's no way out of this
That it's the past that I'll miss
The road keeps twisting, turning with no end
And I keep sinking lower into you
My branch has broken, my roots will soon bend
There's not a thing I think I can do.

It's been a gypsy day
One more step on my way.

Disclaimer: This poem uses the word 'gypsy' in a colloquial sense to convey a spirit of wandering. We acknowledge the complex history of the term and respect the Romani people and their culture.

Million Dollar Falls – A Breathtaking Yukon Adventure

Story and photos By Abhishek Avii

Million Dollar Falls, located in the Yukon's Kluane region, gets its name from a U.S. Army camp built nearby in the 1940s during the construction of the Haines Road and a pipeline from Haines to Fairbanks. The camp had barracks, officers' quarters, and a large bathroom with 21 toilets. However, it was never used, and people joked that it must have cost a "million dollars" to build, giving the falls their name.

Today, the area is a Yukon Government campground with a boardwalk leading to a viewpoint where visitors can see the 60-meter-high waterfall on the Takhanne River. In July, it becomes the destination for Chinook salmon swimming upstream to spawn.

My Unforgettable Adventure to Million Dollar Falls

In August 2024, I arrived in Whitehorse, Yukon, full of excitement after hearing so much about



Million Dollar Falls from my cousins. After settling in, I asked my cousin if we could go explore the falls, and we quickly planned a trip for the upcoming Sunday.

On the day of the adventure, I woke up early, eager to start the journey. I helped pick up snacks, drinks, and some chicken for cooking later. By 8:30 AM, we were excited to be on the road. The drive was filled with breathtaking views, and every rest stop allowed me to stretch, grab a bite, and snap a few pictures. I particularly enjoyed the first stop at Pine Lake, where I watched people boating and swimming in the crystal-clear waters. It was the perfect spot to relax and take in the peaceful atmosphere before continuing.



It felt like two worlds coming together as we ate traditional Indian food in the Yukon wilderness. Once everything was ready, we sat down and enjoyed our food with the magnificent waterfall as our backdrop. I felt like I was living in a dream as I savored every bite.

This trip became one of my most cherished memories. It was more than just visiting the falls—it was about enjoying the company of family, sharing food, and experiencing the beauty of Yukon together. Every moment of this adventure, from the scenic drive to the delicious meal, will stay with me forever.

After refueling the car in Haines Junction (though everything was more expensive there than in Whitehorse), we stopped at Kathleen Lake. I spent some time there playing games by the water and laughing with my cousin, making for some fun memories before we reached our destination.

We finally arrived at Million Dollar Falls and walked along the wooden boardwalk to see the falls.

I was in awe of the powerful waterfall cascading down in front of me. It was even more stunning than I had imagined, and I was eager to capture the moment with my camera. The trip's highlight came when we found the perfect spot to cook our chicken. I helped set up, prepared the ingredients, and started cooking a traditional butter chicken.



Have You Ever Tried Ice Fishing?

Story and photos By Shanshan Jiang



My first impression of ice fishing was simply sitting motionless on a frozen lake, waiting for a fish to bite. At least, I figured, this wouldn't put my legs at risk! Without hesitation, I decided to give it a try. On a bright and sunny weekend, my friend Jiachen and I packed our gear and set off. We headed to Luis Lake, a 30-minute drive from Whitehorse. After turning off the Alaska Highway, we followed a winding road lined with breathtaking scenery, filling me with a sense of adventure. Once we arrived at the lake, we strapped on our gear and began trekking across the vast frozen surface toward the deeper waters, where Jiachen, an experienced angler, believed the bigger fish would be. There weren't

Winter in the Yukon is a vast expanse of white, where the once lively forest trails of summer fall into a deep and peaceful silence. Outdoor activities become limited, with skiing reigning as the most popular winter sport. However, I have never dared to try it—not because of the thrill of speeding downhill, but because I fear my fragile bones might not withstand a fall. As a Chinese saying goes, 'A bone injury takes a hundred days to heal.' As an international student juggling coursework and two part-time jobs, a single fracture could disrupt my entire schedule. So, skiing is definitely out of the question. Instead, another winter activity caught my eye—ice fishing!





many footprints along the way, and we trudged through the snow for about ten minutes before reaching our fishing spot.

