

**The complex history
of Israel
(Pg. 2)**

Accountability: Letter to our readers

Reflector Staff

Dear Reader,

The Reflector staff feels that our coverage of the Israel-Hamas conflict in the Nov. 23, 2023, issue lacked balance and accuracy.

To that end, in this issue we are providing coverage focusing on the other perspective of the conflict.

We would also like to stress that our newspaper does not condone acts of

hatred towards any group—especially now towards either the Israeli/Jewish community and/or the Palestinian/Arab community.

We would like to thank our readers and community

members for continuing to provide us with depth and nuance regarding important cultural perspectives. It is our goal to continue learning and informing ourselves here at *The Reflector*.

Our thoughts are with those who have been personally affected by the Israel-Hamas conflict.

Sincerely,
The Reflector Staff

Understanding the Complex History of Israel

Noa P.

Contributor

Words like ‘colonialism’ and ‘settlers’ have been repeated as the justification for why Israel does not have the right to exist. These terms are deeply offensive and blatantly false to the Jewish community, and act to erase the deep-rooted history that Jews have with the land, spanning back thousands of years.

The false notion of Jews being settlers in the land of Israel has been a common argument used to delegitimize the Jews’ right to the land. According to StandwithUs, a non-partisan

educational organization fighting anti-semitism, Jews are the Indigenous people of the land of Israel and have had an unbroken and documented presence in the land for over 3,000 years. Up until about 2,000 years ago, most Jews lived in Israel, named Judea at the time. But, they were expelled by the Roman Empire. The conflict with the Arabs began in the 1800’s, as both groups bought and sold land in this area, which at the time was part of the Ottoman Empire. During WWI, the British defeated the Ottomans and took control of

the land. The United Nations finally passed a resolution in 1947 in which the British would withdraw and two states would be created. The area with a Jewish majority was to become the Jewish state, and the area with an Arab majority was to become the Palestinian state. The Jews happily accepted this resolution. The Palestinians and surrounding Arab countries would not accept any existence of Israel or Jews in Israel.

Upon declaring their independence in 1948, Israel was immediately invaded by numerous Arab countries, including the Palestinians. The invasion was meant to eradicate the Jewish state.

Both Jews and Palestinians were displaced after the Arab countries launched their war against Israel. Of course many Arabs remained in Israel after the war and today they enjoy full rights in a democratic country, and make up approximately 20 per cent of Israel’s population.

Since then, there have been numerous wars launched to annihilate Israel. These wars include the Six Day War of 1967, initiated by Egypt, Jordan, and Syria.

As the Palestinian population continues to grow from 1948 to now, the Jewish population in surrounding Arab countries has decreased to nearly zero. This ethnic cleansing of over 850,000 Jewish people in Arab countries has been completely ignored.

After multiple attempts to negotiate peace, Israel unilaterally withdrew entirely from Gaza in 2005, ending the occupation since 1967, in hopes that the Palestinians would create a better future for themselves. This resulted in Hamas immediately attacking Israel, purposefully targeting Jewish civilians. A partial blockade in Gaza was put in place only after this violence, in order to protect Israeli civilians

from Hamas’s attacks. This blockade was reinforced by Egypt, in acknowledgement of Hamas’s role as an Iranian proxy terror organization.

Hamas has been very clear about their goal— to kill every Jew, not only in Israel, but throughout the world. They do not have the interests of Palestinian civilians in mind, but rather have used them as human shields during their combat. Hamas has been known to publicly execute Palestinian civilians who go against their rule.

Contrary to the misinformation being spread, all Arabs living in Israel have full rights as citizens. Many attend Israeli universities and work as doctors, lawyers, and hold positions in the government, the judiciary, and in the Israeli army. In total, there are over two million Arabs in Israel who are citizens. Currently, there are a total 136 Jews in all of Gaza—all of whom are kidnapped hostages.



This particular flag model was adopted in 1891, and has been flown as the flag of Israel since. Photo courtesy of Unsplash

Editorial: Hamas's Oct. 7 massacre

Reader advisory: this article contains content that may be disturbing to some readers

Michelle Zalmanowitz

Contributor

On the morning of Oct. 7, 2023, an unprecedented brutal surprise attack was launched on Israel by the internationally recognized terrorist organization, Hamas. They viciously murdered, beheaded, raped, and kidnapped babies, children, adults and the elderly as they unleashed devastating violence on Israeli citizens of all religions, seeking to inflict as much terror on civilians as possible. On the morning of Oct. 7, Hamas terrorists began a surprise invasion on Israel, tearing down large sections of the security fence around Gaza using tractors, RPGs, explosives and brute force. Over 3,000 Hamas terrorists successfully broke through the fence in vehicles and on foot, others used motorized paragliders to fly over the fence, and some invaded through sea.

The Hamas terrorists split up and made their way to 22 towns known as Kibbutzim and Israeli Defense Forces (IDF) bases nearby Gaza. That is when the massacre began. They swiftly and violently invaded the Kibbutzim and bases, shooting everything in sight while filming the terror attack, glorifying the atrocities committed. Hamas dragged people from their cars and broke into civilian homes, burning, raping, beheading and shooting Israelis: Muslims and Jews, newborn and old, and even family pets. Terrorists forced people at gunpoint to lure their own families out of safe-rooms, to their deaths. Pictures of the terrorists joyously posing for photos on-top of freshly killed Israelis, some clutching loved ones, with brains and blood still pouring from their bodies, were also shared from that



In wake of Oct. 7, allyship is needed for Jewish students. Photo courtesy of Adobe Stock

day. These testimonies can be found online with ease.

Simultaneously, Hamas terrorists in Gaza began firing 3,000 rockets into south and central Israeli civilian targets and infrastructure, aiming to maximize the loss of Israeli life. At 6:30 a.m. local time, air sirens around the entire country of Israel were sounding, alerting those who could hear them that an attack was in progress and to immediately take cover in a bomb shelter, if possible.

Near Gaza, attendees of the Nova Music Festival stopped revelling due to those sirens. They attempted to evacuate as terrorists stormed the festival grounds. The terrorists fired indiscriminately through the crowds of thousands of civilians who'd come from all over the world to celebrate "unity and love" through music. Witness accounts of the attack speak to the celebration of depravity the terrorists enjoyed. Many of the attendees never

reached safety. Numerous people were abducted as hostages. Over 260 abused, decapitated, and burned bodies were later found in the area of the festival, mostly belonging to innocent youth.

On Oct. 7, over 1,200 Israeli civilians were horrifically murdered, roughly 6,700 grievously injured, and 250+ were brutally abducted, including many foreign nationals. Hamas terrorists briefly took control of 10 Israeli towns, savagely annihilating residents, raping young women, and parading their naked bodies through the streets, filming and celebrating the brutalization of their bodies. Video footage was also released showing Hamas terrorists violently beating and abducting those into Gaza they hadn't yet killed.

Mohammed Deif, commander in chief of Hamas' military arm, has since recorded a video statement claiming

responsibility for the attack. On Dec. 1, Hamas leader, Yahya Sinwar, swore to the world that the massacre was "just a rehearsal".

