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AYESHA BARAKZAI

Unifor members from Local 8300, along with their president, rallied together for health care workers in downtown Toronto on Feb. 6.

'Save our hospitals' unions chant

Ayesha Barakzai
General Reporter

A rally on Feb. 6 by hundreds of workers and union members demanded better working conditions and better-quality care for patients in Ontario's health care system.

The protesters protested current hospital conditions. Unifor Local 8300 President Kathleen Brooks said there isn't enough being done. She said hallway is chronic.

"There's not enough beds, there's not enough doctors. Certainly, what our members are doing, there's not enough people to do the work," Brooks said.

"We're short in every area, not just nurses and PSWs (personal support workers), but in every department and every hospital."

Michael Hurley, president of Ontario Council of Health Unions and first vice-president of CUPE Ontario, said about 13,050 patients are bedded on stretchers in hallways, leaving them with no privacy.

"Some of them are dying. Some of them are being given medical treatment and given medical advice in situations where they have no privacy," Hurley said. "Their family members are anxious and desperately concerned," he said.

"It's a very emotional time for them and there's absolutely no place for them to have confidential conversations with their family members, to tell them they love them and how much they mean to them."

The unions said they are looking

for an increase in funding that goes past inflation levels.

The increase would go towards creating safe working spaces, not only for hospital staff but for patients, as well.

"Last year they got a point five per cent increase in their funding and as a result, they have been making cuts," Hurley said. "This is at a time when there aren't enough services for people who need them now."

He said 73 per cent of OCHU members are exhausted and a huge number of them dread going to

work.

"They're very anxious, very unhappy and sad," Hurley said. "Their state of mind is very precarious and it's not a healthy workforce. Dealing with people who are desperately sick, and dealing with inadequate resources and over time it wears them out."

Ontario Nurses' Association joined the demonstration in support. Karen McKay, vice president of the Ontario Nurses' Association, said nurses who are working in urgent care are caring for more patients.

The nurse-to-patient ratio is currently one-to-five, she said.

"We are not only in a crisis of care, but we are in a crisis of decent working conditions. Nurses and health care workers are working 24-hour shifts, required to do excessive over-time," McKay said.

"The Ford government must invest in safe staffing with decent working conditions and fair wages," she said.

"With enough nurses and professionals to support manageable workloads. It is the only solution to the defeating staffing crisis."



AYESHA BARAKZAI

Unions and health care supporters rallied at Sheraton Centre, calling for better hospitals on Feb. 6.

ETC •

Humber Et Cetera is the Humber College journalism program laboratory newspaper.

It is created by journalism students in the Advanced Diploma and Post Graduate Certificate programs. Et Cetera serves to inform the Humber community and give its readers well rounded coverage on the things that matter to them.

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'One Fare' to save transit riders money

Sam Belton
Senior Reporter

The Ontario government has announced "One Fare", expected to save transit riders an average of \$1,600 annually.

Set to launch on Feb. 26, riders will only pay one fare if they are transferring between the TTC and participating transit systems around Toronto, which includes GO Transit.

The plan will create eight million new rides every year, according to a press release from the province.

"This One Fare program is a godsend," said Mayor Olivia Chow at a press conference this morning at Downsview Park subway station.

"Because it means that someone from Etobicoke can take the GO train via Long Branch or Mimico, come down to Union, jump on Line 1 and take [the] TTC."

"Our government is on a mission to keep costs down for the hardworking people of Ontario," said Ontario Premier Doug Ford in the provincial government's press release on the matter.

"This program will be a game-changer for transit riders."

Chow said it will be more convenient and affordable, and has been in the works for two decades. Riders of GO Transit, Brampton Transit, Durham Region Transit, MiWay, and York Region Transit will benefit from this.

August Pantitlan Puranauth, Organizer at TTCRiders, a grassroots, volunteer, non-profit orga-

nization of Toronto transit riders, said the announcement is good news.

Puranauth, whose pronouns are they/them, used the example of traveling from Toronto to York Region, with passengers able to transfer for free to York Region within two hours of the last ride.

"Your TTC fare is what's going count and you don't have to pay the additional fare. So, it really breaks down boundaries in that case," they said.

Puranauth said that with this new change, more people will ride the TTC, and they are hoping to see Ontario help more with TTC operation costs because more service will be needed to manage increased crowding due to this program making the TTC more popular.

This morning's conference was also attended by Associate Minister of Transportation Vijay Thanigasalam.

Thanigasalam explained how the reduced-fee transfers would work using the example of a Barrie, Ont. commuter.

"They pay for the Barrie transit fees and they get onto the GO. They will pay GO minus the Barrie fees they already paid.

"And let's say they come to Downsview and take [the] TTC, they don't pay TTC fares," Thanigasalam said.

So, ultimately, they only end up paying part of the GO Transit fare. Although TTCRiders has advocated for free transfers between



DAVID LYNCH

Ontario govt. announces "One Fare" to be implemented from Feb. 26 which will save money of commuters.

the TTC and other networks for some time, Puranauth said there should also be a single flat fare for the TTC and GO Transit, allowing for free transfers between the two systems.

"Because even with the proposed changes happening at the end of this month, you'll still be paying a GO fare, which can be higher than the TTC fare," they said.

Thanigasalam said the Ontario government is fully funding the One Fare program, investing \$67 million in the next two years to kickstart it.

"Affordability is a number one issue at the moment," he said.

Thanigasalam said the government wants to put money back into people's pockets.

He also announced further improvements, including billions of dollars worth of investments, to public transit in and around

Toronto.

"Since day one, Premier Ford and our government have been focused on building public transit, better public transit systems, for the people of Ontario," Thanigasalam said.

Ford said his two transportation ministers are doing a great job of leading the largest expansion of public transit in North America, with the province investing \$70 billion in new subways and the expansion of the GO Transit network.

By 2031, there will be all-day GO service, every 15 minutes, in certain parts of the Golden Horseshoe to provide improved transit to connect residents with each other and their jobs.

Thanigasalam mentioned the collaboration between the city and the province.

"Our government, under the

leadership of Premier Ford, we are committed to stand [standing] with public transit riders, to make public transit affordable. Like [the] premier said, with the working relationship with Mayor Chow and other municipalities, I am confident this is going to be a successful One Fare program moving forward in the long-term," he said.

"When the Ontario government and the municipal government work together, we can make life more affordable," Chow said. "So, thank you, premier."

But Puranauth said TTCRiders would like to see more federal support, which they said is direly needed.

"We want to see permanent support from upper levels of government, including the federal government to pay to actually run the buses and streetcars and subways in our city," they said.

Woman ruffles feathers for feeding birds

Abhisha Nanda
General Reporter

Ava Wojcik was in her car heading for a north Mississauga parking lot. She removed a huge bag of birdseed and spread it out on a grass-covered path. Geese and a few pigeons made their way for lunch. It was the start of a rou-



ABHISHA NANDA

Ava Wojcik feeds birds in park.

tine day for Wojcik, who zig-zags across Mississauga, Etobicoke and downtown Toronto to feed birds.

She says she spreads out seven or eight 15-kilogram bags of Armstrong All Season Blend in a day for her feathered friends. Wojcik usually buys 12 at once, each at about \$21.

Wojcik said she often has people calling the police on her for feeding birds in parks in downtown Toronto. The legal compliance officer at Sky Power Global on Bay Street says she is aware that doing so is illegal.

Toronto bylaws make it illegal to feed birds in public places, but they can be fed on private property as long as they meet hygiene standards and do not attract any other wildlife. "I know it is illegal, and I still do it," Wojcik said. She said she's been feeding birds for about a dozen years and cares deeply about

them.

"I go through seven to eight bags a day, and I feed (birds) in downtown Toronto and Mississauga," she said. She said she is so invested in the task that she knows all the spots her little friends hide in. She said she feeds sparrows who have built a little nest inside a trailer.

"It attracts rodents and pests, and when they eat, they shit," said Willam Chi, a restaurant owner on Spadina Avenue in Chinatown in downtown Toronto. "Who cleans that?" He said whenever the birds eat, they excrete all over his place which drives his customers away. "Why would someone eat in an unhygienic place?" Chi asked.

Indeed, the city agrees with him. The city said feeding birds could "encourage large flocks to roost or perch nearby, creating unsanitary conditions and potentially spreading diseases such as avian

flu among large bird populations."