The ice was buried under a thick layer of snow, so we used the most basic method to clear it—kicking. After clearing enough space for two foldable chairs, Jiachen began drilling a hole in the ice with an ice drill. At first, I doubted such a simple tool could penetrate the thick ice, but Jiachen swiftly proved me wrong. He gripped the drill firmly with one hand and spun the handle with the other. In just a few turns, the ice cracked open, and as he drilled deeper, chunks of ice piled up. I helped by scooping out the ice fragments with a small ladle. After a while, Jiachen grew tired, and it was my turn. I mimicked his technique and started drilling. Though the air was freezing, the effort kept me warm. Finally, I felt a sudden give—the drill had broken through! Clear lake

water gushed up, carrying bits of ice with it. 'It's open!' I cheered, exhilarated. I carefully scooped out the remaining ice until we had a clear hole, through which we could see our bait drop into the depths below.

We set up our chairs, grabbed our short ice-fishing rods, and began lowering bait—frozen shrimp and sausage—to lure the hungry fish. Unlike summer fishing, where artificial lures rely on skillful movements to attract fish, ice fishing requires real food to entice them. And so, the waiting game began—a test of patience and endurance.

After nearly two hours, the initial warmth from our activity faded, and the cold seeped through my layers of clothing. Despite wearing two pairs of thermal pants and four layers on top, my feet began to freeze. I stood up and jumped around to keep warm. Just then, Jiachen shouted, 'It's here!' I rushed over, eyes locked on his fishing line. He gave a swift tug—hooked! With a firm pull, he lifted a massive lake trout out of the water. What a catch! We carefully removed the hook from its mouth, preparing to release it back into the lake. We never keep the fish we catch; for us, the joy of fishing lies in the challenge, not the meal. However, as we examined the fish, we noticed several parasites clinging to its body. It looked pitiful, yet this was nature's way—an unalterable balance of survival. I quickly searched online to see if removing the parasites would help, but the



answer suggested it might do more harm than good. Respecting nature's course, we gently returned the trout to the water. I watched closely as it swam away, feeling a deep sense of satisfaction.

With our adventure complete, we packed up carefully, ensuring we left no trace behind. Any litter left on the ice would sink into the lake when the ice melts in spring, polluting the water. Carrying all our gear, we began the trek back. Though we didn't bring home a single fish, we felt victorious—because what we gained was the experience of ice fishing and the thrill of a successful catch. In ice fishing, avoiding an empty-handed trip is the ultimate achievement!

Ice fishing adds endless excitement to the quiet winter months. If you haven't tried it yet, give it a shot! May every angler enjoy success, and may every trip be filled with great catches!

Baking Classes in Campus Housing

Story and photos By Dori Zaluski

This fall I started offering my services as a baking and cooking instructor in campus housing. Mostly I taught baking, since sweet treats are so tasty! I've had several faithful students over the year, and I really enjoy the interaction. I like to lead, but it has been a learning experience for me as well as the people who come to learn how to bake and cook. Some of the lessons had two or more recipes on offer, and my dormmates who came usually decided to try a different recipe! Things could get chaotic! But we've had laughs, and some epic failures, part of the failed attempts was from the recipes not suited to our climate. Some of the recipes are created at more humid places, this affects the dryness of the ingredients.

There have been a lot of successes though. I wouldn't have been so successful without Maureen Conway supporting me and help getting the word out about the lessons offered. We had a great time making gingerbread

men/people and decorating Christmas cookies. And on Valentines we had some cupcakes and sugar cookies to decorate on craft night. I look forward to giving more lessons as I feel it is a skill that is useful to have. I hope to pass on my love of the culinary arts to my fellow students in these cooking classes, and maybe they will teach someone else someday!



Northern Outdoor Pursuits and Leadership Adventures

Cross-country skiing & the CGC

By Aaron Rich and Natasha Hyslop

How it all began ...
Our PHED class met at the Moose Wall Tent at 9 am. Everyone arrived mostly on time which gave us plenty of time to be at Mount Mac for 10:30 am. The plan was to be cross-country skiing around the Mount Mac area, hopefully making our way out to Harvey's Hut. It was the perfect distance for getting to just in time for lunch and making it back before 3:30 pm. Natasha and I decided that this would be the perfect schedule with enough time to hit the hot tub at the Canada Games Centre; a great recovery plan after a day of fun but hard work. After going through the initial rundown, we had time to spare so we gave everyone time to grab some food or anything else they might need for the day. We set out for Mount Mac around 10:15.

Upon our arrival, we parked in the CGC parking lot and made our way up the steps to the ski chalet. Our boots and skis were waiting for us when we arrived, and we grouped up outside and got all our gear. Our fearless instructor Rodney took us through practicing getting up from falling over and the basics of slowing yourself down. Two very key abilities to have when skiing. When everyone felt comfortable enough, we made our way down the hill, (some faster than others) to the ski park area to get some additional practice in around 11 am. After practicing going up and down a small hill a couple of times it was time to head out if we wanted to return in time for swimming at the CGC. We then led our group through a tunnel and onto the trail we needed to follow around 12 but swiftly encountered a problem.



