

the reflector

FREE
September 18, 2025
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Who's who in the city council race?

Bella Coco

News Editor

With the municipal election candidate nominations closing Sept. 22, and the election taking place on Oct. 20, the clock is ticking for the Calgary City Council race. There are currently 70 confirmed candidates for council and eight unofficial intended candidates across the 14 wards of Calgary.

Wards are "local regions within Calgary" that contain different neighbourhoods and communities. Each ward has a representative from city council who answers to the Municipal Government Act (MGA) to ensure accountability within their roles and responsibilities.

City councillors have three main roles:

- Representative role: Councillors have to represent their electorate and the entire municipality by gathering information, considering the common good and balancing individual requests with community requests.
- Legislative role: Actively participate in law-making and policy setting.
- Executive role: Ensure the council process carries out policies properly.

Ward 1

Ward 1 includes the following communities: Bowness, Crestmont, Greenwood/Greenbriar, Haskayne, Osprey Hill, Rocky Ridge, Royal Oak, Scenic Acres, Silver Springs, Tuscany, Valley Ridge and Varsity.

The official Ward 1 candidates include Cathy Jacobs (A Better Calgary Party), Joey Nowak (The Calgary Party), Dan Olesen (Independent), Ali Oonwala (Independent) and Kim Tyers (Communities First).

Ward 2

Ward 2 includes the following communities: Ambleton, Arbour Lake, Citadel, Evanston, Glacier Ridge, Hamptons, Hawkwood, Kincora, Nolan Hill, Ranchlands, Sage Hill, Sherwood, and Symons Valley Ranch.

The official Ward 2 candidates include Trevor Cavanaugh (Independent), Shaukat Chaudhry

(Independent), John Garden (A Better Calgary Party) and Jennifer Wyness (Independent).

Ward 3

Ward 3 includes the following communities: Carrington, Country Hills, Country Hills Village, Coventry Hills, Harvest Hills, Hanson Ranch, Hidden Valley, Keystone Hills, Lewisburg, Livingston, MacEwan Glen, Panorama Hills and Sandstone Valley.

The official Ward 3 candidates include Atul Chauhan (The Calgary Party), Taran Dhillon (Independent), Christy Edwards (A Better Calgary Party), Jaspriya Johal (Independent), Siraj Shah (Independent) and Andrew Yule (Independent).

Ward 4

Ward 4 includes the following communities: Beddington Heights, Brentwood, Cambrian Heights, Charleswood, Collingwood, Dalhousie, Edgemont, Greenview, Highland Park, Highwood, Huntington Hills, North Haven, North Haven Upper, Queens Park Village, Rosemont, Thorncliffe and Winston Heights/Mountview.

The official Ward 4 candidates include Daniel James (DJ) Kelly (The Calgary Party), Jeremy Wong (Communities First), and Sheldon Yakiwchuk (Independent).

Ward 5

Ward 5 includes the following communities: Castleridge, Cityscape, Cornerstone, Falconridge, Homestead, Martindale, Redstone, Saddle Ridge, Skyview Ranch and Taradale.

The official Ward 5 candidates include Gurpreet Dhillon (The Calgary Party), Tariq Khan (Independent), Harneet (Reet) Mushiana (Independent), Jigar Patel (Independent), Harinder (Harry) Singh Purba (Independent) and Aryan Sadat (Independent).

Ward 6

Ward 6 includes the following communities: Aspen Woods, Christie Park, Coach Hill, Cougar Ridge, Discovery Ridge, Glamorgan, Glenbrook, Glendale, Medicine Hill, Patterson, Signal Hill, Springbank Hill, Spruce Cliff, Strathcona Park, West Springs, Westgate and Wildwood.

The official Ward 6

candidates include Joanne Birce (Independent), John Pantazopoulos (Independent) and Inam Teja (The Calgary Party).

Ward 7

Ward 7 includes the following communities: Banff Trail, Capitol Hill, Chinatown, Crescent Heights, Downtown Commercial Core, Downtown East Village, Downtown West End, Eau Claire, Hillhurst, Hounsfeld Heights/Briar Hill, Montgomery, Mount Pleasant, Parkdale, Point McKay, Rosedale, St. Andrews Heights, Sunnyside, Tuxedo Park, University District, University Heights, University Of Calgary and West Hillhurst.

The official Ward 7 candidates include Greg Amoruso (Independent), Myke Atkinson (Independent), Heather McRae (The Calgary Party) and Terry Wong (Communities First).

Ward 8

Ward 8 includes the following communities: Altadore, Bankview, Beltline, Britannia, Cliff Bungalow, Currie Barracks, Elbow Park, Elboya, Erlton, Garrison Woods, Killarney/Glengarry, Lincoln Park, Lower Mount Royal, Mission, Parkhill, Richmond, Rideau Park, Rosscarrock, Roxboro, Rutland Park, Scarboro, Scarboro/ Sunalta West, Shaganappi, South Calgary, Sunalta and Upper Mount Royal.

The official Ward 8 candidates include Gary Bobrovitz (Independent), Miguel Cortines (Independent), Dave Cree (The Calgary Party), Kent Hehr (Independent), Nathaniel Schmidt (Independent) and Cornelia Wiebe (Communities First).

Ward 9

Ward 9 includes the following communities: Albert Park/Radisson Heights, Applewood Park, Belvedere, Bridgeland/Riverside, Dover, Erin Woods, Forest Heights, Forest Lawn, Inglewood, Manchester, Ogden, Penbrooke Meadows, Ramsay, Red Carpet, Renfrew, Southview and Twinhills.

The official Ward 9 councillors include Harrison



A view of Calgary's City Hall and potential new home for city council candidates. Photo courtesy of Wikimedia Commons

M. Clark (Independent), Gar Gar (Independent), Alison Karim-McSwiney (Communities First), Ariana Kippers (The Calgary Party) and Marina Ortman (Independent).

Ward 10

Ward 10 includes the following communities: Abbeydale, Coral Springs, Marlborough, Marlborough Park, Mayland Heights, Monterey Park, Pineridge, Rundle, Temple, Vista Heights and Whitehorn.

The official Ward 10 candidates include Nickie Brockhoff (The Calgary Party), Andre Chabot (Communities First) and Mahmoud Mourra (Independent).

Ward 11

Ward 11 includes the following communities: Acadia, Bayview, Bel-Aire, Braeside, Cedarbrae, Chinook Park, Douglasdale/Glen, Eagle Ridge, Fairview, Garrison Green, Haysboro, Kelvin Grove, Kingsland, Lakeview, Maple Ridge, Mayfair, Meadowlark Park, North Glenmore Park, Oakridge, Palliser, Pump Hill, Riverbend, Southwood, Willow Park and Windsor Park.

The official Ward 11 candidates include Rob Ward (Communities First) and Alex Williams (The Calgary Party).

Ward 12

Ward 12 includes the following communities: Auburn Bay, Copperfield, Cranston, Hotchkiss, Mahogany, McKenzie Towne, New Brighton, Rangeview

Seton and Shepard.

The official Ward 12 candidates include Shane Byciuk (Communities First), Sarah Ferguson (The Calgary Party), Mike Jamieson (A Better Calgary Party) and Raj-Kumar Khuttan (Independent).

Ward 13

Ward 13 includes the following communities: Alpine Park, Belmont, Bridlewood, Canyon Meadows, Evergreen, Millrise, Pine Creek, Shawnee Slopes, Shawnessy, Silverado, Somerset, Woodbine, Woodlands and Yorkville.

The official Ward 13 candidates include Dan McLean (Communities First) and Elliot Weinstein (The Calgary Party).

Ward 14

Ward 14 includes the following communities: Bonavista Downs, Chaparral, Deer Ridge, Deer Run, Diamond Cove, Lake Bonavista, Legacy, McKenzie Lake, Midnapore, Parkland, Queensland, Sundance, Walden and Wolf Willow.

The official Ward 14 candidates include Chima Akuchie (Independent), Erin Averbukh (Independent), Devin Elkin (Independent), Keener Hachey (A Better Calgary Party), Landon Johnston (Independent), Sunjiv Raval (Independent) and Ryan Stutt (The Calgary Party).

Visit The Reflector's coverage of the municipal political parties and the mayoral candidates. Stay tuned for continuing coverage on Calgary's municipal election.

