

# the reflector

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# Opinion: Rally 'round the flag

*O Canada! Not so passive anymore*

**Ryan Montgomery**

Staff Writer

Canadians are not a typically nationalistic bunch. As a whole, flag-waving, fist-pumping, and screaming til you're red-white-and-blue in the face puts a bad taste in our mouths. Much too... American for our sensibilities. Or, that was, until Feb. 1, 2025.

It was then that President Donald Trump signed an executive order placing a 25 per cent tariff on all goods coming from Canada, and a 10 per cent tariff on energy.

Now, if you'll permit me a bit of boring policy talk for a bit because they won't let me write this unless it's educational, it's worthwhile to go over exactly what a tariff is because if you read Elon's Twitter replies, it seems no one really knows.

A tariff is a tax placed on imported goods. For the sake of explanation: you, as an American entrepreneur, want to buy your goods from China because it's so much cheaper when labour laws are secondary to human rights. However, Uncle Sam wants you to buy American goods to fuel American jobs, so the federal government places a tariff on goods coming from China. This means you now have to pay the price of the Chinese goods you bought, plus the price of the tariffs. In short, you pay the tariff.

So, when President Trump says he's going to place a 25 per cent tariff on Canadian goods, (their largest trading partner mind you) this means that the price of all imports from Canada will increase by 25 per cent. Alberta crude oil? 25 per cent more expensive. Ontario car parts? 25 per cent more expensive. Overpriced maple syrup in novelty maple leaf bottles meant as a scam for gullible tourists? 25 per cent more expensive. In America.

Discussing these tariffs in any rational way gives them more credit than they are due. Trump gave various reasons for threatening to essentially tank the Canadian



**With tensions rising over tariffs, trade wars, and Trump, Canadians are celebrating and advertising their nationality more than ever. Photo courtesy of Pexels**

economy.

First, the commander-in-chief drew an issue with the Canadian-U.S. trade deficit. Trump, assumedly having asked ChatGPT to name him a big dramatic number, claimed that the deficit was a staggering \$250 billion U.S. This is in spite of the fact that in 2023, the actual number was \$64 billion U.S. Where Trump found this extra \$196 billion, I'm sure the CRA would love to know.

Then, after the trade deficit, came border security and drugs. Trump claimed that the northern border was a hotbed of drugs and illegal immigrants.

Additionally, Trump claimed the tariffs were to "combat the scourge of fentanyl." A noble end no doubt, if not for the fact that only 43 pounds, less than one per cent of fentanyl in the U.S. comes across the Canadian border. Then after drugs, Trump made up that American banks couldn't operate in Canada, which is something that isn't true.

With the spectre of economic devastation looming above the Great White North, questions floated about how Canadians would react. Would they bicker among themselves and

splinter? Would they cave to U.S. demands and sheepishly give Trump his 51st state? The unity of the country, especially after the past few years of increasing partisan polarization, was left in question.

In a patriotic turn of events that was by no means surprising, Canadians of every province, language, party, and background rallied against American aggression. One of the major causes of this was Trump's repeated insistence that Canada would become the 51st state. Canadians, collectively remembering the view of the White House burning through their ancestor's eyes, unified wholeheartedly against Trump and his tariffs.

In heartwarming Canadian fashion, this newfound surge of patriotism found no louder home than in that of the good ol' hockey game. Across North America, in Ottawa, Vancouver, and Montreal, hockey fans fervently booed and jeered the star-spangled banner. Where once drunk NHL fans stood silent with their hands over their hearts and their team-branded hats solemnly removed from their heads. Now, the deafening roar of national displeasure drained out the feeble voices

of singers wishing they had taken another gig. Even Raptors fans got involved when they booed the U.S. anthem at a Feb. 2 NBA game. Hopefully, come the opening of the 2025 Major League Baseball (MLB) series, Blue Jays fans will join in and we can get the anthem-booing three-peat.

This rinkside patriotism found its zenith at the 2025 4 Nations Face-Off. A nail-biting, heart-pounding, conflict between Canada, America, and the broadly irrelevant teams of Sweden and Finland. While the American team beat the Canadians in their first showdown in Montreal, the Canadians rallied in the final game held in Boston.

With national pride and our hockey cred on the line, Canadians from coast to coast said their prayers to our heavenly centre, Connor McJesus. With his pants-soiling overtime goal, the Canucks beat the Yanks. Glorious.

The great Canadian tariff war did not end at the stadium doors, it also extended to the liquor store. Canadians, doing what they do best, heard there was a fight and ran to buy booze.

What ensued could only

be described as a purge of prohibition-era proportions. Across the country, American liquors were dragged from shelves in a surge of patriotic fervour. The Liquor Control Board of Ontario (LCBO), one of the largest liquor purchasers in the world, announced they would cease the sale of American liquor indefinitely.

The same occurred in British Columbia with government liquor stores pulling red-state-produced liquor from their shelves. It was also at this time that many jingoistic Canucks tragically learned how many of their favourite types of liquor came from America. Bourbon and Jack Daniels and White Claws, Oh my!

Since February, it's been True North strong and free, the maple leaf forever, and no one knows what the hell a mile is (insert triumphant goose honk here).

Many questions still stand as to what will happen next. The dreaded date of the return of tariffs—March 4—is now upon us, where in the early hours of that morning, U.S. tariffs came into effect, and so did the Canadian response.

In a decisive move, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau announced that if Trump's tariffs remain in place, Canada will hit back hard with retaliatory measures: 25 per cent tariffs on up to \$155 billion of U.S. goods. The first, covering \$30 billion worth of products immediately, with additional countermeasures on the remaining \$125 billion in 21 days time.

Maybe tomorrow Trump will change his mind and announce Hawaii is the 11th province, there's really no way to tell.

In such an uncertain time, it's nice to cling to a few undeniable truths. Hockey is still our game, our beer is still stronger, and we'll never be the 51st state. RAH!

# MRU maintains a strong performance in Canadian post-secondary education rankings

**Khaoula Choual**

Staff Writer

Mount Royal University (MRU) has once again exhibited academic distinction, receiving recognition in several areas in the most recent CourseCompare rankings. CourseCompare is a Canadian marketplace for education that serves over two million people globally, but they aid mostly Canadians who are looking for domestic education opportunities. Jessica Robinson, CourseCompare's content marketing manager, provided insights into MRU's great success and how the university is adjusting to changing educational and economic environments.



**Ranked as the second-best flight school in Canada by CourseCompare, MRU's aviation program offers pilot-training and flight education. Photo courtesy of Instagram/@mountroual\_aviation**

## MRU ranking success

In CourseCompare's 2025 rankings, MRU ranked high in five categories: aviation schools, online universities, change management certifications, interior design, and massage therapy. By finishing second in flight school rankings, MRU also reinforced its reputation in a narrow but critical category in flight education.

"That's a really good indicator that where MRU is being recognized, it's doing so exceptionally well compared to its peers," said Robinson.

## Key performance indicators for MRU

CourseCompare assesses schools using a number of fundamental criteria, such as employer recognition, student happiness, and job placement rates. With an outstanding 91 per cent graduate employment rate within six months of graduation and an 87 per cent student satisfaction rating, MRU performed exceptionally well.

Robinson underlined that MRU's high rankings are partly due to its accreditation. The university's flight school graduates have a competitive edge in the job market because it is one of only two programs in Canada to receive certification from the Aviation Accreditation Board.

In addition to aviation, MRU's ranking performance was supported by its online programs. The university's dedication to accessible and flexible education was demonstrated by its fifth-place finish in the online universities category. Due to a blend of synchronous and asynchronous learning alternatives, students can balance their education, jobs, and family obligations.

## Effects of economic changes and student population growth

Robinson pointed out that while the population of students is not a direct ranking indicator, growth can be associated with enhanced program options and a better reputation. MRU has been

fortunate in avoiding many financial difficulties, as it is serving a predominantly domestic audience.

Robinson said that MRU's percentage of international students is still low, at about 3.09 per cent, compared to the national average of between 18 and 24 per cent. As a result, the university has experienced a limited direct impact from the current rearrangement of international student visas.

However, student demand for some majors has been greatly impacted by economic concerns. According to Robinson, "Canada's higher education system is sort of at a crossroads right now."

Students are looking for programs with specific career goals as a result of declining international enrollment, growing tuition expenses, and a quickly changing labour market.

## The adjustment of MRU to AI and technological developments

MRU is actively incorporating artificial

intelligence (AI) into its curriculum as it transforms several industries. The university offers a four-year undergraduate data science program, the first of its type in Alberta, and was the first in Canada to deploy an AI-powered security system.

MRU's Academic Development Centre also advises teachers on how to incorporate AI into classes while retaining academic integrity. Robinson underlined that the university is balancing AI-enabled learning with traditional academic methodologies.

"We can't pretend that AI doesn't exist, we can't train graduates to rely on it entirely in case it implodes. So educating and informing and really striking a balance between AI-enabled learning and independent learning," she said. "Most schools are really making a concerted effort to walk that line to incorporate AI in curriculum...while still ensuring that students are capable without AI."

## Industry collaborations

## and professional preparedness

MRU has established solid industry connections to guarantee that graduates are prepared for the workforce. This is seen in the university's flight school working with major airlines like Porter Airlines, Sunwing, and WestJet. Students can directly apply for jobs through the Jazz Aviation Pathway program.

## Looking ahead at MRU's future

MRU's dedication to student achievement and industry relevance has been demonstrated by its steady rankings and flexible approaches. MRU is establishing itself as a leader in Canadian post-secondary education by promoting excellent job results, using modern technologies, and preserving industry ties.

