

the reflector

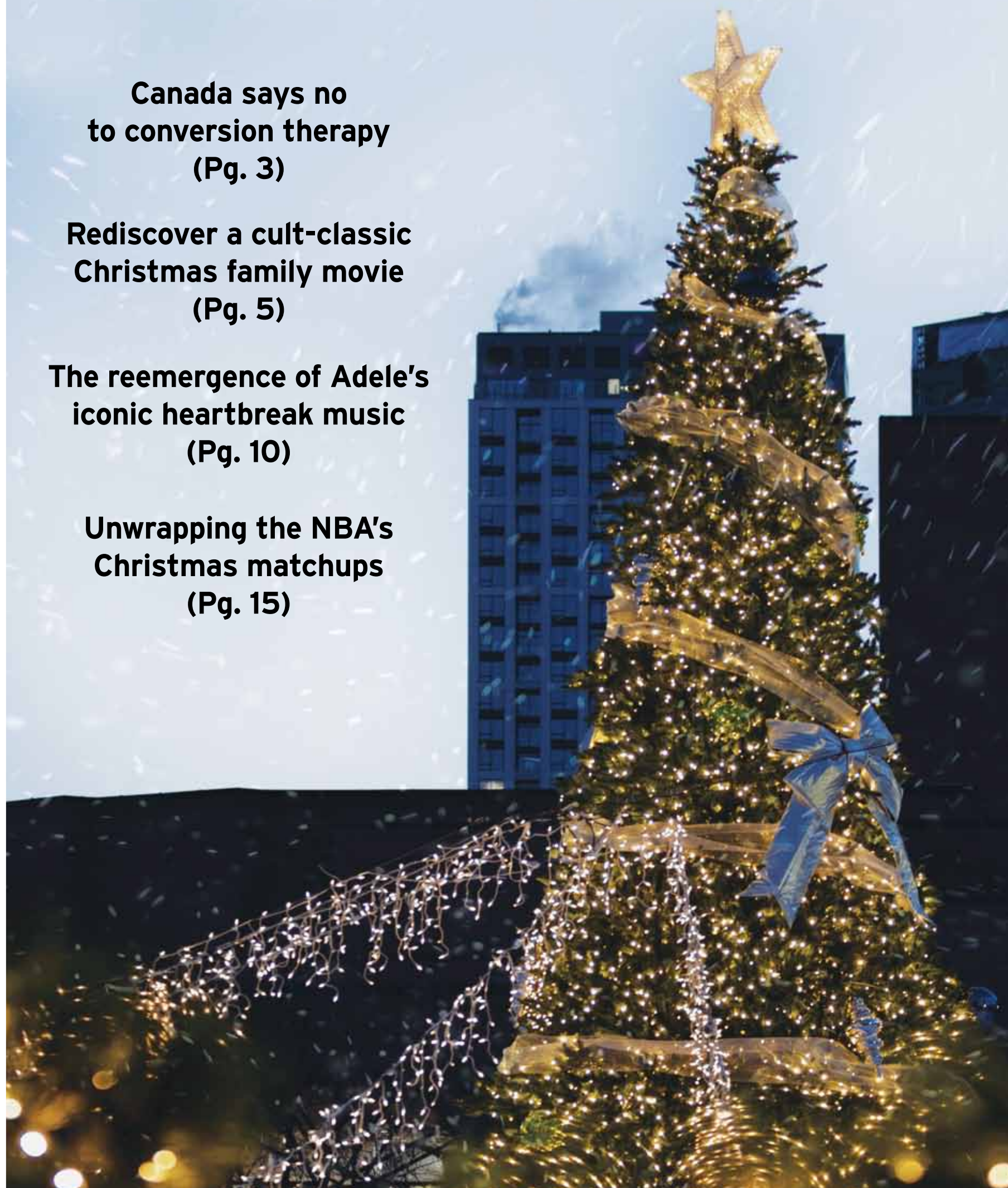
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**Canada says no
to conversion therapy
(Pg. 3)**

**Rediscover a cult-classic
Christmas family movie
(Pg. 5)**

**The reemergence of Adele's
iconic heartbreak music
(Pg. 10)**

**Unwrapping the NBA's
Christmas matchups
(Pg. 15)**



State of Local Emergency lifted for Calgary

Alex Luong

Staff Writer

On Dec. 2, the City of Calgary let the State of Local Emergency (SOLE) expire as they deem the powers afforded under the SOLE no longer necessary. These extra powers included procurement of vaccines and rapid testing.

“Most Calgarians have rolled up their sleeves to protect themselves, their loved ones and their community from the pandemic. With 88 per cent of Calgarians aged 12 and older now fully vaccinated against COVID-19 and the vaccination for children aged 5-11 underway,” Chief of the Calgary Emergency Management Agency (CEMA) Susan Henry said.

The SOLE that has been in place on Sept. 3, 2021 is the third SOLE that has been declared since the beginning of the pandemic. It was declared due to an increase in the number of COVID-19 Delta variant cases. During that time, the Vaccine Passport and Face Covering bylaw were implemented.

The Vaccine Passport bylaw required many businesses and organizations to require proof of vaccination, a recent negative COVID-19 test or a valid medical exemption letter to gain entry to many businesses and public establishments. The Face Covering Bylaw required Calgarians to wear a face covering or masks in indoor public spaces and public vehicles.

Earlier last year, during March of 2020, the Municipal Emergency Plan was implemented to provide citizens and city employees with information, resources, and support against the COVID-19 pandemic.

Despite the SOLE being lifted, there is still concern among Calgarians like Ward 7 Councillor Terry Wong. Wong voices his concern on Twitter, saying he’d like to have a council meeting to reconsider the decision as the Omicron COVID variant has been confirmed in Alberta by Dr. Deena Hinshaw.



Dec. 2 marked the end of the third State of Local Emergency for Calgary. Photo by Alex Luong

Wong tweeted, “#Omicron is confirmed in #Alberta by Dr Hinshaw. So it makes no sense to end #YYC State of Local Emergency on Thurs. We must have a special [Calgary City Council] meeting to reconsider that order. Lives are at stake. I’m asking Mayor [Jyoti Gondek] to reconvene [with the] Council.”

Although the SOLE has expired, Calgary’s Municipal Emergency Plan along with the Vaccine Passport and Face Covering bylaw will continue to be in place until further notice.

Mayor Gondek said that, “with the increase of vaccinations and the continued use of masks

in public settings, we have been able to keep businesses and our economy open. Calgarians must remember the pandemic is not yet over and we must remain vigilant. Please continue to wear your masks and get yourself and your kids vaccinated.”

WHO: ‘Omicron has a higher risk of reinfection’

Keoputhy Bunny

News Editor

Originally labeled a COVID-19 variant of concern by World Health Organization (WHO) in late November, variant B.1.1.529 or more commonly known as the Omicron variant has taken the world by storm. There are 11 cases in Alberta at the time of writing.

According to WHO, preliminary evidence shows that Omicron has a higher

risk of reinfection than other variants. More information is still being obtained, but this means that people who previously had COVID-19 are more likely to acquire the virus again with the Omicron variant.

In Canada, the variant has already set foot in multiple places, including Alberta, Quebec, Ottawa and British Columbia.