Calgary Climate Hub wraps up Climate Justice summer series

Calgary Climate Hub presents a locally made short film as the finale to summer series

Bella Coco, News Editor & Manveet Kaur Waraich, Contributor



View of the final climate justice summer series event. Photo by Zafir Nagji

The Calgary Climate Hub is changing with the seasons as they wrap up their climate justice summer series, which was held for the first time last July.

The hub, a volunteer-driven non-profit, launched its climate justice program this year with the University of Calgary (UofC) and Mount Royal University's (MRU) social work departments.

Jared Blustein, executive director of the Calgary Climate Hub, explained that by weaving together concerns about the intersections of race, income, gender and ableism with environmental action, the program aims to build "solidarity, allyship and supporting one another across various movements."

"The idea grew from a growing awareness across all equity movements that we need to be more aware of the intersectionality of oppression that people face," Blustein said.

The first semester of collaboration between the hub, UofC and MRU was centred around the idea of green social work. Blustein explained that while the hub travels to visit newcomer and immigrant communities, the conversation evolves into much more than taking climate action.

"We're talking about housing security, transit, food security, et cetera. Then we're really trying to address

climate issues through those experiences," Blustein said. "You know, weaving together those issues with this quality of life and cost of living really makes it more experiential and brings more people."

Climate justice all summer long

After a successful first semester of hard work, Calgary Climate Hub Community Connector Sophie Burns joined to work with Moyin Sanyade, the Climate Justice program coordinator.

The summer series was funded through the Building Connected Communities (BCC) initiative with a focus on asset-based community development (ABCD).

Burns described the BCC initiative as "a way of building community around empowerment and people's strengths, gifts, talents and passion."

July's kickoff was the Climate, Community, and Care Zine-Making Workshop at Shelf Life Books. Sanyade described the event on the hub's website as a warm and welcoming space to explore ideas such as environmental degradation, Indigenous justice and the love for the planet through the creation of zines. Not long after, in August, the hub hosted Land-Based Walk + Talk featuring local gardeners and the chance to promote anti-racist

and decolonial community building.

Each gathering encouraged participants to "dig a bit deeper into what climate justice means to us in this part of the world," Burns said.

The finale paired a screening of the short film, "Sh*t We Believed," directed by Chris Hsiung, with deep reflection amongst local changemakers about the meaning of justice, community, and activism.

The documentary opens with a simple metaphor from local food advocate, Gerald Lajeunesse.

"Gardening to me is very much like social change in the sense that you don't know what the outcome is going to be," Lajeunesse said. "Is it a sunny year? Is it a wet, cold, year? You just go into it at the beginning saying, 'I'm going to work at it—despite the obstacles. And I'm going to accept the final outcome.'"

The sense of patience in the garden, and sitting with uncertainty, strikes a parallel in activism. Indigenous educator, Chantal Chagnon reminds the audience that, "when you're pushing and pushing... as an activist... you want to see that change right away. But you don't realize it's a marathon... not just a race."

Expanding on that concept, activist Sharon Stevens noted that a marathon of activism doesn't look the same for everyone.

"It just means something as

the connection between themselves and their planet. Lajeunesse's film-closing statement inspired and was etched into everyone's memory as the hub organises its next events and protests. "Hopelessness is the enemy of justice"

Moving with the seasons

Beyond screenings and discussions, the hub is building tangible action through mutual-aid projects—from shared community gardens to cooling stations—and using those projects to highlight gaps in municipal policy.

"If we had strong municipal policies that supported food security across all of our communities, then we wouldn't need mutual aid food-security projects," Blustein said. The hub hopes to turn those lessons into advocacy, training residents in council speaking skills and op-ed writing to push for change at city hall.

This fall, the hub will welcome new social-work practicum students and continue monthly climate justice working-group meetings. For Blustein, progress requires balancing realism with resolve.

"I'll have to think of this quote by the famous Italian theorist, Antonio Gramsci. 'Pessimism of the intellect, optimism of the will.' We are surrounded by all this hopelessness, this rising carbon, this increase in social inequity and social stratification, and cultural division," Blustein said. "I think oftentimes we feel like there's just so much going wrong in the world, but I think we really need to have a sobering perspective."

For Burns, the new season is opening up new doors for opportunity.

"I feel really hopeful about joy as resistance. Connecting to what makes us feel joyful, that's really important, I think, in all of this. Ultimately, we're coming together for a love of humans and the Earth," she said.

simple as phoning a member of government or joining a volunteer board," Stevens said. "You can be active by attending a rally that someone else has organized ...[or] by donating money to different causes."

While the pace and form of activism may look different for each of us, it is still a marathon we are running together. That shared journey became a central thread of the discussion, honing into the idea that community and sense of belonging is everything—we are all connected and none of us walks alone.

Emelia Connolly, director of Black Eco Bloom, took that sentiment beyond just solidarity, rooting it in our shared relationship to the land and the inherent indigeneity within each of us.

"We do have a type of knowledge and relationship with the land... even though we left it for whatever reasons; migration, refuge, whatever necessity... we don't lose that when we move to a different place."

As the night wrapped up, Adesuwa Opedun, the Community Connector of the Land of Dreams, reflected on the final sentiments echoing through the room.

"You hardly find people who genuinely care for nature—that don't care for people."

The attendants and speakers at Village Commons came together from many walks of life, reinvigorating

What's next for Alberta at the Alberta Next panel?

Acacia Carol, Layout Editor & **Khaoula Choual**, Contributor

Premier Danielle Smith says Alberta has an “Ottawa problem,” and to protect itself, Alberta needs to resist Ottawa’s attempt to “drain” the province’s pockets.

Smith is trying to understand how best to respond to that problem through the Alberta Next panel tour, which began holding town halls in July.

The Alberta Next panel is made up of 16 industry leaders and community members who wish to explore policy suggestions for Alberta’s sovereignty, especially around natural resources, pension plans, and immigration.

Alberta Next says its goal is not entirely to separate from Canada, rather, it’s about achieving more autonomy and fair treatment without being “held back.”

The ideas and feedback received from these panels will be directed towards a 2026 referendum on how Alberta should assert its rights and responsibilities within confederation.

How are Albertans reacting?

Out of its 10 planned stops, the panel has drawn controversy and support in droves from Albertans attending or protesting the town halls.

Recently, during the Medicine Hat town hall, CBC reported that the crowd attending seemed to be in support of Smith’s proposed policies, like withholding social services for some immigrants.

However, the panel has also received public pushback in other locations. Edmonton’s panel drew 750 attendees, the largest crowd on the tour currently, some of whom voiced their discontent with the proposed policies.

That discontent has been echoed by NDP Leader Naheed Nenshi, who criticized the panel as a “sham” and “a debacle” that highlights sentiments contrary to what he has been hearing from Albertans.

He further criticized Smith’s sentiments, saying that her belief in a sovereign Alberta within a united Canada is playing both sides while platforming separatists using taxpayer

money.

The panel has garnered criticism from both ends of the political spectrum, with the Republican Party of Alberta Leader Cameron Davies calling the panel a delay and distraction, offering more “political theatre” than practical action.

Who’s involved?

We’ve chosen to highlight seven panellists we believe are influential players, excluding Premier Smith, to explain their backgrounds further. However, we encourage readers to look into each panellist.

MLA Rebecca Schulz

Rebecca Schulz was first elected as an MLA for the Calgary-Shaw area in 2019, and again in May 2023. She was sworn in as the Minister of Environment and Protected Areas in June 2023. She previously served as Minister of Municipal Affairs and Minister of Children’s Services. Schulz also previously worked for the Government of Saskatchewan. She is also a member of Smith’s Alberta First Committee.

Andrew Judson

Andrew Judson has worked in capital markets and private equity, with a focus on the oil and gas industry. He is the vice chairman of the conservative think tank Fraser Institute. Judson is

also a director at the Calgary Police Youth Foundation.

MLA Glenn van Dijken

Glenn van Dijken currently serves as an MLA for the Athabasca-Barrhead-Westlock area with the United Conservative Party. He was first elected in May 2015. Prior to his UCP affiliation, he was with the Wildrose Party. Van Dijken was also chosen to head the Alberta First committee by Premier Smith.