Despite the future of education constantly being reshaped by economic and technological shifts, MRU has demonstrated its ability to innovate and adapt for the future.

# Fire season ahead: What you need to know

**Aiden Johner**

Photo Editor



**Residents in Alberta can expect to start preparing for wildfires as early as March, and should keep their heads on a swivel for upcoming news releases and bans. Photo courtesy of Wikimedia Commons**

## Firewatch

With the cozy winds of spring starting to make its way to Alberta, it can feel like such a relief to feel warm air after five months of winter cold. With that in mind, something else might be popping into Albertan's heads: the inevitable smoke.

Wildfire season in Alberta typically runs from March to October each year, which means that the 2025 wildfire season is already underway. Don't start panicking yet though, because the Alberta government has plans in place to help prevent fires from starting and from inevitably spreading further. To manage fire risks, Alberta enforces fire bans, conducts prescribed burns, and has implemented a community fireguard program to protect local communities.

## Fire bans

As someone who likes to camp and enjoys having s'mores by the fire, I too find myself annoyed that Alberta has so many fire bans.

However, it is important to understand that fire bans exist for a reason. In 2024, 50 per cent of the 1,184 wildfires in Alberta were caused by human activity.

Fire bans exist to help keep the risk of wildfires lower. When it comes to fire bans

in Alberta, it is important to note that the province is separated into many different areas where different people oversee the implementation of fire bans.

Towns and cities have their discretion and can choose to implement bans when they see fit. In the case of provincial parks, those areas are overseen by Alberta Parks.

However, for the majority of the province, the government of Alberta makes decisions through the Forest Protection Area (FPA).

The provincial government has four different tiers of fire bans in its fire ban system. Those are fire advisories, restrictions or bans, forest closures, and off-highway vehicle restrictions.

The FPA encompasses nearly all of Alberta. Outside of the FPA, every town, city, and forested area in Alberta has its own legislation and can instate a fire ban at their discretion.

The Calgary Fire Department is constantly monitoring weather forecasts and conditions to ensure Calgary is ready for any increased fire risk.

In short, these fire bans are put in place to keep the land and the people who live on it safer from the looming threat of wildfires. Fire bans

aren't always able to stop wildfires though as 47 per cent of the wildfires in 2024 were caused by lightning. Stopping human-caused fires is only half the battle, and the province also has systems in place to help mediate the naturally occurring wildfires.

## Prescribed fires

If you have never heard of a prescribed fire or a controlled burn, it is essentially a controlled fire started to help prevent the spread of wildfires and restore the health of the ecosystem.

It may seem counterintuitive to burn parts of a forest to prevent the spread of wildfires but this practice is used worldwide.

Aside from being good for the environment and ecosystems in the area, prescribed fires also reduce the amount of fuel in the form of dead leaves, twigs, branches, dry grass, and fallen logs, that get built up on the forest floor and help sustain and spread fires.

These prescribed burns happen under heavy planning and are very closely monitored to ensure that the fires can remain under control. The Alberta government currently has two projects planned. These consist of one to two prescribed fires each in

Ribbon Creek, and Pelican Mountain. While the Ribbon Creek fire would be intended to help prevent the spread of wildfires and help create a healthier ecosystem, the fires started at Pelican Mountain appear to be more for research purposes.

## Keepin' it cool

We live in a province with beautiful scenery, but it can be hard to see it when it is covered in smoke. It's important that Alberta has systems in place to maintain a healthy ecosystem—and equally as important that you, as an Albertan, keep those systems in mind.

If you are someone who likes camping or just enjoys having a fire in your backyard, it's good to keep in mind fire safety and respect fire bans. If you intend on having a fire anywhere in the world, make sure to check your local area and find out if there's a ban or restriction.

For those of you who intend on spending some time outdoors, it may be a good idea to keep tabs on wildfires in your area.

For those interested, the Government of Alberta has an app on IOS and Android that allows you to keep track of the wildfires throughout the province called AB Wildfires Status.

## THE REFLECTOR

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## the reflector

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## Overconsuming overconsumption

*Overindulging in material items is not a hot girl activity*

Acacia Carol, Staff Writer & Bella Coco, News Editor

For a generation labelled as planet saviours, Generation Z sure has a lot of explaining to do. Now, we're not calling all of you imposters. We're on the same team (04' babies, anyone?), and sometimes, unintentionally, we may bite off more than we can chew.

What we're referring to is the mass amount of overconsumption that has dramatically increased since the COVID-19 pandemic. The number of clothes the average consumer purchases has increased by over 60 per cent in the last 25 years, not to mention other industries such as food and cosmetics.

The issue affects us on a local scale too. Sustainable Calgary assessed that Calgarians struggled with two critical issues in their "State of our City" report in 1988—overconsumption of resources and socio-economic equality.

The best part? Their 2020 assessment found basically the same thing. Way to stay consistent, Calgary.

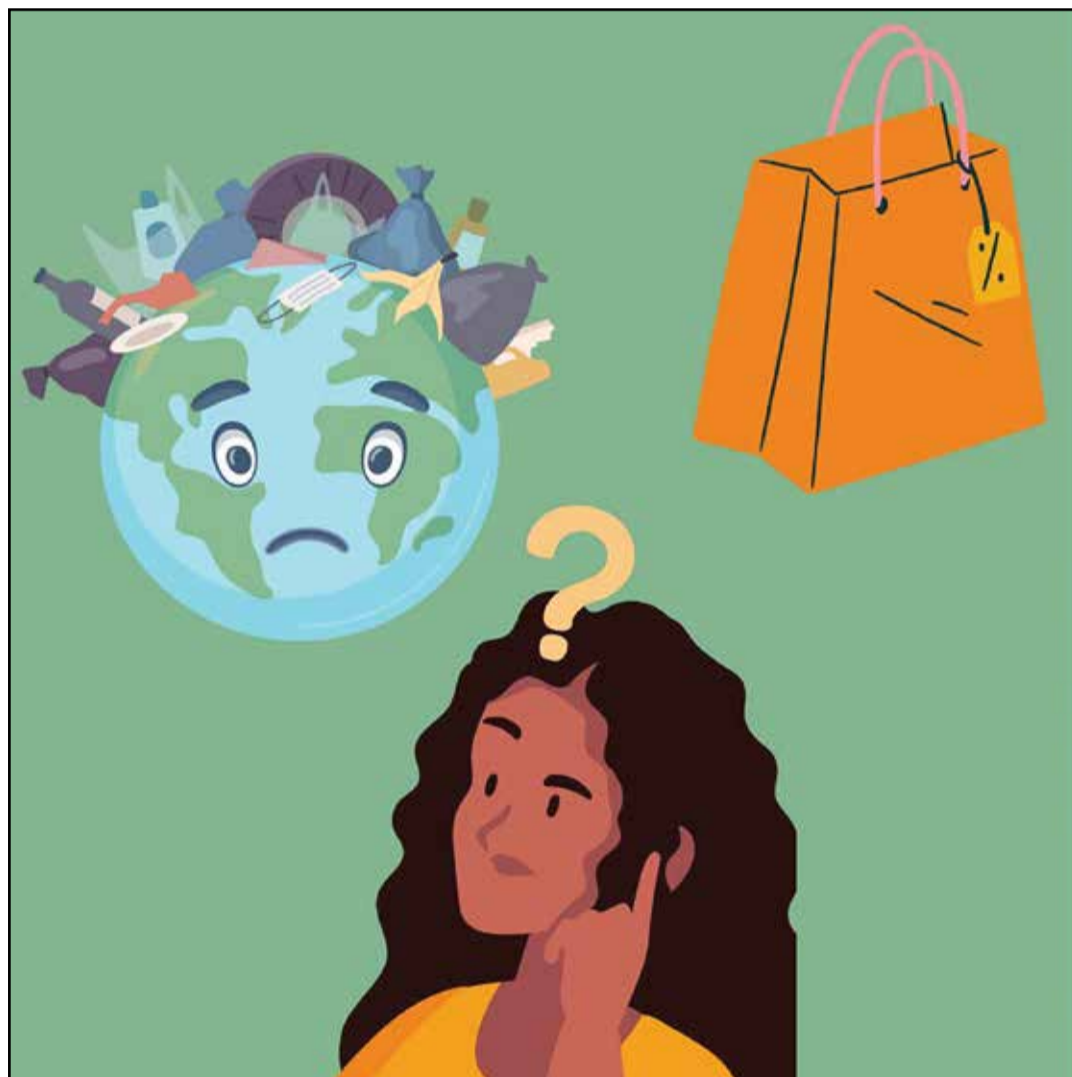
They explain that the opportunity for a slow, gradual, watching paint dry type of change was in 1988. It's not too late, but we need to find quicker solutions and be aware of exactly how this will impact our lives.

"We must now embark on a rapid transition or face the real prospect of significantly compromised quality of life and livelihoods and a precarious future for our children and their city," the assessment explains.

They go even further to outline seven specific areas where Calgary needs help and surprisingly, our natural environment and sense of community are doing pretty well (yay). But our economics, education, wellness, resource use, and governance are all in the proverbial red.

"Okay, I'm not the mayor of Calgary, it's not like I'm in charge of allocating resources!" You may be thinking to yourself.

Fair, we'll give you that. But our attitude around



**With the rise in influencer culture and normalized expectations of overconsumption, people may find themselves at a crossroads between splurging and saving. Graphic created by Acacia Carol and Bella Coco using Canva**

overconsumption affects everyone and it starts top down.

