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All aboard or off the rails

Unforeseen costs have left the Calgary Green Line in limbo without additional provincial funds

Khaoula Choual

Contributor

Planning for the Green Line LRT started in 2011, but recent developments, such as the Alberta government's decision to halt funding, has placed the project on an indefinite hold. This has left stakeholders confused and frustrated as they consider what this means for Calgary's transit future.

The next iteration of Calgary's Green Line LRT project may be significantly shorter—and more expensive—than the initial vision. According to CBC, the Alberta government is withdrawing funding for Calgary's Green Line LRT, according to a letter sent to Mayor Jyoti Gondek.

Since the mid-1980s, the city council has been considering the need for a light rail transit (LRT) route in the southeast sector of the city. It began as part of the city's strategy to address

population growth, efficient transportation and traffic jams.

The existing transit systems, such as the Red Line and Blue Line, have proven inadequate for Calgary's rising population, which has grown dramatically during the last decade. According to the Government of Alberta's website, in 2023, Calgary had the largest population in the province, with 1.5 million people. Calgary's population has grown by 6.20 per cent year on year and 13.4 per cent during the last five years. Expanding the transit line was seen as a necessary step by the provincial government to improve the Calgary Transit System.

The City of Calgary considered building an LRT route along Nose Creek, Edmonton Trail, or Centre Street North. A recent

planning study determined a path along Centre Street North or along Edmonton Trail.

The original plan for the Green Line according to CBC showed early maps of the Green Line running from 160th Avenue in the north to Seton in the south. However, despite numerous statements from city authorities, including the former mayor Naheed Nenshi, this was merely a sketch and that no design work had been done.

Gondek said that the city's Green Line LRT project is essentially disbanded, at least in the near future. The cost estimates grew as development went on for a number of reasons, such as inflation, growing building expenses, and modifications to the project's scope.

According to Gondek, the most recent provincial action has drastically altered the

project's prospects.

"As a result of that ... we are no longer as a city able to afford the cost of this project," she told CBC earlier this month.

The province says in the letter that it will proceed by contracting a third party to submit substitute ideas for the LRT line that unites the Red and Blue Lines along Seventh Avenue S.W. and the Grand Central inter-city railway station the province envisions in the east-end entertainment district.

Premier Danielle Smith's United Conservative government (UCP) is blaming former mayor and NDP leader Naheed Nenshi, for prior negligence, while the Calgary city council is blaming the province for withdrawing previously pledged funds.

As of now, Calgary has spent more than \$1.4 billion

on the Green Line LRT project, which includes \$350 million in site purchase, \$400 million in utility construction, and a new fleet of light rail vehicles that will arrive in late 2027.

Transportation and Economic Corridors Minister Devin Dreeshen termed the city's revised Green Line LRT plan "unacceptable," stating that the province will not support it.

The proposed new route will go from Eau Claire to Lynnwood/Millican rather than Eau Claire to Shepard, making it far shorter than expected.

To address escalating costs, the council decided 10-5 in late July to eliminate six stations from the Green Line's initial phase while increasing its budget from \$700 million to more than \$6.2 billion. The expectation was that the province would contribute \$1.53 billion toward the project which now has been pulled.

In recent developments according to Gondek, the province has granted her request to attempt rescuing some of the Green Line LRT project's work while it explores a different route.

It follows a letter that Gondek wrote to Dreeshen and Premier Danielle Smith, which the mayor shared on social media.

In a post on X, Gondek stated that the province might temporarily preserve up to 700 jobs and taxpayer money if it used some of the city's current work in its new alignment.

Several setbacks, political choices, and escalating expenses have continuously modified the project's schedule and extent.

The project's future is uncertain right now because other options are being explored, especially in the absence of the required provincial money.



People pile in to the 69th Street Blue Line train. Photo by Darren Makowichuk/Post Media

Calgary Police accused of intimidation following Pro-Palestine Protest

Acacia Carol

Contributor



Protestors march at the Calgary Coalition for Palestine and the Calgary Student Movement gathering. Photo Courtesy of Wikimedia Commons

Twelve protesters were ticketed and three were arrested by the Calgary Police Service (CPS) on Sept. 15, following officers' response to "a non-permitted event," sources say.

The protest, which was organized by the Calgary Coalition for Palestine and the Calgary Student Movement (CSM) in coordination with various other organizations, began in Tomkins Park before proceeding West down 17th Avenue S.W. towards 14 Street S.W.

In a statement on X following the event, police outlined concerns for community disruption as well as children's safety during the protest, as the group spilled out off the sidewalk and into the road.

"Despite efforts by officers, including the use of bikes to fence off the road and numerous requests by

loud hailer, they refused to cooperate," the statement read.

However, a very different image is painted by protestors at the event itself, like Leo Smith, who was one of the individuals ticketed at the protest. Smith detailed the initial police presence at the march as "intimidating" but reiterated the intention of protestors to keep the event peaceful.

"I was generally uneasy from the beginning, just because of the police presence. But overall, I felt safe. I was with my community and we were protesting. We were allowed to protest there."

It wasn't until the march reached Tomkins Park again that Smith was issued a ticket. Smith stated that when he approached an officer with his cellphone recording to document the ticketing of another protestor, he was

detained before being ticketed himself.

"I felt like I was being singled out," Smith said. "I wasn't clear on why. Because I had no part in organizing that event. I had simply attended. I have a right to protest."

Smith also described other protestors seeing an officer strike an elderly protestor with a bike, masked individuals taking photographs on top of buildings, and a drone that hovered nearby as the march began.

Describing the "hectic situation," Smith claimed that he saw protestors being arrested and ticketed on the roadway as traffic proceeded, with all claims reiterated by other protestors and protest organizers.

"They physically overpowered a lot of the people that they were arresting, and that included bringing them into oncoming

traffic."

Smith also shared concerns about how police treated "the only black person" at the event. Smith described seeing the individual, who was not a part of the march, being approached by police. However, Smith believed the individual was only tending to an art installation along the protest route, not actively protesting.

Smith maintains that there was "absolutely" no intention for the protest to escalate from those marching.

"The police were aware of our route and they were facilitating our march," he said. "We have marshals who helped conduct this march. We have trained volunteers who are trained in first aid and de-escalation."

So, was the response of police proportional to the potential risk that the protestors posed to

themselves or the wider community? Smith believes that the response of ticketing and arresting was "simply intimidation."

More specifically, Smith outlined similarities with mass ticketing during the May 9th student encampment, and what legal precedent these citations set.

"Tickets issued to either protestors at the May 9th demonstration or May 9th encampment at the UofC, were either thrown out or delayed as they reached their court dates."

The May 9th demonstration at the University of Calgary campus also drew considerable backlash for how CPS responded, with student protestors being tear gassed, physically assaulted, ticketed and arrested by officers in full riot gear.

The CSM has publicly condemned police action at both the May 9th encampment and the Sept. 15th march at Tomkins Park.

The demands of the CSM have not changed since May 9th, with chief demands being total divestment from corporations involved with the "surveillance, occupation, and murder" of Palestians and a full disclosure of where students' tuition is being invested.

These demands and calls for action were a key part of the goals of protestors and organizers at Tomkins Park. Still, Smith believes this was a key reason that police presence was so heavy and concentrated during the march.

"We've been treated differently simply because we're with the Palestinian cause specifically."

So, what is next for Smith? Well, he plans to have his day in court, however, he feels that much of the next steps are "up in the air" currently.

