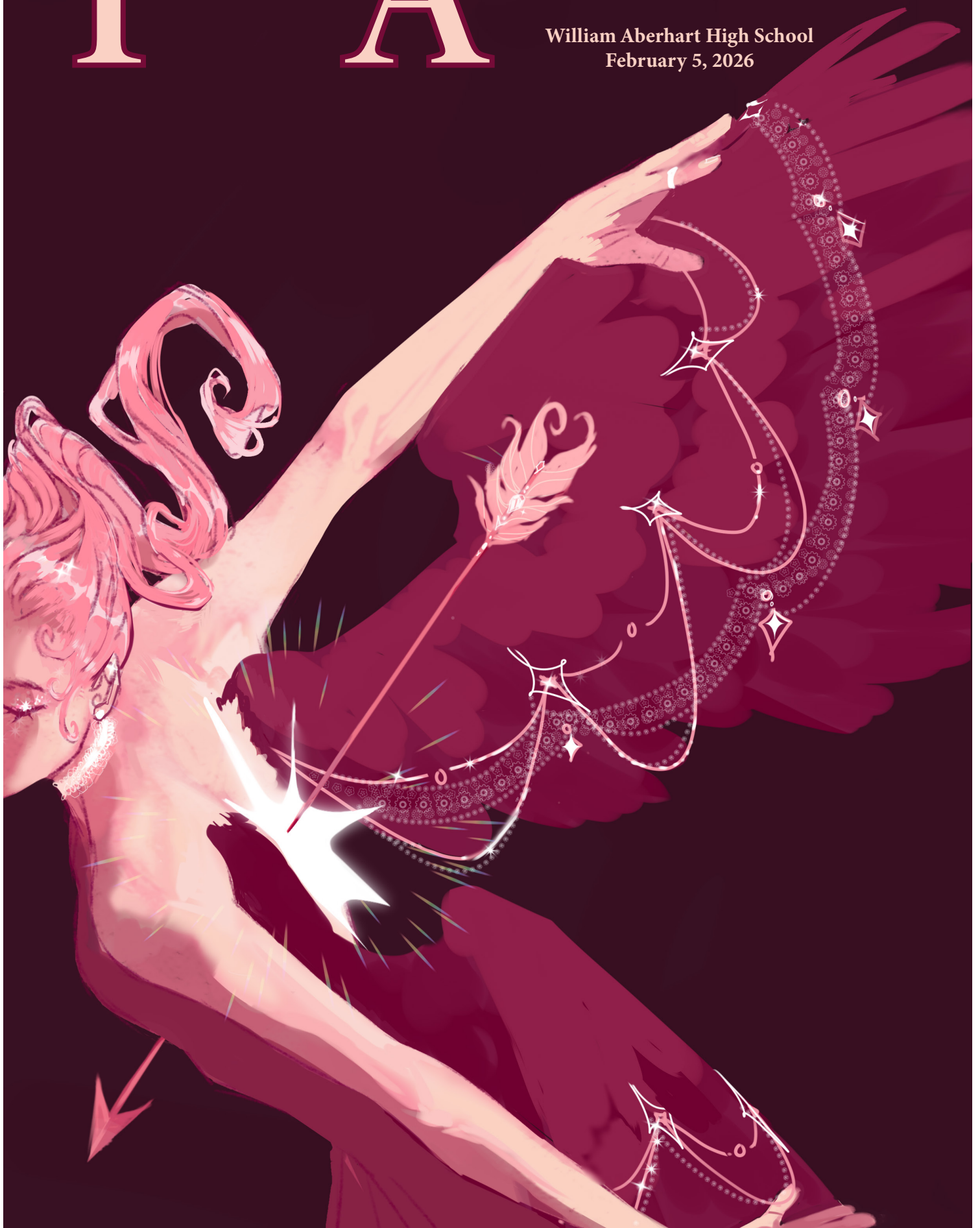


# THE ADVOCATE

William Aberhart High School  
February 5, 2026



# A NATION ON ICE: THE RISE OF AUTHORITARIAN ENFORCEMENT IN AMERICA

by: Addison C.

The ink drying in America's history books has grown darker, marking a chapter where the expansion of federal jurisdiction signals a chilling shift from democracy and towards authoritarian repression.

In just one year, the U.S. justice system has been essentially rewired under President Donald Trump's control, as the expansion of Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), aggressive raids, mass detentions, and militarized tactics have increasingly blurred the line between law enforcement and authoritarian control. Cities around the country such as Minneapolis and Chicago have seen heavy federal enforcement activity, leading to tragedies ranging from the detention of children to the fatal shootings of U.S. citizens. ICE's actions have sparked fear, outrage, and questions regarding the erosion of civil liberties. The world is presently experiencing a pivotal global moment, reminding nations around the world that the preservation of democracy depends on collective responsiveness.

On January 20th, 2025, President Donald Trump was inaugurated as the 47th President of the United States. After just one year of the President's second term, the United States has been subjected to much political, economic and social change. Throughout his 2024 reelection campaign, Trump made it clear that a central priority of his administration

would be tightening national security and expanding deportation and detention policies across the country. The President's primary idea of tightening national security includes the goal of 1 million immigrants deported per year. While the administration promised to deport only "the worst of the worst," government data shows that approximately 74% of immigrants currently in detention have no criminal records, raising questions about who is truly being targeted.

In the Presidential Transition Project: Project 2025, the Trump administration stated, "Prioritizing border security and immigration enforcement, including detention and deportation, is critical if we are to regain control of the border, repair the historic damage done by the Biden Administration, return to a lawful and orderly immigration system, and protect the homeland from terrorism and public safety threats." These priorities included proposals as extreme as ending birthright citizenship and eliminating student visas from so-called "enemy" countries, both of which were blocked by the Supreme Court. Nevertheless, President Trump persisted in advancing most aspects of his plan.

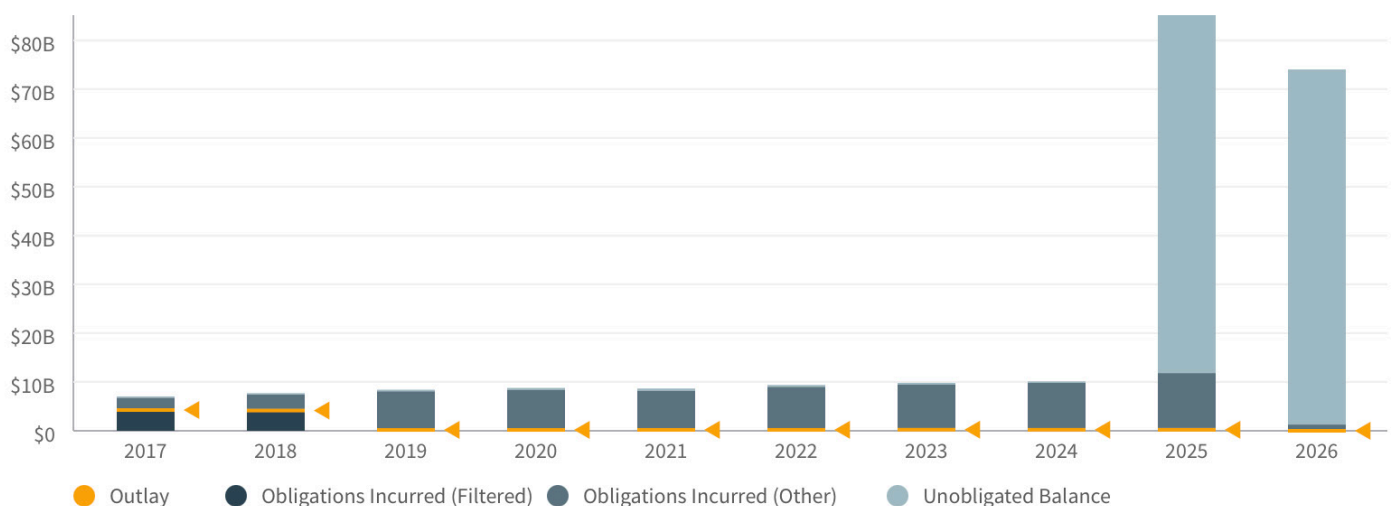
For example, at the beginning of Trump's second term in 2025, Congress allocated a staggering \$73 billion in unobligated funding to Immigration and Customs

Enforcement as part of the annual signature tax and spending bill. This marked a dramatic increase from the average unobligated budgets of \$300–400 million allocated between 2017 and 2024.

Following the billions of dollars allocated to ICE, the primary focus was to increase the workforce by a minimum of eleven thousand new hires by the beginning of 2026. Such strenuous federal timelines and rapid expansion led to concerns regarding the changes made to officer training standards. When asked about the shortening of new ICE officer training, a senior Department of Homeland Security official stated that "The FLETC (Federal Law Enforcement Training Centers) are prepared to accommodate eleven thousand new hires by the beginning of next year. We have streamlined training to cut redundancy and incorporate technology advancements."

Under the revised structure, the new ICE officers train a total of 47 days over the course of 8 weeks. This length of training was significantly reduced from the previous five-month training period, raising questions towards adequate preparation. The specific number of 47 days was chosen as Donald Trump is the 47th president, said DHS officials when asked about the reduction.