If we as individual consumers must be mindful of where our money goes, who it supports, and the impact it will have on the next seven generations, should we not expect that and more from our elected officials?

Not only does overconsumption muddle the mind on what we really need both personally and politically, but it also takes away from our day-one provider: Earth.

### **Are we the environmentalists everyone thinks we are?**

Let's get this out of the way: we can't beat the stats. The Gen Z Activism Survey

conducted by the United Way of the National Capital Area found that 66 per cent of Gen Zers participate in online activism, and 32 per cent are involved in social justice.

Well, we hate to burst your bubble, but 33 per cent of Gen Zers admit to being addicted to fast fashion.

What is fast fashion you ask? You may have heard the term trending on TikTok or in a news story (wink, wink). According to Ocean Generation, fast fashion is the consumption of low-cost, trendy clothing rapidly produced by retailers in response to the latest trends.

Essentially, fast fashion is a parasite that leeches onto the idea of staying up-to-date on trends and never wearing the same thing twice. Pretty barbaric, right?

Online companies like

Shein and Temu use fast fashion to turn over a quick profit by marketing affordable prices and speedy shipping to consumers. However, those precious prices are due to an exponential increase in pollution and the ill-treatment of labour workers.

Common cheap materials in fast fashion, like polyester, also contribute to a large consumption of water and emit more carbon dioxide. This may surprise you, but the fashion industry emits more carbon than any other global industry.

Fast fashion is just one factor of overconsumption. However, each factor has one thing in common: they need Earth's resources, and they need it fast.

With a focus on making money, products these days are made much quicker with

much lower quality. It has become normalized to use more disposable products that require more materials to market.

Every product we have comes from somewhere, and there's a high possibility that the shirt on your back has contributed to pollution, loss of biodiverse life, and increased carbon emissions.

Pretty crazy, huh?

Not to get all depressing, but we have reached a point where we can no longer sustain the resources that we deplete.

However, there's always an opportunity to grow.

### **Let's all do better**

Now, we're not saying you can't buy products. However, it's easy to be a smart consumer.

We're going to hold your hand when we say this. You do not need four white T-shirts. You do not need the newest must-have makeup product that influencers are preaching through your screens. And no, that trend is not timeless. In two months, you and everyone else on social media will deem it tacky and throw that bubble skirt at the closest thrift.

When something catches your eye, take a moment, and consider the following:

- Do I already own this in one way or another?
  - Do I want this because of interest or because everyone else and their mother has one?
  - Will I want this in three months?
  - How often will I use this?
  - What emotional gain will I receive from this?
- If you want to take a step further, take the time to research company production practices. Do they have green initiatives? Are they committed to sustainability? Are they cruelty-free?
- Being a sustainable consumer can feel like a lot of work, but it's the amount of work we owe the planet to push for a brighter future.

# REFLECTOR RAMBLERS

## Alberta's prion problems: "Zombie deer" and "mad cow" disease explained

**Arroy (AJ) Jacob**

Web Editor

Neurodegenerative diseases are rare, but they're fast and fatal. For example, Albertans have seen 145 cases of Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease (CJD) since 1998. Diseases like CJD are essential to keep track of because there is still no cure. However, more awareness of how these diseases occur at the molecular level never hurt an Albertan more than not knowing why their family members, pets, or cattle catch the disease to begin with.

Therefore, it's essential to start with its origin—prions, now considered one of the most dangerous molecules on Earth.

### What are prions?

Prions are proteins that already exist in healthy mammalian brains. The danger, however, comes from when one of these prions sporadically misfolds and "infects" all other proteins around it to do the same. Misfolding refers to the proteins twisting into a non-functional form. If more proteins in the brain lose their function, brain cell death occurs, and neurodegenerative diseases are diagnosed.

Various types of prion diseases have plagued mammals for a very long

time. These diseases affect both animals and humans and can potentially transfer between species. This is possible because prions can exist in the environment for years.

### Prion diseases in animals

Bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE), also known as "mad cow disease," occurs in cattle. It mainly begins when they consume feed infected with prions. As the prions infect their brains and propagate protein misfolding, the cattle experience intense behavioural changes, including aggression and tremors. Physiological changes include loss of weight and milk production ability.

Chronic wasting disease (CWD), also known as "zombie deer disease," plagues cervids (deer). It is more rare but is also just as fatal as BSE. Prions can infect a deer when it physically contacts an infected corpse or excrement. Like a virus, the prions can incubate within the new "vessel" for months before it exhibits symptoms. Some include excessive drooling, drinking and urination, and even depression before it dies in

the wild. If another deer comes into contact with it, the cycle repeats. According to the Government of Alberta, the total number of CWD cases in the province since September 2005 is 6,163.

### Prion diseases in humans

There is ample evidence to suggest that humans who consume beef that has been infected with prions develop variant Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease (vCJD). This rare but invariably fatal neurodegenerative disorder overlaps with symptoms of dementia and physiological disrepair. Victims are bedridden and are given less than a year to survive before they are pulled into a permanent vegetative state.

No studies suggest that consuming deer meat infected with prions would lead to human disease, but Alberta hunters, guides, and landowners are told to inform their local health authorities.

Despite its eeriness, prion-induced neurodegenerative diseases are infrequent amongst cattle, deer, and humans. Efforts since its discovery have kept the disease at bay. If anything regarding prions should be spread to the public, it should be its awareness.

## PHENOMENA brings optical illusions to Telus Spark

**Liam Rockliffe**

Features Editor



Reflector news editor Bella Coco, right, and I, left, found our already obvious height disparity magnified by the illusion of the Ames room, which makes for great Instagram pictures. Photo courtesy of Bella Coco

PHENOMENA is an exhibition at Telus Spark taking place from Jan. 19 to March 26 that dives into the world of optical illusions, showing how easily your brain can be tricked. Through hands-on exhibits and mind-bending visuals, visitors can explore the science behind perception and discover why things aren't always as they seem.

Upon entering PHENOMENA, you are greeted by a room resembling a photo booth. When entered, three RGB lights are pointed against a white wall; when walked in front of, these lights change the colour of the shadow created by the viewer. But this box of shadow magic is just the start of one of the trippiest endeavours a Calgarian can embark upon.

Continuing deeper into the exhibit, several famous optical illusions are present in every open space like the Ames room. From the outside looking in, the room makes two things look disproportionately sized to each other. If two people are in this room, at the right location, one will look gargantuan, and the other will shrink. A perfect Instagram opportunity.

If you're concerned about not having a friend to take photos of you in the impossible situations PHENOMENA presents, never fear as when I went, there were employees ready to help—or even give

you fascinating information on the illusions.

The event also has a "visually swirling" tunnel that had me white knuckle gripping the railings from fear of falling. At the back of the exhibit, there is also an incredible mirror maze, perfect for reenacting the fight scene from "John Wick: Chapter 2." This mirror maze comes complete with bashing your face off a mirror, as well as being trapped forever as you continue going in identical circles.

Upon leaving PHENOMENA, I was left questioning everything I saw, unsure of reality and my place in the universe. Luckily, Telus Spark also has another attraction of a "virtual sandbox." When entered, lights on the floor and walls track your every movement, turning your shape into a colourful amalgamation of light. There is then a giant room of lit walls and flooring which tracks your every step, sometimes clearing the light wherever you stand, or lighting your footprints. This room was a more relaxed experience, a perfect place to sit and watch the lights move under the steps of children playing.

Overall, Telus Spark's PHENOMENA experience was a pleasure to be a part of, and I highly recommend any student to take advantage of the student discount and melt away into shifting colours and twisting scenes.



Zombie deer disease is a rare form of neurodegenerative disease that has affected over six thousand deers in Alberta since September 2005. Photo courtesy of Wikimedia Commons

# A student's guide to the best study spots in Calgary

**Mia Smith**

Staff Writer

The most trying time of the year is upon us once again—the dreaded exam season. Students across Calgary are entering the most demanding season of the school year. And while there are several on-campus opportunities and spaces for students to hit the books, many students find that leaving campus can offer more productive environments to study, as well as a nice change of scenery.

Calgary is home to many hidden study spots in cafes and restaurants. I took the liberty of trying a few of them to see what the environment was like and what kind of snacks and coffee they offered. Lord knows we all need caffeine right now to get through these next couple of months. Whether you study alone or in a group, sometimes trying a new place can bring a small sense of excitement during such a nerve-racking time.

As a self-proclaimed coffee addict myself, trust me when I tell you that my latte senses are quite heightened.

## **Analog Coffee, 17th Avenue**

With such a small building and a busy location, you are testing your luck trying to

find a seat to study at. But, if you do get lucky and snag a seat, the experience is phenomenal. The food and coffee selection is wide, and as a basic white girl, I know a good vanilla latte when I taste it. Being so central on the always bustling 17th Ave, this location might not be great for you if you need peace and quiet to lock in. However, if you are able to dial in and appreciate a good cup of coffee, this cafe might be your new favourite spot.

## **Phil & Sebastian, Marda Loop**

MardaLoop is home to many thriving local companies. I stopped by Phil & Sebastian and found the large open concept refreshing, as many cafes are known to be small and cozy. This well-known Calgary cafe is renowned for its irresistible coffee and tasty snacks. Although, personally, the coffee was not my cup of tea.

