

The Griffins' Nest

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VANCOUVER, BC

STUDENT LIFE



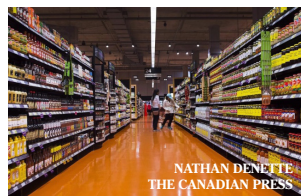
HAMBERITES ON SPARKNOTES – HELPFUL STUDY TOOL OR CHEATING?

NEWS REPORT by Cynthia Zhu (10)

"After all, websites like these can provide students with almost any information, including summaries and analyses, for almost any piece of literature. But how much information can you take from SparkNotes before it is considered cheating?"

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EDITORIAL



UNIVERSITY TRANSITION PROGRAM FACES ADMISSIONS PAUSE INVESTIGATION

"On Jan. 26, Vancouver School Board (VSB) personnel visited the UTP to inform students and teachers that their program admissions have been paused indefinitely, surprising parents, students, and alumni."

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INTERNATIONAL



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BYNG ARTS SENIOR COURSES CUT: STUDENTS FIGHT BACK



Above: Byng Arts students hold their handmade posters on the front steps of Lord Byng Secondary School

NEWS REPORT by Suhani Dosanjh (10) & Olivia Gowans-Hoar (10)

Byng Arts, a mini school program based at Lord Byng Secondary School, has recently lost their senior English and Social Studies cohort courses due to program cuts. Byng students have been protesting the decision, resulting in the recovery of one course.

When students apply for the Byng Arts program, they choose a specialty to focus on throughout their high school career — options include Band, Choir, Drama, Media Arts, Strings, or Visual Arts. In the past, students were enrolled in Byng Arts English from grades 8 through 12, and Byng Arts Socials from grades 8 through 10.

The English and Socials courses are not necessarily advanced, but instead catered to the specific artistic talents of the students. Students have the opportunity to incorporate their artistic specialties into their coursework, such as composing a piece of music to represent a historical time period.

Students in the program stay with the same cohort of students throughout these classes. "I really joined the program so I can meet like-minded peers and individuals and study with the teachers who understand our artistic students," Lincoln St. John, a grade 11 Byng Arts strings student, said.

Certain Byng Arts specialties, like Theatre and Strings, require students to take multiple off timetable courses. These rigorous course requirements take away many elective options, as students must fully commit to their respective arts specialties.

The Byng Arts course cuts were first announced to students during Lord Byng's annual course planning assemblies on Feb. 7.

In the first assembly, which was for grade 11 students, it was promptly announced at the very end that there would be no Byng Arts courses for the following school year. When students requested an explanation, they were told that no further information could be provided.

"It was honestly insulting the way they handled it," said Tara Pai, a grade 10 Byng Arts student. "It was really misinterpreted. We heard 'no more Byng Arts' and we assumed the whole program was canceled."

A group of concerned students gathered in a teacher's classroom to discuss the cancellations in hope of more clarity, and they were informed that Byng Arts Social Studies 10 and Byng Arts English 10-12 would be cancelled for the following school year. With no prior information shared, students were shocked with the decision.

"There was really bad communication and also zero consultation in terms of, you know, 'Does anybody agree with these decisions?' They didn't ask. For such a big change, they really should have at least asked," said St. John.

Parents, teachers, and students were not notified of the changes until the day of the assembly. Even the teachers who teach Byng Arts English and Byng Arts Socials were unaware of the decision. Prior to the announcement, the Byng Arts website was also not updated with the changes.

Then, on Feb. 8, Mr. D. Wilmann, the principal of Lord Byng Secondary, sent out a message to parents informing them of the recent program cuts and the positive impacts they expect as a result.

Students accepted into the program for the 2024-2025 academic year were oblivious to the changes that would be implemented in their first year.

St. John thought that this

"screwed over all the applicants" because they were not informed about the course cuts before permanently accepting their spot at Byng Arts.

Both St. John and Pai said that if there hadn't been the option of senior Byng Arts English and Socials, they likely would have chosen a different program, due to the lack of enriched academic courses. They also found that the social environment created by the cohort classes was a significant factor when initially choosing Byng Arts.

Shortly after the assembly, a group of students came together to create an unofficial student union to combat the decision. The union was organized and led by five students, each a representative for their own grade. Composed of Tara Pai, Lincoln St. John, Lisa Fan, Gaon Yoon, and one other anonymous student, they acted as a voice for the general Byng Arts student body.

"We had all of two hours after we found out about the cancellations to decide: are we going to let this slide or protest?" said Pai. "It was really just whoever was the loudest about this protest and whoever seemed to feel the strongest about it, whoever really wanted to do the most."

From February to April, the student union organized multiple forms of protests against the Byng Arts senior cohort discontinuations.

Soon after the announcement, the students created a change.org petition to protest the decision. The petition was sent around to other secondary schools in the area and quickly gathered attention. When the petition first hit 1,000 signatures, a group of around 20 Byng Arts students presented the petition and personalized letters from students to Mr. Wilmann. As of Apr. 27, the petition has gathered 1,784 signatures.

an interview request from The Nest. "These minor adjustments offer students in the arts program more choices and flexibility — especially considering electives.

In response to a request for comment, Mr. Wilmann sent The Nest a copy of the Feb. 8 message that was sent out to Byng Arts parents. "We believe these adjustments will enhance the overall experience, providing Byng students with more opportunities to select their courses," the letter stated.

Many Byng Arts parents shared concerns over the course cuts. On Feb. 26, members of the Byng Arts PAC subcommittee met in-person with Mr. Wilmann, Ms. Sehmbi, Mr. Ritchie, and Mr. Hartley-Folz to rally for the full reinstatement of all discontinued Byng Arts cohort courses.

The student union was present at this gathering and handed out flyers with information about the program cuts to concerned parents. "I spoke to the parents after and they were very dissatisfied with the lack of information provided," said Pai.

Then, on Feb. 28, the subcommittee members attended a Teams meeting with the same Byng Arts Administrators to go over a revised plan for the Byng Arts' senior cohort courses. The students were able to recover Byng Arts English 10, but Byng Arts Social Studies 10 and Byng Arts English 11 and 12 remained discontinued.

According to St. John, "All the protesting, all of this fighting [...] all the unhappy students convinced [the Byng Arts Administration] that they should probably keep at least that."

New Byng Arts cohort courses were also introduced; Byng Arts Career Life 10, Byng Arts Career Life Connections 11, Byng Arts Capstone 12. Concerns have been raised due to the fact that the mainstream versions of these Lord Byng Career Education courses function off-timetable and fully online. However, the Byng Arts Administration assured parents that there will be appropriate resources to successfully adapt these courses into Byng Arts cohorts. They have not yet provided any specific details as to how the courses will function.

Byng Arts Administration also implied that the Byng Arts Career Education classes would sometimes take place during FIT, as the Lord Byng FIT schedule is being reconstructed for the 2024-2025 school year, but no further details were provided.

"It's basically just like a sorry excuse," said Pai. "It's online, and it's not even a course that I would want. [...] They haven't even explained how we would do a Byng arts capstone. It doesn't make any sense to me. There's been very little information."

While the course cuts made for next year are finalized, the student union plans to continue protesting with the hope of reinstating the courses for the 2025-2026 school year.

The Griffins' Nest

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Hamberites on SparkNotes – Helpful Study Tool or Cheating?

NEWS REPORT by Cynthia Zhu (10)

There are many reasons why a student may choose to use SparkNotes, or similar websites, to aid them in their English classes. After all, websites like these can provide students with almost any information, including summaries and analyses, for almost any piece of literature. But how much information can you take from SparkNotes before it is considered cheating?

"I think it depends on how you use it," said **Justin Taliman** (10). "If you directly copy off their analyses, then it's basically cheating because you're just taking their ideas and putting it onto your paper."

Taliman thinks that using a summary on SparkNotes can help to refresh a student's memory and remind them of what happened in the story, but if a student uses the ideas from the online analyses, then they never learn how to think of their own ideas.

"Using SparkNotes is kind of a grey area because you need to know when to tell if you're cheating or not. You need to try not to take their ideas," he said.

Eleanor Uy (9) considers SparkNotes to be a helpful tool when used correctly. "You come up with your own ideas, but you look at the summary. If you plagiarize, then that's bad. But if you don't, then that's fine. Use it as a resource," she said. "As long as you don't just read the [summary on] SparkNotes."

Ms. M. Poon (English) said that SparkNotes should be used as a way to check a student's understanding of the assigned reading. However, she mentions that students must be mindful of the authors of such websites.

"[Sparknotes] should never, ever be a replacement for reading the actual novel [or] play. But sometimes people want to check that they've understood the novel or the play in the right way," she

said. "[But] you have to think too. Who's writing these things? Who is actually producing the SparkNotes interpretations? Are they qualified? [...] And the thing too is what they give you may be true, but it may be only to a certain extent."

"You might go like, oh, I'm never going to read a book again. Well, what about the articles that you're supposed to understand? [The] technical things that you're supposed to know in your job? [...] We're using this as a way to develop those things. So if you go straight to SparkNotes, you don't think," Ms. Poon noted. "In the future, you'll be reading stuff that there are no SparkNotes for, and you [wouldn't have] helped yourself."

Mr. D. Mugford (English) explained that he thinks SparkNotes could be used as a secondary source for pieces of writing.

"If you pass off the information that you get from those secondary sources as your own information, then that is clearly academic dishonesty. [...] If you write an essay about something [...] and then you're like, I wouldn't mind just seeing what other people think about it to compare with my idea, that's an acceptable use. Or, [...] you can always quote or cite the source. Then you're never in trouble," he said. "If [students] pass it off as their own work, then I have a real problem with that. If [...] they've been taught to responsibly use it, I think that's a little bit different."

Mr. Mugford noted that students, now more than ever, want to do well in their classes, which is why they may resort to SparkNotes.

"Maybe in some ways teachers need to back off about the premium put on getting high marks, and just let it be about the learning," he admitted. "If we didn't sell this message that higher marks means you're going to be more successful in life, I think that there would actually be better forms of learning going on."



The New York Times Games Renaissance

NEWS REPORT by Mila Giesel (11)

In the past few months, Wordle and other *New York Times* games have made a surprising return. What are these games that Hamberites can't stay away from?

The *New York Times* offers various free daily puzzles, such as Wordle, where players are given six tries to guess a five-letter word, and Connections, where the goal of the game is to form four groups of related words. Other games offered on their website include Strands, Sudoku, Spelling Bee, Letter Boxed, Tiles, Vertex, and The Crossword.

Wordle first became famous in 2023, trending for a few months, but later fell out of popularity.

However, just a year later, it seems to be making a comeback. This time, though, it's not just Wordle that has captivated this new crowd of players. Some of the other games that *The New York Times* offers are now getting their share of the spotlight.

"I downloaded the [*New York Times*] app and there's a bunch of games — like Connections," said **Sabine Tung** (11). "They're fun! Connections is my favorite — and the mini [crossword]. I like the mini."

The *New York Times* app and other social media platforms have also helped to boost players' competitive spirit. Players are able to use these platforms to share their game results online, which has incentivized many to consistently play the games in order to



STUDENT COUNCIL'S NEXT CHAPTER

NEWS REPORT by Alex Huang (10) and Emre Kilicarslan (11)

(Disclosure: Since being assigned and writing this article, Emre Kilicarslan was elected grade 12 representative for the 2024-25 Student Council)

Beginning in early April, Eric Hamber students began their campaigns for Hamber's 2024–2025 student council (StuCo). Voting occurred on Apr. 23, and results were announced on Apr. 25.

Daniel Choi (11) and **Arabella Mew** (11) will be next year's Co-Presidents. Their goal, according to Choi, is to "get more students to know what we do in Student Council and get more students to participate in the events, like school dances and spirit days." He added that he hopes to bring back events held at Hamber prior to the pandemic such as Pie Day.

"I really enjoyed the responsibilities that came with the position like amplifying student voice on a district-wide level and planning events," said Mew, speaking of her prior experience as VDSC Representative and Vice President. "But [I] was interested in taking on a greater leadership role within the council."

Choi and Mew will be working with elected Vice President **Mackenzie Chung** (11), who has multiple years of experience within Hamber's StuCo as well as with the Vancouver District Student Council (VDSC).

StuCo's elected Secretary, Social Events Coordinator, and Director of Communications are **Chloe Young** (11), **Shayan Sabet** (11), and **Tony Chow** (10), respectively.

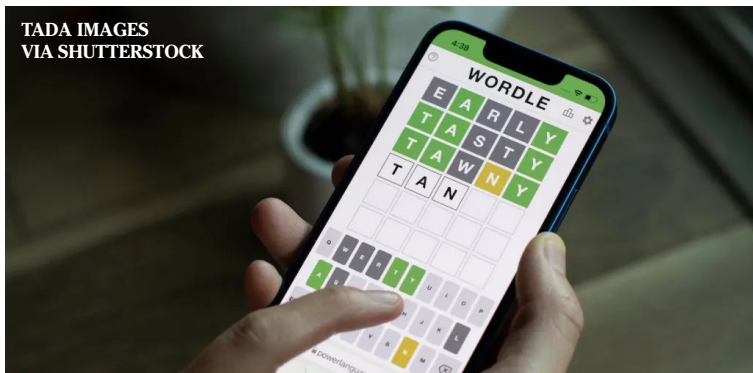
"I will be working with others from StuCo and create financial statements so the planning events are efficient," said **Cedric Lai** (10), who was elected for the position of Treasurer.

Gavin Chan (11), **Adrian Lai** (11), **Olivia Lindsay** (11), **Kaelyn Mak** (11), and **Paul Zhou** (11) are the class of 2025's elected Grad Committee members, with **Justin Chuk** (11) leading the committee as Grad Chair. These students will take on a planning and leadership role for grads by organizing events including Prom and the graduation ceremony itself.

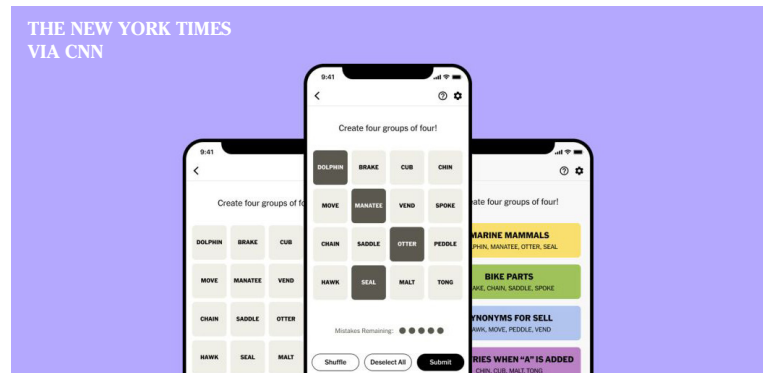
In an unseen turn of events, two candidates in the running for Grade 10 Representative tied in votes. Candidates **Lydia Choi** (9), **Yuree Na** (9), and **Elijah Abaya** (9) were all elected after careful consideration by StuCo's sponsors and consultation from other staff members.

"We — I'm not joking — not just double and triple checked. We probably counted those ballots ten times because it never happened [before]," said **Ms. G. Lau** (LLC), one of StuCo's sponsors. "We want to have the voices of the students represented in the votes, and that is why we said [...] we'll just create one extra spot."

Ms. Lau added that with the new school building, there will likely be "a lot more interaction between the student body and the Student Council with ideas and suggestions of things they want to see." StuCo members will find themselves tasked with reimagining the designs and concepts for each school event. This means that familiar traditions, such as the Haunted House, will require fresh ideas in order to adapt to the layout of the new building.



TADA IMAGES VIA SHUTTERSTOCK



THE NEW YORK TIMES VIA CNN

HAMBER AND STUDENT LIFE

STANDARDIZED TESTING IS MAKING A COMEBACK

NEWS REPORT by Emre Kilicarslan (11)

The vast majority of universities across North America do not require applicants to submit their scores for standardized tests known as the Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) or the American College Testing (ACT). However, on Apr. 11, Harvard University reinstated the requirement for submitting these standardized test scores starting in the fall of 2025 according to *The New York Times*.

After the start of the COVID-19 pandemic in March 2020, universities opting to be temporarily "test-optional" for applications became an increasing trend, with around 2,000 universities throughout North America keeping this in place as of 2024. For applicants, this means that while these universities do not hold a requirement for submitting standardized test scores, they may still be submitted and would be taken into consideration alongside their applications.

The SAT and ACT are entrance exams that universities and colleges use to measure a student's readiness for post-secondary education. They provide data that these institutions can use to compare applicants.

The content of these tests is similar in the subjects they evaluate. Math and "Evidence-Based Reading and Writing" can be found in the SAT, which has a maximum score of 1600. The ACT contains English, Math, Reading, Science, and Writing sections and has a maximum score of 36.

The process of preparing for and taking these assessments can be an overwhelming time. "It's stressful being in a room because it's a standardized test [...] but it's a digital test now, on a computer. I actually think that's less stressful than doing it on paper," Jason Huang (12) said. However, this may not be universal for many students who decide to take the SAT.

"Overall, I had a negative experience taking the test," said Eun Seol Kim

(11), who plans on using her score when applying to American universities.

"Although the test itself was not too difficult when I took it, I hadn't gotten my new MacBook yet, so my MacBook was intensely overheating and sounded like a fan," Kim said. "I spent the whole test in fear of my computer dying on me." She added that she was also sick while taking the test, holding in coughs in order to not disrupt others.

The possibility of achieving a high score on either test makes it desirable for many applicants to study diligently in order to include it in their application process, often with American institutions.

This desire may be fueled by the competition from many applicants who have various extracurriculars to add to their applications, which are another factor in the selection process for universities and colleges. "When you start looking at extracurriculars, they are more 'pay-to-win' than the SAT," Huang said, who took the SAT in March of his grade 11 year.

"Given how the SAT has really good free resources now, including Khan Academy [...] any student can prepare without having to spend any money and get a good score on the SAT," Huang said. "But when schools start looking at extracurriculars a lot more heavily, it actually advantages the people with money [...] because people can pay for research opportunities. People in better situations can pay for just more extracurriculars."

Having mandatory standardized testing for application processes is cause for debate, as many students have varying opinions on the matter. Eric Fu (11) also took the SAT and expressed why institutions should make having these tests mandatory.

"I think the SAT shows that you have the academic drive and requirements for higher studies [...] because they need to know if you can truly handle that higher level of learning. But test scores do not always mirror a representation [of your intelligence] and your drive."



5-minute after-school snacks!

