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Politicians and students gather at MRU

Julie Patton
News Editor

On Jan. 25, students and local politicians—including Mayor Jyoti Gondek—gathered at the Council Chambers located in Mount Royal University’s (MRU) Wyckham House.

Organized by Prabhjit Grewal, VP of External at the Students Association of MRU (SAMRU), Student Connect provided students with the opportunity to connect with politicians and explore the possibilities of entering the field as well as air concerns surrounding topics in local government.

Janet Eremenko, an MLA for the Calgary-Currie district and critic for Mental Health and Addictions, attended the event as a way to connect with the youth in her district.

“Just think it’s a really wonderful opportunity to break down some of those barriers and connect with folks on issues that matter most to them,” she said. “I never want to presuppose what those are going to be. The only way we can hear about those is by coming in and having some frank and candid conversations.”

Eremenko said that part of breaking down barriers is helping students realize that there is a place in politics for them.

“When I was in university, I didn’t think that there was a place in politics for me because I didn’t really see people like me. I didn’t really know if they had the same background that I did. I didn’t have special connections or a well connected family… So, I didn’t think that there was space for me. We’ve really got a responsibility to try to break some of that down.”

A chance to share your voice

Maddox Nelles, a Social Work major minoring in Law and Governance, attended Student Connect to gain a better understanding of how local politicians are representing student interests.

“Students are facing a lot of issues right now; affordability, textbook costs, housing. It’s a really big deal for a lot of us, and we vote for government.”

Nelles had the opportunity to speak with Eremenko on the topic of mental health and air his concerns as well as open the door to speak further on the topic in the future.

“It’s really nice to see that everyone is here listening to students, having respectful conversations, and getting their voices heard,” he said.

Visit from the Mayor

The honourable guest of the evening was Mayor Jyoti Gondek who arrived midway through the event. On a tight schedule of engagements, Gondek attended Student Connect for around 30 minutes where she spent every minute engaged in conversation with students.

“They’ve been able to provide some really good insight into what they’re seeing coming out of city hall and at the City of Calgary,” she said.

“We talked about whether the U-Pass is an efficient system or if the frequency of Max BRT routes is enough for students. If I’m not out here, chatting with folks about what their lived experiences are, then the decisions I make are not going to be as informed as they should be.”

For students who were unable to attend the event, Gondek advises them to speak at public hearings to have their voices heard. She recalled a two and a half day committee meeting from September 2023 where 183 Calgarians spoke on the issue of housing.

“We had a lot of students coming out and talking about their lived experiences, and we all took a lot away from that,” she said. “You can send an email, you can drop us a note through the official channels, but the power of student voice at public hearings is incredible.”

Nelles remarked how exciting it was to have an audience with the mayor and appreciated how receptive she was during the event.

“One of my colleagues, Kyle Joseph, brought up transportation and the issue of buses and the level of detail that she was able to go into on her thoughts, she clearly knows how it affects students and cares about that.”

Successful student connections

Grewal said they were happy with the turn out of Student Connect. The event had not been held since 2019 where around four or six politicians would attend. This year, Grewal reported a total of 14 politicians at the event.

Additionally, they said the large turnout of students provided hope for the future of young people in politics.

“It makes me very hopeful for the future of this province that more students are getting engaged in politics, more students are willing to learn about politics and actually come to these events,” they said.

Grewal hopes to host the event again next year, saying the biggest change to make will be booking a bigger venue.

Mayor Gondek said she thoroughly enjoyed the event and hopes to attend another in the future.

“The pandemic robbed us of opportunities like this. I think it’s brilliant that you’ve got all kinds of elected officials here, and all kinds of student leaders as well as students. That’s the kind of thing we need more of so I’ll absolutely come back.”

On Jan. 25, students and local politicians gathered at MRU for Student Connect. Photo by Julie Patton

Janet Eremenko chats with student Maddox Nelles at Student Connect on Jan. 25. Photo by Julie Patton
MRU’s Old Library: 10 years and 60M in the making

Liam Rockliffe, Staff Writer & Julie Patton, News Editor

Since the successful building of the Riddell Library and Learning Centre in 2017, Mount Royal University’s (MRU) original library space has been left a husk of its former self. The 4,700 square metre space has the possibility of endless utility, with space for two science labs, student services, and a general “hang-out” for students to rest and converse. There are a million things that could fit into the two-story space, which is why it’s important that what ever finally lands in the space fits the needs (and wants) of the university’s population.

At a price point of $60 million, construction on a project of this magnitude cannot be rushed. The plans for renovating the space known as the G-Wing started in the “Campus Master Plan” in 2016, slightly before the opening of the new library. However, at the rate of the progress, it is likely construction won’t finish until 2026.

Project management

The project is managed by Colliers Project Managers, a prestigious management company which has made its name known worldwide. Construction is being completed by Stuart Olson Construction Ltd, the same company the University of Calgary used for the construction of MacKinnie Tower. Lastly, the DIALOG architecture firm is in charge of architecture. All of these companies won the opportunity to work on the G-Wing Renovation by a bid as well as undergoing several interviews ensuring they were the “right” people for the job. Also leading the project are several representatives from the university’s faculty and the Student Association of MRU (SAMRU) – ensuring that the G-Wing ends up being perfect for the school.

Justin Trotta, the manager of capital construction in MRU’s facilities management department, said the project is currently in the early design stage. He said the phase is broken into schematic design, design development, and construction drawings. The schematic design progresses with high-level thinking on the purpose of the space, along with placeholder layouts. The construction drawings show the inner workings of the space, such as where pipes and electrical sockets go.