While I found it to be a great study space, the coffee was an acquired taste. However, I must give a special shout-out to the staff—for being on the larger side of a local chain, they are always fantastic. They go as far as to chat with you about your life while the espresso is brewing, which



**Analog Coffee on 17th Avenue is a hot spot for those looking to study or work remote while enjoying a nice brew and a buzzing atmosphere. Photo courtesy of Instagram/@analogcoffee.ca**

took me aback, as baristas are usually not this chatty while crafting their artwork.

## **Monogram Coffee, Altadore**

Monogram is a great study spot, and not very far from Mount Royal University. Its quaint and tiny environment provides an ideal atmosphere for students to grab an

exceptional coffee and hit the books. Walking into the cafe, I was personally devastated to find out that they do not carry vanilla, so I cautiously opted for a condensed milk latte. I was pleasantly surprised by how much I liked this alien coffee.

However, the main setback for this cute location was the daily early closures at 4 p.m. This forces the cafe to miss an influx of night-time students who are not leaving school until later on.

Monogram makes up for the lack of hours with an endearing vibe and tasty coffee.

## **Philosafy Coffee, 17th Avenue**

This cafe is one of my personal favourites. The vibe is excellent and besides the daily lunch rush from the high schoolers across the street, I have never seen this place packed to the brim. Which in terms of a study place, makes for an exceptional vibe. This professional hub is a breeding ground for focus.

The coffee is excellent and the staff are even more so. No surprise, I highly recommend their vanilla latte. Like the caffeine aficionado I am, I

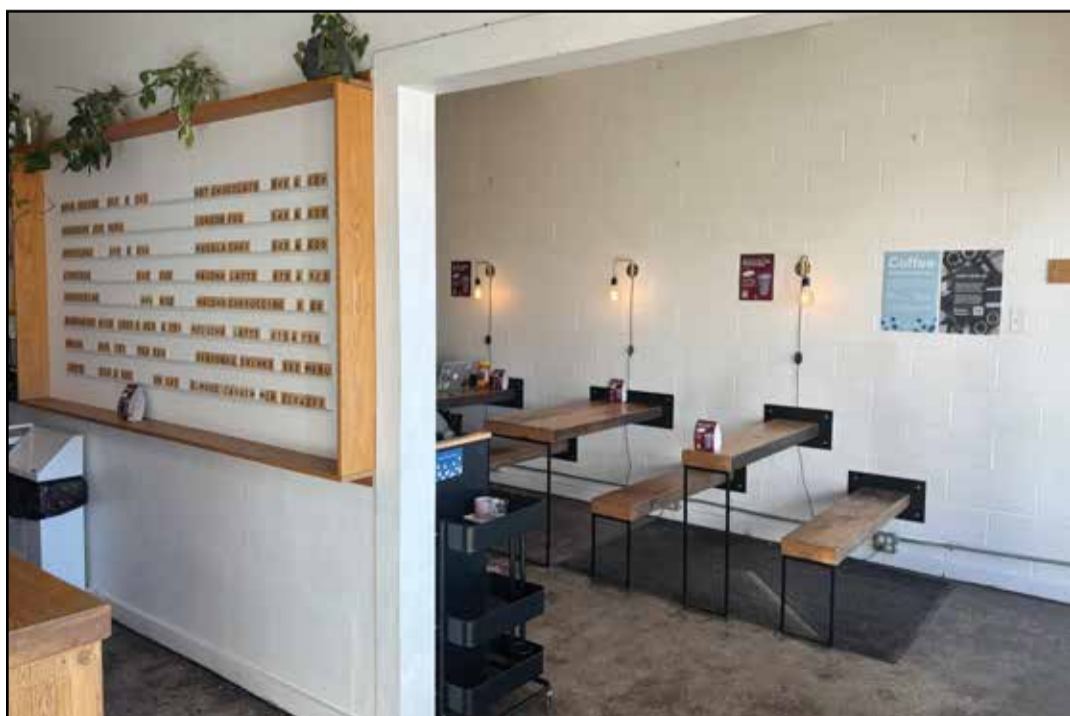
often opt for grabbing an extra shot of espresso on the side of my coffee for extra flavour and kick. The majority of the time, workers here give me the extra shot with no questions asked.

The only con is the lack of food options. But with so many spots for food on 17th, a quick study break and a walk down the street for a bite to eat would be an easy side quest.

## **Element Cafe, 17th Avenue**

Similar to any popular cafe on 17th, finding a spot can be tough but, when you do, it is a fantastic experience. The coffee is delish and the pastries even more so. Although the coffee and food are top-notch, the noise level for studying is a bit distracting.

The shop offers an array of flights that are unique to them. It has a wonderfully relaxed vibe and serves as a potentially great grind session for students. The staff is friendly and welcoming. Element works closely with local artists and surrounds the cafe with their work, which I thought was a nice local touch.



**In addition to being close to MRU, Monogram Coffee in Altadore provides a cozy cafe environment and an array of tasty beverages, but unfortunately closes at 4 p.m.**

Photo courtesy of Mia Smith

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# Health and beauty routine—winter edition

*How to heal from the season's dryness*

**Daria Orth**  
Staff Writer



A collection of popular and affordable skincare brands designed to help nourish and protect your skin. Photo by Sarah. B on Unsplash

Cracked lips, split ends, and incurable skin dryness are just a few of the same fates we face when living in the frosty and dry climate of Calgary.

The dry climate can have negative impacts on your skin if not cared for properly. During the winter months, it's essential to take extra care of your skin barrier and hair follicles. The key is deep hydration.

The first step is understanding your skin and hair type in order to focus on your main concerns accordingly. While there are certain brands that specialize

in specific skin or hair types, there are a few staple ingredients that generally work for most people.

## Skincare

Hyaluronic acid is a common skincare ingredient that provides intensive hydration. It's a key ingredient in all kinds of products ranging anywhere from serums to face creams.

Retinol is a skincare ingredient that, according to the Toronto Dermatology Centre, is best used for people in their 20s and onwards. Retinol is used all-year-round, but it can be a

lifesaver when your skin feels especially dried out.

Vaseline is always an affordable way to help with eczema and other dry skin irritations. This brand offers a variety of creams and jellies that are best used on problematic areas of skin, but it's additionally recommended to wear a minimum of SPF 30. Just because it's cold outside, doesn't mean there isn't any sun, so it's crucial to protect your skin from harmful sun rays as much as possible.

Finding a good skincare routine can be quite overwhelming because there

are so many brands and formulas to choose from—you may not even know where to begin. By doing a quick online search on Amazon, Sephora, or Shoppers Drug Mart, you can quickly find some top-recommended products best for treating dry skin.

CeraVe, Garnier, Cetaphil, e.l.f., and RoC all have great and affordable options and are available at most drug stores with all kinds of formulas and products to try out. If you have a higher budget, TULA, Drunk Elephant, Glow Recipe, and Dermalogica have some game-changing products to bring dry and cracking skin back to life.

These are only a few of the never-ending options, so research scents, ingredients, textures, and prices that work best for you.

Don't forget to hydrate from the inside out, and drink plenty of water. An article by mindbodygreen has a list of nutritious foods to incorporate into your diet that will help keep your skin moisturized and glowing. And really, who doesn't want that in the desiccated time of year?

## Hair care

Brittle and frizzy hair is hard to avoid with the climate's unforgiving harshness. Deep conditioning, hair masks, hair oils, and leave-in conditioners are going to make your hair more manageable to work

with in times like these.

Brave in Bloom's website mentions that silk bonnets can help avoid the breakage that hair follicles are so prone to during the dry seasons. Alternatively, silk pillowcases can be helpful for this as well if you're someone who can't sleep with something on your head.

Luxury hair care brands are sometimes worth the investment if it means keeping your hair healthy and shiny.

Although brands like Kérastase, Pureology, Gisou, and Kevin Murphy are highly recommended by hair stylists, they are not always realistic options for everyone. Garnier, OGX, Pantene, and Dove are some of the top suggestions online.

Once you understand which products and brands work best for your hair type, you can start playing around with before and after shower routines to keep the hair from feeling dull. Consistency with care will likely lead to good results.

Winter depression is already bad enough without skin and hair issues to bring you down. Self-care is important, find the time in your morning and night routine to give yourself the proper treatment you deserve.

There might be more maintenance with winter beauty and health, but it's worth it when you feel a little bit more nourished.

## OUT'N ABOUT

### Climb the Calgary Tower

Every Tuesday in March, from 4 p.m. to 7 p.m., the Calgary Tower is opening its stairwell for the 802 Challenge. Climbers are challenged to tackle the stairs to the top and are rewarded with a breathtaking view of the city. Admission is \$10 and participants must be 17 years or older.

### Calgary Rock N' Gem Show

Calling all crystal lovers—Canada's largest rock and gem showcase is coming to New Horizon Mall from March 13 to 16. For only \$3 admission, guests can explore over 400 tables filled with crystals, jewelry, and fossils for sale. For more information, visit [cangems.ca](http://cangems.ca).

### Festival of Animated Objects

Through March, the International Festival of Animated Objects Society is running a nomadic festival of contemporary puppetry and masked performances. With the biggest lineup in 20 years, the society is hosting over 35 performances across the city of Calgary. More information is available on [puppetfestival.ca](http://puppetfestival.ca).

### St. Patrick's Day bar crawl

Spice up your St. Paddy's with Calgary's best shamrock bar crawl. With stops at Whiskey Rose, Commonwealth, Velvet Room, and more, the \$15 event admission guarantees you access to Calgary's hottest bars and clubs all night on March 15. Visit [eventbrite.ca](http://eventbrite.ca) for tickets and more information.