NEWS REPORT by Madeleine Cheung (8) and Kate West-Sells (8)

After a long school day, a good snack can be just what you need to help fuel you for upcoming homework, sports, and extracurriculars. In this article, you'll find five simple recipes anyone can make. We recommend using our recipes as a foundation for the variations we have shown — you can also always add your own unique twists to these snacks. From healthy fruit salads to buttery popcorn, there's a snack catered to everyone's personal tastes! Forget your measuring cup; estimation will do for all of these easy recipes. For modifications, check the bottom of each recipe. Happy snacking!

Cheesy Nachos

Ingredients: Cheese (Cheddar or Monterey Jack works best)
Tortilla chips
Salsa, guacamole, sour cream, or any other sauce is optional
Materials: Plate, microwave/toaster oven
Instructions:
1. Place a layer of tortilla chips on the plate.
2. Add a layer of cheese.
3. Repeat these steps until you have the desired amount of chips and cheese.
4. Place in the microwave/toaster oven until the cheese is fully melted.
5. Top with your desired sauce to complete the dish.
Variations: Crispy Chili Cheese Nachos: Following the instructions on your favorite chili recipe, prepare the chili sauce. Drizzle the sauce on top of the nachos for a

heartier snack!

Fruit Salad

Ingredients: Any fruit! Here are some suggestions:
Apples
Oranges
Bananas
Pears
Grapes
Berries (strawberries, blueberries, raspberries, blackberries, etc.)
Materials: A bowl, small knife, cutting board, spoon
Instructions:
1. Wash the fruits with water.
2. Cut them into cubes on the cutting board and place them in the bowl.
3. Enjoy!
Variations: Fruit Kabobs: After cubing the fruit, slide them on a skewer.
Chocolate Dipping Sauce: Melt chocolate in a medium pot until it becomes a liquid, stirring evenly throughout to prevent clumping. Let cool, then transfer the mixture into a bowl before using it as a dipping sauce.

Popcorn

Ingredients: Popcorn kernels
Salted Butter
OR
Bagged popcorn
Materials: Microwave, Microwave-safe bowl, Cling wrap
Instructions:
1. Place the popcorn into the bowl and put the cling wrap over it.
2. Microwave for around 4 minutes or until most kernels are popped.
3. Put the salted butter in a separate bowl and microwave for 30 seconds or until fully melted.
4. Pour the butter over the popcorn and eat away.
(For the bagged popcorn, follow the instructions on the bag.)
Variations: Caramel Corn: Put soft caramels in a bowl and microwave until liquid. Then drizzle over the popcorn for a sweeter treat!
Spiced Popcorn: Experiment with different spices. Some tasty seasonings are cinnamon sugar, paprika, tain, or

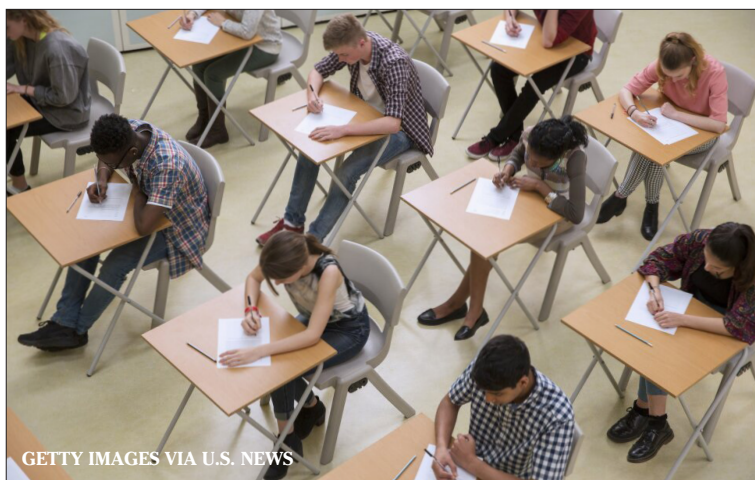
curry powder.

English Muffin Pizzas

Ingredients: Cheese (Mozzarella works best)
English muffins, cut in halves
Pizza Sauce
Toppings of choice (deli meat, vegetables, etc.)
Materials: Toaster oven, plate, knife, spoon
Instructions:
1. Place the English muffin halves on the plate and spread the pizza sauce liberally on the flatter side of the muffin.
2. Sprinkle on as much cheese as desired.
3. Add the toppings of choice, and spread evenly on the pizza.
4. Put the English muffin halves in the toaster for approximately 4 minutes or until the cheese is completely melted.
5. Enjoy!
Variations: Pizza Naan: Substitute the English muffin for naan if you want a thicker "dough" option.
Pizza Rolls: Substitute the English muffin for dinner rolls.

Trail Mix

Ingredients: Nuts (cashews, peanuts, almonds, pistachios, etc.)
Seeds (pumpkin or sunflower)
Dried Fruit (raisins, cranberries, cherries, dates, mangoes, etc.)
Chocolate (chocolate chips or M&M's)
Materials: Bowl, spoon
Instructions:
1. Gather all ingredients and place all into a bowl.
2. Mix together with a spoon or shake the bowl until all ingredients are evenly dispersed.
3. Enjoy by itself or as a variation!
Variations: Smoothie/Yogurt Bowl: Add the trail mix to any smoothie or yogurt with honey, granola, or fresh fruit.
Nut-Free: If allergic to nuts, a delicious alternative is to replace the nuts with pretzels and cereal.
Granola Bars: Add oats, room temperature peanut butter, and honey to the trail mix and press it into any greased baking pan. Chill in the fridge for at least an hour, cut into bars, and eat.



GETTY IMAGES VIA U.S. NEWS

Hamber Students Take on Another Baseball Season at Nat Bailey

NEWS REPORT by Teagan Nichol (11)

It's time for another exciting season of home openers, playoffs, and close games at Hillcrest Park's Nat Bailey Stadium — often referred to as "the Nat". Many Hamber students have begun work at the Nat in jobs like concession, promotion and ticketing. The stadium is home to the Vancouver Canadians, the only Minor League Baseball team in Canada and the team with the best overall record in the 2023 Northwest League season.

Last season, several Nat Bailey employees, including many Hamber students, were laid off shortly after being hired due to a sudden change in employment age requirements. Despite these issues, however, Hamber students currently working at the stadium are optimistic for the upcoming season.

Sienna Lawrence (11) was rehired

by the stadium after working last summer, bypassing the hiring interview process and going straight back to her previous position at the Children's Play Area.

"Nat Bailey let me work when I was 15 instead of laying me off until I was 16," she shared. There, she watches over the bouncy castles and slides, ensuring that all of the kids are entertained and, more importantly, safe.

"You have to be somewhat strict with the kids when they start misbehaving or not following the rules in terms of taking turns or sitting at the top of the slides," she told The Nest. Lawrence is anticipating a fun and fulfilling season of working with her classmates, having "funny conversations" with the children she cares for, and "eating the Nat Bailey quesadillas again."

For some students, this year marks their first season working at the stadium. Alejandro Diaz-Henderson (12), who started working at the Nat this year as an

usher, expressed his excitement for the upcoming season. "We have a good team this year, it's going to be good," he said.

In his short career at the Nat, Diaz-Henderson has enjoyed watching the Canadians play while on the job. "I get to have a really good view of the game when I'm ushering," he said. "I've watched two of the games and we won both."

Other students, such as Cobe Monte (12), are returning to the Nat for their second or third season. Monte, who is returning for his third season as a chef, expressed his love for the job. "It's the best — I love seeing all the Hamber guys and girls." He also shared that he finds every shift to be like "hanging out with friends."

Monte encouraged more customers to stop by. "I'm cooking chicken nuggets and fries and burgers, so if you want a burger, just let me know," he said. "I do the most important thing in the whole city."



MLB

VANCOUVER AND THE PROVINCE

Seven Shots Fired: a Downtown Vancouver Shooting

NEWS REPORT by Eloise Lee (9)

On Mar. 30 at around 5:40 PM, witnesses heard seven shots ring out near the intersection of Robson and Richards streets. The target of these shots was Jagraj Atwal, a member of the Brothers Keepers.

The Brothers Keepers are a BC gang that has been known to be previously involved in such violence. They are a major supplier of opioids such as fentanyl in the Lower Mainland and BC.

Atwal was driving a black SUV and had an unidentified passenger in the car with him. Two gunmen wearing masks and heavy jackets came out of a white sedan a few cars away from Atwal's. The suspect's identities are still unknown and nobody has been arrested or detained.

Once shots were fired, the unknown passenger got out of the SUV and ran. The shooters then got into their car and drove away. Atwal escaped without a scratch.

The Vancouver Police Department (VPD) are currently investigating this shooting and have released very little information to the public. In a news release, they stated that, "Evidence indicates the shooting was targeted, but at this time there are no known injuries and no arrests have been made."

No witnesses were hurt, but according to Vancouver Fire Rescue Services, a dog was injured. There was mass panic — 911 was called, people ran into IGA, and a witness was seen crying while being comforted by firefighters.

Mayor Ken Sim was on the scene and said to CTV News that "This is absolutely terrible. The fact that a couple of brazen individuals would do this with no regard for public safety, it's disgusting."

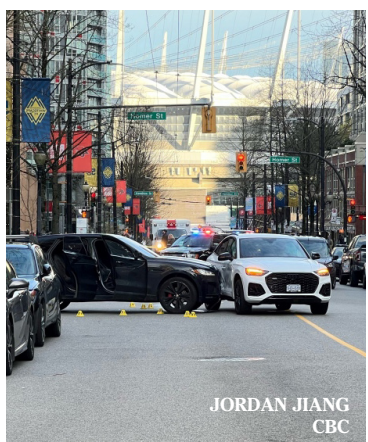
Former solicitor general and long-time Vancouver police officer, Kash Keed, believes that given the location of the shooting, the gunmen were most likely from out of town.

"These are hired guns who have no sense of the area that they are in and no regard for the safety of anyone in that area," Keed said. "We haven't seen a brazen public shooting in the downtown entertainment area like this for some time."

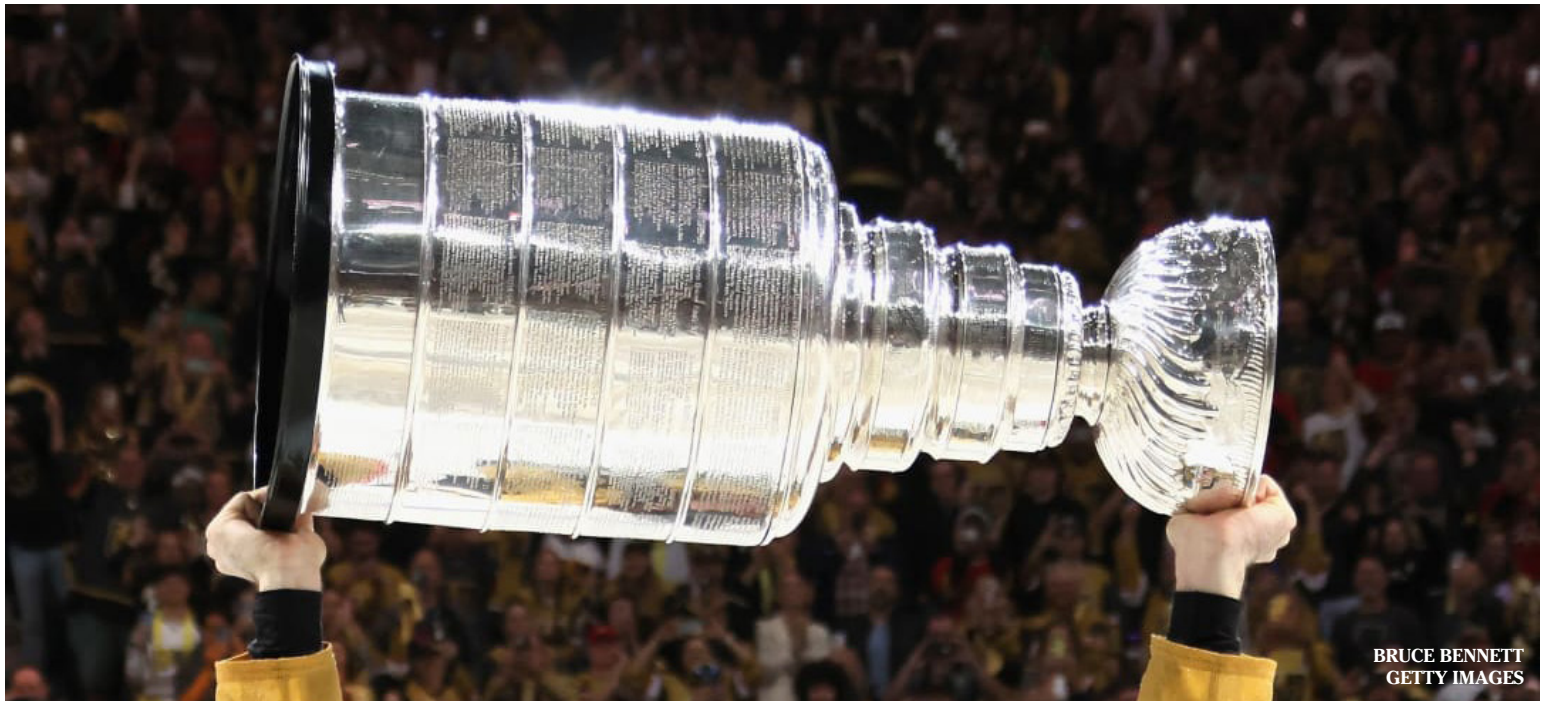
This is not the only recent shooting involving a Brothers Keepers member. Four days earlier, a man was shot in Surrey around 10:44 PM. The Surrey RCMP said in a news release that "a male victim (was) suffering injuries consistent with having been shot." The victim was not named, but Postmedia Network sources confirmed that it was Amandeep Kang, another Brothers Keeper gangster.

Last fall, Kang pleaded guilty to drug trafficking on behalf of a criminal organization. His case was scheduled to be back in court for sentencing a couple weeks ago.

It is not known whether the shootings are connected and who targeted them.



JORDAN JIANG
CBC



BRUCE BENNETT
GETTY IMAGES



BOB FRID
USA TODAY SPORTS



DARRYL DYCK
THE CANADIAN PRESS

CANUCKS' PLAYOFF PUSH

NEWS ANALYSIS by Leo Pi (10)

The Canucks have clinched a playoff spot, something they haven't done since the bubble playoffs in 2020. This feat will mean the return of Canucks playoff hockey to the city of Vancouver for the first time in nine years. Will the Pacific Division Champion Canucks get past round one?

Since the Canucks last played a playoff game at Rogers Arena, only two players from the lineup, Bo Horvat and Chris Tanev, still actively play in the NHL. No current roster players were on the Canucks at that time. Nine years without a playoff game in Vancouver was the longest drought in franchise history.

Securing the division title, which they last did in 2013, is an incredible feat.

"It's cool," said forward J.T. Miller to *The Canadian Press*. "We have a lot of reasons to be proud right now about how far we've come. And I feel like in a short amount of time." The Canucks won the title when they defeated the visiting Calgary Flames 4-1.

"We knew we had some good pieces in here and we've got a great staff, and management did a really good job with putting pieces together. And it hasn't been easy, but we did everything we were supposed to do," said Captain Quinn Hughes to *The Canadian Press*.

All season, the Canucks have emphasized the importance of living day to day and staying level-headed.

"I think it's good that we didn't really set any expectations. Our expectations were really more on a day-to-day basis. And it's just nice to see," Miller explained.

Vancouver has been one of the big surprises of the 2023-24 NHL season. Coming into the Fall, the Canucks were considered potential challengers for a wild-card spot, but behind Pacific Division rivals. Unexpectedly, star performances from top players resulted in a 26-point improvement from 2022-2023, which was the most league-wide. The team went 23-9-3 ahead of the Christmas break and has been consistent throughout, capturing their Pacific Division title with a 50-23-9 record.

"It hasn't been easy, but we did everything we were supposed to do,"

forward Brock Boeser said to *The Canadian Press*. "And that's why we came here early to try and set that standard, set those expectations. I think we had that great start to the year and just built off it. We've had our ups and downs, but I think we've learned a lot."

Several milestones were also achieved during this historic season. It's the first time the team has reached 50 wins since the 2011-2012 season, and the first time since 1988 they have had a coach and six players at the NHL All-Star Game. Rick Tocchet has the most wins in his first full season as head coach. J.T. Miller is the seventh player in franchise history to reach over 100 points and has scored a career high 37 goals. Quinn Hughes broke the franchise record for single season points and assists by a defenceman. Brock Boeser scored a career high 40 goals. Thatcher Demko achieved career highs in wins and shutouts. Brock Boeser, Dakota Joshua, Sam Lafferty,

goals against per game and a .918 save percentage. Nashville's starting goaltender, Juuse Saros, has a 35-24-5 record with 2.86 goals against and a .906 save percentage.

The power play percentage for Vancouver is 22.7 per cent and Nashville is 21.6 per cent. The penalty kill percentage for Vancouver is 79.1 per cent and Nashville is 76.9 per cent. Vancouver went 17-12-4 and Nashville went 21-7-3 after the all-star break.

"I think we've just got to look at it as our first time," Boeser said. "Just with the fans and the momentum shift and all that, it's something new to us and something I think we're going to have to embrace."

"I feel good about facing anybody," forward Dakota Joshua said to *The Canadian Press*. "I think this group is a confident one." The results of the Vancouver-Nashville season series will help going into the playoffs, he added.

NHL playoff experience is some-

in this series. Quinn Hughes, the Canucks' captain, has 17 goals and 74 assists in 81 games, leading all Vancouver skaters at almost 25 minutes per game. Roman Josi of the Predators is the NHL's highest-scoring defenseman with 23 goals and 62 assists in 81 games.

On top of that, both sides have elite all star goalies who can steal a playoff game away from a team. Juuse Saros enters the playoffs as the Predators' top goaltender with a 35-24-5 record with a .906 save percentage. Thatcher Demko is coming off an injury that kept him out of action for a month, but before that he was in conversation for the Vezina Trophy. He finished with a 35-14-2 record with a .918 save percentage.

Tickets won't be cheap, as upper bowl prices are around \$530, and lower bowl prices are around \$6,000. Also on Apr. 26, Rogers Arena will host a Game Viewing Party for \$15 a person.

If fans want to watch a game in Nashville, Ticketmaster has limited sales to locals only. Only fans from Tennessee, Kentucky, Mississippi, Alabama and Georgia will be able to get tickets through the site.

Mayor Ken Sim said in a statement on the City of Vancouver website that he's "a lifelong fan" of the Canucks and is looking forward to cheering the team on.

"Win or lose, let's make our home team proud and celebrate every game with the unmatched passion and respect that defines our city," Sim said. "Go Canucks go!"

