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Has fast food tipping
gotten out of hand?
(Pg. 5)

MRU announces 2026 student election results

Meet your 2026 SAMRU representatives

Nadoo Abaagu

Staff Writer



REC President, Noel Ormita. Photo courtesy of SAMRU

Student elections at Mount Royal University (MRU) have come and swiftly gone. The time for campaigning is over. No more posters will scatter the hallways, no more students will haggle for a vote and there will be no more Student Association of Mount Royal University (SAMRU) election advertisements.

All that is left now is the results: What 18 students will determine SAMRU's future for the year to come?

Student Governing Board

The Student Governing Board (SGB) is the highest decision-making board of SAMRU. It hires 14 students from the MRU student body to govern the student association and represent student needs in line with approved advocacy priorities.

This year, seven positions were available.

Chris Brown, Fabiha Hassan, Kenzy Jali, Jasmyn Krywolt, Patricia Maglalang, Sara Muskaj and Sheena Sahota will serve as incoming student governors for fall 2026. The students range from first to third-year and represent different parts of MRU.

Representative Executive Council

The Representative Executive Council (REC) comprises four students elected annually. Each student position represents a different aspect of student life at MRU and reflects students' priorities to the university, as well as provincial and federal boards.

The candidates shared similar themes in their campaign messaging, with many advocating for affordability and accessibility.

Here's who ran for REC positions:

Noel Ormita and Vlad

Semeshko both ran for REC president, with Ormita winning with 60.5 per cent of student votes.

Ormita ran on affordability for students and improving communication between SAMRU and students.

"I think for sure tuition is a big issue and financial restrictions [are] a big issue for a lot of students. One of the things I really want to advocate for with the provincial government, by working with the VP external, is to increase the minimum wage from \$15 to \$18 an hour," he says.

Anita Surujbally and Liv Lopez ran for REC vice president student affairs. Lopez will take on REC VP student affairs with 53.1 per cent of the student vote.

As a candidate, Lopez says she wants to improve the accessibility and visibility of student services.

"One of my goals is to rework how we market these existing services, diversifying our messaging so that support is visible, straightforward and accessible long before a student reaches a crisis point," she says.

Julia Madden and Erika Sofia Ortiz ran for REC vice president academics. Madden will serve as REC VP academic with 53.1 per cent of the votes.

Madden ran a campaign primarily addressing student living costs and lowering textbook prices.

"How can we try to push for more zero-cost textbooks in the classrooms because we're in a cost-of-living crisis? I think that is probably the most important thing in my campaign that everyone can relate with," she explains.

Rylynne Campbell and Mariana Mejia Salazar ran for REC vice president external. Salazar will serve as REC VP external with 63.6 per cent of the votes.

Salazar says she wants to improve barriers to attending post-secondary and make the overall experience worthwhile and affordable for students.

"I think affordability is one of the biggest issues students struggle with. It's one of the biggest barriers to even accessing post-secondary education," Salazar says.

Voter turnout is still an issue

A total of 1,877 students voted in the 2026 election, representing 14.4 per cent of MRU students.

In the last decade, less than 20 per cent of MRU's student body has turned out to vote in student elections, according to Shauna Hunter, chief returning officer of SAMRU

elections.

Students say they have difficulty voting due to busy lives or a lack of interest.

"I didn't vote at all, mostly just because I was kind of busy, and it's my first year, so I wasn't very involved in any of the processes," says Samuel Donnelly, an open studies student at MRU.

"I didn't vote, [I] also kind of didn't have enough time. But I don't really use much of the state-of-the-art resources anyway," says Mason Passarelli, a computer information systems student at MRU.

With his position as REC president, Ormita says staying involved in campus politics ensures that students' voices are heard.

"When student leaders, whether that's me or somebody else, advocate to the government and say, 'this is what students care about', but they don't show up in the data, it says a lot to them about the priorities and the policies that they can create around us," says Ormita.

"We have to make sure that it's us that they hear, because the government and the university will only invest in what they hear. And it's important that it's [the] students [who] hear."



The SAMRU meet-and-greet helps students get to know their representatives before they cast ballots. Photo courtesy of SAMRU

The Calgary Public Library's new AI art residency sparks controversy

What does this mean for artists in Calgary?

Serena Kanji-Ramji

Staff Writer

The Calgary Public Library (CPL) is exploring new avenues with the artist residencies they offer. In an Instagram post on Feb. 27, the CPL announced they are accepting applications for their new “Creative in Residence—Artificial Intelligence Collaborative (AIC) Artist” position.

The library said in their post that the position is open to “artists in any discipline who use AI ethically as a collaborative partner in their creative process.” This residency would run over the course of 10 weeks, with the selected artist being compensated \$50 an hour, being paid a maximum of \$8,000, depending on the number of hours contributed.

The backlash to the announcement was instant, starting in the comment section of the post.

One user wrote, “There is no public ‘need’ to AI, in this political climate we need to be supporting the human artists who give this city its colour.”

Another individual responding to the CPL's post commented, “There is no ethical AI art.”

In an interview with the Calgary Herald, Calgary Mayor Jeromy Farkas chimed in on the conversation, backing critics.

“I'm strongly in support of our local arts and culture



CPL's most notable location, Central Library, is known as the flagship branch across the city. Photo courtesy of calgarylibrary.ca

scene, but it has to be Calgarians driving the bus,” he said. “I feel it robs local talent of the opportunity to be able to engage, and to be able to access contracts like these and to be able to bid.”

For many people, AI art is unethical for a number of reasons. One of the most discussed criticisms is that there is no such thing as ethical AI art because the software used to create

images or paintings is often trained using other artists' work as a reference point.

Generative AI, the type used in the sort of project the CPL is proposing, is trained through data lakes and question snippets.

Simplified, this means the software takes raw data and top search results and uses that as a reference to answer any prompt it's given. Often, the data used is diversely

sourced and includes social media feeds.

In 2024, Meta attracted criticism for using artists' public Instagram's to train their AI image generator.

Decisions like nonconsensually using artists' work to train AI and establishing an AI art residency have caused frustrations in creative communities.

Multimedia artist and Alberta University of the Arts (AUArts) student Jelena MacDonald explains that the root of this frustration can be traced back to the few opportunities for artists based in Calgary and Alberta.

For MacDonald, the residency also reads as discouraging. She says that when she watches herself and her peers put in the work towards their art degrees, the replacement of their work becomes “very disheartening.”

When looking towards the future, MacDonald hopes that this residency isn't setting a precedent for what art is going to be.

“I don't want it to be where we're heading for art,” she says. “I don't even want to say that it's the creation of art, that it is art, because it's not. I think a lot of people have

taken for granted...practising something and putting your talents on the table. The public library is a place that focuses on education and making things accessible to people via knowledge, but I don't think that art should fall into that.”

Despite the overwhelming amount of criticism, the CPL has not withdrawn the program. Over email with the Calgary Herald, CPL's Community and Engagement Executive Director Mary Kapusta wrote, “As AI becomes more prevalent in our community, there is a public need to help Calgarians navigate the opportunities and challenges it presents.”

This statement was also echoed in the comment section of the original Instagram post.

What this residency means for artists in Calgary remains to be seen. Applications for this position are to be closed on April 7.



Known for evocative feminist art, Jelena MacDonald continues to be outspoken about AI in the art scene. Photo courtesy of Jelena MacDonald

Exploring Calgary's youth hiring fair

How is Calgary helping bridge the gap between young people and employment?

Karra Smith

Staff Writer

Youth unemployment rates have been on a steady incline over the past decade. With many Albertans aged 15 to 24 feeling the pressure, the city's 27th annual youth hiring fair proved to be a hot spot for young job seekers.