We had a massive gap in skill level in our group, some students could burst ahead with ease while others were still struggling to push forward. Our group was quickly divided, and we didn't get far before it became clear that not all of us would make it out to Harvey's Hut as it was around 3km from our starting point. Rodney offered to bring students back to the chalet who didn't think they could continue and around half the group did. I wanted to challenge myself and continue to build my cross-country skiing ability, so I stayed with the Hut group. It was a grueling experience filled with many falls and uncomfortable moments, but we eventually made it out to Harvey's Hut around 12:45. Rodney made his way there to meet us for lunch around 1:15. We spent 30 minutes there recovering and getting warm for our journey back. Rodney, Natasha, and I maintained similar speeds and made our way back to the chalet together while the faster group pushed ahead. We made it back to the chalet just before 3 and met up with the

rest of the team. It was then time for rest and relaxation in the hot tub after a long journey full of memorable experiences. We spent roughly 45 minutes at the pool, having Dylan lead our final group reflection and then disbanding around 4.

Recommendations

Carefully planning out our timeline beforehand was key to our success on the day. We set out an actionable goal that was well within reason and allowed for some deviation if needed. Backup plans are key with something like cross-country skiing. Each person will have a different level of comfortability. It was great that we were in a position where we could split the group in two to make sure everyone was comfortable and safe. Leaders should gauge the skill or fitness level of their group beforehand. Maybe creating a mini quiz about ski experience etc.

To better keep the group together I would

suggest letting everyone know at the beginning of the day that we will be sticking together as a team out there on the trails so there are many people available to help someone if they get hurt. This became an issue a few times during our trip where some students wouldn't wait for others to catch up, so some didn't know whether to stop and wait or to keep going. Deciding on being one group or splitting the group should be done prior.

I don't have too much else to say about our day out. The weather was good and besides one minor injury, everyone made it through without a scratch. Natasha and I accomplished our goal of making it to Harvey's Hut and back in time for the hot tub and steam room. I was just extremely sore the next day!

Logistics and Details

After meeting at the Canada Games Centre, we received our ski boots and skis from the Chalet. We began on the trail marked "Dog" and continued until just before the trail splits. From here, we made the decision to split into two groups, one would head back to the chalet and the other to continue to Harvey's Hut. We stayed on the same trail all the way to Harvey's Hut. We rested, ate lunch and warmed up before heading out again. On the way back, we were more spread out, going our own speeds. We followed the trail marked "sundog" on the way back to the chalet.

Once we regrouped, we decided to spend the last hour of class time in the Canada Games Centre for warming up in the sauna, hot tub and swimming pool.



The above map shows the trail we took to get out to Harvey's Hut, (bottom left of the map) from the chalet in the top right, (around the parking area). Dog is labeled centrally.

The below map shows the trail we took to return to the chalet, (Sundog).



Risk Management / Safety

In our initial email, we reminded everyone to dress for the weather, including mitts, hats, snowpants and winter coats.

Our class consisted of different levels of experience, most of us had never tried cross country skiing before. This posed a risk to us all.

Our instructor demonstrated how to use the skis in front of the entrance. We practiced falling with the purpose of trying to get up on our own. We went down the hill to the small hills where we practiced for 20 minutes, before heading out on the trails.

We did spread out along the trails, varying levels of speed. Some students picked up how to do it quick, others found it challenging. This is how we ended up in two groups: one group was made up of stronger skiers, and the other were students that were cold, tired or unable to continue the distance.

By the end of the trip, we ended with one injury. She reassured everyone that she would get it checked after the class and that she was okay. Her wrist was broken.

In an emergency, what should have been done, is everyone stopping to regroup. Depending on the severity, we would take the injured person back to the chalet to see emergency/paramedics or take her directly to the hospital, rather than waiting out the day.

Conclusion

In conclusion, this was a wonderful end to my PHED experience and I recommend it to any student at all interested in having the opportunity to explore more of the Yukon's vast landscapes and activities.

Must Know Places at YukonU

Story and photos By Dale Henry Tinga

YukonU Gymnasium

This versatile space, with a maximum capacity of 400 people, is open to all students and staff. It's the perfect venue for activities like basketball, badminton, indoor soccer, and volleyball. Whether you're looking for a place to train or simply seeking a spot to unwind and play, the gym has you covered.