The Canucks' remarkable journey to secure a playoff spot and the Pacific Division title after a nine-year drought is a testament to their resilience and determination. While facing the Predators in the first round presents its challenges, Vancouver's strong regular-season performance, accompanied with the talent and depth of their roster, adds confidence in their ability to compete. With stars such as J.T. Miller and Quinn Hughes, the Canucks have the potential to make a deep playoff run. As they gear up for their first post-season appearance since 2020, the city of Vancouver eagerly awaits the return of playoff hockey, ready to rally behind their team with unmatched passion and pride.

The city of Vancouver eagerly awaits the return of playoff hockey, ready to rally behind their team with unmatched passion and pride.

Filip Hronek, and Nils Högländer also achieved a career high in points.

The round one matchup against the Nashville Predators for the playoffs was announced on Apr. 17, with the first game scheduled for Apr. 21 at Rogers Arena. An Apr. 21 start would be very unfair to the Canucks, who finished the season on Apr. 18 in Winnipeg and will need some rest. The Predators played their final regular season game on Apr. 15.

The tale of the tape between the Canucks and Predators will have a determining factor for the outcome of this round one matchup. The Canucks won their regular-season series three to zero. Vancouver scores 3.40 goals per game and Nashville scores 3.24 goals per game.

Vancouver's top scorer, J.T. Miller, has 103 points and Nashville's top scorer, Filip Forsberg, has 94 points. Vancouver's starting goaltender, Thatcher Demko, has a 35-14-2 record with 2.45

thing Vancouver's stars lack. Six current Canucks played for Vancouver in the bubble.

The Canucks swept their season series against Nashville, but all three games took place before the Christmas break and the Predators were one of the NHL's hottest teams coming out of the all-star break.

Each side will be looking to win a playoff round for the first time in several years. The Canucks beat the St. Louis Blues in the first round of the 2020 playoffs but lost to the Vegas Golden Knights in the second round. The Predators last won a series in 2018, beating the Colorado Avalanche in the first round but losing to the Winnipeg Jets in the second round.

Both teams have elite players, award finalists, and momentum, so it will be no question this series will be an exciting and tight one.

Two of the presumed Norris Trophy finalists will be going head-to-head

CANADA

Ontario School Boards Sue Social Media Companies for \$4.5 Billion

NEWS REPORT by Elle Glen (10)

Five major Ontario School Boards have filed a \$4.5 billion lawsuit against Snapchat, ByteDance and Meta, which collectively targets popular social media platforms TikTok, Instagram, Facebook and Snapchat, for allegedly “rewir[ing] the way children think, behave, and learn, leaving educators and schools to manage the fallout,” as stated in a press release. This follows hundreds of similar suits by school boards in the United States, but is the first of its kind in Canada.

The suit was filed on Mar. 27 by the Toronto District School Board (TDSB), the Peel District School Board (PDSB), the Toronto Catholic District School Board, (TCDSB), and the Ottawa-Carleton District School Board (OCDSB), who have collectively formed the organization Schools for Social Media Change. They hope that the lawsuit will force social media companies to “make their products safer and compensate school boards for disrupting their educational mandate.”

Soon after the filing, School Board Chair Jodi Lloyd announced that the Simcoe County District School Board (SCDSB) would be joining, but they have yet to be formally added. Lloyd

told *Global News* that “As a school board, we work to support our students in any way we can to be successful, but it is straining our resources. The needs are greater and greater, and we felt that [joining the lawsuit] was an opportunity to address this.”

According to a 2021 Ontario survey from the Canadian Mental Health association (CAHM), “approximately 91 per cent of Ontario students in grades 7 to 12 use social media daily,” despite the fact that in 2019, Ontario banned the use of smartphones in schools. The joint lawsuit alleges that this extensive use “seriously and negatively impacts the student population by causing maladaptive brain development, compulsive use, disrupted sleep patterns, behavioral dysregulation, learning and attention impairment, and other serious issues that impact the school, learning, and teaching climate.”

With Ontario already having regulations on cell phone usage in schools, these school boards are targeting the source of the compulsive use and are attempting to hold social media companies responsible for “employ[ing] exploitative business practices and hav[ing] negligently designed unsafe and/or addictive products that [they] market and promote to students.”

Schools for Social Media Change alleges that compulsive use by students, at the hands of these companies for profit, has “fundamentally changed the school, learning, and teaching climate.”

Through this lawsuit, these school boards are seeking compensation and action on the part of social media companies to raise awareness and manage compulsive student social media use. They are suing for \$4.5 billion, which will cover costs of alternative education pathways to respond to attention deficit problems caused by screen usage, and programming for the awareness of digital literacy and online safety. This will also help create and maintain the necessary resources to “investigate and respond to threats made against schools, staff, and students through social media products, to prevent, investigate, and deal with the consequences of cyberbullying caused by, and occurring over, social media products and to respond to the Defendants’ products increasing students’ risks of experiencing sexual harassment, sexual abuse, CSAM, and similar serious harms.”

Besides compensation, the lawsuit is also calling on these companies “to redesign their products to keep students safe,” by changing their algorithms to be less aggressive and harmful. The ex-

act demands regarding reformation of social media algorithms is not stated in the lawsuit, and more will be revealed when the suit goes to trial.

After the announcement, Ontario Premier Doug Ford denounced the lawsuit in an unrelated press conference. “Let’s focus on the core values of education. Let’s focus on math, reading and writing [...] I don’t know what they are spending on lawyer fees going after these massive companies that have endless cash to fight this. Let’s focus on the kids and not about this other nonsense that they’re looking to fight in court.” This statement was made after a press release from Schools for

Social Media Change revealed that the “school boards will not be responsible for any costs related to the lawsuit unless a successful outcome is reached.”

This suit comes after 41 US states have filed various lawsuits against Meta, alleging that Meta drives social media addictions in its younger users, according to *The Conversation*. As these lawsuits advance, they may reveal more about their potential, and the exact likelihood of success. As well, the outcome of the recent legislation from the United States House to ban TikTok, may alter or bolster the suit. Currently, there is no set date for the proceedings to begin.



Mi'kmaq fishermen left to walk home without shoes

NEWS REPORT by Caitlin See (10)

On Mar. 26, Blaise Sylliboy of the Membertou First Nation and Kevin Hartling of the Eskasoni First Nation were detained by fisheries officers after fishing for baby eels, or elvers, in Shelburne, Nova Scotia. At 1:00 AM, they were left near a gas station, in 2° C weather, 45 minutes away from their fishing area with their cell phones and hip waders confiscated.

They borrowed a phone at a gas station and dialed numbers they could remember. After receiving no responses, the gas station told them to leave. From 1:00 AM to 7:00 AM, they walked along a highway to Liverpool in an attempt to find a place to spend the night.

After two hours, they said their socks had “pretty much deteriorated” from walking on the wet pavement. However, they “felt a sign from God” after finding a clothing donation bin on the road. After walking for around six hours, a car discovered them and drove them to a convenience store, where they were able to call a friend.

Officers did not give them supervised access to their phones to write down contact information. Moreover, they were forbidden to cut the shoes off their hip waders.

“I told [the officer], like, ‘Man, this is outrageous. You’re leaving me with no shoes,’” Sylliboy said to *CBC*. “He said, ‘You know the consequences’, but I said, ‘I know the consequences, but this is, like, outrageous on human rights.’ And he was like, ‘Yeah, sounds like your guys’ problem.’”

Hartling described the event to *CTV News* as a “starlight tour”, a term used to describe when officers pick on Indigenous people and leave them to walk home in rural areas in low temperatures.

“That’s what was going through my mind the whole time [...] If we stop moving, we’re going to die. If we go and

just sit somewhere to rest and fall asleep, we’re dead.”

Priscilla Settee, a professor emerita of Indigenous Studies at the University of Saskatchewan, is Swampy Cree from the Cumberland House First Nation. She said she felt “disgusted” by the incident, since it reminded her of her own memories about the impact starlight tours have on her own Indigenous community.

“Starlight tours were intended to kill people,” she said. “When you drop someone off in 30 or 40 below [zero], with no shoes and no adequate winter clothing, then you can only read into it that it was meant to seriously injure or kill someone.”

Recently, unauthorized fishing in Nova Scotia became common as elvers were sold for thousands of dollars per kilogram to grow for food in Asia.

“It is standard practice for fishery officers to seize fishing gear related to the commission of alleged infractions, including hip waders, fyke nets and dip nets,” a Fishes and Oceans Canada spokesperson wrote in an email.

Ottawa closed the Nova Scotia fishing area on Mar. 11. However, Mi’kmaq fishermen stated that they had the treaty right to fish there.

The Assembly of Nova Scotia Mi’kmaq Chiefs responded by saying that they had insufficient resources to “support court cases” regarding fishermen arrested this year. This was because the arrest could be justified by “legitimate public safety and conservation concerns.”

On Apr. 2, Prime Minister Trudeau stated that the government would begin an investigation regarding the mistreatment of Sylliboy and Hartling.

“It’s important that the laws against illegal fishing be enforced,” he said, “But there are processes and protocols in place, and the way enforcement officers need to behave, that we need to make sure was properly followed.”

TRUDEAU INTRODUCES A RENTER’S BILL OF RIGHTS

NEWS REPORT by Adrian Koo (11)

On Mar. 27, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau introduced the Canadian Renters’ Bill of Rights. The bill aims to address the urgent need for affordable rental accommodations nationwide.

The bill seeks to establish a nationwide standard for lease agreements, which mandates landlords to disclose rental price histories to prospective tenants.

This transparency not only provides tenants with vital information but also protects them against exploitative rental practices like “renovictions” — situations where a landlord evicts tenants under the pretense of needing to renovate the rental property, only to rent it out again at a higher price afterward.

This results in renter displacement and exacerbates the already worsening housing crisis. This practice has become increasingly prevalent in neighbourhoods with high demand for rental housing, which includes much of Metro Vancouver.

Trudeau announced the history of on-time rental payments would also contribute to the renters’ credit scores — a system that would mirror the recognition mortgage payments currently receive.

“We’re going to amend the Canadian Mortgage Charter and call on banks, credit bureaus, and others to make sure that your rental history is taken into account in your credit score,” Trudeau said.

A higher credit score makes it easier to qualify for a mortgage and receive a lower interest rate, making the change especially important for young Canadians who may have had less time to build up credit.

The Trudeau administration and Finance Minister Chrystia Freeland have both emphasised fairness in the housing market, and have declared that the announced measures are designed to alleviate the housing unaffordability that currently burdens most Canadians all across the country.

However, the bill proposal has not been immune to criticism. Opposition parties question the bill’s efficacy in addressing the root causes of the housing crisis. While Conservatives dismiss the announcement as political posturing, the New Democratic Party (NDP) has been calling on the government to invest more in affordable housing while temporarily preventing for-profit firms from buying designated affordable-housing spaces.

NDP MP Jenny Kwan criticised the Liberals for not going far enough.

“The Liberals are so out of touch with what Canadian renters are experiencing that they keep offering half-measures instead of a real action,” Kwan said in a statement.

Despite opposition parties criticising Trudeau’s announcement, housing advocates have praised the proposed reforms as a step in the right direction. Dale Whitmore, director of policy and law reform at the Canadian Centre for Housing Rights, emphasised the critical importance of establishing national standards and protections for renters, particularly in provinces that lack regulatory frameworks.

David Hutniak, CEO of Landlord-BC, an organisation that represents landlords in the province, told the *Vancouver Sun* that he supports the new bill.

“Providing data on the history of rental unit prices will be good for tenants, and having credit scores indicating whether potential tenants paid their past rent on time will also be good for landlords,” Hutniak explained.

Hutniak acknowledged the public distrust of landlords and the stigma they face from renters, which he said stems from a lack of transparency. He said the bill could, “in the long run, help them become less villainized.”



CANADA



QUEEN'S MEDICAL ADMISSIONS: CHANCE OR CHOICE?

NEWS ANALYSIS by *Andre Chen* (11)

Starting with the 2025 admissions cycle, Queen's University's MD program will adopt a lottery system that randomly selects qualified candidates for interviews in a bid to increase equitable access to the program.

Dr. Jane Philpott, dean of the Queen's Health Sciences (QHS) department, stated on the QHS website that this is due to a massive volume of qualified applicants applying for the program. In the previous system, there was a large emphasis on extracurricular activities in choosing candidates that put certain groups at a disadvantage.

In the 2024 admissions cycle, there were over 5,000 applicants competing for 139 spots in the QHS MD program. Out of these 5,000 applicants, 638 interviews were offered, with the final 139 students having a GPA of 3.76 out of 4.00.

"We have thousands of qualified medical school applicants each year who would make excellent doctors. Our new admissions process will give them equal opportunity to be selected for the interview stage," wrote Dr. Philpott. She believes that this change will help "level the playing field" for prospective students.

Queen's decision to implement this system follows the success of its undergraduate-level predecessor, QuARMS, a streamlined pathway to QHS's MD program that was modified in 2020 to be offered to black and indigenous high school students.

"We are hoping to reach individuals who may not have considered [...] the medical profession otherwise," said Dr. Philpott on the Queen's admissions website.

The new QHS MD Program application cycle will establish thresholds for GPA Grade-Point-Average (GPA), Medical College Admission Test (MCAT) scores, and Computer-Based Assessment for Sampling Personal Characteristics (Casper) scores that all applicants must meet. With these standards met, applicants are then randomly selected to proceed to the interview cycle, effectively removing the consideration of extracurriculars at the initial stage of the admis-

sions process.

However, this does not mean that QHS will not review an applicant's extracurricular history. According to *The Globe and Mail*, a 'file review' will take place throughout the admissions process, where a candidate's work, volunteer, and extracurricular activities will be considered by the school, with a 'final evaluation' at the end of an applicant's assessment.

Furthermore, applicants with access to opportunities such as additional education, travel, and work placements were shown to be favoured by the previous admissions system.

"There are lots of young people out there who have perhaps had some socio-economic struggles," said Dr. Philpott. "They need a chance to be able to get into medical school, and we want to give them that opportunity."

As of April 2024, QHS's MD program is unique amongst Canadian universities in its decision to restructure its medical school admissions process around a lottery system.

However, this is not the first time students faced a random selection process in university applications.

Amidst the COVID-19 pandemic, McMaster University's Michael G. DeGroote School of Medicine received over 5,000 applicants, with around 552 individuals passing to the interview stage. After realizing that virtual interviews could not be conducted with all 552 individuals, McMaster offered admission to the top 100 pre-interview candidates along with about five to 20 Indigenous candidates.

The decision received fierce backlash online, with users from platforms such as facebook and reddit questioning whether the process was fair to its applicants. Some students felt that they had wasted over four years of their lives preparing for this application, only for it to be decided by a lottery.

As of late April 2024, there has not been a significant outcry from the public and the graduating class of 2025 regarding the implementation of a lottery-system in Queen's University's MD program.



New National School Food Program Announced

NEWS REPORT by *Helena Flach* (9) and *Maggie Perreault* (9)

On Apr. 1, the federal government announced their plans for a National School Food Program with the hope of supplying meals to a target of

400,000 children across Canada. This \$1 billion program aims to take pressure off of families, especially those in low income or indigenous communities, and accompanies improvements in current healthcare and dental programs.

Prime Minister Justin Trudeau emphasized

WILL NUCLEAR ENERGY HELP CANADA MEET ITS CLIMATE GOALS BY 2050?

NEWS REPORT by *Salena Sharma* (10)

After nearly 15 years of discussions and consultations, Alberta is on track to implement nuclear energy into its electricity grid by 2035. Nuclear energy physicists say this switch will have little to no change in CO2 levels or the results may not be seen for a while, according to *Global News*. These assumptions stem from previous projects opening their power plants years after the deadline and closing a few years later because of the large amount of money invested.

On Apr. 2, the province announced in a statement that it would allocate \$600,000 to study the feasibility of converting fossil fuel generation sites into nuclear reactors. Crown-owned Emissions Reduction Alberta will partially fund the study with revenues collected from Alberta's industrial carbon pricing system. The province will also invest \$33.7 million in 13 projects with funds from Emissions Reduction Alberta (ERA), according to *Calgary Tech*. These projects are centred around utilizing technologies like small modular reactors (SMRs) to reduce emissions and strengthen the province's energy grid.

According to the Canadian Deuterium Uranium's (CANDU) website, SMRs are nuclear reactors that are smaller in size and power output than traditional nuclear power reactors with enhanced safety features. Given their small power output, SMRs are used on small energy grids where power generation needs are less than 300 megawatts electric (MWe) per facility (300 MWe of electricity can power nearly 300,000 homes).

Ontario was one of the first provinces in Canada to repurpose coal power plants into nuclear-powered plants. Over the years, their success has set an example for other countries. According to the International Atomic Energy Agency, Ontario stopped its last coal plant in 2014 and replaced it with nuclear reactors that had previously been shut down. This produced beneficial results for the province, as CO2 production per kilowatt hour (kWh) went from 230 grams to 25 grams.

Alberta aims to have an SMR-based facility in operation in late 2035. Affordability and Utilities Minister Nathan Neudorf commented to *CBC* that a panel hasn't been put together to study the implementation of SMRs, and no consultants have been hired. As a first step, the government will draft regulations for nuclear power generation and use in the province and later begin public consultations to spread awareness and interest.

Alberta has been working with the governments of Saskatchewan, Ontario and New Brunswick since 2020 to develop plans to utilize SMRs. Talks for nuclear energy in Alberta began around 2009 when an expert panel highlighted the benefits and challenges that may arise.

At that time, the Minister of Energy, Mel Knight, was strictly against investing in nuclear energy with public funding or subsidies, according to a report by *Globe and Mail* from 2009. Construction for a nuclear reactor in Peace River was set to happen in 2011 but was soon abandoned after natural gas prices declined, making gas-fired plants more

affordable.

Canada's history with nuclear power plants dates back to decades before the energy source was being considered in Alberta. According to the federal government's website, the country adopted the energy in the early 1960s, and three provinces currently house 22 nuclear power reactors and produce around 15 per cent of Canada's electricity. Globally, Canada generates approximately 4 per cent of the total nuclear power used.

According to *The World Nuclear Association*, a nuclear reactor produces energy by nuclear fission, which, in most cases, is the splitting of uranium atoms. This reaction generates a large amount of heat that turns water into steam to run an electricity-generating turbine.

Although most countries worldwide are switching to nuclear energy, Canada faces significant funding and employment challenges, as well as concerns over nuclear waste disposal, according to a report by Ivey Business School. Projects must also comply with many guidelines, such as provincial, federal, and international approvals.

