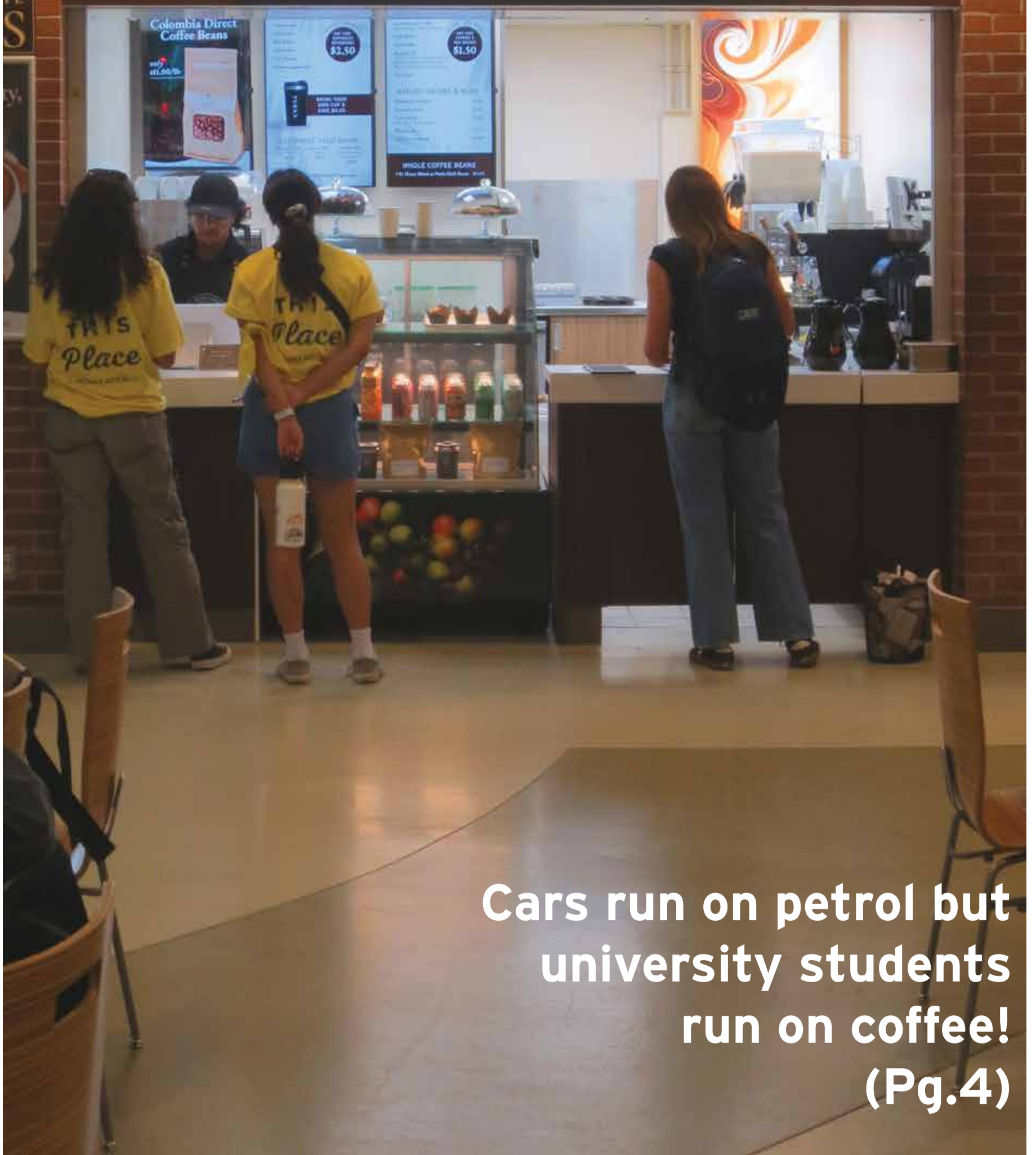


# PERKS

COFFEE, TEA & TREATS



**Cars run on petrol but  
university students  
run on coffee!  
(Pg.4)**

# What you need to know about the upcoming election in Calgary

**Khaoula Choual**

Contributor

Less than two months away, on Oct. 20, Calgarians will be able to vote for their next mayor, councillors and school board trustees, but this time things will be a bit different. During this general election, political parties will be implemented.

## What are the changes for this election?

Two provincial legislations will impact this year's election. This will be Calgary's first election with political parties and new legislative rules for campaign donations and candidate expenses.

In 2024, the Alberta government passed Bill 20, the Municipal Affairs Statutes Amendment Act. This bill will cap corporations, third-party supporters and unions at a maximum dollar amount. It also sets rules for candidates on how much they can spend on campaign costs and how much they can receive. Automated vote-counting machines will also be prohibited this election year, leaving voting results to potentially be delayed until after election day.

## Campaign and donation rules

The population is used to determine limits for campaigns depending on the population size of the city. They are allowed to spend from \$1 per person or \$20,000 on their campaign, whichever is higher, which could potentially rack up to over a million dollars. This also applies to council candidates, but the population is based on the size of the ward.

Candidates can utilise their own funds for their campaign, but it is limited to \$10,000. Individuals and organisations have a cap of \$5,000 to any party in Calgary per year.

## Calgary's political parties

With political parties coming into play in the

upcoming general election, the previous notion of independent candidates has been shaken up.

However, current Mayor Jyoti Gondek is not a fan of political parties at a municipal level. Speaking to The Calgary Herald, Gondek said, "I think if we fall into this quagmire of becoming partisan at the local level, it hinders our ability to work across orders of government."

Gondek believes that political parties will divide people rather than unite them across all municipal and provincial levels.

The Local Authorities Election Act (LAEA) states that new municipal parties cannot be an already existing political party. Slogans, acronyms and political branding must all be different. Candidates can still choose to run as independents, however, if a candidate chooses to stay as an independent, they don't get the same amenities. With political parties, you get to spend a little more than independent candidates.

Political parties do not apply to school board trustees. With the requirements needed to create your own political party, you must have at least 1,000 signatures, and candidates must run in at least a third of the wards in Calgary and Edmonton.

Three new official political parties have been introduced: A Better Calgary Party, The Calgary Party and Communities First.

A Better Calgary Party is a conservative-leaning party, according to the Sprawl, it supports "the family as a fundamental unit of society."

The Calgary Party focuses on making Calgarians safe and prioritising housing and community.

Communities First focuses on public safety, increasing the policing budget and sustaining city infrastructure and keeping taxes low.

## Who is running for mayor?

Some familiar faces are returning to the general

election this year. Jyoti Gondek is running for a second term, while Jeromy Farkas and Jeff Davison, 2021 mayoral runner-ups, are also returning.

## Mayor Jyoti Gondek

In November 2024, she confirmed she would be running for reelection. Due to Gondek's mixed support from the public, voters have been sceptical about her returning candidacy for mayor. Traditionally, most mayors running for reelection in Calgary have been known to be a shoo-in for office. However, with low approval ratings, officials are not convinced Gondek will take a second victory. Lori Williams, a political analyst at Mount Royal University (MRU), told the CBC that with Gondek's low numbers, her assumed electoral advantages no longer apply.

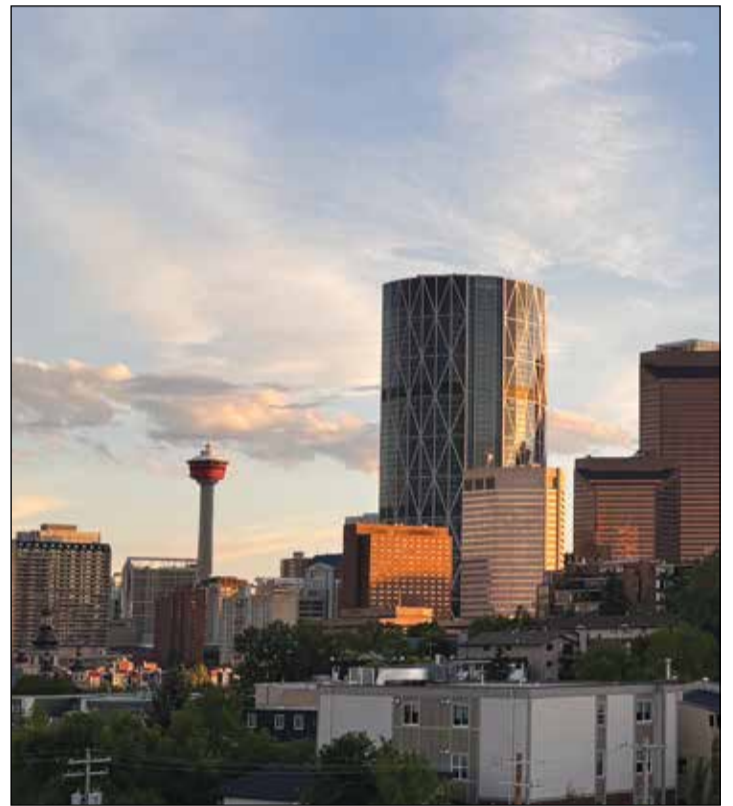
Gondek served as a councillor for Ward 3 in 2017, and she changed history as Calgary's first female mayor in 2021 where she won 45 per cent of the votes. Gondek has faced low polling over the last couple of years, along with a citizen petition to recall her. According to the Calgary Herald, Gondek said she would improve communication between Calgarians and City Hall in her candidate announcement. She is running as an independent.