Sumita Anand

Sumita Anand is the vice president of Above and Beyond Care, a private home care company in Airdrie. Anand served as president of the UCP Calgary-North East constituency association from 2021 to 2023, during which she was appointed as co-chair to the Premier’s Council on Multiculturalism.

Grant Fagerheim

Grant Fagerheim has served as the president and CEO of Whitecap Resources Inc. since 2009. In 2017, he became a member of the Saskatchewan Oil and Gas Hall of Fame, and in 2021, he was Saskatchewan’s Oil Person of the Year. Since 2020, he has also served as a board member of the Fraser Institute.

Michael Binnion

Michael Binnion is the Questerre Energy president and founding shareholder,

and he is also the chair of the Manning Foundation, High Arctic Energy Services and Sage Roots Foundation. Binnion acts as the executive director of the Modern Miracle Network, a fossil fuel advocacy organization.

Tara Sawyer

Tara Sawyer is the recently elected Olds-Didsbury-Three Hills UCP MLA. Most recently, she acts as the chair of the grain growers in Canada, and she had previously served as the chair of Alberta Grain and Alberta Barley.

According to information collected from the UCP campaign finance records by the Progress Report, a handful of Alberta Next panellists have donated to the UCP government’s campaigns. Fagerheim has donated a total of \$18,275, Binnion has donated \$14,312, Judson has donated \$1,500, and Anand has donated \$1,426.

Other donors include Dr. Benny Xu, Dr. Akin Osakuade, and the past president of the Lethbridge Chamber of Commerce, Melody Garner-Skiba. In total, the panellists donated \$44,315 to the UCP.

The panel’s recommendation will be submitted to the Alberta government by Dec. 31, 2025.

Calgary is the last stop on the Alberta Next panel tour this Sept. 29.



View of Calgary Climate Hub’s 95-metre message to G7 leaders arriving in Canada. Photo courtesy of Instagram /@calgaryclimatehub

THE REFLECTOR

Issue 2, Volume 65

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The Reflector, with an on- and off-campus circulation of 2,000, 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.

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Mapping the march of prairie Pride

Behind Jonathan Niemczak's mission to make Canada's queer history heard

Sarah Palmer
Features Editor



People march in a Pride parade. Lennart Linse / Unsplash

Eight years ago and 1,300 kilometres away, rainbow colours drenched downtown Winnipeg as Manitobans commemorated the 30th annual Pride parade. The theme—Resurgence: Taking Back Space—highlighted how far the queer community had come since 1987.

That year, sexual orientation was officially added as a protected ground under the Manitoba Human Rights Code, marking a pivotal moment in the province's history. Honouring the milestone, Winnipeggers traded protesting for parading and took to the streets.

"There was a celebratory march and gathering in front of our Manitoba legislature building in '87," says Pride Winnipeg's former president, Jonathan Niemczak. "That was our first Pride, and we've been doing Pride ever since."

Though the event took place before his time, it has captivated Niemczak ever since he learned about it. In the 2010s, when opening Pride Winnipeg meetings, he says that he would often retell it as a powerful reminder of the organisation's roots.

"I found that story really interesting, but a lot of folks weren't aware of that," says Niemczak. "In fact, the organisers of the Pride's themselves didn't really know their own history in terms of how Pride got started in their community."

It was then that Niemczak noticed how the history of Pride, not just in Manitoba but

across Canada, was largely preserved anecdotally, often found in slim volumes of books and journals. He says this inspired him to help bridge the gap in queer history resources.

Turning Pride documentation dreams into reality

In 2014, Niemczak pitched the idea to colleagues and community members attending the Fierté Canada Pride conference, which received positive support. Four years later, he stepped down from his role at Pride Winnipeg to establish the Canadian Pride and Historical Society (CPHS).

The organization investigates and archives past Pride activity in municipalities across the

nation. With upwards of 50 volunteers, Niemczak says they focus on conducting region-specific, online research.

"We use that to start piecing together a sort of puzzle," he says. "We're looking at, ultimately, how did Pride form in that community? What led to the formation of Pride? Was there an event that sparked it?"

Having initially opened in Manitoba in 2021, the CPHS soon after launched operations in Alberta, Saskatchewan, and British Columbia. Eventually, Niemczak says that they will expand to Eastern Canada, but that the West remains a priority.

Western anti-queer rhetoric

warrants attention, says Niemczak

When the CPHS ventured to Alberta, Niemczak says that they looked into roughly 1,500 data points across 20 different communities. He says that places like Medicine Hat and Fort McMurray have a relatively new Pride history, but that Calgary and Edmonton have a longer, more bitter paper trail.

"In the larger cities, we tend to see more of that anti-Pride movement, versus in the smaller cities and towns," says Niemczak.

No matter the location, the CPHS provides the school boards attached to the places that they research with lesson plans. Niemczak says queer history is virtually non-

existent in the country's curriculum.

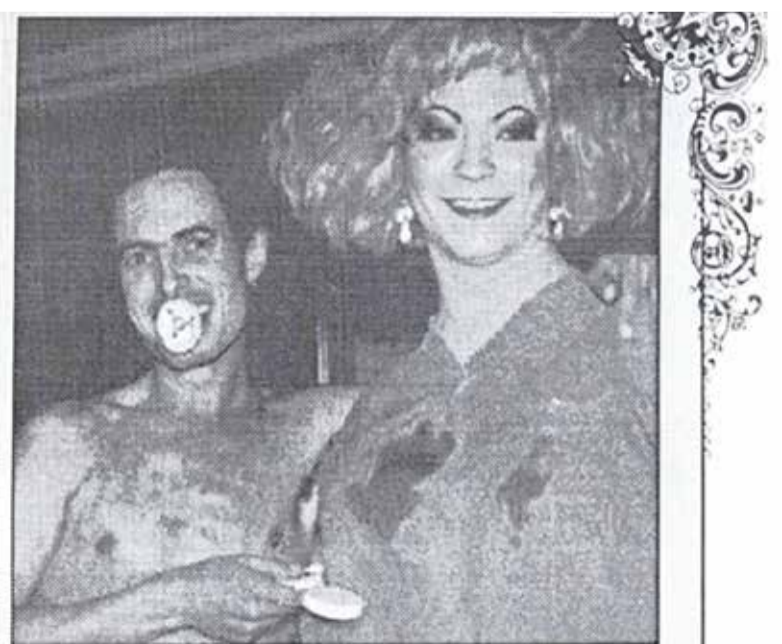
"When we look at social study curricula across Canada, they do tend to cover a lot of the major rights movements," he says. "But the 2SLGBTQIA+ movement is absent."

In the Western provinces, specifically, Niemczak says that there has been a rise in hatred against the queer community. For Alberta and Saskatchewan, he says that recent restrictions on gender expression and school content for young students have only catalysed this.

"When we look at government legislation and where governments are putting priority, they're really feeding into this parental rights movement piece that we've kind of seen coming out of the U.S., and they're just hitching their bandwagon to it," he says.

Niemczak says that a quality education covers the nation's history in full, and that since virtually no textbook touches on Canadian queerness, the CPHS's online resources—organised by grade level and learning outcome—seek to remedy this.

"Our community has suffered greatly at the hands of government, as with other equity groups, and our story should be one that is taught in the classroom," he says. "This is the way that you ultimately get at people's ignorance, is you teach them."



Poster from 1993 advertises celebrating Calgary's Gay Pride Week. Photo courtesy of Canadian Pride Historical Society

New doc details Northern Super League's launch

Sarah Palmer

Features Editor

When star-studded soccer player Diana Matheson retired in 2021, she didn't walk off the field—she expanded it. Exchanging her goals involving cleats and posts for a new one, Matheson set out to build something that didn't exist: a Canadian pro-women's league.

From proposal to the first play, *The Pitch* follows the creation of the Northern Super League (NSL), which held its first official game on April 16. Matheson, being the league's founder, says the documentary commemorates a significant stride in women's sports history.

"It's been a whirlwind few years—with so many challenges, struggles, emotions, and milestones," she said in an email statement. "*The Pitch* takes me back to those early days and shows how the community and the country rallied around a belief in our league."

Filmed over the course of two years, the documentary debuted at the Atlantic Film Festival on Sept. 15 and 16. Before embarking on a national screening tour, *The Pitch* will be played as part of the Calgary International Film Festival on Sept. 23.