The gymnasium is also available for external users through reservations, ideal for hosting events or sports practices. To make a booking, contact roombooking@yukonu.ca. For more details you can contact **(867)334-6042**.

Get ready to make the most of this fantastic facility!



Fitness Center

This state-of-the-art facility is open to all students and staff, offering a wide range of equipment designed to help you build strength and boost stamina. Whether you're just beginning your fitness journey or you're a seasoned gym goer, you'll find everything you need to achieve your goals here.

Don't forget to bring your YukonU ID for access. The center is open Monday to Friday from 7 AM to 8 PM, and on weekends from 2 PM to 8 PM. For additional information, feel free to reach out to studentlife@yukonu.ca.

Let's get moving and make fitness a part of your routine!



Study Room

YukonU offers convenient study rooms exclusively for students and faculty! These rooms are ideal for studying, working on projects, or holding group meetings. Access is on a booking basis, ensuring you have the privacy and space you need.

To reserve a study room, visit yukonu.libcal.com/reserve/study_rooms. Make the most of this quiet and focused environment to excel in your academic and collaborative endeavors!

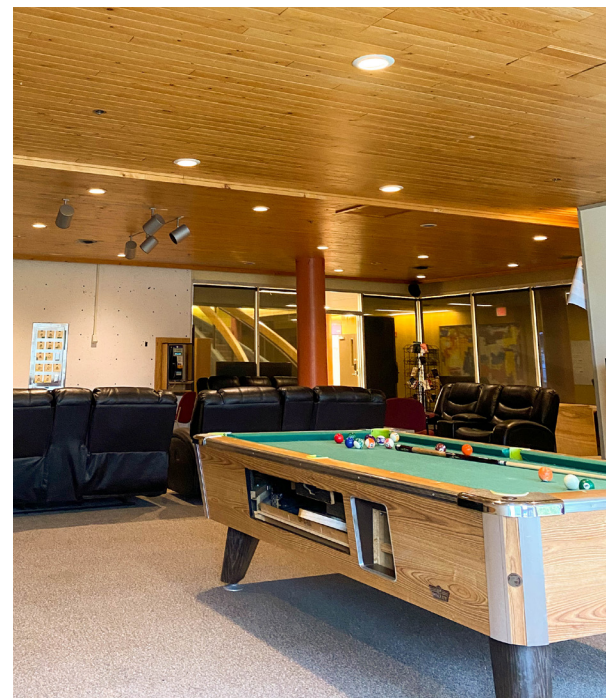


Student Lounge

Welcome to the YukonU Student Lounge! This space is the perfect spot to unwind between classes. Whether you're looking for a place to relax, meet new friends, or enjoy some leisure activities, the lounge has something for everyone.

You can challenge your peers to a game of billiards, play a tune on the piano, or dive into one of the many books available. It's a fantastic place to connect with fellow students and make lasting friendships.

Come by and make the most of your time at YukonU!



A Break Between Assignments: The Yukon Night Sky

Story and photos By David Heilig

The night air was just crisp enough to wake me up as I stepped outside between assignments. My brain was heavy with numbers and formulas, but I needed a moment to breathe, to escape my laptop screen. As I looked up, the night sky was playing in colour. Green ribbons of light wove through the sky, shifting and dancing slowly, completely mesmerizing me. The Northern Lights. Aurora Borealis. It felt unreal. It had been almost ten years since I last saw them in Northern Finland. And now, it was like the flow of time had paused

for a moment. The towering evergreens stood still; their dark silhouettes framed the glow. The cabin at Roddy's Camp, its windows cast a warm light, reminded me of how small we are beneath something so vast. For a moment, deadlines and responsibilities vanished. There was only the fresh air, the cool night, the quiet environment, and the sky alive with movement. Then, with a deep breath, I walked back, recharged, if only a little, by nature itself.



My Learning Journey at YukonU

Story and photos By Dean Smarch

I began the Business After that I took some time off from school before returning to my studies in the Multimedia Communication program. which I used to enrich my skills and enhance my resume for future employers. I enjoyed all my software programs and accounting classes. I also enrolled into Intro to Literature

with Melanie McFadyen, and discovered I enjoy writing and researching which helped enhance my communication skills. It was a long 10 years with Yukon University, now I am researching to be an entrepreneur in Whitehorse after graduation with a Bachelor of Business Administration Degree.



Haiku

By Jacqueline Leanne Colwell

mid-semester class
outdoors, bright-white distraction-
springtime snowflakes fall



Image by pixabay



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