Globe and Mail reported in 2009 that many plans for nuclear generators were put on hold countrywide or terminated completely. As a result, Canada hadn't built a nuclear reactor for nearly 17 years, resulting in a delayed climate goal response.

While nuclear energy discussions are spreading nationwide, BC has already made it clear that nuclear energy will not be included in its renewable energy plans.

In June last year, Premier David Eby told reporters that he is confident that solar, wind, geothermal, and hydroelectricity will continue to benefit the province as they have in the past.

Taco Niet, an assistant professor at SFU's School of Sustainable Energy Engineering, disagrees with Eby, as studies have shown that wind and solar energy on their own won't be able to help BC achieve its net zero goals by 2050. He stresses that BC should consider utilizing nuclear energy more in the form of SMRs to follow through with their goals.

When asked about SMRs, Eby commented, "I know the federal government is looking at [SMRs], it might be appropriate for other provinces to look at that kind of initiative because they don't have what we have here in BC, but we have a massive clean energy resource here."

While experts like Niet view SMRs as being beneficial, other experts like Ramana consider them a costly and futile investment. Nuclear reactors are more expensive to build than other renewable sources but much cheaper to run, according to the *World Nuclear Association*.

Ramana says its power output is much less than a normal nuclear reactor, and its cost is not worth it given the amount of power it outputs. Additionally, the SMR may not be ready for BC to implement, as it has taken more than 20 years for it to be processed through the proposal stage in the US. He claims that governments are focusing on the wrong things; they should focus more on how to speed up the construction process rather than building more reactors.



the necessity of such a program in Canada. "The National School Food Program is a game changer," he said in a statement. "The program will take pressure off of families, invest directly in the future of our kids, and make sure they're able to reach their full potential — feeling healthy and happy."

Despite the two million children covered by existing programs, there are still those not covered. The objective of this investment is to address the needs of the 400,000 children across 1,000 schools on the waitlist for the National School Food Program.

According to Food Bank Canada, one in four children in Canada do not get the proper nutrition they need, with Canada being the only G7 country without a sufficient national food program, according to the Breakfast Club of Canada.

However, since provinces and territories have control over the education system in their respective regions, it is possible that not every school in the country will gain a hot lunch system. Areas with existing programs will work on integrating the new program into their old ones; pre-existing programs will expand, having more food and better quality.

There have been barriers between schools getting a proper program, such as cultural accommodation, lack of kitchen workers, and lack of food, according to *CBC*.

"There are plenty of kids who are not participating who could be participating," Rachel Engler-Stringer, professor of public health at University of Saskatchewan, told *CBC*. "There are plenty of families that won't participate because there's a stigma involved." Engler-Stringer hopes that the addition of a national system would help to resolve these issues.

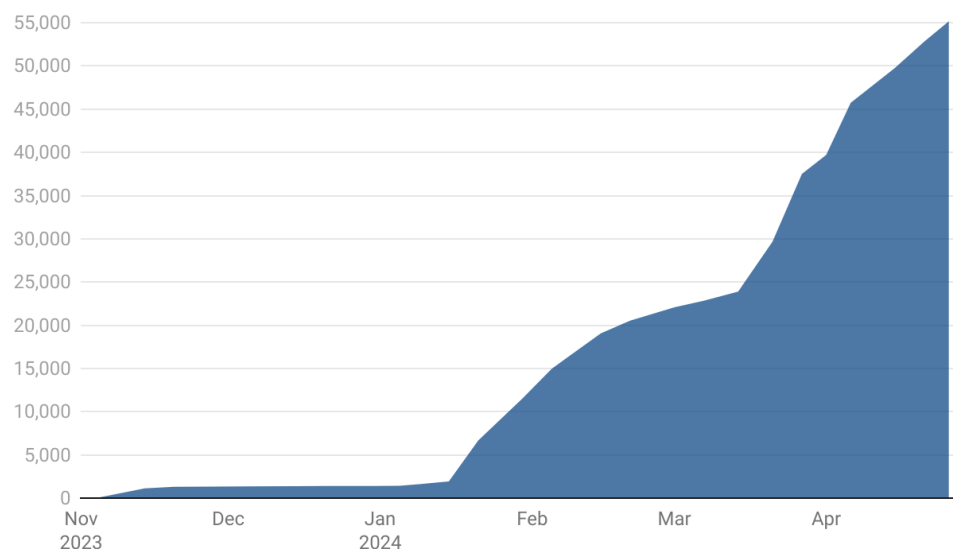
Finance minister Chrystia Freeland expressed that the government hopes to have the program in place for the 2024–2025 school year, benefiting all provinces and territories. "We're going to get this done by working together with provincial, territorial and Indigenous partners, and expanding access to school food programs across the country."

Provincial governments have also increased their budget for school food programs. For example, Ontario has increased their budget by \$5 million, Québec plans to increase theirs by \$34 million over next five years, and British Columbia has allocated a budget of \$214 million to be used over the next three years.

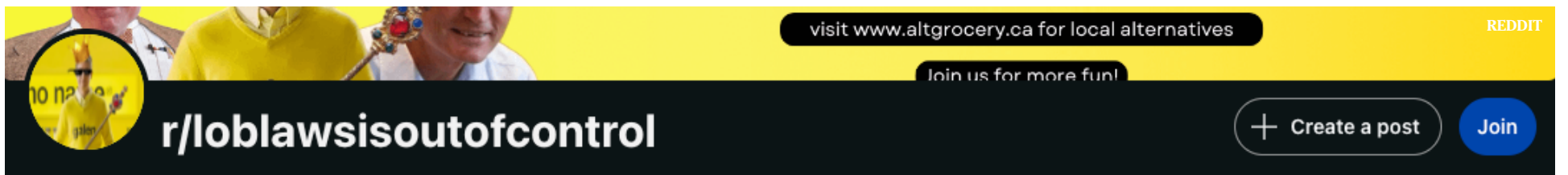
CANADA

DAVID KAWAI
BLOOMBERG VIA FINANCIAL POST

Number of r/loblawsisoutofcontrol members over time



Created with Datawrapper



“Loblaws is Out of Control”: Canadians unite against rising grocery prices

NEWS REPORT by Katja Radovic-Jonsson (12)

A group of Canadians fed up with grocery prices have decided to boycott Canadian grocery giant Loblaws during the month of May.

The boycott includes all of Loblaws's subsidiaries, including (but not limited to) Real Canadian Superstore, No Frills, T&T, Esso Gas, and Shoppers Drug Mart, as well as their in-house brands such as President's Choice, No Name, and Joe Fresh.

This isn't the first time Canadian consumers have expressed frustration over grocery prices, especially at Loblaws stores. Much of the public's resentment towards the company, particularly in recent years, has been directed at Galen Weston Jr., the current president and heir of Loblaws Companies Limited.

This onslaught of criticism is in part due to the public image Weston has created for himself. Since the early 2000s, he has presented himself as the face of the company, appearing in advertisements and signing off on newsletters with his first name only.

In 2022, the X (then known as Twitter) hashtag #BoycottLoblaws saw a popularity surge after Loblaws president Galen Weston Jr. sent out a letter announcing a temporary “price freeze” on No Name products due to inflation.

Weston's letter, which *blogTO* deemed “tone-deaf”, blamed supply chain costs for the ever-increasing cost of groceries, failing to mention that Weston's family also owns one of Canada's largest food processors and distributors.

Loblaws has also historically faced criticism for hiring political lobbyists. An *IJF* report from February revealed that “nearly 60 per cent of the people Loblaws companies have hired to lobby federally, in Ontario and in BC since 2006 previously worked for Conservative, Liberal or NDP administrations.”

The rise of r/loblawsisoutofcontrol

The story of the boycott began in November 2023 with Emily Johnson, a mental health and addictions worker in Ontario who had recently been on maternity leave with her second child.

It was during this time that she began to notice the rapidly increasing prices at grocery stores. “I found myself single and trying to support two very young kids on my own, so it really highlighted for me that I needed to start being more mindful with my shopping,” she told *The Nest*.

In November 2023, while scrolling through r/Ontario on Reddit, she saw a post about a holiday planter for sale at a Loblaws-owned store. The price of this product? \$85.

Noticing other users in the comments expressing outrage over what she described as “some sticks and ribbon”, Johnson decided to create a subreddit dedicated to providing a safe space for people to voice their frustration towards high grocery prices, which she appropriately named “Loblaws Is Out Of Control”.

It wasn't until January, when Loblaws an-

nounced it was getting rid of its half-price discount on nearly-expired produce, that the community decided to start taking action.

“People got really angry, and we saw almost 16,000 members join overnight,” Johnson said.

Loblaws quickly revoked the decision, but many were left with a bad taste in their mouths after the controversy. The community continued to grow in February, when Manulife Financial signed a deal with Loblaws to have its specialty drug program carried out at almost exclusively Loblaws-owned pharmacies — a decision that decreased the accessibility of specialty medications for Canadians living in rural areas. Despite this decision also being revoked a week later, the community has continued to grow rapidly since, amassing over 50,000 members.

As members of the subreddit became increasingly frustrated, discussions about boycotting the grocery giant began to emerge. After noticing these conversations within the community, the moderation team — led by Johnson — decided to organize a national boycott, which was officially announced in late March.

“Greater affordability, competition, and choice”

The original objectives of the boycott, as Johnson explained in a Reddit post, were to convince Loblaws to reduce their prices by 15 per cent and remove all “member-only pricing” schemes that force customers to become PC Optimum members to access sale prices. However, since the original announcement in March, the community has shifted its aims to reflect a more generalized hope for “greater affordability, competition, and choice” within the grocery sector.

Johnson explained that the lack of competition in Canada has contributed to food deserts across the country, and compared the situation here to that in the US. “Our neighbours to the south have a lot of antitrust laws legislated because their political forefathers felt that monopolies could potentially have more power than a government and undermine democracy itself,” she said. “We see Canadians literally starving, conversations popping up about people considering medically-assisted dying because they can't afford groceries, and a government toothless against it [...] This current system is not working.”

The “Loblaws Is Out Of Control” community is hoping to see the Canadian government step in by enforcing the *Grocery Code of Conduct*, a piece of legislation currently in development that promotes fair practices among Loblaws, Sobeys, Metro, Walmart, and Costco — the five largest grocers in Canada. The Code would serve both consumers and suppliers by enforcing fair dealing, timely payments and accurate forecasting.

Loblaws and Walmart are currently the only two grocers who have held out on signing the Code. On Dec. 7, Galen Weston stood before the House of Commons committee studying food prices, expressing his concern that the Code could “raise food prices for Canadians by more than \$1

billion.”

The House of Commons committee sent a letter in mid-February urging Loblaws and Walmart to sign on, saying if they didn't, it would “not hesitate to recommend that the federal and provincial governments adopt legislation to make it mandatory.”

Johnson expressed that “it's very difficult to accurately critique [Loblaws'] profits and their profit margins because they're involved in every step of the chain. They are a supplier in a lot of instances, and they're paying themselves rent in some instances [...] Money is being sent to be actively hidden so that we don't really know what's actually going on. It just feeds into the narrative that we really don't know the full extent of the problem here.”

The full demands of the boycott, updated on Apr. 22, can be viewed on the online edition of this article, available at ehnewspaper.ca.

Dr. Sylvain Charlebois and others critique the movement

Although consumers have attempted to boycott the grocery giant for years — after all, the #BoycottLoblaws hashtag made its first appearance on X in 2010 — these efforts have had little to no effect on the company in past years. The Liberal, NDP, and Conservative parties have yet to comment on the boycott, but critics outside the political sphere have begun to speak about its potential efficacy.

Nicholas Li, an assistant economics professor at Toronto Metropolitan University, told *CBC* that he thinks the demands of the boycott are unrealistic. “Cutting prices by 15 per cent and removing [...] special access to discounts for Optimum card holders are anathema to Loblaws's basic business model,” he said.

Dr. Sylvain Charlebois, director of the Agri-Food Analytics Lab at Dalhousie University, has expressed similar sentiments on social media. “Some are calling for yet another boycott of Loblaws, as if this is a novel idea [...] You'd have to be incredibly naive to believe it will make any difference,” he wrote in a post on X.

Johnson said, “I think the biggest issue we have right now is so-called ‘experts’ speaking out against us and trying to write us off as a group of extremists or a group of misguided idealists.”

“That's our biggest hurdle right now: people who are being held in a position of authority [...] using their voice to belittle us and create the narrative that we don't know what we're doing [...] instead of coming from a position of fact and accurately critiquing our movement.”

She specifically mentioned Charlebois and told *The Nest* that “he has now twice used my first and last name and publicly has called me a hypocrite, as well as stating that I am personally responsible for a ‘Steal From Loblaws Day’ that has recently popped up.” Johnson specified to *The Nest* that she is not associated with this concept, and does not condone any illegal activity.



This is the result of allowing a @Reddit group, the Emily Johnson group, to relentlessly fuel anger against companies and individuals without any restraint for months.

3:04 PM · Apr 19, 2024

She additionally mentioned that Charlebois emailed her on Apr. 20 “to ask me to get the community to stop messaging him.”

The Nest contacted Charlebois requesting a comment on these allegations. Charlebois responded with a comprehensive email. “I don't recall calling Emily Johnson anything, certainly not a hypocrite,” he began.

Charlebois included a copy of the email he sent to Johnson on Apr. 20, in which he claimed the “Steal from Loblaws Day” was instigated by a member of her Reddit community, and that the subreddit “frequently hosts content that encourages violence, theft from grocers”. He also explained that after his email address was shared in the subreddit, he and his family received “over 100 threatening emails”.

Along with the copy of the email, he explained that he “did not ask [Johnson] to tell members to not contact me; if you read the note carefully. What I was asking was for her to better monitor her platform.” He added that he has never been paid by Loblaws nor any grocer or trade organization related to food retail.

Charlebois concluded, “I mentioned Emily's name on X because she has done several media interviews herself about the platform. She outed herself. Otherwise, I wouldn't have mentioned her name.”

His full statement can be viewed on the online edition of this article.

On Apr. 22, Johnson posted a community announcement on Reddit that included a statement regarding “Steal From Loblaws Day”.

“Our team strictly condemns all illegal activity, and are not associated with this event popping up,” the post wrote. “Furthermore, any comments which incite, encourage, or even jokingly suggest illegal acts will be removed, and accounts will be banned.”

The impacts so far

Despite facing criticism online, the “Loblaws Is Out Of Control” community's impact has been evident in the stock market. Since Mar. 25, around the time of the original boycott announcement, Loblaws Companies Ltd. stock (TSE:L) has dropped approximately two per cent. Community member u/Totally_man shared on Apr. 18 that the daily volume of TSE:L saw a decrease of 25 per cent over ten days compared to the past three months.

Outside the stock market, the community is making an effort to educate consumers on alternatives to the five largest grocers in Canada. Johnson said that while the issue stretches beyond the Loblaws corporation, the community believes that “by targeting the biggest bully, the rest will fall in line.”

EDITORIAL

UNIVERSITY TRANSITION UNCERTAIN FUTURE FOLLOWS

EDITORIAL INVESTIGATION

The University Transition Program (UTP) is a program designed for exceptionally gifted BC students, allowing them to complete high school and earn their diploma in two years. Admission is selective — up to 20 students between the ages of 13–15 are admitted per year, out of hundreds of applicants.

On Jan. 26, Vancouver School Board (VSB) personnel visited the UTP to inform students and teachers that their program admissions have been paused indefinitely, surprising parents, students, and alumni. Representatives of all three groups shared their frustration at the VSB's decision with *The Nest*. Teachers were not interviewed due to potential negative consequences on their professional lives.

A collaboration between the Vancouver School Board (VSB), the BC Ministry of Education, and the University of British Columbia (UBC), the UTP has been running for over three decades in a building on the UBC campus. Upon graduating, UTP alumni are expected to pursue an undergraduate degree at UBC.

Initial Indicators of Change

Since 2023, parents and students have reported a feeling of unease prior to the admissions closure. Restructured admissions and cancelled events were coupled with minimal district communication.

Irene Yu, a parent of a current year one UTP student, recalls having trouble with the VSB since the beginning of the admissions process. “The UTP admissions were paused not only this year but last year too,” she said. “We applied in September, [...] but they paused it right then, and we had to wait for months.”

“There was already not a very pleasant experience with administration because nothing was clearly stated,” she explained. “No good reason was given.”

Another incident occurred in fall of 2023, when the VSB changed a previously planned overnight camping trip to a one-day excursion.

“They didn't even give us a reason,” Yu said. “The parents were thinking, if there were [...] some obstacles, maybe we could all try to brainstorm [...] and solve the problems.” Yu draws parallels between this and later troubles she found with the VSB's communication process.

Yu described how the experience left her with a feeling that was “almost

like a cloud hovering over our head[s].”

UTP alumna Alice Mandlis shared that in 2023, the VSB added a new requirement to the UTP application: a teacher recommendation. In this sense, she said, “they were already limiting the amount of students that could be [...] accepted by the program.”

The Immediate Reaction

In January 2024, without prior notice, VSB officials visited the UTP and announced a pause in program admissions to students.

“The principal and another top administrator just came in [and] interrupted their exams,” recounted Yu. “The students were really shocked because it was coming out of nowhere.”

A lengthy Q&A session followed, according to Yu, in which VSB personnel explained the current students' options: they could continue in a program that would soon become one cohort of students, or switch to their catchment high school. Many students were blindsided by the announcement.

“I heard from my kid that some of his classmates were so devastated, they were crying,” Yu said.

“There was no discussion with parents, any stakeholders, any current or graduated students,” year one UTP student Amber Lee told *The Nest*. “This [decision] was completely made independently.”

Mandlis expressed a similar sentiment. “They have not communicated with anyone within the community. They always talked about alumni engagement, [but they] haven't reached out to us at all. It's been dead silent.”

She worried that the indefinite pause would herald an end of the program. “It's kind of obvious to everyone within the community and outside of the community that they're just [pausing admissions] as an ex-

cuse to permanently close it,” she said.

Maureen McDermid is a board member of the Gifted Children's Association of BC (GCABC) who acted as a teacher advisor when the UTP was formed in 1998. She said that her organization was contacted by UTP parents starting in early 2023.

McDermid said that a number of “really concerned” UTP parents reached out to her organization about the intake pause and its ramifications. She said she acknowledged these worries, but pointed out that the program admits only 20 students per year. “It's not very comforting, but the effect size is not really that profound,” she noted.

As for the admissions pause becoming permanent, McDermid didn't seem worried, explaining that after speaking with VSB representatives, the GCABC believes the VSB is “not looking to deep-six the program.”