Joining Matheson at the screening, which is scheduled to start at 7 p.m. at The Grand Theatre, will be director Michèle Hozer, four-time Olympic soccer player Christine Sinclair, and members of the Calgary Wild FC team.

Tickets are available to the public, and Hozer says she hopes that the early evening time slot will make the event accessible to young athletes—viewers who the film could encourage to chase their dreams.

"There's a lot of laughs, there's a lot of tears, and it's a great inspirational film," says Hozer. "I hope lots of people in Calgary see it, and then they can go and watch the games."

Inspiring the next generation of barrier breakers

As an award-winning filmmaker whose portfolio includes pieces like *Sugar Coated* and *Genius Within: The Inner Life of Glenn*



Retired Canadian professional soccer players Christine Sinclair (left) and Diana Matheson (right) behind the scenes of *The Pitch*. Photo courtesy of Amy Doary PR

Gould, Hozer says that this project was a refreshing one to work on.

"How often does a documentary filmmaker work on a film that's good news?" she says.

However, Hozer says it was the film's executive producer, Nathalie Cook, who came up with the idea to tell the story.

When the former vice president of several TSN channels shared the idea, Hozer admits that she had a naive perspective of sport. She says she saw it as a rolling in the riches type of industry, and found it difficult to understand why Matheson was the one behind the NSL.

"Why is a former player having to do this?" says Hozer. "Why isn't it the big corporations?"

But over time, once she became acquainted with decorated players like Matheson and Sinclair, Hozer says she began to understand that, since no other entity was fighting for a league like this, the retired players had to take it upon themselves.

"These women have changed soccer in this country, without the proper support that they needed from Canada, from corporations, from the federation," she says. "This

league is a form of justice for them."

Describing the film as a "David and Goliath story," Hozer says the documentary puts viewers in the passenger seat while Matheson and her team dodge the doubters, push through growing pains, and overcome challenges.

"If anything, those naysayers were a motivator for Diana and the team," she says. "I think that's a universal theme, and in sports, that really comes shining through."

Hozer says the film's message is infectious and that she hopes that the next generation of female athletes will take it to heart.

"If you have a dream, nothing should stop you," she says.

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Opinion: Israel's war on Gaza, the deadliest in journalism history

Ryan Montgomery

Contributor



Palestinian journalists sit on a Gaza Strip street in 2008. Al Jazeera / Wikimedia Commons

For 23 long months, since the attacks of Oct. 7, 2023, the Israeli Defence Force (IDF) has been invading Gaza, bringing immeasurable havoc and damage to the Strip. In a war so one-sided, where one nation holds uncontested military dominance over the other, the IDF can attack with impunity.

One defence for the unarmed is the arena of public opinion and the journalists who fight in it, which is why this fact is so alarming to face: for journalists, this conflict is the deadliest in the history of documented war correspondence.

On Aug. 25, the IDF attacked Nasser Hospital in Khan Yunis, the second largest city in the Gaza Strip. According to the Associated Press, the IDF struck the hospital using high-explosive tank rounds and did so without warning. The attack killed 22 people, including relatives of the patients, healthcare workers, rescue workers, and four journalists. A well-known gathering spot for journalists, the hospital was targeted by the IDF because they believed it harboured “suspicious behaviour.”

The behaviour in question, as explained by Israeli officials, was a camera perched on the roof of the

hospital—what the IDF thought was being used by Hamas for intelligence gathering.

In short, they saw a camera, shot at the hospital with a tank, and killed 22 innocent people. It seems the “best trained military” in the Middle East has a hard time distinguishing between a camera and a rifle.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu referred to the event as a “tragic mishap.” However, to call this incident a “mishap” downplays the staggering regularity of attacks like this in Gaza.

War correspondents—journalists sent to warzones to observe and report on conflict—have been killed at a staggering rate unseen in any other conflict in modern history. According to the International Federation of Journalists, as of Sept. 4, at least 221 journalists are confirmed as having been killed while reporting in Gaza, a number that Al Jazeera—a Qatar-based news organization—places even higher at 278.

So, how does this number compare to past wars? The Watson Institute for International & Public Affairs at Brown University lists the death counts of previous wars as such: 69 in both

the First and Second World Wars, 17 in the Korean War, and 71 in the Vietnam War. Altogether, the number sits at 157 total deaths, which is approximately 64 fewer than in Gaza.

Perhaps the wars of yore are a poor comparison, or that the nature of journalism has changed in this century, and that there are significantly more journalists per capita, and thus, many more will be killed. To determine if this is the case, we can compare this to other conflicts in the information age, namely the ongoing Russo-Ukrainian war.

The three-year-long conflict between the two largest European countries has a colossal front line of nearly 2,000 kilometres, which has seen over two million soldiers in action. That number is almost identical to the total sum of casualties, not to mention the 10 million civilians who have fled and been displaced.

How many journalists have been killed in this titanic war? According to Reporters Without Borders, 13, which is just under six per cent of the total confirmed in Gaza.

So if modern warfare isn't our answer for why so many journalists have been killed in Gaza, is it possible that Israel's presence or policies

have led to a higher death count?

Israel banned international journalists from covering the war in Gaza, which has led to news organizations relying almost entirely on local Palestinian residents and members of the media to provide information on the war. This has prompted Israel to repeatedly claim that Palestinian journalists are members of Hamas and, therefore, are active combatants and can be bombed fair and square.

On Aug. 10, Israel bombed a media tent outside of Al-Shifa Hospital in Gaza City, killing seven people—six of whom were journalists. Israel claimed, without evidence, that one of the journalists killed, an Al Jazeera correspondent named Anas al-Sharif, was leading a Hamas cell and was working to attack Israeli soldiers and civilians. Last year, the IDF made the same claim, stating that six Al Jazeera reporters were Hamas operatives. Once again, without concrete evidence.

According to Gaza's Ministry of Health, Israel has killed at least 63,459 Palestinians as of Sept. 1. However, due to the IDF's destruction having impacted the ministry's operations, the number is believed to

be significantly higher. Data from the United Nations shows that nearly 70 per cent of civilians killed in the war in Gaza are made up of women and children.

After the aforementioned Khan Yunis hospital bombing, Reuters—one of the largest international news organizations—announced that it will no longer be sharing the locations of its journalists working from the Gaza Strip to the IDF.

News agencies sharing the location of their reporters with both sides in a conflict has long been standard practice in modern war. The killing of journalists in wartime is explicitly listed as a war crime under the Geneva Conventions. Because of this, there is a long-held assumption on the part of the journalists and the militaries involved that combatants will not target an area known to have journalists in it. Hence, sharing their location keeps them safe.

For Reuters to cease this practice means one of two things: either the IDF is so incompetent in not targeting journalists that Reuters feels they are safer if the IDF doesn't know their location, or the IDF is explicitly targeting journalists in the Gaza Strip.

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Thank you to everyone who stopped by our booth at this year's Welcome Back Campus Carnival. We set up a photo wall to capture the moment, meet new faces, and have fun on the first day back. This gallery is a showcase of the lively community at Mount Royal, and The Reflector's gratitude to be a part of it. If you got your photo taken and don't see it here, visit thereflector.ca for the full gallery. If you missed our booth and want the opportunity to pose for us, or want more information on how you can get involved with The Reflector, come find us at the Clubs Expo on Oct. 7-8.

— **Emma Marshall**, Publishing Editor

OUT'N ABOUT

Granary Road Pumpkins

To welcome back fall, Granary Road's Harvest Fair returns for another year. This includes tractor rides, pumpkins to purchase, and full access to their seasonal selection at the farmer's market. The annual event takes place on select dates from Sept. 20 to 28, with all access passes available at granaryroad.com.

CultureFest

Celebrating community diversity, CultureFest showcases the vibrant, multicultural tapestry of Calgary. It is an opportunity to connect with different communities within the city, all the while enjoying music, diverse eats and good company. The event is set for Sept. 20 from noon to 6 p.m. at the Genesis Centre.

Ghost Stories

Looking to summon fall spirit? Calgary Central Library introduces Locked Library: Ghost Stories, a night of puzzle-solving and clue hunting that rewards the quickest problem solvers. Doors open at 7 p.m. on Sept. 26, with tickets available at libraryfoundation.ca. All ticket sales are reinvested into library initiatives.