"Frankly, I'm not going to be just letting it happen to me," he said. "I'm certainly thinking about my options."

Pedestrian struck by vehicle at MRU campus crosswalk

Bella Coco
News Editor

Earlier this month, an MRU student got hit by a vehicle while crossing through Richardson Way S.W. crosswalk to the North Entrance of campus.

It is known throughout the MRU campus that the crosswalk between Richardson Way and the North Entrance is notoriously long with no light or alert system to incoming traffic. The crosswalk spans across six lanes of traffic—four driving lanes and two turn lanes—with a maximum speed limit of 60 kilometres per hour.

An individual claiming to be the student who was hit in the crosswalk reached out to MRU chatter, the go-to confidential confession page for MRU student, faculty and staff life.

“I was the one who got hit by the car yesterday but I’m okay! Nothing too serious, just a concussion and bruising

all over my body with a big hematoma on the back of my head,” the post read.

The Reflector attempted to reach out to the individual through MRU chatter, but did not receive a response.

Requests can be submitted to the city to have pedestrian activated lights at a preexisting crosswalk, on the City of Calgary website, where one can provide the street address, surrounding building information, contact information and additional details if necessary.

In 2022, there were 437 injury collisions involving pedestrians in Calgary, which included fatalities and major injuries.

According to the Calgary Safer Mobility Plan (which was briefed in 2023), there was an aim to reduce injuries and fatalities from mobile vehicles by 25 per cent.

The 2024 brief has not been released yet, but the

city has “been working with Calgary Police Service on the development of the first unified plan as core partners working towards safer mobility and reducing harm on our roadways.

The new plan will be built on our past successes and principles of continuous improvements and expanding collaboration with our partners and communities. We anticipate completion in 2024.”

As for pedestrian safety and signage, the city is collaborating on standardizing signal operations and the safety at intersections.

“The policy is driven by our goal to achieve safer outcomes for vulnerable road users. The guiding principle is achieving a network wide impact through relatively low-cost proven interventions to improve pedestrian safety. This work will focus on

refining pedestrian walk and clearance intervals and other operational features (right turn on red restrictions, leading pedestrian intervals, turn protection, and pedestrian scramble) to improve pedestrian safety. A draft of the policy is expected by the second quarter of 2024,” the brief reads.

The Reflector will further explore pedestrian safety on campus with the city’s upcoming 2024 mobility plan and statistics, and will be reaching out to MRU campus security and parking services for a follow-up story on campus security and pedestrian safety in a future issue.

Those interested in contacting the Students’ Association of Mount Royal University (SAMRU) about representation for student and pedestrian safety on campus can use the contact form on their website.

THE REFLECTOR

Issue 3, Volume 64

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The Reflector, with an on- and off-campus circulation of 5,000, is the independent voice of the students of Mount Royal University. It is published fortnightly during the academic year (Sept. to April).

The Reflector is editorially autonomous and financially independent from all other governing bodies at Mount Royal University.

The Reflector welcomes newsworthy submissions from all students and community members. While the right of editorial comment is reserved for editors of The Reflector, opinion pieces may be submitted as letters to the editor, and may be published on the editorial page as such. The Reflector reserves the right not to publish submissions deemed by the Publishing Editor to be offensive.

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Mount Royal University’s North Entrance near where the student was struck. Photo by Aiden Johner

Editorial: The right to be yourself

Why the new Alberta transgender youth policies will damage generations of 2SLGBTQIA+ youth

Bella Coco

News Editor

In January 2024, Danielle Smith announced new legislation surrounding 2SLGBTQIA+ youth, gender affirming healthcare and transgender youth in the education sector. The legislation is set to be implemented this fall. There is no confirmed date at this time.

The announcement sparked a wildfire of debate across the province, but it also spurred an alarming amount of misinformation on transgender healthcare and ideologies.

With the legislation just around the corner, it's time to debunk the myths and false information surrounding trans youth, as well as educate those who are unaware of other surrounding factors.

Proposed legislation recap

With nine months since Smith's new proposed legislation, let's revisit what the province of Alberta has proposed and its comparison to other provinces across Canada.

As highlighted by CBC, the United Conservative Party (UCP) plans to implement:

- Children 15 or under are not permitted to use puberty or hormone blockers in gender-affirming healthcare.
- Top surgeries and bottom surgeries are banned for those 17 or under.

- Children 16-17 who desire hormone therapies for gender affirmation must undergo an evaluation involving psychological, parental and physical approval. The approval will decide if the youth is "mature enough" to go through with hormone therapies.

- When teachers plan to include sexual orientation and gender identity in their lessons, parents will have to "opt in" to allow their child to be present during the lesson. Before this proposal, parents had the opportunity to "opt



Multiple posters at Calgary's 2024 Pride Parade displayed support and love for transgender youth. Photo by Bella Coco.

out.”

And, let's not forget, when a child 15 or under changes their pronouns or their name at school, parental consent is required. When a youth 16 or 17 changes their pronouns or name, no consent is required, but the school is required to notify parents of the changes.

Ironic that Smith has stated that she is keeping trans children's best interest in mind, when her proposed policies and legislations only seem to benefit parents, consequently violating queer and trans identities.

Parental rights

Smith has said that "parental rights" have been an important part of her government, but let's unpack what "parental rights" are, and its harm within the new proposed legislation.

Parental rights are a conservative step further than parents current rights provided to them by the

Charter of Rights and Freedoms. While parents hold a right to liberty to raise their children according to their traditions and values (particularly with respect to religion), they do not have a right to step over their children's own rights in a way that may invalidate or harm their expression or identity.

According to the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, Section 2(b) - Freedom of Expression, "Everyone has the following fundamental freedoms: freedom of thought, belief, opinion and expression, including freedom of the press and other media of communication."

This freedom gives youth the right to express themselves freely through their sexual orientation or gender identity, even at their school. By no means in the Charter does it say that parents are entitled to the knowledge of their

children transitioning or changing their pronouns and/or name. By no means in the Charter does it say that parents must provide consent for their child to take the steps forward for gender affirmation.

The legislation that a youth has to rely on parental consent to change their pronouns and name at school violates students' rights to be free from cruel and unusual treatment and their right to equality.

So, what does my opinion have to do with this?

As a member of the 2SLGBTQIA+ community and an individual with family members who do not conform to the heteronormative gender binary, I feel strongly that Smith's new legislation is fear mongering and frankly, disturbing.

The proposed legislation has promoted trans hate and sets Alberta backwards, and goes even further than harmful policies proposed by New Brunswick and Saskatchewan.

To put students and trans/queer youth in a potential place of harm or invalidation will only bring generations worth of trauma to the queer community in Alberta.

By no means do doctors perform gender-affirming surgeries on youth, but it is a child's right to express themselves through pronoun and name changes. It is a child's right to trust certain individuals with their identity if they are in a potential position of harm in their home.

For those interested in more information on the legislation, check out the debate surrounding Alberta's proposed transgender youth policies on The Reflector website.

From homework to hosting: MRU alumna's new talk show

Sarah Palmer

Staff Writer



Aisha Sheikh's (left) contribution to TELUS StoryHive have provided a diverse and gravitational environment surrounding middle-aged adults. Photo by Dawson Bainbridge

Graduate from Mount Royal University's Broadcast and Media Studies program, Aisha N. Sheikh, 50, celebrated the premiere of her show, *The Gen Xperience with Aisha* on Sept. 24, 2024.