The demand for mass new hires has led to certain extreme measures, such as the use



Unobligated budget reports from [usaspending.gov](https://usaspending.gov) towards Immigration and Customs Enforcement (2017-2026)



of the 1940s figurehead “Uncle Sam” war propaganda advertisements by the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement department.

While the size and reach of ICE have intensified, the agency has simultaneously expanded its authority through legally questionable methods. Practices include the reported use of administrative rather than judicial warrants to enter homes, a move that has alarmed civil rights advocates. Unlike judicial warrants, which are signed by independent judges, administrative warrants bypass this safeguard, raising serious concerns regarding the Fourth Amendment about unreasonable searches and seizures. Human Rights Watch and other watchdog organizations further report that ICE agents increasingly operate in military-style gear, use unmarked vehicles, and conceal their identities with masks, tactics that critics argue are designed to intimidate communities and blur the line between civilian law enforcement and military force.

As enforcement tactics have grown more aggressive, several high-profile incidents in January 2026 have drawn national attention to what critics describe as illegal and unconstitutional ICE practices. Renée Nicole Good, a 37-year-old unarmed U.S. citizen, was shot and killed by an ICE officer during an enforcement operation in Minneapolis on January 7, 2026. The Hennepin County Medical Examiner ruled her death a homicide. Contradicting this, ICE claims that she “weaponized” her vehicle, whereas video and eyewitness accounts show she was attempting to drive away rather than attack, disproving this

claim. When questioned about the killing on CNN’s State of the Union on January 11, President Trump dismissed Good as “an agitator, probably a paid agitator,” while Homeland Security Secretary Kristi Noem labeled the incident “an act of domestic terrorism.”

Just weeks later, on January 24, 2026, Alex Jeffrey Pretti, a 37-year-old ICU nurse and U.S. citizen, was fatally shot by federal immigration agents in Minneapolis, although officials initially claimed he had a gun and resisted, video evidence shows Pretti holding a phone and assisting others before being pepper-sprayed, subdued, and shot. This tragedy sparked widespread protests and demands for accountability.

In another incident a five-year-old boy, Liam Conejo Ramos, was detained with his father after returning home from preschool in Minnesota, with school officials stating that agents used the child to knock on the family’s door to locate others. Taken together, these incidents, which all occurred within a single month, highlight mounting concerns over violations of human rights.

When viewed collectively, the rapid expansion of ICE, the dilution of training standards, the use of intimidation tactics, and the deadly consequences for citizens and non-citizens alike reveal a disturbing shift in the role of federal law enforcement in the United States. The Trump administration disguises these events as “national security”, where constitutional protections are treated as obstacles rather than obligations. The growing record of violence and inhumane treatment stands as clear evidence of the federal government’s increasingly authoritative

enforcement strategies. As history continues to unfold, the central question is no longer how immigration enforcement has changed over the past year, but how the public will respond to these abuses of power. In this moment, awareness and accountability are not optional, they are essential to ensuring that the United States remains a nation governed by the rule of law rather than fear.



5 year old Liam Ramos while being detained by ICE

## THE ADVOCATE

THE ADVOCATE is the official newspaper of William Aberhart High School. THE ADVOCATE is meant as a forum for student expression and is published to inform and entertain the students and the entire school community.

**Editors-in-Chief: Addison C. and Laura Z.**

**Staff Sponsors: Mr. Colautti**

**Head of Layout: Ruby T.**

**Cover Art: Alena D.**



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Howdy Abe!

After a much needed break, the Advocate is back full swing for the start of semester two!

Lots of fun happenings in February, like Leadership's buy-a-crush-for-your-crush event, and the crazy chinooks we've been having.

This month, we have some very insightful articles about current local and international politics, and we look forward to seeing you in our next edition!

### Call for poets, artists, and other creatives:

If you would like to have you art, photography, poetry, or really anything else published in The Advocate, please email us:

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## THE 2026 WORLD ECONOMIC FORUM: WORLD LEADERS ON DISPLAY

by: Gavin D.

The week of the 19th of January 2026, the 56th Annual World Economic Forum took place in Davos Switzerland. The conference itself was founded with the goal of “improving the state of the world by engaging business, political, academic, and other leaders of society to shape global, regional and industry agendas.” For decades, the forum has advocated for economic interconnectivity and globalism over all. This time around, cracks in the internationalist order were clearly visible.

The primary factor driving the demolition of the old rules based order is the United States and their protectionist trade policies. The repeated rollout and threats of tariffs on nearly every country on the planet has shown that Donald Trump’s White House is not intent on preserving international cooperation. President Trump himself represented the United States at the conference, but numerous other business leaders were also invited to speak, namely Trump backer Elon Musk.

Mark Carney was present to represent Canadian interests, and advocated strongly for international cooperation between willing nations. He encouraged the development of a new international community that would not be entirely reliant on the United States.

The general reaction to Prime Minister Carney and President Trump’s speeches seem to be polar opposites. Carney was the third speaker at the Conference to ever receive a standing ovation, following Volodymyr Zelensky and Nelson Mandela during previous forums. While Trump has been wildly criticised for using his time to ramp up his threats of annexing Greenland.

The two leaders took drastically different tones during their speeches. Carney has been praised for remaining a values based realist in the face of deteriorating global conditions, while Trump spewed insults for nearly seventy minutes. Trump mocked NATO allies, notably Denmark for not ceding Greenland and at French President Emmanuel Macron for refusing his invitation to Trump’s new Board of Peace. Macron rejected the invitation because the board would bypass the United Nations.

Mark Carney spent his time calling out the current international order in which smaller nations must react to the whims of nuclear superpowers. He focused attention on the current rupture to the international order, without naming President Donald Trump once during his address.

On the economic front, Trump cited metric after metric meant to display a thriving American economy, however, a Pew research survey from October, where 74% of Americans consider the economy to be only fair or poor rather than excellent or good. This overall shows that while the stock market may be thriving due to AI investment, the wealth is not trickling down to the average American.

Carney cited the 12 new trade deals his government has made over the past six months as his own metric of economic success, but like with the American economy, the average Canadian might not be feeling Carney’s successful trade deals at the moment. According to the Bank of Canada, Canadian consumers still feel pessimistic about their financial health. The prime minister still emphasized during his speech the importance of

strategic autonomy, which is the idea that a country that cannot feed, fuel or defend itself has no sovereignty over its future.

President Trump on the other hand continued to attack Greenland and discredit the nation’s sovereignty. He repeatedly called Greenland “Iceland” several times out of confusion and said that they needed the “piece of ice for security reasons.” His 51st state rhetoric from before the Canadian Federal Election in April also made a return.

Carney rebutted Trump’s imperialist rhetoric by inviting the middle powers of the globe to unite against economic coercion to ensure that they are not the targets of the great powers. Prime Minister Carney, a pro-business leader, essentially encouraged unionization of countries against the nuclear superpowers, which is in some ways ironic.

Following the conference, Trump rescinded Carney’s invitation to the Board of Peace, and started to threaten Canada with 100% tariffs on all Canadian goods after Carney made a deal with China to allow 49,000 Chinese EVs into Canada at a 6.1% tariff rate in exchange for China dropping canola tariffs from 84% to 15%.

Mark Carney has received praise from the leaders of many “middle countries” for pointing out the death of the rules-based international order. All that’s left is to wait and see whether the future is a world of nations bunkering down and isolating in their fortresses or an actual web of the willing.



# CALGARY'S WATER MAIN: CRITICAL INFRASTRUCTURE OR POLITICAL FOOTBALL?

by: Cameron W.

On June 5, 2024, Calgarians woke up to an emergency alert notifying them of a catastrophic break of the Bearspaw South Feeder Main. One and a half years later on December 30, a drop in water pressure for the residents in communities near Bowness signalled a second break in the same pipe.

The second break has now been repaired, but the City of Calgary has started work to replace the aging feeder main. Calgary's water troubles have highlighted the issue of aging infrastructure and poor management of the water system. These issues also have the potential to make or break multiple political careers. In the coming months and years, Calgarians will likely decide who to pin their frustration on, while politicians of all stripes will be forced to balance the public good and their own political gains. Lori Williams, a professor of political science at Mount Royal University, told *The Advocate* that "the management of the issue, the leadership exercised in responding to this issue, is something that could be politically positive or very negative."

## Differences in Communication and a Sense of Fatigue

Mayor Jyoti Gondek's handling of the first feeder main break was criticized by people across the political spectrum. Williams said that the former mayor's handling of the break created a lingering frustration with her leadership. Several days after the initial break, the mayor came out and apologized for the lack of effective and timely communication. Williams believes that Mayor Jeremy Farkas has handled the crisis far more effectively than his predecessor. He has even been taking responsibility for the break, saying that it doesn't matter how the break happened, it's his responsibility as mayor.

Williams also mentioned that Calgarians didn't seem as willing to conserve water this time. She doesn't believe that this is due to his communication, but rather a general fatigue about the situation. Despite the City's pleas, water use levels went over the sustainable use level almost every day of water restrictions. If another break were to happen, people's patience could be strained even further. What's

more, the large cost of replacing the feeder main and the possible increase in property taxes could harm the current mayor and council politically, especially because the new council recently voted to lower the planned tax increase. At this time, it's difficult to predict whether there will be lasting political impacts from the mayor's management and leadership during Calgary's water crisis.