An amendment was made in 2022 to the existing animal bylaws to prevent the feeding of birds in public places, including parks, and was banned in April 2023.

Chi said he understands that Wojcik is doing a "sweet job" taking care of birds, but he needs to take care of his business first. He said he does feed leftovers to birds but does that in the back of his restaurant so that his place does not get dirty.

"Why is loitering allowed, why are cigarette bits allowed?" Wojcik asked. "Are they not a threat to the general public health?" She said the laws are moulded to the convenience of the lawmakers, and they are ignoring more important issues and raising unnecessary ones.

But Wojcik said for the most part, she has been treated well by the officers.

"They just turn a blind eye," she said. She said they tell her that it is a beautiful job that she is doing and wish her the best. Wojcik said many times people who see her feed the birds bless her, too. That gives her emotional support and strength.

"Although such occasions are rare, they do occur when people praise me for doing this," she said.

Wojcik said birds do become dependent on feeders for their food but in winter, food is the only thing that keeps them warm.

"They are smart enough to learn how to be on their own again," she said. Wojcik said humans were blessed more than speechless animals, so they should do everything they can to help them. She said she realizes what she is doing is wrong in the eyes of the law, but that won't stop her.

"It is morally legal, and I will never stop doing this," Wojcik said.

Air Canada's accessibility plan after backlash

Aarjavee Raaj
Culture Editor

Air Canada, a Toronto-based international airline, has come under fire for its mistreatment of people with disabilities.

Michael Rousseau, the chief executive of Air Canada, apologized for the airline's shortcomings when he faced the members of the House of Commons at a committee hearing about services for Canadians with disabilities on Feb. 5.

"We understand the impact in terms of how difficult the disruption is for our customers with disabilities. The best remedy for this is to provide our people who all want to do a good job serving customers, with more and better-tailored training and tools," Rousseau said.

Committee Vice-Chair and Conservative Tracy Gray said she was shocked to hear about how people with disabilities were treated by the airline staff.

Gray said it was completely unacceptable.

Liberal MP Peter Fragiskatos agreed.

"None of these policies are being adequately down streamed from corporate/legal to the front line," he said.

The hearing was scheduled after multiple complaints were made about the ill-treatment of passengers with special needs by the staff.

Alessia Di Virgilio, a woman from Toronto, had a lift fall on her head and her ventilator disconnected as she was being transferred between her wheelchair and the airplane.

The incident was caught on a hidden camera for an investigation conducted by CBC Marketplace.

The investigation later became a documentary that illustrated all the challenges faced by people with disabilities.

According to the Canadian Transportation Agency, mobility aids are required to be stowed in the cargo hold, making the transfer of people using wheelchairs onto the plane significantly more difficult.

Air Canada announced the acceleration of the three-year Air Canada Accessibility Plan in



PEXELS/AIRBORNEYVR

Air Canada has announced an action plan to improve services for people with disabilities after backlash.

November 2023, a series of measures to improve the travel experience for customers with disabilities, a press release by Air Canada said.

The plan will initially have representatives from four Canadian accessibility groups — Barrier Free Canada, Brain Injury Canada, K eroul, and Spinal Cord Injury Canada — to provide input and guide the airline to manage cus-

tomers with disabilities, they said.

Air Canada has vowed to enhance the training of their employees to improve interactions with customers with disabilities.

They have created a new position of director of customer accessibility to implement responsive management of disability issues, according to the press release.

Air Canada has specified these new measures, such as priority

boarding and seating, storage for mobility aids in the aircraft cabin, and enhanced employee training.

Twenty-seven per cent of Canadians over the age of 15, or eight million people have at least one disability, according to a Statistics Canada study released in December 2023.

This shows an increase of 4.7 per cent from the year 2017.

Powerless in downtown Toronto feat. raccoon

Abhijit Alka Anil
Senior Reporter

An unexpected power outage in downtown Toronto was caused by the city's unofficial mascot, a raccoon.

The incident affected around 7,000 Hydro One customers in their homes last Thursday at 7:40 p.m. Hydro crews restored power at about 10:20 p.m.

Hydro One, Ontario's largest electricity transmission and distribution service provider, said in a tweet that a raccoon made contact with the transmission system, causing the failure.

Those affected also experienced a complete shutdown of water.

The blackout affected the area roughly bounded by St. Clair Avenue West to Gerrard Street and Avenue Road to Don Valley Parkway, said Daniel McNeil, corporate spokesperson for Toronto Hydro, in an email.

Saba Bapunashvili, a Humber College student living on Ontario Street with his brother Gegi, a student at Seneca Polytechnic in North York, travelled to Mississauga to stay at their parents' home because there was no electricity and water.

"Since we weren't expecting this, we had no drinking water stored,"



ABHIJIT ALKA ANIL

Parts of downtown Toronto were blacked-out after a raccoon made contact with a Hydro One system.

Saba said.

"The food we had bought a couple of days ago is going to go bad by the morning. We are getting thirsty, obviously," Gegi said.

"We can't take the TTC due to the outage and thus we are spending more by taking Lyft to

Mississauga," he said.

"All the stores on Sherbourne are closed right now," Gegi said.

The TTC said in a tweet it shut down subway service between Union and Bloor-Yonge stations due to the power failure.

Saba said he was studying for a test he had the next day at Humber when the power went out.

"If I get bad marks on my test, I am going to ask for an excuse from my professor, but if I pass, I am not going to say anything," he said.

Joshua Okoli, 11, said he had a science project that he couldn't finish due to the outage.

"It is the first time I experienced a blackout, and I am pretty nervous about it," he said. "I wanted to communicate with my friends to see how they're doing."

His sister Janelle, 12, felt the outage was creepy but cool as she had never seen the building hallways dark.

"The blackout is interfering with my life. I can't send snaps to my friends and talk to them" because she didn't have access to her data, she said.

Jonathan Okoli, the elder brother of Joshua and Janelle, said they went to their aunt's home near the waterfront by Uber.

Captain Deepak Chagger, a public information officer for Toronto Fire, said in a phone interview that elevator rescues were mainly from the outage areas between 7:45 p.m. and 9:15 p.m.

Firefighters handled 12 simultaneous calls for 16 stalled elevators at residential buildings, with some having multiple elevators from the affected areas.

"About 20 to 30 people were rescued from those 16 elevator responses," Chagger said.

Fertility rates drop as cost of living rises

Zoe Pierson
Editor-in-chief

Statistics Canada reported fertility rates in Canada have dropped to the lowest they have been in more than a decade, at 1.3 children per woman in 2022.

Alyssa Featherstone, 24, said she is not ready to have children with her partner because they are not ready for the financial responsibility.

Featherstone lives with two roommates and serves at a restaurant in downtown Toronto. She said she could not imagine having a child without financial security.

“We’re definitely living paycheck to paycheck,” she said. “Savings are tricky. I’m sorry, but without savings, thinking about having kids is really, really tough to do.”

It may be no coincidence that as the cost of living in Canada continues to rise, the total fertility rate (TFR) in Canada continues to drop.

The TFR has been on a steady decline, with an exception in 2021, dropping to 1.3 from 2.1 in 1972. The TFR level in 1972 was the first to drop below the cohort replacement level, the level of fertility at which a population exactly replaces itself from one generation to the next.

“Not only is it unusual to observe



THE CANADIAN PRESS/EDUARDO LIMA

Multiple factors like financial security and changing ideals contribute to record drop in Canada’s fertility rate.

an annual decline in all provinces, but this has not occurred for four years in a row — as it did from 2017 to 2020 — since the 1960s,” StatCan said.

StatCan also recorded a steady increase in living costs for Canadians, specifically inflation and housing. “From May 2021 to April 2023, the all-items Consumer Price Index (CPI) increased by 10.9 per cent, while the CPI for rent rose by 10.1 per cent,” StatCan reported. “Inflationary pressure makes housing affordability challenges harder to weather for many

people across the country.”

Despite being relatively stable throughout 2023, grocery prices continue to remain elevated, according to StatCan. “Grocery price inflation remained broad-based in 2023 with a number of contributing factors, including poor weather in growing regions, higher input costs, diseases such as bird flu and African swine fever, and Russia’s invasion of Ukraine,” StatCan reported.

Mya Deus, 23, said she wants to have children with her partner one day but said they would not

have more than two because of the expense.