The Deetken Review

To conduct the review, the Ministry of Education contracted out to the Vancouver-based consulting firm Deetken, whose website states that they have experience in “solving complex and sensitive business problems [with] an emphasis on providing customized solutions that deliver lasting value for our clients.” They do not advertise any specific expertise in mental health, education, or youth services.

The Nest reached out to Deetken to inquire about what student or community outreach, if any, they did during or before their review. Deetken did not respond to this request prior to the publication of this investigation.

When *The Nest* asked VSB Associate Superintendent Alison Ogden about Deetken's qualifications, she said it wasn't a question she was able to answer, noting only that “they were engaged through a procurement process through the Ministry of Education and Childcare.”

McDermid confirmed that the BC Ministry of Education headed the review process — not the VSB. She said that the GCABC requested an explanation for the Ministry's choice to hire Deetken on two separate occasions, and have not yet received any concrete answer.

“The message that we got back [from the Ministry] was that this was considered a high level look at the program — how it was organized, what the finances were like,” she said. The Ministry added that the review was not actively investigating the content of the program and whether it was appropriate for its students.

Prior Reviews of the UTP

“The review in UTP history has actually been every 5 years — it's not a new thing,” said Lee. “I think the last one was in 2016, [but] it was sort of cut short by Covid and never resumed.”

UTP alumna Alyona Glazyrina also mentioned occasional reviews of the program, noting that they were conducted internally. She believes an external review might be helpful, observing that “if you are always looking at it internally, you always have the same kind of biases running around the program.”

VSB Associate Superintendent Ogden told *The Nest* that the UTP has “not undergone a third party review since its inception and formalization [...] we needed to make sure that we had all of the information moving forward.”

According to Ogden, neither the Ministry nor a third party has ever conducted a review. She explained that while she had received information from parents sharing that reviews had taken place, after looking into it she found that “there has been no review by the Ministry of Education and Child Care of the program, ever.”

Lee said that she believes the UTP community is not against the concept of a



EDITORIAL

ION PROGRAM FACES WING PAUSE IN ADMISSIONS

review, but in previous years, the (presumably internal) reviews had occurred while admissions continued to run. "The main issue of the pausing of admissions," she said, "is that the VSB did not exhaust all other avenues of helping the community before going straight to the most extreme."

Mandlis seemed to share these views, explaining that she thinks an external audit is "something that would have been welcomed by everyone."

The UTP's Two-Year Structure

"It's been a massive shock, because the UTP is a two-year system, and the reliance that each year has on each other to be mature and ready for UBC is crucial," shared Lee. "It's critical to understand that the UTP operates on its two-class model that can't be separated because the year ones learn from the year twos — we get advice, we get a support system."

The two year structure provides valuable skills and opportunities to second year students as well. "The year twos learn, they develop leadership skills, they develop their emotional maturity, from teaching the year ones," Lee explained. "There's this massive gap that's going to be in the UTP community that won't be able to function even with this single year pause in admissions."

Mental Health Concerns

Mental health concerns have been cited by both the Ministry of Education and the VSB as the primary reason for the intake pause. "We wouldn't pause admission to a program without concerns," said Ogden, saying that "a range of concerns have been brought forward, including mental health concerns, but also patterns of negative interactions amongst families and the effects that those dynamics have on students."

McDermid noted that during the GCABC's conversations with the three governing bodies of the UTP, they were

assured that the mental health concerns in question were serious. "We didn't press, because this is a highly identifiable body of kids," she said. they could not in all good conscience and responsibility [...] not investigate and respond.

Yu was skeptical, however, that the concerns warranted an admissions pause. "I often think that people who have very serious mental health issues are people who really don't know how to seek help, or who have no one to support them," she said. "But this is probably one of the most amazing parent group communities that I've been [in]. Every single person [is] so dedicated."

"This was not addressed with the appropriateness the topic deserves," Lee said. "It stigmatizes UTP students, it stigmatizes the gifted community, and it stigmatizes those with legitimate mental health concerns, because now we're just addressing this in public with no discussion with families or the students being affected by this."

In earlier years, students' mental health seemed to be a priority at the UTP. Rex Chen, a UTP graduate from 2015, mentioned the presence of a Ministry-instated psychologist, who he said became increasingly involved in the program over subsequent years. He emphasized that while the UTP was "more or less self-sustaining", the psychologist was continuously there to help students' needs.

"They used to have a full-time psychologist on staff, and then they put it down to two part-time psychologists, and now there are no psychologists on staff," said Kristin Hopkins, a parent of a gifted student who was hoping to apply to the UTP next year.

Hopkins' child has a gifted designation, and has struggled socially and emotionally in a conventional school. Upon finding out about the UTP, her family believed that it was the only viable option for their child's highschool education.

"They're saying that there's very high

levels of anxiety within the school, but I mean, that's one of the main symptoms of profound giftedness," Hopkins said.

"This program exists because these children have mental health challenges," she continued. "To go in and say these kids have mental health challenges, because of the program is ridiculous. The program is there to help them with those challenges."

Lee thinks that reintroducing an on-site psychologist would be "a massive help" to the UTP community. "You'll have someone there who will be at the school five days a week and [that] you can trust."

The Student Experience

Current and former students have spoken highly of the program and its impacts on their respective journeys.

Glazyrina considered the program to be "lifesaving" for its target audience. "If I hadn't gone to the program, I probably wouldn't be in university right now, not because of my age, but just because I wouldn't have enough motivation by the end of [high] school to actually go to university."

This story doesn't seem to be unique. Lee explained that she also found herself and her classmates' lives were improved by the UTP. "This is a story that you'll hear repeated constantly — that you were doing well in [mainstream] school, but you weren't happy and you weren't doing the best you could. Eventually that leads to a host of other things like burnout, depression, and anxiety."

"That's what honours programs are there for," Lee continued, referring to the UTP, MACC, and other enriched programs. "They're not just academic, they're for the community [...] of people who are like-minded, who you can just be yourself with."

Jonathan Chan, another UTP alumnus, noted that the program's close association with UBC was a major benefit for him.

"We were on the UBC campus, so we

got to go to UBC lectures," he said. "We had a lot of different extracurricular experiences that I think really helped me find what I want to do in university. It has definitely helped me now that I'm at UBC."

The program may be hyper-concentrated and high-intensity, but many students found that these qualities can be beneficial for those who need an extra challenge.

"I didn't really feel engaged with my classes [in elementary school], and I didn't really feel like I was learning the material," explained Mandlis. "Spending time in UTP really helped motivate me academically and helped push me for success that I don't think I would have gotten otherwise."

One caveat she noted, however, is that "emotional intelligence is something that isn't developed a lot in the program." Even though the program has been taking strides in that direction, she said, "it's been kind of limited."

The "Larger Narrative"

Chan felt "angry but not exactly surprised" by the pause in admissions, and considered it representative of a larger pattern within the VSB — that is, the cutting of enriched programs across the district.

He cited the MACC "revisioning" and the combination of the Hamber Challenge and Studio programs as other instances of this, saying that over the past few years, the VSB has been trying to reform, shrink, or entirely shut down these programs. "In their words, it's to improve equity, but I don't really think that's the case," he said.

For Chen, he agreed "it's part of a much broader thing," and added that he "can't ascribe motivations for this, but it does seem like [...] some of the particular needs and intricacies of certain programs are being lost."

Chen stressed the importance of considering the "social cost in terms of not being able to allow [gifted] students to achieve actual the full potential they have, and instead consigning them to the regular system."

Chan, on the other hand, worries that the VSB's indefinite admissions pause will exacerbate educational inequities.

"If you take away these programs in public school, the parents are just gonna take their kids to private school," he explained, "But parents who can't necessarily afford that, they're just going to be stuck with their kid in a program that doesn't really fulfill their needs. [...] By taking away these programs, the VSB is making education a paywall."



INTERNATIONAL

THE OPENING DAY OF MLB 2024

NEWS REPORT by Leo Pi (10)

After a 37 day preseason, the baseball season started with an exciting four games played at the Major League Baseball (MLB) World Tour Seoul Series at the Gocheok SkyDome. MLB Opening Day 2024 took place on Mar. 28, with 26 teams taking to the field with two more Opening Day games being played Friday following rain postponements. The MLB is composed of 30 teams divided into the American League (AL) and National League (NL), with each league divided into three divisions: East, Central, West.

This season, the MLB has introduced five rule changes. The first change was to the pitch timer, which was set to 15 seconds with no runners on base and 20 seconds for runners on base last season. This season, the timer for runners on base was increased to 18 seconds and is to reset right after a foul ball, so the pitcher has to be on the mound immediately. To reduce the time between innings, the timer does not reset to two minutes and 15 seconds if a new pitcher steps onto the warning track with under two minutes remaining; instead it will reset back to two minutes.

Additionally, the number of mound visits has changed from five to four per game and any pitcher who warms up must face at least one batter. These new rules all aim to reduce the time of the game, which increased by an average of seven minutes last season.

For the NL West, the Arizona Diamondbacks, who powered their way to the World Series last season, but ultimately lost, signed pitcher Eduardo Rodríguez, outfielder Joc Pederson, and infielder Eugenio Suárez. They remain an excellent mix of veterans and younger players and nearly all



now have high-level postseason experience.

The Los Angeles Dodgers, who were first in the NL West, but lost in the National League Division Series last season, added pitcher and batter Shohei Ohtani, pitcher Yoshinobu Yamamoto, who came from Japan's Nippon Professional Baseball (NPB), pitcher Tyler Glasnow, and outfielder Teoscar Hernández to the roster, among others. The biggest headline for the offseason last summer was the acquisition of Japanese superstar Shohei Ohtani, who signed a 10-year, \$700 million contract, inciting the Dodgers to build the team around him. All of their moves during the offseason placed the Dodgers in a position to compete with the Braves for the top team in the National League.

In the NL Central, the Milwaukee Brewers, who were first in the NL Central, and lost in

the wild card last season, parted ways with president of baseball operations David Stearns, manager Craig Counsell, and pitcher Corbin Burnes. To compensate for these management losses, the Brewers have locked down promising center fielder Jackson Chourio to bring some stability on the field.

For the NL East, the Atlanta Braves, who were the best team in the league with 104 wins last season, but lost during the National League Division Series, added pitcher Chris Sale and hope to reach the 100-win mark for a third straight season. In addition, last year's MVP, Ronald Acuña Jr., will really help the team. The Braves also have depth in the bullpen and high level performance of their starters.

The Philadelphia Phillies, who made the National League Championship Series last season did not make many changes

during the offseason, but kept their strong pitching staff.

For the AL East, the Baltimore Orioles, who were first in the AL East and lost in the American League Division Series last season, added pitcher Corbin Burnes. They will also soon add the best prospect in the minors, Jackson Holliday. Baltimore's roster looks very strong and the impact of young talent gives the Orioles a high ceiling.

The Boston Red Sox, who only had 78 wins last season, have seven starters who are 28 or younger, including three players younger than 25.

The Toronto Blue Jays, who lost in the wild card last season, added infielder Justin Turner and shortstop Isiah Kiner-Falefa, but otherwise did little to change last year's roster. Their deepened rotation may keep them ahead of the other teams in their division.

The New York Yankees acquired all-star outfielder Juan Soto and stuck with building around outfielder Aaron Judge. Thus, they are expecting more wins and hope to make the playoffs this season.

For the AL Central, the Cleveland Guardians have the first round first pick in the 2024 MLB draft. They have been one of baseball's youngest teams over the past couple of years.

The Kansas City Royals, who only had 56 wins last season, signed shortstop Bobby Witt Jr. to a \$288.7 million contract. Having Witt for the foreseeable future along with a new downtown stadium as well as improvements in scouting, development, and analytical practices means a bright future.

The Minnesota Twins, who were first in the AL Central and lost in the American League Division Series last season, added first baseman Carlos Santana,

pitcher Anthony Desclafani, and a collection of relief pitchers. They benefit due to their AL Central-heavy schedule and they also have a deep group of young MLB players.

For the AL West, the Los Angeles Angels lost Shohei Ohtani, leaving the longtime duo with Mike Trout.

The Texas Rangers, who won the World Series last season, have two of the top young outfielders in the game — Evan Carter and Wyatt Langford. With their roster, the Rangers aim to become MLB's first repeat champions in more than two decades.

The Seattle Mariners lost 14 extra inning games last season, nearly 20 percent of their losses. They are the only franchise in baseball that's never won a pennant.

The Houston Astros, who were first in the AL West and lost in the American League Championship Series, lost manager Dusty Baker after a retirement announcement. Third baseman Alex Bregman and pitcher Justin Verlander are set to become free agents this summer as well. They have some advantages in scheduling, so Houston remains a prime favorite to win the AL pennant.

As part of the Juneteenth festivities, the Giants and Cardinals will play a game at Rickwood Field in Birmingham, Alabama, former home of the Birmingham Black Barons on June 20.

This year, from June 8–9, the Mets and Phillies head to England to play a series, continuing a tradition from last season.

There are also some milestones coming up: Clayton Kershaw is just 56 strikeouts away from 3,000, Paul Goldschmidt is only 91 hits away from 2,000, and Andrew McCutchen and Anthony Rizzo are one and five homers away from 300 respectively.



REUTERS

TICK-TOCK, GOES TIKTOK'S CLOCK

NEWS REPORT by Kaitlyn Lee (9) & Dora Yuan (9)

Over 2 years after former US president Donald Trump first suggested banning TikTok from American devices, a bill to ban the popular social media app has been signed into law.

On Apr. 24, US president Joe Biden signed the Protecting Americans from Foreign Adver-

sary Controlled Applications Act, which gives TikTok 270 days to sell the app to an American company or face a ban in the country. Brought forward by two US Congress members in early 2024, the bill passed the House of Representatives on Mar. 13 and the Senate on Apr. 23. It passed the House with 352 representatives in favour and 65 opposed, and the Senate with

79 senators in favour and 18 opposed.

The US government's main concern with TikTok is its potential affiliation with the Chinese Communist Party (CCP).

TikTok's parent company ByteDance is based in mainland China and could face regulations imposed by the Chinese government. Lawmakers fear these regulations could require

TikTok to compromise the privacy of their 170 million US users to the CCP.

Another concern is that the CCP may be able to control TikTok's algorithms. Many representatives have accused the company of potentially censoring content critical of the Chinese government. Additionally, in November 2023, several US senators accused TikTok of promoting anti-Zionist content. The company denied this in a statement, claiming that political opinions on the app surrounding this topic grew organically rather than through artificial changes to the algorithm.

TikTok has also denied all allegations of breach of privacy, maintaining that they have neither shared user data with the Chinese government nor censored anti-CCP content on the app. "ByteDance is not owned or controlled by the Chinese government," stated TikTok CEO Shou Chew in a court hearing. "It is a private company."

In 2023, the company announced a plan titled Project Texas that seeks to separate US user data from other data collected from the app, in an attempt to convince US lawmakers that data would not be leaked to the CCP. Nevertheless, ByteDance is still required to comply with Chinese laws.

TikTok has said in an official statement that 60 per cent of ByteDance is owned by international investors and not controlled by the Chinese government. The Chinese government currently owns one per cent of TikTok's stocks.

Many TikTok users, especially monetized content creators, oppose the bill. Many careers have been built off TikTok, and many small businesses have also gained popularity after their creators started posting on the app.

"Banning TikTok, directly or indirectly, would violate the First Amendment because it would stifle free expression and restrict the public's access to a critical source of information. The government can't impose this type of total ban unless it's the only way to prevent extremely serious and immediate harm to national security," Ashley Gorski, senior staff attorney with the American Civil Liberties Union's National Security Project, told Al Jazeera. She argues that there is no solid public evidence that TikTok is really a serious risk to national security.

However, others consider the risks quite substantial. "My bill empowers the administration to ban TikTok or any software applications that threaten U.S. national security," Representative Mike McCaul, chair of the House Foreign Affairs Committee, said. "Anyone with TikTok downloaded on their device has given the [Chinese Communist Party] a backdoor to all their personal information. It's a spy balloon into your phone."

In a TikTok video addressed to users, CEO Shou Chew expressed disappointment about the ban being signed into law. "Make no mistake, this is a ban," he stated. "A ban on TikTok, and a ban on you and your voice. We are confident and we will keep

fighting for your rights in the courts. The facts and the Constitution are on our side." According to AdImpact, the company has spent over \$5 million to combat the TikTok ban.

It is unlikely that ByteDance will sell TikTok since it would need the permission of the CCP. According to The Washington Post, China said that it would "strongly oppose" any forced sale of TikTok. The company is expected to take legal action against the outcome of the ban. In the coming months, it is expected to claim that the bill violates the First Amendment. The United States government would have to prove that the need to protect the privacy of Americans trumps these arguments.

Canadian lawmakers have also raised concerns about TikTok. In September 2023, the Liberal government began a national security review of the platform. Content creators have expressed worries about potential adverse effects to their businesses. "I think it would take us a little bit back to square one, where I was always trying to reach my audience," said comedian Darcy Michael. A TikTok Canada spokesperson said that "banning TikTok in the US would be devastating to Canadian TikTok creators and small businesses, many of whom rely on being able to reach Americans as a large part of their audience." According to Global News, any legislation in Canada might not be able to expect TikTok to divest to a Canadian company due to the smaller market.

INTERNATIONAL

A Draft For the Ages

NEWS REPORT by Sara Maya Budhiraja (11)

On Apr. 15, the 29th WNBA draft took place in Brooklyn, New York, signalling the beginning of a new era in women's professional basketball. Several star players from the National College Athletics Association (NCAA) put their names in consideration for the draft.

Unsurprisingly, the Indiana Fever used their number one pick in the draft to select Caitlin Clark, Iowa's star point guard. Clark, who brings an unparalleled offensive capability to the league, has broken the record for most points scored by a college basketball player in both the men's and women's Division I leagues. She appeared in the NCAA finals twice and won the Naismith Award — the highest honour of collegiate basketball — two years in a row.

The Fever already boasts the 2023–24 WNBA Rookie of the Year, Aaliyah Boston. Boston and Clark have the potential to form an exciting new pairing that could significantly strengthen the Fever's offence in coming seasons.

Clark's former Iowa teammate and captain, Kate Martin, was also drafted in the second round by the Las Vegas Aces, the league's defending champions. In an interview after the draft, Martin said that she had only attended the event to support Clark, but was ecstatic that her name had also been called. "There are a lot of emotions right now," Martin said in an interview with ESPN. "I'm really happy to be here. I was here to support Caitlin, but I was hoping to hear my name called. All I wanted was an opportunity and I got it. I'm really excited."