But it seems a little bit too early to tell if this variant of concern will bring about another, stronger wave of COVID-19. In an interview with *CNN*, Dr. Megan Ranney, professor of Emergency Medicine and associate dean at the School of Public Health at Brown University said it was too early to tell just how deadly Omicron is compared to

other forms of COVID-19.

Even so, some countries have taken pre-emptive measures against the variant. At the time of writing, several countries including Canada and the United Kingdom have either banned or restricted travel to South Africa, where scientists first raised the alarm on the Omicron variant.

For now, WHO recommends that countries should keep an eye out and make sure people who are in disadvantaged positions are able to be kept safe and to also get their citizens vaccinated.

For the general public, WHO has recommended keeping distance from others, wearing a mask and staying away from poorly ventilated places.

Conversion therapy to be banned across all of Canada

Keoputhy Bunny

News Editor

Bill C-4 has passed in parliament. The bill was passed on Dec. 1 by unanimous decision by the House of Commons, effectively outlawing any attempt at forcing someone to undergo conversion therapy practices throughout Canada.

According to a report submitted to the United Nations (UN) by an independent expert on the harms of conversion therapy, “‘Conversion therapy’ is used as an umbrella term to describe interventions of a wide-ranging nature, all of which are premised on the belief that a person’s sexual orientation and gender identity, including gender expression, can and should be changed or suppressed [...] in particular when the person is lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans or gender diverse.”

Simply put, conversion

therapy or reparative therapy is a practice, service or treatment that represses or changes a person’s gender expression or identity.

The bill states that a person who knowingly causes another person to go through conversion therapy is subject to up to five years in prison.

The bill also dictates that courts are allowed to order any advertisements for conversion therapy to be deleted.

According to the bill, anyone who is guilty of knowingly promoting or advertising conversion therapy is liable for up to two years in prison.

“I dream of the day when LGBTQ2 issues are no longer political footballs. And we are one day closer to that future,” said Member of Parliament (MP) Randy Boissonnault to reporters after the vote.

Although the bill had been introduced before, it came with opposition from the Conservative party. The last time the ban on conversion therapy was introduced, 62 Conservative Members of Parliament voted against it.

The aforementioned report submitted to the UN also proposed a global ban on conversion therapy.

Even though clusters around the world and areas in certain countries have banned conversion therapy, only four countries currently have a full ban on it according to *Forbes* magazine.

Conversion therapy has been banned in Calgary since May 2020.

Current Calgary Mayor Jyoti Gondek spoke on the subject back in February 2020, when Naheed Nenshi was still mayor and she was still a councillor.



Canada would join only a handful of countries who have nationally banned conversion therapy. Photo by Keo Bunny

“There’s absolutely no place for conversion therapy anywhere in any city, let alone just Calgary,” Gondek said in a council meeting.

New Office of Safe Disclosure opens at MRU

Keoputhy Bunny

News Editor

The new Office of Safe Disclosure has officially opened for Mount Royal University (MRU). This new office, headed by the Safe Disclosure Advisor Feden Abeda, a social work graduate and multi-disciplinary artist, aims to be a safe place for students, staff and faculty to report about discrimination equity and human rights.

Reports made by community members of MRU will be received in a confidential manner. The new office also aims to make sure the university’s processes and policies are understood.

When an issue is reported, the office will work to find an appropriate solution to whatever the situation may be. Abeda says that the office acts as a central point of safe

disclosures. If something is unable to be resolved through this office, Abeda says she could point individuals in the right direction to a service who can help.

“Feden’s prior experience with training lawyers who represent survivors of gender and racially based violence as well as harassment and discrimination in the workplace is what makes her a great fit as our first safe disclosure advisor,” MRU’s General Counsel Amy Nixon said in an article published on the university’s website about the new office.

However, Abeda’s job extends further than helping with disclosures.

Abeda added that, “Because this role is meant to fill a gap in the community, I work to

identify trends and patterns on the disclosure side, within the limits of confidentiality, and share what I’m observing with appropriate decision makers so we can look at [it in the] long term.”

Abeda also stated that she’s not a replacement for current MRU services but she can “guide people to the resources and processes already available.”

If anyone is looking to contact the Office of Safe Disclosure, they are able to be reached through a Google Form through their website.

There are also other third-party services outside the university that MRU community members can report to if they need it.



Feden Abeda is also aiming to identify trends around disclosures to share with decision makers to impact change. Photo courtesy of Feden Abeda

Continues on Pg. 4

Continued from Pg. 3

ConfidenceLine offers confidential reporting focused on professional or financial misconduct. Although geared more towards staff and faculty, ConfidenceLine

will also take reports from students and alumni as well.

They can be reached toll-free at 1-800-661-9675 and at mru.confidenceline.net.

If any MRU community member may suspect a person to cause harm to

themselves or someone else, the Concerning Behaviour on Campus Team (CBCT) offers their help. According to their website, they combine the expertise of services like the Office of Student Conduct and Student Counselling Services

to assist people confidentially on a case-by-case basis.

The CBCT can be contacted by their email cbct@mtroyal.ca or by calling Security Services at 403-440-5900 and asking to make a report to CBCT.

THE REFLECTOR

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EDITORIAL STAFF:

Publishing Editor: Riggs Zyrille Vergara

Managing Editor: Ivar Bergs

News Editor: Keoputhy Bunny

Features Editor: Emily Marsten

Arts Editor: Astrid Cunanan

Sports Editor: Gage Smith

Photo Editor: Hermie Ocanar

Layout Editor: Christian

Kindrachuk

Web Editor: Mikaela Delos Santos

CONTRIBUTORS: Dylan LeDuke,

Abbie Riglin, Emme Larkins,

Spencer Yu, Katherine Funk

STAFF WRITERS: Josh Werle,

Alex Luong, Matthew Hillier, Jed

Mabazza, Taylor Charlebois,

Makenzie Mason

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the reflector

Wyckham House
Mount Royal University
4825 Mount Royal Gate SW
Calgary, AB T3E 6K6

All depts.: 403.440.6268

Fax: 403.440.6762

TheReflector@TheReflector.ca

World leaders rush to respond to massed troops on Ukraine's border

Matthew Hillier

Staff Writer

News organizations were quick to cover the Russian Federation this week as troop activity over the frequently contested Crimean-Ukraine border has massively increased since November.

According to a document obtained by the *Washington Post*, up to 175,000 troops have been spotted moving to potentially take military action against Ukraine. The former Soviet satellite state is no stranger to interference from its upstairs neighbour. In 2014, Crimea, Ukrainian's neighbour and former political ally, was annexed following a political revolution that overthrew the Ukrainian back interim government.

This was followed by massive unrest that gave Russian special forces a reason to overtake Crimea's Parliament in order to, according to Russia, "stabilize" the country. Following this, men in unmarked uniforms (believed to be a mixture of Pro-Russian Crimeans and Russian forces) blockaded trade routes and borders. The Crimean government was given little option but to be annexed by the Russian Federation following the blockades.