## Jeromy Farkas

Farkas served as a councillor for Ward 11 between 2017 and 2021. He was the second runner-up in 2021, earning about 30 per cent of the votes. His promise to Calgarians is to increase jobs, housing, and public safety. He is also running as an independent.

## Jeff Davison

In 2021, Davison was the third runner-up with 13 per cent of the votes. He also served as a councillor for Ward 6 from 2017 to 2021. His main promise to Calgarians is a four-year



Landscape view of Calgary's downtown skyline. Photo by Aiden Johner

property tax freeze. This year, he is running as an independent candidate.

## Brian Thiessen

Brian Thiessen is best known as the former chair of the Calgary police commission. He said he will prioritise public safety and housing. He describes himself as a centrist who is fiscally conservative but socially progressive, and he is running with The Calgary Party.

## Sonya Sharp

Sonya Sharp serves as the current councillor for Ward 1. She announced her campaign to run for mayor on March 31, 2025. She wants to reduce the property tax increase by reducing spending and regaining provincial relationships, as well as prioritising safety. Sharp is running with the Communities First political party.

## Who are the ward councillors?

Calgary consists of 14 wards that represent a balance between the demands of community members and the needs

of the individual. Council partakes in creating laws and polices and makes sure those policies are implemented correctly. According to the City of Calgary website, 51 candidates are currently running for councillor across 14 wards. Candidates can still enter the race until Sept. 22.

## Who can vote?

To vote, you must be at least 18 years old and a Canadian citizen. You also must reside in Calgary to vote for the mayor. To vote for your councillors and the school board trustees, you must live in that ward and the school board jurisdiction. While Voterlink registration closed on Aug. 27, citizens can vote without being registered.

## Why should you vote?

Every Canadian citizen is entitled to vote. Voting permits you to choose who your next mayor, councillors, and school board trustees will be. The outcome of an election is entirely up to you. Votes can shape results, and they allow you to advocate for your community and yourself.

# Reading into Edmonton's book ban

*Edmonton's sweeping book pull sparks questions in Calgary*

**Bella Coco**

News Editor

The Edmonton Public School Board (EPSB) plans to remove more than 200 books from school libraries to comply with a provincial mandate banning materials claimed to contain “inappropriate sexual content.”

The list includes literary staples such as Margaret Atwood's *The Handmaid's Tale*, George Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World*, Maya Angelou's *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings* and F. Scott Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby*.

The EPSB confirmed the list, stating that staff applied the “over-broad” criteria laid out in the ministerial order signed by Education Minister Demetrios Nicolaides. The order requires the removal of books with explicit sexual content from all grades, though students in grades 10 and above may access material with non-explicit sexual content.

Alberta Premier Danielle Smith described the school board's approach as “vicious compliance,” and the government would “hold their hand” to ensure the policy is applied appropriately.

Meanwhile, Nicolaides has asked the EPSB to clarify its choices and affirmed that his office will work with all school boards to implement the standards appropriately.

## Civil liberties groups sound the alarm

The Canadian Civil Liberties Association (CCLA) issued a strong statement condemning the move as a dangerous form of censorship. The CCLA Executive Director, Howard Sapers, warned that removing influential works like, *The Handmaid's Tale* deprives students of critical learning opportunities.

“The banning of books is a hallmark of censorship, not democracy,” Sapers stated.

Similarly, the policy has drawn criticism from academic voices. James Turk, director of the Centre for Free Expression at Toronto Metropolitan University, says the ban appears to be the product of lobbying by right-wing groups such as Action4Canada and Parents for Choice in Education, who have long opposed LGBTQIA2S+ affirming content.

Turk and other critics point out that while the government claims not to target queer stories, the guidelines disproportionately affect them, citing graphic novels like *Gender Queer*, *Fun Home*, *Blankets* and *Flamer* as specific examples at the heart of the book ban.

## What's next?

Edmonton Public's list is not final, and officials are expecting additions. Schools across Alberta are predicted to follow suit, though it is unclear how far they will follow in Edmonton's footsteps.

The controversy also raises more questions of censorship in Canada. Domestic bans are rare, and Canada's Charter of Rights and Freedoms protects free expression across the country, with limitations only

for hate speech or obscene content. School board decisions have occasionally drawn federal scrutiny, such as the Surrey, B.C., case overturned by the Supreme Court in *Chamberlain v. Surrey School District*.

## Why does this matter for Calgarians?

In response to the Edmonton development, the Calgary Board of Education (CBE) says it is reviewing its inventory of over half a million titles to ensure alignment with the new provincial rules. The CBE has not released any specific titles under review and has not entirely committed to the provincial mandate, but indicated that further information will be shared as

the process unfolds.

The Calgary Catholic Board of Education (CCBE) has confirmed that it will comply with provincial rules. While the book banning wildfire sparks up across the province, parents and educators have voiced their concerns over the consequences of censorship.

- Access to literature: Books such as *The Handmaid's Tale*, studied in Canadian schools and post-secondary institutions, may become harder to access and understand.
- Impact on curriculum: Calgary schools—CBE or CCBE—may prematurely adjust reading lists or library access and further affect student courses, assignments and engagement.

- Public pushback: Further concerns from parents, educators, students and civil liberties groups may sway board decisions or spark broader provincial debate.

Calgary's response could become a trailblazer. Post-secondary students, especially in an academic environment like Mount Royal University, have a front-row seat to watch and participate in the conversation about what literature your communities value, and what the next chapter of Alberta's book bans will look like.

As of Sept. 4, Smith paused the controversial book ban after facing actions of protest from a large school district.



Last Friday, Premier Smith spoke to the idea that the Edmonton Public School Board book list was heavily aligned with the new government directive. Photo courtesy of FLICKR



Margaret Atwood, author of *The Handmaid's Tale*, declined to comment to any news organizations, but took to social media to voice her thoughts on the book ban. Photo courtesy of FLICKR

# A new perk joins Wyckham House

**Acacia Carol**

Layout Editor

The mark of the fall semester starting is an influx of newness—new class schedules, new professors, and, in some cases, a new coffee house on campus, like West Gate Perks in Wyckham House.

low price doesn't mean West Gate Perks is skipping out on quality either—the cafe's coffee beans are directly imported from Columbia.

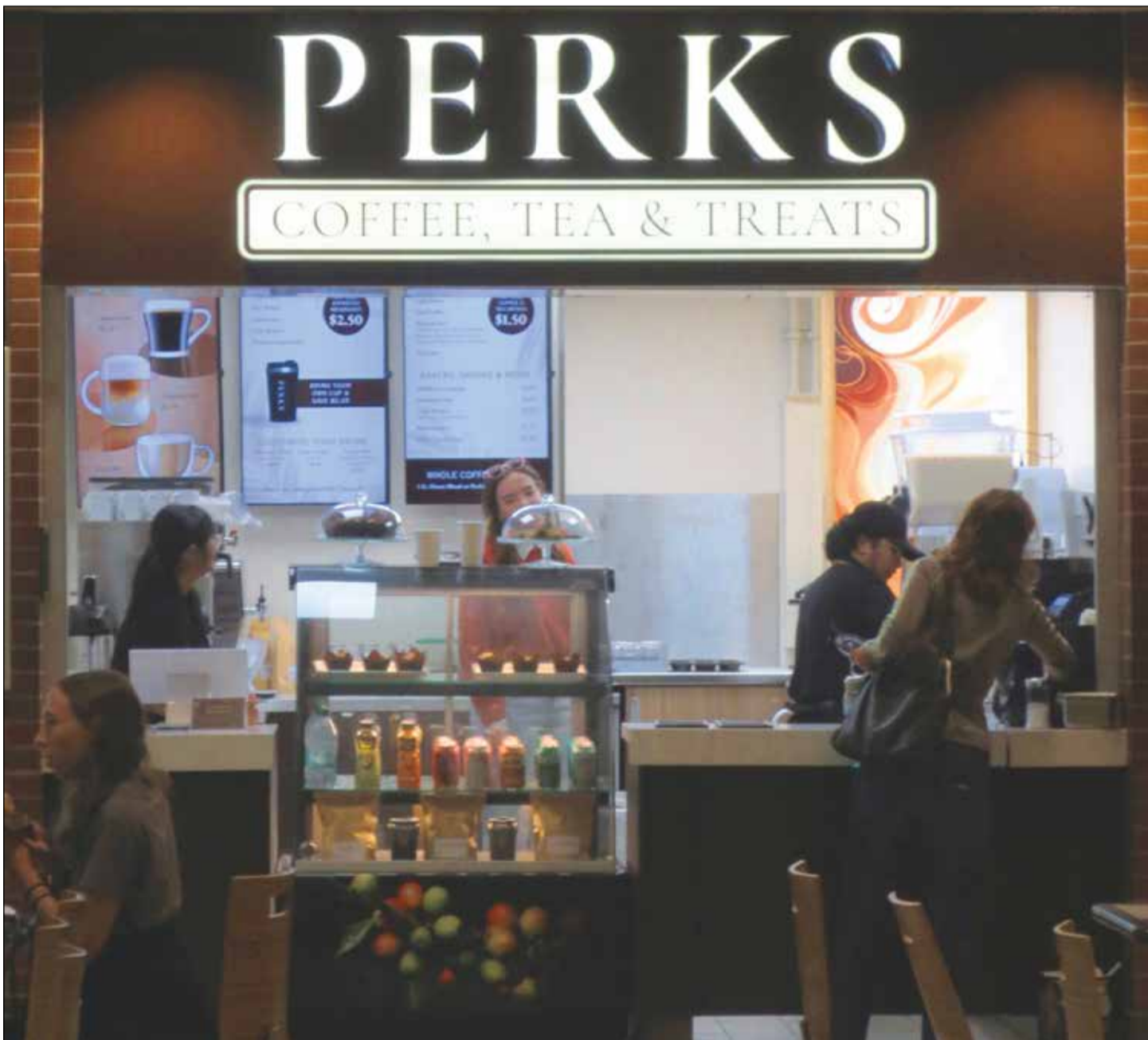
"We're really focusing on having high-quality products that students love," Czaja

responses to that QR code survey. Czaja also says she is "really excited" about the name coming from students, and she appreciates how "cute" the name is.