The time frame of the G-Wing renovation has been reported as upsetting by students, but Trotta assures them this is the typical construction design process. “In big capital projects like (the G-Wing), it is more in-depth and takes a long time to get everything right.” He adds the reason for the lengthy timeline is to ensure that the library space will be perfect for everyone, for years to come.

What’s with all the holes?

Trotta said Stuart Olson is a perfect fit for the project as they have tons of experience working within a living university campus, and Colliers brings the resources required to manage the project. The library was open during the pandemic before construction and demo, but closed its doors officially in 2022.

As the official construction date nears, Trotta said it is important to do sampling and investigative demolition as well as complete the proper testing required for engineering. Currently, large excavated holes scatter the library as the team completes tests for asbestos. A designated hazmat team is completing the tests, ensuring the proper precautions are in place should there be any asbestos or hazards.

When construction starts in March of 2025, all the tests and safety steps should be complete.

Although students wish the library was open for more study space, Trotta said having the G-Wing fully free of students allows the design process to flourish as the project team can get a full lay of the land. Additionally, there was a clogged sanitary line leak in G100 which posed a risk and furthered the need to keep civilians out.

Funding

The renovation is funded through the Taylor Foundation at $60 million with additional support from the Government of Alberta. The project is also grouped in with the W-Wing project, which was renovated with four new classrooms in the summer of 2022.

Trotta acts as a project manager for the construction but more so holds an owner’s representative role. “The way we are designing the G-Wing is wholly student first. Study spaces and resources are spread throughout the school, and the G-Wing creates an opportunity to bring these services together,” he said. “It means to be a gathering spot for all students to go to.”

The G-Wing has unlimited potential, and with the team that MRU has enlisted, the funds secured, and the immense time allotted, only time will tell what the future of the Old Library looks like.

Large holes scatter the Old Library as a special team tests for asbestos and other hazards. Photo by Liam Rockliffe
Class is in session: History with a Drag Queen comes to MRU

Bella Coco
Staff Writer

Grab your history books and prepare for the lesson of a lifetime, because History with a Drag Queen is coming to Mount Royal University (MRU) on Thursday, Feb. 8.

Karla Marx, a drag queen who uses her burlesque and comedic talents to teach history, is bringing her show to MRU’s pub, West Gate Social (WGS).

Marx was developed and is embodied by Victoria Bucholtz, a professor in the history department at MRU. With her riveting historical knowledge, Marx plans to educate the audience about the important ideologies and impacts made by fascism, and the role it plays with our current landscape of politics.

Bucholtz said that “Karla Marx, by doing these history lessons to be filled with comedic jokes and burlesque content. They will also be given the opportunity to tip performers as well.”

“We’re going to kind of show you a little bit of everything. So it is a full cabaret, but you’re also going to be learning. So it’s comedy, it’s cabaret, and it’s also educational,” Bucholtz said.

Doors at West Gate Social open at 6:30 pm and “class” begins at 7 pm. Students and attendees are encouraged to come early and grab a table. In the meantime, while attendees wait, WGS will be open to serve drinks and food off their menu.

“When we first came up with this idea for having Karla Marx perform on campus, we immediately thought of the West Gate Social because we wanted the event to happen in the student center, and Wyckham House is one of the locations on campus where students feel the most comfortable,” Mason shared.

With the recent events unfolding in Alberta’s political landscape, Mason defined the importance of History with a Drag Queen being performed and what it means for the queer and trans community and its allies: “To understand what’s happening right now with our government and [proposed] the anti-trans policies that were released over the last few days, then you have to understand the history of fascism in a global context.

Karla Marx is going to explain to all of us in a very fun and very performative way just how to make sense of our contemporary experiences of anti-trans movements and anti-trans politics.”

The event is to be hosted by QriTical, MRU’s newly founded research hub that aims to connect 2SLGBTQIA+ students, faculty, and staff at MRU through teaching, events, research, and community engagement.

According to Corinne Mason, one of the co-founders and co-leads of QriTical, History with a Drag Queen has been around as a YouTube series and live series for quite some time, but this will be the first time Marx will debut her show at MRU.

“While I was doing my PhD at the University of Calgary, I got a couple opportunities to teach some classes as a grad student and I loved connecting with students. So that’s kind of really where my passion for teaching started,” Bucholtz said.

Why learn history with a drag queen

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“The most exciting thing for me is to really have students be able to see the art of drag be paired with education, and so often when we think about going into perhaps history classrooms or, you know, in other classrooms on our campus, we sometimes think about those spaces as not super fun,” Mason said.

At the beginning of the pandemic, Bucholtz did exactly that. She made learning about history fun by creating the online web series, History with a Drag Queen.

“The web series turned into people asking me to do a live show when we got out of the pandemic,” Bucholtz said. “So now I’ve been doing that for over a year now. Then the amazing Corinne Mason asked me to do a show on campus. So I said, ‘Sure, why not?”

Another crucial part of the show is highlighting queer and trans histories.

“People may think that there might not be something, especially as queer and trans people, that there might not be history lessons that are relevant to us in our lives and in our histories,” Mason said.

“Karla Marx, by doing these performances of History with a Drag Queen, shows just how essential drag artists are to our communities, to storytelling, to education, and to holding up our histories. I think there’s actually nobody better to teach history than a drag queen,” Mason said.

Bucholtz said that attendees can expect their history lesson to be filled with comedic jokes and burlesque content. They will also be given the opportunity to tip performers as well.

“We’re going to kind of show you a little bit of everything. So it is a full cabaret, but you’re also going to be learning. So it’s comedy, it’s cabaret, and it’s also educational,” Bucholtz said.

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Do we need a detox from diet culture?

Mia Smith
Contributor

Detox culture has been an issue in society for decades. But are these juicing cleanses real? Or are they just juicing the people that are taking them?