Ever since, Ukraine has been updating and expanding its military forces to prepare against potential Russian interference. Russia's goals are

likely to control the Dnieper River and the land coordinator connecting the river and Crimea. Ukraine quickly built a dam after the annexation of Crimea to destabilize Russian influence in the area. This river supplies Crimea with over 1.5 million cubic meters of water and amounted to 85 per cent of the newly annexed Crimea's drinking water.

Crimea and Ukraine have also been a hotbed of militia activity since the annexation as both governments seek to destabilize each other's influence without direct involvement. For example, in 2015, blockades were set up between Ukraine and Crimea by far-right militias, however, these blockades were moved following Russian troop activity on the border.

According to Global Fire Power, a ranking system for countries' military strength that assesses over 50 points of strength, Russia seems to overpower Ukraine in every section. Statistics like reserve personnel and available manpower are considered. Russia ranked second in terms of global military strength. Ukraine is ranked 25th.

The United Nations (UN) and its United States allies have pledged little to aid Ukraine. However, the Biden administration, with help from the UN, has pledged to

hit Russia economically.

According to Global News, when these troop movements began back in November, the Biden administration pledged to sanction Russian access to the Society for Worldwide Interbank Financial Telecommunication (SWIFT) if annexation occurs. SWIFT is an international banking system responsible for transferring large payments from country to country.

United States President Joe Biden believes that the economic sanctions may be enough to dissuade any Russian military action.

"What I am doing is putting together what I believe to be, will be the most comprehensive and meaningful set of initiatives to make it very, very difficult for Mr. Putin to go ahead and do what people are worried he may do," Biden says.




President Putin maintains that Russia is not planning an invasion of the Ukraine but other countries are concerned. Photo courtesy of Pixabay

United States President Joe Biden believes that the economic sanctions may be enough to dissuade any Russian military action.

"What I am doing is putting together what I believe to be, will be the most comprehensive and meaningful set of initiatives to make it very, very difficult for Mr. [Vladimir] Putin to go ahead and do what people are worried he may do," Biden said.

Time will tell if the economic sanctions will be effective. Yuri Ushakov, Putin's Foreign Affairs Adviser spoke on this subject in a conference call with reporters.

"While the U.S. president talked about possible sanctions, our president emphasized what Russia needs," Ushakov said. "Sanctions aren't something new, they have been in place for a long time and will not have any effect."



COVID-19 UPDATES

New variant in Canada

The Omicron Variant has now been discovered in Canada. At the time of writing, there are currently over a dozen cases in Canada and 11 in Alberta.

COVID-19 detected in animals

COVID-19 has been found in three white-tailed deer, reports Canadian officials.

Third dose incoming for adults

All Albertans 18-59 years old can book their third dose if it has been six months after their second dose.

How watching *National Lampoon's Christmas Vacation* feels like coming home

Dylan LeDuke
Contributor

There is a hallowed Christmas tradition in my family. One that, for me, started on a 24-inch tube TV in my jammies, sitting on the ground, listening to my dad angrily fast-forward the VHS tape. It continues today on a 55-inch LED TV, on a Blu-Ray disk.

No, my family and I are not sitting down to watch the Grinch conduct the greatest heist ever seen in Whoville. Although, the classic cartoon rendition is a staple on Christmas morning. Also, we aren't watching the tale of a forgotten, resourceful, little maniac, as he uses guerilla-warfare style tactics to defend his home against two bozos in *Home Alone*.

No, my family sits down and watches the 'comedic masterclass'

performed by Chevy Chase in *National Lampoon's Christmas Vacation* — a cult classic and my personal pick for best use of a PG-13's single allotted f-bomb in a feature film.

My parents began the tradition with a few of their friends years before I was

born. While I don't know all the details of how the tradition came to be, I am pretty sure it was a byproduct of my dad's obsession with movies that the IMDb section routinely grades below a six-out-of-ten that led him to develop a love for the movie.

For those of you who don't know, this movie is part of a long-running series based on a John Hughes short story titled "Vacation 58" that was published in the *National*

Lampoon Magazine. The movies, released from 1983 to 2015, mainly follow the adventures of Clark W. Griswold as he takes his family on a variety of trips that are all filled with ridiculous comedy and hijinks; from a Moose-based parody of Disney World to Europe, and even to Las Vegas.

The movies range wildly in quality and humour, from groan-inducing and garbage, to a gut-busting holiday classic. Whatever it is, the magic of Christmas or bad humour, *National Lampoon's Christmas Vacation* has a special quality that makes it mandatory that we all watch it every year as a family.

In its first scene, we see the family driving through the snow-covered outskirts of the city on the way to get the "Griswold family Christmas tree," which shows us how the family operates as a whole.

When I was younger, I laughed at the part where Chase flips the bird towards the two hillbillies in their pickup before

promptly getting himself stuck underneath a moving semi-truck. Now, the scene holds a new world of meaning and subsequently makes me laugh that much harder.

Chase's ridiculous road rage and unwillingness to back down reminds me of my father berating idiots on the highway. The way Beverly D'Angelo desperately tries to calm him down before resorting to calling on a higher power for help makes me think that the scene may just have been filmed in my family's car on a road trip to mountainous British Columbia.

The whole movie is a series of unfortunate events. From squirrels, a "fried pussycat" and a burnt down tree to kidnapping Chase's boss. All of this is naught but a trial for our protagonist on his quest to provide the ultimate "Griswold family Christmas." It then follows a traumatic and hilarious scene involving the aforementioned squirrel, a dog named Snots, actress Julia Louis Dreyfus and one ruined Christmas eve, (for those of you who haven't seen the movie, I'll let your imagination fill in the blanks).

There is a line delivered that is quite possibly the best f-bomb ever delivered in a PG-13 movie. Everyone, all the aunts, uncles and grandparents, understandably done with the evening's festivities, tries to escape. For Clark W. Griswold, seeing everyone pack up and try to go is the straw that breaks the reindeer's back. This sends him into a tirade befitting



Continues on Pg. 6

Continued from Pg. 5

a cruel dictator moments before his downfall, with a hint of serial killer for good measure, he proclaims that no one shall leave and everyone's going to have—and I quote, “The hap-happiest Christmas, since Bing Crosby tap danced with Danny f***in-Kaye.” As a child, I had no idea who either of those people were, but it didn't stop me from sharing in the laughs with my parents and repeating the

line to friends. After years and years of rewatching, I only laugh harder now as dad rewinds to play it again.

To be honest, when I first sat down to watch the movie as a kid I never really got it. A movie about a dumb family and their father's wish to pull off the greatest family Christmas ever — noble cause for sure. I only laughed at the funny parts I could understand at the time, I was just too young to get the subtleties or references, or the naughty jokes. I always

just wanted to go back downstairs and play.

Thinking back, I now know that I grew to love the movie because I grew to understand and relate to the story within. The importance of family only becomes more apparent living away from home. It's always a treat to visit family and watch it, reciting every line with my dad and eating my mom's homemade cooking. Truly, much like Ruby Sue from the film, it only took a mule called time to “kick me un-cross-eyed” before I could see.