## An Independent Report

In January 2026, an independent review panel released its final report into the 2024 feeder main break. The 86-page report examined the root causes of the rupture, finding gaps in the City's handling of its Water Utility.

As illustrated by the panel's review, Calgary has some of the most per capita water infrastructure in Canada. This is due to the fact that Calgary is the fastest growing major city in Canada, but its low density means that greater lengths of pipes are required to serve the entire city. More maintenance and work to ensure that infrastructure remains in good condition is necessary and strains the Water Utility's resources. The report also mentioned that investment in utilities across Canada has not kept up with demand, especially because of the increase in population growth. Montreal and Hamilton both experienced some breakage of the same type of pipe since Calgary's 2024 break, which highlights the importance of increased investment in critical infrastructure across the country.

Moreover, the report noted that infrastructure risk assessments leading up to the breaks "emphasized likelihood over consequence, deprioritizing low-probability but high-impact events like feeder main failures." The report found that the risk prioritization system wasn't well struc-



tured and there wasn't a clear way to escalate concerns. This meant that potential risks weren't adequately taken care of or monitored. It stated that the feeder main was supposed to be inspected three times since 2017, but none of those inspections happened because requests for temporary outages to complete the inspections were redirected and delayed.

The City of Calgary also didn't adequately plan for the future or put redundancies in place. Neither Hamilton nor Montreal residents were required to conserve water during their water main breaks because both cities had backup water mains that were able to supply enough drinking water. The City of Calgary also failed to sufficiently plan how it would deal with its infrastructure assets. An asset management plan (AMP) is created to make decisions and investments in infrastructure assets. The City's most recent AMP related to the water system was released in 2017 and the independent review panel's report notes that two-thirds of the AMP recommendations were not enacted.

On top of this, management of the Water Utility was further spread across multiple groups of people at the city during a restructuring in 2022, which meant that there wasn't one single person or group responsible for making decisions about water infrastructure. Decisions were mostly made by people who didn't have "executive oversight" and weren't able to make decisions from the perspective of the





entire water system.

Finally, the report found that City Council wasn't able to properly oversee the City's Water Utility. Multiple reasons were identified for this including the lack of sufficient financial statements that could be evaluated by council, which directly contradicted a recommendation in a 2015 review by an independent financial consultant to establish a Director of Finance position and an independent oversight body. Additionally, the Water Utility didn't regularly report to City Council and there wasn't a mandate or schedule of reporting, unlike most major Canadian municipalities.

The review panel provided several recommendations to City Council including improved monitoring of the feeder main, further accelerating the construction of a new pipe, adopting a new risk assessment approach and strengthening the asset management planning process as well as a path to create a dedicated water utility department to better structure and "eliminate fragmentation in decision making." After the report was presented, council voted unanimously to approve all of the recommendations.

### Playing Politics

Despite the independent review panel's report, the provincial government announced that they would be conducting their own review into Calgary's water system. Kelly Black, a professor of civil engineering at the University of Calgary, told CBC that she finds it surprising that the Alberta government would launch its own report. She said that from an engineering standpoint, it's unclear what they would be looking for. Political science professor Lori Williams believes that this new report is likely not about finding out what happened since the province should already have that information. She said that it is clear that the province is looking to gain a political advantage.

Mayor Jeromy Farkas has agreed to work with the Province and hand over all of the requested documentation by its deadline. Speaking about Mayor Farkas' approach to this, Williams noted that he would like to maintain a good relationship with the province. She also said that if the mayor focuses on addressing the issues facing Calgary's water system instead of playing politics, it could bode well for him but

reflect badly on the province.

This isn't the first time the provincial government has politicized the issue. After the release of the review panel's report, Premier Danielle Smith accused Naheed Nenshi, the former Calgary mayor and current leader of the provincial NDP, of failing to maintain Calgary's water system, stating "when you look back at who is ultimately responsible politically, for making sure that taxpayers of Calgary are having this critical infrastructure invested in, [that] they have a water utility run by the City, all of this should have been identified early so that subsequent mayors are not having to deal with this." Williams said that support for Naheed Nenshi may not be as high in Calgary because he was the mayor for ten years. She noted that in the last election, several seats in Calgary were won narrowly by the NDP and that the UCP could be looking for more votes in the next election. This strategy could play well for the UCP but it may also harm them politically. Albertans, particularly those who don't support the UCP, may see the Premier's actions as political opportunism and not taking any responsibility for a problem they could help solve. Williams also pointed out that the Provincial government increased their education property tax in the 2025 budget and has said that it will be increased again, while at the same time cutting income taxes. This levy is requisitioned by the Province from municipalities who collect it alongside their own property taxes. This move may also play badly for the UCP because the levy substantially increases the amount of money collected by the provincial government, but the amount of money given to municipalities from the Province to fund things such as infrastructure has gone down in recent years.

### The Politics of Aging Infrastructure

Aging infrastructure is a major problem faced by municipalities across the country. The majority of Canada's infrastructure is more than fifty years old and is starting to show signs of wear, or in the case of Calgary's watermain, fail. This was a major contributing factor to the 2024 feeder main break and the suspected cause of the 2025 break. A report presented to Council earlier this month stated that Calgary's infrastructure is at the highest possible risk level. It estimated that approximately eleven percent of the City's infrastructure is

in poor to very poor condition and needs urgent repairs or replacement. Statistics Canada's 2022 Canada's Core Public Infrastructure Survey noted that approximately 27% of Canadian water transmission mains need maintenance.

This issue is also politically problematic because it can be hard for politicians to justify spending on repairing aging infrastructure. Williams said that Calgarians may not like the cost of replacing and repairing the Bears paw Feeder Main, but that people probably understand the need. Nonetheless, she says it will still be hard to sell the cost of replacing the pipe but that it will be even harder to sell an investment into infrastructure that doesn't so obviously need maintenance. "This isn't new housing, this isn't a new bridge, it's just [maintaining] the bridges that we already have and the roads we already have."

City councilors will be forced to walk the fine line between supporting spending on infrastructure maintenance and their own political futures. Council will have to evaluate infrastructure spending on a case by case basis and some projects could fall between the cracks. Williams noted that these costs often don't fit nicely into election cycles and cost saving measures such as spreading out spending or waiting for prices to decrease in a few years aren't always feasible.

Ultimately, it is hard to say who will be most affected politically by the water main breaks. Depending on ongoing handling of the situation, the municipal and provincial governments could both stand to benefit or lose support on the issue. Other people could also see themselves affected such as Naheed Nenshi as leader of the opposition and former Calgary mayor or senior city officials. Williams said that "the responses of political leaders to this problem, the ability to communicate what is necessary and get support for that will be a very significant test of their political leadership. This is a harder thing to manage than different visions of housing and transit."





## WHY ARE THERE PROTESTS IN IRAN RIGHT NOW?

by: Yekta G.

What are the perspectives of Iranian people, and the West?

Context:

Firstly, Iran is the oldest country in the world according to multiple sources, and has the third largest oil reserves in the world. They also had the ancient and powerful Persian Empire founded by Cyrus the Great of the Achaemenid Dynasty in 550 BC, which started the roots of Human Rights. The nation holds a strategic position that includes two main mountains, the Alboroz and the Zagros mountains, and is situated between Arab, Turkish, Russian and Indian regions which allows them to have access to the Persian Gulf and control over the Straits of Hormoz. Mainly due to its geographic location and features, Iran is an exceptional geopolitically important country, and one that is historically very challenging to invade.

One fun fact about Iran is that they are placed fourth for their average IQ level globally. Due to emphasis on education and doing well in life, Iran is known globally for its deep philosophies, arts, and significant focus and success on STEM worldwide.

What protests and why?

To ask an Iranian person, do you know a distant family/friend that has been killed in the ongoing protests in Iran? I can assure you, the answer is almost always yes, whether direct family, or indirect connection.

It is necessary to understand that after four decades, Iran's currency (Rials) has lost its value nearly 20,000 times. As of right now, the Iranian Rial is worth 0.00 Canadian Dollars, (in reference, one Canadian dollar is equal to 806,500 Rials) and inflation rose to 52.6% recorded on December 28th 2025. Citizens have been struggling to buy groceries, and make enough valuable earnings

to survive. In other words, the economy of Iran has never been this weak, and citizens are not scared to risk their lives by mass protesting on the streets for freedom. Additionally, one thing that has been upsetting the Iranian people and encouraging them to protest, is that the government seems to "strategically" help other nations before prioritizing its citizens' needs. This means providing funding and resources to various countries before supporting its population. Many citizens have concluded that they felt neglected, as if their voices are never being heard and that the leadership of Iran has become a dictatorship. Following this, there has been a complete black-out of the internet since the 8th of January, in order to isolate the atrocities happening in the country from the public eye. This includes citizens having zero access to social media or any external platform, and limitations to speak with family living abroad. Due to the blackout, it is challenging to find the exact number of killings and arrests by the IRGC (Iranian police forces), however sources claim that arrests have gone over 40,000, while the death toll is passed 10,000, while some sources have claimed 20,000 and currently, it has even been raised to an estimated 30,000 individuals killed in the past 2 weeks. A large amount of the killing has been done by the IRGC, however, lots of casualties like citizen-on-citizen attacks are also counted. Amongst them include many individuals as young as 16 years old.