# How to start a reading habit

**Emma Marshall**

Arts Editor

Feeling stuck in a reading rut? You're not alone. Many book lovers hit a point where the pages just don't turn as easily anymore. Or maybe you were never that into reading in the first place, and that's okay too.

Whether it's a busy schedule, lack of motivation, or simply feeling disconnected from your favourite stories, the good news is—escaping a reading slump is totally possible.

Reading has countless benefits to the body and mind. What if I told you the answer to your restless nights is a good book? How about your sore back? You guessed it, reading.

With the right approach, you can (re)discover your passion for reading and make books a regular part of your life.

Don't get me wrong, I'm not judging. Spending all day in lectures or with your nose buried in a textbook doesn't necessarily motivate people to go home and exercise those sore eyes more.

## So, what do you do instead?

Maybe you put on a TV show, or maybe doom scroll videos of cats playing with each other. While these habits offer a quick dopamine rush, this is only temporary relief from the stressors of everyday life. A Harvard Business Review article suggests "that social media platforms are addictive by design."

These habits, though, have a progressively negative impact on things like sleep, productivity, attention span, and overall quality of life. I know reading may feel daunting, but so do the 438 episodes of *Grey's Anatomy*.

And, despite your dreams of becoming a surgeon one day, reading may actually help your life now.

## The benefits of reading

A study by the University of Sussex concluded that as little as six minutes of reading each day can reduce heart rate and ease muscle tension by 68 per cent.

This same study concluded that reading was better at reducing stress than listening

to music, drinking warm tea, going for a walk, or playing video games.

With these calming effects, reading is also a caveat in creating and maintaining a positive sleep schedule.

Kindles and e-readers are widely debated for being as effective as traditional books when it comes to winding down at bedtime.

While these devices still require blue light to operate in low-light conditions, there is a dark mode that can help minimize the effects of the screen.

Overall, trading the blue light of your phone for reading at all—whether that is an e-reader or the raw pages of a book—helps the brain to unwind before sleep.

And if you keep up with it, your brain begins to recognize that reading time means bedtime.

Oh, did I mention it could make you live longer?

A 2016 study found that reading for 30 minutes each day extended lifespan by two years. This same study also concluded that the positive effects of reading were more prominent among book readers as opposed to people who read magazines or newspapers.

If all of that doesn't convince you, how about the fact that reading is hot? A survey by SuperSummary concluded that 81 per cent of women and 77 per cent of men believed that being a reader was attractive.

Aside from improving vocabulary, imagination, and overall literacy, there are countless online forums of people confirming this research and pouring out their attraction to those who read.

I know they are not the most reliable, but the opinions speak for themselves. On Reddit and Quora alike, people widely agree that reading is a far sexier habit than watching TV or playing video games.

## How do you get started?

As I mentioned earlier, reading isn't the most desirable thing for most people after a long day, especially if you aren't used to it yet. Like most habits,



Reading can improve your sleep, attractiveness, and even your lifespan. Picking up a book and reading for only a few moments a night could change your life. Photo by Aiden Johner

the hardest part is getting started.

If I haven't already convinced you to pick up a book, I have composed some tips for starting—and keeping—a reading habit.

## Find out what you like

Despite what those self-help books may tell you, reading doesn't have to be transformative to your brain chemistry. I'm here to tell you that you can still read for enjoyment.

Lose the self-help and dive into a story—whether that is fantasy, romance, horror, or anything in between.

You may not find your niche first try, and don't feel unmotivated if it takes a few attempts. To help with this, you could try out fan favourites or classics. Popular books are popular for a reason.

If the length feels daunting to you, try something short. Light reads feel less like a chore, and the reward of finishing a novel may even convince you to pick up another.

Some popular short book titles are "Animal Farm," "The Great Gatsby," "Before the Coffee Gets Cold," and "On Earth We're Briefly Gorgeous."

You can also chat with people around you who read regularly, even if it's just a coworker. Ask for their

recommendations based on what they read and what they think you might like. Books have a way of bonding people, so don't be afraid to talk about it—you might make a new friend.

## Create a space

Similar to the psychology of creating a designated study space, a reading nook can be motivating for adopting a reading habit.

Dedicate a comfy chair in your home, and fill it with pillows and blankets. Ensure your space is adequately lit so you don't strain your eyes.

My personal favourite touch is to add a drink holder or tray so I can keep tea or water nearby while reading.

Also, don't overlook the power of reading in bed.

If you train your brain to associate your bed with reading and sleeping instead of phones and laptops, your sleep is sure to improve.

## Apps to help

I know starting something new is easier said than done, so don't feel discouraged if you feel yourself still reaching for your phone.

Maybe counterintuitive, but there are apps that can help.

One Sec is an app that can be connected to other apps on your phone. It implements a 15 second wait period before they open, and forces you to think for a moment about

whether you really want to be accessing social media, or if you are just doing it out of habit.

Another is called Opal, and this app can be configured to actually lock you out of certain apps for an amount of time. This is perfect for studying and productivity, but it can be used to carve out designated reading time too.

Also, if you're the kind of person who likes to see progress, there are apps for that too. Habitify and Habitica are habit trackers that allow you to add and monitor new habits you want to implement.

Fable is one specifically for readers. With a vibrant design, this app allows you to create and manage reading goals, find new book recommendations, and connect with book lovers globally.

## The final point

Reading is supposed to be enjoyable, and it's never too late to rediscover the power of pages.

Dedicating just a few minutes each day to yourself may actually be the secret to improving your life. In the digital age we live in, this can be hard. But the results speak for themselves.

Oh, and you. Yeah, you reading this right now. You're already two steps ahead of everyone who decided not to read this.

# Genr(uh)?: Beyoncé and country music

**Ava Free**

Contributor

When most people hear genre, they think of “a category of artistic composition” that is “characterized by similarities in form, style, or subject matter.”

Often discussed by media and artists alike on whether or not its existence inhibits the creative process, the term garnered new meaning when Beyoncé won Country Album of the Year for her eighth studio album, *Cowboy Carter*.

During her acceptance speech at the awards ceremony, Beyoncé said “I think genre is a code word to keep us in our place.”

As a music inquirer—a self-given title based on my intrigue for sound, culture,

and the overall romance of listening—I am no expert in the brass tacks of music influence, impact, and arguably out-of-control fan bases.

However, after watching the 2025 Grammys, I had questions.

I agree with the first definition. A more traditional approach, but I see genre as an opportunity to explore a realm, style, and character of music. It’s an identifier—a way to sort and make sense of who we are and what we like.

I think Beyoncé sees genre as a box—and I’m trying to unpack it.

## A genre Requiem

With 27 tracks and one hour and eighteen minutes of

music, Beyoncé announced *Cowboy Carter*—her eighth studio album—in March 2024 in an Instagram post.

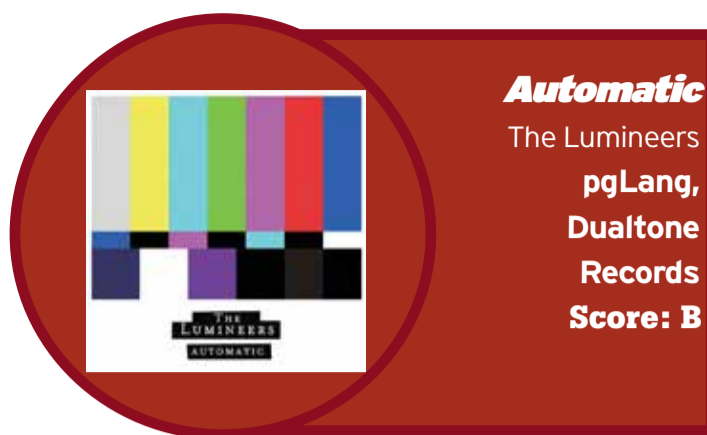
“It was born out of an experience that I had years ago where I did not feel welcomed...and it was very clear that I wasn’t. But, because of that experience, I did a deeper dive into the history of Country music and studied our rich musical archive,” she writes the post.

Nominated alongside country music stars Chris Stapleton, Kacey Musgraves, and Lainey Wilson. As well as Post Malone—who I believe

Continues on Pg.12



Some fans suspect that *Cowboy Carter* was released as a rebuttal to the backlash Beyoncé faced at her 2016 C.M.A performance, where genre fans argued she was not a country artist. Photo courtesy of Instagram/@beyonce



## Automatic

The Lumineers

pgLang,

Dualtone

Records

Score: B

The Lumineer’s latest album, *Automatic*, released on Valentine’s Day 2025, brings a lot to the table by expressing the classic Lumineers’ feel we all know and love. However, this album lacks diversity, coming out a little flatter than expected. That being said, all the songs on *Automatic* make excellent listening.

There are notable songs such as “Keys on the Table” which gives warm summer campfire feelings.

The timing of releasing this album on Valentine’s Day plays into the sad reality of dealing with self-doubt and self-worth. The main song, “Automatic” chooses lyrics such as, “Take your victory lap, Running on an empty track,” which addresses the loneliness people experience when they lack cherished people to

celebrate amongst.

The general atmosphere of *Automatic* strives away from the warm feeling that The Lumineers traditionally bring by embracing a cold-hearted nature.

Heartbreak is something that all people experience in different ways throughout their lives. Whether this album brings comfort or not, there is something to take away—the need for love and self-love considering the hardships we face in our daily lives.