Filmed in her living room, viewers can feel as if they're right there with Sheikh and her selection of middle-aged guests as they blend humour and hard-hitting realities while candidly discussing topics concerning their generation in this "one of a kind" interview-style docu-series.

Originally conceptualized for a video assignment completed in the final year of her degree, the project was awarded a grant by the TELUS StoryHive program and is now a six-episode series available on TELUS Optik TV, Stream+ and YouTube—where it has already garnered hundreds of views.

Today, it's hard to believe that just over five-years-ago, Sheikh had never worked in broadcasting.

Having first entered the workforce in 2001 as a certified esthetician employed at Holt Renfrew, Sheikh left the beauty industry soon after to raise her children. Nineteen-years later, her post-secondary career began when she was accepted into the MRU Open Studies program in 2018.

Describing herself as

having a "philanthropic spirit," Sheikh's volunteer experience at organizations like the Syrian Refugee Crisis and Dress for Success Calgary contributed to her decision of switching into the Broadcast and Media Studies program a year later.

"I wanted to be able to tell the stories of positivity and overcoming," said Sheikh. "So I thought about broadcasting [or] somewhere in that journalism scope."

Starting university at 44 years of age, Sheikh found that her struggles were not exclusive to getting back into the habit of writing papers and referencing academic texts—but also the culture shock she felt in being a whole generation older than her classmates.

"The way that the students communicated was different," said Sheikh. "I had to crack that code in order to be able to understand and communicate with my fellow students."

However, being a mature student wasn't an entirely negative experience. Citing how her years lived have given her a courageous attitude, Sheikh believes this allowed her to stay on top of her courses because she was more willing to reach out to her professors and classmates for assistance if she found class content puzzling.

"Asking those questions was definitely a huge part in

my success story because I could do that," said Sheikh. "It was a great collaboration of everybody being super supportive of each other."

Semesters came and went and in no time, Sheikh's graduating class embarked on the lengthy process of planning and executing their fourth year media projects in 2023. Helping one another out to complete their individual projects, her former classmate Riggs Vergara remembers Sheikh's ambition when helping her to shoot the inaugural episode.

"Aisha was one of the first ones who started their production," said Vergara. "It was really cool just being there and enjoying the stories."

After finishing their productions, the students concluded their last semester by holding a makeshift film festival so they could showcase their creative endeavors to students and staff across the broadcasting program—where Sheikh's project captivated audiences of all generations.

"A lot of my professors said 'you need to do something with this,'" said Sheikh.

Thinking back to an opportunity she learnt about in an entrepreneurship course, Sheikh applied for a grant offered by TELUS. Shortly after, she received a congratulatory letter saying they would fund six more

episodes as part of their StoryHive program, seeking to alleviate recipients of the financial burden associated with production and offers them training to help "create diverse, compelling, locally reflective short films," according to the National Screen Institute.

Recipients of StoryHive grants have to enroll in mandatory crash courses before they receive any funding. Ranging from lighting and camera settings to understanding licensing agreements and how to advertise a project, the courses intend to ensure producers are set-up for success.

During production, recipients are also assigned a "mentor" who is available for answering inquiries and responsible for making sure that the project adheres to TELUS's standards—one strict rule being that all films must be rated G.

Embracing the role of creative producer—or, "mother hen" as Sheikh described—provided her with the opportunity to decide who her coworkers would be for the next six episodes. Looking back to the show's roots, Sheikh chose a few of her former classmates to work alongside as her crew members.

Coming from an episode submitted for class credit and taking on the StoryHive

project was a difference comparable to "night and day" for Vergara, who was elected to be the director and head of marketing. His responsibilities included coordinating the cast and crew as well as live camera switching, organizing the set and communicating situational issues directly to Sheikh.

"It was an enlightening experience," said Vergara. "There was a lot that happened on the fly and there's a lot of trust that had to be built during the production process because there were a lot of moving parts."

While he appreciated the chance to bond with his acquaintances on-set once more, Vergara found that his motivations behind pursuing the role were also due to how the production's topics resonated with him as someone who moved to Calgary from the Philippines.

"I gravitated towards it because it's tackling not only the human age group of being in your forties," said Vergara, "but it also tackles being an immigrant [as in] financial and familial situations."

Aside from immigration topics, *The Gen Xperience* with Aisha touches on dating in the digital age, parenting your parents and Gen X v.s. Gen Z—addressing how the negative stereotypes placed on each generation impact that age group and how a handful of Gen Z guests feel about the way they were raised.

Juggling the demands of raising the next generation while offering support to the generation before them, today's people aged 44 to 59 undoubtedly carry an immense weight on their shoulders.

For Sheikh, she holds the goal that the series will start discussions that can eventually alleviate feelings of loneliness shared among some middle-aged adults.

"By starting the conversation, we unburden ourselves of the guilt [and] of the pressure to be perfect," said Sheikh. "I hope that we find solutions to these challenges rather than everybody quietly suffering in their own little corners."

Tattoo culture: Research and wisdom

Tattoo culture is constantly changing, and the value behind tattoos changes with it

Karra Smith

Contributor

Across the world and for generations, tattoos have been used as a form of self-expression and cultural representation. However, in the shift to the 21st century, a tattoo's significance has become a point of contention and debate.

Sydney Dyer, owner of the tattoo studio The Brindle Room, as well as a competitor on season 15 of *Inkmaster*, describes current tattoo culture as “a bit of a disaster.”

According to Dyer, today's culture is driven by instant gratification where if someone is having a bad day or is simply “craving” a new tattoo, they're just impulsively getting one. In previous generations, people would opt to spend time deciding on a tattoo, its placement, where to go and where to get it. Waiting months for a tattoo appointment used to be seen as reasonable, but now the desire for instant results has become the norm.

Dyer, who has been tattooing for a little over 10 years now, does not see an issue with a tattoo's lack of meaning, but rather in the lack of research and planning that comes with getting impulse ink.

Dyer expressed concern that tattoo artists are not being as thoroughly researched or sought out as they once were. She noted a decline in the appreciation for high-quality work, which she finds unfortunate for the artistic community. Despite the trend, many artists still strive to create authentic, well-crafted pieces, but their efforts are often overshadowed by the growing demand for more immediate impulsive decisions.

On the other side of the spectrum, younger generations view the tattoo itself as meaningful enough.

“To me, tattoo culture is a way of self-expression. If it's something silly on your ankle or something huge on your arm, it tells a story,” said Breanna Gavan, an MRU student and tattoo enthusiast.



While tattoo culture has adapted over the years, later generations have become more impulsive with booking and design choices, a concern shared by many tattoo artists. Photo courtesy of Shan Lestage

“I have a quote that is really important to me, but then I also have the Twisted Tea logo on my knee so, tattoos are supposed to be fun and expressive and they don't always have to mean something.”

Both Dyer and Gavan pointed out that sometimes their tattoos do not bode well with the older generations. In the end, however, neither of them pay much mind to

the negativity.

When explaining the reaction she would often receive from older generations, Dyer said the main thing people said to her was that she would regret her tattoos when she was older. But for Dyer, she proved all of those negative comments wrong by making a thriving career out of it.

Gavan similarly said that sometimes, she still gets dirty

looks from older generations when they see her tattoos but it's just something she has learned to let roll off her back.

Whether you are new to tattoos or an experienced ink collector, you should always do your research and know your boundaries. Some quick wisdom from Dyer herself is to not be intimidated and to take into consideration your artist's advice—they are the

experts. But overall, at the end of the day, Dyer said that it's your body and your choice.