Running on the not-for-profit model also means

Not a coffee person? Don't worry, the cafe will also stock tea blends from Sarjesa, an MRU alumni-owned company which started as a student project in an Indigenous Studies course.

In addition to supporting



**Boasting low prices and high quality, West Gate Perks aims to be a more accessible option for students needing an energy boost. Photo by Aiden Johner**

At West Gate Perks, there's also a big focus on affordability. So much so that it runs differently than what students might be used to.

Unlike other dining options on campus, the goal of West Gate Perks isn't to make money. The cafe operates on a not-for-profit model, primarily aiming instead at making enough money to support its operations while keeping prices low.

How low exactly? Try a latte for \$2.50.

Miranda Czaja, the operations manager at West Gate Perks, says that the

says. "What they expect from any other big brand coffee shop, but it's student-focused prices."

West Gate Perks gets a lot of its direction from what students want. Returning students might remember QR codes around Wyckham last winter semester that were asking for feedback. That survey was one of many ways that SAMRU wanted to focus students' opinions on the new project.

According to Czaja, the name 'West Gate Perks' came from analyzing student feedback from over 350

opening with a smaller menu, Czaja explains. West Gate Perks currently offers all the standard coffee house drink favourites like drip coffee, espresso beverages and cold brew.

Continuing the commitment to operating with student feedback, there will be QR codes posted around the cafe so students can offer direct feedback about what is and isn't working. Czaja wants to hear what students actually want, so West Gate Perks can make the biggest impact with their menu, she says.

alumni and providing an affordable option on campus, the cafe will also be primarily staffed by students. Czaja explains that it's important to her that she is able to find a coffee house that has "super friendly" staff that genuinely care, and she wants to create a similar feeling at West Gate Perks.

"It's a boost to my day, and it makes me just feel right. And that's what we want students to feel, and we don't want it to have a financial barrier," she says.

## THE REFLECTOR

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The Reflector welcomes newsworthy submissions from all students and community members.

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## MRU housing a headache: Students

*How Calgary's growing population pressures residence to evolve*

**Karra Smith**

Contributor



View of one of Mount Royal University's East residence buildings. Photo by Aiden Johner

Each year, Mount Royal University's (MRU) residence houses thousands of tenants, but as Calgary's population continues to rise, many students are stressing about scoring a spot off the waitlist.

Between the East and West Residence buildings, MRU said in an email statement that 950 students will be housed for the 2025-26 academic year.

According to the Alberta Government, Calgary's population has grown by 18 per cent since 2020. MRU's residence services director, Mark Keller, says that as the city's number of citizens increases, so has the influx of students seeking shelter on campus.

"We've seen over the last couple of years an increased demand for housing on campus," he says. "We've gotten more applications and we've housed more students as the Calgary rental market has gotten a little bit more difficult in terms of space available and also pricing."

However, in a July report by the Calgary Chamber of Commerce, housing starts are up 32 per cent compared to last year's total. Additionally, rent in Calgary is 9 per cent cheaper than last year, according to Rentals.ca.

Nonetheless, due to the

shifting population and rise in applicants, Keller says MRU residence has had to adjust the way these requests are processed.

"In the past...we would prioritize first-year students by saying 'OK, if you applied by a certain date, we would guarantee you a spot in residence,'" he says. "We haven't been able to do that, unfortunately, with the next couple of years simply because we weren't able to guarantee spaces moving forward."

To create equal opportunity for applicants, while ensuring there is a mix of both returning and new students, Keller says residence is set up on a first-come, first-served basis.

But not all students agree with this protocol, which they say has made receiving a housing offer a stressful process.

### Campus housing system is skewed, students say

"I'm not a local student. I live far away. I'm eight hours north, so if I don't get into residence, there is nowhere for me to live," says Madison Shannon, a student going into her fourth year living on campus.

"I didn't even get told I was getting a place until like mid-August."

Shannon says that she believes returning students coming from places outside of commuting distance should have priority over Calgary locals, and she's not alone in this thought.

"I think they should take into account the distance of where people live and not just who applies first," says second-year student Abby Weidman.

She opted to be part of the choose-a-room program, which placed her with two roommates. Weidman says that it didn't take long to realize she and her roommates were not the right fit for one another.

Though she successfully avoided the waitlist by applying early, Weidman says that residence presented her with the hurdle of dealing with the roommate conflict on her own.

"I just felt that I was put in that situation, like I didn't want to be in that situation. So I wish that residence would have handled that for me," she says.

Another second-year student, Lacey Holowaty, says that she also felt tension between MRU residence services and tenants. For

her, the stress was not knowing when she would get details about her housing assignment.

"I feel like it's taking up more of my mental energy worrying about it than it should be, maybe that's just me, but I should be worrying about what classes I'm getting ready for and this and that, but all I can think about is res," says Holowaty.

To help with student anxiety, she says that MRU should send out key information in a single email or outline when information will be released.

### New MRU housing plan underway

With the fall semester now in full swing, MRU says it recognizes the challenges and frustration students are feeling not just in Calgary, but across the nation.

"We understand the concern by students regarding the shortage of accommodation in Calgary and in many university communities across Canada," MRU residence services said in an email statement. "Mount Royal's Students Association maintains an up-to-date listing of room-and-board, houses, duplexes, suites and apartments for students who do not live on

campus."

In partnership with Places4Students Inc., SAMRU's website offers a database with several high-quality, off-campus housing options, including site features, photos and landlord contact information.

MRU residence, with a 1,000-person maximum capacity, can house approximately 1 in 15 of its students, based on last year's total attendance number of almost 15,800. As Calgary's population incline shows no signs of slowing, Keller says the residence team is looking into what the future holds for on-campus housing.

"So we have started to work on a residence masterplan which will involve figuring out some demand, what students are looking for with housing, doing some cost analysis, that sort of thing," he says.

Kellers says that different options for accommodations are being considered.

"That obviously doesn't help for the next couple years because it's going to take a long time to figure out what we're going to do next," he says. "If we do decide to build something new, that takes time as well, but conversations are definitely happening."

# Vapes: From 'healthier' to hazardous

*Why new research doesn't recommend using the devices to quit cigarettes*

**Sarah Palmer**

Features Editor



Person holds an e-cigarette. Photo by Rick Barrett / Unsplash

E-cigarettes, disposables, puffs, mods—no matter the name, nicotine vapes came onto the scene as the traditional tobacco cigarettes trendy alternative, believed to offer the same sensation with a fraction of the side effects.

But according to new guidelines by the Canadian Task Force on Preventive Health Care, vaping should be viewed as a last resort for those seeking to quit cigarette smoking.

The report, published on Aug. 25 in the Canadian Medical Association Journal, states that despite some e-cigarette users saying that the devices helped kick their cravings, the downside of underresearched ingredients outweighs the benefits.

"We suggest against using e-cigarettes for smoking cessation for most people because of uncertainty about unapproved products, long-term harms, and public health impacts," read the report.

"Most people should first consider other options other than e-cigarettes to stop smoking."

Instead, the report recommended that nonpregnant adults should turn to behavioural tools, such as counselling, and pharmacotherapy—medication or nicotine replacement therapy (NRT)—to curb their hankering.

Including gum, patches, lozenges, inhalers, and sprays, the use of NRTs, either individually or in combination with behavioural tools, is believed to be the most effective approach, regardless of someone's smoking habits.

Vaping, even when used alongside NRTs, was found by past research to have barely made a dent in changing the routine of cigarette smokers. But recent data shows that most of today's e-cigarette users never smoked cigarettes to begin with.

## Vaping's grip on Gen Z

In Canada, it took 14 years after the devices first entered the market to be legalized. Around that time, in the early 2000s, Health Canada issued an advisory against them, but this ban was never enforced.

Instead, over a decade later, in May 2018, the opposite happened when Bill S-5—amendments to the Tobacco Act and the Non-Smokers Health Act—passed, which effectively legalized the sale of nicotine-containing e-cigarettes to adults.

According to the Canadian Lung Association (CLA), updates to Bill S-5 included some regulations regarding marketing and safety, but these "didn't go far enough in preventing youth from using vaping products."

In 2022, the Canadian Tobacco and Nicotine Survey found that 20 per cent of youth aged 20 to 24 reported having vaped in the past month, compared to 14 per cent of youth aged 15 to 19 and four per cent of Canadians over the age of 25.

Even more, in the same study surveying middle and high school students, 17 per cent of youth enrolled in grades 7 to 12 reported using a vape in the past month. Despite almost all of the respondents being underage,

55 per cent of them said obtaining a nicotine vape was easy.

While it may seem logical to assume that young adults are picking up vaping more than minors, university students in 2022 matched their junior counterparts, with 17 per cent of them having vaped in

the past month, according to the Canadian Postsecondary Education Alcohol and Drug Use Survey.

Why this is concerning, as the CLA outlines, is due to e-cigarette flavours commonly containing the ingredient glycerol, which is linked to causing irreversible

damage, such as pulmonary lung disease, and death in extreme cases.