Since the massacre, Jew hatred (antisemitism) around the world has seen a 388 per cent increase in incidents compared to the same period last year, according to the Anti-Defamation League. The attack on Israel has emboldened the world to put its Jew hatred on display, with Jewish people around the globe being targeted, physically attacked and even murdered as some Palestinian sympathizers heed Hamas's call to eliminate Jews and Zionists worldwide.

Here in Canada, Jewish K-12 schools and synagogues have been shot up and firebombed. Physical clashes have erupted at multiple universities, most recently at Concordia University, many of which have been reported to Calgary Police Services. There have been

swastikas drawn as graffiti in public places on campus and on signs held by Anti-Israel protestors along with pictures of Adolf Hitler proudly displayed.

It is important to make clear that Jewish people and Israelis alike unequivocally believe in the sanctity of life - no matter where anyone is born.

Amidst so much anti-Israeli propaganda released by Hamas themselves, people feel uncertain and overwhelmed by what they have seen, especially on social media.

We as Jewish members of the MRU community—your peers, your colleagues, your teachers, your friends—are scared of where misinformation and propaganda leads. We want to feel safe, we want to be students at MRU without fear, who can wear their Star of Davids with pride, and we ultimately want lasting peace. We do not want another ceasefire to be broken.

Debunking false narratives against Israel

Kayla Rzepa

Contributor

The spread of misinformation has increased immensely in the past two months since the Oct. 7 Hamas terrorist attack and massacre.

Why have people been so quick to post, like, and share the abundance of misinformation on Israel in the digital space? Unfortunately, misinformation about Israel spreads during the time of conflict. Words like Israeli apartheid, genocide, ethnic cleansing and occupation are outright false, leading to incitement, hate and violence against Jews worldwide, including the MRU campus.

Not an apartheid state

According to the Oxford Dictionary, the definition of apartheid is a “policy or system of segregation or discrimination on grounds of race.” The population of Israel is over nine million people including two million Arabs. The Arab population in Israel live with full rights as citizens, and contribute to all aspects of society. Arabs are members of parliament, the IDF, and are doctors, lawyers, business owners, etc.. Israel’s

demographics include people from Africa, Asia, Europe, North America, and the Middle East, all representing multiple religious groups. Their equality, freedoms, and religious beliefs are entirely protected by law. Israel is the only country in the Middle East that Arab citizens have the right to vote in democratic elections.

Not ‘ethnically cleansing’ Gazans

According to the Oxford Dictionary, ethnic cleansing is the “mass expulsion or killing of members of an unwanted ethnic or religious group in a society.” The Palestinian population growth rate in the West Bank and Gaza is one of the highest in the world, and has increased exponentially. The population of Jewish people in Arab countries since 1947 has been reduced to virtually zero with over 850,000 Jews persecuted, expelled, or murdered.

Fathi Hammad, a senior Hamas official stated in 2019, “We must attack every Jew on planet Earth! We must slaughter and kill them.” That is ethnic cleansing.



There has been a recent surge of antisemitism amidst the ongoing conflict. Photo by Lena Century

Is there Genocide?

No. Israel has the right and responsibility as a democratic nation to defend its people from terrorism at the hands of Hamas. Genocide has been used to describe the Holocaust, the mass murder of six million Jews in Europe. In comparison, four times more people have been killed during the recent Syrian civil war than on both sides of the entire Arab-Israeli conflict since 1920. Hamas, an internationally recognized terrorist organization, started the war against Israel and has used innocent civilians as human shields to protect themselves.

It is important to understand that the majority of information coming out of the Gaza Strip is only being provided by the terrorist organization Hamas. The Palestinian Health Ministry is Hamas. There is no independent verification that the numbers of civilian deaths are accurate.

Additionally, Hamas is doing everything it can to maximize Palestinian civilian deaths for propaganda purposes; while Israel is doing everything it can to minimize such deaths, by way of warning Palestinian civilians ahead of time to leave dangerous areas.

Is Israel pinkwashing?

Israel is the only country in the Middle East that upholds equal rights for the 2SLGBTQ+ communities. Israel holds one of the largest pride parades in the entire world—just this year, more than 150,000 people gathered in Tel Aviv. Areas like Gaza and the West Bank view homosexuality as a

misconstruction of oneself, and is illegal, leading to imprisonment and death sentences.

Words Matter

The slogan “Free Palestine” has been seen in the media, during protests, on flyers, billboards, Instagram posts, comment sections, and even on the MRU campus. But what does the term really mean? Many Jewish leaders say, when people shout “From the river to the sea, Palestine will be free,” they are calling for the total eradication of the Jewish people from the State of Israel from the Jordan River to the Mediterranean Sea. That is a direct call for genocide against the Jews.

Boycotting Starbucks is not going to “Free Palestine,” neither is interacting with a TikTok filter as a way to donate money to the people of Gaza, when in fact the money being raised may go into the hands of Hamas terrorists. By posting a colorful and eye-catching infographic on your Instagram story as a way to show your activism and support for a movement, without pausing to fact check, you are only potentially aiding in the spread of misinformation, rather than showing support for a cause.

To “Free Palestine”, people should be collectively chanting “Free Palestine from Hamas”. It is important to understand the meaning behind the words in which we choose to share with the world.

As the Nazi propaganda chief, Joseph Goebbels, once said, “If you tell a lie big enough and keep repeating it, people will eventually come to believe it.”

THE REFLECTOR

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Opinion: Allyship needed for Jewish students

Noa P., Contributor, **Kayla Rzepa**, Contributor & **Michelle Zalmanowitz**, Contributor

Hate crimes against Jewish students on university campuses have been a significant issue long before the massacre on Oct. 7. In a quote by Rabbi Daniel Fellman to the *National Post*, the Hamas terrorist attacks that resulted in the highest number of Jews killed in a single day since the Holocaust. Since then, reports of hate crimes on campuses have increased and MRU is one of them.

As Jewish students ourselves, our identities are something deeply embedded within every aspect of our lives. Each of us is a third generation Holocaust survivor, having been taught to carry our identity with pride, and never forget the tragic history our people have experienced.

Waking up on Oct. 7, and hearing of the horrors that had occurred in our homeland was utterly sickening, and we felt this tragedy deeply as a global Jewish community. Never would we have thought that these events would translate into anything that we would deal with directly on campus in Canada. We were incredibly wrong.

There began a rise of Jew hatred on campuses across Canada and the United States, and we along with our Jewish peers began to feel increased pressure to hide our religious and cultural identities.

This fear and anxiety grows with each passing day as anti-semitic crimes around the world have increased nearly 400 per cent. Every day, as each of us walk into school, we are hit with waves of anxiety and fear, feeling our hearts race in our chest. As Jewish

students on campus, we do not feel safe. And our Jewish peers feel the same way.

One of our peers, a Jewish student at MRU, who wished to remain anonymous for their safety, has been struggling with their expression of Jewish identity on campus. "Growing up, my Jewish heritage was a central part of my identity. The history, traditions, and values shaped who I am.