The well-beloved Chevy Chase in one of the scenes of *National Lampoon's Christmas Vacation*. Photo courtesy of Hughes Entertainment

The Solo Female's Guide to Backpacking: Christmas market must-do's in the United Kingdom

Mackenzie Mason

Staff Writer



Christmas markets pop up all across Europe from late November through to December. They're a great way to get into the festive spirit. Photo courtesy of Pexels

With Christmas just around the corner (and my return home after three months of travelling through Europe), I've been able to stop by a number

of Christmas markets all the way from Scotland's Glasgow and Edinburgh, to England's Liverpool and London.

These festive

markets, also called “Christkindlmarkt,” originate from Germany and have spread across Europe as a fun way to get into the Christmas spirit.

They have everything from amusement rides and local businesses, to German sausages and all the mulled wine you could wish for.

So how do you spend a day at the Christmas markets in the United

Continues on Pg. 7

Continued from Pg. 8

Kingdom? Here are my suggestions for a holly jolly good time.

Do some gift shopping

There are tons of different vendors that take part in the Christmas markets. You can find personalized Christmas decorations, local products like cheese, spreads and unique items like the kilts and tartan scarves that I saw at the markets in Edinburgh.

Drink mulled wine or cider

Let me set the scene. It's a brisk night, but you're bundled up as you stroll through the lit up market passing all the vendors and market-goers. You catch the scent of citrus, cinnamon and spices drifting through the air and then you feel the heat radiating from the large pots of mulled wine and cider. It tastes just as good as it smells. Life is good.

Eat a German sausage

It's only fair that at a German Christmas market you indulge in their culture, so there's tons of different sausages to choose from, even stuffed with cheese, to warm you up and fill your belly!

Ride the ferris wheel at night

Not all Christmas markets have a ferris wheel, but it is quite common for it to be part of the festivities and it's a must-do if you see one. At night you'll be able to see the twinkling lights from the market below and the city from a view that you wouldn't get to see at any other time of year.

Christmas is my favourite time of year, and I feel so lucky to have been able to experience it in the UK before flying home to be with my family and friends after three long months of seeing the world.

Merry Christmas MRU!



Christmas markets are a great way to find unique presents for all of your loved ones. Photo courtesy of Unsplash

Spending the holidays alone – and that's okay

Taylor Charlebois

Contributor

The holidays are a joyous and merry time of the year. Everyone is rife with excitement and anticipation. Families get together, people exchange gifts, share in the good times, drink a ton of booze — the Christmas spirit, as they say.

But not me.

My family, the entirety of them — my nanny (grandmother), my aunts, uncles, brother and parental unit — are all living in Montreal and Ottawa with a few family stragglers in Toronto. But for me, I'm the ultimate straggler of them all — living here in Calgary, 3,613 kilometers away.

I made the move to Calgary eight years ago and since then I've only been home once for Christmas. At first, it was difficult to make

things work financially. I worked as a bartender and found trouble getting the time off. As well, an \$800 plane ticket was a tough pill to swallow.

So, on Dec. 25 I would stay home. I'd always treat myself to some great grocery haul before everything closed. I'd stay in, watch my favorite movies, drink wine, eat a ton of food and it was nice.

There was something romantic about it — I can't quite say what it was. I felt as though for the first time in my life, I had control over what I did. This was monumental to me because for all of my life until I moved, I was always being



Continues on Pg. 8

Christmas is a great time to spend time on things that are special to you personally, sometimes this includes *Lord of the Rings* marathons. Photo courtesy of Unsplash

Continued from Pg. 7

told what to do during the holidays.

“We’re going to nanny’s,” or, “We’re going to your uncle’s,” or, “Everyone is coming here.” It was always what my family had planned and I think subconsciously, that bothered me.

So for the first few years of being on my own, I’d just stay home. Fast forward a few years, I started to make more money, got a better job, made friends, and even at one point got cozy with a significant other and their family. Even with the invitations to spend the holidays with friends and their families, or my partner’s family — I’d still opt out and choose to stay in and indulge in my little traditions.

To be honest though, what beats watching a full length *Lord of the Rings* movie marathon on a cool and crisp Christmas Eve? In my books, nothing is better than that. When I was young, we had this cute little thing on the 24th where we’d take

our dogs on a big walk after dinner to burn off some of the calories we had just eaten. To our young little hearts’ surprise, every time we’d return it was as though Santa had made his visit.

Maybe I’m not very nostalgic, or maybe I’m just not that familial of a person. I’ve always been kind of a loner, enjoying the solitude of staying in on a Friday night instead of going out and partying for the weekend.

It’s not a plane ticket that deters me from going home for Christmas. It’s not the inability to get time off work, or that I have better things to do. It’s that sometimes we need to follow our own traditions and recharge our batteries in our own unique and quirky ways.

Sometimes I think being alone is just a safe place for me. I hope that all the people who may be forced to spend Christmas alone due to the ongoing pandemic find some solace in that they’re not alone in this — and that’s okay.



Choosing to spend Christmas alone can have its perks, including finding new traditions that make you happy. Photo courtesy of Unsplash



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Year's End Cheer

Celebrate the end of the semester with us!

Drop by West Gate Social on December 9th from 12:30-4:00 pm for a live DJ, free treats, and games!

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students' association
of mount royal university



Alberta
Foundation
for the Arts

Looking back at Kendrick Lamar's Top Dawg legacy

Spencer Yu
Contributor



Kendrick Lamar's music video "HUMBLE." is his most viewed work on YouTube with a whopping 400 million views. Photo courtesy of TDE Films and FREENJOY INC

Kendrick Lamar is widely regarded as one of the best rappers of this generation and potentially one of the greatest of all time. His consistently good discography and varying sounds have made him one of the most notable artists in the hip-hop genre. With his next album speculated to release soon, I thought now would be a great time to look back at five of his best songs ranked in no particular order.

"ADHD"

From the first time I heard this track I knew it was going to be one of my personal favourites. The sample it's built around sets it apart from the rest. The sound of The Knight Hawk's "Jet age of tomorrow" adds such a futuristic feel to the song and is something that I have never heard before. It plays so well with the flow of the track. Lamar's bars aren't as strong in "ADHD" in comparison to the other tracks on this list. But the song's overall vibe makes it, in my opinion, one of his more

notable tracks and showcases his ability to create a feeling within music.

"DUCKWORTH."

"DUCKWORTH" is the last track on Lamar's latest album DAMN. and I personally think it's the strongest track on the album. It perfectly encapsulates Lamar's style of storytelling. The production by Ninth Wonder is also spectacular and plays so well with the progression of the song's story. I thought it was really cool how this track dives not only into Lamar's past specifically, but also the story of how his manager, Anthony "Top Dawg" Tiffith, met his father known as Ducky.

This meeting led to Lamar being signed to Top Dawg Entertainment. What perfectly ends this album is the final bar of the track that goes: "because if Anthony killed Ducky, Top Dawg could be serving life while I grow up without a father and die in a gunfight." I think that just puts into perspective how

a chance reaction gave birth to one of the greatest rappers of our generation instead of having him fall into the more negative gangster lifestyle.

"M.a.a.d City"

One of Lamar's most popular songs, "M.a.a.d City" is a true-to-the core west coast rap song. The track is split into two parts; the first is a look into Lamar's childhood and what it was like to grow up in south central Los Angeles while the second half of the song focuses on Lamar's teenage years and the struggles he faced regarding substance abuse and peer pressure. The track also features one of the most notable west coast rappers of the 90s, MC Eiht. While it isn't the most popular track on the *M.a.a.d City* album, it's definitely a showcase of Kendrick's raw ability when it comes to the rap game.