“I wouldn’t say living expenses have impacted how I feel about having children because I know I still want to have them,” she said. “However, I also know that realistically in our current economy, I would not have the means to provide an abundant life to most likely more than two children, but my partner and I only want two anyways so it works out.”

Deus has a stable full-time job as an executive assistant at Akb Architects and said her position

would allow for paid time off to care for her children.

RBC reported on July 14, 2023, that the average cost of raising a child in Canada can be up to \$15,000. “If neither parent is able to stay at home, childcare may be your largest single expense, particularly in the years before your child reaches Kindergarten,” RBC said.

Featherstone said many working parents do not have the option of staying home. They could not take a break from work with pay or pay for childcare without work.

“I worked with somebody who is a little older than me, but just had a baby and was working until she was like six months, seven months pregnant,” Featherstone said. “And I’m sorry, but to be a server at seven months pregnant is wild. I have a lot of respect for her.”

Featherstone said her short-term intention is to prioritize living independently before committing to raising and supporting a child.

“I’ll do the things I want to do because I got one life and I kind of saw the way that having kids changed my parents’ life and not that they regret that at all, it’s a beautiful thing for them,” she said. “I feel like we live in a time where parenthood is not nearly as much of a given as it used to be.”

Student protesters rally against Premier Smith

Asher Klaver
News Reporter

Protesters organized outside the Albany Club in downtown Toronto on Feb. 6 to rally against the presence of Alberta Premier Danielle Smith and her passing of anti-transgender laws sanctioning medical care for trans youth.

The demonstration on King Street East near Jarvis Street was organized by the anarchist political activist group Students for Queer Liberation Tkaronto, the Mohawk word for the area which eventually got colonized into Toronto.

Smith proposed policy changes on Jan. 31 restricting access to gender-affirming and surgeries for transgender youth as well as governmental oversight in children’s pronouns and names used in schools and participation in youth sports.

Alberta Health released statistics showing a total of 49 mastectomies, sometimes referred to as top surgery, were done to minors 17 and under in 2022 and 2023. Alberta health does not track the



ASHER KLAVER

Alberta premiere Danielle Smith’s anti-transgender stance draws widespread criticism from students.

reasoning for these surgeries, so it is unclear how many were done for gender affirmation or medical reasons such as cancer or chronic pain.

The nonprofit organization Stepping Stone posted on Instagram claiming that they could not find any record of transgender youth under 18 receiving bottom surgery in Canada. A crowd of over 100 people formed on less than 24 hours notice in front of the club along with two NDP MPPs,

Wong-Tam and Joel Harden, also making brief appearances.

Mateo, who did not give his last name because of the group’s anonymous nature, organized the demonstration and was pleased with the turnout. Air Canada faces backlash over treatment of disabled Canadians

“We were ready to do this with 25 people, so 100 is pretty good,” he said.

To Mateo, this is one of many actions that will need to be taken

by Students for Queer Liberation.

“We’re not going to let anti-trans laws pass in Alberta and we’re not going to let them come to Ontario. We need to support trans youth all over the country,” he said.

While queer rights groups Egale Canada and the Stepping Stone Foundation vowed to take legal action against the province, Mateo remains focused on having boots on the ground.

“A lot of the time were about student mobilization and getting out

into the streets, it’s about showing where our power is as youth,” he said.

Protesters chanting slogans such as “f**k Danielle Smith” and “shame” at Albany club members drew both support and spite from pedestrians passing by. A pedestrian was restrained by Toronto Police as he charged towards protesters, calling them pedophiles.

Venus, a protester and performance artist, revealed cut and burn scars on their body as they stripped shirtless and let other protesters write slogans on them.

They came to Canada as a Persian immigrant fleeing from prosecution for being queer.

“I want to stand for my rights to be queer, non-binary or trans,” Venus said. “As a mother themselves with a son, they know they need to keep fighting.”

“It’s like a black hole in my heart, like a plane crash sometimes you need to put the mask on yourself before you save others,” Venus said.

Smith and the Albany club did not respond to requests for comment.

EDITORIAL

Loss of local news means loss of community

The decline of local newspapers across Canada is not just a problem for journalism but for Canadians looking to build a sense of community.

Local newspaper closures have rapidly increased in Canada, with 516 operations shutting down since 2008, according to a 2023 report by the Local News Research Project.

In 2023 alone, 36 operations were closed due to mergers or lack of revenue, yet only one new outlet was launched, according to the report. The days of opening a newspaper and seeing the outcome of the local Little League baseball game are behind us.

Dave Bidini said he started the West End Phoenix (WEP), a Toronto-based local newspaper, because of all the shutdowns and mergers killing local news.

"I just think a lot of big news organizations have just betrayed

local news," Bidini said. "Like in the past, all of the [four] legacy newspapers that we read in this city did a beautiful job covering local news and community news in the past."

In an open letter to employees on Feb. 8, 2024, Bell Canada announced it is selling 45 local radio stations and cutting 4,800 jobs including journalists and employees across all levels of Bell Media.

Yet again, a major corporation has let down communities by putting their access to local news in jeopardy. WEP was launched in 2017 as an exclusively print paper, yet it managed to stay alive and grow despite a dying market and operating through the COVID-19 pandemic.

Focusing on the west end of Toronto, WEP has found its niche by delivering a printed newspaper filled with community-related



PEXELS/SUZY HAZELWOOD

Local news closures can remove people from community occurrences.

content to its readers every six weeks, Bidini said.

"There's a lot of people who subscribe to the paper that have never had a newspaper delivered in all of their lives. So that's kind of cool," he said.

Although there's still interest in community newspapers, many organizations must resort to closing or partnering with a big company to stay afloat.

Companies such as Metroland

Media Group and Village Media give local news an online format, but the websites look more like an advertising portal than a community paper. These media organizations house multiple local news platforms and use the same format for each website, leaving no variation among localities.

Aside from the colour scheme, telling the difference between these ad-riddled cookie-cutter websites is impossible.

In comparison, the West End Phoenix website has few ads, a unique design, and pictures of local artists or community members front and centre. The printed paper looks the same.

Bringing back the neighbourhood connection and focusing on local stories is just as important as every other battle we face today, Bidini said.

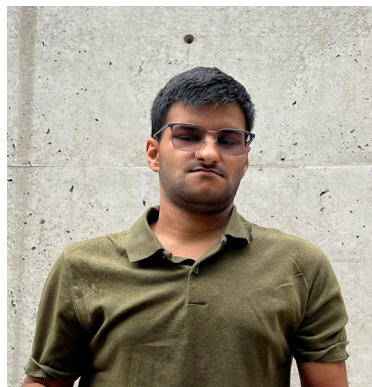
"Without local journalism, the stories of the people who live where we do just aren't going to get told beyond the conversations we have between porches with each other," he said.

Continuing to push for news for the community, from the community is something Canadians need to support, or soon there will be nothing left.

"There is a path forward, but that path is still being dug," Bidini said. "We have the shovels, so we just got to keep digging."

OPINION

Canada's identity loss, realizing Manifest Destiny



Iqbal Alibhai
Senior Reporter

Alberta Premier Danielle Smith hosted Tucker Carlson on Jan. 24, 2024, in Calgary.

Tucker Carlson does not need an introduction, however, for those living under a rock (I envy you), Carlson was a host of a television show called Tucker Carlson Tonight, on the Fox News Network.

Tucker is well known for his right-wing propaganda and his debate with comedian Jon Stewart.

Tucker Carlson interviewing Smith on Jan. 24, on stage in Calgary, is not just a conservative politician attempting to curry favour from a voting block impassioned by the "white Christian" values that Tucker Carlson embodies.

It is an indictment of how Canadians have lost their identity.



PEXELS/YAJUN DONG

The Canadian Parliament building, where American political ideologies smother Canadian identity.

Canadian identity is hard to pinpoint as the nation does not have the history of other nations; it has a heterogenous population, with no common religion, language, or caste. However, there have always been some ideals all Canadians held dear. Canada has always believed in its independence, pragmatism, and ability to compromise for the greater good.

Canada was born in opposition to America. Even the Canadian motto opposes America. Instead of "life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness," Canada's motto is

"peace, order, and good government."

Opposition to America's influence rose and fell, however, until the end of the Second World War, it was always a staunch part of Canadian political life.

Since 1945, Canada has been slowly adopting more and more American ideologies.