According to a report by Statistics Canada, the unemployment rate for youth across the country reached 14.1 per cent in February of this year, inching closer to the recent high of 14.6 per cent in September 2025.

Excluding 2020 and 2021, these numbers are the highest they have been since 2010.

Provincially, July 2025 showed an unemployment rate of 20 per cent among youth—the highest it has been since December 2020.

But with the annual hiring fair, young Calgarians have the chance to connect with 80 employers and hear about a variety of different job opportunities, with some individuals being interviewed and hired on the spot.

Hardeep Seeghat, a community liaison with the Youth Employment Centre (YEC), says the goal for the event is to create a space where the value of youth seeking employment is recognised.

"So, ultimately, our hope is that if an employer sees a youth today, they understand that youth may have a lot to offer, whether it's a new perspective, new energy, they are also keener," says Seeghat.



Held at the Big Four Roadhouse, this year's youth hiring event marked the 27th anniversary of the fair. Photo by Karra Smith

When it comes to the need for additional work, Seeghat says the City of Calgary acknowledges the tough nature of the economy and hopes that by continuing to host the job fair and offer resume assistance through the YEC, the Calgary employment field will grow for young adults and teens.

"We know that youth are navigating a very challenging job market right now, but that being said, it's not that there are no opportunities out there," Seeghat says.

While the event itself can be very helpful for many youth, some find the wait times to get inside the building and the sheer volume of attendees to be a challenging part.

Damian Michaud waited for roughly two hours to get in, and with approximately 5,000 individuals coming through the event over its four and a half hour duration, finding a job there still felt quite daunting.

"I'd like for an event that happens quarterly every couple of months throughout the year, so there aren't as many people going to one thing at one time," says Michaud.

After graduating in 2020, Michaud worked a few jobs, but he says it has not been enough to take care of himself and his loved ones.

"It sucks being broke, not being able to support my family, especially struggling

in the area we are in," he says. "It's very hard to find work, especially with everyone else trying to find work."

And this sentiment has echoed throughout the province.

While increasing unemployment rates have been a stressor for many teens and young adults, the concerns have not fallen on deaf ears.

In efforts to address the growing job crisis for youth, the Alberta government introduced an \$8 million initiative back in September of 2025 to incentivise companies to hire young people.

The Alberta Youth Employment incentive provides eligible businesses the opportunity to be awarded up to \$7,500 for hiring three to five youth for a minimum of 750 hours combined or \$4,000 for hiring one to two youth for a minimum of 400 hours combined.

While the program is beneficial for employers, youth who take part in the initiative can be rewarded with a 'Ready2Work' digital badge.

According to a report by CBC, Joseph Schow, Alberta minister of jobs, economy, trade and immigration says this badge can be put on a resume and highlight to employers a young person's previous experience.

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The youth hiring event gives people the chance to meet with multiple types of employers and explore various industries in Calgary. Photo by Karra Smith

Fast food gratuity requests impacting traditional tipping habits

Canadians are getting fed up with tip prompts, and the influx is hurting legacy restaurants

Emma Voelpel

Staff Writer



With tipping being taken up at non-traditional food service businesses, research shows more Canadians are getting sick of being prompted. Photo courtesy of Blake Wisz / Unsplash

A routine stop at a convenience store for a snack—a bag of chips and a pop—now often comes with an added prompt at checkout. As the purchase gets rung through, the payment screen displays three tipping options: 18 per cent, 20 per cent or 22 per cent.

Looking for a quick bite at a rest stop or fast-food joint is becoming more expensive as tipping culture continues to bleed into other industries beyond restaurant service.

In traditional sit-down restaurants, tipping has served as an informal yet key part of the business model. Servers typically earn an hourly base pay, but a significant portion of their income relies on gratuities—usually 15 to 20 per cent of the customer's bill.

Those tips are often shared through a 'tip-out' system with kitchen staff, bartenders and other workers, making gratuities a central part of income across the operation. However, the assumption

that tipping is a normal and necessary part of dining has become less widely accepted.

In 2025, H&R Block conducted a survey showing that a colossal 94 per cent of Canadians have become increasingly agitated by tipping culture. This tension around gratuities has existed for decades, but has become more apparent as tipping has expanded beyond its traditional setting, with customers routinely asked to leave gratuities in places with limited to no table service—including fast-food outlets, coffee counters and convenience stores.

How the pandemic played a part

The COVID-19 pandemic accelerated this shift. During lockdown, customers tipped more generously to support workers in hard-hit sectors. But as businesses reopened, tipping prompts in new establishments remained in place.

The result has been a

growing sense of 'tip-fatigue' as customers face more frequent requests to add gratuities.

Emily Fast has been serving in sit-down restaurants since 2013, and she has noticed a dwindling enthusiasm for tipping over the years.

"There's always that expectation, no matter where you go to give that extra dollar," says Fast.

This shift has altered Canadians' perceptions of tipping. What was once closely tied to personalised service has now become a standard of payment, regardless of the level of staff interaction.

"The tip is the interaction, the gesture, the above and beyond," says Fast.

For full-service restaurants, this shift may have unintended consequences.

A research study by the Angus Reid Institute found that Canadians have been feeling pressure to tip more at restaurants since 2016. At the same time, rising menu prices

driven by inflation have made sit-down restaurants more sensitive to overall cost.

A trend reflected in Statistics Canada showed how food purchased in restaurants has seen price increases in recent years. When higher prices are paired with higher suggested tip options, customers feel the final total can be excessive, and in some cases, they might decide not to tip at all.

Sit-down service faces friendly fire

Tipping in a full-service restaurant is directed to servers and passed on through the tip-out system. In non-traditional tip settings, such as fast-food chains or rest stops, there is less clarity about whether tips go directly to employees, are pooled or are used to offset wages and operating costs.

With frustration growing among consumers, attention is now turning to what can be done to reset how tipping works in Canada.

Some Canadian restaurants—including Toronto-based places like Richmond Station and Burdock Brewery—have experimented with eliminating tipping in favour of higher wages. While the approach has been welcomed by customers, the practice has yet to be widely adopted, in part due to competitiveness and concerns about higher listed prices.

Another approach adopted by some provincial governments is to be more transparent about prices that include gratuity.

In 2025, Quebec implemented new consumer protection rules requiring restaurants and other establishments to calculate suggested tip amounts based on the pre-tax subtotal of a bill.

This regulation also mandates that tipping options on payment terminals be presented neutrally. Officials say the change makes tips clearer for diners and prevents suggested amounts from looking higher than they really are.

However, 67 per cent of Canadians are in favour of a culture in Canada that doesn't require gratuity for service. Even Fast, after years in the industry, feels as if it's time for Canada to join the UK and Australia.

"If they raised the minimum wage for industry workers, I feel like they could just abolish tipping culture altogether," she says.

For now, tipping remains deeply embedded in Canada's restaurant industry, even as its role continues to evolve.

As Canadians continue to adjust their tipping habits, the future of tipping may depend on whether people are willing to accept lower menu prices in exchange for an added cost at the end of the bill, even as tipping becomes more common outside the restaurant industry.

Could magic mushrooms be Canada's next cannabis?

Psilocybin gets tested for therapeutic properties amid recreational use discussions

Anais Loeppky

Staff Writer



Psilocybin, casually known as magic mushrooms, is reentering the medical conversation as a treatment for addiction and mental health. Photo courtesy of Kooikkari / Wikimedia Commons

Western Canada researchers are studying something that would have seemed unfathomable just a few years ago: using psychedelics to help treat addiction.

Leah Mayo, an assistant professor in the Department of Psychiatry at the University of Calgary (UofC), is leading a clinical trial exploring how psilocybin—the active drug in ‘magic mushrooms’—can be used alongside therapy to help people reduce or stop drinking.