However, the Government of Canada says that, though vaping is not an approved tool for quitting cigarettes by Health Canada, e-cigarettes are not linked to cancer and contain over 7,000 fewer chemicals than tobacco, making them a decent substitute.

But with the surge in adolescents picking up the puffs, the CLA urges that the government ban additives and flavours in addition to Alberta's preexisting regulations, being the 20 mg nicotine cap and sales tax hike.

"The rise in popularity among young Canadians is staggering," read the report. "With ongoing aggressive marketing and promotion of these products, there is concern that the numbers of youth vaping will continue to rise."

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# Opinion: The thawing Silk Road

*The Arctic could revolutionize international trade, but are we ready?*

**Ryan Montgomery**

Contributor

The low sun rises in the 13th century. The Mongol hordes of the Great Khan conquer untold lands for the hungry gods of their eternal blue sky.

Under this new empire, under the newfound peace brought by the yoke of soldiers, trade flourishes. All along the steppe of Central Asia and the Middle East, what was once a home for thieves, smugglers, and bandits is now turned into a mercantile superhighway. The watchful eye and iron fist of Kublai Khan, grandson

there's a new Silk Road right around the corner. We've traded the Golbi Dessert for the Arctic Archipelago, Ulaanbaatar for Ottawa, and the hordes of the Great Kahn for the Canadian Coast Guard. I'm talking, of course, about the Northwest Passage (NWP).

Located above mainland North America, the Arctic Ocean-based sea route runs between the Bering Strait—through Nunavut and the Northwest Territories—to connect the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans.

icepack has consistently melted, with the speed increasing considerably in recent decades. Current predictions state that the NWP will have ice-free summers by the mid-2030s, but with how climate predictions go nowadays, it could be next week, who knows.

Using the NWP is 7,000 kilometres shorter than the current quickest sea route, the Panama Canal—shaving off about two weeks of travel time each voyage. It costs around \$150,000 a day to

A nation has what's known as internal waters, which are defined as either three kilometres from the nation's coastline or any waterways that are surrounded by that nation's land. Within its internal waters, a nation is fully sovereign. It can exercise full legal authority over the sea and can even prohibit innocent passage, or ships just passing through.

Two hundred nautical miles beyond that boundary, you have a nation's Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ), in which it holds

international waterway, which, under UNCLOS, would obligate Canada to permit the passing through of ships.

Chief among these critics is our old pal, the good ol' US of A, whose government has repeatedly fought Canada over the status of the NWP as internal Canadian waters, cause that means they wouldn't get to use it all the time for free.

OK, we're done now with maritime law, I promise. If you need to pause and go take a cold shower or get a



View of the Northwest Passage off the coast of Nunavut. Photo by Coast Guard News / Flickr

of Genghis, has turned a den of thieves into a highway of gold.

Chinese silk and Indian spices travel the breadth of Asia, through the gates of Constantinople, into the ever-flowing markets of Europe. Lord Almighty, is there money to be made, and those who control the route make gobs of it. Empires rise and fall based on control of the trade, and fortunes are made and squandered by the day.

Doesn't that sound nice? Don't you wish we had that? Don't you want to be the middleman for a modern Silk Road and rack up money just for being there?

Well, cheer up, my enterprising mercantilist, for

The Arctic icepatch steadily retreats year after year, opening up new waters for possible navigation, where the NWP has claimed the lives of hundreds of explorers seeking to find a way to circumnavigate North America. Of course, the Inuit knew where it was the whole time, but the explorers never thought to ask.

The point of all this wanton exploring and freezing was to find a direct sea route to Asia from Europe. When they did eventually find it—no shock to anyone—it was covered in ice.

This is how it's been for the last 10,000 years or so until that old villain, climate change, reared its ugly head.

Since the 1990s, the

operate a large cargo ship. That's millions saved on every trip from the Atlantic to the Pacific.

The NWP will do to the Panama Canal what Booth did to Lincoln. In other words, it will completely revolutionize international trade and shipping.

And guess who's smack-dab in the centre of it? Us.

Now, if you'll permit me to dive into the raunchy, dog-eat-dog, hot-n-heavy world of international maritime law for a minute, I can explain why this is so important for Canada. Under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, or, as the cool kids call it, UNCLOS, a nation's maritime borders are defined in various ways.

complete sovereignty over the economic activity in the zone, such as fishing or mineral rights, but can't prohibit passage through or loitering in the water.

The trillion-dollar legal question is whether or not the NWP is located within Canadian territorial waters or is just a part of its EEZ. If it is within the territorial waters, that means that the Canadian government can charge a fee for every ship passing through. However, if it's just a part of the EEZ, then they would be required to let shipping boats through without impediment,

In more tragic words, no money for Johnny Canuck.

Many countries want the NWP declared an

cigarette, I'd understand.

So what needs to be done? Well, there needs to be a lot of investment in the north by the federal government. We need more icebreakers, we need deep-water ports, and we need the ability to stake our claim to the Arctic and actually back it up with steel and ordnance if we want countries to listen to us. To maintain our sovereignty and protect Inuit rights, we needed drastic action yesterday. Or else we risk getting left out in the cold from our own Silk Road.

# YOUR STUDENTS' ASSOCIATION



SAMRU.CA/EVENTS

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2nd Floor Lounge, Wyckham House  
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RSVP by Sept. 22 to [representation@samru.ca](mailto:representation@samru.ca)

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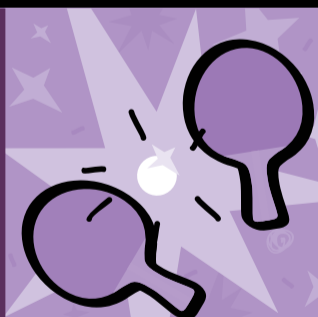
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# Trends I am (not) falling for this year

*Saying no to what doesn't fit—and yes to a wardrobe that actually does*

**Daria Orth**

Contributor

Fashion trends are interesting because they come and go, and often come full circle. Nothing ever really goes away, but nothing ever truly stays current either. It's always old clothing fads that once broke the internet being reintroduced through a different style, and that's one of the many things I love about fashion.

In 2025, all kinds of fashion trends from 2000s club styles to maximalist business-wear have been getting attention on social media and runways. While I'm usually easily influenced by trends, they still need to stand out to me and reflect my aesthetic. There's been a few trends that I have never been a personal fan of that I have seen models pull-off wonderfully. It's typically because it either suits their features or their outfit is disgustingly well-styled.

With the fall semester starting up, I'm excited to start putting together some outfits that match what's trending, while still staying true to myself.

## My fashion trend "no's"

### Skinny jeans

Skinny jeans are a controversial fashion topic that is either loved or despised. In high school, I pretty much wore skinny jeans every day, and that was before I had found my personal style. Now they are making a comeback, but I refuse to ever put them on my body again. Instead, I find flared jeans or baggy low-rise pants much more flattering and stylish, paired with a tight-fitted crop top and belt of choice.

Oddly enough, however, I have seen skinny jeans styled "old money," and it actually looks really nice. With knee high boots, skinny jeans, a turtleneck sweater layered under a long trench-coat, and a classy belt, the jeans work. It's truthfully the only way I've seen skinny jeans styled correctly in my mind, and even I can see the appeal when worn this way. However, unless they

are styled exactly like that, skinny jeans have no place in my wardrobe or anywhere in my outfit Pinterest board.

### Jorts

Jorts refer to baggy or oversized jean shorts that hit at or below the knee. While I like baggy pants, I like them floor-length with my sneakers, just barely peeking through. I'm skeptical about jorts because they are baggy, but end around knee length. It's a look that some people pull off really well—however, I am not one of those people. I do think they can be fashionable, but they just aren't for me.

### Animal print

I've never liked animal print clothing as I've always found it to be a bit tacky. Whether that's fake crocodile leather, zebra print, or leopard print, I just don't like how it looks. I have been seeing leopard print everywhere recently, especially in short bodycon dresses or corset tops. I do have to say I'm starting to feel open minded about leopard print though, and am curious

to style it in the future. One of my Y2K purses has leopard print in the interior, which I don't hate. I will even wear fur jackets, faux or second-hand, because those actually feel very classy, but you will absolutely never catch me in zebra stripes or cow spots.

### Nike tech

Nike tech refers to Nike's line of fleece wear, which includes jogger pants and zip-up hoodies. Nike tech is a big no for me. I can understand the outfit from a comfortable or practical standpoint, maybe, but for fashion? Absolutely not. There's something about this vibe that reminds me of Victor's orange tracksuit from *Despicable Me*. And it's weird because I even like the Y2K Juicy Couture and Playboy women's tracksuits that actually look completely different and very iconic. Now if we're talking about Nike Dunk sneakers, then yes, those alone are very fashionable with a retro look, and I genuinely want a pair in every colour.

## My fashion trend "yes's"

### Maxi dresses

As of lately, I've been loving long maxi dresses and the elegance that comes with them. I think they are so pretty and feminine, not to mention they come in so many different styles. Dresses with lots of frills, slits, and corseted bodices have been grabbing my attention the most. Some of them are skin-tight and flare out at the bottom, while others are more of a wide skirt with a princess look, but either way, I want a closet full of them for every season.

### Layering skirts

A trend I have seen a lot of this year is layering skirts of

different lengths with various clothing pieces to approach an outfit from a different angle. For example, layering frilly mini skirts over low-rise cargo pants or layering long maxi skirts under shorter dresses and oversized shirts. I think layering is a fashionista's playground, so this is a trend I will be experimenting with.