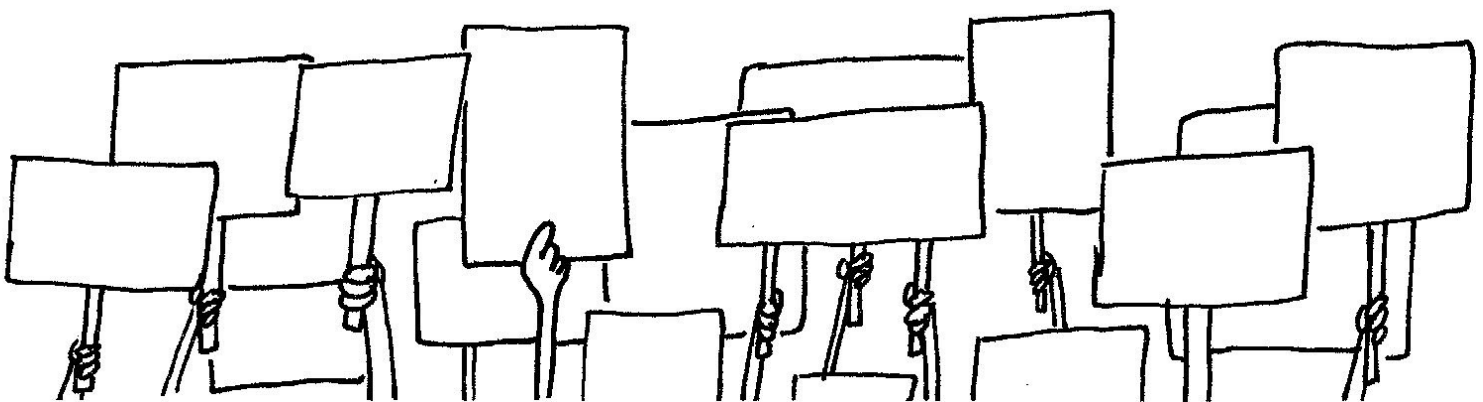
Moreover, the people of Iran began to emphasize that in order to live a rich quality of life with a not-so crippling economy, it is necessary to establish a well rounded relationship with the world to be able to free trade. The economic sanctions imposed on Iran by the United States have had a very large impact on this economy, and the people began to wonder, what would life look like if the leadership of Iran maintained a strategic relationship with the

United States? Not only did the economic factor induce this uprising in protests, but also personal freedom. The current regime in Iran is an Islamic theocracy regime, (in other words, it is ruled under religion/ideology). Due to this ruling, many actions have been restricted, such as zero tolerance of homosexuality, restrictions of social media (citizens are banned to post on social media without covering hair and body), and females not being allowed to sing/dance publicly.

America's reaction and hypotheses:

Donald Trump and other officials like Marco Rubio have made it very clear that they stand with the people of Iran, fighting against the oppressive regime. At one point, Trump has even threatened to intervene if the killings intensify. However, this positioning seems contradictory to the State's actions towards Iran. Surrounding this topic, there has been lots of controversy regarding the US sanctions. Do sanctions truly "punish" a government? Or does it harm the citizens living in the country? In Iran's case, sanctions have shown harm to civilization, and have not had an effect on the government's actions as much. This comes back to the positioning of the United States. If the government of Iran was aligned with America's political views to begin with, would they still care about the opinions of the people? If the Iranian leadership were to hypothetically come back with a new system that not only obeys America, but also obeys its ideology, like respecting Israel as a state, opposing Russia and China, would the American government still support Iranian protestors? Or are they supporting the people just for the sake of benefitting themselves?

If you have read my article and have any questions or concerns, feel free to spark up a conversation! yektag1@educbe.ca



## OPINION: THE CASE FOR ELECTORAL REFORM

by: William G.H.

In 2025 Canadians voted in Canada's 45th Federal election. The result was a minority government for the Liberal Party. An outcome that hasn't occurred since the early 2000s, was that the New Democratic Party and the Bloc Québécois received nearly the exact number of votes. Yet, the Bloc Québécois won 22 seats and the NDP only six.

This is due to our First-Past-the-Post (FPTP) electoral system. Under that system, the candidate who wins the most votes in a riding wins the election and becomes that riding's Member of Parliament. In 2025, because votes for the Bloc Québécois were concentrated in a smaller area (specifically one province, Quebec), not across the country (as was the case for the NDP), the Bloc managed to win far more seats than the NDP. It's important to note that this is a constant of the FPTP system.

There have been a multitude of attempts to change this system in countries like Canada. Yet, to this day, these countries still use this system for the reason that it traditionally increases power for larger governing parties, almost always at the expense of smaller parties. Therefore, the only parties that ever have the power to change the system gain nothing by doing it, and the parties that have everything to gain, never have the power to make it happen. It's logical to state that a system that over-represents some and under-represents others is broken. It's clear we need an effective alternative. Thankfully, there are a multitude of choices to pick from.

A popular alternative to FPTP is the

ranked ballot system. This is the system used in Australia and the system advocated for by former Prime Minister Justin Trudeau. Under a ranked ballot system, voters rank the candidates in order of preference instead of voting for just one candidate. If a candidate receives a majority of the votes in their constituency, they win. If no candidate reaches a majority after the first count, the candidate with the least amount of votes is eliminated and their ballots are redistributed to the remaining candidates according to voters' next preferences. This process continues until one candidate wins over 50% of the vote.

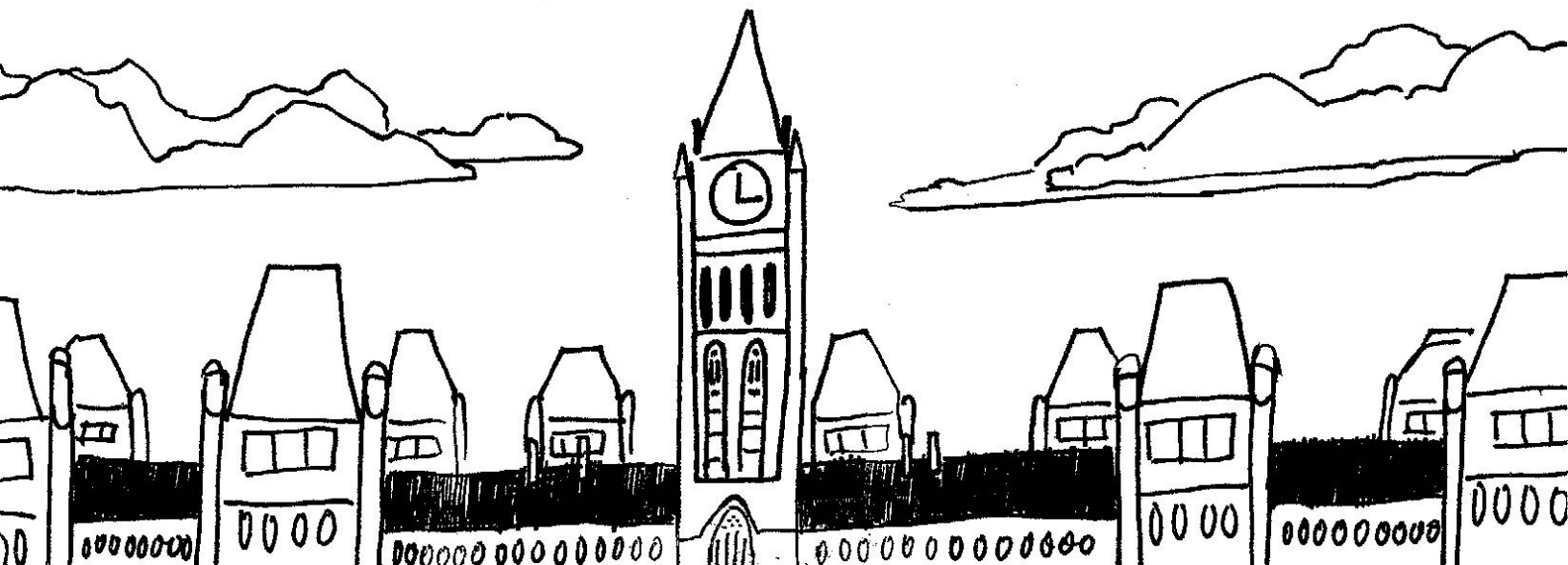
Consider the 2025 election results in the riding of Nanaimo-Ladysmith in a hypothetical ranked ballot system. In that riding, the Conservatives won with approximately 36% vote, the Liberals received approximately 28%, and the NDP and Greens each received approximately 18%. Under a ranked ballot system, it's plausible that after a redistribution of votes, the Liberals could have surpassed the Conservatives in later rounds. The principal merit of this system is that the person elected in every riding ultimately has the support of the majority of voters. The drawback is that many voters' first choice isn't elected, and the outcome may not even change following redistribution.