Announced in spring 2024, it's one of the largest single-site clinical trials of its kind. The UofC study will recruit 128 people diagnosed with alcohol use disorder who will undergo structured therapy sessions both before and after the psilocybin treatment.

While the research is still in the works, it reflects a shift in how psychedelics are being viewed. Psilocybin and other psychedelics, like LSD, were first officially studied in the early 1960s by Harvard psychologists Timothy Leary and Richard Alpert.

However, according to an article by Harvard University's Department of Psychology, their research was poorly conducted. In 1963, the project was forced to be dismissed when the pair was seen promoting the

substances recreationally by giving samples to students off-campus.

Despite traditional studies from the 1950s having already determined that certain psychedelic drugs were generally safe and non-addictive, the downfall of the Harvard project saw the substances become a symbol of counterculture across North America.

This eventually led to the criminalisation of psychedelics, which scholars argue was the product of “moral panic,” and consequently halted medical research into the topic. Magic mushrooms have been considered a dangerous drug for quite some time, and are now returning to their origins as a potential treatment.

A different way of treating addiction

At the same time that Canada is seeing a surge in interest, often described as a “shroom boom,” addiction and the supports needed to treat patrons are on the rise, which is difficult given the high rates of relapse. In 2023, nearly 18 per cent of Canadians over the age of 15 met the criteria for alcohol use disorder.

Psilocybin-assisted therapy takes a different approach. It

addresses how people think and feel, diving deeper into the psychological effects of addiction. Research by Johns Hopkins Medicine suggests that psilocybin can alter brain patterns, allowing individuals to step outside harmful habits and behaviours and reflect on them in a new way.

Some studies suggest that people who undergo this kind of therapy report lasting changes in how they relate to alcohol. They often describe a shift in perspective rather than a sense of restriction.

Psilocybin is also not considered physically addictive, which makes it especially interesting to researchers studying substance use. That doesn't mean it is risk-free. A mushroom ‘trip’ can be very unpredictable and depends on the environment and support provided.

For now, access to this type of treatment in Canada is limited to clinical trials and special approvals.

A complicated legal status

Psilocybin is still illegal in Canada under federal law, which outlines that the possession, sale and production are prohibited unless approved for research or specific medical use.

However, the enforcement of this has not been consistent.

In some cities, stores openly sell mushrooms despite the law. Online access has also made it easier for people to obtain them. In Calgary, people can have them delivered to their door through various websites.

The accessibility and normalisation of psilocybin are bringing new conversations to light. Some people see it as a sign that Canada's policy is lagging behind reality, especially when other parts of the world are moving at different speeds.

In places like the Netherlands and Jamaica, psilocybin can be accessed in certain forms. Some regions in the U.S. have decriminalised it, while others allow supervised therapeutic use.

These changes are being watched closely, as they offer examples of how regulation could work in the future for both recreational and medical use, much the same as the debate revolving around cannabis prior to 2018.

Before Canada legalised cannabis, there was a similar pattern. It was widely used, easily accessible and inconsistently enforced. Over time, the government moved toward regulation. Psilocybin is in a similar position in some ways, but there are key differences.

Cannabis is often used casually. Psilocybin is usually taken in a more intentional setting because of its strong effects on perception and emotion. The experience can last for hours and is difficult to predict.

Because of this, many researchers argue that if psilocybin becomes legal, it will likely be within a therapeutic framework rather than something you could find in your local corner store.

Should it be regulated?

The current situation raises an obvious question: if people are already using psilocybin, would regulation

make it safer?

Supporters of regulation argue that it would create clearer standards by reducing the risks tied to unregulated products and providing guidance on safe use.

Others view it as a more serious drug that should not be legalised the way cannabis is. Psilocybin can bring up intense emotions, especially without preparation or support. There is concern that commercial access could lead to misuse or negative experiences.

This is why most current research focuses on controlled environments. The emphasis is on supervision, preparation and follow-up care.

Some argue that because psilocybin is already part of a growing and scalable market, not legalising it is a missed opportunity for tax revenue. Currently, it operates as a thriving unregulated market.

The conversation around psilocybin is already happening across Canada. Regulation could help ensure it moves forward safely, and controlled research happening at UofC is part of a broader shift.

While psychedelics are gaining attention in the medical community, by being studied with the same level of attention given to other treatments, the public perception is also changing. Conversations that once felt slightly scandalous are now happening in classrooms, clinics and policy discussions.

For now, psilocybin sits in a liminal space. While being illegal, magic mushrooms are becoming increasingly normalised and accessible.

Whether Canada chooses to regulate it in the future remains uncertain. What is clear is that interest is growing and research is continuing.

The question is no longer whether psilocybin works, as this has already been established. Today, the proposition is whether the country is ready to decide what to do with that knowledge.

Opinion: The 'A' stands for asexual

Defining the feelings and experiences of the often forgotten group

Harris Turner

Contributor

When you think about LGBT, what comes to mind?

Gay? Lesbian? Perhaps transgender, two-spirited or intersex people.

Acronyms referring to the queer community have evolved over the years. Until 2022, the Government of Canada used LGBTQ2, and for the last three years, it has recognised 2SLGBTQI+ as its official abbreviation.

Yet there is one letter, representative of an identity, that is often forgotten—so much so that it's left out of many acronyms altogether: asexual.

Save for the lesser-used abbreviation, 2SLGBTQIA+, which was included in the 2021 report, titled the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls, asexuality is rarely remembered in synthesised terms.

In many ways, being asexual is the 'invisible' sexuality in which others won't know until they truly get to know a person. Asexuals also do not have the same amount of documented history as gay or lesbian people.

Further, there's no clear asexual 'look' or identifier, often because it overlaps with other aspects of the queer community. But one thing is for certain: it has nothing to do with hormonal levels, at least for most people.

Defining the queer alphabet's 'A'

People assume asexuality is when a person feels no attraction or has little drive for sexual acts. In practice, the identity is more complex.

There are many types of asexuality and various factors to consider, like how an asexual person feels about sex itself.

At its core, asexuals—or 'aces'—feel little to no sexual attraction to anyone. Arosexuals fall on the asexuality spectrum and are considered the opposite, defined as those who do feel sexual attraction, but little romantic attraction.

However, both exist on a personal spectrum, and both can find attraction in different ways aside from the sexual, such as aesthetically, emotionally, personally and even platonically.

There are also various branches or subcategories



A purple, grey, white and black flag flies high, representing asexuality at a Pride parade in Stockholm, Sweden, on Aug. 4, 2012. Photo courtesy of Trollhare / Flickr

under the 'ace umbrella,' including grey and demisexual. Greysexuals have limited amounts of sexual attraction towards others. There are sometimes, but not always, situations in which attraction varies greatly and infrequently, as it is closer to a wide range of feelings than to true absolutes.

Demisexuals feel attraction only to people they have spent a long time with and have formed an emotional bond with. For them, attraction is often very hard to develop until they really get to know someone on a personal level.

From the past to the present

According to It Gets Better Canada, asexuals make up approximately one per cent of the world's population, which sounds small, but accounts for an estimated tens of millions of people. However, because of the inconsistent collection of the sexual orientation statistics, the exact number is unknown today.

Throughout their ever-present history, members of the queer community have been criminalised and stigmatised. Documents of queer history have been hidden or distorted until recent efforts brought them back to light.

Before sexual orientation was included in the Canadian Charter of Rights and

Freedoms in 1995, and later added to the country's Human Rights Act with the passing of Bill C-33 the following year, asexuality was considered a psychiatric disorder.