"Sing about me, I'm dying of thirst"

This is without a doubt

Lamar's most emotional track. It paints a picture of the tragedies that happened around him as a teenager living in south central Los Angeles. The first half of the song, "Sing About Me," tells two different stories of people he knew growing up that ultimately motivated him to leave the gangster lifestyle behind. Touching on topics like death, prostitution and mental health, it paints a somber picture for the listener as he goes into great detail in the third verse about the many trials he has faced before reflecting on himself as a person and making the decision to better himself.

The second half of the song, "Dying of thirst," focuses on the journey of Lamar leaving the gangster lifestyle behind and repenting for the many sins that he has committed while being a part of it. It's a very powerful track about Lamar's redemption and it gives us a personal look at how he learned to deal with his trauma and how he moved past it.

"HiiiPoWeR"

This song has been gaining popularity in recent years, and given its subject matter, it's clear to see why. Off of his debut album *Section 80*, the song touches on topics like racism and fighting against the system. It has become the anthem for those who advocate against racial injustice all over the world. It really shows that aside from rapping about his past experiences that he has a firm grasp on social justice issues happening around the world and that he isn't afraid to speak on such matters. Lamar describes the concept of "HiiiPoWeR" as, "a way of thinking with higher expectations and achieving richness in body and mind."

Lamar's upcoming release is one of the most anticipated releases in the music industry currently. With it being the final album with his long time label Top Dawg Entertainment, only time will tell what he does next with his illustrious career.

OUT'N ABOUT

Holiday Skating

Looking for a date idea? Bring your loved one to Olympic Plaza to see the new Christmas decorations. Skates and helmets are available for rent at the plaza.

WinSport Tubing

Check out the fastest tube track in all of Western Canada at the Canada Olympic Park to fulfil your need for speed.

Paint with Alpacas

What is a better way to distress from finals than painting with live alpacas? Visit Calgary's Color Me Mine Kensington on Dec. 12 for some artsy fun.

The Saskatoon Farm Christmas Market

Head south of Calgary to support over 240+ local vendors this holiday season. Hurry and get your tickets while you can, they're only \$6 per person!

A Raw and Real Release: Adele's new album and the concert that followed

Emme Larkins

Contributor

Adele did not take it easy on me. The superstar's long-awaited number one single dropped a month prior to the album, causing buckets of tears to be shed around the world – I'm still icing my eyes – and of course, anticipation grew.

The Album

The biggest question on fans' minds following the drop of "Easy On Me" was the album name. When the easter eggs began to drop, those fans were thrilled the artist continued her trend – the album is, simply, *30*, of course.

Listening to *30* feels like you are immersed in someone's diary, and just like a diary, Adele insists on the songs being listened to in sequence. Even Spotify removed the shuffle feature as a default when listening to an album – a first for the app.

30 is raw, emotional and at times a lot to handle as Adele explores

divorce, struggles with alcohol and anxiety. As listeners, Adele unlocks an empathy within us where we feel we understand her completely – and perhaps she understands us more.

The album opens with "Strangers By Nature," intimate and sorrowful. It's a bitter-sweet goodbye to past lovers as she transitions into "Easy On Me," already a hit at the time of release. Next is "My Little Love" bringing tears to the listener's eyes in seconds. With lyrics and voice memos, Adele's intense love for her son, Angelo reverberates. Listening feels almost inappropriate.

While the name *30* is a perfect transition from her last album, *25*, the music is often unexpected. Fans have always felt the singer deserves a genre of her own. With tracks like "Cry Your Heart Out" and "Can I Get It" we see a fresh, experimental side of the classic ballad artist.

Though the songs are beautifully written, musically unique and brilliantly produced, they are unusually personal and speak to Adele's hyper-specific



Adele's One Night Only concert happened on Nov. 14. Photo courtesy of CBS Griffith Observatory

experience. Some find this intimacy uncomfortable and prefer her easier listening sing-along songs like "Rolling in the Deep." If you're ready for the emotions that come with it, *30* is a must-listen, with tracks like "Oh My God" already joining "Easy On Me" on the charts.

The Concert

With the drop of "Easy on Me," the buzz began around Adele's televised one-night-only concert and Oprah interview. Fans rejoiced at the idea of seeing the artist perform and promptly cancelled all plans on Nov. 14 to watch.

Held at the stunning Griffith Observatory of Los Angeles, the backdrop competed with Adele for attention. She strutted on stage, hair in her signature beehive and stunting a luxurious black gown and statement Saturn earrings.

The artist opened the show with an obvious choice, "Hello."

Accompanied by only the piano, the song felt more personal – touched with the

profound emotional events of the performer's past five years. Adele's pitch was stellar and steadfast as she moved into "Easy On Me."

Timed perfectly, the California sun appropriately began to set as the opening chords of "Skyfall" are heard. We're treated to grand camera angles, as her full band finally joins in a swell of sound. Following her James Bond moment is the never-heard-before "I Drink Wine," despite the relatable and quippy title we quickly learn from the lyrics and anguish in Adele's voice that the piece is ripe with emotion.

She sings, "When I was a child/ Every single thing could blow my mind/ Soaking it all up for fun/ But now I only soak up wine." The sun has set on Griffith Observatory and we start to see vivid projections cast on the building behind Adele.

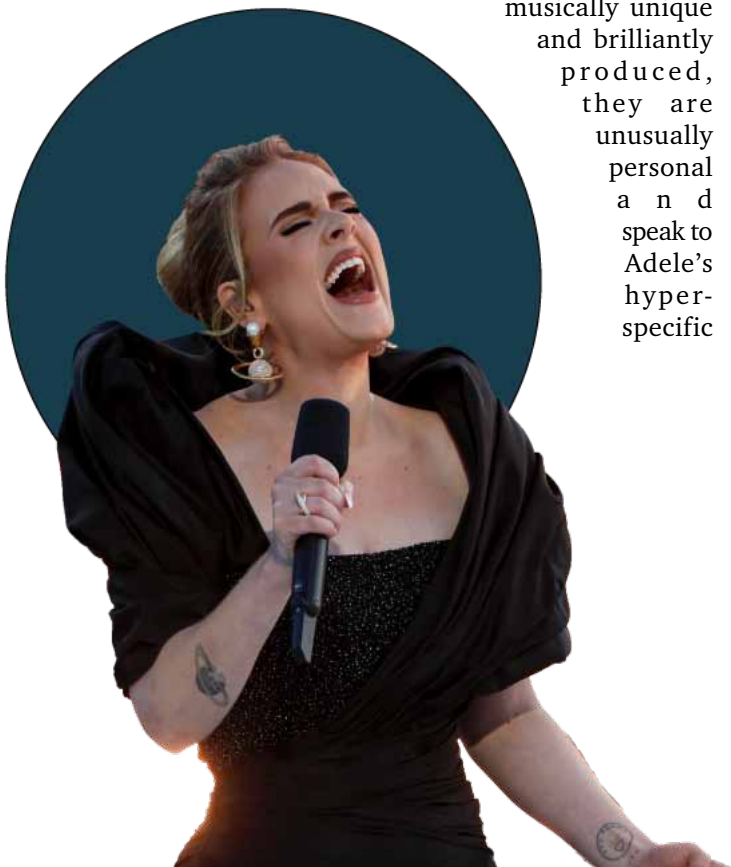
Following the new track are the classics, "Someone Like You" from *21*, "When We Were Young" from *25* and her famous cover of "Make You Feel My Love" from *19*.