And in doing so, has also been slowly losing its own identity. Canadians watch American shows, play American sports and read American books. Our talents go to the U.S. to advance in their careers.

During the 1988 election race between John Turner and Brian Mulroney, Turner argued that Mulroney's free trade agreement would give America control over Canada's economy.

"The political ability of this country to remain as an independent nation, that is lost forever and that is the issue of this election, sir," Turner said. Canadian politics has become a watered-down version of American politics since that debate in 1988.

The issues have become similar, and so too have the characters.

America has Representatives Marjorie Taylor Greene and Lauren Boebert. Canada has Alberta Premier Danielle Smith.

America has the Republican Leader Donald Trump, and Canada has the Official Opposition leader Pierre Poilievre.

As an example of the type of similar political games being played, just recently, Poilievre put out a press release attacking the Trudeau administration for an increase in crime.

"After eight years of Justin Trudeau, Canada is becoming less and less safe. Violent crime is up by 39 percent under Trudeau's catch-and-release system, unleashing chaos and disorder in our communities," Poilievre said. Similar attacks have been used for years by Republican leaders. It is time Canadians remembered their roots.

Canada's situation is different, our problems are different, our people are different and our solutions need to be different.

Canada must remember its more pragmatic past, when it worked with other nations to solve issues like the Suez Canal.

Canada needs to stop playing American politics and think about what Canadians need, what will work in Canada and how Canada can be a better nation.

OPINION

In AI race we must fear big tech not machines



Carlo Cantisani
General Reporter

In the reckless race to develop new AI systems, society must fear not machines but who owns these systems are upending workforces like never before.

We must question the monopoly of giant technology corporations like Google, Meta and Microsoft and ensure that these new technologies will be pro-workers and not just pro-corporations.

The latest World Economic Forum (WEF) in Davos, Switzerland, focused on AI as a main theme, bringing together politicians, world leaders, and CEOs to

explore its future opportunities and risks.

The essence of the discussions was captured by IBM CEO Arvin Krishna's statement that embracing AI could significantly enhance worker productivity in their daily tasks.

However, if they don't, they will soon find out they no longer have a job.

It sounds like a threat. According to a survey by Resume Builder, 44 per cent of companies said AI will lead to layoffs in 2024, and 37 per cent of those employing AI say new technology replaced workers last year.

Research conducted by the Brookfield Institute in 2016 found that nearly 42 per cent of the workforce in Canada is at high risk of being affected by automation in the next decade or two that follows.

The WEF highlighted that a shifting division of labour between humans and machines is expected to displace 85 million jobs worldwide between 2020 and 2025 and alter 44 per cent of workers' skills from 2023 to 2028, marking a nine



PEXELS/COTTONBRO STUDIO

AI will mean 44 per cent of companies will lay off workers in 2024.

per cent rise from its previous five-year forecast.

AI will impact all professions. Humber College Digital and Popular Culture professor Chris Clemens said massive layoffs are affecting white-collar jobs and not just blue-collar collars in Canada.

"I think a lot of folks thought that the stuff related specifically to human management was going to be safe," he said. "Now, AI and automation are challenging us in some sort of high concept area as well as just the mechanical labour that we were hoping it would be limited to."

Big tech companies frame the AI threat as inevitable: surrender to the new AI reality or prepare to be obsolete.

History shows that industrial technologies like the steam engine and computers have been influenced based on the decisions of a small group who have owned the machines and have benefitted from them, while workers have borne the costs and adverse effects.

AI will radically transform some jobs while others will completely disappear, leaving behind many unable to adapt.

Tech companies don't want to recognize this dire reality.

Clemens said the productivity and efficiency gains from AI primarily favour top-level executives and shareholders, leaving workers at the bottom vulnerable to potential job displacement and replace-

ment by AI.

"Things are set up so that it's going to put the squeeze on people and make them feel the negative repercussions of increasingly competitive attitudes around the jobs that remain," he said.

At present, workers face the brunt of AI's negative impacts in workplaces, introduced without their input by tech companies, which is why tech giants should be held accountable for job losses in the future.

Workers should be involved in the decisions to guide AI development in a humane and pro-worker direction.

Civil society, unions, and governments share the responsibility for addressing the impact of AI on people's lives without leaving anybody sacrificed at the altar of maximum productivity and efficiency.

If we turn our backs on those who need help, we may soon find out that we will be the next ones to be considered obsolete due to unpredictable technological developments in which we did not participate.

OPINION

Mental illness must be taken seriously in Islam



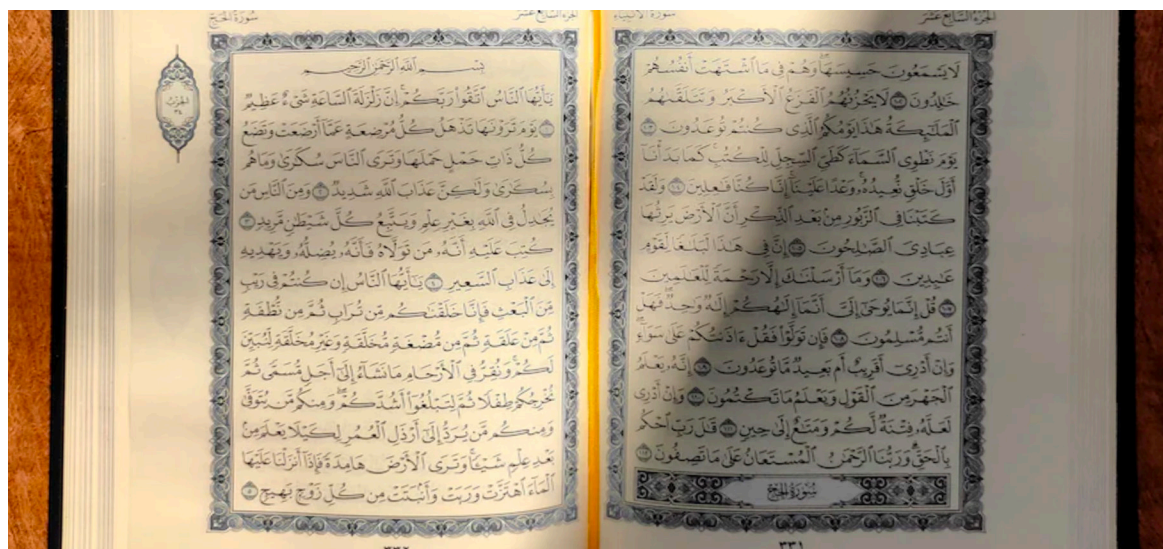
Zainab Raza
General Reporter

Islam is a strict and strong religion. Followers have strong beliefs on many topics, but when it comes to mental health, it's not considered real.

I grew up in a strict, religious family and I have always dealt with anxiety and depression. My family never believed in mental illness and that I have anxiety and depression.

They always have said don't act like white people, that they are the reason why I am like this and to stop hanging out with them.

I try to avoid what my parents always say about these things. I try not to tell them what goes into my life because I know they will tell me to stop hanging out with these white people and be alone.



UNSPASH/SIDIK KURNIAWAN

Many Muslim parents deny mental illness, even though Qur'an verse discusses relief from anxiety and stress.

Mental illness is a big deal in every religion and to a lot of people in life. Mental illness is something that can't be ignored. It is something that has to be taken seriously.

Frankie Samah, then a postgraduate student at the University of Bristol, wrote in a 2018 article in The British Psychological Society that Islam values the importance of good mental health and emotional well-being.

Haroon Imtiaz, director of communications of the Islamic Society

of North America, says the Qur'an mentioned numerous times that mental health is crucial.

The Qur'an states in 70:19 that, "Truly, man was created anxious," Imtiaz wrote.

"And this is a verse clearly alluding to the reality of anxiety, we also find in Surah Duha, the Prophet (PBUH) experienced intense mental doubt and fear, and Allah (SWT) comforted him," he said.

Muslim parents believe that Allah can solve all of our problems, but

not when it comes to mental illness. They think it is a sin and an act we are playing.

It took me years to explain to my family that mental illness is a real thing, it is not a white people thing, it is a real-life situation.

My mom was there for my first anxiety attack last December, she yelled at me for acting. I explained to her it was real.

Islamic families have always thought Muslims who were suffering were playacting, that they

were behaving like the people in the movies who act stupid and crazy.