Since the country's establishment, the Census of Canada has been responsible for collecting population data every five years. However, the soon-to-happen 2026 census will be the first to ask residents to define their sexual orientation, listing options including heterosexual, lesbian, gay, bisexual and other.

This new update brings to light how all queer people have gone unaccounted for in national data, and that even today, asexuals are subject to being mislabelled or lumped together with other identities, despite their long-known presence.

According to the Society of Alberta Asexuals and Aromantics, asexuals have been known since Ancient Rome. The initial term 'nonsexual' was one of the first interchangeable identifiers that went as far back as the 1890s to describe those who felt no attraction, along with 'asexual.'

During the 1970s, this term became much more concrete with texts like Lisa Orlando's *Asexual Manifesto*. The two decades to follow saw a larger push towards the identifier, and by 2001, asexuality had its own online community with the Asexual Visibility and Education Network.

However, it wasn't until 2010 that they had their own flag—a very recent development compared to the original pride flag, which was created by activist Harvey Milk and artist Gilbert Baker in 1978.

Where education meets understanding

Feeling isolated is common not only for those who are heterosexual but also for those across the queer community. After all, in a world that is driven by sex and intimacy, it can be hard for asexual people, especially romantically, to find connections.

There's a fear that perhaps even if they found a partner, they would leave because of who they are. Some asexual people may not feel like they are a part of the queer community at all because their differences are too great.

An overall lack of education and understanding has led to asexual discrimination. The same struggle has happened for those who are lesbian, gay, trans, bisexual and so much more of the queer community.

Emily Coultts, who was an active asexual online during the 2010s, said that even then there was discourse on what being asexual is—who fits and who does not.

There have been pushes to 'disprove' asexuality as

though it is merely a choice, hormonal imbalance or 'just not finding the right person' from people outside and, unfortunately, within the queer community. Asexuality, at times, is seen as an 'impossibility'—how can someone not feel anything for their preferred sex?

Thankfully, this is decreasing, especially in the last couple of years. With proper education, resources and representation in various media, there is a much larger understanding of what it means to be asexual. It certainly is not perfect, but it's given a chance for others to walk in an ace's shoes.

For those who are friends with an asexual, it's crucial to show them unjudgmental acceptance. Outside of sexuality, asexual people aren't much different, with their own backgrounds, communities and interests.

Teaching oneself about what it means to be ace can shine an entirely different light on the subject. It doesn't need to be academic—it could be as simple as playing a game made by an ace person, engaging with a YouTube video or even watching a movie. By reaching the end of this article, you are already doing this.

Asexual people, like other marginalised groups, deserve respect and patience. They don't need help or to be fixed, but they will certainly enjoy it if you bake them a cake.

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Get informed, Get involved

Attend a Student Governing Board meeting and see governance in action.

Meeting Dates	Sept 22	Oct 27	Nov 24	Jan 19	Feb 9	Mar 16	Apr 20	May 11	June 8
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All meetings are in Council Chambers (Room Z236), 4-7pm
If you're interested in attending a meeting, please email governance@samru.ca



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Turning the page on Canada Reads

Wordfest presents the heated literary showdown of the year

Katrina Ebuenga

Staff Writer

Battling for the best book this spring season, CBC's Canada Reads will have book lovers captivated in a literary showdown between authors and celebrities.

Canada Reads offers fans the chance to watch a heated debate take place from April 13 to 16, broadcasted each day on CBC Radio. A panel of Canadian celebrities each champion a book on behalf of the author they believe should be Canada's winning writer.

Fans can tune in and listen to the top contending books battle it out to be Canada's must-read book of the year. This year's theme is a book to build bridges, featuring novels that inspire and connect communities.

The competing books include *Foe* by Iain Reid, *The Cure for Drowning* by Lohan Paylor, *A Minor Chorus* by Billy-Ray Belcourt, *It's Different This Time* by Joss Richard and *Searching for Terry Punchout* by Calgary-based author Tyler Hellard.

Throughout the Canada Reads competition, listeners will have the chance to hear all sides of the story and take part in the elimination process, which happens each day of the competition until one book is crowned.

Celebrate Canada Reads in Calgary

In celebration of Canada Reads' 25th year, Wordfest presented Calgary's Canada Reads celebratory event on April 1 at Memorial Park Library with two of the five finalists. The event provided readers everything they needed to know about these sensational books before the competition began.

Shelley Youngblut, host of the event and Wordfest's CEO and creative ringleader, explains that audiences are

given a unique experience in these early stages of the competition, experiencing "the exclamation point between the book being written and the book being read."

Since 2015, Youngblut has been cultivating a remarkable experience that connects readers of all kinds across Calgary, creating a "home-team for Calgarians" to enjoy year after year.

"Our shows are warm and inviting, and the audience is as much a star as the author and the host on the stage," says Youngblut. "You really feel that as a fan of Canada Reads, as a fan of Canadian literature, you're in the game too."

From the two unique authors showcased at the event, P.E.I.-raised and Calgary-based Tyler Hellard, author of *Searching for Terry Punchout* is one wordsmith to keep an eye and ear out for. Championing his book is Steve "Dangle" Glynn, host of *The Steve Dangle Podcast*. He integrates elements of hockey with the latest moments in pop culture, branching out his sports-forward content to all kinds of listeners.

In this hockey centred book, readers will be struck with a sense of nostalgia and familiarity to the small hometown setting and the hurdles that come along with it.

Growing up in P.E.I., Hellard is able to encapsulate the feel of a small-town life and showcases the complexities of relationship development and growth. This charming hockey tale intertwines humour with the harder elements of revisiting the past.

Hellard's competition, *It's Different This Time* written by Joss Richard, will have book enthusiasts excited for this second-chance romance



Calgary-based pastry chef Said M'Dahoma (left) and Olympic gold medallist Maggie Mac Neil (right) at the Calgary Wordfest event last year. Photo by David Kotsibie

debut. The twist of fates of past roommates having to rekindle their relationship tangled in unresolved feelings will leave readers eager to turn the page.

The champion for this romantic tale is one of Canada's biggest content creators, Morgann Book, who is a longstanding literary enthusiast and owner of Bookish Media, which spreads all types of book-related content.

At the Calgary event, the stage for Canada Reads is set up differently from the competition's standard broadcast format, where fans are now able to interact with the author-champions and hear the insider's scoop to their strategies.

"You're getting to see two champions and the two authors on stage together," says Youngblut. "When you're watching the CBC broadcast, the authors are sitting on the sidelines, at home. They don't know what's going to happen

and all the pressure falls on the champions."

Watching the champion and authors' strategies play out in real-time creates a unique experience and connection for the book-loving community. The celebratory event also prepares champion-authors for the initial competition.

"Our whole philosophy is to encourage people to see books as exciting and reading as exciting and gathering and talking about big ideas as exciting, and this is one tool in our arsenal," says Youngblut.

Honing the ability to foster a community-based world through ideas, listening and empathy is the antidote that Youngblut believes is very important, especially now.

"I believe that books find you at the right time," says Youngblut. "For whatever reason, the universe gives you a book, and sometimes the universe will give you a book at the wrong time, and you

should just put it aside and wait, and then sometimes it literally falls off your shelf at you."

Youngblut and her team are driven to bring the best experience forward for fans and the reading community, and through this celebration, Canadians are brought together to further continue the legacy of great literature that connects us all.

"I truly believe that there's this invisible connection that books have with their intended readers."

OUT'N ABOUT

Spring Babies Festival

Every spring, Butterfield Acres Farm celebrates the arrival of new additions to the barn. The Spring Babies Festival runs on select days throughout April, allowing ticket holders to drop in and meet newborn goats, piglets, lambs and more. For more information, visit butterfieldacres.com.