Celebrities such as Gwyneth Paltrow, Katy Perry and many others have sworn by these fast ‘effective’ cleanses. But these cleanses are doing more harm than good for many people.

These fad detox and body cleanses have been and continue to be a major source of false information for young people everywhere.

By definition, detox culture promotes calorie restriction and limits food intake. Both of which can—if done in a not health conscious way—lead to different types of disordered eating.

I recently spoke to Timothy Caulfield, author of Is Gwyneth Paltrow Wrong about Everything?

Within his research, Caulfield underwent the “Clean Cleanse” 21-day detox program made by Gwyneth Paltrow.

The marketing for these cleanses claims that they may “reset your system” and “remove toxins,” yet there is no proof at all for any of those claims.

He goes on to say that this “Clean Cleanse” in which he took part was indeed a crash diet—as are most cleanses Caulfield revealed.

During his time with the cleanse he said his mood drastically changed, his friends and family even started saying he was miserable to be around—this is in addition to other symptoms such as bad breath. It slowly became real to Caulfield that this was not an enjoyable experience.

Caulfield did state that he did lose drastic weight during his time with the cleanse—only to gain it all back in the following weeks.

There is a psychological toll that people tend to take when beginning these crash diets. They are marketed to feel like, and genuinely believe that they are doing something good for themselves. Caulfield states that when these “cleanses” come to an end, you feel like you have accomplished something. They market using “pseudoscience and false promises.”

The rise of social media has shifted the game in terms of diet and detox culture. The rise of body positive influencers has increased drastically. But, so has the rise of misinformation.

Social media and online platforms are growing worse and worse by the day in the way they are spreading false information and to an increasingly younger audience.

Is social media making detox and diet culture better or worse?

The topic of social media is a broad one. Although the idea of body positivity across platforms has improved over the years, there is still toxic misinformation getting thrown around consistently.

An example of a good personality online is a big influencer across TikTok and Instagram right now—Spencer Barbosa. She has been very open about her journey with self love and growing to love the body in which she was given.

Barbosa has opened up about the fact that her first large platform video was posted when she was 16-years-old and features her drinking apple cider vinegar everyday as a method of weight loss. She documents her journey throughout.

She has since become a large advocate for self-love to her 1.8 million followers on Instagram and 9.8 million followers on TikTok.

“You do not exist to lose weight. You were not born with your insecurities, you were taught them,” Barbosa said in a TikTok video posted on Jan. 19.

Social media: the good, the bad and the ugly

Although celebrity detox trends continue to decrease in today’s digital age, the rise of online videos and posts is underway. People are consistently posting ‘what I eat in a day to lose weight,’ videos.

These are doing more harm than good. Many times when influencers are posting these videos they have absolutely no scientific evidence to back that these are effective. Many times they are not eating enough and then spreading that as an effective weight loss tool to a large audience.

I also spoke to University of Calgary Communications student, Darci Miller, about the body toxicity that has been spread online.

“Conversation surrounding bodies and diets have become so normalized and prominent on social media that it could potentially be used as a positive but also can lead to an enhanced spiral for someone who is already suffering from disordered eating,” said Miller.

Making the right decision for you

When it comes to diet, focus on the science informed basics. Before people attempt a diet or “cleanse” it is key that the appropriate research is done. You could be doing more harm than good to your body.

“Don’t be fooled by those magical promises, it is about a healthy and sustainable diet that works for you,” emphasized Caulfield.

In Caulfield’s article he explained that science is the only source you can trust when it comes to choosing a diet, you need scientific evidence to back up your decision on what best suits you.

The only person who can decide the right diet that works for you is yourself.
The quest for finding love online is hard, but not impossible

Bella Coco
Staff Writer

In a digital world run by social media and swiping right and left, dating and finding love can be extremely overwhelming. What does love even look like online? How can someone know anyone’s intentions or genuine likes and dislikes through the screen? Do people really lie about their height and their expectations for love? Why do couples post each other on social media constantly? Is there a standard all couples should be hitting?

According to CNBC, 42 per cent of adults believe that dating apps make it easier to find a partner. However, a whopping 88 per cent of adults are disappointed by what they see on dating apps. More often than not, men tend to feel more insecure about the lack of messages or communication they receive on dating apps rather than women. All of these statistics can be overwhelming, and tend to create more questions than answers.

First and foremost, your standard for love and relationships should always be your own. Advice here and there from others is never necessarily bad, but your relationship is your own to handle and to set standards for. Couples who post each other during every waking moment on social media tend to conveniently leave out the hard parts of a relationship, and those hard parts are completely normal.

There seems to be a specific kind of pressure when it comes to posting your partner. What sort of bragging rights does someone get when they shove their relationship down our digital throats?
Answer? They don’t.

At least that’s what we all want to believe, because the only audience these couples seem to be advertising to are themselves. Maybe it’s for self-validation, or for the perfectly innocent desire to show off your partner. Whatever the reason may be, it seems to have set a precedent that in the digital age, an online couple is a worthy couple.

In dating apps, there is always the fear of Photoshop accidentally curating your perfect person or matching with someone who treats healthy communication like they magi’s. Is finding love hopeless in a digital age?
Well, not entirely.
For some, making the first move via keyboard and texts is a lot less intimidating. The wonderful world of texting can give people a chance to put thought and time into their responses when they communicate with the people they match up with. You can really think about what you want to say, and what kind of hypothetical tone you want your text to be veiled with. Do you want to be sexy, sweet, intelligent, witty, or cheerful? Great news! You can be anything you want with the help of some type bubbles and read receipts.