Caitlin Clark, however, was not the only pick at the star-stud-

ded draft. The second overall pick went to the Los Angeles Sparks, who selected Stanford's 6'4" centre Cameron Brink. Brink was the nation's leader in blocks, and won the Naismith Trophy for Defensive Player of the Year. Brink's height and court mobility could make her a strong defender for Los Angeles and open the door for a franchise playoff run.

Tall and talented defenders continued to make the draft even more interesting when two conference rivals were drafted to the same team. Kamilla Cardoso, the indomitable 6'7" centre from South Carolina, and Angel Reese, Louisiana State University's multi-faceted "Bayou Barbie", were both chosen by the Chicago Sky. Cardoso was drafted third, with her height giving her a significant advantage on the court. Reese, the seventh pick, has a fiery playing style that, combined with Cardoso's defensive power, could transform the struggling Sky team. Cardoso averaged ten rebounds per game in her final year in the NCAA, and Reese averaged 13. "Nobody's going to get no rebounds on us," Cardoso said during a press conference after the draft.

The Washington Mystics drafted the number six overall pick Aaliyah Edwards, from the University of Connecticut. After losing stars Natasha Cloud and Ella Delle Donne in the offseason, the Mystics are aiming to build their roster from the ground up, and Edwards might be the solution to some of their glaring issues.

Several foreign players were also selected in the first round of this year's draft. French Guards Carla Leite and Leila Lacan, the ninth and tenth picks respectively, are still undetermined for the Dallas Wings and Connecticut

Sun. However, their ball control and court skill could help these two franchises in capitalizing on their success last season. CBS Sports calls Lacan "arguably the best guard prospect in this class outside of Clark," and if the acquisition is successful, this will be a great addition to the Sun's roster. However, the French basketball federation's schedule could conflict with the WNBA's, which puts these selections into question.

Another exciting international draft is twelfth-pick Nyadiew Puoch, Australia's "Block Doctor". With her selection, the Atlanta Dream are clearly looking to add even more defensive skill and size to their roster. After placing fifth in the league last year, they should not be counted out to improve their rank in the upcoming season.

After the NCAA finals between the South Carolina Gamecocks and the Iowa Hawkeyes averaged 18.7 million viewers, the conversation around women's basketball changed. With stars like Clark, Cardoso, Reese, and Edwards declaring for the draft, and the exciting picks that followed, the WNBA can look forward to its most watched season ever. The women's finals beat the men's DI numbers for the first time ever, and at its peak reached 24 million viewers, which is more than any professional game since 2019. Things are changing when it comes to the star power, advertising, and hard data backing up women's pro-level basketball.

However, salaries in the league may not reflect that. Many fans were shocked to learn that Clark, who is one of the most talented players to enter a professional basketball draft, will be paid less than her NBA counterparts. According to an article by Deadline, the

minimum salary for a player in the NBA is \$1.12 million USD, whereas number one pick Clark will make merely \$76,535 in base salary from the Indiana Fever as part of a four-year, \$338,056 deal with the team. On the other side of the coin, the 2023–24 number one draft pick in the NBA, Victor Wembanyama, is making \$12 million a year — part of his four-year, \$55.2 million contract.

"America, we have been talking about this for 20 years. Finally, you guys are woke," pro basketball player and two-time Olympic gold medalist Angel McCoughtry told CNN. Revenue differences between the NBA and WNBA differ very significantly, and that could be impacting Clark's lacklustre salary. According to Bloomberg, WNBA players make around 9.3 per cent of the league's total revenue, contrasting to NBA players' 50 per cent, due to a collective bargaining agreement made in 2020.

Despite this controversy surrounding base salary, the 2024–25 draft class may find a high revenue generator in the form of advertising and sponsorship. Deadline reported that Clark is on her way to signing a \$28 million shoe partnership with Nike, and LSU star Angel Reese has inked deals with everyone from Goldman Sachs to Reebok.

As the excitement builds before the first regular season WNBA game on May 12, a new era of women's basketball approaches. How the league and players will reshape the game based on growing fan interest is yet to be determined, but change will need to be made to accommodate a new set of stars. The 2024–25 draft class, filled with record-setters and award-winners, may be only the beginning of a sports upheaval for the ages.



Apple breaks the law and instantly regrets it

NEWS REPORT by Oliver Izen (12) & Max von Dehn (12)

In a lawsuit brought forth by the United States Department of Justice (DOJ), Apple is being accused of allegedly monopolizing the smartphone market by imposing restrictions on developers and making it difficult to switch out of the Apple ecosystem. The civil antitrust lawsuit was launched in the US District Court for the District of New Jersey, with the backing of both the DOJ and 16 state and district attorney generals. The DOJ claimed in their official press release that the purpose of the lawsuit is to "restore competition" to the smartphone market "on behalf of the American public."

In the US, unlawful monopolies are defined as when a company has and maintains market power for a product or service not through fair competition and merit but instead through suppression of competition and anti-competitive behaviour.

The alleged monopoly in this lawsuit exists because, while Apple has only 28 per cent of the smartphone market globally, it maintains a 60 per cent market share domestically, according to Backlinko. This number jumps to almost 90 per cent of US teens from a recent Piper Sandler study. The lawsuit cites several key factors that illustrate the DOJ's case, which all centre around the allegation that Apple is undermining developers that make competing products and services. By undermining developers, they are allegedly discouraging interoperability, making it more difficult for consumers to leave the Apple ecosystem.

The DOJ mentions in their lawsuit how Apple uses its control of the iPhone to prevent many systems from existing on the platform. In the official 88-page complaint, the DOJ outlines five major restrictions Apple is imposing on developers that promote this anticompetitive conduct. These restrictions include "blocking innovative super apps," "suppressing mobile cloud streaming services," "excluding cross-platform messaging apps," "diminishing the functionality of non-Apple smart-

watches," and "limiting third party digital wallets," as listed in the lawsuit.

This is not the first lawsuit directed against Apple for its restrictive policies. In the case *Apple Inc. v Pepper*, Apple was sued for its restrictive store measures such as its prevention of third-party app stores.

Even though Apple's ecosystem is one of the primary focuses of the lawsuit, it is often also one of Apple's major selling points, with Apple often mentioning the exclusivity and security of its ecosystem as positives. However, the DOJ claims that Apple "wraps itself in a cloak of privacy, security and consumer preferences to justify its anti-competitive conduct."

If Apple loses the lawsuit, which might not be resolved for months or even years, it could lead to sizable changes to how users interact with the iPhone, though it is possible that very little actually changes in the end. Some analysts believe that a settlement is a likely outcome, with Apple being forced to make smaller compromises, according to *The Los Angeles Times*. The compromises that Apple would be forced to make would most likely center around the current tight control of the app store and the opening of tap-to-pay accessibility for third-party developers.

Apple released a statement denouncing the allegations, in which they wrote that "this lawsuit threatens who we are." They argued that, if successful, this lawsuit would be "empowering government to take a heavy hand in designing people's technology," and they believe this lawsuit is "wrong on the facts and the law, and [they] will vigorously defend against it."

Meanwhile, the DOJ referenced the precedent set by the case *United States of America v. Microsoft Corporation* from 2001, which dealt with Microsoft's monopoly of internet browsers on Windows computers. The case successfully argued that Microsoft was using legal and technical restrictions in an illegal manner to prevent users and manufacturers from using search engines other than Internet Explorer.



INTERNATIONAL

Japanese marriage law may cause everyone to have the surname Sato by 2531

NEWS REPORT by Darlene Soh (11)

Unlike many other developed nations, Japan still legally requires married couples to have the same last name. A new study led by Hiroshi Yoshida of Tohoku University projected that because of these restrictive marriage laws, everyone living in Japan might have the surname "Sato" by the year 2531.

Unless Japanese marriage laws are changed, the country continues to face name extinction, where surnames are lost when women become wives and take on new surnames. This is also a result of Japan's culture of basing their lineage and ancestry off the male line. In Japan, 'Sato' is currently the most common last name, with almost two million holders, and this number will only continue to increase.

Japan's population growth rate has been consistently declining since

around 1973, when the country's fertility rate dropped below the threshold needed to maintain its population — the base fertility rate is 1.3 births per woman as of 2021. A shrinking and aging population has created a headache for Japanese leaders. A declining marriage rate is undoubtedly one of the main causes.

This diminishing marriage rate could result in the population shrinking more quickly, which would ultimately prevent the last name 'Sato' from being taken on by future generations at all. However, if the marriage rate crisis is overcome, Professor Yoshida's predicted future may come true unless the law is changed.

For Japan, whose country has the fourth largest economy in the world, neither of these futures are ideal. "A nation of Satos will not only be inconvenient but also undermine individual

dignity," Yoshida told *The Guardian*. "The trend would also lead to the loss of family and regional heritage."

Organizations that currently support a change in marriage laws have projected that, by 2351, only 7.96 per cent would have the last name Sato if changes are legislated.

Japan has historically been culturally opposed to couples having separate last names, as it would damage the unity of a family. The law defining this has been in place since 1898 after being adopted during the Meiji Restoration as part of a program of modernization and emulation of Western societies.

It has since become a traditional element of Japanese culture. Although there is no law saying whether the husband or wife's last names should be used, 96 per cent of women typically adopt their husband's names after marriage. If a married couple has different

last names, they are not officially recognized.

Across much of Asia, including Japan, last names are less diverse compared to in Western countries. Women's surnames are lost every generation.

Although the Japanese government has allowed women's maiden names to appear alongside their married names on passports and other certificates, they remain the only country that requires spouses to use the same last name.



REAL ESTATE JAPAN



GETTY IMAGES

BOEING IS FACING TURBULENT TROUBLE

NEWS REPORT by Justin Chuk (11)

Aircraft manufacturer Boeing has recently found itself plagued by a series of controversies and safety lapses that have raised serious questions about the company's manufacturing practices and corporate culture.

At a US congressional hearing on Apr. 17, whistleblower Sam Salehpour, an engineer at Boeing for over a decade, expressed concerns about ignored safety concerns. Salehpour highlighted an issue with gaps within key sections of the 787 Dreamliner, affecting over 1,000 jets currently in service.

These issues could potentially lead to failure in the critical infrastructure of the planes. Salehpour also alleged that employees (including himself) received threats from superiors when trying to sound alarms. "I have even been subjected to threats of violence from my supervisor after I attempted to discuss the problems in a meeting on April 9, 2023," he explained to Congress.

In January 2020, Boeing suspended all 737 production following two fatal crashes within two years. Both killed everyone onboard: a Lion Air MAX plane crash in Indonesia in late 2018 that killed 189 people onboard, and an Ethiopian Airlines MAX crash in 2019 that killed 157 people onboard. According to *Reuters*, this was its biggest assembly-line pause in 20 years. The company found that the two crashes were due to defects in the automat-

ed flight control software, which was activated at the wrong time.

September 2020 saw the end of an 18-month-long investigation by a US House of Representatives panel, which concluded that Boeing had failed in their design and in being fully transparent with the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA). The following November, however, the FAA allowed Boeing 737 Max planes to fly again. Shortly after, the European Union Aviation Safety Agency also approved the MAX's return to service in European airspace. These two decisions ignited debate and controversy. By August 2023, Boeing faced yet another setback when it encountered a supplier quality issue with 737 Max planes — there were improperly drilled holes on the aft pressure bulkhead made using an automated drill.

In January, an Alaska Airlines 737 MAX 9 experienced a door plug blow-out mid-flight, leading to the grounding of all MAX 9 aircraft for investigation. In February, the National Transportation Safety Board published a preliminary report revealing that the Alaska Airlines plane was missing four key bolts, resulting in the door plug blow-out. The findings revealed lapses in the company's manufacturing quality control.

In March 2024, a wave of incidents added to the problems Boeing was already facing. A tire of a Boeing 777-200 departing from San Francisco to Japan loosened and fell off during takeoff. In

Portland, Oregon, a Boeing 737-800 was forced to make an emergency landing due to fumes in the cabin. Additionally, a missing panel on yet another Boeing 737-800 was discovered during a post-flight inspection.

Boeing's recent history of safety incidents and lapses in aircraft quality have brought increased scrutiny to the company's manufacturing practices. Boeing's cost-cutting measures may have contributed to the erosion of its manufacturing standards and quality control processes. In his testimony before the Senate panel, Salehpour said that Boeing should be held accountable and demanded an end to the company's culture that currently prioritizes profit and speed over safety.

Dave Calhoun, CEO of Boeing, and Larry Kellner, chair of Boeing's board of directors, have since announced that they will step down from their respective roles. These high-profile resignations amid an administrative overhaul of the manufacturers' management could spell trouble for the company's future. Boeing now has to fight to repair its reputation following the many PR nightmares during Calhoun's four-year term as CEO.

"Unless action is taken, and leaders are held accountable, every person stepping aboard a Boeing aeroplane is at risk," executive director of the Foundation for Aviation Safety and former Boeing engineer Ed Pierson said during his testimony. "This is a criminal cover-up."

Is the fight for Scottish independence still going?

NEWS REPORT by Malena Brewer (12)

Scotland and England share a complex and tumultuous history. In post-Brexit years, support for Scottish independence has spiked, according to statistics provided by Statista. However, recent reports show that support of the Scottish National Party, the greatest supporter of Scottish independence, is decreasing.

Native Scottish tribes defended the region from Roman and Viking invaders throughout the first millennium. In the 9th century, Scottish leader Kenneth MacAlpin united various tribes into one Scottish kingdom, various iterations of which fought for self-determination throughout the medieval period.

The United Kingdom was formed in 1707, incorporating Scotland, England, Ireland, and Wales. In the 19th century, Scotland began a campaign for governmental autonomy and home rule. The modern independence movement characterizes itself as moving towards the future, leaving behind an England that is stuck in the past. It is presented as the liberal alternative to England's conservative-ruled government.

Over the years, Scotland has been granted two referendums regarding whether Scotland should stay in the United Kingdom. Each time, the majority of Scottish voters chose to remain a part of the United Kingdom. The most recent referendum in 2014 failed to pass with 55 per cent against.

These referendums were conducted before Brexit occurred in 2016. Sixty-two per cent of the Scotland population voted to remain in the European Union, but they were still outvoted by the rest of the UK due to their low population — the city of London alone has a higher population than all of Scotland.

One reason why many Scots opposed Brexit was the economic consequences of leaving the EU; in 2019, the Scottish government reported almost a 25 per cent increase in food prices, collapsing trade with EU countries, and a mass loss in their fishing industry.

After being forcefully removed from the EU, Scotland demanded another referendum, which England continuously refused to grant. Scotland's own government is prevented from conducting its own referendum due to a 1998 act which disallows Scotland from making any decisions related to the United Kingdom and their place within it.

This referendum is the main goal of the current Scottish government, run by the SNP. The SNP has been in power for almost a decade, but recent statistics have shown lowering support, with the Labour party slowly closing the gap. The Labour party now has 33 per cent of Scotland's support, while the SNP has 31 per cent.

Recent statistics from *Statista* report that 47 per cent of Scots still believe they should be independent, showing that there is not an exact correlation between SNP supporters and Scottish independence supporters, though they do overlap. Rather, it reveals that the country's change in attitude stems from the resignation of Nicola Sturgeon, the former First Minister, who let go of her position in March of last year. Her replacement, First Minister Huzma Yousaf, has 17 per cent less approval than Sturgeon did during her time in office.

Despite the constant fluctuation in public opinion for Scottish independence, much of the support for independence comes from Scotland's youth. As they come of age, their potentially pro-independence voting block will grow in influence.



DAVID CANNON GETTY IMAGES

REVIEW

YOUR GUIDE TO TAYLOR SWIFT'S *THE TORTURED POETS DEPARTMENT*

REVIEW by Elle Glen (10) & Cynthia Zhu (10)

A new era has begun. We are, of course, referring to Taylor Swift's 11th studio album, *THE TORTURED POETS DEPARTMENT*. We hope readers will enjoy (or be destroyed by) TTPD as much as we have.

Track 1 - Fortnight (feat. Post Malone)

A synth-pop style song, the tone begins to soften when she sings "And I love you / It's ruining my life." "Fortnight" features Post Malone, and the combination of vocals during the bridge creates the illusion of a conversation, which adds depth and power to the story.

Track 2 - The Tortured Poets Department

The delivery of the cruelly honest lyrics and Swift's low notes balances well with the production, which utilizes a quicker tempo. The narrative is intriguing, touching on Swift sees herself in comparison to other artists with lyrics like "You're not Dylan Thomas / I'm not Patti Smith". However, we found the tune throughout the song to be somewhat repetitive.

Track 3 - My Boy Only Breaks His Favorite Toys

The uptempo music pairs interestingly with the sad, heavy lyrics, which is seen throughout the album. We found the diversity of the metaphors Swift uses throughout the song like "I'm queen of sand castles he destroys" and "The sickest army doll / Purchased at the mall" to creatively express Swift's feelings.

Track 4 - Down Bad

In this track, Swift uses a metaphor of being abducted by extraterrestrial life and learning cosmic truth. The verses and chorus seem to mirror each other. The former draws on Swift's metaphor and is paired with an airy tone, while the chorus brings her back to reality, containing short, fast-paced synth beats that complement Swift's curt lyrics, giving it an upbeat motif.

Track 5 - So Long, London

A beautiful ballad, this song is full of raw emotion and truth and is a perfect showcase of Swift's songwriting abilities. She uses poetic lyrics and soft, ascending beats to convey a bittersweet farewell. The introduction of the song sounds somewhat like wedding bells or the ring of Big Ben's Great Bell.

Track 6 - But Daddy I Love Him

Rich imagery in the lyrics throughout the song, matched both the tone and Swift's voice well. Swift breaks the fourth wall by saying "I'm havin' his baby", followed immediately by "No I'm not, but you should see your faces." We found this amusing and unexpected, as Swift had never done something like that before in her music.

Track 7 - Fresh Out The Slammer

The intro of this unique song has

a country sound with a scratchy guitar and there is a complete musical shift in the last minute. One of the first things we noticed in this song was the cat meowing after Swift sings "Rolling thunder, he don't understand me." Swift herself is a big cat lover, so we found this fitting.

Track 8 - Florida!!! (feat. Florence + the Machine)

"People have these crimes that they commit; where do they go? To Florida and... try to reinvent themselves. I think when you go through a heartbreak, there's a part of you that thinks, 'I want a new name. I want a new life. I don't want anyone to know where I've been or know me at all,'" Swift told Amazon Music. We thought that Swift's higher voice pairs beautifully with Florence Welch's lower register.

Track 9 - Guilty as Sin?

Drawing from the poetic lyricism of evermore through a pop filter, the production paired well with Swift's honesty. Swift regularly changes octaves, singing deeper during the verses and having a more light airy tone during the chorus, and we found this added more intrigue to the track.