Another popular alternative to FPTP is a proportional electoral system. A proportional electoral system is arguably the fairest and simplest electoral system that exists. In its purest form, a proportional electoral system results in a party's share of the seats in parliament being the same as its vote share. For example, if a

party gets 30% of the votes, it gets 30% of the seats. This is an electoral system used across the world most commonly in Europe. However, there are different ways of achieving proportional representation. The principal benefit of the system is that it ensures parliament is reflective of the voters choice.

A popular version of proportional representation, used in countries such as Germany and New Zealand, is a mixed-member proportional system. In a mixed-member proportional (MMP) system voters cast two ballots. One to choose their constituency's Member of Parliament, the second for a political party's list of candidates. The seats in parliament are then filled by the MPs elected in their constituency (this is the same as in FPTP). However, following that, additional MPs from political parties' lists are added in order to make the result proportional to the vote. For example, let's say that under FPTP, a party gets zero seats but 5% of the vote. Under a MMP system, parliament would add seats from that party's list of candidates. In this case, that would mean adding enough seats so that party would make up 5% of the total seats in parliament. The benefit of this system is that it still maintains local as well as regional representation whilst still being reflective of the voters preferences.

First-Past-the-Post is a relic of a by-gone era. Its removal is the most important democratic reform that needs to be enacted in this country. For what kind of democracy are we, if people's votes do not truly count?





## OPINION: WHAT MAYOR MAMDANI HAS DONE FOR NEW YORK CITY

by: Lia A.V.

Propaganda is at large, and no one is immune; during election seasons, echo chambers grow, and seeds of disinformation are often planted where citizens seek truth. However, veracity always prevails.

Inaugurated on January 1st 2026 as the 112th mayor of New York City, 34 year old Zohran Mamdani, a member of the Democratic Socialists of America & Democratic Party, has made great strides to improve the lives of working class New Yorkers. Mamdani, despite the original fear mongering created by right wing sources, has proved that he is more than capable of creating well-deserved change. Threats that were fabricated by outside sources include; spikes in crime, reduction of freedom, upcoming unaffordable living costs, economic collapse, etc. None of which have occurred. In fact, Mamdani is currently working towards a rent freeze, has begun to implement free childcare, and is working to raise the minimum wage in the city. Even though we live in Calgary, all his work over just 26 days really makes me want to go around saying "that's my mayor!"

Namely, for over two million New Yorkers, increasing costs of living were a great concern. Reportedly, sixty percent of citizens were unable to afford basic living costs to make ends meet! In light of this struggle, Mayor Mamdani has promised to take a financial load off his people's shoulders by temporarily freezing rent payments, while also cracking down on policies that allow for exploitative prices created by landlords.

On top of that, a pillar of Zohran's platform is childcare for all: from ages 6 weeks to 5 years, New York is on a path to become stronger in fostering early childhood development, with equality to benefit families of all classes! As of January 8th, two thousand children are set to be enrolled into the program for the fall, which will begin in lower-income neighborhoods, and gradually expand throughout the city.

Lastly, the chasm between minimum wage and inflation grows larger day by day, and while we all struggle with this disparity, it sure is nice to see someone

in power actually being proactive about it! Promising to raise New York City's minimum wage to \$30/hour by 2030, Zohran recognizes that incomes no longer cover the cost of living, and that New Yorkers should no longer be forced to live in poverty; in his own words: "when working people have more money in their pocket, the whole economy thrives."

In summary, Zohran has been one of the most effective waymakers in such a short period of time; truly, I have never seen someone get right down to the core issues in their city in only a little over three weeks. With rent freezes for all citizens, childcare for families of all classes, and a plan for a matching salary to inflation ratio, it is clear that he is a man on a mission. My final note? Trust your local socialists!



COMIC BY ANGIE Z



## COMIC

by: Pheophe O.





## A MODERN ROBIN HOOD: AN INTERVIEW WITH MR. TAYLOR

by: Ruby T.

### Tell us a bit about yourself, a little introduction

My name's Mr. Taylor to the rest of you, but the first time I walked into the building, everybody would have known me as Keaton. I'm teaching biology, and sciences in general, but mainly biology. I'm also coaching basketball.

I'm a father to two adorable little cats, and of course, they're not the same responsibility as a little person, but that's a big part of who I am. My family has always been very important to me. My mother, my grandfather, I'm very close with them.

### What are some of your hobbies/interests?

When I'm not working, I'm either skiing or I'm camping, depending on the season. I like to spend a lot of time outside. That's one of the best parts about Alberta, the public use zones, us being able to pay a flat fee and then be able to camp all over the province in some of the most beautiful scenery. I like to spend a lot of time out there, but I also spend a lot of time in the basketball gym.

### If you had to describe yourself in 3 words, what would they be?

I would say... boisterous. I would say passionate, and I would say... frustrated is the wrong word, but what I'm saying is, there's always a reason to work a little harder.

Like, there's always somebody who is putting in more time, more effort, and that seems to be a motivator if you get where I'm coming from.



### What motivates you when you're in a slump?

My family. Like I said, my mom's really important to me. I was raised in a single parent household, and she worked multiple jobs growing up just to allow me to be a kid and be a basketball player. There's some days where I don't want to get out of bed in the morning, but it doesn't matter because I come into the classroom and on the way to school, I'm thinking about how at the end of the day, there was multiple times growing up where my mom didn't want to get out of bed, but if she hadn't there wouldn't have been food on the table, or I wouldn't have been able to pay for that basketball trip.

So, for me, every single kid that walks into this classroom, they're looking for an educational experience, and I'm part of that experience. I think it's very important for me to be at my best to help these kids, and it's really important for them to know that I'm in their corner. The people in this building are more than willing to put 110% into trying to help you become a better person, a better student. And I think that is phenomenal.

### How did you end up back at Aberhart?

So, I graduated here in 2018. I played basketball at the University of Alberta, Augustana campus for three years, I got my bachelor's in science (biology), and then I transferred to the main campus and got my bachelor of education.



I graduated university in the spring of 2023. I was born and raised in Calgary, so as soon as I graduated and had no obligations in Edmonton I was back here as soon as possible. There's no way I was gonna stay in Edmonton. Right? Why was I there? Eventually, I got a three month temporary contract at Aberhart. Everybody will tell you I did an okay job because I'm still here, but I feel like I did a horrible job. I feel like I'm still doing a horrible job, but that's what keeps me motivated, right? That's what keeps me in line. I did a good enough job that when Mr. Feller went down with an injury later that year, I got to be him for a couple of weeks, and that got me to the end of first semester. I've been here every semester since.

### What changes have you noticed at Abe since you graduated?

When I first walked into school, when I was in grade 10, there was this table in the corner of the cafeteria in grade 12, and only the grade 12s were allowed to sit at that table. During a tour in grade 9, I sat down there once, and some of the grade 12s started yelling at us immediately. So now you start asking these people, and they start telling you all these stories about "the grade 12 corner".

"Don't go sit there. That's not your space." Not only that, when I was in school, the Spanish program was still here, so the demographics have changed a little bit, since now we only have two languages.

### Any advice for this year's graduating class?

I would say between now and June, you have the opportunity to make this the most memorable year of your young life. And whatever that looks like for you, I would encourage every single one of you to take a second and talk to somebody that you've wanted to talk to, but there's been an outside reason, outside influence that's been keeping you from doing that. One of the most important things I learned when I was in university was that you need to be able to break bread with anybody. So some of these people, if you would consider yourself the prototypical athlete, you wouldn't look at the prototypical musician and say, "Yeah, I want to talk to that person." Then you have a class together, and they make you laugh offhandedly, but you would have decided over the course of three years not to talk to this person 'cause that's not the way it goes. That's not real life. And I think it's very easy to get caught up in the fact that this is our school, this is our experience, but it ends in June, right? So take the time to appreciate the people that are around you. The ones you don't love, you won't ever have to see again if you don't want to. But don't burn a bridge because you never know where any of these people are gonna end up. I think it's a great experience if you can enjoy grade 12 together. Nobody has to be hanging out together all the time, but everybody's on the same page that this is our year, not my year.

### What artist would you most want to see live?

Billy Joel in New York, but not in Madison Square Garden, rather an intimate venue, somewhere in a small town in New York. That or I would say... I also have a very, very big passion to see Celine Dion. Doesn't really matter where. Especially the fact that, having gone to school in French immersion, you'd be able to experience it a little differently, when she sings in English and when she sings in French. So I think that would be awesome as well.

### What sport would you play if you were athletic?

Oh, that's a great question, and I love the way you worded it. So, if I was athletic, I would probably bowl. I think high level bowling takes some of the most dedication, time, just sheer focus out of any sport on the Earth. I also think it would be incredible to be extremely accurate with a bow. I think it's very impressive to be able to use your hand eye coordination that well. Do you know how cool it would be to be able to go to your friends and say, "I'm Robin Hood"?

All I'm saying is, bows are very cool.

### Who are your teacher friends?

Mr. Hayes was one of my first basketball coaches, and now getting to spend a lot of time with him as a coworker is phenomenal. He's a really good dude. Mr. Colautti across the hall, he's got this English

lesson and at some point where he starts screaming, what I think he's saying is "My Shayla, my Shayla!", but that's not what he's saying. I've asked him and he's like, "No, that's not what I'm saying". He's lying to me.