Finding the right platform can also make a huge difference in your quest for love.
Move over eHarmony, because Hinge, Tinder, and Bumble seemed to have paved the way for the newer generations of online dating. Tinder and Bumble share the same foundation when it comes to finding partners (swipe right for yes and left for no), whereas Hinge uses the tried and true ‘like’ button.

Online dating also immediately filters out anyone you may not be interested in with settings to help you decide what you are looking for. In one’s personal settings, they can decide their preference for a potential partner’s age, location radius, gender identity, and interests–to name a few.

When it comes to your own filter, you can get extremely specific about your hobbies, levels of commitment, your physical attributes, and your quirks. Often a dating app will give a user some prompts to further their personality onto a spotlight and give other potential partners more things to find in common.

Many websites, such as Courtly, preach that more genuine photos make a better profile and allow potential partners to see the real you shine. Photos are usually the first impression you give on dating apps to others.

While all of these aspects can seem overwhelming, they come in handy when you’re looking for love. Take it from me, the filters are your friend, not a foe.
Even more so, dating apps can make it easier to meet someone that shares the same community as you do. PinkNews shared that 80 per cent of 2SLGBTQIA+ individuals believe that dating apps benefit their community in a positive way by allowing them to connect with more people and become more comfortable with their own identities.

Coming from personal experience, I met my girlfriend on Hinge almost one year ago and we have not looked back since. Even though we are both from the same city, it became extremely clear that without a dating app connecting us, we most likely would have never crossed paths. While the photos and the swiping and the liking and the filtering can feel like a burden, the outcomes are not always fake and overedited. Sometimes the outcome can, surprisingly, be love.

Online dating apps may be the trick to finding love in a digital world. Photo courtesy of Wikimedia
How often do people remember that caffeine is a drug? In the context of coffee, many of us forget “drugs” negative connotations due to its sensationalised normalisation.

According to statistics on Made in CA, coffee, the world’s favourite beverage, keeps our country running as 71 per cent of Canadians drink coffee regularly (even more than tap water).

Clearly, the taste of coffee and the added benefits of caffeine consumption make it more popular than ever.

But those looking for alternate options to boost their energy that do not involve coffee, energy drinks, etc., may consider caffeine pills.

When I tell my friends that I take caffeine pills, I’m met with glaring eyes, furrowed eyebrows, and agape mouths telling me that I’m crazy, or that it’s not healthy for me, or that I’m going to die young.

Suddenly, the word “drug” immediately comes back into the context of caffeine whenever I mention the word “pill.” But not when I say “coffee?”

To this, I will rebut two of the significant arguments I’ve received and respond with accurate research to demystify the cloudiness around caffeine pill usage. Hopefully, all the coffee lovers’ mugs don’t all shatter at once.

“It’s not the same!”

Hold on. Most cups of coffee contain around 100-200 mg of coffee. The average adult should take a maximum of 400 mg, equating to approximately three to five cups of the world’s favourite beverage.

And most caffeine pills are sold at 200 mg of caffeine per pill, equating to two pills a day.

In the context of achieving attentiveness and energy with coffee, these two forms of consumption are equivalent. If anything, caffeine pills are much more effective at delivering the drug through your circulatory system than coffee, as the pill form is pure and small and can easily dissolve faster in your digestive system, as any pill could.

Now, if you’re looking for the actual taste of coffee, I would say that it is irrelevant in the debate of its effectiveness to caffeinate. We all know that caffeine pills do not have a taste; what matters is that they do their job.

If you desire the obscure scent of roasted beans in the morning or want to feel a smooth bitterness run through your throat (for whatever reason), try Mount Royal University’s tap water instead. Or just get decaf.

“It’s worse for your body!”

Mayo Clinic disagrees. Side effects of excessive consumption of caffeine (such as headaches, insomnia, irritability, and even muscle tremors) can become prevalent through an overconsumption of either coffee or pills. The side effects for both stay the same.

In fact, there are more benefits to your body when taking caffeine pills compared to coffee.

One of these benefits includes eliminating unnecessary additives to your coffee by just taking the pill form instead. “About two-thirds of coffee drinkers and one-third of tea drinkers add sugar in their coffee,” says Advanced Dentistry. And Health.com validates this by saying: “taking a pill avoids a sugar intake.”

A second added benefit to the pure pill form, compared to coffee, is the complete absence of poor digestion. If you are familiar with the uncomfortable murmurs and excretions that occur when drinking a hot cup o’ Joe, a large portion of that fact is due to the beverage’s acidity level. Healthline says, “Coffee contains many acids, such as chlorogenic acid and N-alkanoyl-5-hydroxytryptamide, which have been shown to increase stomach acid production. Stomach acid helps break down food so it can move through your gut.” They say that coffee acids paired with “common additives like milk, cream, sugar, or sweeteners (additives) may upset your stomach as well.”

Caffeine pills ignore both of these concerns, and recall makes it much easier to become attentive and energised in a shorter amount of time (with the right amount of consumption).

But I guess at the end of the day...

Everyone’s preferences for using caffeine are going to be different. Whether they pop the pill or swallow a hot serving, everyone is trying to achieve the same goal. They want to re-energise their life for a brief moment before starting their workday, finishing that last-minute essay, or even boosting their self-confidence.

What matters is that all caffeine users know the medically-revised advice and information provided for either form of caffeine, and that no one puts down the other solely based on their lack of knowledge of how the other method works.

At the end of the day, we’re all taking the same drug.
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Valid government-issued
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Find West Gate Social in Wyckham House, near West Gate
Lily Gladstone makes history as the first Indigenous woman to win a Golden Globe

Bella Coco
Staff Writer

On Jan. 7, Lily Gladstone made history after winning the Golden Globe for best actress in a motion picture—drama. This made Gladstone the first Indigenous woman to win best actress ever. After accepting the award, the actress began her acceptance speech in the Blackfeet language, which is an Algonquian language spoken by the Blackfeet and Niitsitapi people.