"Some Muslim parents may not take mental illnesses seriously for certain reasons," Imtiaz wrote. "Some may believe that faith and prayer can easily deal with these issues. Some may also characterize mental issues as just tests and whispers of the Shay-taan (devil), as opposed to illnesses."

Some parents have never been exposed to those with mental health conditions, thus making them unwilling to believe, Imtiaz said.

Anxiety and depression are rare and always something that needs to be taken seriously in any child or any person. The World Health Organization said about four per cent of the world's population suffers from an anxiety disorder, or about 301 million people in a 2019 report. Other research suggests about 60 per cent of them also suffer from depression.

"Parents should take the mental health of their children very seriously. Poor mental health is linked to bad hygiene, poor performance at school and work, and other issues," Imtiaz said.

Islamic parents need to understand that this isn't a game, nor is it an act. In life, we all need help and support.

Humber names at this year's Juno Awards

Liana Naccarato
Senior Reporter

Canadian superstars like Daniel Caesar, Tate McCrae and Charlotte Cardin are up for multiple awards at this year's Juno Awards. Joining them on the winner's stage could also be some notable Humber faculty and alumni.

The Canadian music industry announced nominations for this year's ceremony at an event in downtown Toronto Tuesday morning.

Charlotte Cardin leads the nominations with six, followed by Daniel Caesar with five.

Juno Awards CEO Alan Reid said he's looking forward to the awards, to be held in Halifax on March 24.

"We cannot wait to bring the party and celebrate this year's nominees with music fans from across the country," Reid said.

Ten-time Juno Award winner Nelly Furtado will host the 53rd annual awards.

She previously hosted the 2007 edition and said she wouldn't be



JUNO AWARDS

Collage of Canadian nominees for the 2024 Juno Awards in Toronto announced on Tuesday morning.

where she is without the awards.

"The Juno's have always shown the spotlight on the richest of the talent coming out of this country, honouring the biggest, best-known acts and also launching the careers of some

up-and-coming stars," Furtado said.

Furtado will also perform at the awards, along with The Beaches and Charlotte Cardin.

Humber College is well-represented in the nominations.

Alumni Anthony Carone (Arkells) and Joel Cassady (Walk Off the Earth) will compete against each other in the Group of the Year Category.

Humber's jazz program is also well represented, with multiple

nominations for alumni and faculty members, including Alex Bird, Ewen Farncombe, Caity Gyorgy and Laila Biali for Vocal Jazz Album of the Year.

Humber guitar professor Jocelyn Gould is up for Jazz Album of the Year (solo).

She previously won the Juno in that category in 2021.

Other notable Humber nominees include:

Producer Of The Year- Jack Richardson and Hill Kourkoutis Alternative Album Of The Year- Leith Ross.

Jazz Album Of The Year (Group)- Allison Au with the Migrations Ensemble, Hilario Duran & His Latin Big Band and Mike Murley and Mark Eisenman Quartet.

TikTok Juno Fan Choice- Walk off the Earth (Joel Cassady).

The Junos will air on CBC Television on March 24th.

Fans can vote for the TikTok Juno Fan Choice award up until 9 p.m. on the night of the show.

Year of the Dragon gets a roaring welcome

Elizabeth Hart
Culture Reporter

Humber College's North campus saw a large turnout for this year's Lunar New Year celebration.

Welcome to the Year of the Dragon.

First Year Experience (FYE) held a lunchtime event filled with activities, food and a photo booth to ring in the Year of the Dragon and bring students together.

Janice Majoros, FYE student life facilitator, said the holiday is important for students.

"Lunar New Year, also known under various names, follows the solar or lunar calendar, so it's not your traditional Gregorian calendar," Majoros said.

"So this is just a really great get-together, to be inclusive and celebrate that the new year occurs at different times throughout the year."

Students were encouraged to interact with presenters wearing traditional Chinese clothing, play games at various booths and even received a lucky red envelope, a Lunar New Year staple.

Majoros said the event planning began months earlier, working out details including floor plan and budgeting, to create an inclusive and fun festivity.



ELIZABETH HART

The Lunar New Year presentation at Humber College North campus celebrated the Year of the Dragon.

"This took a lot of careful consideration to make sure we followed our equity, diversity and inclusion values of Humber and making sure that this is an accessible and easy-to-follow event for all students," Majoros said.

Hai Pipian, a second-year accounting student, said the event was made extra memorable by the authentic elements.

"I come from China, so it's very fun," Pipian said.

She moved from China to attend Humber and said the



ELIZABETH HART

Tzu Chi Chinese Medicine Clinic booth, a program at Humber.

traditions felt like home, particularly the food being served. She said she enjoyed the events and celebrating her culture in Canada.

Though the event felt nostalgic for some students, others were intrigued by learning about a new holiday.

Tessnim Abouisteite, a first-year culinary student, visited the event without prior knowledge of the Lunar New Year.

"I was really curious, for me personally I just love different cultures so I really wanted to come and experience this," Abouisteite said.

The concourse was filled with students from all different backgrounds, coming together to explore Chinese traditions.

There were many learning opportunities, like the Tzu Chi Chinese Medicine Clinic, a Toronto-based centre that has the traditional Chinese medicine program at Humber.

"It's really nice to explore these cultural avenues and see how these new years are expressed," Majoros said.

Lunar New Year is just one of many events hosted by FYE to celebrate inclusivity and bring the campus closer together.

Mind Matters targets anxiety management

Thuy Trang Nguyen
Culture Reporter

Mind Matters, an exclusive event for international students at Humber to support mental well-being, was organized on Feb. 6 at the North campus.

The workshop was a collaboration of the Humber Global Team with the Spirituality and Wellness Centre to support international students' mental health awareness and management.

It was a follow-up event of Humber Let's Talk, a week to support the mental well-being of Humber's communities held last month.

In 2022, Humber also introduced the Well-being Strategy to prioritize well-being in all aspects and advocate a healthier environment for the campus culture.

Mind Matters attracted international students from different countries, sharing their issues and challenges in college life in a global education environment.

Haidaly Sayago, a representative from the International Centre, shared her challenges as a Humber alumni.

"Anxiety can hold us in small doses. Different ways that can see anxiety in your mind and body,"

said Stephanie Boache, coordinator of Spirituality and Wellness Centre and an international student from Italy.

"You can feel fear, dread, uneasiness, or paranoia," she said.

Headache, nostalgia, restlessness, chest tie, panic, and shoulder up are common physical symptoms of anxiety and vary among individuals.

"If you don't notice and manage the symptoms, it could feel difficult. It can also make it difficult to try new things, take risks, and decrease your self-esteem, causing you to feel unfulfilled in life," said Boache.

Attendees had the chance to connect through group activities and by expressing their current problems, including academic pressure, financial concerns, isolation/home-sickness, weather, cultural adjustment and language barriers.

Language barriers, finding a part-time job, and financial management were the top three issues discussed during the event.

Panellists learn how to determine and understand anxiety disorder through quizzes, mindfulness activities and box-breathing activities.

"It's very important to have this kind of activity, especially for



THUY TRANG NGUYEN

Humber Global Team in a meeting with the Spirituality and Wellness Centre for international students.

international students," said Fabi Mijangos, a first-year international student from Mexico.

"It's a good way for us to make new friends. The activities here are very helpful to share how we're feeling or dealing with daily challenges."

"The only thing I could say is they could organize in a bigger place next time. When I arrived here, there were many people, and I could not hear clearly," Mijangos said.

The workshop provided students with multicultural food and guided them in making aromatherapy spray to stay calm and relieve stress.

"I started to do international student events and collaborate with the international centre because I feel like sometimes, they are not given the services they need," Boache said.

"I cannot provide them everything they need, but I know one thing that helps their mental health and wellness, it's belonging and

having a community. Through this, they're able to make connections and friends," she said.

The coordinator of the Spirituality and Wellness Centre believes giving resources and unique communities is a great way to support international students.

The Spirituality and Wellness Centre provides resources and support for the Humber communities, with weekly events for international students announced regularly on Humber's official Instagram.

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Humber Hawks hockey takes it outdoors

Isabelle Ferrante
Senior Reporter

The Humber Hawks men's and women's hockey teams headed outside in frigid evening wind yesterday for some old-fashioned hockey as they held their inaugural outdoor game.

Families and Hawks fans braved the cold as they witnessed Dave Eccleston's idea finally become a reality.