However, in recent times, my identity has become a source of anxiety and fear, as antisemitism and hatred toward Israel are on the rise. I have always believed that our university is a place of mutual respect—where students are encouraged to explore our identities and share our successes.

"Yet, in the shadows of escalating tensions, I find myself hesitating to express my Jewishness. As a student, I seek knowledge and understanding and engage in discussions and debates to broaden my worldview. But how can I, or any Jewish student, fully participate in this academic journey when our identity is a target of contempt and misinformation?"

As Noa P., a contributing writer of this article explains, "Last year, I was verbally attacked and intimidated on campus by two individuals for displaying a Magen David sign—a star of David. This is a very significant and deeply personal symbol belonging to the Jewish people, and I was shocked and terrified as they told me that I shouldn't show that symbol on campus, and that it was 'deeply offensive to them'. Ironically, when my

Jewish friend called them out for being antisemitic, they followed up by ignorantly stating 'antisemitism does not exist anymore.' Hearing this, as a Jewish student who had never been a victim of Jew hatred until that moment, was terrifying, and I stayed home from school for the rest of the week in fear that I would see these two people again."

A third-year Jewish student, who remains anonymous for safety, shared, "This whole conflict has led to friends in my program cutting me out because of what I stand for. I am proud to be Jewish, and am proud of where I come from, and that has not stopped me from speaking out and standing for what I believe in. I will continue to educate and create respectful discussions amongst peers who are willing to engage with me."

Since Oct. 7, we along with many of our Jewish peers both at MRU, as well as at other Alberta universities, have been afraid to wear our Star of David necklaces and other Jewish symbols, in fear of our own safety. And rightfully so—last month, a student in the halls of MRU was called a "f***ing Jew," among other instances of hate speech.

Multiple students have formally reported aggression due to wearing Jewish symbols. Other Jewish students have received hateful DMs from anonymous Instagram accounts, filled with antisemitic hate speech and threats that have had to be reported to the Calgary police.

These instances, along with the many others, have greatly harmed the ability of

Jewish students to feel safe on campus. Additionally, it has interfered with our ability to focus on schoolwork and study, has altered our physical movements on campus, and has impeded our ability to remain intellectually safe in our classrooms, with some students expressing how scared they are of the hostile environments some professors are creating around the conflict.

While most of these occurrences have been reported to either MRU security, and even to the Calgary Police, little to no action is being taken to ensure Jewish students and staff's safety on campus. Meetings with MRU have resulted in students being told that the problem is too big to be addressed at a university level, and that "there are too many student voices and not everyone's concerns can be heard." Even MRU

has admitted this is not a perfect system, putting the onus on Jewish students to ask for security escorts and rely on security reports for communication to the school about incidents on campus.

As we Jews make up a small population of MRU, our voices are not being listened to. We refuse to let fear silence us, and we will continue to speak out with messages of peace and the sanctity of all human life.

"Education is the road to peace. It is critical that students speak up, not to argue, but to use education as a means of paving a way for understanding and compassion between communities. To empower individuals to come together to build bridges, and a future of unity rather than division," states Yael Berkovich, West Coast educator for StandWithUs Canada.

"Never Again" is now.



The star of David can represent many different things for its wearer, but is generally worn as a symbol of faith. Photo courtesy of Pexels

Holidays in your early 20s

Tips for finding time to spend with your loved ones this holiday season

Mikaela Delos Santos, Publishing Editor & **Emma Duke**, Features Editor

Preparing for the holidays is both a stressful but relieving feeling—the shopping for gifts, setting up the Christmas tree, the desire to consume lots of cookies and hot chocolate... But for many university students, the holiday season means late nights at the library, highlighting notes, and preparing for final exams. For some students, it also means having to balance working at their part-time jobs throughout the retail ‘black out week’. This in turn means that a lot of university students get to spend less time with their families.

For those in their early 20s, one of the biggest lessons and realizations we learn from that age is how comforting the idea of being with family

is. When we graduate high school at 18, we crave the freedom of letting go from our roots and kin. 18 is when we plan for our future—we start making plans of where we go for university, or which apartment we would like to live in... This is when we think for ourselves and in a way, ‘forget’ our families. The world is our oyster, and we don’t want mom and dad holding us back. When we’re 19 to 22, we try to figure out what university life is like, we find someone we get infatuated with who will end up breaking our hearts, and at the same time try to get our GPA’s to a desirable number.

By 23, we long for our families again. 23 is when adult life hits you. This is when we realize rent is way

too expensive, the job market isn’t looking too promising, and that Mom and Dad’s advice makes sense now. It gets pretty overwhelming and so we look for that comfort and nurture once more.

As we cram to hand in our last minute projects on D2L, and consume terrible amounts of caffeine, it’s important to find the time to enjoy our loved ones’ company.

Oftentimes, this is easier said than done, and taking an entire day off from studying or work is rarely doable—if you choose to do it, you might find yourself falling behind, inducing more stress and giving you even less time with your loved ones.

Many students also feel guilty for taking time off—not

working on that assignment or studying for a final exam makes you less productive, and, there goes your grade.

When you start to fall into this mindset, there are two important things to remember.

The first is to plan. Block out time for studying, and block out time for loved ones. This will do a few things: firstly, it may make you realize that you have more time than you think—by planning every hour of your day, you may realize where in your day you’re getting distracted or caught up, and you can adjust accordingly.

Secondly, planning will likely make you feel less guilty for taking time off from studying. If you write down “work on English class

for 3 hours,” and then that three hours is up, and you’ve allocated another 3 hours for going for lunch with a friend... by going for lunch, you’re not taking time away from studying, you’re simply following your own schedule. You’re allowing yourself to tick something else off your list. How productive of you!

Lastly, it will turn your productive time into uninterrupted work time. You will almost certainly be less distracted when you study. If you’ve written down a few hours to do an assignment and hand it in—the time pressure will get to you. You suddenly feel more inclined to sit down, turn on ‘do not disturb’, and spend these hours in complete and utter focus—you only have three hours to do this!

Planning can reframe the way you think about how much time you have and the way you spend that time; it can eliminate distractions and make you feel less guilty for taking time away.

Reframing your thoughts when it comes to spending time with loved ones can be extremely helpful and even necessary. The guilt of unproductivity gets to all of us, but by telling yourself that in order to perform at your best, rest and connection are not optional, but required, it takes a little bit of weight off.

Sometimes it seems that we have no choice but to put school first. It is unremarkably difficult to balance being a good daughter, student, friend, girlfriend, etc. Remember what will be most important to you later in life—not the grade, but the connections and memories you made.