“Hello my relatives,” Gladstone opened in Blackfeet. “My name is Eagle Woman. I have arrived here from the Blackfoot Confederacy. I love you all.”

Gladstone, 37, starred in the 2023 film Killers of the Flower Moon, where she played Mollie Burkhart, an Osage woman who lived in 1920s Oklahoma. During the filming of Killers of the Flower Moon, Gladstone took classes for four months to construct sentences in Osage.

“It’s so inspiring to see all of these people working to preserve and revitalize this language,” Gladstone told Vogue. “I’ve lost it now, but by the time I left the set, I was starting to be able to construct my own sentences in Osage. It’s funny because that’s so much further than where I am with the Blackfeet language, even though I grew up hearing bits and pieces of it.”

Even during her acceptance speech, Gladstone joked a bit of fun at not being fluent in Blackfeet, but despite it all, her community was one that nurtured her and allowed her to grow.

“I just spoke a bit of the Blackfeet language,” Gladstone said in her speech. “A beautiful community, a nation that raised me, that encouraged me to keep going, keep doing this. I’m so grateful that I can speak even a little bit of my language, which I’m not fluent in, up here, because in this business Native actors used to speak their lines in English and then the sound mixers would run them backwards to accomplish Native languages on camera.”

In Killers of the Flower Moon, Gladstone improvised a few of her lines and spoke in Osage rather than English. The improvisation was praised by critics and viewers, and many said it made the film and Gladstone’s character more genuine.

Gladstone went on to say that her Golden Globes win was a historic one, and a win that did not solely belong to her.

“I’m holding it right now. I’m holding it with all my beautiful sisters in the film at this table over here and my mother, Tantoo Cardinal, standing on all of your shoulders. Thank you,” Gladstone tearfully said.

The actress went on to thank Martin Scorsese, Leonardo DiCaprio and Robert De Niro for changing things in the industry and for being allies to Indigenous communities.

“This is for every little rez kid, every little urban kid, every little Native kid out there who has a dream, who is seeing themselves represented in our stories told by ourselves in our own words with tremendous allies and tremendous trust from within each other,” Gladstone concluded.

Many Indigenous communities also felt the victory alongside Gladstone.

“I was beyond thrilled for her and I knew in that moment that it would be history-making,” she said. “The win was bigger than all of us. I was so proud of her,” Michelle Thrush, a Mohkinstsis Cree actress told Global.

Tori McMillan, director of the Mount Royal University Iniskim Centre, also felt the win for Gladstone was a historic one, and a win that did not solely belong to her.

“Lily’s performance is an inspiration for Indigenous youth who aspire to tell their stories through the creative arts. Her winning a Golden Globe for best actress in a drama motion picture, along with the film being nominated for an Academy Award for Best Picture, is a reminder that Indigenous talent is abundant and that there are stories to tell that have both critical and commercial appeal. Hearing her introduce herself in Blackfoot at the awards ceremony was a powerful moment to witness, and it brings hope to those who dream of working in Hollywood,” McMillan says.

In addition to her historic win at the Golden Globes, Gladstone was also nominated for best actress at this year’s 96th Academy Awards, which is history in itself. The Academy Awards are expected to air on March 10.

Chinook Blast
Check out the best of Calgary’s art, music, theatre, sport and recreation from Feb. 2-19! This festival will be spread out through the downtown core. Find more information by simply looking up Chinook Blast.

YYC Chocolate Fest
From Feb. 1-29, select Calgary cafes, restaurants, and chocolatiers will compete for titles like Best and Most Creative Hot Chocolate. Find the list of contenders on the YYC Hot Chocolate Fest website.

Laugh Loft at The Attic
Experience Calgary’s newest stand-up comedy show, Laugh Loft, every Sunday at 7:30 PM in Inglewood’s The Attic. Tickets: $6 advance, $10 at the door. 18+ only.

The Peacock Season Play
See “The Peacock Season” at the Pumphouse Theatre from Feb. 2-17. Clarke and Cora Mariner, contemplate love, wealth, and resort to comically murderous plans. Visit the Morpheus Theatre website for more details.
Love is in the air at Slow Burn Books

Daria Orth
Contributor

What makes this indie bookstore so iconic? While any bookstore is a paradise of literature all on its own, Slow Burn Books is a hopeless romantic’s heaven, with different kinds of love stories in every corner of the space.

This little bookshop located in Marda Loop, is perfect for passionate romance readers. It could be a potential next date or a gift stop for Valentine’s Day.

From following the latest and greatest trends on 'BookTok,' Slow Burn Books offers a wide selection of romance genres. The shop has a book for everyone depending on their type of preferred story content.

The shop layout is a cozy, feminine setup displaying various shelves that house a stunning collection of dark romance, sports romance, contemporary romance, fantasy romance, and anything else the heart desires.

The gaps between the shelves are decorated with cute book nook chairs, small plants, and fun merchandise such as signs, tote bags, mugs, and crew necks. It sets the perfect atmosphere to curl up with a book and a cup of coffee. In other words, a recipe for pure bliss.

Nicola and Shannon MacNaughton, the store owners, are two sisters with a mission of growing the book community beyond the heavy presence it has online. While the community on TikTok or rather 'BookTok' keeps expanding, Nicola wanted to create a safe space in real time where that energy can be replicated with in-person connections.