“As much as I do take my job very seriously, it's still a silly career where I get to draw on people for a living so I don't think there should be any intimidating factors or anything scary,” said Dyer. “You should always feel very comfortable going into a tattoo shop.”

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Beware of ghosts

'The Woman in Black' is haunting her way to the Halloween season

Greg Derer

Contributor

Leaves are falling, and the days are growing shorter. Fall is officially here, and is arguably the eeriest time of year.

In anticipation of the Halloween season, Vertigo Theatre is putting on its own rendition of *The Woman in Black* based on the 1983 gothic horror novel by the same name, written by Susan Hill.

The plot of the original novel follows Arthur Kipps, an estate solicitor who recounts his weeklong visit at the Eel Marsh house in a small English seaside town. With suspense and jumpscare, the play explores all of the unexplained and terrifying experiences during his stay, including the chilling sights of a ghostly figure referred to as the woman in black.

"We're in a time right now where, because of how intense everything is around the world, audiences are looking for something that demands their engagement, that demands their attention, because if you don't grab their attention, I don't think they're going to be interested," said artistic director Jack Grinhaus.

With only two actors on the stage during this performance, viewers can expect an abundance of visual effects in the production. This show puts a large emphasis on sound and light, which Grinhaus claims is a crucial aspect in replicating the tense atmosphere of horror.

Grinhaus insists there is something abnormal and perhaps even paranormal when rehearsing the content

of this play, as the cast and crew encountered strange occurrences while rehearsing.

"One of the things you risk doing this play is you may actually invoke some real spirits. And so it may be that there are spirits that exist, and if they do, that would be amazing to see, wait and find out," Grinhaus said. "Every time we're dealing with the dead, somehow they come to let us know."

The play strays slightly from the original novel, working with themes and concepts that are very relevant in the world today.

"Sometimes it's not the play, but it's the world around you that has changed. Whether it's what is happening in the Middle East or the many school shootings, there's so many stories about parents losing children right now. This play makes sense, and that's one of the scariest things about it," Grinhaus said.

This performance will run from Sept. 28 to Oct. 27, and attendees can expect a suspense-filled two hour viewing of the play. Tickets for this event start at \$30 and can be purchased from Vertigo Theatre's website.

The *Woman in Black* kicks off the Vertigo Theatre's upcoming yearly seasonal showcase, where viewers can expect a lot more thrilling and gruesome productions in the coming months.

The world can be a scary place at times, especially now. Heightened political tensions are on the rise, and violence is more present in the news. Vertigo Theatre aims to give

viewers a break from the real world with this production and offer a little theatrical distraction.

"My hope in general, is that

it also helps people put those other things around the world away for a little bit and just be with us," said Grinhaus. "Have a moment where they

can both escape and engage with our story, and hopefully feel a little better when they get out so they can tackle what's really scary out there."



Teaser art for Vertigo Theatre's 'Woman In Black' running this October. Photo courtesy of Fifth Wall Media

OUT'N ABOUT

Halloweenkends

Crisp autumn air and orange leaves mean only one thing—spooky season is among us. Come to Halloweenkends at Calaway Park to get into the scary spirit with family friendly fun every Saturday and Sunday until Oct. 14. Guests are encouraged to dress up and experience the magical displays and eerie photo opportunities. Tickets are included with GA admission into Calaway Park.

Fall Days

Are you into fall, but not really Halloween? Fall Days at The Calgary Farmyard is the perfect place to celebrate the changing seasons. With pony riding, pumpkin picking, and potato sack slides, there is no shortage of activities on the farm. Tickets start at \$25 and can be purchased on their website or at the gate.

Harvest Lights

Level up your Fall Days experience with the sequel, Harvest Lights, starting at 5 p.m. on Fall Days. When the sun goes down, the Calgary Farmyard becomes illuminated by thousands of lights. Guests are invited to challenge the classic corn maze in the dark, with the help of a flashlight of course, and experience different attractions under night lights. Tickets start at \$25 and can be purchased on their website or at the gate.

Craft (and) Beer

Head to Cold Garden on most Mondays for Crafty Mondays! An event hosted by the Taproom that includes a small and easy craft alongside a pint of your favourite local craft beer. From teacup gardens to air fresheners, every week is different. You can either register online, or show up to the brewery and ask to get involved!

Misty moods: Charlotte Tilbury perfume review

Daria Orth

Contributor

With countless remarkable make-up brands at our fingertips, there are a few trusted names I find myself returning to time and time again. I've experimented with various drugstore brands to more high-end cosmetics throughout the last few years, and I have to say Charlotte Tilbury is by far one of my favourites—as it is to many.

While on the pricier side, I have never been disappointed by any of the products I have tried. This being said, when she dropped her new perfume collection in April, I already had high expectations about each of these six scents.

First, this entire collection is incredibly eye-catching, with its detailed bottles that are all slightly different from one another. Each scent comes in a colourful potion-looking bottle, with a symbol that matches its name. I have honestly never seen perfume in packaging that looks like these ones, and I have to say, the visual alone sold me on wanting to try these out.

Of course, I couldn't just try one, I had to try them all and I found most of them to be very enjoyable scents. Charlotte Tilbury did not only release a collection of perfume, but created ones that each represent and release different auras.

What I really liked about this collection was how long-lasting the scents were after first being applied.

My first impression of the red bottle, "More Sex," instantly gave me red dress and lip combo on date night vibes. This is a bold perfume with a bold name so I imagined it would smell spicy and musky with fainter sweet tones. The actual notes in this fragrance include black pepper oil, leather accord, sandalwood, and musk to name a few. When I first sprayed this, it immediately smelled more leathery and smokey in a way that overpowered the other notes.

You can smell the spice but it's not the first thing

that stood out to me. I do think this perfume had a lot of potential but I just didn't love how the notes blended together. Additionally, I find this scent to be very masculine, so I think it could make a nice cologne. This is an overall very specific scent that I feel like you could either love or hate, so for people who enjoy stronger fragrances, this one's for you.

"Love Frequency," the pink bottle, is the embodiment of a classic feminine perfume. It's on the sweeter side with rose and patchouli notes, finished off with a musky base. Though it's like its name, "Love Frequency" is an addictive, flirty and romantic scent that could make heads turn.

This intoxicating fragrance radiates the "it girl" aesthetic, and could easily become a signature scent the next time you're trying to impress your lover. It smells similar to lychee fruit and is also very comparable to Kate Spade's perfume "Sparkle".

The gold bottle, "Joyphoria," smells as luxurious as it looks. It's the classic sweet vanilla scent perfect for an everyday perfume. With its apparent warmer notes, this fragrance is supposed to stimulate positive emotions. While it's advertised as more of a summer vibe, Joyphoria could pair nicely with any outfit for any of the four seasons.

"Magic Energy," the green bottle, is truly the most enchanting of the collection. It's an earthy aroma that makes you want to get lost in the woods. This scent could be fitting for either fall or summer, with the spicy forest feel it has.

This addition to the collection feels blissful and relaxing to wear. For anyone who finds comfort in essential oils, "Magic Energy" might be the next best thing. It has that appealing freshness that other scents don't always promise to contain. If you're looking for a bougier version

of "Fairytale" by Bath & Body Works, run—do not walk—to collect this perfume.