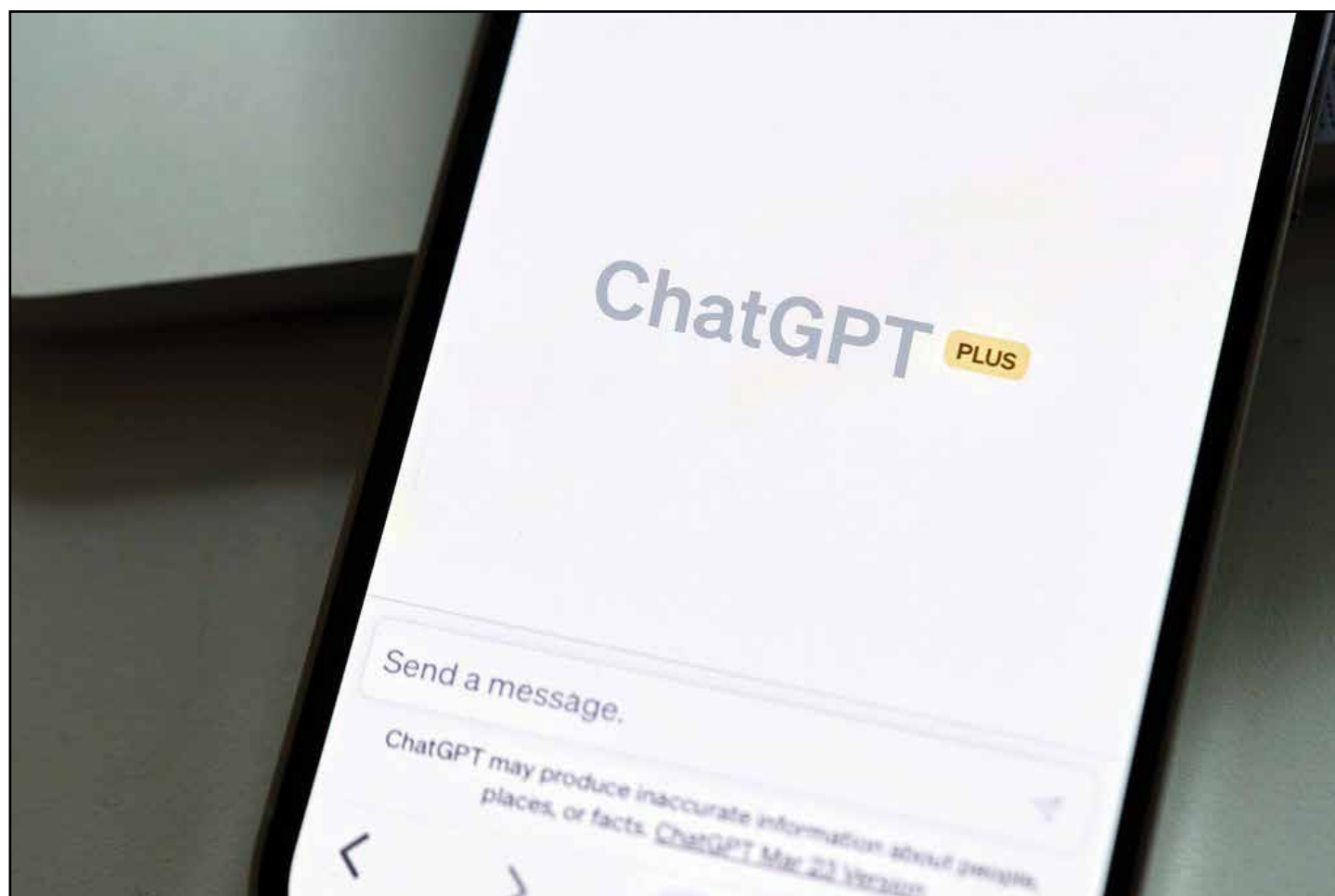


Although the holiday season might seem relaxing in concept, that’s not the case for many students who will be in the midst of an intense finals season. Photo courtesy of Pexels

Using AI to your advantage in school

Zafir Nagji

Staff Writer



ChatGPT by Open AI is one of the most heavily used AI chatbots, especially by university students. Photo courtesy of Flickr

With the semester coming to a close, students are finally going to get relief from the most stressful part of their year. Whether it be final exams, group projects or the pile-up of deadlines from multiple courses, November and December are the longest, most torturous months of a student's Fall semester.

However, there is hope yet for those wanting to avoid the same worries in the Winter semester, and it's with the use of Artificial Intelligence (AI). Those two words come with a negative connotation, often associated with cheating and "taking the easy way out."

Contrary to popular belief, the digital tool can be an instrument for aiding students by saving them time on long, hard-to-interpret readings and helping them

understand how to improve their writing.

One of the issues encountered by most students with heavy course loads is the sheer amount of reading they are required to do.

Plus, since so many academic texts are written with difficult vocabulary that does not read smoothly, students are forced to pull out their dictionaries on every page.

The solution to this is using AI programs like PopAI or AskYourPDF, which allows students to upload the document in question and then ask the AI questions about it. Not only will the chatbot answer their questions, it will also include the pages it used and justify its answer.

The bots also list a series of sample follow-up questions

to help readers interpret the text better and inspire them to ask questions of their own.

If the academic jargon makes texts unreadable, students can use ChatGPT as an interpretive tool. Simply input the piece of writing that confuses you and ask the bot to rewrite it at any grade level or ask it to rewrite it as a series of organized key points.

Make sure to end your prompt with "without losing any information," so that it can give you a comprehensive and understandable rewrite of your inputted quote without any omissions.

Even outside of academia, artificial intelligence is a viable solution as its generative ability can help facilitate human creativity.

Creators have all run into the same issue before,

whether it be artists, writers, videomakers, or any other creators: the blank page syndrome.

Once a creator has a topic or inspiration, their craft becomes remarkably easy for them to undertake and complete, but staring at a blank paper, canvas, or camera can sometimes stump the best creators.

In comes our old friend, ChatGPT, with a way to use generative AI and maintain creativity. As an example, if you're looking for ideas as inspiration for a YouTube video on cars, you can ask ChatGPT to come up with hundreds of ideas for car videos. Seconds later, the program would spit out a myriad of unique car-related topics for the creator to write scripts for and film videos about!

Another problem that AI can help solve for creative zealots and overloaded students alike is difficulties with editing. Reading our own work can be painful and sometimes even ineffective, as we fail to recognize the same mistakes in our writing that professors do.

ChatGPT makes a third appearance in the problem-solving category as it will accept any writing you give it and answer any questions you may have about it. Paste your writing into the input box and ask ChatGPT to identify grammatical errors, highlight passive voice, and even provide solutions or explanations on how to improve the readability of your writing.

This also avoids the risk of cheating, as the process is more similar to having someone proofread your writing and help you gain an understanding of its strengths and potential issues.

Overall, artificial intelligence should not be underestimated or viewed in a negative light. Rather, it should be seen as the digital equivalent of a Swiss Army Knife. It provides a number of tools to help assist someone in a time of need, but to depend on it all the time would be to your own detriment.

Instead, use it in times of need sparingly and carefully, and in turn, it will make your life that much easier.

All this being said, it is still important to be aware of the AI policies of each course you take. For some courses, any use of artificial intelligence requires instructor approval, for others, only generative AI requires approval.

Remember that artificial intelligence shouldn't be doing your work for you. Instead use it as a tool for you to work more efficiently and to spark creativity.