Romanticizing life has a next-level meaning with being able to walk into an all-romance bookstore and smell the fresh scent of books waiting to be read. The small business owners work hard to constantly keep up with the high-selling demand of eager readers ready to come back for more.

Perfect for a rainy day, or a day off looking for something to do, the shop awaits the hearts of those who can’t get enough of poetically charming works of art.
Beats and bars

From OG’s to newcomers, here are the releases hip-hop fans should be most excited for

Zafir Nagji
Staff Writer

The modern era of music has been unquestionably dominated by hip-hop. According to a Luminate report, rap was the most streamed genre of music in the United States, accounting for just over 25 per cent of all on-demand music streams and equating to 277 million units earned. Some of the biggest names in this sect of the music industry include Drake, Nicki Minaj, Travis Scott, and Gunna, all of whom spent significant amounts of time in the Billboard Top 100 for their 2023 projects.

This year is set to build on the precedent that 2023 set, with the “OG’s” of the game making their way back into the industry. Here are some of the projects lovers of the genre should be looking forward to in 2024.

January already gave us some amazing albums to tune into, including Teezo Touchdown’s How Do You Sleep At Night?, Benny the Butcher’s Everybody Can’t Go, and Joey Bada$$’s Passports and Suitcases, to name a few. 21 Savage also contributed to January’s music selection with his immensely acclaimed album, American Dream, along with Kid Cudi and his highly touted project, INSANO.

However, the release that stood out the most came from one of rap’s oldest and most infamous names, The Game, whose project, titled Paisley Dreams, brought the sounds of the two decades he dominated in, the 90’s

Continues on Pg. 12

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In this album, Cudi sounds a lot happier and upbeat compared to his earlier tracks, which was a notable switch-up. His hums and harmonies add an ethereal vibe, like in “FUNKY WIZARD FLEX.” He gave us something different, and through that, showed a versatile rapper with this fun listen of an album.

—Jillian Zack

Big Sigh
Marika Hackman
Chrysalis Records Limited
Score: A-

Big Sigh released on Jan. 12, 2024, is a somber and down-tuned album, mixed with some uplifting electric beats.

With instrumentals that are often associated with melancholy, it seemed as if Hackman played everything apart from string and bass. The slow musicality and tempo mixed with electric beats like in “Vitamins” pairs beautifully together, the high build-ups and beat drops are moving.

“Slime” is another honorable mention, a moody guitar-ballad. A sigh can be interpreted as taking a moment to reflect back, Hackman’s music dives deep into personal relations, as this is more in-tune with feelings and emotions.

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Deadline to apply is
March 1st at 4:30 pm.

For more information, and to apply, visit samru.ca/SGB.
Super Bowl 58: The Kingdom vs. The Faithful II

Ethan Dalton
Contributor

Well, here we are once again. This Super Bowl Sunday, Kyle Shanahan’s San Francisco 49ers are poised to once again take on Patrick Mahomes’ Kansas City Chiefs for the right to hoist the Lombardi trophy in Las Vegas, Nevada on Feb. 11.

Much like Super Bowl 54, just a few short years ago, this game should be an absolute battle from start to finish. Both teams possess elite defences, capable of shutting down some of the most efficient offences across the NFL, along with generationally talented players on offense. The coaching storylines are significant as well, with Chiefs’ head coach Andy Reid looking to secure his third ring and cement the Chiefs as a dynasty with arguably the greatest five-year stretch in NFL history, should they win. Meanwhile, 49ers head coach Kyle Shanahan is looking to right the ship with his juggernaut of a roster after enduring multiple Super Bowl losses, with Atlanta and more recently San Francisco. This game will be one that should be highly entertaining, with lots of big plays, and should come down to the wire.

Let’s take a closer look at the representative of the AFC; the Kansas City Chiefs. For the fourth time in five years, Patrick Mahomes has once again won his division and earned his way back into another opportunity to add a ring to his hall-of-fame resume. Many thought the Chiefs would be a potential first-round exit, as their offence in the regular season looked the worst they ever have with Mahomes under centre. Future hall-of-fame tight end Travis Kelce looked off for most of the year, the offence had the most dropped passes in the NFL, and the Chiefs’ general manager still never made a move for a big-name receiver to help out his quarterback. All this to say, despite how bad they were, especially relative to last year, the offence was still a force to be reckoned with at times largely thanks to the mind of Andy Reid. Additionally, luckily for Mahomes, his defence decided to become one of the best in the league this year and certainly the best he has ever had. The Chiefs ended up going 11-6, easily winning their division and ending up as the #3 seed in the AFC. In true Chiefs fashion, most of their offensive issues seemed to just disappear the second the postseason started. Kelce has scored three touchdowns over three playoff games, nearly matching his regular season total of five. Chiefs running back Isiah Pacheco and the run game in general has been efficient throughout the year to help set up the deep shots that make Kansas City so dangerous. It also goes without saying that Mahomes is still very much in his prime, hasn’t skipped a beat, and will likely pull something out of his hat on Sunday that we’ll be hearing about for the next week. The 49ers may be the better team on paper, but they can’t feel safe until the clock hits 0:00 Sunday that we’ll be hearing something out of his hat on.