Easter Egg Hunt for Dogs

This Good Friday, enjoy an Easter egg hunt with your fur-baby at Calaway Park. Find hundreds of colourful eggs around the park in support of National Service Dogs, who empower the people they work with to restore their independence through service companions. For more information, visit nsd.on.ca.

The Canadian Folk Music Awards

Tune into the Canadian Folk Music Awards set to return on April 9 to 12. Hosted in Calgary at various venues across the city, the award show celebrates folk music in all its forms. Enjoy bilingual concerts, award presentations and more over the course of four days. For more information, visit folkawards.ca.

Jurassic Park at The Grand

In partnership with Eighty Eighty Brewing Co., The GRAND presents Steven Spielberg's iconic prehistoric film, *Jurassic Park*. Grab a cold pint or a slice of pizza from Portland Street Pizza before the film rolls at 7 p.m. on April 10. For more information, visit thegrandyyc.ca.

Opinion: The newest cult classic film

Discussing Maggie Gyllenhaal's *The Bride!*

Avarie Mckinnon-Forgeron

Staff Writer



Christian Bale and Jessie Buckley star in Maggie Gyllenhaal's newest film, *The Bride!*
Photo courtesy of Facebook / @WarnerBros.Canada

Directed by Maggie Gyllenhaal and released on March 6, *The Bride!* is a new take on the classic novel by Mary Shelley, *Frankenstein*.

Set in 1930s Chicago, the film opens with the spirit of Shelley possessing a woman named Ida, who dies after a violent fall. She is then reanimated by scientist Dr. Cornelia Euphronius at the request of Frankenstein's desperately lonely Monster, who in this film is called Frank.

From there, the film becomes a love letter to cinema, a tribute to female detective work and a deeply-woven revenge story.

The Bride!, Gyllenhaal's second feature as writer and director, is many things at once—a gothic romance, a feminist fable, a mystery, and at times, nearly a musical.

Whether these are shining moments in the film, however, depends entirely on the viewer's tolerance for uncontrolled chaos.

Creative choices

What the film does get right is many excellent stylistic choices, with Gyllenhaal creating an atmosphere that continuously shifts to convey the difference between reality and fiction. Some of the musical elements also aid the film's ability to convey the delusion that comes from rejection and loneliness.

The Bride! also sets up a very captivating atmosphere, but makes some interesting choices in the process. Including the spirit of Shelley in the film was almost comical, as her role as a narrator ultimately undermines some of the themes explored in the film, throwing these messages in the faces of viewers.

Strong cast

Nonetheless, Jessie Buckley is undoubtedly the heart of the film, playing Ida, the reanimated Bride and channeling Shelley. In the role of the Bride, Buckley brings a fierce, rebellious energy to a woman who refuses to be molded into a culturally palatable version of herself.

The element I enjoyed most is the Bride's moral superiority over the other characters in the film, easily establishing her as the main protagonist. She stands up

to those who are corrupt by exposing their secrets, which was a highly captivating element that should have been focused on to a larger extent.

Christian Bale's character, Frank, is closer to Boris Karloff's iconic monster, who is a kindly and reluctant creature with a soft presence that Bale brings a surprising vulnerability to.

Their journey together is reminiscent of the Bonnie and Clyde story. Through an accidental crime spree, there is genuine chemistry between the two leads. The film is at its best in these moments, which are strange, tender and oddly moving.

Falling short

Where the film struggles is in its ambition to approach several themes at once. *The Bride!* has non-stop monologues, spitting out rage and literary references, and can feel dramatic without substance, making it difficult to keep up with. Additionally, when the themes are overexplained by the characters, the power of such is undercut.

Ultimately, *The Bride!* has 'cult classic' written all over it—it is too weird and outlandish for the average moviegoer, but full of enough flashes of brilliance to reward those who enjoy a film for not what it says but how it makes you feel.

It received mixed reviews upon release and was unfortunately a financial disappointment, but box office receipts rarely tell the whole story with films this singular.

The Bride! has a mirage of ideas explored, some invigorating and some half-realised. The film is messy, occasionally maddening and absolutely earns the exclamation point.

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Small venues bring big energy to the music scene

How local businesses in Calgary keep community alive

Hannah Flemmenspeck & Katrina Ebuenga

Staff Writers

The growing music scene in Calgary is built on community and local artists. So what does it mean when a seasoned band like Arkells chooses to play at a smaller venue like The Palomino Smokehouse?

This spring, Arkells are bypassing larger stages, choosing community music hubs as the stomping ground for their latest tour. The decision to choose more intimate venues has brought more attention to local stages in Calgary, showcasing the impact of these spaces on the industry.

Opened in 2004, The Palomino is a staple bar, known for its barbecue and a centre for unique live music experiences. Located in the heart of downtown Calgary, it is known to host and organise smaller music events that hold up to only 200 people.

Despite the lower capacity, they have hosted thousands of musical events with artists from all around the

world. The smaller space has welcomed a wide variety of genres to the stage, offering an authentic experience for locals and newcomers.

First signing in 2006 with the indie label Dine Alone Records, Arkells quickly became a prominent presence in the Canadian music scene. In their upcoming tour, the band opens in their hometown of Hamilton, Ont. at the 2026 Juno Awards, then scales down their capacity, headlining at small clubs and bars around North America.

The band seems to be focusing on local and historically significant venues, rather than stadiums. Locations such as Lee's Palace in Toronto are a significant venue in the Canadian music scene, known to showcase many artists at the start of their careers.

When the Arkells come to Calgary on May 19, it will be the business's most well-known artist to date, opening

the possibility for other larger artists to consider more intimate venues for their concerts.

Pubs like Ship and Anchor and Dickens are also known to host small music events, which often showcase up-and-coming talent. Spotlighting the local atmosphere, music lovers are able to experience a more intimate and memorable night.

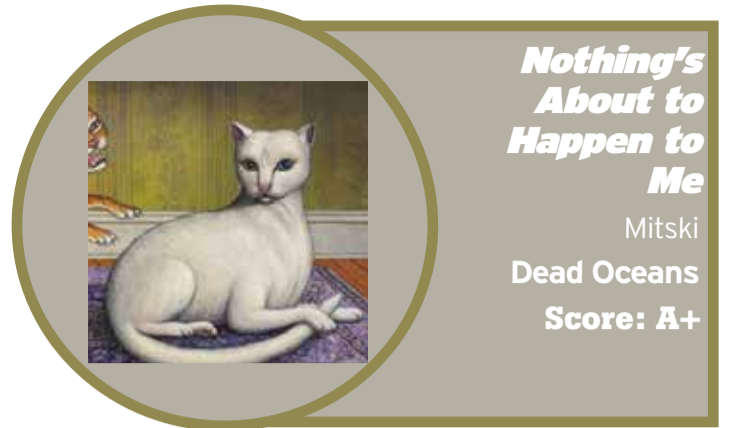
Apart from live music events, Chris Hewitt, owner of Dickens, aims to host and organise trivia, open mic nights and drag shows, branching out to diverse communities.

"I'm not particularly interested in offering only one thing to one group of people," he says. "I definitely like to see different communities circulate through and find a little home in whatever form that

Continues on Pg. 12



Local artists Daniel Caceres (left) and Zealous (right) playing Ship and Anchor's quarterly hip-hop showcase, Ship Hop. Photo by Trevor Hatter



American singer-songwriter Mitski is back with her eighth studio album, *Nothing's About to Happen to Me*. The record blends elements of Americana with bursts of synthonic pop, drawing listeners into a quietly chaotic emotional landscape. It explores themes of isolation, anxiety and inner reflection.

Across the record, Mitski adopts the perspective of a reclusive woman who finds a sense of freedom only within the confines of her own home.