He's one of the most intelligent people in the building, and he knows how to tell a real story. I would also say Mr. Morante, Churchill doesn't know what they've lost. The best teacher, and one of the coolest people I've ever met in my life. Like, we are so lucky to have him.

And also, Mr. Sagriotis is hilarious. Ms. Vryenhoek is probably one of the most influential people to me in the building, and Mme. Brunelle, she was my math teacher in a subject that I was very, very poor in. And now she gets to help me learn how to be a professional. Like, those people outside of work are just great human beings. So being able to talk to them, obviously about how to be better at my job, sure, but also like who they are as people, very important to me.

### How old is your KneeDough?

This is the second iteration.

So I have like eight of these in my desk at home that I've gotten for Christmas over the last two years from students.

If I play with the old beat up ones at school, whatever happens to them, who cares? This one is six months old, has a hole in it. I dropped it the other day, landed on a marker, exploded all over the ground. I go through so many of these on a basis.

### Any closing remarks?

A lot of the grade 12s, you might find it easy to turn your brains off, but now's not the time, right? Going into your first year of university, you want the biggest base possible to avoid that first year grade drop, and you have, like I said, some of the best teachers in the city who are here to help you.

We will find ways to have fun, but try and focus on school. If you're ever around, my door is open, come say hi. There's so many people that come through this school, and I only get to interact with the ones that I teach, the ones that I coach or the ones that come see me.





## TEAM CANADA ATHLETE SPOTLIGHT - MILANO CORTINA WINTER OLYMPIC GAMES 2026

by: Maya S.

The Milano Cortina Winter Olympic Games 2026 are set to take place from February 6th to 22nd. Additionally, the Winter Paralympic Games are planned for March 6th to 15th. Canada has named 206 athletes from 14 sports to represent the country at the Olympic Games. While an official Paralympic roster has not yet been finalized, the Canadian Paralympic Committee expects to send approximately 50 athletes to compete for Canada at the Paralympic Games. Here are 6 Canadian athletes to watch during the upcoming Games:



(above)

### Alison Mackie (Cross-Country Skiing)

Alison Mackie started her skiing career early, training and racing with Edmonton Nordic Ski Club from the age of 7. Mackie earned podium spots at the 2025 FIS Junior World Championships with two bronze medals in the women's 10 km free technique and 20 km mass start classic. She was Canada's first woman to win a world junior championship medal in cross-country skiing since 1989. In 2025, Mackie debuted at the FIS Senior World Championships, skiing to two top-10 finishes. On December 19, 2025, Mackie was named to her first Olympic team and is set to make her official Olympic debut in February at just 20 years old. Cross-country skiing events will take place at the Tesserò Cross-Country Skiing Stadium from February 7th to 22nd.

(below)

### Cynthia Appiah (Bobsleigh)

Cynthia Appiah is a multi-sport athlete who graduated from York University, where she competed in track and field throwing events and earned a Bachelor of Arts in History. She was named Female Athlete of the Year in 2013. Appiah won three silver medals in three consecutive years in shot put at the CIS championships and two medals in the 20 lb weight throw. She was introduced to bobsleigh in 2011 at a testing camp at York. Appiah's Olympic career began at PyeongChang 2018 as an alternate brakewoman. She did not compete. The experience of teetering on the edge between competing and sitting out almost ended her career. With support from her teammates and coaches, she continued and transitioned from brakewoman to pilot. Her first international race as a pilot was in a two-woman event at a North American Cup in 2018. Appiah eventually made her official Olympic debut at Beijing 2022, driving as pilot in the monobob and two-woman events. During the 2021-22 season, she was consistently in the top 5 at world cup events, including many podium finishes, and finished third in the overall standings. You can catch Appiah in the women's bobsleigh events from February 12th to 22nd.



(above)

### Dominic Cozzolino (Para Ice Hockey)

Dominic Cozzolino began playing para ice hockey in 2012 after sustaining an L1 and L2 vertebrae spinal cord injury in 2009 during a minor league hockey game. He returned to the sport, joining a para hockey league with the Mississauga Cruisers. In 2017, Cozzolino helped lead Canada to gold at the World Para Ice Hockey Championship. He has also contributed to silver medals at the 2018 Paralympic Winter Games and subsequent world championships. After a period away from competition to focus on personal well-being, he helped Canada win its first world title in seven years at the World Championships in Calgary, where he was named the championship's top forward after posting 17 points in five games. An experienced member of Canada's para ice hockey team, Cozzolino will aim to lead his team to victory at Milano Cortina 2026. You can watch Cozzolino and his team at the Paralympic Games March 6th to 15th.

*(top)***Jordan Pierre-Gilles (Short Track Speed Skating)**

Jordan Pierre-Gilles's first international races were the four ISU World Cup stops in the 2019-20 season, where he won his first world cup medal in the men's 5000 m relay. Shortly thereafter, he became an Olympic gold medalist in the men's 5000 m relay at Beijing 2022 alongside teammates Pascal Dion, Steven Dubois, Charles Hamelin, and Maxime Laoun. In the 2024-25 season, Pierre-Gilles finished third in the men's 500 m at the ISU Short Track World Tour and pushed Team Canada to claim the Team Crystal Globe. He also reaped two world tour relay victories, ending the season on the podium. Although he suffered a knee injury in summer 2025 that kept him out of the Canadian championships in August, he was still named to the 2025-26 ISU Short Track World Tour team. After competing with the men's 5000 m relay team for three stops, he returned to individual events in late November. Now Olympics-ready, you can watch Pierre-Gilles in the men's short track events from February 10th to 20th.

*(bottom)***Mikaël Kingsbury (Freestyle Skiing)**

Mikaël Kingsbury is widely considered to be one of the most dominant moguls skiers of all time. After Beijing 2022, he became the first male moguls skier to win three Olympic medals, with a silver at Sochi 2014, gold at PyeongChang 2018, and another silver at Beijing 2022. He is a nine-time world champion at the FIS World Championships and has never missed the moguls podium at these events. By January 2022, he became the first man to earn 100 World Cup podiums. In February 2024, his 87th World Cup victory earned him the title of male athlete with the most World Cup wins in any ski or snowboard event, leading him to surpass Swedish alpine skier Ingemar Stenmark. Kingsbury is known for his lucky T-shirt that reads "It's good to be the king," which he has worn since his first world cup podium in 2010. You can catch Kingsbury in the moguls events from February 10th to 15th.

*(middle)***Natalie Spooner (Ice Hockey)**

Natalie Spooner began her collegiate career at Ohio State University in 2008, where she earned a Bachelor of Science in Nutrition and set a school record for goals in 2011-12. She was an NCAA First Team All-American and finished her Buckeyes career as the school's all-time leader in goals. Post-graduation, Spooner was drafted by the Toronto Furries of the CWHL and became a three-time Olympic medallist in women's ice hockey - gold at Sochi 2014, silver at PyeongChang 2018, and gold at Beijing 2022. She has also won 11 medals at the IIHF Women's World Championship. After winning the 2024 World Championship, Spooner was awarded the Billie Jean King Award as the MVP of the PWHL and was named the IIHF's Female Player of the Year for 2024. Spooner is also the first player to compete for three national teams: the U-18 Women's Team, the U-22 Women's Team, and the National Women's Team. You can watch Spooner and Team Canada's women's ice hockey team from February 5th to 19th as they compete for gold.

Canada is sending one of its largest and most accomplished Winter Games teams to Milano Cortina 2026. The 206 Olympians and 50 Paralympians expected to compete under the maple leaf span a remarkable range of sports and experience levels, from first time rising stars such as Alison Mackie to seasoned veterans like Mikaël Kingsbury and Natalie Spooner. Over the course of February and March, Team Canada needs the support of Canadians at home and around the world. All events will be live streamed on CBC Gem. Go Canada!





# HOW THE RULING SYSTEM INFLUENCES DESIGN

## PART ONE: AUTHORITARIANISM

by: Sawyer K.E.

Three pictures in photo folder please include where there is space

The designs of the world we live in are dictated by many factors such as their environment, designers, and funds. However these will not be the focus in this article, instead, we will focus on how the ruling system dictates designs, more specifically how an authoritarian government affects design. We will mainly be discussing design in relation to architecture with a focus on state built and commissioned buildings.

What do you think of when hearing about authoritarian leaders? Most likely it is 20th century Europe with leaders like Stalin, Mussolini, and Hitler. They are the token dictators in history and they will be the main leaders we will talk about. Now you might think that many of the styles of authoritarian leaders are quite varied which is mostly true, however they all have two things in common. Firstly, the scale of the projects that they either constructed or designed, secondly an influence from times of old.

The first point, scale, is by far the most recognizable trait of an authoritarian project, but why across many different cultures and time periods do all authoritarian structures require such a large scale? This is to smother the individualism of the people in the state. This works because it makes the people feel small in comparison to the structures around them, making it easier to conform to what is expected



of them. This leads to an easier time controlling the masses and suppressing revolutions. We can see examples of this in every dictator's plans, but Adolf Hitler's post war vision is a good example. He had a plan to create the city of Germania, this was a proposed complete reconstruction of Berlin to stand at the center of the German Empire, and the scale for this city was to be like no other. It would have the largest building, the largest stadium, and even the largest boulevard; all of these things were to one, show the power and scale of the German Empire, but also because it would be easy to spot differences in a massive place where everybody is doing the same thing. This is one example of why dictators would use a large scale in their designs.