Let’s now look at the representative of the NFC; the San Francisco 49ers. Their unfair levels of talent on offence and defence granted them the number one seed in the NFC with a 13-4 record, firmly establishing themselves as the team to beat in the NFC throughout the entire regular season. Kyle Shanahan’s creative play design for elite skill players such as Christian McCaffrey, George Kittle, Deebo Samuel, and Brandon Aiyuk netted them a ridiculous 28.9 points per game, which was second in the league. They accomplished this with Mr. Irrelevant himself under centre, Brock Purdy, who is continuing to silence all of his doubters. It is certainly true that having multiple all-pros around him significantly helps his MVP-level stat sheet. That being said, he has delivered in big moments throughout the year, especially under pressure. Purdy was largely responsible for creating big plays against Detroit in the second half of the NFC championship game last Sunday, where he helped dig his team out of a 17-point rut at halftime to advance to the Super Bowl. Their defensive line, helmed by dominant edge rusher Nick Bosa, is capable of wrecking any offensive game plan both as pass rushers and in shutting down the run. Their inside linebackers, Fred Warner and Dre Greenlaw, are arguably the best duo at their position in the league. There’s a reason that the 49ers are favourites, they have all the pieces necessary to add a sixth ring to their franchise resume, but much the same was said four years ago.

#s

4, The Kansas City Chiefs are the third team in NFL history to have reached the Super Bowl four out of the past five years.

262, The San Francisco 49ers chose Brock Purdy as the 262nd pick, who will now play as quarterback in the Super Bowl.

21.5, The points per game Dejourne Murray has scored this season, making him one of the hottest trade deadline targets.

24-25, The Los Angeles Lakers record, despite being in a win-now season, forcing them to be buyers at the deadline.

The world is watching to see the embrace between Travis Kelce and Taylor Swift should the Chiefs win the Super Bowl. Photo Courtesy of Instagram/@NFL
Sports and ethics: The thin line between redemption and reckoning

Zafir Nagji
Staff Writer

Professional athletes are constantly at the forefront of mainstream media. Being in the public eye as much as they are means their lives are subject to analysis and judgment. This can mean immense positive affirmation when they contribute to improving society, such as LeBron James winning Associated Press Athlete of the Year in 2018 after opening the I Promise School in his hometown of Akron, Ohio. It can also bring about harsh criticism for poorly made decisions, such as the ridicule Lamar Odom received when he came out about his struggles with drug addiction.

However, when athletes get into serious legal trouble, teams and leagues rarely disbar them from playing and earning millions of dollars on the public stage. So, to answer the question if it is ethically sound to allow this to happen, let’s look at some cases where professional athletes were allowed to play despite legal troubles and some scenarios where athletes were blackballed for lesser reasons.

The NBA is no stranger to its athletes encountering legal issues. One of the more recent and well-known players in this category is Charlotte Hornets forward, Miles Bridges, who was unable to travel to Canada for a matchup against the Toronto Raptors on Dec. 18, 2023, due to his legal troubles. So, to answer the question if it is ethically sound to allow this to happen, let’s look at some cases where professional athletes were allowed to play despite legal troubles and some scenarios where athletes were blackballed for lesser reasons.

The NBA also added a 30-game suspension, but this did not prevent the Hornets from signing Bridges to a $7.9 million extension in July 2023. Just three months later, Bridges was back in the news for more inappropriate decisions.

In October 2023, a criminal summons was issued for Bridges as he allegedly violated the protective order he agreed to less than a year ago by reportedly threatening his former girlfriend and damaging her car while their children were in the vehicle. He also threatened to withhold child support payments if she reported the incident.

The NFL also has its share of athletes involved in deviant activity. Most famous among them is Antonio Brown, who, in 2019, was accused of sexual assault by his former trainer, Britney Taylor. Taylor accused Brown of assaulting her during two training trips in June 2017 and raping her in May 2018. After a brief suspension enforced by the league, Brown signed with the Tampa Bay Buccaneers at the special request of Tom Brady.

Super Bowl-winning cornerback Richard Sherman also incriminated himself in 2021 when he crashed his SUV into a suburban Seattle construction site, attempted to break into his in-laws’ house, and physically fought with officers trying to apprehend him. Sherman was set to be a free agent after the 2021 NFL season, and while he was unable to find a contract with another team, he was soon hired by Fox Sports.

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Continued from Pg. 14

Sports to be on their popular TV show, *UNDISPUTED*, with acclaimed journalist Skip Bayless.

These are certainly not the only examples of legal deviation in professional sports. Other infamous cases include Karl Malone impregnating a 13-year-old girl and still being named to the NBA’s Top 75 Players list and Naismith Basketball Hall of Fame and, more recently, Hockey Canada’s massive sexual assault scandal, which *The Reflector* will cover as information continues to be released.

Additionally, the purpose of this article is not to say that those who are accused of crimes and wrongdoings do not deserve second chances, even if it was their own poor decision-making and lack of character that led them to do so. However, the issue stems from the fact that in an average person’s life, criminal activity often spells them out of ever hoping to have a reputable career and make good on their second chance, simply because they do not perform on multi-billion dollar stages for the richest team and league owners in the world.

Furthermore, athletes have lost the careers they so religiously worked hard to obtain for political reasons. Colin Kaepernick comes to mind right away; before some games in 2016, to protest racial inequality and police brutality, he and Eric Reid sat during the national anthem. A sign of respect for military personnel, they later decided to kneel.

“After hours of careful consideration, and even a visit from Nate Boyer, a former NFL player, we came to the conclusion that we should kneel, rather than sit, ... during the anthem, as a peaceful protest,” said Reid. “We chose to kneel because it's a respectful gesture. I remember thinking our posture was like a flag flown at half-mast to mark a tragedy.”

They started with this gesture in the preseason, but over the course of the regular season, 11 other players joined Kaepernick in his peaceful protest. Many NFL fans burned their Kaepernick jerseys and other Nike products they owned after he became the face of their “Dream Crazy” ad campaign, which had the tagline, “Believe in something. Even if it means sacrificing everything. Just do it.”

As a result of the backlash and the NFL’s strong patriotism, Kaepernick was not offered a contract by any of the 30 teams in the league after becoming a free agent following the protest.