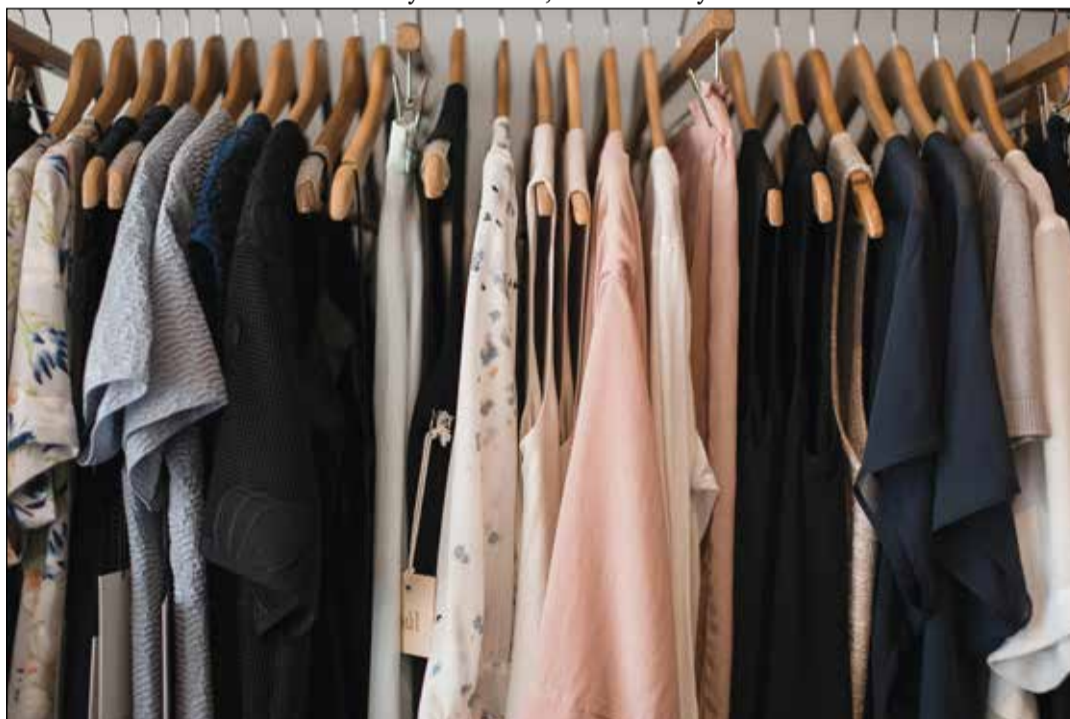
## Grandpa sweaters

I don't know why I find borderline ugly knit sweaters cute, but I do, and they are perfect for fall. Maybe it's how cozy they are, or they really do just remind me of something one of my grandfathers used to wear, but I think they are so much fun when the seasons start to turn gloomy.

## Bag charms

I know so many people hate Labubus and other unnecessary bag charms, but I think they are so adorable and a simplistic way to express your personality. It just adds a little something to your tote that makes it a little more you and unique. And you can find pretty keychains at almost any market, so the idea of decorating your purse resonates with the maximalist in me.

The good thing about fashion is that it's entirely up to you how you dress—these are just my thoughts. Clothing should be about what makes you the most comfortable, so wear what makes you feel good.



Fashion trends ask us whether we are just following the crowd, or always finding new versions of ourselves in styles. Photo courtesy of Pexels

## OUT'N ABOUT

### Inglewood Night Market

Saying goodnight to summer, Inglewood Night Market returns on Sept. 12 from 5 p.m. to 10 p.m. between 10th Ave. and 10th St. SE. With free admission for the public, the market includes over 140 curated local artisans and small businesses, ranging from handmade goods to delicious eats.

### Cinema on 17th Ave

Celebrating four years of community engagement and a love of movies, Cinema on 17th Ave returns from Sept. 12 to Sept. 14. The theatrical movie weekend presents a full lineup of movies everyday from 2 p.m. to 8 p.m., with the full schedule available at [www.17thave.ca](http://www.17thave.ca).

### China Town Lantern Festival

In recognition of the Mid-Autumn Festival, China Town Lantern festival returns on Sept. 12 from 4 p.m. to 11 p.m. along 2nd Ave. SW and Daqing Square. Not ticketed and open to the public, the festival features local vendors, food trucks, and vibrant light and lantern displays.

### Locked Zoo

Experience the Calgary Zoo after hours at Locked Zoo: Diving Deep. This game challenges you to solve puzzles and bring animal conservation to life before time runs out. The event runs from 4 p.m. to 8 p.m. on Sept. 6, with tickets available for those over 18 at [calgaryzoo.com](http://calgaryzoo.com).

# A student's guide to book bargaining

**Farheen Agoro**

Contributor

What textbooks can I find? Where do I find them? Can I even afford them?

Despite what you may think, textbook shopping doesn't have to be stressful this fall.

While the most common place you'll be referred to is the Campus Store, the arrival of new and returning students brings a shortage of stock and the worry of affordability.

Thankfully, there are many resources online and in-person for when you go looking for your textbook list.

Whether you are in a pinch or just looking for a good deal on your books, these are some of the best resources for broke and busy students.

## Local bookstores

Calgary is home to a variety of used bookstores that buy, sell, and exchange books, opening the door to a thriving community of readers. What is better than supporting local and getting a good deal in the process?

If you are looking to build up your library, Fair's Fair Books has got you covered. With branches in Inglewood and Chinook, you can buy, sell, and trade books within both stores.

Fair's Fair Books also has a special in-store credit on select items, easily identifiable by the company's branded sticker. These books can get you up to 80 per cent trade credit that links to your profile and never expires. This strategy provides cheaper options and environmentally friendly ways to keep books out of landfills and back on shelves.

Shelf Life Books is another locally-owned and operated business that specializes in high-quality literature, Canadian authors, and diverse voices for all genres. They also tap into the greater book community as they host events, book clubs, trivia nights, author engagement, and more. They are a friendly place located in the southwest that is sure to meet all of your new book needs this fall.

Making old books new again, The Next Page on 9th Ave. SE is perfect for students who are looking to sell their old books and reinvest in their new list. The store buys any and all used books that are deemed resellable during their store hours from

11 a.m. to 5 p.m., with no appointments needed.

Whether you want to trade in for cash or get a store credit of higher value, The Next Page is looking out for student bank accounts and textbook demands.

## Open Library

If you want a reliable option for digital texts at the comfort of your screen, look no further than Internet Archive.

Internet Archive is renowned for its open library, which offers free and accessible books for daily users. Creating an account is easy and free, and the content is legal and secure. They offer a range of media, including books, textbooks, movies, playscripts, software, music, and more.

In addition, there are plenty of search functions to locate texts quickly, making it the best resource to use in a pinch. It also provides the option to highlight, record, or annotate on digital books to assist in content reading and analysis.

## AbeBooks

AbeBooks is an online marketplace that specializes in everything from used, rare, and new, to out-of-print and scholarly books. It provides a search function that allows you to filter a single book title based on price and quality. This allows students to choose what they need or can afford, giving them the versatility to select the best options.

Alongside their impressive book selection, AbeBooks also specializes in unique collectables and vintage objects. Perhaps you'll discover photographs based on the books, a postcard from the 19th century, or a discontinued press magazine.

What makes AbeBooks unique is that it has international branches, with texts and other printed material in multiple languages—there's a little something for everyone in AbeBooks' wide selection.

As an added bonus, AbeBooks ships most of their books free to Canadian customers.

## Facebook Marketplace

When in doubt, one of the best resources available

to students this fall is your peers—why not buy, sell, and exchange books with one another?

Run by students for students, Mount Royal University Buy and Sell is a Facebook marketplace group dedicated to the circulation of textbooks.

Whether you want to post your own books and make

some money back, or you are looking to finish off your own textbook list, MRU Buy and Sell offers accessibility and approachability for students looking for books that are specific to MRU courses.

The marketplace even connects you to other MRU groups, which allows you to find major-specific groups that circulate textbooks

central to their program, such as the MRU Public Relations. Textbook Buy and Sell.

From popping into a bookstore to looking online or searching around campus, there is no shortage of ways to find textbooks and other media that fit your budget and schedule.



Every year, students scramble to stay cost effective when met with booklist demands. Photo courtesy of Pexels



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**BOOK AN APPOINTMENT**

# Flowing with new sound

**Katrina Ebuenga**

Contributor

When it comes to experiencing local hip-hop talent, Calgary's own Ship and Anchor has got you covered.

Hosted by KTheChosen, local hip-hop artist and curator, ShipHop at Ship and Anchor is a hip-hop showcase that promotes hip-hop lovers and artists to come together to share a night of fun and live music performances.

Located along 17th Ave., Ship and Anchor works alongside KTheChosen to provide an exhilarating space that encourages young, growing artists to take their skills of rapping and pen game to the stage.

With free admission for those over 18, the next night of ShipHop is set for Nov. 5, hosted at Ship and Anchor at 8.p.m.

Come experience live hip-hop talent from Nick Wise, Hip Hip Thursday, Kindé, a neo-soul artist who recently was nominated for the YYC Music Award, and Tanajah, a hip-hop artist and rapper visiting all the way from New York.

A fellow rapper, KTheChosen has spent the

last three years hosting and curating the ShipHop stage for other rising stars, welcoming amazing artists from all over Canada, spanning from Toronto to Vancouver.

He does this alongside his talented teammates, CatfishTheWizard, DJ and co-creator of rap games, and Nii, head of 3rd Verse Studios, sponsor and co-curator for artists.