The second point is the influence from times of old. This trait is less noticeable than the scale, but it is important all the same. Most modern dictators have tried to invoke old and traditional motifs in their

designs. This is either to invoke a sense of pride in the people to remember their past or it is to compare themselves to empires of old. This is most apparent in Fascist Italy where most of their designs call back to the Roman Empire. They did this to make the Italian people feel pride in their state because they idolize the Roman Empire. Italy was not the only country to do this, other notable examples would be early communist China calling back to traditional designs in their country. Both of these countries used old design ideas as a form of propaganda, making the people consider their country as great as the ones in history.

There are many influences when it comes to designing buildings and authoritarian governments can play a big role in design choices. There are countless other influences, this is just one, other Governmental influences will be discussed in future editions.





## CANCEL CULTURE; A MEASURE OF ACCOUNTABILITY OR JUSTIFIED BULLYING?

by: Karina C.

In the past years, 'Cancel Culture' has been a raging social debate. People from all over the globe have tuned in to share opinions on the ideology of this new societal method of expression. As these opinions were split, two sides were formed, which led to the scientific and more fact-based exploration of the topic. Those in favour of the accountability and reforms made due to the cancellation of a person, comprised one side. On the other, those who believe humanity is falling into a society of mob mentality.

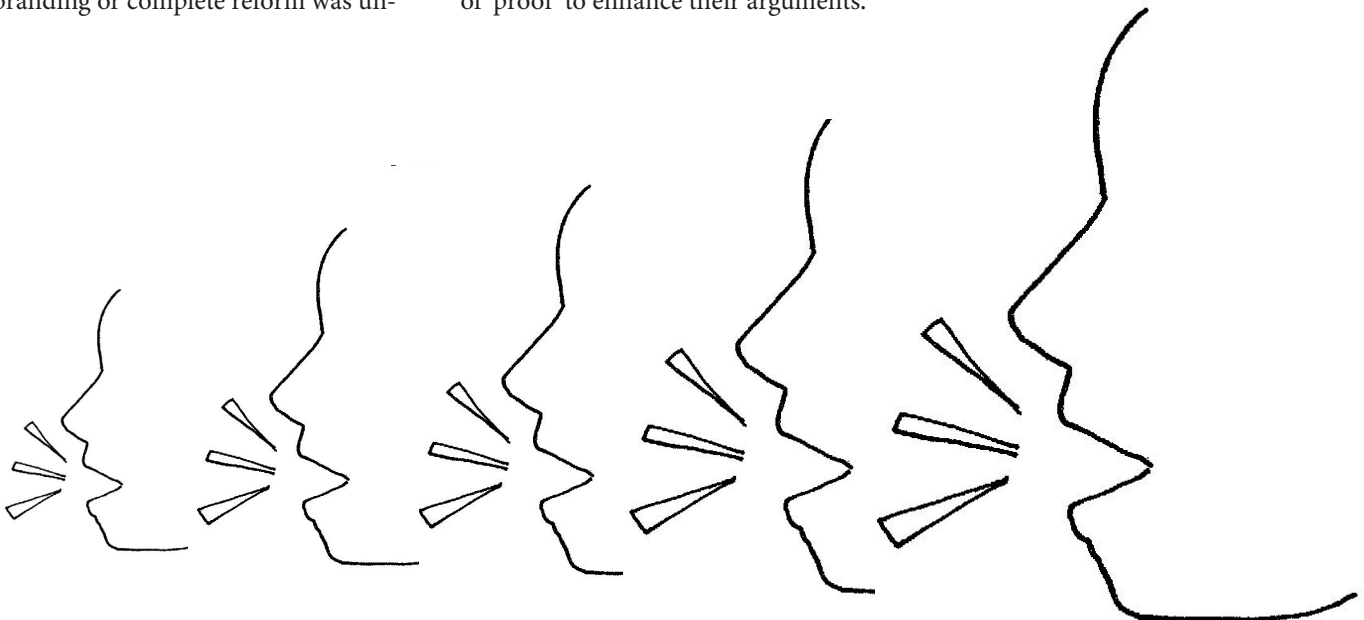
Now, to fully understand the debate, it's important to explore the motivations and perspectives of both sides. Firstly, those in favour. Many people believe that 'Cancel Culture' is a meaningful way for one person or a marginalized population to express discontent, specifically through social media. A rather common way for people to protest companies, or specific individuals, is boycotting. Generally, boycotting occurs when either advertisements, branding, or a perceived injustice happens and a large enough portion of the original consumer base stops purchasing products, forcing change. For example, Aunt Jemmima's Pancake Mix and Syrup, after being canceled and boycotted because of outdated racial stereotypes, had to rebrand the whole company to the Pearl Milling Company. This is a clear example of the real change Cancel Culture makes, since just one person fighting alone can be brushed past, but not the majority of the consumer base of a company. Either rebranding or complete reform was un-

dertaken by more than five multi-million dollar companies due to boycotting in just 2021. Specific individuals can also be cancelled due to boycotting. In this case, the goal of the cancellation is not reform, but severe consequences for the poor behaviour of the individual. Any business owned by or affiliated with the individual may be boycotted, as well as other measures such as the removal of public speaking opportunities, pressure on affiliate organizations to withdraw support, and in-person protests or rallies. It is clear that while this stance may not objectively be correct, the argument is understandable, because Cancel Culture gives voices to those who have experienced injustices, help them create a true cause through awareness spread on social media, and feel empowered or justified.

As previously stated, this is not a one-sided debate. The opposing side consists of those who believe that Cancel Culture is a hidden form of a mindless mob mentality slowly overtaking more of our society each day. While this may sound harsh, this topic as a whole is harsh. If an individual has one slip-up or lapse in judgement they could be facing termination in employment, loss of familial connection, or the dissolution of major relationships. In addition, one major flaw of cancel culture is the fact that most of the people in the accusatory group don't even know if the allegations are true or credible. Especially with the extra aspect of Artificial Intelligence (A.I.) anyone can make fake pieces of 'proof' to enhance their arguments.

Lastly, and the largest issue with Cancel Culture, is bullying. One action amounts to a person's entire worth. Their whole life, including hidden good deeds, are forsaken. The ideology has been described as a public shaming exercise undertaken by those who feel on a moral high ground or with a higher level due to a sense of indignation. Sometimes the act of cancelling can include death threats or other terrible comments leading to very real consequences as well. This can be so brutal that sometimes the means by which a person is cancelled are worse than the offence originally punished. This is similar to cyberbullying, those part of the mob find it easier to rudely and harshly punish these individuals because of the shield or mask they get to hide behind. Social norms, ethics, and rules are disregarded on account of both the perceived necessity to punish the wrongdoer and the perceived moral high ground of the punisher. Because of this, cancel culture has even been compared to the treatment of prisoners or criminals in some instances. Their wrongdoing eliminates the person as a whole with a history, story, and complexity.

So, while this deep debate has no visible conclusion, the topic should not be brushed past or forgotten about. On one hand, cancel culture allows for people who would otherwise have no power against big celebrities or companies to hold them accountable. On the other hand, the repercussions or means to cancel a person can be much worse than the original offense.



# HALCYON

by: Laura Z.

On a calm Tuesday afternoon in February, the crowd at The Metropolitan was scarce. Thomas had wandered past the more commercial exhibits, down a particular set of hallways as he drew away from the lull of the few self-declared art appraisers, and had ended up in an echoing room he was sure he'd never seen before.

The walls were a pale blue, adorned with paintings of wars, women, and landscapes in golden frames. A chandelier hung from the ceiling, sunlight peeking through the windows angled just above him. Thomas glanced around, unfamiliar in the setting, though he was sure he knew the museum by heart. He'd often wandered whenever he was here, letting his feet take him wherever they felt inclined to lead him that day, to whatever old piece he so fancied to see. He often thought about the stillness of the museum. How the memories of artists centuries ago were present enough for him to be able to relive their very lives through their works.

He frequented the museum often, but never for long. On certain days he found himself standing in front of one work only, without so much as glancing at any others. He would memorize it, often taking out his worn notebook to jot down a couple thoughts before leaving. He'd done it for years now, every couple of weeks when he found the time. Though he didn't think himself a critic by any means, his favourites were the paintings depicting the countryside, all rolling fields and bright skies. He always felt a bit more at home when he spotted them.

Here, however, he was lost. As if to help regain his orientation, Thomas wandered closer to the nearest wall, his eyes falling on an image of a boy standing in a bright

green field, a sunhat on his head of curls and a grey pup roaming curiously amid his legs, nipping playfully at the long blades of grass curling around his ankles. A soft feeling melted in Thomas' chest as he reminisced of summers spent as a boy in the countryside of his homeland. A decade ago he had still been in England, but when he looked at the painting, it felt like he had never left. The sun peered through the wispy clouds, painting gold into the boy's hair, embroidering his shirt, and he recalled the same linens of his mother's skirts, sweet-smelling as she held him in the evenings after a long day of work spent outside. A flock of sheep grazed in the distance, a sea of white clouds amongst the green plain. Thomas smiled faintly at the sight. His own flock had been handsome, back in England, and he had taken great pride in them back then.