Eccleston, head coach of the men's team, said it had been a long time coming.

"We tried to get this going for three years so it's awesome to finally be here and have everybody out and I think all the athletes are super pumped to do it," Eccleston said.

"We started with some outdoor practices, and those went well and the kids were super into it," he said.

And now, I was just like, can we make it work? And can we get teams there? And do we have the right facility to make it work?," he said.

As the Sunnydale Park rink, just a nine-minute drive from Humber's north campus, lights illuminated the surface as the teams made their way on the freshly



SANTIAGO HELOU QUINTERO

The women's team were on full display and were brought back to their earliest childhood memories of being on the outdoor rink playing hockey.

flooded ice for the first time; many were taken back to when they first fell in love with the game.

Humber goalie Rachel Zmigrodzki said playing outdoors brings her back to when she was younger and it's something she will never forget.

"All the family skates; Mom and Dad tying the skates for the first time, playing with friends; you can't beat it. Also the runny noses, and rosy cheeks," Zmigrodzki said.

"There is nothing like being outside and playing with the girls you love," she said.

The goalie tandem of Zmigrodzki and Elyse Seravalle teamed up for a clean 5-0 shutout against Durham College/Ontario Tech (DCOT).

Seravalle came in cold and faced a penalty shot but still managed to shut the door against a strong team.

It was her passion for the game and those late nights on the outdoor rink with her dad when she was just 10 years old.

"We didn't have much practice time in [the] house league, but I remember going out there with

my dad, and that's how my goalie career started, he would take me to the ice, and then shoot pucks at me," she said.

Her dad, Flavio Seravalle, stood at the glass with a camera in hand proudly and nervously as he watched his daughter take the ice.

"She's really earned it; she's come a long way," Seravalle said.

"It was a big change from when she first started out," he said.

"It's watching her grow up and experience different levels of hockey, that really makes me proud."

The men's team followed the exciting first game with a huge 8-2 victory over McMaster.

Dave Eccleston thought it was a success, looks forward to the future, and hopes to see more people come out to watch.

He knows that Humber is a diverse community and acknowledges that maybe a lot of people might not be into hockey or they don't understand it yet but it would be good for them to experience it.

"It's such a cool environment," he said. "And really, this is Canada, right? This is what we do."

Steelheads hope for fresh start in Brampton

Nicholas Endrizzi
Sports Reporter

The Mississauga Steelheads announced the team will relocate to Brampton for the 2024-25 OHL season.

The move will end a 26-year run of junior hockey in Mississauga, dating back to when they were known as the IceDogs.

The club released a statement on X on Jan. 31 to announce the move, which they said came after much consideration and discussion.

The team said part of this consideration was taking advantage of increasing interest in hockey in Brampton.

"This move marks a strategic decision aimed at enhancing our team's growth and expanding our fan base," the team said.

They said Brampton's diverse community and its growing hockey fan base present an exciting new opportunity for the Steelheads.

The Steelheads, who currently play in Mississauga's Paramount Fine Foods Centre, will move to the CAA Centre in Brampton, just 6.6 kilometres north.



THE CANADIAN PRESS IMAGES/KENNETH ARMSTRONG

Riley Brace played for Mississauga in 2013. The Steelheads will move to Brampton for the 2024-25 OHL season, after 26 years in Mississauga.

The move comes as the Steelheads have struggled to draw in fans in recent years.

Their average attendance this season is 2,256 people per game, ranking lowest in the league, according to Hockey DB.

Elliott Kerr, one of the team's co-owners since 2012, said this was the primary reason for the

relocation among other factors.

He said other factors included the financial challenges the club faced coming out of the pandemic, the lack of hospitality options near the rink, and the Raptors 905 drawing their audience away.

"With all of those variables, we just had to do something," Kerr said.

He said the new facility will come with a large and fully operational restaurant which should attract fans before and after games.

Kerr said staying in the area was a priority for both players and staff and a plus for brand-building and marketing initiatives.

He said this would help to retain season ticket holders and cut down any unnecessary disruptions for players dealing with billet families and their education.

Jordan Davidson, a Steelheads fan for the past eight years, said he was not surprised about the move.

"Honestly, it's always been on my mind," Davidson said.

"The team has never been great at drawing fans and every time the building lease was up, there were always rumours about the future of the team," he said.

Davidson said he believed poor marketing played a huge role in the team leaving.

He said he found it rare to see any Steelheads advertising beyond the team's arena or the sports complex next door.

"I feel that reminding people that there are future NHLers playing in their backyards for much less than

the cheapest Leaf ticket could have made a difference," Davidson said.

Despite his disappointment in having to travel farther to see his team, he said loyal fans should be lucky they haven't moved too far.

Another Steelheads fan, Marvin Daw, had a different reaction.

"When I heard the news, I was in complete shock," Daw said.

"I love the arena and the fans that come to the games are amazing," he said.

But Daw said now that he's had time to digest the news, he can see why the move is taking place.

This will be the second time the OHL has operated in Brampton, the first being with the Battalion from 1998 to 2013 when the team moved to North Bay.

The move comes as the Steelheads have assembled a young core that is looking to make some noise over the next couple of years.

They are currently the youngest team in the OHL with many 2024 and 2025 NHL draft eligible players on the roster.

Ownership hopes the move and all that comes with it will make the fan experience better than it's been in years.

Humber North wins UTM cricket tourney

Nihaal Damarala
Senior Reporter

The Humber College North campus men's cricket team showcased thrilling skills to win the University of Toronto Mississauga (UTM) Extramural Tournament on Feb. 2.

Humber North asserted dominance early, securing a victory over Seneca College by eight wickets.

They later extended their winning streak, defeating St. Lawrence College by 32 runs, making their presence known.

The tournament's highlight unfolded as Humber North faced off against Humber Lakeshore, with North prevailing by nine wickets.

Ultimately, Humber North clinched the championship, demonstrating exceptional talent throughout the tournament.

Humber North captain Shreshth Nirmohi said he was ecstatic about their win.

"Cricket is my first love and my relationship with it is never ending," Nirmohi said.

"It's been 20 years I have been in this sport, yet I keep learning about new dynamics and its evolving nature," he said.



NIHAAL DAMARALA

Humber College's North campus team dominant at OCR Men's Cricket Tournament on Feb. 2 at U of T Mississauga, winning the tournament.

Nirmohi acknowledged the dedication the team put into achieving success and not becoming complacent.

"It becomes easier to be successful if we master our skills. We have won three titles, one runner-up out of five, but we still keep working on getting better as a team," he said.

Chinmay Thatte, the top scorer for Humber North, said he felt proud to have led his team to victory.

"As an opening batsman, my role is to take the game till the end, and I try to do that," Thatte said.

"I focus on playing each ball as it comes till the end of the game," he said.

Additionally, bowler Diwakar Johnson, in his first tournament for Humber North, was ecstatic about his contribution to the team's success.

"As a bowler, making a meaningful impact in my first tournament for Humber College vali-

dates the hard work and dedication I've put into refining my skills," Johnson said.

"Representing Humber College North campus on the cricket field is an honour," he said.

Coach Fahad Choudhry guided the team throughout the tournament and said he was proud of the results.

"This was [a] special win for us. We won back-to-back championships at UTM, so this was definitely special," Choudhry said.

This isn't it for Humber North this season, as he said there is still more for the team to achieve.

"[The] goal is to win the regional level so we can qualify for the OCR Cup Championship that will take place in Fanshawe, London," Choudhry said.

Humber North men's cricket team is now preparing for the Ontario Collegiate Recreation (OCR) South Regional qualifiers at Sheridan College on Feb. 14.

Hawks women's volleyball goes undefeated

David Lynch
Sports Reporter

Despite high expectations following a dominant regular season, the Humber Women's volleyball team is looking to have fun in the playoffs.

Head coach Chris Wilkins, in his 22nd year coaching the team, said the team is going to enjoy themselves as they work towards the national championship.

"We deserve to have some fun and see what we can do," Wilkins said. "So we're going to enjoy it and whatever happens, happens."

The team finished the regular season with a record of 18-0, and only lost two sets in those games.

Humber has won two straight Ontario Collegiate Athletic Association (OCAA) women's volleyball titles, and is currently ranked third in the country.

Assistant coach Taylor Robertson said that the culture of winning is normal to the team.