Calgary Police Classic

Celebrating its 45th anniversary, the Calgary Police Classic takes place on Sept. 20 at the new urban road course, which starts and finishes in Cowboys Park. With different terrain and distance options available, the event is inclusive to runners of any level. Register now at raceroster.com.

Yearn for the past: The digital camera

Mia Smith

Web Editor

Over the past few years, the world has seen an unexpected, yet oddly familiar blast from the past—the resurgence of compact digital cameras. While this could be because of their vintage appearance or nostalgic vibe, the main question to be asked is: what is the cause for this recurrence?

The retro trend started with the revival of disposable cameras, such as the classic Kodak Fun Saver and the FujiFilm QuickSnap Flash cameras. These cameras added an element of surprise to an evening, with every film roll being a mini time capsule.

The shift away from these disposable cameras, however, happened when cash-strapped college students began to wonder why they are spending \$30 for 20 pictures?

In a world where anyone with a phone can be a shutterbug, youth are now turning their backs to their most accessible option, the phones themselves. Instead, kids are scouring the internet on platforms like Facebook Marketplace and eBay to get their fill of nostalgia.

With their compact size and easy to understand settings, anyone can use a digital camera. Unless you're over the age of 25, you probably haven't seen a digital camera in years. Go to any bar or pub around town, however, and I bet you will see multiple being used by Y2K enthusiasts.

This fad stems from the age old saying 'what goes around comes around.' It remains that people have long been fascinated by the age that comes before them. From skinny jeans to maxi skirts, every time something goes out of style, it inevitably comes back in—digital cameras are no exception.

There is also something to be said about the elite and their ability to influence the younger generations. Loud names like Bella Hadid, Alix Earle, and Brie Larson have been spotted out in public with the early 2000's staple in their right hand.

Youth today are entranced by all things vintage, from vinyl records to boots with the fur. Call it retro-enthusiasm or modern-rejection, our generation is the pinnacle

of 'I was born in the wrong generation.'

In a world flooded by 4K HD photoshoots, the low-fidelity photos from digicams add a 'nonchalant' vibe to any photo, giving it a different look from the millions of other Instagram posts that are going out every day. In an era of ultra-high-definition everything, there's something pulling about the grainy, low-resolution charm of digital cameras—it almost feels counterintuitive, yet people can't get enough.

There is also a shred of relaxation that comes with putting your phone down and letting your camera do the work. Digital cameras give you the opportunity to not worry about push notifications disrupting the moment.

Plus, they make a great story later.

Digital cameras create a timeless quality that you cannot fully dive into until you decide to download the images. This produces not only a feeling of nostalgia from the times that lived us before, but an element of surprise to an otherwise dull time of life.

The digital camera is a glimpse into the mind. The world is within a constant state of change, and youth yearn for a state of stableness.

In an age of hyper-curated content and constant digital noise, youth are craving real moments that feel raw, unfiltered, and emotionally honest.

These photos are perfectly distorted. With every picture you take, a little piece of the past is ingrained in the present.

"Those images make us feel nostalgic. And I think people are chasing that," said freelance reporter Elizabeth Gulino, who covers lifestyle and internet trends, in an NPR interview.

"I think people are feeling really nostalgic for the era, like the early 2000s, when everyone would bring their digital cameras to the club or, like, to a family party and stuff and take those photos. And those images make us feel nostalgic, and I think people are chasing that."

Recycling has never looked this cool. Digging out an old camera from the basement

and taking it for a night on the town? That's a whole new vibe.

Just like clothing, photography has trends too. Black and white, high saturation, and now vintage digital. While millennials planted the seed, Generation Z are the ones watering the

plant.

Once a technological breakthrough, photography is now as accessible as the click of a button. True photography means slowing down, therefore, Generation Z's pull to digital cameras is linked directly to their desire for emotion and human

experience.

It is a quiet rebellion against the rampage that is modern technology.

Ultimately, the pocket sized commodity is a reflection of people's yearning for simplicity, which manifests in moments that are instantly shared but slowly revealed.



Digital photography continues to rise as a popular commodity. Photo by Mia Smith

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Lights, camera, action on young filmmakers

Katrina Ebuenga

Contributor



Calgary International Film Festival celebrates another year of filmmaking. Photo courtesy of Calgary International Film Festival website/ciffcalgary.ca

It only takes a couple of seconds to be fully immersed in the world of story telling.

With local youth filmmakers heading for the big screens, the lineup for this year's Calgary International Film Festival (CIFF) has got audiences at the edge of their seats.

Shining a spotlight on young filmmakers, *Shorts: Youth by Youth Cinema* presented by CIFF highlights a spectacle of short films crafted by local Canadians and global filmmakers.

The main festival is set to roll through Sept. 18-28, with multiple screenings at various locations across Calgary, which feature local and international directors and their creative teams.

Shorts: Youth by Youth cinema, however, is a set showtime at 4:15 p.m. on Sept. 20, held at the Calgary Contemporary Auditorium. The screening will showcase young filmmakers' artistic skills and their eagerness to take audiences to another world.

Highly anticipated short films

Looking for adventure from an animated lens? *Skyfall*, directed by Daniel Evan Ta, follows the journey of a lone traveler troubled by emotional and personal challenges that confront him through wondrous

structures. In this one minute short film, the voyage of self discovery unfolds before him as he drifts further into the mysterious world set in front of him.

Keeper of the Night Sky, directed by Karina Loerchner, uses her passions in 3D animation and musical talents to create a captivating story. The film follows an overly curious little girl who stumbles upon an unsuspecting dragon, resulting in a wild adventure with havoc brewing just beneath them. The six minute short film is filled with soaring adventure as audiences follow along in an unforgettable journey.

Stepping away from animation, the creativity from young filmmakers continues to shine through in different styles.

Journey to Joy, directed by Kaylee Chu, brings a sense of light-heartedness that highlights the spark of youthfulness. The film follows young Eloise on a whimsical journey as she attempts to bring joy back to a gloomy balloon in the form of colour. Venture into a world of shades of grey and watch life be brought back in this five minute film.

For film fans of drama and more theatrics, *The Secrets*, an eight minute short film with an undisclosed creative team behind it, is about a detective that is eager to

solve a new case, but soon discovers the hidden truths that lie within the people that surrounded him. This thriller/mystery film reveals that not everything, or everyone, is as they appear.

Out of Spite, a four minute film directed by Eoin Tamura and Kaliya Pual, will have audiences eager to uncover the truth as well as fall into laughter together as they watch the obsession of a teenage boy's favourite drink drive him to do the unthinkable, taking a surprising twist in order to get possession of it.

Last but not least, *Snow* directed by Ruoyi Dong characterizes the feeling of isolation in a cold environment and the troubles that come along with it. This four minute Chinese film immerses you into their perspective through photography, creating a sense of relatability and understanding of a world of alienation.

These multifaceted short films showcase the rising talent of the next generation, previewing what movie goers can anticipate from the film industry moving forward.

Encouraging the next generation

In their 26th year of running, the...

Continues on Pg. 12



Man's Best Friend

Sabrina Carpenter
Island Records
Score: A

Released on Aug. 29, Sabrina Carpenter's new album, *Man's Best Friend*, attempts to revitalize the immense success of her last album, *Short n' Sweet*. Despite the backlash she received for the album's cover art, *Man's Best Friend* doesn't shy away from the silly and sexy themes we have come to expect from her.

Like *Short n' Sweet*, the 12-track album encapsulates Carpenter's witty lyricism and affinity for undermining the misogynistic expectations of women inside and out of the industry. Unlike *Short n' Sweet*, however, the album lacks the originality that brought so many fans to her door.

While it is undeniable that tracks like "Tears," "House Tour," and "Go Go Juice" have the satirical flair and fun that have become Carpenter's niche, other tracks such as "Nobody's Son" represent the

crutch her music has come to rely on.

Whether they are alike or down right the same, many of her melodies are no longer fresh to listeners as with her last album. Therefore, although the tracks present a level of artistic integrity when listened to separately, the album does not transition as seamlessly as its predecessor.