As "When We Were Young" plays, we see images of the artist growing up move in the background, her younger self smiling and laughing – a nod to less complicated times. She also shares with the live audience and those watching from home that this is her first show that her son has attended.

Next up is another song from *30*, "Hold On" where she seems to be encouraging herself. "Rolling In The Deep," the artist's third-best selling song of all time, follows as a projection of waves crashing dances behind Adele and the elite Hollywood audience joins in dancing and laughing.

We are ushered out of the event by the outro to Adele's *30*, an appropriate choice, "Love Is A Game." This song is a soul-crushing masterpiece packed with emotion and heartbreak. A fabulous song to close both the album and concert with the final words ... "I'd do it all again, like I did it."

And to that, I say thank god you did it, Adele, and thank you for doing it once again.



Adele's belting out with her luxurious black gown and statement Saturn earrings. Photo courtesy of CBS Griffith Observatory

Using crafts to deal with finals stress

Katherine Funk

Contributor



Knitting is only one of the many crafts you can do to relax during finals. Photo courtesy of Unsplash

This year's finals seem to be particularly brutal. With all of the changes that we have had over the past few years, it can be difficult to constantly readjust and relearn how to, well, learn. While figuring out how to roll with the punches, many of us have taken up some sort of handwork. There has been a resurgence of arts and crafts like sewing, knitting, painting and all sorts of other creative endeavours.

Although working on a fun project might not solve all of your problems, it can certainly help with the stress! They can give you an outlet for your frustrations, an excuse to take some time for yourself and you get the satisfaction of a finished product made with your own two hands. Nothing can beat the feeling of looking at something you made after spending time and effort on it.

One of the greatest things about these kinds of creative outlets is that there is such a vast variety. Not great at drawing? No problem! Get annoyed by finicky things? There are always other options! One of my favourite

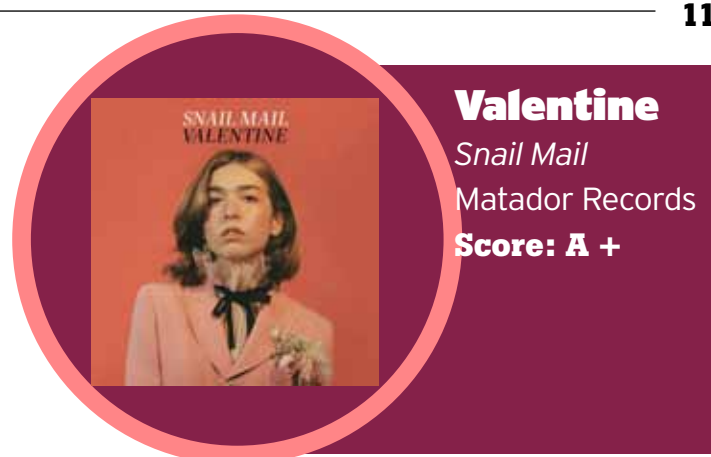
popular ways to destress with art is through colouring pages. Adult colouring books aren't quite as popular as they were a few years ago, but there are still tons of options available through book stores or you can just print out one of the many printable options available online for free. Colouring pages take out the effort needed to draw something. Because let's face it — having a drawing not turn out the way you wanted it to is the last thing you need during exams. And they can be as complicated or as simple as you desire.

If you are looking for something a little more involved to do with your hands, needlework is a great option — knitting, crocheting, embroidery, cross-stitch and more. There is a world of possibilities. Handwork has also risen in popularity lately, so you can find some trendy, hilarious, or elegant patterns online. If you want to have a cross-stitch of a quote from your favourite T.V. show you will likely be able to find a pattern on Etsy.

If you're feeling a little more adventurous, you can always create a pattern by yourself. YouTube has tons of amazing tutorials to help you get started.

While I am a huge fan of all types of needlework, that might not be everyone's cup of tea. Another fun way to clear your mind of exam stress is calligraphy. You do need certain types of equipment for traditional calligraphy, but modern calligraphy can be done with a sharpie, a pencil, or any other type of writing device that you have with you. This can also be a unique way to make holiday cards for friends and family.

Now, this is only a small sampling of crafts that you can get into this winter. There is a huge world of art for de-stressing out there. Digital drawings, painting, journaling, macrame are all examples of crafts that could help you get through the most stressful time of the school year. Whatever you do to relax over exam break, we wish you the best of luck!



Valentine

Snail Mail

Matador Records

Score: A +

Singer-songwriter Lindsey Jordan has done it once again, the “sophomore slump” album curse has been destroyed!

In 10 songs Jordan manages to tell a story of people falling in and out of love. I could listen to her soothing voice on repeat for an eternity and you would not hear me complain once.

Valentine captures the essence of '90s alternative pop. Her raw voice can be easily heard in “Light Blue,” one of my favourite songs from the album. It features lyrics “wanna wake up early every day/ Just to be awake/

In the same world as you” which was made heavenly by the accompaniment of by the light guitar strums.

This 10 track album will have you staring at the ceiling reminiscing on old memories. As a matter of fact, my only critique of the album is that I wish *Valentine* was longer than 10 songs.

- Astrid Cunanan



Soft Focus

Hotel Fiction

We Bought a Zoo

Records

Score: A -

Soft Focus is our first glimpse at all of the potential the band Hotel Fiction offers to bring to the music industry. With the harmonies brought by Jade Long and Jessica Thompson's voices, *Soft Focus* places listeners in a place of serenity with catchy hooks, lively piano melodies and dreamy guitar riffs, creating a cohesive album with strong storylines relatable to their own age group.

As young people of today, Hotel Fiction knows exactly what it's like to grow up in a time of absolute chaos and watch as your world gives out from under you. The album's closing songs “Soft Focus” and “17” say exactly this by writing into words the feeling of last moments where you got to be a kid with no responsibilities, with the titular track even saying “let's go back to the days where we were content” offering the message that

change and growing up isn't all that it's cracked up to be.

Hotel Fiction offers up multiple sides of their sound on *Soft Focus*. Songs like “Daydrifter” and “Golden Days” show the sun-kissed side of the group while “Ghost Train” and “Steady” are melancholy but still rich. “Think Twice” gives voice to their passion for having fun within their music by using a synth. Normally this can be catastrophic, on *Soft Focus* it might be the strongest point as it shows Hotel Fiction doesn't just have one sound.

All in all, Hotel Fiction has created the ideal album for listeners to match up to their own picturesque coming-of-age story. This album is a true voice for exploring yourself through music and seeing the world through all lenses of focus.

- Abbie Rigin

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Coach's Corner: Marc Dobell's timeless style in a changing sport

Gage Smith
 Sports Editor

Marc Dobell has been a men's basketball coach for longer than Mount Royal has been a university. But his career with the school didn't start on the bench, but as a player for the Mount Royal College.