"It feels like a pretty normal day to day thing for us," she said. "It's not really like playoffs for us, it's just another day for us to prepare."

Co-captain Sydney Ferguson, in



DAVID LYNCH

Humber Hawks women's volleyball finished the regular season 18-0 and now prepare for the OCAA playoffs.

her fourth and final year with the team, said she has extra motivation after coming close to the national title last year.

"I would love to walk away with a national championship," she said.

"We came so close last year, getting a bronze at nationals, so it'd be nice to take home the gold this

year," she said.

First year player Caitlyn Labelle said that she's learned a lot in her first season.

Being on a team with a lot of pressure to perform, Labelle said she is confident in the team through the playoffs.

"I feel like it'll be great because I

think we're able to win the national championships," she said.

Ferguson said that the team started training in September for the season.

As the playoffs arrive, the team is ready to fight for every point on the court, no matter the game situation, she said.

"It's important to just play our game and play every point hard," Ferguson said. "No matter what, first point or last point of the game, we're taking every point as if it's the last."

Robertson said that players like Ferguson in their last year playing gives the team extra motivation to work hard and be successful.

"They're obviously a big part of our program and they mean a lot to us," Robertson said. "So, being able to succeed and watching them lead the team to success is always an exciting time."

Wilkins recognizes the pressure, and knows there's a target on the team's back.

He said they're going to prepare to go up against any team that faces them.

"We know that, you know every team out there is going to be playing their best against us," Wilkins said.

"And we'll work hard this week to make sure that we're ready for sure," he said.

The team will start their OCAA title defence on Feb. 10 against George Brown, at the North campus.

Fan-zone centre of NHL All-Star weekend

Toni Canyameras Rojas

Sports editor

Four hours before the 7 p.m. puck drop for last Saturday's NHL All-Star game, fans crowded the area surrounding Scotiabank Arena as the city that breathes hockey embraced the NHL's best.

On a winter day dressed as spring with sunny skies and warm temperatures, a parade of fans in colourful jerseys, like a field of vibrant blooming flowers, packed the Metro Convention Centre.

While the entire league convened in Toronto, local pride was not lost among Leafs fans who were out to support their city.

Gary De Bono was one of these Leafs fans, wearing a Mitch Marner jersey.

He said he was excited about the all-star experience and the great weather that happened to come with it.

"This is the hockey town. We are looking forward to interactions, seeing some places and the alumni players," De Bono said.

"It feels like spring. It's funny because we were just talking about playing some golf today, you need to come with a hat," he said.

Toronto hosted the first NHL All-Star weekend since 2000. And

from Feb. 1 to Feb. 4, the weekend was dedicated to fans with several interactive activities.

While De Bono gave up a day on the links, other fans like William Boissnoau endured a long journey to experience all the weekend had to offer.

"We are from Sault Ste. Marie, and I drove for eight hours yesterday. But this is important enough to do that. Ice hockey feels different here, it's like a religion," Boissnoau said.

All-Star weekend brings fans from far and wide, fans of all teams and all ages, like Petr Hrudu, 62, and his wife Sue, 62.

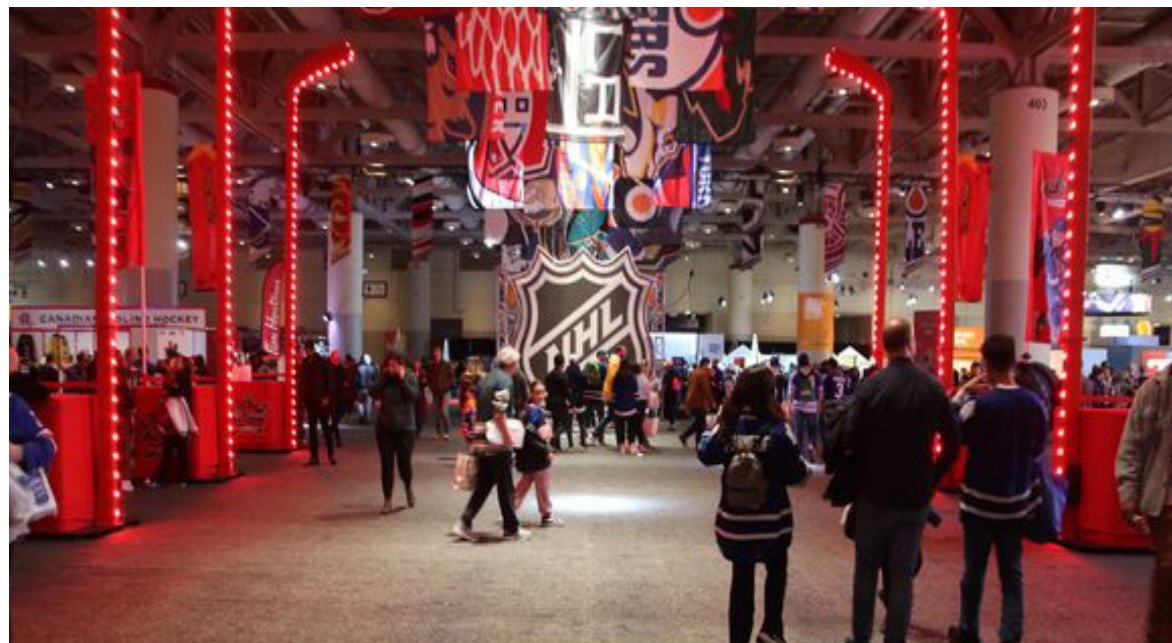
"I have mobility problems," Petr said. "But I'm a fan of my wife, and I'm here to support her. She is a hockey fan and this is a birthday present for her."

Sue Hrudu wore a Boston Bruins jersey.

"They are my religion," she said. "I'm glad to see tiny ones, the new generations with different jerseys, I love that."

While the sun was shining outside, the fans could feel like stars inside the Metro Convention Centre.

NHL mascots greeted fans as they entered the convention centre, inviting them to go



TONI CANYAMERAS

Thousands of fans checked out the various activities in the Metro Convention Centre during the NHL All Star

downstairs and check out the 300,000-square-foot room full of activities and food stands.

Eden Enderby, 9, said she was a fan of the fan-fest.

"I liked the skills competition. It was the most beautiful thing," he said.

And fans could also feel like former Hart Trophy winner Sidney Crosby, by putting their shot to the test by shooting against a dryer, just like he did growing up.

While the youngsters seemed to have the most fun, the older generation, like William Boissnoau, 42, enjoyed the nostalgia of meeting ex-players.

"Some former Leafs players like Jeff O'Neill were signing autographs and this is great," he said.

The fan zone was a hit, as the Metro Convention Centre was packed throughout the entirety of the NHL All-Star weekend.

Among the many long queues was the one to take a picture next

to the Stanley Cup, a trophy the Leafs have not hoisted since 1967.

De Bono was very young when the Leafs last won the Stanley Cup and has little recollection of it.

"I was just only five years old back in 1967. I'd like to see them winning again before I leave this planet," he said.

But all-star weekend brought hope among some Leafs fans like De Bono.

"Maybe having the All-Star in Toronto is a sign," he said.

Olympics going to be best-on-best again

Iqbal Alibhai

Senior reporter

Newmarket resident Laz Mandjik is a long-time hockey fan and a long-suffering Toronto Maple Leafs fan.

Mandjik said he is excited to see the greatest hockey players today play best-on-best in the Olympics as representatives of their nation.

"It's always terrific hockey, like, right down to the end, too. The gold medal game is always spectacular," he said.

Mandjik said he remembers the great moments in hockey history, including Sidney Crosby scoring the golden goal in overtime at the Vancouver 2010 Olympics.

The Sochi Olympics in 2014 was the last time NHL players competed.

And after 10 years, Olympic hockey will be best-on-best once again, and fans like Mandjik are looking forward to the possibility of another golden goal.

During the Toronto NHL All-Star weekend, Commissioner Gary Bettman announced NHL players will be eligible to participate in the

2026 and 2030 Olympics.

"The international composition of National Hockey League rosters is unparalleled, and NHL Players take great pride in representing their countries," Bettman said.

NHLPA Executive Director Marty Walsh said hockey fans worldwide are anticipating the next best-on-best international competition.

"And now they can finally see some of their favourite players represent their countries and line up together," he said.

The International Ice Hockey Federation (IIHF) President Luc Tardif said the IIHF brought all parties to the table seeking a consensus for long-term cooperation.