"We hope to raise the bar on the Calgary hip-hop scene," said KTheChosen. "We intentionally created a different format with our rap games and open mics, making them more interactive as to pull in different levels of rappers."

What sets ShipHop apart from other live music nights in Calgary is their interactive space that connects the stage and the crowd, encouraging lively participation through rap games.

At their last show hosted on Aug. 6, they welcomed to the stage Rome IX, a Calgary-based indie/soul musician, MC MEdz, a solo hip-hop artist, and (un)decided, a blended band of many genres

taking influence from jazz, RnB, hip-hop, and neo-soul.

Alongside the talented slew of artists that threw their mic in for rap games and started the night with open mic, Rome IX, MC MEdz, and (un)decided showcased what the ShipHop platform aims to achieve for artists.

"What makes this stage different is that it's very inclusive and interactive, with loads of different elements," said KTheChosen. "On every level, we're giving some kind of benefit to those that participate. We make sure everyone is always leveling up, whether that be artists moving from open mics to rap games to schedule performances, or audiences learning how to interact with the artists and the format."

ShipHop aims to be an inclusive and interactive stage where multiple talents are blended together. They achieve this not only through their formatting, but also through those that step up on to the platform.

Working with KTheChosen and ShipHop, Dwight Farahat, executive director of Tribe Artist Society,



MC MEdz giving a dynamic performance at the Ship Hop summer showcase. Photo by Katrina Ebuenga



**Different Night Same Rodeo**

Bailey Zimmerman  
Atlantic Records/Warner Music Nashville  
Score: B

On Aug. 8, Bailey Zimmerman released his newest album, *Different Night Same Rodeo*. His tour began on Aug. 22 and is anticipated to carry on through the entirety of 2025's summer.

Zimmerman has done an excellent job of creating an album with many themes that feels like it has progression as the listener makes their way through the songs. Some of these themes include heartbreak, resilience, vulnerability, and nostalgia.

My favourite song from the album, "When It Was," draws the reader into a love story that had gotten lost in simpler times. This is a very powerful song that touches on the pain that comes with heartbreak, the resilience required to push through hardship, to acknowledge what went wrong and find the difference between time spent and time wasted, and looking back and being grateful for

the opportunity to have these memories.

Zimmerman effectively finds a way to keep everyone entertained through his storytelling and by incorporating modern country style with some exciting features, such as Diplo, The Kid LAROI, and Luke Combs.

Although this album has a lot of potential, I think Zimmerman has tried to do too much with it—almost adopting a playlist mentality with solid songs but a scattered direction. While good, much of the content can feel recycled and tired.

Overall, *Different Night Same Rodeo* by Bailey Zimmerman does a great job at providing songs that bring forward some great lyrical work, however, this is not the best we have seen from him.

—Brennen French



**Talkin' to the Trees**

Neil Young  
Reprise Records  
Score: C

On June 13, Neil Young released his latest album *Talkin' to the Trees*. This album encapsulates the aspects of personal growth and nostalgia, directly talking about Young's family life and growth. With a mix of 10 songs, this album brings the listeners a mix of country, rock, and folk-style music. It's a little something for everyone.

While I personally enjoyed the album, I was extremely underwhelmed by the presence it had while listening. To further elaborate on that, most of the songs lacked any depth. The lyrics felt too literal, too bland, and leaned too much into typical country tropes.

Well, yes, I understand that Neil Young is known for that, however, I don't usually get bored. This being said, *Talkin' to the Trees* did have a few excellent songs—my favourite being "Dark Mirage." After listening to it a few times, I have

come to the conclusion this is about Young losing family, particularly his daughter, "to the darkness inside" which leads me to believe this was evoked after the passing of his wife Pegi Young in 2019.

"Dark Mirage" is a great example of how this album can come too close to his personal life, almost leaving the listener feeling a little awkward. I praise Mr. Young for releasing such a raw and unfiltered song during such a difficult time in his life.

Overall, this album is worth a listen purely for its artistic bravery. By bringing such a strong sense of emotion forward in this album, it feels as if the listener can get secondhand emotions with how it is presented.

—Brennen French

spearheads an Indigenous-led hip-hop and arts collective that helps artists grow their craft through creating sober spaces where hip-hop, art, and Indigenous culture co-exist.

With the intention of creating a positive and supportive space for all individuals, ShipHop works alongside Tribe Artist Society to build those connections within the community.

“The whole point is that rap is meant to be something that helps build community and stability for those who might have habits that they’re trying to break. And although ShipHop has its own set of ideas that people are used to by now, it’s all about putting other people on that platform and letting them grow in that way,” said KTheChosen.

In the spirit of ushering local artists and communities to the stage, 3rd Verse Studio, a recording studio right here in Calgary, also offers free studio time for all participating artists in open mics, rap games, and scheduled performances throughout the night.

“This is really about building a culture, both for the audiences and for the artists, to have a space where

they can continue to grow,” said KTheChosen. “We’ve cut as many barriers as we can for students to come and see the show, as well as the fact that you never know within the student body who’s an artist themselves and may need this platform.”

For aspiring artists and individuals who enjoy experiencing new music, ShipHop creates a stage for opportunities and a chance to try out new material with a welcoming crowd.

“The biggest word of wisdom I have is just go out there,” said KTheChosen. “You will never get to be the unknown artist twice, so you’re allowed to make mistakes because no one knows who you are yet.”

With a local eagerness for new sound, there is no limit to the talent and inspiration to gain from a night at ShipHop.

“There is competition in the city right now, which forces everybody to step up their game. I think now people have realized that because there’s so many of us, they’ve got to stand out in a way,” said KTheChosen. “The local hip-hop scene is hungry,”



Rome IX introducing ShipHop to his unique indie-soul sound at the summer showcase. Photo by Trevor Hatter



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# Cougars kick off 14th Canada West campaign

Zafir Nagji  
Sports Editor

School is back in session for post-secondary students across the country, and with the return of classes and homework comes the start of a new season in Canada West. At Mount Royal University, that means donning navy blue and cheering for the MRU Cougars, who kick off their 2025-26 Canada West campaign on the pitch with men's and women's soccer. Meet the two squads' new faces, get reacquainted with their returning veterans and find out when and where to watch your Cougars on the football pitch.

## Women's soccer

Winning may be the ultimate goal of competition, but judging a team only by its finishing position is reductive at best. Such is the case with the MRU Cougars women's soccer team, who narrowly missed last year's Canada West playoffs, but had so much more to show than their ranking in the conference table. According to 17th-year head coach Tino Fusco, the team played well against their stiffest competition, and he expects them to bring their best to Canada West this season.

"Last year, having quite a few new players coming to the squad, I felt that we were quite competitive against some good B.C. sides that played a different physical style than perhaps what we were used to," Fusco said. "Things that I'm looking for this year would be very similar. Us to be competitive. To possess the ball, to look forward. I feel we have the players to do that. And, yeah, I'm excited to bring that in person."

Ella Filek, one of the team's newest players last season, was signed days before the first game of 2024. The now-second-year goalkeeper had a steep learning curve, but soon became one of the premier



Ella Filek, left, made seven saves and Chaan Chanda, right, scored two goals as The Cougars earned a pair of wins in their opening games. Photos courtesy of Electric Umbrella/

Liam Richards, Daniel Zappe netminders in

the conference, making an astounding 50 saves in 13 games and quickly developing a strong rapport with her teammates.

"It was pretty stressful being thrown into it, there was a lot of hesitancy, and I definitely had to find my voice," Filek said. "With the girls, I really got into it fast because we had such chemistry and everyone was so vocal. So it made me very comfortable to be vocal as well. Once I found my voice, I got more confident in myself. And I feel like that showed with how I played."

Forward Julia Makoloski also emerged as one of the team's brightest young talents, scoring two goals and recording two assists in her 2024 rookie campaign. Makoloski became notorious for her intensity, pace and precise touch, soon becoming the primary focus of opposing defences and attracting more contact. She credited team veteran Isabella Chirico for helping her through her first season and enjoyed the ups and downs of her first season thoroughly.

"Playing at the collegiate

level was very competitive and there were obviously a lot of challenges, dealing with small knocks on the way, but otherwise, I really enjoyed it," Makoloski said. "I have to give a lot of credit to Bella, taking that stress off of me and taking on extra players so I could have a little bit more freedom."

This team expects to make this year's Canada West playoffs, but to Fusco, the culture of being an MRU Cougar is about so much more than what happens on the field.

"The foundation of who we are is that we want good character. Good people, high academic, but then also very competitive on the pitch," Fusco said. "Ideally, it's about being a good teammate. It's being a good human. That's something that we strive for, and of course, we want to win a championship."

With their season just kicking off, hopes are high for the MRU Cougars women's soccer team, who hope to continue to develop their young talent, maximize their veterans' capabilities and make more than just an

appearance in this year's Canada West playoffs.

## Men's soccer

Having made two consecutive trips to the U SPORTS National Championship and winning a conference championship two years ago, the MRU Cougars men's soccer team have become accustomed to excellence in recent years. However, many of the biggest names from the team's recent playoff runs have moved on, with some graduating and even playing at the professional level. According to 11th-year Head Coach Ryan Gyaki, though, there are plenty of new faces to fill those boots.

"The names obviously make coaching easier for sure, but there are a lot of good names that people just don't know because they're young," Gyaki said. "Every season it doesn't matter what the name is on the roster sheet, it's what's on the MRU badge, what we want as a team and the effort, to work for each other is number one."