Nonetheless, that does not mean this is not a great album. Her lyricism is consistent without being repetitive and her thematic choices remain relatable without revisiting that of her previous album.

Man's Best Friend has some stand-out songs that maintain clever metaphors, sexy innuendoes, and the audacious pop-princess drama she always brings to the table.

— Rylie Perry



I Barely Know Her

sombr
SMB Music LLC
Score: B+

Highschool drop-out and breakout sensation, sombr, released his sophomore album, *I Barely Know Her*, on Aug. 22. Although his rise to fame can be attributed to the success of his single "Back to Friends" on TikTok, sombr refuses to let his sound simply be a trend.

The 10-track album reaches for the formula that shot "Back to Friends" to the top of the charts, relying on themes of heartbreak, longing, and self-reflection. Further, the album continues to remind listeners of his own humble beginnings, hearkening back to coming-of-age nostalgia and the tendency to romanticize the mundane and ignore harsher realities.

Songs such as "i wish i know how to quit you" and "12 to 12" showcase the unquenchable angst of young love, which easily captivates young lovers and hopeless romantics alike. It is through his ability to infuse a vulnerable mix of emotional

maturity and immaturity into the template of bedroom music that sets his sophomore album apart.

Despite the album's unabashed confidence, however, it is not flawless. The cookie-cutter formula that sombr uses from song to song creates notable repetition on the album. Although, this was not a detriment to my listening experience as I believe we have yet to hear enough from him as an artist to type-cast his sound.

While it can be cliché and performative at times, *I Barely Know Her* introduces us to something new that is infused with hopeless yearning and teen-spirit—for that, the album is worth a listen.

— Rylie Perry

Continued from Pg.11

Calgary International Film Festival (CIFF) provides more than just a gateway for filmmakers to showcase their talents. Along with cash prizes and jury awards offered to the most outstanding films selected by the audience, film creators are able to grow their passions further.

Connecting film lovers from all over the province and further, CIFF is a central hub for interactions to travel beyond the screen. In full swing of celebrating artists and audiences in the production of visual storytelling, the festival becomes uniquely one to remember every year.

Step into the world of film and take part in creating an immersive space for audiences. The lively atmosphere is brought together by fellow movie goers and film creators alike.

Although entries are closed, submissions of short films under 30 minutes to the Youth by Youth Cinema requires only a verification of being 18 years of age or under during the time of filming and an uploaded copy of either a student ID, driver's license, or signed letter verifying age from a teacher on a school letterhead to FilmFreeway.

The selected short film voted by the audience in the youth category will be awarded the Youth by Youth Cinema International Short Film Award, a scholarship offer to the Vancouver Film School, and a \$2,500 gift card from Sunbelt Rental towards the winner's next project.

As the audience is just as important as the film creators

and developers, The Calgary International Film Festival offers a Student All-Access Pass, which is more than just a golden ticket to the film festival. With this discounted student pass, opportunities in viewing films and attending events expand further.

By applying for the pass with a copy of student ID, the experience at the film festival

is taken to another level with unlimited entry to every film, panel, and parties hosted.

Get access to preview all the film trailers before their screenings to tease the adventures that await. With opportunities to attend standard panels, Q&As, and exclusive parties hosted, the festival is fully packed with fun.

With a pass that allows for more, students are able to further deepen their connections with the film industry and find more film lovers alike.

Expect to dive into the world of young filmmaker's artistic and story telling abilities expanding the creative lens and experience for all.



Calgary International Film Festival highlights new films and timeless genres. Photo courtesy of Calgary International Film Festival website/ciffcalgary.ca

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Expectations 'very high' for 2025-26

MRU hockey teams

Cougars looking for third National Tournament appearance in four years

Naomi Campbell

Contributor



Abbey Borbandy, left, has high hopes for her final season as an MRU Cougar, along with Josh Tarzwell of the men's team, right, as both teams start their season on Oct. 3.

Nothing brings Cougars fans together like hockey games at Flames Community Arena. From the 2023 women's team's Cinderella run to the U SPORTS National Championship to the 2024 men's team finally breaking their semi-final curse, MRU hockey has spoiled its fans of late. Now, the team hopes to bring championship jewelry to its core of legendary graduating players in 2025-26.

Men's Hockey

The 2024-25 season for the MRU Cougars men's team was a year the players and fans will remember forever. After years of losing in the Canada West semi-finals, the team made its first appearance at the U SPORTS National Tournament last year. There, the Cougars lost in quintuple overtime to Toronto Metropolitan University, which set a new record for the longest game in U SPORTS National Tournament History at 143 minutes and 33 seconds of game-time, breaking the old record by 27 minutes.

Head coach Bert Gilling believes that this year's men's team is looking like a force to be reckoned with in Canada West and can contend for a U SPORTS title.

"With this group, there is a very high expectation for it," Gilling said. "In my 11 years, I really believe this is the biggest group of returning players that I've had here, which is really exciting."

With 121 shots on net and five game-winning goals last year, fifth-year forward Tarzwell and the other three graduate students are determined to make the most of their final seasons as they search for the next step in their professional careers.

"Bert always says make your last year your best year, and I think there's a lot of guys that also want to do that," Tarzwell said.

Standing at six feet and four inches tall without his skates on, towering defenceman Tanner Komzak comes to the Cougars after playing two

seasons with the University of North Dakota. Komzak is eager to get back into the regular season with a team he believes can go all the way and win championships.

"I think the reason for the transfer is I wanted to play somewhere where I felt respected, and then on top of that, I wanted to win," Komzak said. "I know with the group of guys that we got here, they got the mindset where we wanted to go back to the national championship and win it this year."

Women's Hockey

During the 2024-25 season, the women's team had a very successful year, finishing second in their division and earning a trip to the playoffs. They ended their season on an unfortunate loss to the University of Alberta Pandas in the semi-finals, but head coach Scott Rivett is excited to see how this year's group can stack up against the best teams in Canada West and U SPORTS.

"We've got a little bit older, so I think we're starting to see a little bit more experience from our group," Rivett said. "So that's exciting to see, because typically, stronger teams are a little bit older in our league the way it works."

Fifth-year player Abbey Borbandy rejoins the roster for one more campaign and is one of the most exciting players in the conference to watch, scoring a career-high five goals last season. The defencewoman made eye-opening changes in her mentality and game last season, and hopes to end her Cougars career with a bang.

"I did see a big jump in my game overall," Borbandy said. "I think I just found myself and just realized, it's something that I loved doing in my life, and it's not a stressful thing that I used to think it was."

Rookie Isa MacPhee joins the Cougars full of excitement to finally be playing university hockey. She previously

played in Quebec for Stanstead College's Varsity team, putting up 44 points in 70 games in 2024-25.

"Coming in, I think it's just meeting lots of new people and just kind of like settling into the team and being ready for the season," MacPhee said. "I've been ready for, I don't know how long, I'm just excited to be here now and be able to play at a high pace, high compete level."

The men's team will be in Saskatchewan for their first battle of the season, taking on the University of Saskatchewan Huskies on Friday, Oct. 3 at 6 p.m., with their home opener set for Saturday, Oct. 11 against the University of Calgary Dinos.

The women's team will begin their warpath on home ice as they host the Huskies on Friday, Oct. 3 at 7 p.m. All home games are free for students to attend and are held at Flames Community Arena, and all games are broadcast live on Canada West TV. For the full version of this article, head to thereflector.ca or check out The Reflector app.