The blue bottle, "Calm Bliss," is the one I found to be the sweetest. This is summer in a bottle, with its notes of bergamot and orange. It's fun and exciting in a humble and innocent way. "Calm Bliss" carries a peaceful energy that almost leaves you sleepy after spraying it. Applying this fragrance feels like falling asleep on the

beach in the afternoon sun.

Finally, the purple bottle, "Cosmic Power," had me feeling a roller coaster of emotions. Like "More Sex," you definitely have to have an acquired taste for this peculiar scent. Initially, I didn't love "Cosmic Power," but the more I wore it, the more it grew on me. The smell itself is hard to describe because you pick up on many different notes.

It smells spicy, woody,

and leathery but also has notes of rose, bergamot, and vanilla. It's designed to bring out confidence but it smells like a paradox in a fancy vile, which made me feel more confused than empowered—however, I was far from disappointed.

To all of the beauty gurus looking to find a new scent, your local Sephora can provide you with this unique collection of six very distinct perfumes.



Sephora's Charlotte Tilbury Perfume display, on Sept. 20, 2024. Photo by Daria Orth

A taste of Toronto comes to Calgary

La Ciel is now open on 17th Ave

Mia Smith
Staff Writer

Calgary has just welcomed its newest dining experience to 17th Ave. La Ciel is now open at the corner of 17th Ave. S.W. and 14th St. S.W.

The three-story restaurant gives customers a dining experience that Calgary has never seen before. They had their grand opening on Aug. 31, featuring photo opportunities with a mascot, belly dancers, and more.

Taking inspiration from Toronto trends, this restaurant offers customers a chance to try out three

different styles of dining within one building. By hopping on an elevator in the restaurant, guests can kick-off their night at a sports bar on the first floor, experience fine dining on the second floor and top it all off with a visit to their unique set of domes on the rooftop patio.

The domes are a feature that is new to Calgary. They feature both central air conditioning as well as heaters for the chilly winter months we have coming.

Within three enclosed

igloos on the top floor, customers are able to experience a personalized dining experience with all the advanced gadgets these domes offer such as personal speakers, service call buttons and lighting settings.

Kunao Kakkar, general manager of La Ciel is excited about the traction that the

Continues on Pg.12

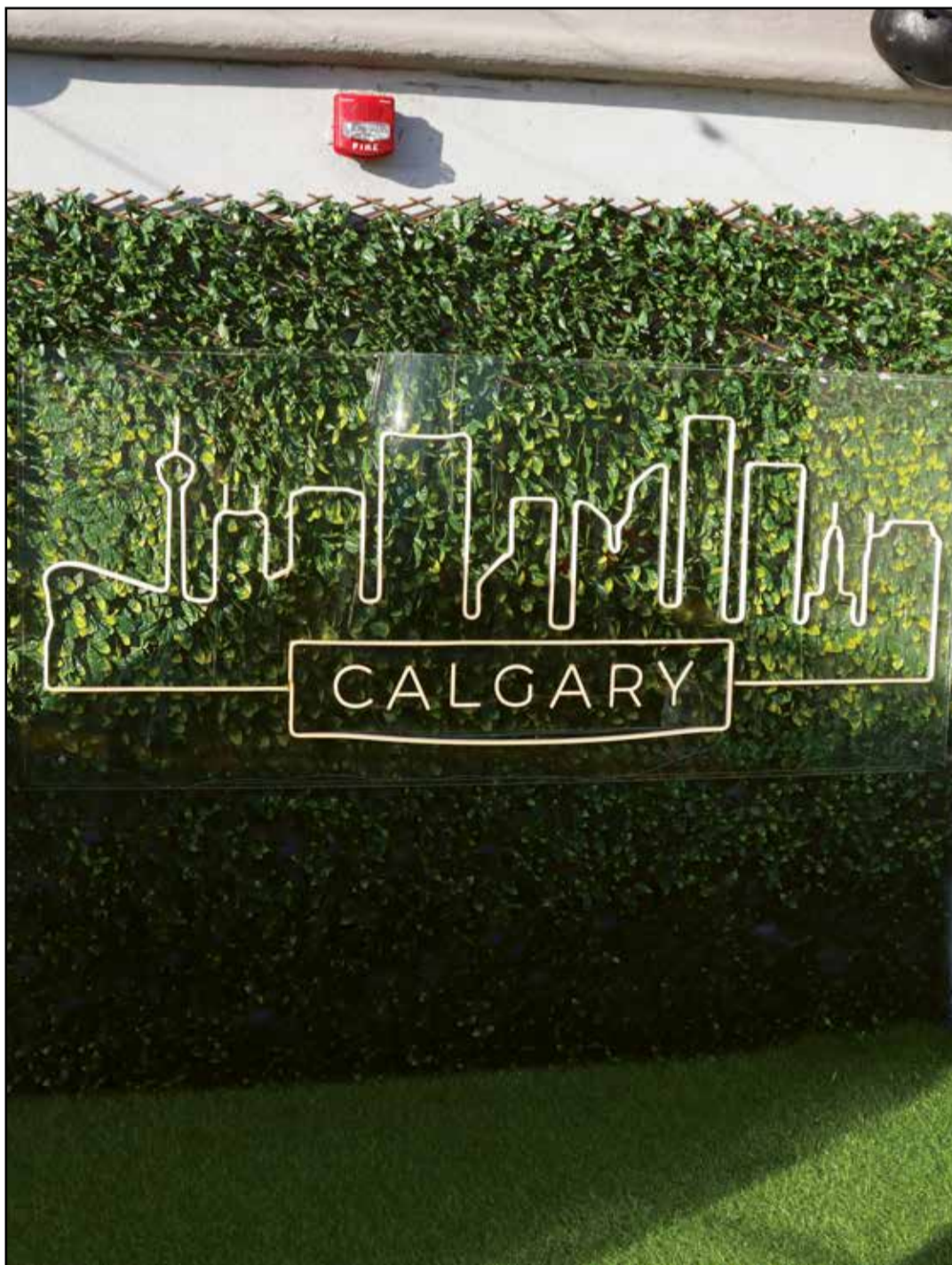
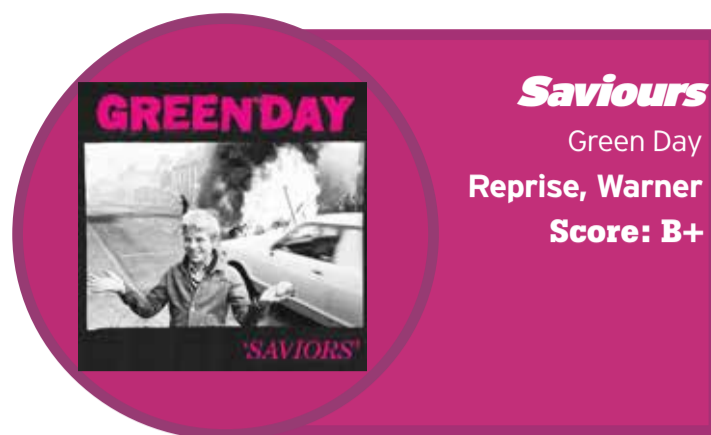


Photo wall seen on the top floor of La Ciel on 17th Ave. Photo by Mia Smith



In January of 2024, punk rock band Green Day released their 14th studio album *Saviors*. Known for their powerful music, along with powerful lyrics and messages, Green Day's new album *Saviors*, keeps up with their unique style whilst bringing in more personal, sentimental lyrics and connections to the band and lead singer Billie Joe Armstrong.