This narrative thread first emerges through the album's lead single, "Where's My Phone?," released on Jan. 16. Its accompanying music video—based on the novel *We Have Always Lived in the Castle* by Shirley Jackson—further reinforces the album's atmosphere of neuroticism and loneliness.

Her dedication to character-driven songwriting continues to set her apart from other

artists. Rather than simply documenting her own personal experience, she uses those struggles as a way of building immersive perspectives, guiding the listener through the album's melancholic themes. The result is a collection of songs that feel both intimate and unsettling, balancing vulnerability with carefully crafted storytelling.

Nothing's About to Happen to Me stands as another strong addition to the discography that Mitski has been shaping since 2012. She has come out strong with a body of work that is defined by emotional honesty and a willingness to explore the quieter corners of human experience.

—Emma Voelpel



Harry Styles has made his grand return to music with his funk-adjacent record, *Kiss All the Time. Disco, Occasionally*. The album carves out a distinctive new lane for his solo career, embracing a funk-infused, electronic sound. While the record feels like a deliberate departure from his earlier work, it still retains his signature style.

The first taste of this record came on Jan. 22 when Styles released the lead single, "Aperture." The song has a distinct electronic sound that Styles had previously experimented with on *Harry's House*, which he completely delves into this time around.

Although the techno approach is a refreshing and unique take for Styles, it's apparent that this genre is restrictive for his range. The vocal range and versatility that Styles has proven to have is put on the back burner in order to further explore the more muted vocal performance.

With that being said, the album finds its strongest moments with quieter tracks like "Coming Up Roses" and "Paint By Numbers" that stand out as emotional anchors, allowing Styles to reconnect with the expressive and emotional delivery that contributes to his appeal. These slower, more intimate tracks provide balance against the rhythmic energy of the album's core.

Ultimately, *Kiss All the Time. Disco, Occasionally*, succeeds as an ambitious and stylistically interesting record, even if its experimentation occasionally comes at the expense of vocal versatility.

—Emma Voelpel

Continued from Pg. 11

may take.” Adding to the foundation of local gathering spaces in Calgary, Dickens has become a haven for different and niche communities to come together. Hewitt cites community building as being one of the establishment’s long-standing strengths.

“There are a lot of good people out there, and a lot of them come to Dickens,” he says. “You might find yourself a new pack, and you might find it where you least expect it.”

Supporting local businesses extends past just talking about them. K the Chosen, local artist and event host for music showcases like Ship Hop at the Ship and Anchor, explains how there is a lot more that goes into supporting businesses as an artist and organiser.

He emphasises the role of artists and industry professionals in supporting businesses not only through real purchases and engagement, but collaboration with others.

“I imagine if an artist blows up, the first thing they should be saying is, ‘this is the coffee I love to drink in the

morning,’ and that helps the coffee brand get out there,” K the Chosen explains. “It gets people more excited about local businesses.”

Supporting the local businesses that host these events goes hand in hand with supporting the local music scene in Calgary. As K the Chosen expresses, going to these events as a Calgarian is extremely important for the community, encouraging it to grow.

“The fact that you’re in a much smaller space, you can really connect with the audience,” he says, explaining how the flexibility of small venues also allows you to bend the rules and get creative with what and how you present your work.

He adds that “the bigger the venue gets, the more rules that they have.” So, while larger stages have an established brand, small businesses offer an adaptability for audiences and performers.

There is also an interconnectedness within the local venues as well, creating an ecosystem within itself.

As bigger venues look for artists, they may ask smaller venues who they recommend



Hip-hop artist Talib Kweli playing an electric set at Calgary’s Dickens. Photo by Shannon Johnston / @me_onlylouder

based on what they have seen from open mics. K the Chosen explains that this creates a pipeline for artists, where they can go from micro to small, and then to even bigger venues.

While venues like Ship and Anchor are known to host emerging artists as they get comfortable in front of a

crowd, venues like Dickens are known for the diversity in their events. And with a big name like Arkells touring these micro and small venues, it highlights the importance of these spaces and their ability to foster community and grow the music scene in the city.

“Go out and try new things.

That is one of the most difficult things that we have to try to express to people, because we have so many different things going on,” Hewitt says. “You never know where you might find your new home, and you never know what form it’s going to take.”



April 13 - 17

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Canada West teams face early exit

The best of the best in university hockey battle it out for the University Cup

Naomi Campbell

Staff Writer

From March 19 to 22, Canada's best men's university hockey teams came together to compete for the long-standing title of U SPORTS University Cup champions. Eight teams across three divisions have met before on common ground, with this year's tournament being held in Halifax. Two teams with high hopes heading into the tournament were the Canada West Champions, the University of Saskatchewan (UofS) Huskies and Canada West Silver Medalists, the Mount Royal University (MRU) Cougars.

Cougars legacy leaves its mark

On the first day of competition, fans saw MRU and the University of Windsor (UofW) face-off in the first quarterfinal game of the weekend. With both teams evenly matched as the fourth and fifth seeds, it was anyone's game. This is only the second ever appearance for MRU in program history, and after an early exit last

year, they came in with an eagerness to get to the top of the ranks.

Putting themselves down by one after the first period, even with a shot count lead, the Cougars put on the pressure. A few minutes into second period, third-year forward Tristan Zandee was able to put the puck past UofW goaltender Max Donoso, tying the game at one. Going into the third, UofW charged back with two goals 11 seconds apart, putting MRU down 3-1.

Alternate captain Connor Bouchard broke the lead by one on the power play, and fifth-year veteran Josh Tarzwell banked a third goal in the dying seconds of the game, but UofW was able to keep their one-goal lead, giving them the win and pushing on to the semi-finals.

With the quarterfinals not ending the way the team had planned, second-year forward Vaughn Watterodt exemplifies the challenges MRU had to overcome throughout the entire season. "This group handled

adversity all throughout the season. We kept belief in one another and trusted that in the end, we would be able to overcome our early-season struggles. Now is a time for reflection and appreciation for how far we came as a group," Watterodt says.

Fourth-year player Blake Stevenson was a part of the graduating class, marking his last game of university hockey.

"I think we truly defined what it meant to be a part of the men's hockey program at MRU. We all gave it everything we had for four or five years and never wavered," he says.

Stevenson says the impact of the graduating class serves as a legacy for the next group of young Cougar stars.

"Whether it was in the classroom or on the ice, I think the graduating class truly embodied everything we desired to be in our first years and maybe even more," says Stevenson. "I think we raised the standard for all the players coming in, and I hope they raise it even higher."

One more for the top dog

First-seeded UofS and eighth-seeded Halifax-based Saint Mary's University (SMU) faced off in the late game on March 19. UofS was the fan favourite after placing third in last year's University Cup. Second-year defenseman Logan Bairos notes that the pressure coming into this year's tournament was turned up a notch after winning bronze the season prior.

"We knew we had what it takes to win last year but fell short," Bairos says. "This left us with a sour taste in our mouths and gave us a greater desire to win. Also, with having many graduating players this year, there could have been a slight change in pressure because it was the last chance to win it for those teammates."

The SMU Huskies took the lead after three unanswered goals between the first and second period. Rookie star Connor Roulette finally broke the ice at the 15-minute

mark of period two. Only 15 seconds into the third period, Roulette banked a goal with assists from Chase Bertholet and Liam Keeler, breaking SMU's lead down to one goal.

With time not on UofS's side, something needed to change if they wanted to try and push the game to overtime, and Keeler did just that.

Landon Kosior and Chantz Petruic were able to get the puck to Keeler, allowing for a power-play goal to tie the game with less than three minutes left in regulation. With the game tied at three goals each, a 20-minute five-on-five overtime was underway. Unfortunately for the Canada West Champions, SMU was able to sneak past Nolan Maier with three minutes left in overtime, pushing themselves into the semi-finals against UofW.