"I was a pass-first point guard who had to fight and claw for everything. Lack of talent, a lot of effort," Dobell said.

A lot of talented players say that about themselves, but Dobell seeing himself this way has clearly contributed to his coaching style, which he says revolves around his players being ready to work hard.

"I'm not there to yell and scream ... I'm not there to motivate them every day and give them speeches. I'm there to help them become better basketball players. At this level, I think players need to show up every day already motivated and with a good

work ethic," Dobell said.

Dobell gives credit to one of his own former coaches, Gary Howard, for his own appreciation for the value of work ethic in his players. He describes Howard as a tougher coach who ran very "disciplined teams."

"He was old-school for sure. He got into players. But one of the things I loved about him was that he was honest. If you were good or bad, he made sure you knew about it. He demanded full effort from his players at all times and that rings true with me to this day," Dobell said.

Dobell added that sticking with that mentality helped him with his transition from coaching to playing. He said that the hardest part was wanting to be on the floor, as coaches don't have the same, "Direct influence on the outcome of the game."

Speaking of transitions,

Dobell was at the helm for the Mount Royal University (MRU) Cougars for their very first season stepping up from the Alberta College Athletic Conference to the U Sports league.

"Since [that transition], every team is a quality team and you've got to be ready to compete every night. It's fun having that challenge every day," Dobell said.

Dobell and the Cougars look for players who are up to that challenge when they recruit new talent. Aside from coming in ready to work hard, he looks for athletic players who can shoot the ball, regardless of position.

"We're looking for guys who can knock down the three, and the better the athlete, the better opportunities guys are going to have at this level. Gone are the days of the back-to-the-basket guys or the pass-only point guard. You need to



Cougars men's basketball Head Coach Mark Dobell.
 Photo by Adrian Shellard

have a more diverse skillset to be able to play today," Dobell said.

The coach says that when he played in high school, the three point line wasn't even there yet. His first season at the college level was his first with the three ball and a shot clock. Now he leads a team that runs all five of his players around the perimeter.

Despite all of the adjustments, Dobell's hard-nosed, hard-working style has stayed the same and served MRU well.

"We're a young team, but these guys are going to be good ambassadors for the MRU basketball program. Come on out, check them out, and cheer on your Cougars," Dobell said.



Guard Brock Dewsbery hoists an outside shot, a skill Dobell looks for in all of his players.
 Photo by Adrian Shellard



Dobell fosters a culture of hard work and discipline. Photo by Adrian Shellard



Guard Holt Tomie pushes the pace. Photo by Adrian Shellard

#S

8, members of the MRU Cougars men's hockey team will be in the U SPORTS all-star series

3, the number of missed field goals by Calgary Stampeder's kicker Rene Paredes in playoff loss to Saskatchewan

17, The number of goals Calgary Flames left wing Andrew Mangiapane has scored this season, ranking third in the NHL

126, Steph Curry leads the NBA with 126 three-pointers made this season. Buddy Hield, the runner-up, has only 87

The biggest surprises to start this year's NHL season

Josh Werle

Staff Writer

Roughly one quarter of this year's National Hockey League (NHL) season has been completed and it has been a very entertaining ride thus far. In every sports league there are always going to be moments that nobody saw coming and the many surprises in the NHL this season have fans buzzing. Teams and players who were previously at the top have taken a dive in the standings and some unexpected contenders have emerged in the first quarter of the 2021-22 campaign. Let's take a look at some of the most surprising aspects of this year's NHL season so far.

The Seattle Kraken's disappointing goaltending

Heading into the 2021-22 NHL season, the Seattle Kraken had a goaltending duo that was worth bragging about. Phillip Grubauer and Chris Driedger were both coming off spectacular seasons with their previous squads. Grubauer had a goals-against average of 1.95 with the Stanley Cup favorite Colorado Avalanche and held an overall record of 30-9-1. His efforts with the Avalanche earned him a third place finish in the inaugural Vezina award nominations (which is awarded to the best goaltender in the league for that given season) and a second round appearance in the NHL playoffs.

The Seattle Kraken have used Grubauer as their primary starter this season, but his previous numbers have yet to translate over to this year. Grubauer sits at an overall record of 6-9-1 this season, having already accumulated as many losses as he had at the end of last season. Before Grubauer was a free agent, the Kraken elected to take Driedger from the Florida Panthers with their pick in the expansion draft. It was expected that Driedger was ready to make a jump to a starting position, as he finished with a 14-6-3 record with the Panthers in 2020-21. With Grubauer struggling, the Kraken team has tried to rely on Driedger, but with a goals-against average of 3.6 at the time of writing, he isn't able to help them either. These two goaltenders were supposed to have a large impact on the Kraken's success this season, but are currently contributing to their position at the bottom of the Pacific division.

A reigning Vezina champ's struggle

Speaking of goaltending troubles, the reigning Vezina champion has started off ice-cold this season. After going 26-10 and limiting his goals-against average to only 1.98, former Vegas Golden Knights goaltender Marc-André Fleury won the NHL's Vezina trophy.

After rumors of his retirement came to light, the Golden Knights quickly traded him to the Chicago Blackhawks. The Blackhawks organization convinced him to stick around for this season and it's safe to say Fleury could be regretting that decision right now. At the time of writing, he sits at a record of 5-9, with a goals-against average of 2.91, which is a far cry from the results that he was able to achieve last season. Of course, the Blackhawks are not the same

team as the Golden Knights, but it's surprising to see any reigning Vezina champion sitting near the bottom of their divisional leaderboard.

Calgary Flames are Stanley Cup Contenders

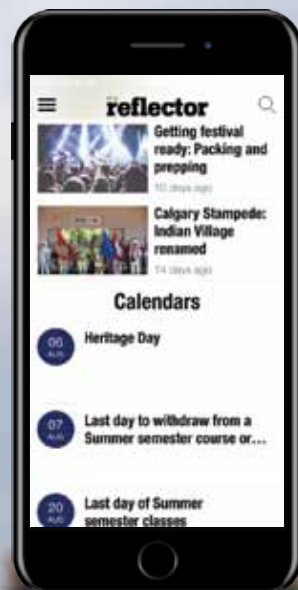
In a previous story, I have mentioned that the Calgary Flames were a playoff hopeful team and that Johnny Gaudreau and Jacob Markström were two of the names to look out for this

season. It would be relatively safe to say that the Flames are no longer just a playoff hopeful team and that they could have a serious chance to make it out of the Western Conference in this year's playoffs.

Gaudreau has been playing at a point-per-game pace to start the season and Markström currently leads the rest of the league's goaltenders in shutouts with five. This Flames team has

Continues on Pg. 15

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Johnny Gaudreau and Calgary Flames are off to one of the strongest starts to a season in franchise history. Photo courtesy of Wikimedia Commons

Continued from Pg. 14

been playing like a legitimate cup contender since the season started and has shown no signs of slowing down anytime soon.

Montreal Canadiens are near the bottom of the standings

After a fairytale-esque run for the Canadiens during the NHL's 2020-21 playoff season, they have plummeted to the bottom of the league standings. With a record of 6-16-2 at the time of writing, the Canadiens have looked like a shell of their former selves.