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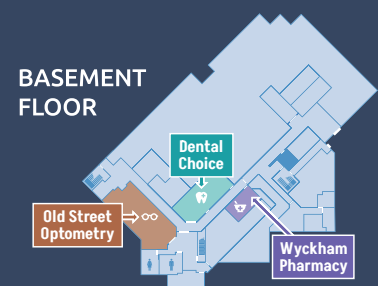
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De-Influencing: Holiday Edition

Bella Coco

Staff Writer

With the holiday season upon us, people feel pressured to spend more than ever. Whether it's for themselves or their loved ones for the holidays, the number of items in a cart can get high and the bank balance can get low.

If I had a dollar for every time I opened TikTok and I was bombarded with an influencer showing off their favourite \$100 moisturizer or \$700 hair tool, I would be eating my words and falling for the "must-have" gimmick. But, as most people—including myself—tend to forget that the lives that people have on social media are not real.

First, we must start with the basics. You should know that a small fraction of people can realistically afford the Dyson AirWrap, which retails for \$799, or a well-coloured Stanley which goes for \$60 to \$90. Many of the influencers you see on TikTok do not afford their luxuries all on their own. They can either thank brand deals or an alarming amount of credit card debt for their envious lives seen through a screen. The fancy vacations they take three to four times a year and the crazy amount of trends they keep up with are not realistic. So, stop trying to make it your reality!

Second, with many of us seeing the coaxing and

tempting holiday sales, it is important to remember that just because something is 50 per cent off does not mean it is a need. Repeat after me, there is no such thing as an Amazon must-have. And while Black Friday has come and gone, one must be aware that Boxing Day still looms over shoppers with money-hungry glee.

A general rule to live by: if you cannot afford the item twice, you cannot afford it at all. Yes, even during those fun holiday sale periods. For

those who adore their online shopping, myself included, we are in immediate danger of a fun dopamine rush and impulse purchasing. When you see that dream product, take a moment. Add it to your wish list, and close the tab. 90 per cent of the time, you will come back to realize that the product wasn't a need as much as you thought it was.

To add, will the expensive item you're ogling over on your computer bring you or your loved ones joy in the long term? Will it lessen your

stress, or make you a happier person? Really think. If it will, congratulations! Take the time to mull over the price, but remember that not every fancy product will bring you or your loved ones peace of mind. If it won't bring you longtime joy, step away from that cart.

One of the greatest gifts we can give as consumers is shopping local during the holiday season, and all year round. Visit your local holiday market or check out small independent stores

to potentially provide some business.

When it comes to giving gifts to our loved ones, there does come a pressure to get them more than they need in order to make them feel special and loved. The important thing to remember this holiday season is that no amount of money can buy the love and care you have for your loved ones. Time well spent together with memories made is the best gift you could give someone this holiday season.



Gimmicky and popular items can seem like great gifts in the moment, but many of these are just money wasted in the long-term. Photo courtesy of Flickr

OUT'N ABOUT

The Plaza: Holiday movies

Support local and experience the holiday spirit at the Plaza Theatre with a lineup of festive films this Christmas season. The listing of films can be found on their website.

Glow Calgary

Do your Christmas light-watching in one stop at Glow Calgary by taking in millions of twinkle lights! Running from Dec. 7 to 31, this experience welcomes couples, friends, and families. Get tickets at glowyyc.ca.

Tinseltown: The Christmas speakeasy

Get into the swing of the season by visiting this Christmas-themed pop-up bar from Nov. 30 to Dec. 30. Look up Tinseltown Calgary online to get your tickets.

Mean Girls: The musical

That's so fetch! Catch the Mean Girls musical at the Southern Alberta Jubilee Auditorium from Jan. 16-21. Get your tickets while you can!

Christmas through the theatrical looking glass

Noel Ormita

Staff Writer



Ever-popular and beloved, opening night for Alberta Ballet's version of the *The Nutcracker Ballet* is fast approaching. Photo courtesy of Alberta Ballet



StoryBook Theatre's *One Christmas Carol* is a one-woman retelling of the Charles Dickens classic. Photo courtesy of StoryBook Theatre

With the end of the Fall semester comes the holiday season. Whether you have started listening to Christmas tunes or getting your festive gear out of the closet—there's no denying that the jingle bells are ringing.

There's one Christmas tradition I will never break—loving holiday stories. Whether you're celebrating the birth of Jesus, adhering to the festival of lights during Hanukkah, reuniting with friends and family, or just wanting a break off campus, it's a season to be merry.

But, why not do something different this year? Instead of watching the same movies on television, discover the beauty in theatre productions.

On your toes

First position, grab a companion. Second position, save the date and buy a ticket. Alberta Ballet's *The Nutcracker* is showing from Dec. 15 to Dec. 24 at the Southern Alberta Jubilee Auditorium.

In this timeless story about the magic behind friendship and love with classic characters like Klara, Rat Tsar and Sugar Plum Fairy, be entranced by the live music of the Edmonton Symphony and Calgary Philharmonic Orchestra.

The return of a holiday classic

Naughty or nice, who will you be this Christmas? Maybe learn from the story of Ebenezer Scrooge in this classic tale.

The local production of Charles Dickens's *A Christmas Carol* returns to Theatre

Calgary after nearly three years. Follow Scrooge in a journey with the Spirit of Christmas' past, present and future to discover the warmth of kindness and the true meaning of Christmas in the most awaited show, with tickets selling out fast.

The show will draw its curtains on Dec. 31.

Christmas with a twist

Looking for something different but familiar? Maybe you're tired of the classics? StoryBook Theatre's *One Christmas Carol* adds a twist to the tale of Ebenezer Scrooge. You won't be seeing one, or two, or three — try 35.

In this one-woman show, Natascha Girgis really can do it all. She opens the show like you've never seen or thought of before on Dec. 1 until Dec. 29 in a new masterpiece approach towards a timeless tale.

Have a bloody holiday

I guess even the holidays can't escape the scenes of a great mystery. In this play, you'll be asking who dunnit? *Sleuth* follows the story of Andrew Wyke who tricks his wife's mistress into staging a robbery, but who's really in control?

This Tony Award-winning play directed by Cherissa Richards, is described as "the ultimate game of cat and mouse."

Sleuth will be showing at the Vertigo Theatre until Dec. 18. Now the question is, who will you choose to take with you?

Is punk rock dead?

Calgary's Zipties say not yet.

Amy Winch

Contributor

"Dicktits," a tune I was looking forward to hearing, from the newly released album *The Ties That Bind* while I was at The Ship and Anchor Pub on a Wednesday night. This album is the latest release from local punk rockers, the Zipties.

The band's high-energy live show, fronted by vocalist Timothy Stobart's stage persona Misty Bangers—

like the sausage—seemed to take over the small stage in the corner of the pub as patrons gathered round to catch the exploding wall of sound and Bangers' glitter shorts.

With a variety of song titles, drummer Matt Kehoe explained the inspiration for the song.

"Number of years ago, I worked in a construction

zone area, and I was using the Porta Potty, and I went to go take a piss and there in front of me was this beautiful drawing of a woman with these two giant swinging d*cks for t*ts," said Kehoe.