As a Lumineers fan, this album did not disappoint and houses well-done music. *Automatic* takes a different approach to addressing the skeletons in the closet for many.

—Brennen French



## Enough Of The Sweet Talk

Lime Cordiale

Chugg Music

Score: A

Australian indie band Lime Cordiale, composed of brothers Louis and Oliver Leimbach and their supporting band members, released the album *Enough Of The Sweet Talk* on July 26, 2024, which topped the charts in the indie community. Just recently, the Leimbach brothers and their band set off on their 2025 album tour and are scheduled to play here in Calgary on March 13.

This is by far my favourite album they have released as it carries its own story. Cleverly separated by interludes that I interpreted to be sections of a story of the lifeline that lies behind a relationship. These interludes are made into four tracks called “cue” followed by a Roman numeral that splits up the 13 songs.

The first two songs of the album, “Pedestal” and “The Milkman,” are the stages of being starstruck by the new love that just walked into your life. These two songs

encapsulate the awkward excitement that comes from being young and naive. When I messaged Lime Cordiale asking if there would be a milkman there, they responded with “the milkman is always there,” (take that how you will).

The pinpoint main track of the album in the next cue, “Enough Of The Sweet Talk,” brings feelings of empty promises and complicated feelings as things begin to turn sour. This section of the cue is reflected through the next songs.

The final two cues bring the end of the beginning and the beginning of the end. Songs of self-reflection like “When I’m Losing It,” and “Strangers” mark the end of what once was.

This album was a true masterpiece and March 13 is not a show to miss.

—Brennen French

## Continued from Pg.11

would be the subject of a similar article should he have walked home with the gold gramophone. Nevertheless, Beyoncé came out on top.

Beyoncé's win was immediately greeted with commentary from fans and foe alike—a discourse she has been familiar with since 2016.

Some speculate the “experience” Beyoncé references in her caption as the backlash she received after performing “Daddy Lessons”—a country-ode featured on her sixth studio album *Lemonade*—alongside The Chicks at the 2016 Country Music Awards. At the time, fans of the genre complained that Beyoncé was not a country artist.

In fact, more recently at the 2024 Country Music Awards *Cowboy Carter* wasn't nominated in a single category.

Born and raised in Houston, Texas, Beyoncé frequently pays homage to the state—one that's known for its “legendary cowboy culture”—both culturally and lyrically through her music. *Cowboy Carter*, however, took those references and raised them.

## Defining country music (or trying to make sense of it)

Country music, or the industry that precedes it, wasn't widely accepted until the 1920s and 30s.

Unlike the pop genre, one that historically adheres to 808's, minor chords, and “a beat you can't ignore”—country music is continuously a genre of multifaceted, dynamic artists.

There's bluegrass, honky-tonk, outlaw country or the more recent Bro Country era of the 2000s.

In an article by the Earpeace blog titled “Cowboy Carter: Is Beyoncé Really Making Country Music?,” the author unpacks the historical evolution of country music.

“The 40-60's [was] ‘Country and Western’, followed by the 70's and 80's ‘Outlaw Country’ era, the ‘Golden Era’ of the 90's and then the ‘Bro Country,’” explains the article.

### Bro Country?

When Jody Rosen coined the term in a 2013 article titled “Jody Rosen on the Rise of Bro Country,” he considered “Cruise” by Florida Georgia Line.

Twelve years later, the somewhat comical term is still relevant to our current cultural perception of country music—especially if you live in Western Canada, or more specifically Alberta.

When I think of Bro Country, I think of 10 days in the summer when Paul Brandt's words ring true evermore and country music is “Alberta Bound.” I think of the denim-clad, white t-shirt, cowboy hat wearing, “the bigger the belt buckle the better” thinking country bros of Stampedes past.

Bro Country is “music by and of the tatted, gym-toned, party-hearty young American white dude. It's a movement that has been gathering steam for several years now, and we may look back on ‘Cruise’ as a turning point, the moment when the balance of power tipped from an older generation of male country stars to the bros,” writes Rosen.

I think Florida Georgia Line walked so Morgan Wallen could run—and despite my satirical commentary on Bro Country, I admit, I'm a listener. I enjoy Bro Country. Sometimes I feel like I live in bro country.

### What does this mean?

Maybe genre is subjective. And, maybe Linda Martell was right when her words echoed through the first 20 seconds of “SPAGHETTI” on *Cowboy Carter* stating:

“Genres are a funny little concept, aren't they?”

Yes, they are

That Beyoncé Virgo shit

In theory, they have a

simple definition that's

easy to understand

But in practice, well, some

may feel confined”

The truth is, *Cowboy Carter* isn't void of country nods. Citing and featuring key figures in the country music paradigm such as Willie Nelson and Dolly Parton, Beyoncé draws on several influential themes of the red, white, and blue but more specifically rooted in Black American culture from the south.

In a music review for Variety, Chris Willman says, “[Beyoncé's] too serious to just be settling for lazy genre tourism.”

Whiskey, liquor, red cups, dive bars, back roads, dance lines, hoedowns and spinnin' round are all stereotypical themes found time and time again in country music roundups. All of which are featured themes throughout *Cowboy Carter*.

Is that not genre tourism?

Is she being satirical?

Whatever her motive, it worked in her favour.

However, I don't think it's fair for Beyoncé to criticize how genre tries to keep us in our place when it was effective enough in causing her to use some of the most common country music motifs.

To me, *Cowboy Carter* was an extreme attempt at claiming some kind of ownership and authority over what country music should look like.

An attempt to rise above the oppression of a tyrant we call genre enforced by an academy that praised her for doing so.

I'm excited for the Grammys next year. Maybe the program will be shorter, because if The Recording Academy truly believes *Cowboy Carter* deserved Best Country Album, then I think it is also true that they align with her stance on genre.

And if they align with her stance on genre, there should only be three main categories—Album of the Year, Song of the Year, and Record of the Year.

Because at the end of the day, “genres are a funny little concept, aren't they?”

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# GENDER BENDER



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## Was it 4 the best?

*Despite the short-term entertainment value, was the 4 Nations Face-Off truly a win for all?*

**Truman Bartman**

Staff Writer



**American hockey fans were disappointed to lose Boston Bruins top defenceman Charlie McAvoy, pictured, to a torn AC joint in his right shoulder during the 4 Nations Face-Off. Photo courtesy of Instagram/ @hockeycanada**

The 4 Nations Face-Off was one of the most successful events hosted by the NHL in years. It reintroduced the best-on-best format that hockey fans have yearned for since the 2016 World Cup of Hockey.

Despite only five total games being played, each matchup captivated audiences, including a championship final where 16.1 million tuned in, making it the second most-watched hockey game of the last decade.

It doesn't take a lot of digging to see all of the positives that this tournament brought forth. But it implores the question, was it for the best? Do the positives outweigh the negatives? For many, this may be a confusing proposition to stomach, as from a fan's point of view, this tournament was the complete package. But in

hindsight, the damage done over a four-to-five-game span could impact NHL franchises and players for far longer.

At the conclusion of the tournament, a laundry list of superstar players were sent to injury reserve, many with questionable and lengthy return timelines. The likes of Adam Fox, Matthew Tkachuk, Shea Theodore, and Charlie McAvoy all limped away from the 4 Nations with injuries.

That list doesn't include players who entered the event with pre-existing injuries like Sidney Crosby or those who suffered from an in-tournament illness such as players like Auston Matthews, Juuse Saros, Josh Morrissey, and Cale Makar. The wear and tear that many of these superstars dealt with to play in a short weekend of intense games is drastic. Plus, many players had less than a 48-hour turnaround before

their next set of regular season games. There is a clear drawback for those who were able to represent their country.

On the opposite end of the spectrum, stars like David Pastrnak and Leon Draisaitl were given the chance to rest up with an extended holiday due to their countries not being represented.

It may be an even bigger disadvantage for the teams/organizations that have to deal with the consequences that the 4 Nations served up. In the case of the Boston Bruins and the injury to their stalwart defenseman McAvoy, the mismanagement of his injury could end up being dire for their team down the stretch to make the playoffs. McAvoy suffered a right shoulder injury against Finland, which landed him in the hospital. The issue only worsened as McAvoy received further complications after his shoulder developed an infection. He still remains out with this injury and is expected to be out for the foreseeable future. Team Canada and Boston Bruins manager Don Sweeney was not pleased with how his injury was handled and he was reluctant to comment on how Team United States dealt with the situation.

McAvoy has been the Bruins' best defenseman on both sides of the ice over the last couple of seasons. Widely regarded as one of the best shutdown defenders in the league, McAvoy's offence has also been stellar, totalling 23 points in 50 games this season. Boston is in a tight Eastern Conference playoff race where they will need to keep pace over the next few months if they dream of

making the postseason again.

In a similar situation are both the Florida Panthers and New York Rangers, who will be tasked with making the Stanley Cup playoffs without two of their premier stars—Tkachuk and Fox.

The potential for revenue loss is at an all-time high for these organizations. Long playoff runs can work wonders for these teams. According to Forbes, just last season the Florida Panthers cashed in on an extra \$161 million dollars during their Stanley Cup-winning run. The potential of losing out on big dollars is a scary sight for owners who could blame the 4 Nations if their squads do not go far. As great as it was for those from Sweden, Canada, the USA, and Finland, those same fans who now return to

cheering for their NHL teams may miss out on viewing their favourite players. This could ultimately deter fans from attending games and, once again, threaten each franchise's pockets.