His playing time declined rapidly after his protest and by 2001, he was out of the NBA. It was not until three decades ago, former NBA star player Mahmoud Abdul-Rauf was suspended by the league for refusing to stand for the national anthem, protesting the flag that he believed was symbolic of tyranny and oppression. He later chose to stand, but rather than placing his hand on his heart, he chose to pray, and presumably because of his recent conversion to Islam, received immense backlash. Boos in opposing arenas was just the start, as he soon began receiving death threats and a home he was building in Mississippi was burned down.

Kaepernick was not the first to lose his job over peaceful protesting. Over the course of the regular season, 11 other players

Antonio Brown has undergone a spectacular fall from grace, often ending up in headlines for the wrong reasons since retiring from the NFL. Photo courtesy of Wikimedia Commons

battleground and welcomed him with open arms.

Again, those who commit crimes or make mistakes deserve a second chance after showing signs of improvement and committing to bettering themselves. However, athletes, who often act as role models and earn massive salaries, seem to escape being held to the same standards as the average person and are given opportunities most average people would not receive. This becomes especially concerning when athletes who have seemingly committed no wrongdoing are suspended and sometimes even blackballed from their respective sports for much less immoral behaviour.
Who’s on the move for the 2024 NBA trade deadline?

Noah Wilson
Contributor

This season of NBA basketball has been nothing short of exceptional thanks to a plethora of storylines surrounding the league since the first day of tip-off. Many of these stories include Oklahoma City's rise to the top, the Golden State Warriors fall from grace, Draymond Green's WWE antics, stars like Embiid and Doncic hitting 70 points every other night, and of course one of the biggest storylines of the season, the 2024 NBA trade deadline. This year's edition of the NBA trade deadline is set for Feb. 8. With the playoff race so incredibly tight this season, many teams will be looking to either bolster their squads for a playoff push or make a move to propel them over the top.

Los Angeles Lakers

The Los Angeles Lakers have had a very mediocre season up to this point. They currently stand at a 24-25 record and sit at the 9th play-in seed. With a team of LeBron James and Anthony Davis, there is no doubt this team is in win-now mode, which will make it a priority for the Lakers to make a move in some capacity.

D'Angelo Russell

One of the biggest names circulating the league has been D'Angelo Russell. Russell this season has been a man of two tales. To start the season Russell had his fair share of struggles which fueled the narrative of him being on the Lakers trade wire. Recently, however, Russell has been delivering as a scorer, so much so that his recent play might have been enough for the Lakers to second-guess whether to move on from him this deadline. Either way, he will be a player to watch as he is without a doubt the Lakers best asset heading into this deadline looking to make a deep run in the playoffs.

Atlanta Hawks

Much like the Lakers, the Atlanta Hawks have had an underwhelming season up to this point. Coming into this season, there was lots of buzz over the new acquisition of Dejounte Murray. Fast forward to the trade deadline and rumors are swirling about Murray possibly on the move. For Atlanta however, the biggest name on the rumor mill to everyone's surprise has been Trae Young. Although far-fetched, his name has been circling teams like the Mavs, Spurs, and even the Lakers. He is someone to watch for not only for this deadline but for the months to follow heading into the offseason.

Dejounte Murray

Dejounte Murray has been an elite guard this season which has not been a surprise to anyone. Murray is a bonafide stud, and that is why the Hawks acquired him. Unfortunately for Atlanta, this has not been enough to push them into the realm of a clear-cut contender. This season Murray has put up 21.5 points per game, 5 rebounds per game, with 5.2 assists to complement. This is a player just about any team in the league would love to have on their team which is why it's fair to say he's the best player available for the trade deadline.

Toronto Raptors

As we approach the deadline, we have already seen multiple blockbuster trades come and go. The Toronto Raptors have been the biggest culprits to these trades as they have ignited their fire sale a little early this season. Seeing studs such as Pascal Siakam and OG Anunoby shipped out and then promising young talents such as RJ Barrett, Immanuel Quickley, Jordan Nwora, and a collection of first-round picks being shipped in. The Raptors are in a full rebuild-mode as they look to continue to craft a team around Scottie Barnes.

Dennis Schroeder

As the Raptors continue to offload their players, look for Dennis Schroeder to be their main asset on the block. The veteran point guard has been very productive for the Raps averaging 13.9 points, 6.3 assists, and 2.7 rebounds shooting at about 45 per cent. It is not guaranteed that the Raptors will move on from Schroeder as he has been terrific coming off the bench, he is a player to keep an eye on if the Raptors decide to offload any more of their players at the deadline.

Chicago Bulls

The Chicago Bulls haven't been very good this season. Currently sitting in the second to last play in seed with a 23-26 record. One of the few bright spots from the Bulls this season has been guard Coby White. White has transformed himself into a star this year thanks to the absence of Zach Lavine putting up multiple 30-point performances this season while averaging a career-high 18.7 points per game. Because of such a poor season, it is more than likely that the Bulls will be sellers for the 2024 deadline.

Zach Lavine

The Bulls franchise piece, Lavine has not played in many contests this season due to a handful of injuries he has gone through the past couple of months. Due to his absence this season, don't be surprised if Lavine has played his last game in a Bulls uniform. Lavine has shown his frustration over the lack of competitiveness in this Bulls squad and it seems like a separation between the two parties is inevitable. It doesn't help that the Bulls are 12-10 without Lavine and 10-15 with him in the lineup. Like Trae Young, although he may not be moved at the deadline he is a trade catalyst that could be dealt shortly after.

Zach Lavine has been the subject of a lot of trade rumours heading into the NBA trade deadline, though he might not be moved until the offseason. Photo Courtesy of Wikimedia