One of those young names is Chanan Chanda,

who has steadily made a career for himself through the Calgary Cavalry and its League1 Alberta U21 team. The striker, who has appeared in 10 Canadian Premier League matches, has already integrated himself into the offence, scoring two goals in his first weekend. He expressed a readiness for the lofty expectations of this successful team and wants to bring more silverware to MRU's trophy cabinets.

"The program is incredible and the players are incredible," Chanda said. "Ryan's done such a good job with putting a team together this season. This team can compete with any team in Canada. We're just going to stick together because as long as the team's together, it'll do just fine."

Since joining the highest ranks of Canadian collegiate competition in 2012, MRU has been an underdog in U SPORTS and Canada West, but with 13 years of experience under their belt, Gyaki believes this team has established a dominant culture off the field that will propel it to more success.

"More importantly than what's done on the field is the culture off the field, to always pull on flags, to always try to fulfill our potential as people and as students and as athletes," Gyaki said. "That's number one, and from there, if you do that, well, good things happen. For me, the culture is about staying grounded and wanting to grow and fulfill your potential in all aspects."

With two wins on the season already and plenty of teams hunting them down, the Cougars will bank on their mix of savvy veterans and bright young talent to stay in the upper echelon of Canada West men's soccer.

# #S

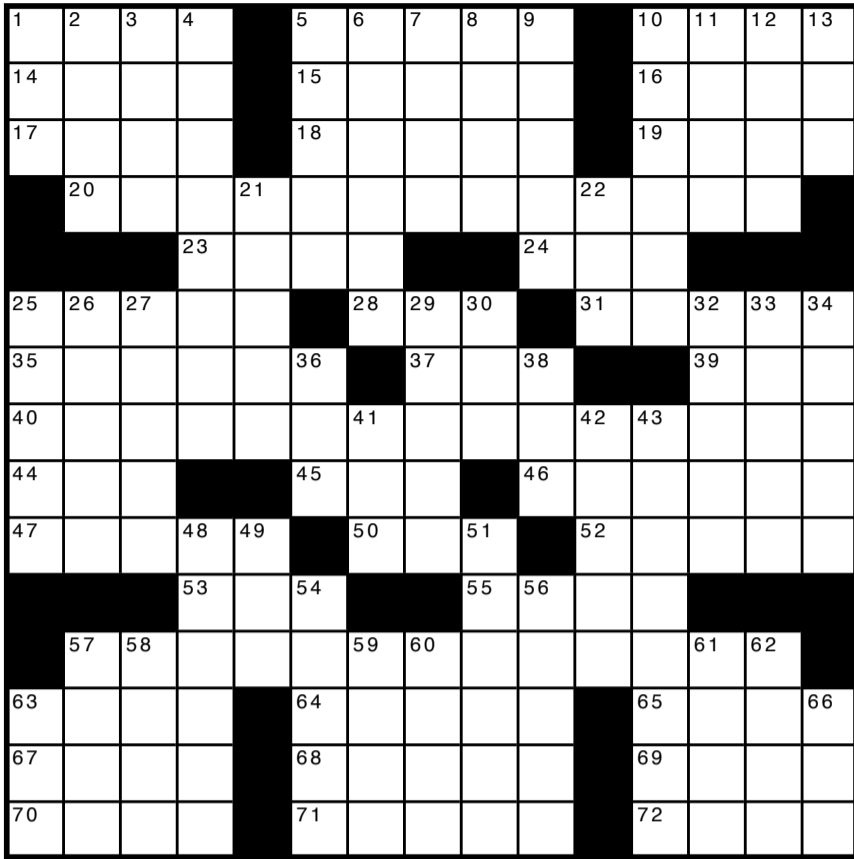
**12** goals scored by Teague Patton in MRU's quintuple-overtime loss to the TMU Bold in their first-ever U SPORTS University Cup

**2** shutouts for Calgary Flames goaltender Dustin Wolf, the first rookie in franchise history to reach this milestone

**80** wins for the Toronto Blue Jays, who rank 1st in the AL East Division

**17** saves by Cougars GK Sjord Strauss in four games, the most in Canada West

# THE REFLECTOR CROSSWORD



- 25. Mouthlike opening
  - 28. Sue Grafton's "\_\_\_ for Evidence"
  - 31. High home
  - 35. Capital of Kansas
  - 37. Not emp.
  - 39. Italian article
  - 40. Like afterschool activities
  - 44. Prevaricate
  - 45. Somme summer
  - 46. Hidden
  - 47. Conclude by
  - 50. Self
  - 52. Home movie medium
  - 53. Joplin specialty
  - 55. Racetrack boundary
  - 57. Make profitable
  - 63. Years in old Rome
  - 64. Murmuring sound
  - 65. Microwaves
  - 67. Busy as \_\_\_
  - 68. Comedienne Fields
  - 69. Steven Chu's cabinet dept.
  - 70. Some VCRs
  - 71. Edit
  - 72. Stains
- 10. Zoological segment
  - 11. Part of AD
  - 12. Inert gas
  - 13. Immerse
  - 21. Singer Khan
  - 22. Crumpets partner
  - 25. Inscribed pillar
  - 26. Poison
  - 27. Made a choice
  - 29. Like some vbs.
  - 30. Sun. speech
  - 32. Governed
  - 33. Silly
  - 34. Keep an \_\_\_ the ground
  - 36. "\_\_\_ Ventura" was played by Jim Carrey
  - 38. Up to, in ads
  - 41. Western First Nation
  - 42. Trivial objection
  - 43. Used
  - 48. Military organizations
  - 49. Skye cap
  - 51. Source
  - 54. Beau \_\_\_
  - 56. Oohed and \_\_\_
  - 57. "Power Lunch" network
  - 58. Most draftable
  - 59. Chamber
  - 60. Pleasingly pretty
  - 61. Madcap
  - 62. Duel tool
  - 63. Swiss river
  - 66. SAT takers

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

**ACROSS**

- 1. IRS IDs
- 5. Taxi's ticker
- 10. Beach blanket?
- 14. Dele undoer
- 15. Winged
- 16. That's \_\_\_ haven't heard
- 17. Loud, deep utterance, especially used by lions
- 18. Present at birth
- 19. Queue before Q
- 20. Sudden haste
- 23. Cries of discovery
- 24. Are we there \_\_\_?

**DOWN**

- 1. Lith., once
- 2. Word on a red sign
- 3. Become closer to
- 4. Pennant
- 5. Craze
- 6. Go by
- 7. "Mon Oncle" director
- 8. Coup d'\_\_\_
- 9. Cooperative race

See answer grid at bottom of page

## COUGARS SCHEDULE

**Come see your Cougars**

**MSOC: Next game - MRU at U of C on Saturday, Sep. 6 @ 2:15 p.m.**

**Next home game - MRU vs UBC on Saturday, Sep. 20 @ 3 p.m.**

**WSOC: Next game - MRU vs UALB on Saturday, Sep. 6 @ 1 p.m.**

**Next home game - MRU vs UALB on Saturday, Sep. 6 @ 1 p.m.**

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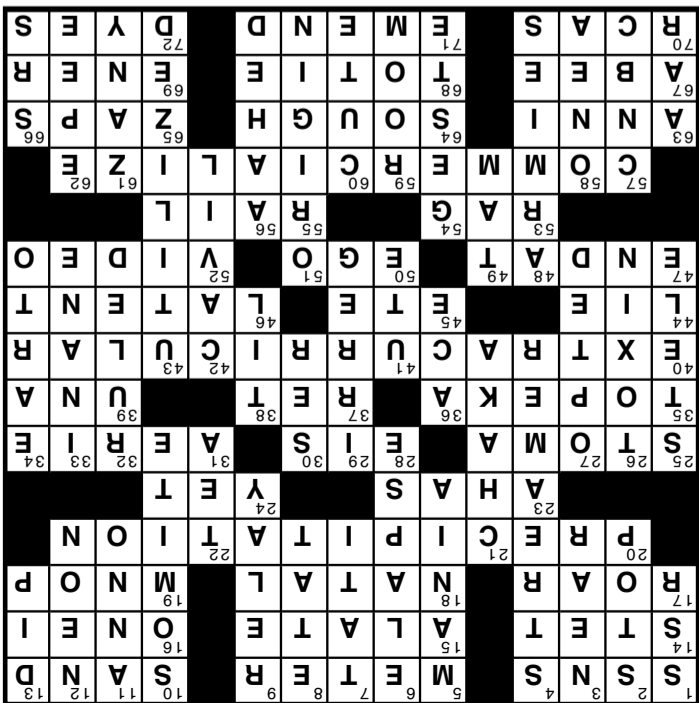


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# Getting up to speed on F1's newest team

**Zafir Nagji**

Sports Editor

Since 2018, Formula One has been a 10-team competition. However, after a lengthy, costly application process, the sport will return to an 11-team grid as one of the biggest automotive conglomerates gets set to join the sport in 2026. Welcome, Cadillac and General Motors, to the pinnacle of motorsport.

## Laying the groundwork

In preparation for their arrival in the sport, Cadillac hired Graeme Lowdon, who had worked with Virgin and Marussia's F1 teams in the past, to be the team principal. Several alumni of Team Enstone, which has won seven World Championships in F1 under various names, also made their way into Cadillac's employment,

including CTO Pat Symonds, operations officer Rob White, technical director Nick Chester, aerodynamicist Jon Tomlinson, and advisor Naoki Tokunaga. Overall, the team has hired approximately 400 staff members, two-thirds of their total goal of 600 employees by their 2026 debut. Their construction personnel stack up with the best in the sport already, ensuring that their development moves forward smoothly and with plenty of progress.