Keeping all of these pieces in mind, this now begs the question: Was the 4 Nations Face-Off really worth it? From an entertainment standpoint, no one can question its brilliance. However, in the long term, was it the best option for the NHL, and did it do a disservice to their franchises by having a series of matchups in the middle of a season?

There might not be a concrete answer to this question, but there is an emphatic case that this showcase caused more harm than it did good.



**Team Canada claimed a historic 3-2 overtime victory at the 4 Nations Face-Off Final that drew over 16 million viewers, more than any of the NBA's All-Star Weekend events. Photo courtesy of Instagram/@hockeycanada**

# #S

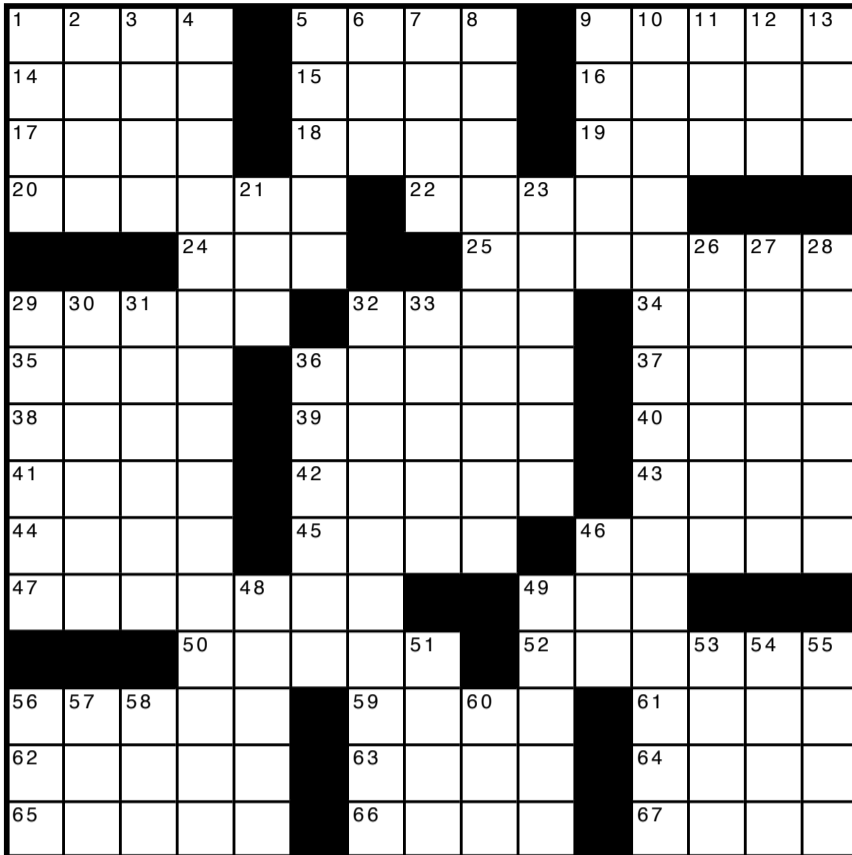
**6** Olympic gold medals for WNBA all-time leading scorer Diana Taurasi, who announced her retirement after a 20-year career

**22** points scored by Keivonte Watts in his final game as a Cougar in MRU's 74-86 loss to Winnipeg in the Canada West Play-In game

**3** goals scored by Jerzey Watteyne in MRU's 4-1 victory over Regina in the CW Women's Hockey Quarterfinals

**17** kills by Cougars middle blocker Mya Morgan in MRU's two losses to the Manitoba Bisons at the CW Women's Volleyball Quarterfinals

# THE REFLECTOR CROSSWORD



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

**ACROSS**

- 1. Adjective-forming suffix
- 5. Caustic substances
- 9. Car bomb?
- 14. "Roots" author Haley
- 15. Clue
- 16. Kentucky college
- 17. Manner of walking
- 18. Actress Heche
- 19. Hubert's successor
- 20. Tara family
- 22. Sleep disorder
- 24. Motorists' org.
- 25. Morning
- 29. Fosse
- 32. Female servant

- 34. Skier's transport
- 35. Hose shade
- 36. Chinese menu phrase
- 37. Actress Suvari
- 38. Oktoberfest order
- 39. Join forces
- 40. Goddess and sister of Ares in Greek mythology
- 41. E.g., e.g.
- 42. Melodies
- 43. Evening, informally
- 44. Arias, usually
- 45. From the U.S.
- 46. Remains
- 47. Accomplish
- 49. Ewe said it
- 50. Flip over
- 52. Fireball
- 56. \_\_\_-Saxon
- 59. Ike's ex
- 61. A party to
- 62. Song of praise
- 63. Blue dye
- 64. Area
- 65. Musical drama, usually sung in Italian
- 66. Lounge
- 67. Decorative pitcher
- 6. Yang's partner
- 7. Sicilian resort
- 8. Fairy tale meanie
- 9. "Barnaby Jones" star
- 10. Divide up
- 11. \_\_\_ Lanka
- 12. Auction ending
- 13. Philosopher \_\_\_-tzu
- 21. That's the spot!
- 23. Pokes gently
- 26. Spain and Portugal
- 27. Soundness of judgment
- 28. Rubs out
- 29. Lower in value
- 30. Refrigerator
- 31. Bass's counterpart
- 32. Overwhelming
- 33. Nitrogen compound
- 36. Nod involuntarily
- 46. \_\_\_ Paulo
- 48. Once \_\_\_ time...
- 49. Hoops
- 51. Rat Pack nickname
- 53. \_\_\_ pronounce you...
- 54. Completed
- 55. Steven Chu's cabinet dept.
- 56. GI mail drop
- 57. Forty winks
- 58. Fancy that!
- 60. It's nothing60. Family room

**DOWN**

- 1. "Othello" villain
- 2. Boring, so to speak
- 3. Sci-fi princess
- 4. Like afterschool activities
- 5. Capital of Tibet

See answer grid at bottom of page

## WATCH THE COUGARS

Cougars men's hockey team is the only MRU team left in the Canada West Playoffs and will be playing in the CW Finals against the University of Saskatchewan Huskies before travelling to Ottawa for the U SPORTS National Tournament.

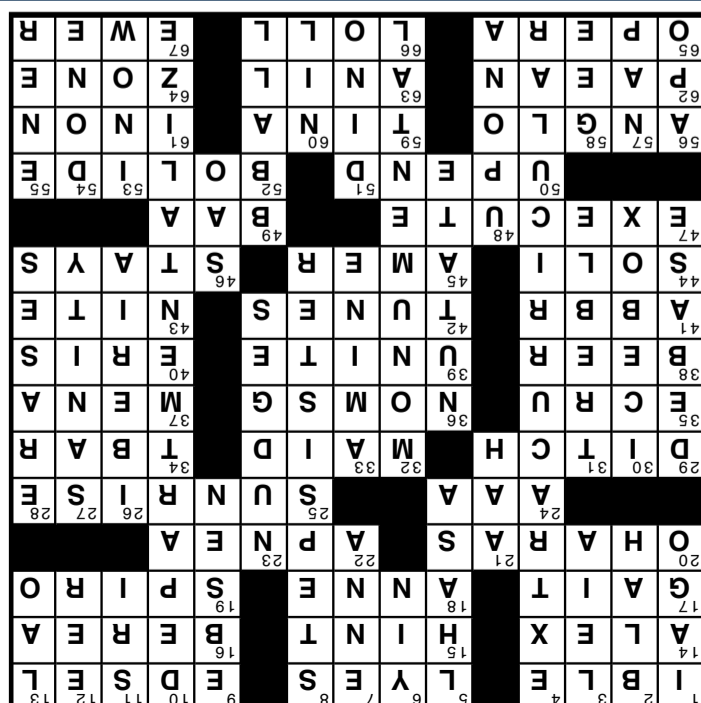
All CW games will be broadcast live on Canada West TV while U SPORTS National Tournament games will be broadcast on CBC.

**CW Finals Game One: MRU Cougars vs SSK Huskies - Friday, March 7 at 6 p.m.**

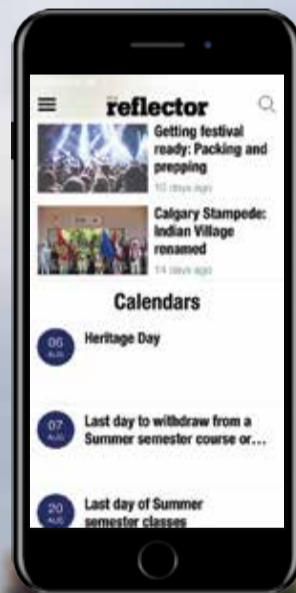
**CW Finals Game Two: MRU Cougars vs SSK Huskies - Saturday, March 8 at 6 p.m.**

**CW Finals Game Three (if necessary): MRU Cougars vs SSK Huskies - Sunday, March 9 at 6 p.m.**

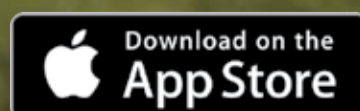
**U SPORTS National Tournament will be held from March 20 - 23.**



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# Mastering March Madness

*Who to root for and which matchups to watch in the upcoming American collegiate basketball tournament*

**Zafir Nagji**

Sports Editor



**Cooper Flagg, left, is an offensively talented freshman with the potential to be selected first overall in the upcoming NBA Draft, while Johni Broome, right, is a defensively dominant senior and will need to perform well in the Tournament to be selected late in the first round. Photos courtesy of Instagram/@dukembb (left), @auburntigers (right)**

Ballers, bettors, and basketball fans rejoice! The nail-biting, highlight-producing, single-game-eliminating National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) March Madness tournament is on the horizon once again, with the first men's basketball games tipping off on March 18.