Fifth-year student and UofS captain Gunner Kinniburgh has been through the ups and downs of the playoffs over his time with the Huskies. He acknowledges the gratitude he feels to be a part of the program, as well as the hurt of coming so close yet falling short. Kinniburgh nods his head to the standard set by experienced players on and off the ice, and hopes the younger generation carries it forward.

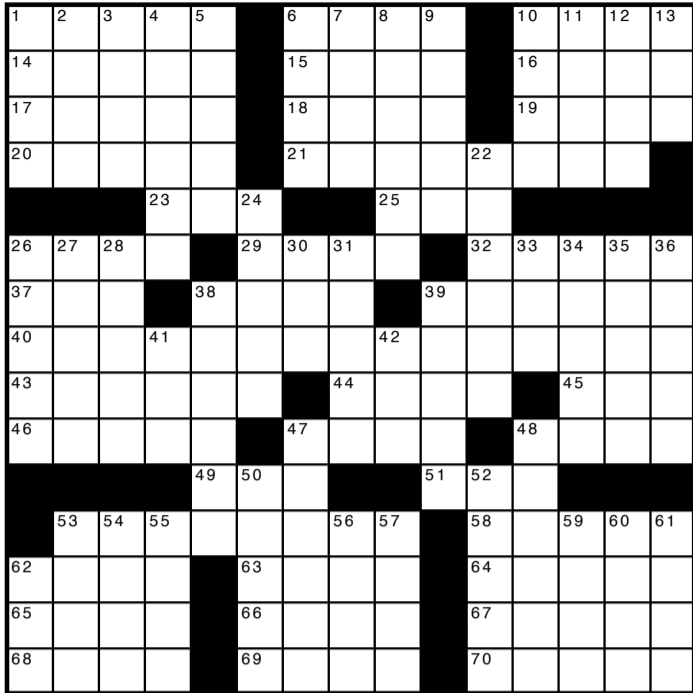
"As I reflect on my time with this program, I feel a lot of gratitude. What makes the University of Saskatchewan Huskies hockey program so amazing is the people who surround it," Kinniburgh says. "At the same time, it stings. We were so close, but came up just short."

At the end of the weekend, both teams made their way home with heavy hearts, especially the graduating seniors who played the final game of their university careers. For some, they plan to come back next year, using the loss as motivation to pave the way back to the national stage.



MRU's Justin Lies (center) and UofS's Josh Pillar (right) face off during the Canada West Finals. Both teams later saw their seasons come to an end at the U SPORTS University Cup. Photo by Adrian Shellard

REFLECTOR DIVERSIONS



Crossword puzzles provided by BestCrosswords.com (<https://www.bestcrosswords.com>). Used with permission.

ACROSS

- 1- Imitating
- 6- Indonesian island
- 10- PDQ
- 14- Chocolate bean
- 15- Word of woe

- 16- Abdul-Jabbar's alma mater
- 17- Freshwater fish
- 18- Auto loan figs.
- 19- Raised platform
- 20- Artist Max

- 21- Small parrot
- 23- Break bread
- 25- Be under the weather
- 26- "Waterloo" group
- 29- Trick
- 32- Plumed heron
- 37- Miler Sebastian
- 38- Walking stick
- 39- With a level head
- 40- Like afterschool activities
- 43- Go to bed
- 44- The two
- 45- From ___ Z
- 46- Carplike fish
- 47- Caribbean dance music
- 48- Storm centers
- 49- Common street name
- 51- Confederate soldier
- 53- Polled
- 58- Receded
- 62- Bang-up
- 63- Et ___
- 64- Gaucho's rope
- 65- Sign of the future
- 66- Range: Abbr.
- 67- Lay to rest
- 68- ___ majeste
- 69- Pops a question
- 70- Excrete from the body

DOWN

- 1- Entr' ___
- 2- Henry VIII's last wife
- 3- Screen symbol
- 4- Sickness at the stomach
- 5- Must, informally
- 6- Ancient Semitic for "Lord"
- 7- Purina competitor
- 8- Immature insects
- 9- Japanese immigrant
- 10- BMW competitor
- 11- Sign of injury
- 12- Put ___ on it!
- 13- Faux ___
- 22- Remove the color from
- 24- Hint
- 26- Biting
- 27- Prizefighter
- 28- Davis or Midler
- 30- Burma's first prime minister
- 31- ___-Croatian
- 33- African antelope
- 34- Cooperative race
- 35- Bring joy
- 36- Newbies
- 38- Bizet's opera
- 39- Ravi Shankar's instrument
- 41- Long, narrow inlet

- 42- Fabled bird
- 47- Refines, as ore
- 48- Refluent
- 50- Alpaca's cousin
- 52- So spooky as to be frightening
- 53- ___ on the Range
- 54- Some bills
- 55- Jeweler Lalique
- 56- Gravitare
- 57- Talk back to
- 59- De-intensify
- 60- French summers
- 61- Pub projectile
- 62- "You've got mail" co.



SUDOKU

Easy

5	4			7	6	1	8
7							2
		6	1	2	4	7	3
		4	8			9	
2				3			1
		8			1	3	
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	5						6
	2	9	7	6			1
							3

Medium

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		8					4
1				2	9		5
			5	6			

Hard

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		8			9		2
			1			6	8
2							3
	6		9		4		5
	9						6
6		4			8		
	3		2			8	
					7		9

WORD SEARCH

Spring Cleaning

X H N E B M G W R E C Y C L E S C R U B
 S P O N G E S W E E P L A U N D R Y F B
 D U S T A V S T O V E M P T Y B G X C R
 S Q U E E G E E U J C H O R E S V Y D A
 J B Q S H O W E R M I R R O R S K N H D
 K M F I L E G Z F B B F E C L E A N S E
 M A W H U T K J A T T I C O S O A P D O
 J D O N A T E D E C L U T T E R Y Z S E
 L I N E N B L V J C W U D O W N S I Z E
 E Z T W D C O M P A R T M E N T P B X J
 W B U G S I N K S Z T O I L E T A B P F
 F A N S B I N S T A Z C L E A N B N U E
 P S A N I T I Z E P X C Y O F L O O R S
 S W A S H O Z D R E A R R A N G E K X K
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 S P R I N G H O U S E W O R K M O P M W
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 G V E G Z S T O R E S T E A M D V S B D
 O R G A N I Z E H N D I S C A R D A R X

- ATTIC
- BINS
- CEILINGS
- CHORES
- CLEAN
- CLEANSE
- COMPARTMENT
- DECLUTTER
- DISCARD
- DONATE
- DOWNSIZE
- DUST
- EMPTY
- FANS
- FILE
- FLOORS
- HOUSEWORK
- LAUNDRY
- LINEN
- MOP
- ORGANIZE
- POLISH
- REARRANGE
- RECYCLE
- SANITIZE
- SCRUB
- SHOWER
- SINKS
- SOAP
- SPONGE
- SPRING
- SQUEEGEE
- STEAM
- STORAGE
- STORE
- STOVE
- STRAIGHTEN
- SWEEP
- WASH
- WAX
- WINDOWS

A new era of Canadian baseball in 2026

What's in store for Canada with the new MLB season?

Julia Finot

Sports Editor Elect

The start of the 2026 Major League Baseball (MLB) season marks a new era for Canadian baseball.

After the Toronto Blue Jays' historic yet heartbreaking loss in the World Series and Team Canada's unexpected success at the World Baseball Classic (WBC), baseball has captured the attention of the nation.

Canada first rallied behind the Blue Jays during their World Series run. The moment united longtime baseball fans and drew in new supporters, all embracing a shared sense of national pride.