"[This] is the backbone of what we intend to do as Sports Organizations," Tardif said.

John Tavares, captain of the Toronto Maple Leafs, said Sunday after practice the return of NHL players to international competition was a step towards growing the sport.

"It's going to be a must-watch TV, must-watch hockey," Tavares



IQBAL ALIBHAI

Laz Mandjik and his son are excited to see the best hockey players in the Olympics again after so many years

said. "Do you let yourself dream of potentially being in the mix?"

Tavares recently came out of a nine-game slump to score against the Winnipeg Jets just before the All-Star break.

However, since his move to Toronto in 2018, NHL stats show Tavares has always achieved at least 50 points in every season.

Tavares will need to demonstrate his usual play to join the likes of top-calibre Canadian players like golden goal scorer Crosby.

Irrespective of a favourite team or favourite player, fans will support their nation when it comes time to watch international games.

Austin Matthews, currently paced to score 70 goals this season with the Leafs, is an American player who will most likely play for Team U.S.A.

"I am a huge Matthews fan. I think he's the best hockey player in the NHL right now, but I'll be cheering for Canada," Mandjik said.

"I'm not conflicted with that because as soon as the Olympics are over, he can get back on a good team.

"It's a bigger deal for us as Canadians to beat the Americans, I feel than it is for the general American public [to see the U.S. beat Canada]," he said.

Bettman also announced a best-on-best for 2025 between four nations, Canada, the U.S., Sweden, and Finland, to take place instead of an All-Star week.

Mediapro misses its shot, media rights

Rory Arthur

Sports reporter

Canadian Soccer Business (CSB) and Mediapro have terminated their agreement for the rights to broadcast Canadian soccer.

This means the Canadian national soccer teams, Canadian Premier League (CPL), Canadian Championship and CONCACAF Champions Cup do not have an official broadcast home in the country.

The two sides initially signed a 10-year deal in 2019, giving the Barcelona-based company Mediapro exclusive rights to broadcast Canadian soccer.

With this, Mediapro created OneSoccer, an exclusive subscriber-based channel for soccer in Canada.

CSB filed a notice of action against Mediapro on Jan. 25, saying the latter failed to deliver on contractual obligations.

These obligations include defaulting on rights fees in 2023, and “failure to secure” bigger audiences for the Canadian national teams, CPL and Canadian Championship.

“Our decision to pursue legal action was not one we took lightly, but we felt it was necessary to pro-



THE CANADIAN PRESS / SCOTT BARBOUR

Quinn (left) and Lacasse, after losing their match 4-0 against Australia in the FIFA Women's World Cup in Australia in 2023. Canada is in a mess.

tect the tremendous investments we have made to build the game in Canada,” CSB said in a statement.

However, Mediapro filed a statement of claim towards the CSB, saying the company is “unable” to support its side of the agreement.

“We have made our best efforts to work with the CSB on a constructive path forward, but have come to a position that we have no choice but to seek to terminate our agreement,” Mediapro said in its statement.

Mediapro said it believes “no entity” has put more investment

into Canadian soccer than itself.

This move leaves Canadian soccer without a broadcast rights holder, but CSB said it will “immediately” look for a new broadcaster.

“By taking back full control of our rights we will immediately have the opportunity to do so with new partners who have the ability to reach large audiences,” the CSB statement said.

Canadian soccer fans are unsure on whether this move will be an immediate success.

With no known broadcaster

immediately lined up, there's still potential for Canadian soccer games to not be aired anywhere.

With both national teams having games in the early spring, as well as the CPL and Canadian Championship starting soon after them, there's the possibility that Canadian soccer fans could be unable to watch these games.

Additionally, these programs have long-term viability concerns if the CSB runs into issues finding a new broadcast rightsholder, as both rely heavily on the funding that a broadcaster gives them.

Canadian soccer supporter Evan Robinson said he's not sure how much of an effect the move will have on Canadian soccer, but remains optimistic.

“I did read that the CSB has a plan in place,” he said.

“So to me, I see that as a sign that the CPL will continue,” Robinson said.

Mediapro has previously run into issues with broadcast partnerships, as in 2020 the broadcaster failed to pay its rights fee installments to the French Football Federation.

OPINION

Canada Soccer is in shambles, must change now



Caleb Moody

Sports Editor

capturing Olympic gold in Tokyo in 2021.

The men's national team reached its highest-ever FIFA world ranking of 33rd in February 2022 and qualified for its first FIFA World Cup since 1986.

Issues soon set in as labour disputes escalated between the players and Canada Soccer, primarily focusing on financial compensation for players.

Both teams lobbied for a new long-term agreement ahead of their respective world cups and saw nothing to show for their efforts.

The divided attention between the pitch and the bargaining table took its toll on performance.

The men's team flamed out in the group stage of the 2022 FIFA World Cup, as one of only two teams to fail to record a point.

And the women's team shared the same fate with an unexpected third-place finish in the 2023 World Cup group stage by failing to progress to the knockout rounds.

Canada Soccer had the chance to right the ship so that their teams, the most talented teams the overseeing body ever produced, could focus on their play on the pitch rather than their performance at the bargaining table.

They did not such thing.

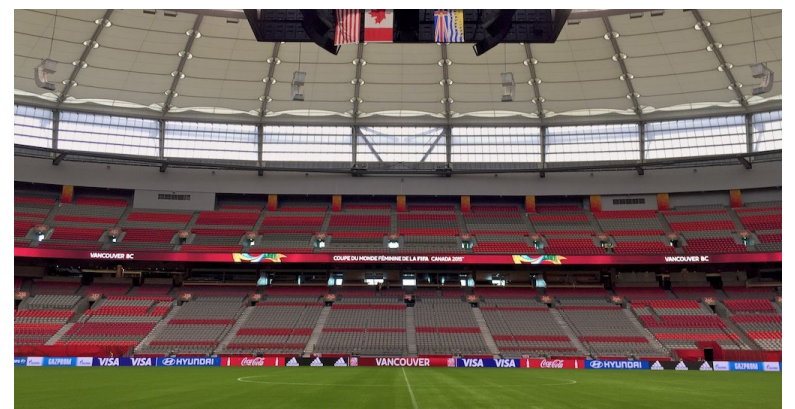
To date, there have been no long-term labour agreements in place between Canada Soccer and its players.

The women's team has historically been in a better place on the pitch when compared to their male counterparts.

As a result rebounded better from these disappointing negotiations, seeing better results after their disappointing World Cup.

But the men's national team is in a much more fragile state. Its reputation diminished further when Canada Soccer opted not to schedule any international friendlies in preparation for the CONCACAF Nations League.

That resulted in the team's unexpected elimination from the league.



FLICKR / REBECCA BOLLWITT

Canada Soccer has issues they need to address before the World Cup

After that, Canada Soccer failed to adequately replace Head Coach Jon Herdman when he resigned in August 2023, opting for an interim replacement, Mauro Biello, who has only won once in his opening three games.

Despite their talent and potential, Canada's national teams have lost their long-time and experienced captains, Christine Sinclair and Atiba Hutchinson, marking a new era of vulnerability on the pitch.

So, CSB taking back the rights to

Mediapro isn't just a matter of lost broadcasting rights. It marks yet another distraction in the backs of the minds of young teams.

Canada Soccer needs to stop getting caught up in its near-sighted and disorganized administrative shortcomings.

Shambles is a bad state to be in when the world comes to Canada for the 2026 FIFA World Cup. And without competent leadership, Canada Soccer is a mere stone's throw away from catastrophe.

Canada Soccer is in shambles. News broke last week that Canadian Soccer Business (CSB) was taking Mediapro, Canada Soccer's official media partner, to court and taking back media rights from them.

It marked yet another stain on Canada Soccer's reputation.

But it wasn't always that way. Indeed, Canada Soccer isn't far removed from its golden era.

Canada's women's national team touched the hearts of soccer fans across the nation with a “Where were you when...?” moment after

OLD-FASHIONED HOCKEY



Humber College men's and women's hockey teams were both victorious in their first outdoor game ever. The games were played at Sunnydale Park in Etobicoke on Feb. 6.

**WOMEN'S
VOLLEYBALL
PERFECT GOING
INTO PLAYOFFS
P.11**



**HUMBER NORTH
WINS CRICKET
EXTRAMURAL
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