#S

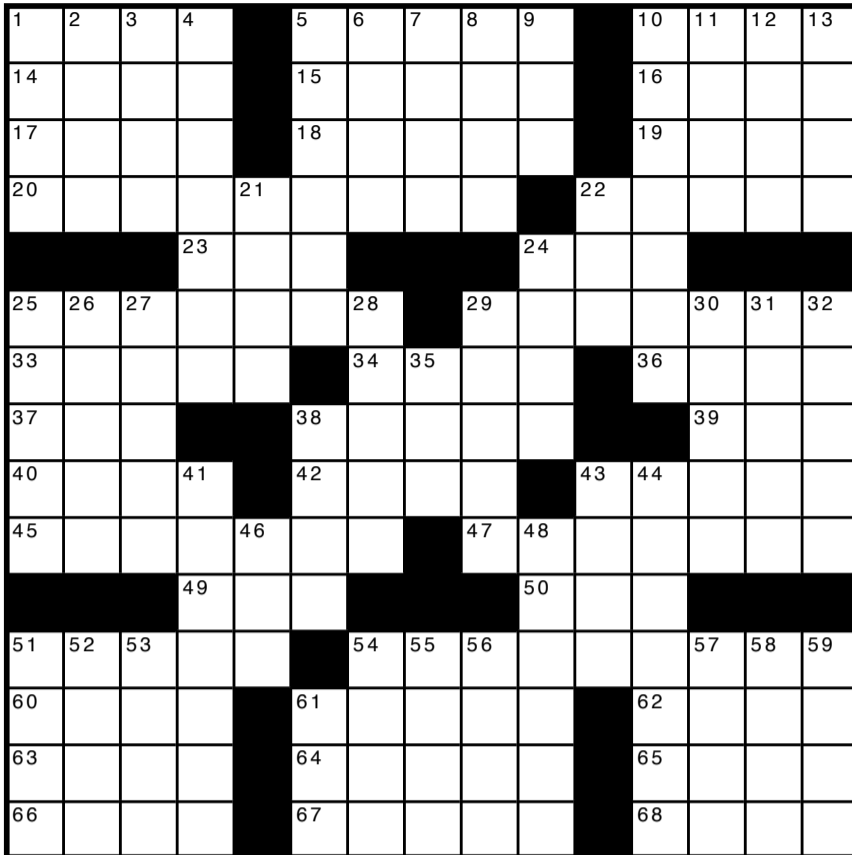
43 comeback wins for the Toronto Blue Jays this season, tied for most in the MLB

0 losses in 9 combined games for MRU's men's and women's soccer teams

16 points scored in 4 minutes by the Buffalo Bills to beat the Baltimore Ravens in Week 1

22 three-pointers made by the LV Aces against the LA Sparks, the most ever in a WNBA game

THE REFLECTOR CROSSWORD



- 25. Virgin Mary
 - 29. Sparkler
 - 33. Clued in
 - 34. Microbe
 - 36. Steven Chu's cabinet dept.
 - 37. Scull mover
 - 38. Durango dwellings
 - 39. Ram's ma'am
 - 40. Nothing, in Nantes
 - 42. URL starter
 - 43. Seizes with teeth
 - 45. I've been framed!
 - 47. Charms
 - 49. Convert into leather
 - 50. Yelp
 - 51. Memento
 - 54. Overflow
 - 60. Hgt.
 - 61. Capital of Egypt
 - 62. Unit of loudness
 - 63. Cause of ruin
 - 64. Like some furniture
 - 65. ___ kleine Nachtmusik
 - 66. Aardvark's prey
 - 67. Iron
 - 68. Minn. neighbor
- 9. Put Down
 - 10. Couple
 - 11. Listen attentively
 - 12. So that's it
 - 13. Not barefoot
 - 21. Wind indicator
 - 22. Orthodontists' org.
 - 24. Intentions
 - 25. New Zealand native
 - 26. Look forward to
 - 27. Challenges
 - 28. Glass marble
 - 29. Hang with cloth
 - 30. ___ a customer
 - 31. More recent
 - 32. Frock
 - 35. Repair shop fig.
 - 38. Lower jaw
 - 41. Indigenous inhabitants
 - 43. Ancient Semitic for "Lord"
 - 44. Burdens
 - 46. Fond du ___, Wisconsin
 - 48. Hose
 - 51. First name in country
 - 52. Flair
 - 53. Mardi Gras follower
 - 54. River to the Moselle
 - 55. Diving position
 - 56. Ticks off
 - 57. Word on a sample check
 - 58. Sicilian resort
 - 59. Smell bad
 - 61. Peace officer

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

- ACROSS**
- 1. Jack of "Rio Lobo"
 - 5. Fishhook line
 - 10. Michael Moore's "Downsize ___!"
 - 14. ___-shanter (Scottish cap)
 - 15. Jazzy Chick
 - 16. Laundry
 - 17. School founded in 1440
 - 18. Cooperative race
 - 19. Sweet sandwich
 - 20. Wizenod
 - 22. Inquired
 - 23. ___ kwon do
 - 24. Commotion

- DOWN**
- 1. French summers
 - 2. Slat
 - 3. Latin love
 - 4. Warning device
 - 5. Coarse sieve
 - 6. Yuletide
 - 7. First name in courtroom fiction
 - 8. Show the way
- See answer grid at bottom of page*

COUGARS SCHEDULE

WSOC: Next game - Saturday, Sep. 20 at GMU Griffins @ 12 p.m. (A)

Next home game - Saturday, Sep. 27 vs OLETH Pronghorns @ 1 p.m. (H)

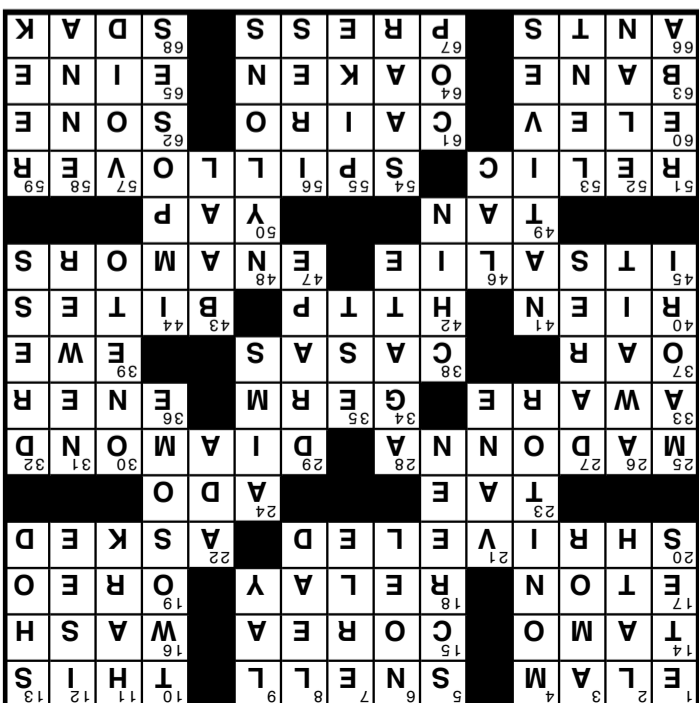
MSOC: Next game - Saturday, Sep. 20 vs UBC Thunderbirds @ 3 p.m. (H)

MHKY: Next game - Friday, Oct. 3 at USASK Huskies @ 6 p.m. (A)

Next home game - Saturday, Oct. 11 vs U of C Dinos @ 5 p.m. (H)

WHKY: Next game - Friday, Oct. 3 vs USASK Huskies @ 7 p.m. (H)

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Calm, Cool(ey), Collected

Calgary Wranglers' goaltender details journey to AHL stardom

Truman Bartman

Contributor

When 28-year-old goaltender Devin Cooley takes the ice, fans see him as one of the American Hockey League's (AHL) premier puck stoppers. But behind his white pads and fiery mask, Cooley is not only tasked with being in top physical shape but, more importantly for him, being at the top of his game mentally.

Cooley spent the 2024-25 season with the Calgary Wranglers in hopes of eventually becoming a member of the Calgary Flames. During his first season with the Wranglers, Cooley recorded a 2.94 goals against average, along with collecting 21 wins and a playoff berth. Part of achieving these numbers for Cooley was his ability to be in command of the emotions that come with being a professional goaltender.

"You can't let your emotions get too high," Cooley said. "You can't get too much adrenaline rush, because then you start making stupid plays, and maybe you start forcing things."

At the beginning of last season, Cooley felt like he was in a great space and his play reflected that, helping him earn his first AHL All-Star nomination.

However, it wasn't all smooth sailing for Cooley, as



As much as the Calgary Wranglers applaud Devin Cooley's incredible goaltending, the Californian netminder celebrates his AHL team's scoring prowess on every single goal. Photo courtesy of Instagram/@AHLRanglers

he felt his play began to slip as the season progressed.

"I started moving before the puck was even shot, and I began to create all this chaos for myself," Cooley said. "I was very chill at the beginning of the year, in the first half of the year, and then I started to become more and more of a perfectionist and expected success every single night. I started to chase the game a little bit more."