The album opens with "The American Dream is Killing Me," which jumps into the irony and prejudice of the stereotypical American dream compared to the struggles of the impoverished, unemployed population of American society. Lyrics like, "Unemployed and obsolete/Did you ever learn to read the ransom note," regard all the people that failed to achieve the American dream, and how they are no longer

valued by society. The "ransom note" symbolizes the reality of the American dream.

Another song on their album—"Dilemma"—takes on a more personal approach. The song talks about the reality of substance abuse and addiction. "I was sober, now I'm drunk again/I'm in trouble and in love again/I don't want to be a dead man walking," detailing the struggle of giving into old habits and the regret that follows. "Dead man walking" symbolizes the knowing that this relapse is going to lead to bigger problems down the road.

— Jacquie Brower



Rock band from South Wales, Casey, released their 2024 album titled *How to Disappear*. This album stands out amongst their previous albums. *How to Disappear* takes on a more focused palette, including slow, cinematic, lyrically driven bridges.

How to Disappear carries a sentimental, ambitious drive in lyrics which makes it versatile for listeners that may not appreciate the "scream" style of rock music. The song "Those That I'm Survived By" focuses on the hardship of feeling like you're a bad friend when you are unable to help loved ones due to the interference of your own struggles. The lyrics "I don't feel like I'm present/I can understand your pain/But still I'm sorry if you feel like I'm not around (I swear I try to be)," touch on exactly that.

The closing song on the album, "How to Disappear" dives deep into the conflict of wanting to give up, but

feeling guilty leaving loved ones behind. The lyrics "When all I wanna know is how to disappear/without leaving you to worry about me/it hurts to say, but I'm getting tired/of running away from the same pain" express the exhaustion of being stuck in a cycle, and wanting a break without the consequences.

— Jacquie Brower

Continued from Pg.11

rooftop domes are gaining within the Calgary market.

“My favourite part has been the reaction from the Calgary crowd,” said Kakkar.

While the Toronto location has done very well, Kakkar says that advertising to the Calgary market has been a new and challenging test.

He explains that the main difference is the volume of Calgary and navigating the smaller amount of foot traffic in comparison to the busy Toronto area.

La Ciel is very active on their social media. The marketing team is frequently posting on @la.cielofficial and @lacielon17th to promote the company.

The team focuses on promoting the atmosphere within the three-story building. Making a space for everyone to feel like they belong.

In the building itself, the team has provided a few photo opportunities for influencers and visitors to capture the perfect photos on a fun night out.

The Calgary location is Kakkar’s first management position in the company. He highly recommends the lobster medley. A dish that

consists of fresh lobster, clams and prawns.

Other hot items on the menu include, the T-bone steak and lamb chops.

La Ciel in Toronto focuses more on strictly Indian cuisine, while this new location is focusing on expanding the menu to include more Italian and French dishes as well.

The restaurant is the perfect place to mix high quality food with affordable prices. The main meals average anywhere from \$20 to \$46.

The drink list is extensive and has a variety of options from beer, wine and spirits to hybrid mocktails. The drinks range from \$13 to \$20.

White ordering bottle service in-store, you are also greeted with the surprise of your drinks being delivered by a small remote control Audi. This feature is one of the unique details that add to the charm of the restaurant.

Kakkar is excited to embark on this new adventure with La Ciel Calgary, and to watch it grow as time goes on.

The La Ciel group is planning to expand their brand to Vancouver in the coming months.



Rooftop patio domes at La Ciel, 17th Ave. Photo by Mia Smith

samru  students' association of mount royal university

Cougars hockey teams returning with vengeance

Zafir Nagji
Sports Editor

Hockey is more than just a sport in Canada; it's a religion. Even though the Flames only have one Stanley Cup to their name, Calgarians eat, sleep and breathe the good old hockey game. Cougars fans have been spoiled lately, as the women's team brought home the 2022-23 USPORTS National Championship and the men's team made its 10th consecutive playoff appearance in Canada West. So, as Mount Royal University's hockey teams prepare for another gauntlet through the 2024-25 season, fans will have plenty of on-ice action to watch at the Flames Community Arena.

Women's hockey

The Cougars women's hockey team failed to win back-to-back USPORTS National Championships in the 2023-24 season, finishing third in the conference with 20 wins, seven losses and one overtime loss. Despite losing in a tough three-game series to the University of Alberta at the Canada West semi-finals, the team continued to prove that they were one of the most intimidating forces in the conference. Championship DNA still courses through their veins and with the injection of young talent, the Cougars women's hockey team is preparing to march on a warpath to a second national championship.

The gold medal run will go down in Cougar's history. Entering the tournament eighth in the standings, and with no conference championship to their name, MRU were serious underdogs and proved their skeptics wrong. However, that turned

them from hunters to being hunted, as opposing squads were now aware of the talent on the ice and leadership on the sidelines.

However, repeating as champions is difficult in any sport at any level, and the women's hockey team found that out the hard way. After losing in the conference semifinals and missing out on the national competition, head coach Scott Rivett knew that going through adversity would help the team in the long haul.

"You can try and replicate some through practice and through different situations in the season, but the reality is you need a little bit of scar tissue," Rivett said. "You need to go through those [things]. Those kids hadn't been in those roles before and they needed to understand what it feels like to play those meaningful games... that little chip on the shoulders would actually help propel us for the next year."

This year's roster features a litany of first and second-year players, meaning that their energy levels will be higher than ever. They are flanked by eight third-year players and numerous more in fourth and fifth years of eligibility, and that provides a unique strength for them this season.

"One of the things that we've seen is just how the team seems to be coming together, which always helps set the stage for your season, off the ice and on," Rivett said. "The fact that we've been able to create as much depth in every position, hopefully, the strength of our group will be the depth of our group."

As a result of these multiple levels of talent, Rivett and the team have lofty expectations going into the new season, aiming to light the conference up with their offensive onslaughts and goaltending greatness.

"As a team, [we] just [have to] be committed to play on the right side of the puck, to be strong defensively," Rivett said. "We've got one of, if not the best, goaltender in the country as our backbone. But she's being pushed along the way too with some of our younger ones, so that's certainly going to be a strength for our group this year. Hopefully, we can continue to demonstrate that we can grow from an offensive standpoint and figure our way out as we move along."

However, the team refuses to back down from the pressure of those goals,

choosing instead to take each game as an opportunity to progress as a group and put the big picture together in chasing their first conference championship and second national championship.

"We want to continue to grow and get an opportunity to play deep into the year and ultimately push for a national championship," Rivett said. "But winning it back means trying to get a Canada West Championship, which we've never done before. We've got a lot standing in our way to be able to do that but, I think we've got a good group who's certainly highly motivated in order to try and help us get there."

With the season start date looming over them, Rivett believes the fans will be treated to an unbelievable season, insisting on the excitement waiting for them at Flames Community Arena.

"You know what? Whether it's our program or men's hockey it doesn't matter which you're showing up at Flames Community Arena," Rivett said. "I think both programs established themselves as some of the top programs in the country."

"Our programs continue to feed the pro ranks, whether it be over in Europe or hopefully, through the PWHL and names that you see in this rink with our team and others are names you're going to see down the line on the pro side of things."