## Filling out the roster

No matter how good its engineering is, an F1 team can only go as far as its drivers take it, making hiring a pair of wheelmen the most important part of Cadillac's plan.

Initially, they had two distinct potential courses of action.

On one hand, Cadillac could put a pair of young drivers in their cars, banking on their ability to develop and turn into long-term drivers while being expendable enough to fire once the team is off the ground. However, as teams like Williams and Haas have found out in recent years, hiring young drivers can be a gamble, and if the driver in question crashes too often, it compromises the quality of data a team is able to use to develop the car.

Cadillac instead chose the other course of action—hire a pair of savvy veteran drivers who may not be known for their ability to consistently win races, but rather drive cleanly and obtain plenty of data for the team to use. In August 2025, the team

announced it would be hiring former Mercedes-AMG driver and race-winner Valtteri Bottas, as well as former Red Bull Racing driver and race-winner Sergio Pérez, for their inaugural season.

Initially seen as a high-potential young driver in his early days at Williams, Bottas established himself as a legendarily stable driver with Mercedes-AMG. The Finn was the ideal second racer next to Lewis Hamilton, driving defensively to keep his British teammate in advantageous positions while collecting 10 race wins of his own. Bottas was then replaced by the younger George Russell, consigning him to drive with the much lower-ranked Sauber team. He still maximized himself while on the team, though, scoring 59 points in three seasons before being reassigned to reserve-driver as Sauber began its transition process to Audi. Bottas did simulator and in-car testing for all Mercedes-affiliated teams, including Mercedes-AMG, Williams, McLaren and Aston Martin, which has kept him fresh and ready for his new digs at Cadillac.

"It's a really exciting, interesting project for me," Bottas said on the F1 Nation podcast. "I know there's a lot of work to do, but I think it's really exciting starting something new and being part of it."

Driving alongside Bottas is Pérez, who was controversially

released by his former team, Red Bull Racing. After impressing the paddock with his incredible drives at BWT Racing Point, including a win at the 2020 Sakhir Grand Prix, he joined the energy drink empire in 2021, replacing Alex Albon. In the Austrian team's cars, the Mexican driver amassed eight pole positions, 29 podium finishes and five race wins, helping Max Verstappen secure four Driver's Championships before being fired in 2024. Now, all Pérez is hoping for is to rediscover his love for Formula One.

"The last year especially was very hard. It was very demanding and I didn't enjoy it," Pérez said on The F1 Show. "I love the sport and I want to go back to enjoy it. This is the main driving factor behind coming back is to just enjoy it and give back a lot of love to the sport that has given me everything."

As the only country with three races on the Formula One calendar, the United States of America and its biggest automotive conglomerate fit perfectly into the sport of F1. Powered by Ferrari until they produce their own powerplants in 2029, orchestrated by an advanced engineering team and driven by two of the sport's most consistent drivers, Cadillac hopes to make a name for itself and American motorsport as a whole in the fastest racecars in the world.

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Valtteri Bottas, left, and Sergio Pérez, right, may have won races at high-level teams in the past, but are now tasked with developing Cadillac's first-ever F1 car as the team joins the grid in 2026. Photo courtesy of Instagram / @cadillacf1

# Who's who in this year's WNBA playoffs?

**Zafir Nagji**

Sports Editor

The 2025 WNBA season has been its most successful to date. Amassing an average of 20 per cent more viewers per game than in 2024, the 2025 regular season has produced captivating on-court action, with stellar performances from stars like Caitlin Clark and outstanding young talents like Paige Bueckers. All good things must come to an end, but thankfully, the WNBA has saved the best for last. With playoffs right around the corner, find out how every playoff team stacks up in the exciting hunt for the 2025 WNBA Championship.

## Sneaking into the dance

Out of the 13 teams in the WNBA, only eight qualify for the playoffs. With just a 44-game regular season, the margins that decide whether a team makes or misses the playoffs can get extremely thin, and such is the case this season.

In the final playoff spot are the Golden State Valkyries, who are on a quest to become the first WNBA expansion team to make the playoffs in their inaugural season. Led by Kayla Thornton, who averages 14 points per game, and supported by four other players averaging double-figures in scoring, the Valkyries will face playoff teams in all but one of their final seven games, including two against the league-best Minnesota Lynx, as they try to hang on to the last playoff spot.

Half a game in front of the Valkyries, the Seattle Storm sit in the seventh seed after suffering a late-season six-game losing streak. The Storm held one of the best records in the league before their skid and has some of the most talented players in the league. Nneka Ogumike averages 18.2 points and 7.1 rebounds per game, both of which are team-highs. She's backed up by Skylar Diggins, who averages 15.6 points and a team-best six assists per game. Overall, the team is extremely well-rounded and holds the fifth-best defence in the league in terms of points allowed per game, making them one of the most lethal seventh-seeded teams ever.

Like the Sparks, injuries have plagued the Indiana

Fever all year long, but with great coaching and standout performances from tertiary players, the team has managed to hold onto a winning record and currently sits in the sixth playoff spot. Clark, Sophie Cunningham, Sydney Colson, Aari McDonald, and many of their other players have battled injuries all season long. However, recent reports indicate that Clark may be able to return in time for a playoff run. With her back in the lineup, the Fever are a scary team to deal with in the first round of the playoffs and should not be underestimated.

## Dark horse contenders

With four teams holding up the back of the pack, the fight in the middle is much smaller, but just as, if not more, intense. Two teams are fighting for a chance to compete with the upper echelon of talent in the WNBA, and while both have had outstanding regular seasons, neither is willing to settle on anything less than a run at the championship.

First on this list are the Phoenix Mercury, who hold the fourth-best win-loss record at 24-14. With a big four of Satou Sabally, Kahleah Copper, Alyssa Thomas, and DeWanna Bonner, all of whom are multiple-time WNBA All-Stars, the Mercury hold the fourth-best net rating of any team in the league at +3.9 and the fourth-best defensive rating at 102.1. Even though they lack the offensive explosion to consistently compete against the league's best offences, defensive teams tend to cope with the increased physicality and intensity of playoff games better than offensively-biased groups. Plus, with Thomas leading the league in assists with 9.2 dimes per game, the Mercury feel ready to compete for their first championship since Diana Taurasi's retirement.

The Atlanta Dream hold the same record as the Mercury at 24-14, thanks in large part to their acquisition of legendary centre Brittney Griner and the incredible offensive output of Allisha Gray. Averaging 18.7 points



**Napheesa Collier, #24, is the odds-on favourite to become just the fifth WNBA player to win MVP and Defensive Player of the Year. Still, her focus is solely on bringing the Minnesota Lynx a fifth WNBA championship. Photo courtesy of Instagram / @minnesotalynx**

per game, Gray is the odds-on favourite to win Most Improved Player this season, and with the second-best net (+7.7) and defensive (100.8) ratings in the league, Atlanta looks poised to take the competition by surprise on their way to their first-ever WNBA Championship.

## Heavyweight fighters

Three teams sit at the top of the list of contenders in this year's WNBA playoffs—the Las Vegas Aces, the New York Liberty and Minnesota Lynx. However, all three teams bring entirely different recipes to the table as they prepare to battle for the 2025 WNBA Championship.

The New York Liberty hold the worst regular-season record of the three teams, battling some key injuries and championship fatigue from their legendary 2024 victory. Don't be fooled by their 24-15 record or their fifth-seed ranking, though—this is largely the same team as the championship-winning group last year. Point guard Sabrina Ionescu has put together an incredible season, averaging 18.8 points and 5.4 assists per game and having to fill in for fellow 18-point-per-game scorer Breanna

Stewart and 2024 Finals MVP Jonquel Jones, both of whom have missed significant time this season. Ionescu even had a six-game stretch where she averaged 27.7 points per game to keep the Liberty afloat. Still, if New York has serious intentions of winning back-to-back titles, they need Stewart, Ionescu, Jones, and the rest of the team to be healthy and play their best basketball together to beat their stiffest competitors.

At the All-Star break, the Las Vegas Aces were in danger of missing the playoffs, but with just four games left on their schedule, the Nevada squad holds the second-best record in the league at 26-14 and looks like a championship-level team once again. Led by all-time legend A'ja Wilson, who has averaged 25.5 points and 11.8 rebounds per game in August to salvage her team's season, the Aces are going to be one of the toughest teams to oust in this year's playoffs. Wilson is flanked by "Point God" Chelsea Gray, crafty guard Jackie Young, and sharpshooter Jewell Loyd, all of whom bring championship experience. Regardless of where they started their season, the Aces are looking to finish it on the highest of notes—with a WNBA

championship trophy.

Sitting atop the WNBA standings as the only team with less than 10 losses, the 30-8 Minnesota Lynx have been the championship favourites all season long. Led by MVP and Defensive Player of the Year favourite Napheesa Collier, the Lynx are out for revenge after being defeated in last year's WNBA Finals in five games by the New York Liberty. Collier has had one of the greatest seasons of all time, averaging 7.6 rebounds, 1.8 steals, and 1.5 blocks per game—all of which are team-highs—to go with her league-leading 23.6 points per game. Kayla McBride and Courtney Williams support her with a combined 29 points per game, helping the Lynx hold the best offensive (112.3), defensive (100) and net (+12.3) ratings in the league. They are the easy championship favourite this season, but with the Aces and Liberty breathing down their necks and many more teams looking to punch up at them, Collier and the Minnesota Lynx will have a hell of a fight on their hands as they look to win their fifth WNBA championship.