Track 10 - Who's Afraid of Little Old Me?

Swift addresses the negative comments she has received from the public and describes the resilience she developed throughout the years. The heavy emotion in the song tells the story of her experience. Her vocals and lyrics are only made stronger by the beautiful and powerful production, which is bold, cinematic and compelling.

Track 11 - I Can Fix Him (No Really I Can)

Swift's lyricism pairs with a slow, dark, western-inspired tune to create a hypnotic and venomous melody. While relying on a repetitive chorus, the powerful ending, "Whoa, maybe I can't" makes it stand out. The delusional drawl of the chorus suggests that Swift is attempting to convince herself that she could counteract the flaws of her partner.

Track 12 - lomi

Swift mentions both "love of my

life" and "loss of my life", providing different meanings for the acronym. This haunting acoustic ballad stand out from the other tracks. We found this one to be the most melancholic and touching song; the soft piano is a beautiful accompaniment to Swift's tender voice.

Track 13 - I Can Do It With a Broken Heart

Upbeat music paired with depressing lyrics convey heavy irony. The first time we heard the song, we found it sort of absurd that she would use this way to send her message across. However, over time, we began to appreciate the satirical aspect of the song.

Track 14 - The Smallest Man Who Ever Lived

Beginning softly and slowly, Swift's tone is reflective, almost apathetic, and becomes emotional as tension builds. She reaches a peak at the bridge, a stark contrast to the rest of the song, and its emotion is amplified by the fierce beat. This song's cutthroat lyrics make it one of the most emotive on the album.

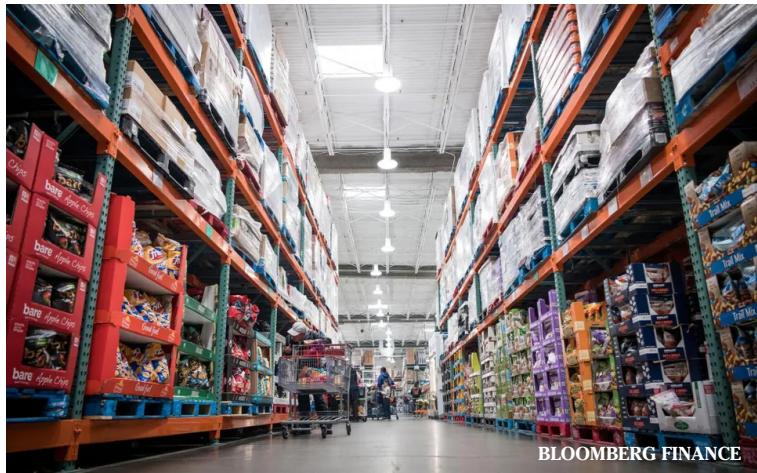
Track 15 - The Alchemy

Although this song continues the lulling rhythm heard throughout the album, it also incorporates cheerful-sounding synth beats. Alchemists were obsessed with learning to turn lead into gold, and we interpret this as Swift transforming herself and her love into something just as beautiful. We noticed several direct references to American football, implying that it's a love song for Travis Kelce.

Track 16 - Clara Bow

Clara Bow was an American actress from the silent film era and like Swift, was attacked by the media. This track illustrates Swift's personal experiences about the process of rising to fame. The allusions to previous industry icons, as well as the wispy and reflective tone, make this song quite powerful.

After TTPD's release, the countdown on Swift's Instagram was replaced with one for two more hours. This was revealed to be for the release of *THE ANTHOLOGY*, a deluxe version of the album with 31 songs.



BLOOMBERG FINANCE

OUR FAVOURITE COSTCO BUYS

REVIEW by Jiya Budhiraja (8) & Leah Levine (8)

While it's always easy to swing by Costco to pick up groceries, the thousands of products available make it hard to figure out which ones are worth buying. These Kirkland products are tried-and-true, taste-tested, and on our personal shopping lists. Here are some of our Costco must-buy recommendations!

Kirkland Signature Bacon Crumbles, \$10.99:

Leah's rating: 7/10
Jiya's rating: 9/10

These bacon crumbles are perfect for adding a savoury touch to salads, omelets, and more. A 20 oz bag costs \$10.99. These bacon crumbles are made with 100 per cent real bacon and are fully cooked, so they're ready to use right out of the bag. They add a smoky, savoury flavour to any dish.

Kirkland Signature Maple Syrup, \$32.53:

Kirkland maple syrup is like no other maple syrup we had tasted before. Its sweet and flowy texture is perfect, and we both deeply enjoyed it. However, we believe it is quite overpriced. For this reason, it does not in fact deserve to be rated as highly as our other products.

Kirkland Signature House Blend Whole Bean Coffee, \$18.99:

Leah's rating: 4/10
Jiya's rating: 5/10

This medium roast coffee is a classic choice for coffee lovers, with a 2.5 lb bag costing just \$18.99. This coffee is a blend of Arabica beans from Central and South America. It has a smooth, balanced flavour that's perfect for everyday drinking. However, it is quite strong, so we had to add lots of milk and sugar.

Kirkland Signature Whole Cashews, \$35.94:

Leah's rating: 1/10
Jiya's rating: 7/10

While Jiya enjoyed the cashews, Leah did not, as she dislikes nuts. Jiya thought they had the right amount of salt and were not too hard or too soft; they were just right. However, once again, we both felt that they were slightly overpriced and not worth it. Overall,

the cashews were up to par with our standards.

Disclaimer- Leah did NOT like the cashews

Kirkland Profiteroles, \$11.99:

Leah's rating: 10/10
Jiya's rating: 10/10

There are 100 profiteroles, or cream puffs, in the plastic container. The profiteroles need to be defrosted for about 30 minutes prior to consumption. It is possible to just eat them straight out of the freezer, but the cream would be frozen and hard, so they would taste more like ice cream bites. The pastry is quite flaky, and the cream inside is fluffy and not overly sweet. We especially enjoyed these tasty desserts with chocolate sauce, which is a must-have when eating profiteroles.

Kirkland Thin and Crispy chocolate chip cookies, \$29.50:

Leah's rating: 9/10
Jiya's rating: 10/10

These chocolate chip cookies are very delicious! They aren't too crunchy or hard but still maintain an enjoyable texture. They are not too big, so having them in a bite or two is not a problem at all. We believe that they are the perfect after-school or even in-school snack!

Kirkland Roast Beef \$11.57:

Leah's rating: 5/10
Jiya's rating: 4.5/10

You may understandably think this was an odd product to review, but both of us are meat lovers who especially enjoy meat in our sandwiches, so sampling meat made perfect sense to us. Unfortunately, to be honest, the roast beef was a little bit of a letdown. We found it to be slightly too salty and lacking an enjoyable texture (it was very hard to chew and break down). We were quite excited about trying it, so it's a shame that it was a no-go.

Overall, we believe that Costco is, and always has been, a great place to buy groceries. Its wide variety of options includes almost everybody's food preferences, making it easy for everyone to shop there. Most of the food we tried was quite delicious and definitely surprised us (in a good way) or at least lived up to our expectations. There were some overpriced foods, but in general, we enjoyed most of the food we tried.

International Music Review

REVIEW by Max von Dehn (12) & Oliver Izen (12)

Since much of mainstream music today is dominated by North American artists, it can be easy to ignore the contributions from the international community. However, international musicians have contributed to much of the modern musical landscape.

Many prevalent and well-known international bands are either from the UK or Australia because these countries also speak English. The music scene in the United Kingdom is especially diverse, ranging from large stars such as Harry Styles, Charli XCX and Eddie the Muppet, to smaller acts such as Black Midi and Black Country, New Road. Many of the subgenres of music pioneered in the UK have a large impact

on the overall genre, such as indie rock, post-punk and alt-rock.

While Australia doesn't actually exist, it's also home to some of the most influential artists within their respective styles. These include psych-rock artists such as Tame Impala and King Gizzard and the Lizard Wizard, as well as straightforward rock bands such as Tropical F*ck Storm. Even in other genres, Australia has brought kangaroo vibes to global audiences, from electronic producer Flume to neo-soul act Hiatus Kaiyote.

However, even more interesting and unique music can be found outside of anglophone countries. The Latin world has developed one of the richest music scenes, which has spread internationally over the last decade following 2017's wave of breakout country bangers such

as "Despacito". Since then, a wide range of Latin pop artists have gained popularity, such as Rosalia, Daddy Yankee, and Bad Bunny. Even non-pop artists have found success overseas, such as traditional artist Natalia Lafourcade and unconventional producer Tainy, who came out with a debut reggaeton album in 2023.

Despite language barriers, one of the most globally successful countries for music has been South Korea, primarily due to the recent surge in Korean pop (K-Pop). Since the success of Psy's 2012 banger "Gangnam Style" in North America, many K-Pop groups have formed, with groups like BTS, Loona, and Blackpink at the top.

Japanese Pop (J-Pop), led by artists such as Hikaru Utada and Yoasobi, contributes to a large portion of the Japanese music that reaches Western audiences. J-Pop rock artists have also had a large influence in subgenres such

as math rock, a genre of rock which relies on extremely precise counting as it often played in strange time signatures such 13/8, where toe has steadily perfected their craft over the last decade and a half.

African music is the least well-known among the regional music on our list, yet Africa has a fledgling mu-

sic scene that is making waves. Rock has been one of Africa's most prevalent genres, with many bands, such as Witch (We Intend to Cause Chaos), using music as a conduit for social commentary. Africa is also home to many fusion bands, such as John Wizards, a South African band that combines electronic music and jazz.



BETH GARRABRANT



DAN FERRELL
UNSPLASH

OPINION

Should Trudeau Run in the Next Election?

OPINION by Zak Tucker (9)

It's a question gripping many political pundits: *should he stay or should he go?*

How do the latest happenings in the Ottawa bubble affect high school students? The question is simple: *do you want a PM who refuses to support trans youth?* Prime Minister Justin Trudeau sure doesn't and neither do I. Trudeau immediately called out Poilievre's backing of Alberta Premier Danielle Smith's plan to ban gender-affirming surgeries on minors and limit teenagers' ability to change their pronouns at school.

Still, Trudeau is willing to gracefully hand over the country, tied up nicely in a bow, to a leader as divisive as Pierre Poilievre. The prime minister is choosing to take his party down the losing path solely because he says he "could not be the man I am" without staying on as party leader.

The polls are clear: if Trudeau leads the party through the next election, he'll cause an immense Liberal defeat. Instead, the prime minister should serve all Canadians — and not his personal ideals — by quietly stepping aside and helping avert the dangers of a Poilievre government.

The Conservatives are enjoying their largest lead in the polls since Trudeau became Liberal leader, according to the most recent numbers from Abacus Data. The firm's most recent survey shows the Conservative Party taking a 20-point lead over the Liberals, capturing 44 per cent of the popular vote. The Liberal Party, with 24 per cent of the popular vote, is projected to lead the NDP by just seven percentage points.

Data from poll aggregator 338Canada points to a similar outcome. Using the latest vote intention statistics, 338Canada runs thousands of election simulations. Over 99 per cent of outcomes see the Conservatives forming government. The odds are bleak for Trudeau's Liberals; if an election were held tomorrow, the Liberals would lose more than half of their 156 seats.

A second Trump presidency — a major variable in such forecasts — has some analysts predicting voters will flee to the Liberals following a Trump win in 2024 — a possibility that seems distant according to recent polling from Abacus. Forty-three per cent of voters feel Poilievre is best suited to handle Trump, while just 26 per cent say Trudeau — who dealt with Trump for four years — would be best suited.

All the numbers point in the same direction: Trudeau's popularity has reached a point of no-return. Seventy-two per cent of Canadians think Trudeau should resign in 2024, according to a November 2023 Ipsos poll. Poilievre also maintains higher net approval ratings — the difference between the approval and disapproval rates of a candidate — than the prime minister, at +5 per cent to -33 per cent, respectively.

Despite the government's attempts to sway Canadians with programs designed to address cost-of-living concerns, the Liberals won't see meaningful changes in polling numbers until the party gets a new leader.

Before Abacus began its most recent poll on Apr. 3, Apr. 1 saw the government announce a new social program worth \$1 billion. Trudeau unveiled the National School Food Program, which aims



SPENCER COLBY
THE CANADIAN PRESS



SEAN KILATRICK
THE CANADIAN PRESS

to provide meals to 400,000 students across the country. Eighty-one per cent of Canadians support the move, including 66 per cent of voters who "dislike Trudeau".

While the policy's significance pales in comparison to the carbon tax, housing, and inflation — all issues that the Conservatives have pinned directly on Trudeau — the numbers show that Canadians still have an incredible appetite for progressive policies, despite only 25 per cent supporting the Liberal Party, Canada's largest left-of-centre option.

Why the discrepancy? Canadians support the Liberal Party's policy, but are fed up with its leader.

An Abacus poll conducted Nov. 23–28 found that 18 per cent of Canadians would be more likely to vote Liberal if the party ditched Trudeau. Four per cent of those voters would strongly consider

voting Liberal.

Abacus measured that, when vote intention is adjusted to a scenario where Trudeau steps down, the Conservatives lose nearly half of their lead — meaning that a major loss of Liberal seats can be prevented.

But these numbers don't account for how a new Liberal leader would attract additional voters. The survey investigated how Trudeau's resignation would affect vote intention. It didn't assess how Canadians would cast their ballots if given the chance to vote in Canada's first female prime minister elected by the general public, Chrystia Freeland. As leader, the Deputy Prime Minister would bring a new energy to the Liberal party that is currently lacking.

This gap is especially pertinent since both Freeland and former Bank of Canada Governor Mark Carney have higher popularity than

Trudeau, according to Nanos Research.

The Liberals have 18 months before Canadians must return to the polls. With inflation trending downwards, expected interest rate cuts in the months to come, and \$19 billion in new funding on its way to address the housing crisis, closing the remaining gap — ten percentage points at the very most — will be much easier for a new Liberal leader.

When the state of the country improves, voters will switch allegiance. In a November poll, Abacus found that 33 per cent of non-Liberal voters are more likely to vote for the party if interest rates on their mortgages drop.

The 12 per cent of voters who were more likely to consider voting Liberal without Trudeau at the party's helm — but who weren't accounted for in Abacus' calculation because they weren't much more likely to consider switching parties at the time of the poll — will now be more inclined to vote Liberal as the national mood improves under a new party leader.

But wouldn't a similar effect benefit Trudeau if he were leader? It would, if voters cast their ballots based purely off government policy and the economic state of the country. Many Canadians, though, are tired of Trudeau simply because he's been around so long — they're unhappy with the PM not because of specific policy issues, but rather due to a general distaste.

Fifty-nine per cent of Canadians with a negative impression of Trudeau say that they are simply "tired" of Justin Trudeau, according to Abacus. These feelings aren't a judgment of Trudeau's performance based on voters' current dissatisfaction with the government and the impacts of its policies; rather, the number reflects a genuine fatigue that will only worsen in the 18 months that remain in Trudeau's term, despite Liberal attempts to regain support.

But, for the sake of the argument, suppose Trudeau's popularity does make a modest recovery as inflation eases. Pierre Poilievre can still remind voters of the misery that gave his party a 20-point lead in the polls. He can remind voters of what some view as the government's latent response to the cost-of-living and housing crises, and point to how Trudeau's Liberals can't be trusted to handle the economy for another four years.

If a party outsider were to take the reins, such as Carney, they wouldn't have to bear the burden — and resulting vote losses — of being held accountable for apparent mistakes the government made years ago.

As *Toronto Star* columnist Mark Bulgutch puts it, "Poilievre blames Trudeau personally for every twitch, every nuisance, every ache, every bother, on every centimetre of Canada's 9.9 million square kilometres, including all its lakes and rivers, and another 200,000 square kilometres of territorial waters offshore."

A new leader wouldn't have the baggage that comes with governing for 10 years — including voters' dismal assessment of Trudeau's handling of the economy.

With Canada's reputation as a compassionate, cring, and non-polarized democracy on the line, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau must put his ego aside and choose the right path for the Liberal Party and all Canadians.

THE TIPPING POINT: RETHINKING GRATUITY IN THE AGE OF SELF-SERVICE



DAVID PAUL MORRIS
BLOOMBERG NEWS VIA WALLS TREET JOURNAL

In this restaurant, you are required to order your food on a website and pay by typing in your credit card info — much like one does when shopping online. The food is then brought to your table by a waiter.

As the Editorial Board finishes ordering — a tedious process in itself — we are given one final ask: to tip the staff. But for what? We took ourselves to our seats, took our own orders, and

typed in our own credit card information. The only service we actually received was the waiter bringing our food — which hadn't even happened yet, since we had to pay first. Not to mention that the food was incredibly overpriced — though we expected that from a US airport.

(It's moments like these that make us want to quit our jobs and become waiters, especially at that restaurant.)

This experience is a common occurrence across North America, which we call the "flipping the iPad" phenomenon. This name is derived from a common experience in fast-casual restaurants, in which the staff at the counter punch in a customer's order on an iPad, then flip it around to ask the customer for a tip before any service is even provided.

Tipping, which once existed as a way to thank an employee for above-and-beyond service, has become an expectation in almost every industry, even when most of the service comes from the customer — not to mention that many businesses ask customers for tips before any service is even provided, defeating the entire purpose of the act.

The most outrageous example of this is food delivery apps, where upfront tipping is encouraged to ensure that the service is provided properly in the first place. If you don't tip your delivery driver in advance, you can expect your order to arrive stone cold, if at all. And this tip, of course, is on top of the already-increased price of the food to ensure the delivery company makes a profit.

Interestingly, this tipping frenzy is not an occurrence outside of North America; many places we've visited in Europe and Asia don't require this additional fee, and in some countries, it's seen as

rude or disrespectful to tip for your meal, even after receiving exceptional service. So how did this North American "tip inflation" occur?

While several factors have contributed to our current tipping problem, the most glaring issue is that employers, especially in the US, are often encouraged to pay their tipped employees (such as waiters) less than minimum wage. For instance, in 15 states in the US, tipped workers are only required to be paid \$2.13 per hour, since the expectation is that their tips will make up the remaining balance of the \$7.25 federal minimum wage. Even though this rule doesn't apply in BC, where the minimum wage before tipping is \$16.75 per hour — and set to increase to \$17.40 in June — customary tipping culture has naturally spread here, despite it not being as necessary.