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Local YYC punk rockers the Zipties, in rehearsal. Getting ready for their show at The Ship and Anchor. Photo by Amy Winch



The Zipties, rock The Ship and Anchor Pub stage Wednesday Nov. 29, 2023. Photo by Amy Winch



Demon Compass

Provoker

Year0001

Score: A

Demon Compass, the sophomore album from the band Provoker, is a darkwave masterpiece that seamlessly blends gothic post-punk with 80s synth, creating a haunting landscape. Released by Year0001, the album is a mesmerizing journey into a realm where giant cockroaches conduct clandestine experiments and teenage vampires snack on disembodied arms.

The album's singles, including "Debt Collector," "Valley Ghoul," and "It's In My Head," showcase Provoker's ability to strike a dreamy balance between paranoid lyricism and melodic riffs.

Vocalist Christian Petty delivers dynamic vocals that, when paired with Jonathon

Lopez's bass lines and dark grooves, create a compelling and addictive experience. *Demon Compass*, both lyrically and sonically cohesive, explores inner demons and hidden evils through a beautiful yet macabre lens.

The album's visual aesthetic, reminiscent of '80s cult-favorite movies, contributes to its storyline, emphasizing the band's commitment to creating a distinct universe. *Demon Compass* is a testament to Provoker's artistic evolution and their ability to create a fully immersive musical experience. *Demon Compass* is not just an album but a captivating journey into a dark and imaginative realm.


—Emma Marshall

Beach Plum

Arcy Drive

Grand Jury Music

Score: B+



Arcy Drive's *Beach Plum* presents an exploration of modern anxieties through glowing synths and introspective lyrics. The album reflects a departure from their earlier work under the name of Widowspeak, taking on a more contemporary approach.

The album delves into themes of labour, death, and the passage of time. Hamilton's honeyed tones and Thomas's intricate guitar work, to create an atmosphere of both calm acceptance and a bright downward spiral. "Breadwinner" resonates with the hypnotic coziness of Mazzy Star, addressing the daily grind of work and the longing for uncomplicated romance.

While the album doesn't take bold risks, it navigates the delicate balance between familiar indie rock vibes and a sharp, visionary approach. Some moments, like the sleepy arrangements of the final tracks, may fade into the background, but the album's special, big moments shine through, offering a thoughtful reflection on the chaos embedded in our daily lives.

Beach Plum serves as a tastefully small exploration of day-to-day concerns, proving that sometimes, less is indeed more.

—Emma Marshall

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After this, Kehoe went on to tell bassist, James Knapman what he saw and according to Kehoe, Knapman said he was going to write a song about it and the rest is history. With writing and performing all originals, the collaborative process for the band comes from late-night jams in the basement, being in the Calgary punk rock scene, and being good friends.

"It's pretty organic, really. Someone will have a riff and then these boys will work on it," said Stobart. It's like putting those candies in the Coke, and a Mentos experiment."

In the spirit of punk rock, when inspiration hits, it's about writing what needs to come out, for the Zipties, that can mean paying homage to late friends, the good times or as guitarist Denis mentions, something unique to their style.

"They're not what I'd call, typical punk rock lyrics. One of the songs Tim has written

is about being abducted by aliens," said Denis.

The Ties That Bind has elements of heavy metal, 90's punk, fast rhythms, and melodic bass lines. This makes sense with local Alberta punk inspirations such as SNFU, The Dead Souls, Chixdiggitt, No Brainer, and The Smalls.

For the Zipties the collaborative process is important. Each member brings new ideas, riffs, lyrics, and the general hilarities of life to the table. With many new songs written and another album ready to go, the band continues with the goal of getting the music out there.

Currently, the band is working on putting out a vinyl record and setting up local shows. When checking out a show, the Zipties want everyone to have fun, enjoy the performance, try not to throw stuff, and to consider maybe buying some merch.

For future 2024 goals, guitarist Chris Holley sums

it up.

"We're going to conquer Alberta. Let's do that. Let's work on that. If we

do Red Deer, Edmonton, Lethbridge, let's f**king go. If we hit Fort Mac, we made it."

The new album is out on all streaming services and Spotify.



The Zipties are a local band comprised of members (from left to right) Denis, Matt Kehoe, Timothy Stobart (Misty Bangers) and James Knapman.



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David Schaefer: A leader beyond the field

Noel Ormita

Staff Writer

David Schaefer, a fifth-year health and physical education student, has been on MRU's men's soccer team since 2018. He has been with the team through rough patches but also recent triumphs recorded in his final year.

Roots to boots

Schaefer told *The Reflector* his interest in soccer started at four years old playing with family and friends back in his hometown of Berlin, Germany.

"It's something we grow up with," Schaefer said. "We were playing everywhere, on the street and on the playgrounds."

He moved to MRU after signing up with an agency back home and ultimately chose Calgary because he loves the balance of nature while prioritizing his academic goals.

"The university sports system in North America is built very well for that and it's been nice to combine those two things easily," Schaefer said.

On the team, he plays in the right-forward or right-winger position, but his versatility allows him to play offensive midfielder and other positions as well.

"I can play wherever the coach needs," he said. "I can

see he is building something special."

Home to many firsts

A year after Schaefer joined the team, the men's soccer team made the Canada West playoffs for the first time since joining the U SPORTS Conference. And, this fall they were crowned Canada West champions while playing on their home turf.

The men's soccer team travelled to Sydney, Nova Scotia for the U SPORTS National Championships on Nov. 12 but came short and could not bring the Sam Davidson Memorial Trophy home.

"Obviously [we're] disappointed with the result but again a very close game," head coach, Ryan Gyaki, said during an Instagram interview.

It was the first time the team had made it to nationals but lost by one point in the semi-finals against Cape Breton University and one point in the bronze-medal match against the University of British Columbia (UBC)—a rematch of the Canada West finals.

"UBC [was] probably on top during the first half and in the second half, I thought

it was going more our way," Gyaki said. "Their chance went in and our chance didn't but overall it was great."

Hey, soul brothers

Being a student athlete can expose you to potential career opportunities in the realm of athletics but representing the Cougars is something special and an honour.

"There's not a lot of people who get to wear the jerseys," Schaefer said. "There's tons of players that want to play for a university team, especially for MRU."

Third-year business student, Josh Flaksman, met Schaefer back in 2020 and told *The Reflector* that his teammate showcased his leadership skills right away.

"He pushed us and motivated us to do our best in training," Flaksman said. "He always tells me that I'm the best and to go show it on the field."

Flaksman and Schaefer play the same position on the field, but he said it never felt like a competition because he sees his senior as a coach.

"He takes our corners and free kicks and penalties and that's a lot of pressure but you know he's going to get

that goal," Flaksman said. Schaefer tied the record at MRU for single season goals with nine goals after a game against the University of Alberta Golden Bears in October but for him the most memorable moments go beyond scoring goals and winning games.

"Being together, building a brotherhood and building a culture," Schaefer said. "It's been an honour to work hard every single day, in the classroom, on the field and in the weight room."

Curtains drawn

"For people interested in university sports, I think building connections is really important," Schaefer said. "Be timely and reach

out in advance."

"The legacy I leave is caring about this program every single day with every action I take," Schaefer said. "It was a great ending to my U SPORTS career."