When a player gets into a slump, it can seem impossible to recover, especially at the

highest levels. For a goalie as composed as Cooley, many on the outside may assume that bringing yourself out of a slump is simple, but for him, it was far from it.

"I felt the pressure keep piling and piling and piling, and then all of a sudden, I'm playing like a totally different goalie, and all of a sudden, I can't stop a puck," Cooley said. "I couldn't figure out what was going on, and I realized that over time, I was just putting more and more pressure on myself,

and I was stressed out all the time. I was stressed out away from the rink. I just wasn't really enjoying what I was doing, and I couldn't bring my mental state to a calm medium."

The turning point for Cooley began with his realization that things were off. He had hit a major roadblock that eventually acted as a turning point for him. It was after a loss to the Bakersfield Condors that Cooley found himself regaining his confidence.

"I kind of hit a rock bottom where I was just like, 'I have no more emotions to give; I have no more energy,'" Cooley said.

"Going into our next game against Tucson (Roadrunners), I was like, I just don't care. I don't care anymore. I told myself from that point on that I was going to get back to just not caring about anything and just playing from a zen state."

Cooley's plan of attack worked in his favour, finding not only a zen state against the Roadrunners but also finding his game again. The next game, he did the exact same thing and put together another stellar performance against the Ontario Reign.

"I was like, 'holy crap,' this is so much better, it's unreal," Cooley said. "And then today, it was even better than that. I think that's where I am going to find the most success—by continually doing just that."

As the 2025-26 AHL season approaches, Cooley is set to rejoin the Calgary Wranglers, looking to continue his success from a season ago. But more importantly, the Californian keeper will be focused on finding his zen state and a calm medium within his game.

In a sport where ups and downs are inevitable, Cooley's 2024-25 season illustrates that, regardless of how low things are at any point, finding some peace of mind can help you rediscover what it takes to return to being Cool(ey) under pressure.



In the 2024-25 AHL regular season, Cooley allowed less than three goals per game and posted a .905 save percentage, including physics-bending stops like this. Photo courtesy of Instagram/@AHLRanglers

LA Clippers, Kawhi Leonard under NBA, FBI investigation

\$248m fraud case turns into salary cap circumvention allegations

MJ Jorge, contributor & **Noah Wilson**, contributor

Los Angeles Clippers superstar Kawhi Leonard has been accused of receiving \$28 million from Aspiration, a sustainability company based in Los Angeles, USA.

The company was founded in 2013 by Andrei Cherny and Joseph Sanberg, and it officially opened for negotiations in 2015. Additionally, the key focus for the company was growing and planting trees to improve the environment.

In 2021, they had social media promotions and endorsements from high-profile celebrities like actor Robert Downey Jr. and Canadian artist Drake. Sanberg was arrested in March of 2025 for two wire fraud charges.

Leonard signed with the Clippers in 2019 after giving the Toronto Raptors their first NBA championship in franchise history. Leonard had a list of demands, many of which came from his uncle, Dennis Robertson, who acted as his representation during contract negotiations.

According to Sports Illustrated, some of the demands included trading for NBA star Paul George, a stake in ownership for the Toronto Maple Leafs and about \$10 million from sponsorships.

During that same summer, the NBA conducted an investigation with the Clippers right after they signed Leonard to see if they gave excessive benefits, but they did not find any evidence and concluded the investigation.

Still, the NBA decided right after that they would reopen the investigation if they found any relevant or recent evidence in the near future.

Clippers owner Steve Ballmer agreed to sign an Aspiration sponsorship of over \$300 million in September of 2021 for not just naming rights in the arena, but also a jersey patch. Two months later, Leonard also agreed to sign with Aspiration, with the terms of their deal indicating that the two-time champion would perform a “no-show job” and be paid separately.

Apart from the potential

legal issues with a deal like this, the National Basketball Players Association (NBPA) and the NBA owners agreed to a new collective bargaining agreement (CBA) that extends through the 2029/2030 season, which introduces a series of salary cap limits for teams, along with potential fines, loss of future draft picks and a disadvantage in signing free agents.

Leonard’s agreement with Aspiration creates a multitude of problems because it is a violation of the CBA for NBA players to receive money in this format, especially under the context of using under-the-table-style deals to circumvent the league’s salary cap.

The Clippers are one of the top spending teams and have the richest owner in the league, with a salary cap hit of over \$204 million USD for the 2025-26 season. Despite this, Leonard signed a contract extension in 2024 worth \$70 million less than the maximum amount he was eligible for.

If the Clippers are found guilty of circumventing the salary cap and illegally compensating the former defensive player of the year, other teams are put at a competitive disadvantage, especially smaller-market teams that don’t have as much money or interest.

Recently, former ESPN employee and acclaimed investigative journalist Pablo Torre took a deep dive into the Clippers’ partnership with Aspiration, and discovered that Leonard agreed to a four-year, \$28 million endorsement deal with the company in April 2022 through his LLC, KL2 Aspire, a deal that would be voided if he left the Clippers.

However, Leonard was not even mentioned in any social media posts. Torre then proceeded to find over 3,000 corporate documents, revealing that Aspiration did not require Leonard to make any public appearances for the company.

Most endorsement deals require the athlete to sign thousands of pieces

of merchandise, make routine public appearances, participate in marketing campaigns, and post on social media, to name a few duties. However, Leonard escaping that responsibility, secretly receiving compensation and then taking a \$70 million pay cut on his extension in the context of these allegations has raised the eyebrows of the NBA, who have opened their own investigation into the Clippers organization along with collaborating with the FBI on their investigation of Aspiration.

ESPN’s Ramona Shelburne conducted an interview with Ballmer after the news broke. The former Microsoft CEO denied the allegations of no-show payments from Aspiration despite recent news that Leonard received more than \$40 million instead of the alleged \$28 million initially.

In this interview, Steve Ballmer made it clear that his Clippers organisation, along with Leonard, are innocent of any wrongdoing and claimed to be victims of Aspiration’s fraud.

“We, the Clippers, have abided by the salary cap circumvention rules because that’s the right thing to do,” Ballmer said.

Ballmer then went on to make a bold statement that he was “conned” and that he had no control over these negotiations, nor did he allegedly have any say over Leonard’s contract with Aspiration.

Whether or not this statement is true, the NBA has launched their own independent investigation to figure out whether or not this was a legitimate sponsorship or a backdoor scheme to keep Leonard with the Clippers.

In this investigation, NBA Commissioner Adam Silver stated, “they need to find evidence, not just appearance, before imposing sanctions.”

For the NBA, the most critical step is determining if Ballmer or the Clippers’ front office intentionally structured Leonard’s deal in a way that circumvents the salary cap.

Still, even if Ballmer



Fans loved Kawhi Leonard when he led the Toronto Raptors to their first championship. His time with the LA Clippers has been more tumultuous due to injuries and a potential salary cap circumvention and fraud scandal.

Photo courtesy of Instagram/@LAClippers

did have a small stake in the matter, the question remains—did he or the Clippers’ front office, or even Leonard himself, push for Aspiration for a “no-show” job?

Along with that key piece of evidence, the league and FBI investigators need to ascertain whether or not Leonard did any promotional or performative work for Aspiration.

In order to find that, the NBA will investigate through internal emails or other forms of communication showing the terms of the company’s contract, specifically talking about certain clauses or claims that affect Leonard’s relationship with this company.

If the Clippers are indeed guilty of these allegations, consequences can range from loss of draft picks, hefty fines, lengthy suspensions, or even the voiding of Leonard’s contract. Alternatively, the NBA could impose unprecedented consequences, setting an example for future teams

looking for ways around the CBA and salary cap.

Those implications have the potential to set the Clippers franchise back years, even decades, especially if they lose their franchise player along with future draft capital that would keep their team competitive for years.

As the investigation continues to unfold, the future of the Clippers and the illustrious legacy of Kawhi Leonard are in question. The NBA has made it clear that, if these allegations are proven true, the fallout could be harsher than we have ever seen in NBA history.

This investigation could also reshape how the league handles contracts, endorsements, while also giving all other 29 franchises a chance at a superstar with Kawhi Leonard potentially hitting the free agency market as we near the start of the season.

Until a verdict has been reached, however, all eyes remain on the NBA and Adam Silver as they continue their investigation.