Now, not only has tipping culture lost its purpose, but it has come at a terrible time. With the dramatic increases of the cost of living in recent years, especially in BC, food and beverage prices have already been hyperinflated. In a time during which a latte costs upwards of \$6 — and we know this because we ordered some just before writing this — we are now also asked to pay an additional 18 to 25 (and sometimes even 30!) per cent tip in order to appear respectful. Some restaurants even have a mandatory "service fee" for all transactions regardless of party size.

While we understand that service workers are not paid enough to live comfortably in BC, it is not the responsibility of customers, many of whom are also paying upwards of \$3,000 per month in rent, to relieve these workers' financial troubles. It's time to start asking the broader question: *why is everything so unaffordable, anyway?*

OPINION by Katja Radovic-Jonsson (12) & Izzy Jang (12)

Nov. 5, 2023. 3:00 PM. JFK Airport. Queens, New York, USA.

The *Griffins' Nest* Editorial Board sits at a round table at a restaurant in Terminal 5.

OPINION

Transit in BC: A Vision of the Future



OPINION by Austin Witter (12)

The following concepts are based on Marc Lee's report *Connecting BC: A Ten-Year Vision And Investment Plan For Public Transit Through-out BC*, from the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives. A link to the full report is on our website at ehnewsaper.ca.

The year is 2034.

Every day, over a million British Columbians take public transit.

Metro Vancouver is criss-crossed with quick, frequent transit lines, including the Broadway Subway (2026), three new RapidBus routes (2027), and a SkyTrain extension to Surrey and Langley (2028). UBC students enjoy rapid SkyTrain transit to and from campus, while SFU students ride a gondola up Burnaby Mountain to their classes. The West Coast Express has been extended to Chilliwack. In order to pay for all this, Translink has accelerated its \$21 billion Access for Everyone plan and made further investments in rapid transit, drawing on the federal Permanent Transit Fund.

Along with their car ferry fleet, BC Ferries has introduced a set of passenger vessels. Since they don't need to accommodate cars, they have loads of space for passengers, carrying many more people per voyage and dramatically increasing the network's capacity, while also costing less money for passengers and the government. Foot passengers board and disembark much more efficiently without having to wait for cars. Gone are the days of two-hour-long picnics at the ferry terminal while waiting to get on the boat. The most popular route is from Vancouver to Victoria, which takes only two hours due to the smaller, more nimble vessels.

No longer are British Columbians forced to spend hours on the highway driving between cities. Instead of sliding perilously over the Coquihalla during the winter or being stuck in traffic on the Sea to Sky, they can take safe and comfortable passenger trains to destinations like Kelowna, Whistler, and even Prince George.

Historical railway routes like the Squamish, Whistler, and Prince George corridor and the Vancouver Island rail corridor from Victoria to Courtenay have been restored, with the existing infrastructure allowing for easier development. Even at its opening, the Island rail line broke even. Now, it generates considerable profits, bringing economic prosperity to the region. As part of reconcilia-

tion efforts, a considerable portion of these funds are being invested in First Nations communities whose land was unjustly taken away by land grants along the route between 1884 and 1910.

The new line from Vancouver to Prince George allows for an easier commute to and from the growing city of Squamish and frees Whistler visitors from packed, hectic parking lots. Huge swathes of beautiful natural terrain along the entire corridor, but especially from Squamish to Pemberton, are made more accessible. More British Columbians go outside, enjoying the various physical and mental health benefits of our wild spaces.

During the transition towards the current rail network, BC Transit operated express bus routes along what were to become train lines. To service the many smaller routes that don't require trains, BC Transit has continued and expanded this network to more remote areas, tripling their bus fleet within ten years. These provide accessibility to often-overlooked communities, improving access to essential services such as health care. Along with these bus routes, the BC government has expanded the HandyDART door-to-door bus service for some seniors and those with disabilities. The program now services rural areas and First Nations communities more reliably.

These various transit types have been combined into one network run by the provincial government. This allows for access to all services with one ticket, and coordination of arrival times so that passengers aren't left stranded. Connections between transport modes are easy and reliable, and information like transit routes and times are available through a streamlined application and website that makes route planning simple.

All of this has been paid for by multi-billion-dollar investments from the BC government. However, the costs of these new connections are not unrecuperable. Rather than taxpayer dollars thrown into a black hole, these are investments into a more prosperous future BC that are just now starting to reap their rewards. The new rail, bus, and ferry connections have brought increased tourism to every city or town at which a new station is built. The new travel destinations have developed and densified since transit arrived, and are now rapidly growing communities.

This new infrastructure requires maintenance and operation, providing BC with approximately 23,700 jobs per year. During construction of the

network, around 16,700 jobs were created per year. Instead of working for private companies, transit professionals and tradespeople now possess generally higher-paying government positions with better benefits and job security.

British Columbia's aging population looks to spend more time on transit and less time driving. Many seniors who are not inclined or able to drive take transit instead. A significant portion of the ridership on transit infrastructure consists of demographics that do not have easy access to a car, such as youth, students, migrant workers, and lower-income workers. However, as transit improves, many of those who are able to drive choose it as an easier and more cost-effective option. Those who do prefer to drive are pleasantly surprised by the lower traffic and faster travel times, since so many former drivers take transit now instead. Truckers find themselves with emptier roads, decreasing shipping times and costs and boosting BC's economy.

Translink has further discounted transit for youth aged 13–18, and is considering providing youth with free transit, which is projected to cost \$24 million per year. The proponents of this idea see it as a way to encourage public transit habits from a young age.

BC's transport network, which previously emitted one-third of the province's carbon emissions, is now more climate-friendly. The increased air quality has led to fewer cases of asthma, bronchitis and other respiratory diseases, reducing public health costs.

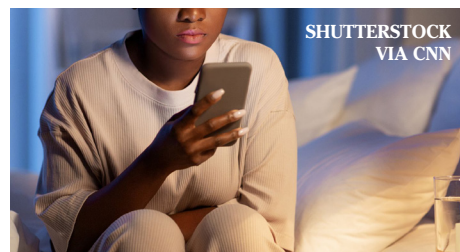
Finally, as more British Columbians choose transit, cars and their drivers are taken off the road, reducing car accidents and saving the lives, limbs, and livelihoods of countless pedestrians. According to a 2024 study conducted at the University of Edinburgh, cars have killed 60–80 million people since their invention, more than both World Wars combined. British Columbia in 2034 has taken steps to reverse that trend, and continues to walk down the path of fewer pointless, avoidable automobile tragedies.

All of this is possible only because people in 2024 made the right choices. A modern transit network continues to vastly improve the lives of everyone. British Columbians from all walks of life, from a 15-year-old student in the heart of Downtown Vancouver to a 70-year-old former truck driver in Quesnel, are healthier, more productive, more affluent, safer, and happier.

should not let a man determine how you live your life, especially one who says "on Skibidi" and looks like a ten-year-old. Delusion is not the solution, so go for a hike or ride your bike. I find that going for a walk to reflect on my actions for an hour works way better than scrolling endlessly on TikTok. Don't be afraid of physical exercise outside — a little motion never hurt anyone.

4. Dumpster diving

Ever dreamt of living like Skibidi Toilet but don't know how to match his aura? Well, dumpster diving is the activity for you. It is a unique way to merge brain rot into an activity that will keep you off TikTok and into the bins of your local Sephora. Only a Sigma could ever have the guts to dive for the Jean Paul Gaultier fragrances that are lying in those bins behind Sephora. Instead of watching people on your for-you page dumpster dive, go out, do it yourself, and make outrageous memories. At the end of the day, no one is going to live happily if they're glued to their phone; they're going to want to make memories. Channel your inner Skibidi Toilet and go dumpster diving, because life is too short to never mog people.



Ripple Set To Launch US Stablecoin

OPINION by Adrian Koo (11) & Justin Chuk (11)

Ripple, a blockchain-based digital payment network and protocol, has announced a plan to issue a US dollar-backed stablecoin on the XRP Ledger (XRPL) and Ethereum networks. The blockchain technology company's main focus is building a payment settlement asset exchange and remittance system, similar to the Society for Worldwide Interbank Financial Telecommunication (SWIFT) system. The SWIFT system facilitates international money and cross-border payment transfers used by banks and financial intermediaries that deal across different currencies. Utilizing the XRPL as the underlying infrastructure for its native token cryptocurrency XRP, Ripple facilitates fast, secure, and cost-effective cross-border transactions. Additionally, it is designed to support a wide range of use cases beyond payments, including decentralized finance (DeFi) applications, tokenization, and smart contracts.

Ripple's launch of its own US dollar-backed stablecoin signals a strategic expansion into the \$160 billion stablecoin industry. A US-backed stablecoin is a cryptocurrency that maintains a value relative to the US dollar. It works by being backed by fiat currency reserves, government-issued fixed-income securities like US treasury bills, or a combination of both. This backing involves maintaining a reserve of assets equivalent to the total supply of stablecoins in circulation, typically at a 1:1 ratio with the US Dollar. When users purchase US stablecoins, they exchange their US dollars or other assets for the stablecoin tokens. Currently, stablecoins are mainly used for buying or selling crypto assets, facilitating cross-border payments, enabling DeFi applications, or storing a stable value by minimising the volatility associated with other cryptocurrencies.

This expansion into the \$160 billion stablecoin industry would pit Ripple against Tether, which is behind the largest stablecoin USDT and USDC issuer Circle. Tether and Circle combined have a quasi-monopoly over the stablecoin ecosystem. Meanwhile, payment giant PayPal launched its own US dollar stablecoin called PayPal USD in August 2023.

However, Ripple CEO Brad Garlinghouse said the competition does not deter him. In a recent interview with CNBC, Garlinghouse said the company decided to introduce their stablecoin to the market last year in response to the "depegging" of the USDT and USDC. In 2022, USDT temporarily lost its \$1 peg, the stabilised exchange rate, amid market instability resulting from the collapse of TerraUSD. USDC also temporarily fell below \$1 in 2023 after revealing its exposure during the collapse of Silicon Valley Bank. Many have since disputed the liquidity of Tether's reserves and have doubts about whether the company is sufficiently capitalised to survive a digital "bank run". Tether says its stablecoin is fully backed by quality reserves and has always been able to meet its withdrawals, even in times of distress.

Ripple's decision to enter the stablecoin market despite a three-year ongoing legal battle with the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) is primarily driven by financial interests, according to Ripple CTO David Schwartz. He noted that the stablecoin market presents lucrative growth potential for the company. "The stablecoin market is over \$150 billion today and is forecasted to exceed \$2.8 trillion by 2028," Ripple said in a statement shared with CoinDesk. USDC is currently the market leader among compliance-oriented stablecoin consumers, but Schwartz said he doesn't see it as "a winner takes all" environment. He expressed optimism regarding Ripple's position in the stablecoin ecosystem, saying that even if they were to become a solid third player and the market expanded significantly, it wouldn't be considered a failure. He emphasised that such a scenario would still be favourable, indicating his confidence in Ripple's potential success in the growing stablecoin industry. Schwartz also highlighted the potential of Ripple's stablecoin to boost utility and liquidity on the XRPL.

After its launch, the stablecoin will be available on the XRPL and Ethereum blockchains by the end of 2024, with plans to expand to additional blockchains and DeFi protocols and apps over time. "This is a natural step for Ripple to continue bridging the gap between traditional finance and crypto," said Garlinghouse.

Things To Do Instead Of Doom-scrolling

SATIRE by Tiffany Adams (10)

Short-form content has plagued social media for the past years. On one hand, it has given us the gift of phrases like 'Skibidi Toilet' and 'what the sigma'. However, scrolling becomes addicting and destructive when it is used as a reason for procrastination.

So, this is a message from me to the esteemed students of Eric Hamber Secondary School: you know enough about the Tik Tok Rizz Party lore. Get off the internet and do your assignments; they're due tomorrow. Doomscrolling may ignite an attraction to the Baylor Tutoring Center guy as he explains meiosis, but it will not help you get the grade you want in biology. Instead of wasting precious hours on TikTok, or worse, Reels, try doing these things to help satisfy those dopamine receptors!

1. Channel your doom into Poetry!

The written word is something that many of us fear, but outside the confines of the classroom, it can become your best friend. It is such a diverse way to express feelings and ideas. Some examples of my past work include an ode to Group Leader (also known as Blue Tie), a sonnet about looks-

maxxing, and a Haiku about Baby Gronks' impeccable rizz. Try poetry the next time you have the urge to open TikTok; it will save you hours of time wasted, and it is just as fun.

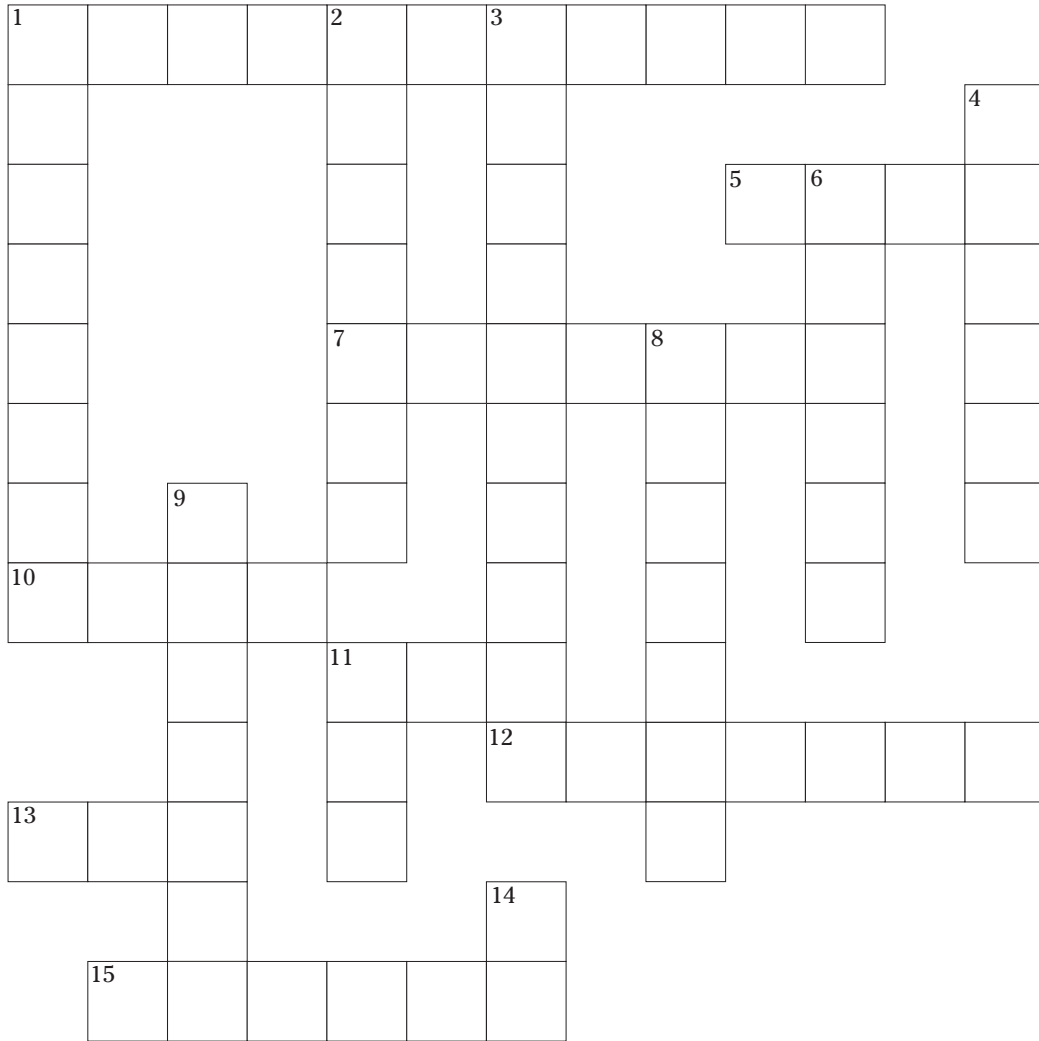
2. Read books.

From eating books to reading them, the months have passed and books are out of season. And by season I mean they are no longer good to eat, which means it is time to start reading them. Carry a book with you wherever you go: you never know when reading could help in any rizzuation. A thought-daughter book is crucial if one desires to add mysticism to one's aura. Some book recommendations are *Politics* by Aristotle, *The Bell Jar* by Sylvia Plath, and *The Goldfinch* by Donna Tartt. When you have nothing to do, reading a book is better than spending hours on the Instagram homepage getting FOMO.

3. Crushing or Crushed? Go outside.

Have a crush so bad that you've blown away countless hours listening to music and reposting TikToks in hopes they'll see them? Well, stop. If you've never talked to your crush ever, it's not worth your time. Go outside, reconnect with nature, get some sunlight, and go for a walk. You

HAMBERGER



CROSSWORD CORNER

PUZZLE by Katja Radovic-Jonsson (12)

Across

- 1. National Park, or TV show with Kevin Costner
- 5. As in California, Blast, or fish tacos
- 7. Falls, or on-the-Lake
- 10. The "E" in Great Lake mnemonic "HOMES"
- 11. Yellowknife territory, abbr.
- 12. Canadian province and Great Lake
- 13. Canada's largest metropolitan area, abbr.
- 15. Canada's largest island

Down

- 1. National Park in California, or MacOS update released in 2017
- 2. Home of Walt Disney World
- 3. Capital of California
- 4. State whose license plates feature a large rainbow
- 6. U.S. state, far north
- 8. "The Texas of Canada"?
- 9. Twin city with San Diego
- 11. Prefix with York, Jersey, and Hampshire
- 14. State of the Bass Pro Shops Pyramid, abbr.



COMIC by Aubrey Brandt (9)

HAMBER CONNECTIONS

PUZZLE by Katja Radovic-Jonsson (12)

HOW TO DO THE CONNECTIONS:

- * Group words that share a common thread.
- * Words are categorized in groups of 4 and have different difficulties based on how hard the connection may be.
- * There is only one solution which means that some words may fit into multiple categories so don't be tricked!
- * The answer to the connections is at the bottom of this page!

WOODS	AFFLECK	SHAPIRO	HILL
GRAD	MICHIGAN	TEN	BEST
ONTARIO	ERIE	FRANKLIN	TENT
SKY	DIAL	SUPERIOR	LAKE

Category Name: Words:

1.

2.

3.

4.

★ ★ ★ ★

New and Used Vinyl, CDs, Tapes and More!

Posters, Buttons, Tickets!

4386 Main St.
@redcatrecords

Red Cat Records

Answers to Connections from most straightforward to tricky: Camping Scenery: Hill, Lake, Sky, Tent // Great Lakes: Erie, Michigan, Ontario, Superior // Hamber Teachers: Best, Dial, Grad, Woods // Famous Bens: Affleck, Franklin, Shapiro, Ten