This was Schaefer's last year on the team and he is expecting to graduate this semester. With a long-term goal to pursue a master's degree, he plans to go back to Germany to reunite with family and play semi-professionally but sees himself coming back to Canada in the future.

"Representing the school at a national level is prestigious," Schaefer said. "I'm sure this team will get back to that stage really, really soon and go even further."



Fifth-year player David Schaefer kicks a corner-kick for the Cougars. Photo courtesy of MRU Cougars

#S

6-22-1, ^{MRU}
Softball record in the inaugural season.

3, ^{players on the}
^{Vancouver}
Canucks that have over 30 points in their first 25 games.

25, ^{goals scored}
^{by David}
Schaefer as a part of MRU's men's soccer team.

51, ^{most points}
^{scored by}
an NFL during last season's Christmas Day games.

MRU softball team sets ambitious goals following inaugural season

Xander Holcomb

Contributor

MRU's newest club played their inaugural season this semester—and nobody knew about it. The new team, a softball club representing MRU, joined the Western Collegiate Softball Association (WCSA), along with schools throughout Alberta, Saskatchewan, and British Columbia.

As a club program, the team is entirely run by its student athletes. Five players make up the executive board, which oversees the program and is responsible for hiring the coaching staff, funding the program and a laundry list of other duties.

Like any first-year program, challenges plagued the Cougars softball team throughout the season. Head coach Jason Poole believes the biggest of all was that the team met for the first time only a week before the season began.

"I wouldn't say it's the smoothest ship ever, but I think everyone's learning," said Poole.

"15 ball players got to play this year, and we got to compete in the league."

Although the Cougars finished seventh out of the eight in the league, both the coaching staff and players feel like the team has potential

going forward.

"We had a lot of talented girls, a lot of girls who really knew what they were doing, but because it was a first-year college team, there were a lot of cracks that we had to iron out," said Emma Hache, a member of the team's executive board.

Hache said that the team is not only skilled, but has a great team mentality and environment.

"We worked well as a group together, it's probably one of the funnest teams I've played on. Everyone got along super well, we all had fun."

Hache, who hails from Vancouver Island, was originally recruited by the joint MRU and SAIT softball program. But, in January 2022, SAIT informed the MRU student athletes that they were no longer able to play as a joint team. This prompted the executive board and longtime SAIT softball coach George Edwards to create and recruit players for an upstart Cougars team.

Although Edwards is no longer involved with the Cougars, he laid the foundation for Poole to step in.

"I started going around at my own expense to tournaments, teams and associations to let them know that MRU was

going to have a team. We had been instructed that we needed a minimum of nine players to solidify the team. I was able to create this fairly quickly," Edwards said.

Edwards was able to recruit players throughout the summer. One major advantage he had in that department came from The Friends, Alumni, and Supporters of Collegiate

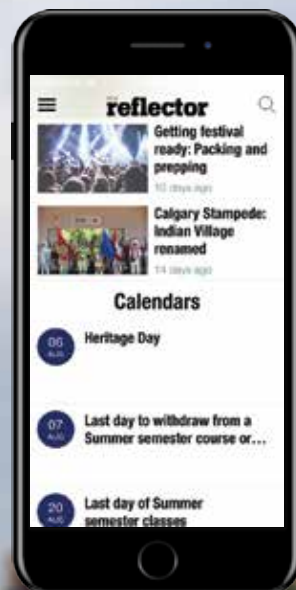
Softball Society. It's a resource for the Cougars to use that assists the program with

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The Cougars softball team finished seventh out of eight teams during their inaugural season as a collegiate club. Photo courtesy of Jordan Squires

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Tis' the season: NFL Christmas Day matchups to get excited for

Zach Payne

Staff Writer

The holiday season is fast approaching, which means the NFL regular season is nearing its waning weeks. There is a very clear sense of which teams are destined to compete for a Super Bowl, and those who are competing for draft position.

On Christmas Day, teams on both sides of the standings will take the field in a triple-header slate of games that viewers can watch throughout the day. All three feature at least one team with championship aspirations.

Las Vegas Raiders at Kansas City Chiefs

The first game of the day features an AFC West matchup between the Raiders and the Chiefs. Vegas is in the midst of a frustrating season, having already fired head coach Josh McDaniels following their Week 8 loss to the Detroit Lions. In the weeks following, the Raiders showed more signs of life, winning back-to-back games against New York's Giants and Jets. They lost to the Miami Dolphins and Chiefs in the following two weeks, but they put up more of a fight than anyone expected them to. In the first matchup against the Chiefs, they even jumped out to a 14-0 lead before Kansas City roared to life in the final moments of the first half—en route to a 31-17 win. Right now the name of the game for the Raiders is to be competitive while upper management evaluates next steps. There are a number of talented players that the Raiders need to make decisions on in the near future. Superstars Maxx Crosby and Davante

Adams can help the Raiders now, or they can be shipped off for massive hauls to fuel a rebuild. The time for those decisions to be made is nearing.

For the Chiefs, it's time to start tuning up for the playoffs once again. But, this season hasn't featured the same level of dominance the Chiefs are known for. The defence has been mostly solid, but the offence is starting to feel the lack of solid options at wide receiver. The remaining games on the schedule are all about fine tuning things to the best of their ability to prepare for their title defence. The AFC is experiencing a bit of a shift from years prior, as the Cincinnati Bengals and Buffalo Bills aren't the same threats they have been in recent history. This season it's a Baltimore Ravens team boasting an excellent defence, and a Dolphins team boasting the best offence in the league. Kansas City needs to balance out their play so they stand a chance against both.

New York Giants at Philadelphia Eagles

The afternoon slate features the most lopsided matchup on paper. The withered corpse of the Giants roster continues to limp through the season, destined for a top-10 selection in the draft. The team invested heavily in maintaining the status quo following a surprising 2022 season that saw them reach the divisional round of the playoffs. Unfortunately, in the NFL, if you don't move forward you will experience some heavy regression. The Giants were due for some regression already and had

it fast-tracked after starting quarterback Daniel Jones went down for the season with an injury. For as poor as Jones was this season, he is still miles ahead of his replacement, Tommy DeVito. The Giants don't look to have much of a chance against the Eagles, but crazier things have happened.

As for the Eagles, they have their sights set on reaching the big dance for the second-straight year. Only this season they hope to come out of it with a championship ring. Star quarterback Jalen Hurts is one of the favourites to win MVP this season, and the Eagles are humming along with the best record in the league. A first-round bye seems like a formality at this point, as the Eagles have a multi-game lead on both the San Francisco 49ers and Detroit Lions. The stage is set for them to keep rolling through everyone in their path. The lone obstacle could be the fact that divisional games tend to be closer than regular games. But looking at both the Giants and Eagles on paper, as well as what each team has done this season, it's hard to see a scenario in which the Eagles don't win by multiple scores.

Baltimore Ravens at San Francisco 49ers

Thankfully, the night game on paper should be a good one. Both of these teams are bonafide Super Bowl contenders. Boasting some of the best defences in the league, along with electric offensive weapons. This will be a true test for each team, and a great litmus test with the playoffs on the horizon to



Davante Adams has been a wide-receiver for the Las Vegas Raiders since the 2022 NFL draft. Photo courtesy of All-Pro Reels/Wikimedia Commons

self-evaluate potential flaws.