The Cougars women's hockey team open their season as they host the Trinity Western University Spartans at the Flames

Continues on Pg.14



The MRU Cougars women's team celebrating one of their nine preseason goals, a milestone they achieved in just four games. Photo by Adrian Shellard

#S

29, goals scored by the Calgary Flames in their first six preseason games

\$192M, contract extension signed by Joel Embiid to stay with the 76ers for three more years

1, USPORTS national championship in Mount Royal University Cougars history, won by the 2022-23 women's hockey team

2, triple doubles racked up by Caitlin Clark, the most by a WNBA rookie ever

Continued from Pg.13

Community Arena on Oct. 4 at 7 P.M. All games stream live on Canada West TV.

Men's hockey

Semi-final losses are a dreaded but familiar sight for the men's squad, who have yet to advance past that stage of the conference playoffs. They posted their best regular season record since joining Canada West and USPORTS in 2023-24 with 21 wins, six losses, and one overtime loss, good for the third-best record in the conference. The team made the playoffs for the tenth consecutive season but failed to break their conference semi-final curse, losing in a hard-fought two-game series to the UofC Dinos.

It's hard to call that run a disappointment by any measure, though, as head coach Bertrum Gilling puts it, as the team was underestimated before the season even began.

"There were really no expectations for us," Gilling said. "We were the fourth youngest team in the country and the youngest team in Canada West...we were picked fifth in the preseason polls, but you could just tell early that there was a great vibe with our guys. They enjoyed being around each other. They love coming to the rink to work, and you go out on a little roll and and we just rode it."

The team also had to say goodbye to seven players, including one of, if not the greatest, player in Cougars USPORTS history, Connor Blake. After the final game against the Dinos, Gilling had a moment with his boys in the locker room.

"It was a really nice group and this was one of the most fun years I've had coaching since I've been here," Gilling said. "The guys left everything on the ice."

"At that moment it was about recognizing our graduating player, Connor Blake, and just understanding that that's the last time that that group would be together like that. To take a moment of appreciation in just saying, 'thank you for all the dedication and the hours in the weight room, the hours on the practice ice, all the travel and, for being a part of it.'"

Going into the new season, the Cougars men's team are in a great place. With a well-established and player-loved head coach, one of the best goaltenders in the country in Shane Farkas, nuclear offensive talents like Connor Bouchard, and a

perfectly primed supporting cast, MRU has everything they need to make a run at Canada West and USPORTS titles. According to Farkas, who won 2023-24 USPORTS Goalie of the Year, it all starts with Gilling's leadership from the sidelines.

"Bert really, truly cares for all of us as people, individuals, athletes and a team," Farkas said. "I've been around sports for most of my life, and I don't think I've seen many examples where I've seen a coach care as much as he does and put as much time and effort into the things that he does."

"Everything that he does is with purpose and he's honest with you. At the end of the day, that's what you want. I think most of the guys in our room can take that and know that it's not judgment. It's constructive criticism. It's a good balance and he always does the right thing for us," said Farkas.

With seven players in the first year of eligibility, the combination of savvy veteran skaters and a composed coaching crew play perfectly when it comes to leading the rookies into battle. Those first-year players have much to learn and have already begun receiving advice from their senior teammates.

"Our approach is a little bit more like a country club vibe," Farkas joked. "Most of the advice is just 'don't be afraid to ask questions. Be yourself. This is the first time in your life, in your hockey career where you are really living on your own and you probably have some more freedoms. So be happy. Be human. If you're struggling, just reach out to us, but work hard every day.'"

With this composition of competitive components, the men's team only has one thing on their mind—breaking the curse of conference semi-final eliminations and joining the women's team in the championship corner.

"We know how important every single point is in the regular season," Gilling said. "Yes, we've lost in the semifinal series. We haven't made it past that, but we've never been at home for it either."

"I want to break through. I want that moment. My guys want that. The players want it. But there's a lot that goes into it."

The men's cold and unforgiving path to greatness begins on the road as they face the Trinity Western University Spartans on Oct. 4. The home opener is set for the following week on Oct. 11 at the Flames Community Arena against the University of British Columbia Thunderbirds.

Farkas and the rest of the

team expressed a strong desire to see Cougar fans flood the arena, but those that can't come to games can catch every game on Canada

West TV.

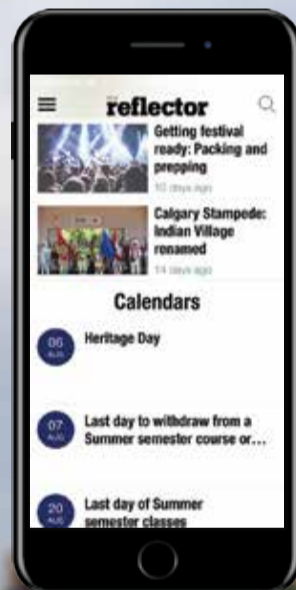
"I would really appreciate it if we could see a few more faces out at games for sure," Farkas said. "But, anytime

we can get some support from someone other than our grandparents, it's very, very much appreciated."

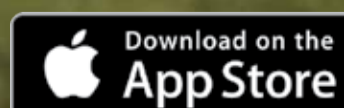


Lyndsey Janes, one of the few players left from the 2022-23 USPORTS National Championship team, is now tasked with being a leader of this year's Cougars women's hockey squad, who have six rookies on their roster. Photo by Adrian Shellard

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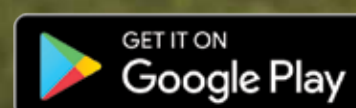


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Cougars dressed in Dinos clothing

How students from three different universities come together to play baseball

Naomi Campbell

Contributor

The University of Calgary (UofC) Dinos Baseball Team is one of the many clubs that make up the UofC's athletics program. The long standing association has gone to compete against teams across Alberta and British Columbia, even winning their first ever Canadian College World Series Championship in May of 2023. As some of you may or may not know, it is not only students that attend the University of Calgary that get to play, but also your fellow Mount Royal University (MRU) classmates and peers you see wandering the halls everyday. With UofC having the only university baseball team in Calgary, it is the only option for some of these boys to continue to play baseball while attending university classes.

Eric Wirun has been playing with the Dinos for the past four years while pursuing a business degree at MRU. When asked about reading break, and how scheduling can conflict being from MRU, he was very transparent with how working around these

conflicts has only gotten easier to navigate over the past 4 years.

"It is just a little bit funky cause when everyone's going back and seeing their parents and taking time off, it kind of sucks cause ours line up differently. I'd say the biggest pain though is when we do have those out of town trips... it was very very hard to get my midterm moved, not being an MRU athlete made the process really tricky," Wirun said.

Wirun also shed some light on the subject of not being able to play on a scholarship basis, and how that had an effect on his decision of where to go for university.

"I just fell in love with the atmosphere and the program [at MRU]," Wirun said. "I know it's a big chunk of money but it just seemed like such a small price to pay."

Wirun also shared his thoughts on the collaboration of three different schools under one logo, stating that while he believes it benefits the institutions, he feels more awareness is needed. He emphasized the importance

of informing students that they can apply to their desired university even if it doesn't have everything they hoped for—there is always a solution.

Two of the rookies also provided a different perspective on this controversial situation. Joey Ell previously attended the UofC before making the decision to transfer to MRU to pursue a psychology degree. While at UofC, Ell did not play with the Dinos, but was still playing high level club baseball. After taking a year off of school and not playing baseball anymore, he made the decision to apply to both MRU and the Dinos Baseball Team.

"When I took that year off from playing really competitive baseball, I was like 'no I have to go back.' And this was really my only option at the age group I'm at. And MRU with their smaller class sizes, that was more of a preference for me," said Ell.