Whether you're filling out your office brackets to stick it to your colleagues, betting on your ball knowledge to bring back profitable returns, or scouting for the next big-league talent to invest your fandom in, March Madness is one of the biggest basketball events of the year, rivalling the NBA's In-Season Tournament, Playoffs and Finals in viewership and pure entertainment value.

So, which teams will enter the tournament as favourites? Which underdogs have a realistic shot at writing a Cinderella story? And, which players should fans keep their eyes on when it comes to predicting basketball's next big-name talent?

## Over-dogs and under-dogs

With a 14-1 conference record and 25-2 overall record, the Auburn University Tigers have been the best team in NCAA men's basketball this season. Led by fifth-year Floridian forward Johni Broome, the Tigers have the sixth-most productive offence in the country, producing 84.3 points per game. However, their defence has not played to the same standard, allowing 68.1 points per game, which ranks 71st in the country. Still, with a high-powered offence like theirs, the Tigers are a justifiable favourite, currently +450 on bet365 and tied for the best odds to win.

The team they're tied with brings serious firepower of its own though; led by the projected first overall pick in the 2025 NBA Draft, Cooper Flagg, the Duke Blue Devils are a perennial playoff powerhouse and consistently produce NBA-ready players. However, their last championship came in 2015 at the hands of Quinn

Cook, Grayson Allen, Tyus Jones, and Justise Winslow, all of whom were drafted to the NBA following their win.

Duke scores 82.6 points per game, the 19th-most in the country, but also defends at a high level, only allowing 61 points per game from their opponents—the seventh-fewest in the country. It's never a bad idea to bet on Duke, especially with Flagg, but beware of their recent championship woes.

As far as potential underdogs to watch, look out for the Alabama Crimson Tide. At 91.2 points per game, Alabama leads the country in scoring. Thanks to their high pace of play, the Crimson Tide rank 12th in field goals attempted (63.9) and second in field goals made (31.0). However, they also concede 80.1 points per game, which ranks 350th in the country.

Still, they rank sixth in the Associated Press Top 25 and in the Coaches Poll with their 22-5 record and could be an offensive force in the tournament. Choosing to "Roll Tide" would net you +1300 odds and return \$13 for every dollar bet on Alabama winning the

championship, according to bet365's odds at the time of writing.

## Players to watch

Other than the high-stakes competition, many fans use March Madness to pick out a favourite future baller.

This year, the hot name on everyone's mind is Cooper Flagg—the six-foot-nine-inch tall forward at Duke University. At 19.1 points per game, Flagg is an all-around scorer with size and skill, shooting 37.5 per cent from beyond the arc while grabbing 7.5 rebounds and dropping 4.8 assists per game. He's also a versatile defender, averaging two steals and just under one block per game. For fans in search of a future NBA star, keep an eye on the Blue Devils' forward and get ready to see him walk the stage as the first overall NBA Draft pick in June.

Johni Broome is a huge reason for Auburn's incredible success this season and is entering his final season of NCAA eligibility. With five years of experience, the forward is too old to be considered a lottery pick

in the upcoming draft but brings a six-foot-ten-inch tall frame and 240 pounds to the hardwood.

With his physically dominant stature, Broome averages 18.6 points, 11.1 rebounds, and 2.6 blocks per game and is an intimidating two-way force ready to make an impact on an NBA roster. Viewers looking for a lesser-known player with serious talent should pay attention to Broome, who may be a box-office performer in the high-pressure tournament as a fifth-year veteran.

Whoever you choose to support in the upcoming American collegiate basketball tournament, gamble responsibly and know your limits. Plenty of media outlets, like ESPN and Yahoo!, allow fans to fill out brackets without putting any money down, keeping the excitement financially consequence-free. To legally tune into the madness, Canadian fans can check out TSN's coverage of the tournament.

For the full version of this article, check out the online version at thereflector.ca and on our app.

# Cougars hockey charges head on into the Canada West playoffs

**Naomi Campbell**

Staff Writer

Get ready, Cougars fans, as the Canada West Playoffs are underway. Both the men's and women's hockey teams dominated the regular season and were fired up to defeat their competition. With the men finishing their season as the first seed in their division and the women finishing in second, MRU headed into the postseason as a huge force to be reckoned with. Both teams had players selected for 1st and 2nd Team Canada West All Stars, as well as the All-Rookie Team, and were ranked in the U SPORTS Top 10 National Rankings every week of the season. As they wrapped up their regular season and headed into the playoffs, both teams were hopeful to make it all the way to the end and come out victorious in the Canada West Finals and U SPORTS National Tournament, but only one advanced past the conference semifinals.

## The best in the West

MRU's men's hockey team had an amazing season, and with their 22-6 record, they claimed the first seed in the West division. Throughout their regular season, they have shown to be a high-powered offensive force against their opponents. Players such as Connor

Bouchard and Canada West points-leader Clay Hanus have been selected to be a part of the Canada West 1st Team All Stars because of their ability to lead their team to important victories, something they were hoping to do in the semifinals against the University of Alberta Golden Bears.

The Cougars showed their offensive skills in their final four games of the season by overpowering the opposing teams with their ability to score in bunches. During their final home games on Feb. 7 and 8, MRU scored 17 goals between two games, with Josh Tarzwell and Jayden Wiens accounting for seven goals combined. Advancing past the quarterfinal round allowed them to take a week off to prepare for their semifinal matchup against the University of Alberta.

The Golden Bears have been a strong contender all season as well, so their matchup was not easy, but our Cougars made history in their semifinal series.

## Breaking the semifinal curse

Heading into the semifinals, the men were on the hunt to make it to their first ever Canada West Finals since joining U SPORTS in 2012. Game one of the series

was an aggressive start to the head to head matchup between the provincial rivals. Both teams went back and forth on the scoring, leaving regulation all tied up at two goals a piece. The game ended in overtime with an unreal goal by fourth-year forward Spencer Moe, giving the Cougars a 3-2 victory and 1-0 series lead.

Heading into game two with a win under their belts, the boys were shut out by Alberta's goaltender Tyler Palmer, with the Golden Bears scoring six goals to push MRU into a third game. After losing in game two, the boys were determined to send the University of Alberta packing. After 60 minutes of intense hockey in game three, rookie Justin Lies scored the game-winning goal for the Cougars to send them to the Canada West Finals.

MRU is set to play against the University of Saskatchewan Huskies in the Canada West Finals. The Cougars were on the losing end of their last playoff matchup with the Huskies and can use that as motivation for their matchup against Saskatchewan and win the Canada West Men's Hockey Championship. The series starts on Friday, March 7 at 6 p.m. and all games will be broadcast live on Canada West TV.

## Tipping our hat (tricks)

With a season record of 18-10, the MRU women's hockey team have shown a strong will to win with their aggressive defensive style of playing. The team has consistently fought hard to make it to the playoffs, and after finishing the season with the second seed in the West division, they have done just that. Goalie Kaitlyn Ross was named one of this year's Canada West 2nd Team All Stars as one of, if not the best goalie in the country.

Coming back from their FISU World University Games debut, Aliya Jomha and Alex Spence have been two of the top performers on



**The MRU women's hockey team handled their business with ease in the quarterfinals against Regina, thanks to Jerzey Watteyne, pictured, registering the first-ever U SPORTS hat trick in Mount Royal's history. Photo by Daniel Zappe**

the Cougars team and were key components in pushing their team to a successful outcome in the postseason. Falling short in their last home games against Trinity Western University, they came back strong to defeat the University of Regina Cougars, sweeping them in their quarterfinals matchup.

With Jerzey Watteyne scoring MRU's first ever playoff hat trick in the second game of the series, the quarterfinals set the tone for the women heading into their semifinal games against the University of Alberta Pandas.

## All good things come to an end

In their series against the University of Alberta Pandas, the women were ready to lay everything on the line in hopes of reaching the Canada West Finals for the third time. In game one, the Cougars came out on top, beating the Pandas 3-2 in a double overtime thriller.

After winning their first game, the women came into game two ecstatic, hoping to complete a semifinal sweep. Unfortunately, they fell short, losing 0-1 as the Pandas forced a third game. With their heads held high, MRU knew that game three was set to be an intense matchup, as the Cougars gave one final push to set themselves apart

and advance to the Canada West Finals.

The women played an aggressive game and held a 2-1 lead for most of the third period. In the final minutes, the Pandas scored to tie it up, sending the game into overtime. Ross held her ground in the net, but sadly, the puck slid right past her into the net in the dying minutes of the game, ending the Cougars' women's hockey season on a 2-3 loss.

## Wishing the men luck

After three full nights of gruelling hockey, Mount Royal fans will be cheering on our men's hockey team as they face the University of Saskatchewan Huskies in the Canada West Finals. Even though the women's season has sadly come to an end, they played like champions throughout the entire regular season and all the way through the playoffs.

Mount Royal fans can cheer on the boys as they head to Saskatoon to compete for the Canada West Championship from March 7-9, with all games being broadcast live on Canada West TV. As well, the men will be heading to Ottawa to play in the U SPORTS University Cup from March 20-23, which will be broadcast live on CBC.



**Cougars forward Justin Lies won Rookie of the Year after a terrific freshman campaign with the team, scoring the most goals of any Cougar this season and the third most of any player in Canada West. Photo by Ethan Bomhof**