The Ravens have been absolutely on fire since the opening month of the year. Particularly against NFC teams, and furthermore particularly against NFC contenders. Both the Seattle Seahawks and Lions—two teams poised to make the playoffs—got absolutely smacked by the Ravens. The combined score of those two wins was 75-9. It also doesn't make things easier for the 49ers, when considering the Ravens' quarterback Lamar Jackson has been downright incredible against NFC opponents in his career. As it turns out, Jackson is 18-1 in his last 19 games against NFC opponents. Pair that with a top-three defence, and that's a lot for any team to handle.

However, if there was a team to stand up to the Ravens, the 49ers—a team with championship ambitions of their own—might be it.

Brock Purdy has had his moments of inconsistency, but for the most part he has been solid at getting the ball to the plethora of talent across the 49ers offence. Christian McCaffrey is by far the best running back in football, George Kittle is one of the best tight ends and Deebo Samuel is an electric weapon both as a rusher and receiver.

Defensively, Fred Warner and Nick Bosa lead a defensive front that should be able to at least slow the Ravens top-ranked rushing attack. This matchup between two elite teams feels like just that. The great equalizer will be whether or not Purdy can elevate his game to go toe-to-toe with a former MVP like Jackson. Regardless this is going to be an excellent game. If you're only planning on watching one game on Christmas Day, make sure this is it.

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fundraising and the expenses required to run the team. Each year the society provides about \$30,000 to offset the costs of travel, equipment, and other expenses.

These extra funds from the society keep the costs down for players, and have attracted players like Hache to Calgary. According to Poole, players from throughout central

Alberta, and parts of British Columbia come to play for the Cougars. Poole's own daughter attends the University of Victoria, where she plays on their softball team. He says that student-athletes in Victoria pay almost three times that of the MRU athletes. Meaning, the benefits that the society provides the program and its athletes are what keeps

the MRU athletes costs down compared to other programs.

Despite having played in their first season already, there's little information about MRU's softball team online. To find the team's page on the MRU Athletics site requires searching through multiple pages, and even there, the page has almost no information about the team. Not even the WCSA site displays a roster, and game results are difficult to come by anywhere online.

The talent that the program already has, along with new recruits, leads Poole to believe that the Cougars can put together a strong showing next year after the team gets an entire year together to train, practice, and gel together. He's set the goal to finish within the top half of the league in only their second season.

"We have some work to do as coaches to recruit, and obviously develop these players that we already have,"

he said. "I think we'll be more competitive as these girls go through a year of practicing and we get to know them a little bit better."

The belief in the team going forward is echoed by Hache.

"I am excited for next season, I think it's going to be great. I think we have a lot of good girls, and I think it's going to be a success."

A look at the NHL before the holiday break

Noah Wilson

Contributor

The 2023-24 NHL season has been an excellent experience for hockey fans to watch so far, with the league being as talented as ever. This, in turn, has brought a fair share of drama, massive surprises, big disappointments, and a plethora of emerging stars.

No gas to Oilers start

At the beginning of this season, the Edmonton Oilers labeled this season as 'Stanley Cup or bust.' Meaning, the Oilers shocking 2-9 start to this season was something nobody in the hockey world saw coming. With mediocre production from Connor McDavid and abysmal goaltending, the Oilers struggled to find their footing, which eventually led to the firing of fan-favourite coach Jay Woodcroft. To make matters even worse, starting

goaltender Jack Campbell was sent down to the American Hockey League (AHL) after posting an .873 save percentage (SV%) and one win in five starts. Everything that could have gone wrong, went wrong for the Edmonton Oilers.

Quinn Hughes and the Vancouver Canucks stand atop the Pacific Division

An overload of success has been a long time coming for Vancouver Canucks fans, and after an incredibly disappointing 2022-23 season, it looks like the team's good fortune is finally here. The Canucks surge to the top has been all thanks to the tremendous production of Quinn Hughes, Elias Pettersson and J.T. Miller—with each

player ranking in the top 10 in points among NHL players.

On top of these players taking over the League, the Canucks have been getting solid team support all around. Players like Brock Boeser, who leads the NHL in goals, Filip Hronek, who has been fantastic on the team's top pair, and goaltender Thatcher Demko, who has genuinely turned into a star this season.

But, the player that has gained the most attention, however, has been defenceman Quinn Hughes.

The Canucks captain has been outstanding this year. Hughes' 33 points in 24 games had proved that the blueliner is not only in the conversation for the Norris Trophy but also the NHL's MVP.

Though, the Canucks aren't in the clear just yet. Consistency has always been a struggle for this core, so it will be intriguing if they can change that narrative this season.

Kings take their throne

The Los Angeles Kings have quietly established themselves as one of the cup favourites as we enter the last month of the year. They currently have a dominant 13-4-3 record while ranked number one in goals against. The Kings' sturdy defensive play is a direct result of the stellar netminding from Cam Talbot, who has a 10-4-1

record with a .928 SV%.

What makes the Kings scary is their endless depth scoring and emerging talent throughout the organization. Over half the team already has 10 points, and we are only at the 25-game mark. That is seriously impressive.

Centre Quinton Byfield is in the process of having his breakout year with four goals and 12 assists in just 20 games. This comes as great news to the Kings organization, as many fans questioned whether Byfield was the proper selection by the team during the 2020 NHL Draft.

However, Byfield is turning heads this season and is showcasing his talent on both ends of the ice.

Forward Trevor Moore is also having a breakout year of his own. The Kings acquired Moore in 2020, and he is someone fans quickly gravitated towards. The California native has an impressive 11 goals and eight assists for 19 points in 20 games.

The Kings' talented mesh of young and old players is playing a critical role in their success, as they seem as dangerous as the Kings teams that were crowned Stanley Cup champions in 2012 and 2014. Only time will tell if we see yet another cup win for 2024.

Wild? More like, watered-down

The Minnesota Wild have always been a perennial playoff team that has found themselves in the middle of the pack. This season has been a different story. The Wild currently sit 27th in league standings and are a bottom-three team in goals against. The struggle of keeping the puck out of the net is the primary reason for the team's seven-game losing streak in November, which ultimately cost former head coach, Dean Evason his job.

The Wild's struggles have also been partly due to franchise player Kirill Kaprizov, who has not looked like his usual self. In the season prior, Kaprizov solidified himself as a top-10 player in the NHL. Many have pointed out that his struggles are because of his lingering recovery from a lower-body injury last season. Even if this is the case, Kaprizov not being the 100-point player his team is used to having has affected the Wild's ability to compete this season.

Rising-star Matthew Boldy has also struggled, registering only two goals in 14 appearances after having an outstanding 2022-23 campaign. A season where he registered a career-high, 31 goals.

It's safe to say that Minnesota's newest bench boss, John Hynes, has lots of work to do if the Wild want to find any success this season.



Connor McDavid and Darnell Nurse at the 2015 Oilers Development Camp. Photo courtesy of Connor Mah/Wikimedia Commons