Evan Gorr, another rookie, gave his reasons as to why he also chose MRU over UofC.

"I always wanted to go

to Calgary and stay close to home. And I ended up choosing Mount Royal because of the class sizes and such, being able to play baseball for UofC was kind of a bonus," Gorr said.

Ben Hul, a third-year finance major at MRU, shared how the baseball program's club status, rather than being a varsity sport, influenced his decision to attend a university close to home. While he acknowledged the lack of scholarships as a drawback, Hul noted that the cost wasn't a significant concern for him, thanks to his parents living in Calgary.

Head coach Cameron Williams has been a part of the Dinos baseball program since starting out as a player in 2015, moving into the position of head coach in 2020. With players from three different schools, Williams shared valuable thoughts on how they balance their educational and athletic commitments. He emphasized that while most players face similar challenges, their success lies in maintaining constant

communication.

"Just asking players to communicate with us right away... the big one is just open communication amongst them cause everyone has a little bit of a different situation," Williams said. "Even at MRU, the professors are still willing to work with them even though they are a part of Dino's athletics and not Cougars athletics, they are still wanting to support."

Even though they are all from different schools and different situations, the Dinos Athletics Program and the Canadian College Baseball Conference have done an amazing job including everyone. Allowing students to play, even if they are not interested in attending the University of Calgary is a wonderful opportunity for the past, present and future generations of Canadian baseball talent.

After all, this group of boys is here for one thing only—to play baseball. Even though they swing for the fences with a Dinos logo on their jerseys, their blood is Cougar blue, just like all of us at MRU.



The University of Calgary Dinos baseball team, pictured, practice with players from multiple schools, including MRU. Photo by Naomi Campbell

Passing the WNBA torch to a new generation

How Caitlin Clark and other rookies took the sporting world by storm in 2024

Noah Wilson

Staff Writer

The 2024 Women's National Basketball Association (WNBA) draft was the most coveted draft in the league's history. This explosion in popularity was in response to college phenom Caitlin Clark entering the league and getting selected No.1 overall by the Indiana Fever.

Fever executives looked at Clark to bring a fresh outlook of dominance, popularity, and growth the league had never seen before.

From opening night tip-off, Clark lived up to her demanding expectations, smashing numerous records and feats no other rookie—or player for that matter—has managed to accomplish.

For starters, Clark finished her rookie season with 19.2 points per game being the fastest player to reach 100, 200, and 350 career points.

By the season's end, she broke the single-season record for most points by a guard with 769 points.

Clark certainly passes the

eye test, meaning whether you watch her in a game or on a highlight reel, it's easy to identify that she has a supernatural talent for scoring the basketball.

What may be overlooked however is her playmaking ability. Clark is a very intelligent basketball player making her an elite-level playmaker.

She showcased this talent when she racked up an impressive 8.4 assists, which landed her the single-season assist record as the most assists in a WNBA season.

Rounding out her offensive game, she also has an underrated knack for securing rebounds, collecting 5.7 this season. That propelled her to be the first rookie in the WNBA to score a triple-double, of which she had two on the season.

Clark is undebatably a generational talent, with so many hidden facets to her game that make her one of the most explosive and well-rounded female basketball

players we have today.

Looking back at her rookie season, it's easy to see that she had one of the most dominant and accomplished rookie seasons in all of sports and topped it off by winning the WNBA Rookie of the Year this past month.

Clark went above and beyond her rookie expectations and as a result has set the league on notice as one of the best players in the league.

What's terrifying is her youth—at only 22 year-old Clark has more than enough time to supercharge her game with a professional training regimen and years of competition against the greatest in the sport ahead of her. With this season alone, she has cemented herself in conversation with players such as A'ja Wilson, Sabrina Ionescu, and Kelsey Plum as not only the best players in the WNBA but also the most influential.

Although Clark's performance on the court this season was otherworldly, where she brought the most value was the exposure and promotion they collectively brought to WNBA and women's basketball off the court and onto your screens.

The WNBA season drew close to a million total viewers on average for their games this season, a feat that has not been accomplished for 16 years dating back to 2008.

On top of that, it has been revealed that every demographic viewership category has seen a double-digit increase with the most substantial increases coming from young viewers and male viewers.

Some credit should go to the WNBA's marketing division as well, as they made sure to take advantage of Clark's arrival by making access to the WNBA much easier with many more national broadcasts.

Due to this, the viewership of young girls (7 to 17) shot up to 181 per cent increase while

teenage girls and women (18 to 34) grew by 54 per cent which is incredible for the sport.

Clark wasn't the only rookie to shine this year either. The entire 2024 rookie class did their part to promote the game this season.

Like Clark, no.7 overall pick Angel Reese of the Chicago Sky brought her share of superiority to the league by breaking numerous records of her own, providing skilful highlights and many infamous quotes that showed the league she will be one of the elite talents for years to come.

Reese finished off her rookie campaign with 13.6 points per game and an astonishing 13.1 rebounds per game which is the most by any rookie ever.

This record break was so impressive in the basketball world that even ex-NBA star, Gilbert Arenas, showed his praise when he said on his podcast, Gil's Arena, that Reese has the potential to become the best WNBA rebounder of all time.

For Reese, although she may not share the same finesse and playstyle as her rival Clark, she still managed to show the same flashes of absolute stardom during points of this season.

Reese proved her skillset of bully ball could match the high flying abilities of Clark. Reese paved the way for herself and now it's up to her how far she wants to take it. For her, the sky's the limit.

Sparks rookie, Cameron Brink, had a promising start to her season before it was cut short by an ACL tear. Even in her limited playing time, there were flashes of magnificence that only served as confirmation of her impending stardom.

Brink showed huge potential early, as in high school, she averaged just under four blocks per game as a freshman. In her sophomore season, Brink led Southridge to a 28–1 record and a second straight Class 6A state championship posting

17.1 points, 10.5 rebounds and 2.7 blocks per game.

In the NCAA, Brink was a college all-star at Stanford. In her senior year, she averaged 21.5 points per game, 20.5 rebounds, and 2 blocks per game, leading the team as the top seed and regular season champion heading into the PAC-12 tournament.

Although Stanford did not win it all, Brink was still awarded a spot on the All-tournament team after her hall-of-fame-level season leading up to that point.

Even a rookie such as Nika Muhl, after a successful college career, played in the shadows of a stacked Seattle Storm team, Muhl managed to promote the game in other ways by appearing on the heavily known Instagram account, "League Fits" as one of the best-dressed players in the WNBA.

Although she is well dressed, she is also a very good basketball player who will hopefully be able to showcase her talents more on the court as she gains more playing time.

The WNBA as a product has grown exceptionally—growth that few would have imagined, especially with the uncertainty surrounding the league not too many years ago.

Now, with this injection of superpowered rookies, that old uncertainty is as good as gone. The WNBA is growing, and it's growing fast.

With the influx of talent, personalities, and of course an exceptional product on the court, women's basketball has changed forever. The viewership numbers have rocketed this season and have put North American women's sports in the best position it has ever been in.

We are experiencing a renaissance in women's basketball and women's sports as a whole. There's no telling just what the future holds for not only Clark, Reese, and the other rookies, but the WNBA and women's sports as a whole.



Caitlin Clark, pictured, and other members of the 2024 WNBA rookie class have brought unparalleled attention to the sport with their stellar on-court performances.

Phot courtesy of Instagram/ @caitlinclark22