It marked the franchise's first appearance in the Fall Classic since its 1993 championship season. While the outcome fell short of expectations, fan support remained strong.

This energy carried into the preseason when Canada competed in the WBC.

Whether it was the World Series or the WBC, a new wave of fandom emerged across Canada. Now more than ever, the national spotlight is on baseball.

Oh, Canada

For the first time, Canada advanced to the quarterfinals of the WBC.

Held every three years, the tournament features 20 countries competing for the title of baseball's best.

Canada finished atop their pool with a record of 3-1, defeating Cuba, Puerto Rico and Colombia.

Led by Seattle Mariners first baseman and Mississauga, Ont., native Josh Naylor, the Canadian team delivered an outstanding performance with a batting average of .241 and a .335 on-base percentage.

Building momentum from the Blue Jays' World Series run, Canadian fans once again rallied behind their team, showing strong support



Outside of Rogers Centre in Toronto after being swept by the Seattle Mariners in the Wild Card Series in 2022.

Photo courtesy of Hugo Coulbouée / Unsplash

on the international stage.

Beyond results, the tournament highlighted Canada's growing strength in player development.

While Canada has not been traditionally viewed as a baseball country, this year's WBC showed that Canada is more than just a hockey nation.

"To see the boys again and be a part of this, represent the Maple Leaf, it's always an honour to be out here," Baltimore Orioles outfielder Tyler O'Neill told Sportsnet after the WBC. "We came further than we ever have in the past and just wish we made it even further than that."

A new swing at things

Coming off a World Series appearance, the Blue Jays enter the 2026 season ready to compete.

Despite losing several key players, they made significant additions, creating what could be a deeper and more balanced lineup than before.

The Blue Jays parted ways with starting pitcher Chris Bassitt, relievers Genesis Cabrera and Seranthony Dominguez and infielder Joey Loperfido.

The most notable departure was infielder Bo Bichette. Bichette was drafted by the Jays back in 2016 and has been a cornerstone of the batting order since his debut in 2019.

After weeks of speculation and reports, he signed with the New York Mets as a free agent.

While his offensive production and signature 'Bo Flow' will be missed, the Blue Jays have retooled their infield with an emphasis on defensive consistency.

Toronto added pitchers Cody Ponce and Tyler Rogers, outfielder Jesus Sanchez, and infielder Kazuma Okamoto.

The headline acquisition was right-handed starting pitcher Dylan Cease.

The 30-year-old veteran debuted in the league back in 2019 and holds an ERA of 3.88 in 188 games. He will be a key addition to the Jays' rotation.

The Blue Jays also re-signed starting pitchers Shane Bieber and Max Scherzer.

To begin the season, the Jays will be missing some key arms in their starting rotation. Trey Yesavage, Jose

Berrios and Bieber all started the season on the injured list. Even so, Toronto's rotation remains strong.

With Scherzer, Cease, Ponce, Eric Lauer and Kevin Gausman as the starting rotation to open the season, the Blue Jays are positioned to remain competitive.

The 2026 season signals more than just a new campaign—it reflects a growing shift in Canadian sports culture.

With renewed national interest and success on both the professional and international stage, baseball is carving out a larger place in Canada's sporting identity.



5 points recorded by Cole Caufield, scoring a hat trick and 2 assists in the 7-3 win for the Montreal Canadiens against the New York Islanders

16 saves made by MRU Cougars fifth year goaltender Shane Farkas at his second appearance at the U SPORTS University Cup in Halifax, where MRU lost 4-3

2 goals scored by University of Saskatchewan rookie Connor Roulette, at the U SPORTS University Cup in Halifax, where UofS lost 4-3 in overtime

4 points for UBC women's hockey rookie Ilona Markova, with 2 goals and 2 assists, at the U SPORTS University Cup, where UBC won 7-2

How geopolitics are reshaping international sports

What happens if politics overshadows the next World Cup?

Julia Finot

Sports Editor Elect



The conflict between the U.S. and Iran is creating tension over America's involvement in the 2026 FIFA World Cup. Photo courtesy of Jannik /

Unsplash

Geopolitical conflicts have always shaped international sports, but inconsistent enforcement and rising global tensions are putting sporting events under increasing pressure.

Critics are raising questions about fairness, safety and the role sports play as a unifying force ahead of the FIFA World Cup.

The Iranian government recently raised concerns about its men's national soccer team competing in the U.S. during the World Cup. The country has expressed interest in competing as a co-host with Canada or Mexico as an alternative, in protest of American power.

"We will boycott America, but we will not boycott the World Cup," said Mehdi Taj, the president of the Football Federation Islamic Republic of Iran, to Fars News Agency.

Iran's position has raised questions about how global conflict affects sports and how international competition really is.

Global tension

The international stage is no stranger to threats and safety concerns.

Between fan security,

political protests and the risk of terrorism, sporting events are often targets because of their global visibility.

At the 2026 Milano Cortina Olympics, officials worried about cyberattacks, lone-actor terrorist attacks and political protests. Although no severe attack occurred on Italian soil, other games have not been as fortunate.

The most notable example was the Munich Massacre during the 1972 Olympics.

Since then, threats have persisted. In 1998, members of the Algerian Armed Islamic Group attempted to bomb French stadiums and hotels during the World Cup.

Looking ahead to the 2026 World Cup, officials have warned security organisations of potential extremist acts linked to the ongoing conflict between the U.S. and Iran. Some analysts have speculated as to whether Iran will take retaliatory action during the tournament.

"Local government, local law enforcement, will certainly have their hands full," said Democratic politician Nellie Pou to Fox News.

Officials have also

announced that federal agencies, including Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), will play a significant role in host cities.

This isn't new

Countries involved in war or diplomatic conflicts have long been excluded from international sport.

At the 1920 Summer Olympics in Belgium, several nations—Austria, Germany, Hungary, Bulgaria and Turkey—were all banned following the First World War.

Germany and Japan were again excluded from international competition following the Second World War.

From 1964 to 1992, South Africa was banned from global sport due to ongoing racial segregation known as apartheid.

Most recently, Russia and Belarus have been banned from many competitions after the invasion of Ukraine, including events governed by the International Olympic Committee (IOC), FIFA, the International Ice Hockey Federation and World Rugby.

Other nations—

Afghanistan, Chad, Pakistan and Zimbabwe—have also faced suspension in several tournaments.

The double standard

These decisions have raised broader questions about consistency in international sporting events.

Critics have argued that if nations such as Russia are banned due to geopolitical actions, similar consequences should apply to other countries that have engaged in international conflict.

The U.S. has broken the Olympic Truce by engaging in conflict with Iran only six days after the Milano Cortina games ended. The truce establishes a peaceful period seven days prior to, throughout and seven days after an Olympic Games.

In the past, countries that have broken the truce have been condemned and have had their athletes suspended from international competition.

This isn't the first time the Americans have been called to not participate in an international competition. Before the 2026 Games, the

IOC rejected requests to ban the U.S. from competing after its military intervention in Venezuela.

"The ability to bring athletes together, no matter where they come from, is fundamental to the future of values-based, truly global sport, which can give hope to the world," the IOC said in a statement to Fox News. "For this reason, the IOC cannot involve itself directly in political matters or conflicts between countries, as these fall outside our remit. This is the realm of politics."

Still, the debate remains.

Can sports still unify the world?

Sports are known to be something that brings people together. No matter race, gender or religion, everyone is able to get together and cheer for the team they love.

As global tensions rise, that ideal is being tested.

With the FIFA World Cup approaching, concerns are extending beyond the pitch.

Sports have always reflected the world around them, and right now, the world appears to be divided.