Without star players like Carey Price and Shea Weber, the Canadiens have been in a complete rut and have been unable to turn themselves around thus far. The team recently fired almost their entire back-office staff, including former General Manager Marc Bergevin. The coming months

will show whether or not their back-office was the issue, or if their players needed a boost. The Canadiens biggest victory this year came when they let the Carolina Hurricanes have Jesperi Kotkaniemi and they didn't match his offer sheet of a USD \$6.1 million dollar contract. Overall, this Canadiens team has gotten off to a very surprising start this season.

The rise of the Florida Panthers

After their intense first round playoff series with the Stanley Cup champion Tampa Bay Lightning, most fans believed that the Lightning were destined to continue to be the best team in Florida. What's surprising is that the Panthers have become not only the team to beat in Florida, but also in the entire NHL. Every aspect of this team has been near-perfect and over the course of a seven game

series, I would have a hard time picking against them.

Goaltender Sergei Bobrovsky has seemingly returned to form with a 9-1-2 record at the time of writing. He has been virtually unstoppable to start the season, due in part to the efforts of the always-stellar defensive unit in front of him. MacKenzie Weegar and Aaron Ekblad currently sit at a positive 14 and positive 16 rating respectively, highlighting how productive the team is when they are on the ice.

In terms of offensive production, the Panthers have an unbelievable amount of scoring depth. Florida currently has 12 players who have crossed the double-digit point threshold at this point in the season. The Panthers have depth from their first line to their fourth line. With Bobrovsky turning the clock back and returning to Vezina form, this team looks like a clear favorite to contend for



Carey Price and the Montreal Canadiens have fallen from Stanley Cup contenders to bottomfeeders. Photo courtesy of Lisa Gansky

this year's Stanley Cup.

While these trends look convincing, it's important to remember that it's still early in the season and a lot can change

before the playoffs in May.

It's been a wild year in the NHL so far, so it'll be interesting to see how the playoffs shake out.

Unwrapping the NBA's Christmas Day matchups

Jed Mabazza

Staff Writer



Trae Young will be hearing some boos as he tries to steal Christmas from the Madison Square Garden crowd. Photo courtesy of Jean-Baptiste Bellet

Christmas is around the corner and that means the much-awaited NBA Christmas games are too. These games will surely dial the intensity up a notch to what has already been an exciting NBA season.

Here's the matchups for Dec. 25:

Atlanta Hawks @ New York Knicks

NBA Christmas day will kick off at 10 a.m. MT as the Atlanta Hawks will visit the New York Knicks at Madison Square Garden. The Knicks will seek to gain a season series advantage over the

Hawks as they have already won their first of three bouts against them. Any game against the Hawks is a big day for the Knicks, not just the players or coaching staff, but for the fanbase as well.

In last year's playoffs, Trae Young single-handedly finished off the Knicks in

five games. Fans will never forget when Young gave a final bow mid court after nailing a three point dagger to eliminate the Knicks. That's gotta hurt to see as a Knicks fan, considering the team had a seven-year playoff drought.

Young has cemented himself as the villain to the

Knicks organization, but could he be the grinch who steals a Christmas win from the Knicks fans? It's tough to say at this point. Both teams aren't quite where they want

Continues on Pg. 16

Continued from Pg. 15

to be in the standings right now compared to last year. The Hawks rank seventh in the East while the Knicks rank 10th. Either way, it'll be fun to see if the Knicks can continue their revenge campaign or if Young can upset the fans once more.

Boston Celtics @ Milwaukee Bucks

The next battle will feature the Boston Celtics against the defending NBA champs, the Milwaukee Bucks. Boston has a lot to prove in this game as the team hasn't been as strong as they were expected to be, ranking eighth in the conference at the time of writing. But that's part of the growing pains that come with having a new head coach. On the other hand, the Bucks have gradually bounced back since their slow start to the season, now ranking fourth in the Eastern Conference.

The key matchup of this game will be Giannis Antetokounpo vs. Jayson Tatum, both all-star level players who are not very different from each other in the major statistical categories. Giannis has a slight advantage, but it will be an exciting matchup to watch. For either team, a win could be like a Christmas miracle.

Golden State Warriors @ Phoenix Suns

In my opinion, this is a must watch game. If this

game were a boxing match, it would be the main event, all the other games would just be exhibitions. The Golden State Warriors and Phoenix Suns are by far the best teams in the entire NBA this season. Steph Curry is back in MVP form and is currently leading in Kia's MVP ladder at the time of writing. What's more exciting is that you could see the splash brothers back in action with Klay Thompson's much awaited return, which could happen anytime now.

On the other hand, the Suns have picked up right where they left off last year. They currently are at the top of the Western Conference and have the longest win streak in the NBA this season, standing at 18.

A lot of people will be watching to see Chris Paul, the point god, and Steph Curry, the evolution of the modern day point guard, battle it out. Others might just be supporting their hometown team. Either way, this game will be a nailbiter for sure. Both teams have deep benches and are two of the most elite teams in the NBA right now.

Brooklyn Nets @ Los Angeles Lakers

This is a decent matchup to watch if you're trying to pass the time. It seems to me that the Lakefront retirement home will have to do more than just win a game of Bingo against the Brooklyn Nets. Things aren't looking so pretty for the Los Angeles Lakers right now as they



The NBA will showcase legendary point guard Steph Curry this Christmas Day. Photo courtesy of Keith Allison

rank sixth in the Western Conference and seem far from being championship contenders. They'll have home court advantage against a still-solid Brooklyn Nets team that's missing their all-star point guard

Kyrie Irving.

Don't get me wrong, this will still be an interesting game to watch, considering that the Lakers may be without LeBron James' services (stuck in health and safety protocols). The Lakers still have a strong lineup of big name players including Anthony Davis, Russel Westbrook, Carmelo Anthony and DeAndre Jordan. This seems like an even matchup as the Nets have Kevin Durant, James Harden, Blake Griffin, LaMarcus Aldridge and Patty Mills to offer as their best players. Regardless, bring out your eggnog or whatever holiday drink suits your fancy and watch the NBA's best veterans battle it out.

Dallas Mavericks @ Utah Jazz

To cap off the night, the Dallas Mavericks will visit the Utah Jazz. The Mavericks' Luka Doncic is adored all over the world,

so it makes sense that the NBA wants to capitalize on their international viewership by featuring his game on Christmas Day. This will clearly be a battle between Luka Doncic and Donovan Mitchell. Both are superstars on their teams and both are similar statistically this season. Though Doncic does have a slight statistical edge in most playing categories compared to Mitchell.

Both teams have a big time star, but are not quite, clear championship contenders. They're still one star away from being serious threats for the title. Even though Dallas is viewed as the more offensive-minded team in the matchup, the Jazz have a higher offensive rating than the Mavericks. While it may seem that the Jazz have a higher chance to get the win, never doubt what Luka Doncic and Mavs Head Coach Jason Kidd can cook up.



Can Giannis Antetokounpo lift the Milwaukee Bucks over the struggling Boston Celtics? Photo courtesy of Keith Allison