Thomas glanced around the room, yet he was still alone. His eyes fell on the engraving below. *Halcyon, 1902, unknown artist.* It wasn't unusual to find a piece without an artist laying claim to it, but something about it bugged Thomas as he reread the words. It was dated ten years back, and the usual painter-less works were left nameless, or with some vague description for a title. *Halcyon* was strange, specific. He wondered if it was, in reality, desired anonymity on behalf of the artist.

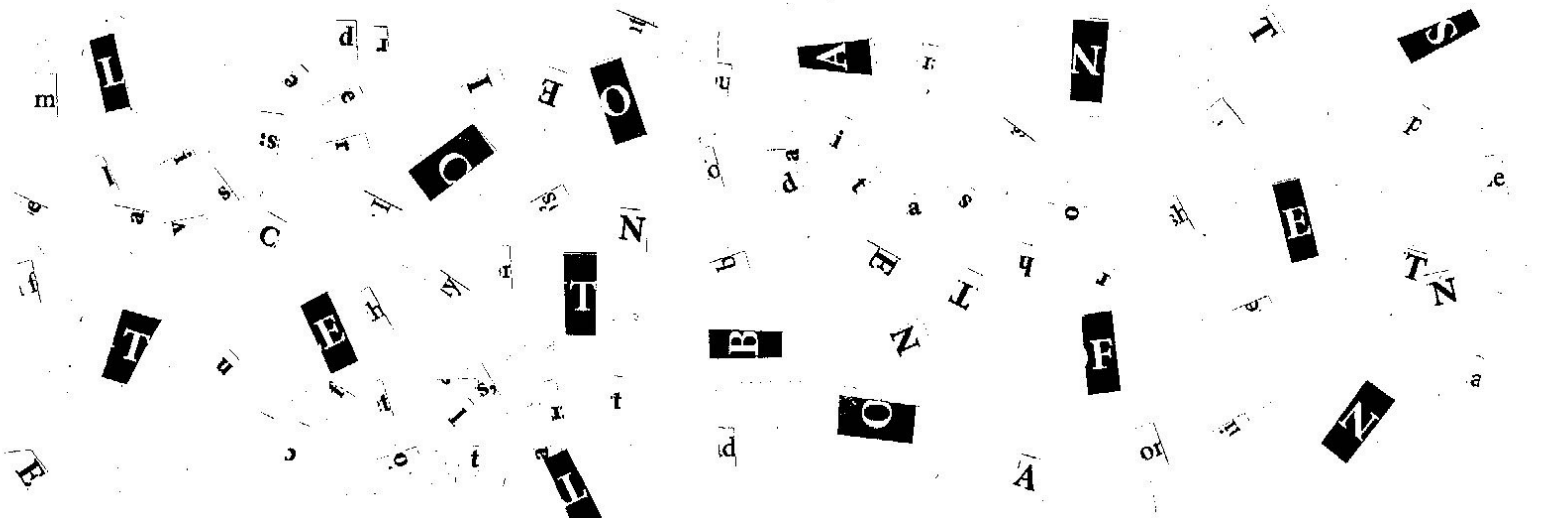
He peered closer, and his brow furrowed, eyes scanning the canvas with precision. The boy, contrarily to his warm surroundings, looked almost cold with grief. His skin was tinted blue, almost frozen, and his expression tear-stained as he gazed into the stretching fields. His hair had grown dull before Thomas' eyes, as if it were showcasing his unease. Thomas

breathed deeply, unable to look away from the sudden transformation. The pup—no, it wasn't a pup anymore—bared a row of shining teeth at the boy. Its shaggy fur was steel silver as it snapped at his legs, wolf-like.

It was almost daunting how the memories flashed in Thomas' eyes. A cold morning, so foggy that it was impossible to see more than an arms length in front of oneself. He'd taken the sheep anyway, which, looking back, had been foolish on his part. He tried hard to forget how he'd heard that howl, how he'd tracked the steps of his herd only to be left with nothing but a few feeble bodies, their last breaths ringing out on the field. He still remembered how he'd held one in particular as she bled out in his arms, how he'd ended it with tears in his eyes, so that the animal could have a quick end.

He'd booked passage for New York shortly after.

Blinking back the memories, Thomas turned to walk away, but not before daring one last glance at the painting. A warm day, a happy pup, and a young shepherd. He cursed himself for having imagined it. It didn't matter now, as he walked through the winding hallways back to the front entrance. That part of his life was over, and it did Thomas no good to dwell over it. A shiver ran down his spine, and he dared a look over his shoulder, back towards the room. A figure stood in the shadows, unmoving, but Thomas knew it was there. Its shining teeth gleaming even in the darkness. Thomas blinked, and it was gone, nothing but a trick of the light. With an overwrought sigh, Thomas stepped out into the streets of New York.



by: Lia A.V.

January is typically a gloomy, grey month; however, it is also a period of transformation for many of us. Feeling stuck in between the new and the old is more than common, and so I want to recommend some songs that give off that same feeling! These have been my January favourites, and I really hope you can find at least one you adore.

Up first is "Coraline" by Måneskin—now, I will preface, the song is in Italian, but despite not knowing the language, the melody is simply sublime. It represents a story with a "beginning, middle, and end," according to the band's drummer, Ethan Torchio. This one is dedicated to all who seem trapped in something that troubles you, while feeling like you aren't able to completely free yourself from it, especially in the fictional muse's (Coraline's) case, where she cannot escape her own mind.

Next, I hope more people will have the

## SONGS OF THE MONTH

transcendent experience of listening to "Egg" by Djo for the first time. Truly, this song is like none other. With a more electronic sound, it tells the tale of a man who is on a mission to see himself through the eyes of the world, while also struggling to find a middle ground between his fears, regrets, and emotions. I can't put into words the feeling this one gives me, but it is genuinely so addicting, and has been one of my favourites ever since the album, *The Crux*, was released this spring.

Now, Aberhart is (obviously) a French Immersion school, and as a Frenchie, I am grateful every day for the privilege to understand some of the prettiest songs that came from France. "Des Excuses" by Pomme is a beautifully tragic ballad from the perspective of a woman who finds herself enamored with someone who is chronically avoidant. Mentally, she tries to find excuses to defend her lover, because she isn't quite ready to let go of them.

Instead, she succumbs to her internal thoughts, attempting to understand this mysterious beau.

Lastly, I only found out about this band this summer, as they were an opener for the Deftones concert in August; I cannot talk about my January favourites without mentioning Phantogram. Their song, "When I'm Small," has carried me through a few of my rough days. The melancholic acoustics paired with the lyrics from a singer who is conflicted with themselves, asking things like "am I still alive, or has the light gone black?" catalyzes a moment of self reflection: Am I really where I want to be? Or am I simply on autopilot?

These four songs have been on repeat for me, and I am so excited to be able to share them with you! On another note, I promise, if I do this section in the next edition, I'll pick some happier songs...

## ABERHART INTRODUCES ITS FIRST ALL-GIRLS ROBOTICS TEAMS

by: Ana F.

The Aberhart Robotics Club is a long standing extracurricular offered at Abe, and has taught many students over the years about STEM, engineering, coding and mechanics. This year, however, the club looks a little different as it has properly introduced its first all-girls team.

### Robotics:

Even though robotics is an internationally practiced discipline among students, with teams ranging from Amsterdam to California, many people don't know much about it.

There are many robotics leagues, but Aberhart participates in the most common, the FIRST Tech Challenge (FTC). Each year FTC teams are given a different task that their 18 by 18 inch robot must perform (e.g., shooting balls into goals, lifting game elements, stacking up cones) that always are connected to a practical, real world, scientific function. Every team has around 3-4 months to design, build, and program their robots for competition, where they compete in several alliance-based matches with other teams from the surrounding area. Each match is divided into two main sections: autonomous (the robot must run on its own) and TELEOP (the robot is driven manually by game controllers).

There are many different ways to get points in matches, and every alliance has a unique strategy to win. If a team consistently places very well in all of their tournaments they will be invited to world championships in Houston Texas, with thousands of the best teams from all around the world.

Robotics gives students the opportunity to design, engineer, problem solve, work with others, and strategize creatively, while enhancing their technical abilities in CAD, programming, electrical wiring and building.

### Robotics at Aberhart:

The Aberhart robotics club, run by Mr. Wehnes and Ms. A, meets two times a week after school, and is composed of four FTC teams. Three of our teams are competing in the FTC Buffalo Jump qualifiers, in hopes to make it to Alberta provincials at the end of February. Our club welcomes members of all experience and skill levels and gives students a space to practice STEM learning, the engineering process, and collaboration.

### The Aberhart girls team:

The Aberhart Codettes is the first ever all girls robotics team at Aberhart, and unlike the other teams within the club,

they are the only student-founded team. The Aberhart Codettes was created in January of 2025 by a group of girls looking to increase the amount of female participation within Abe robotics after noticing the lack of girls in the club. In order to be recognized as a real team, a couple of our members had to present and work with the principal, advocating for the importance of an all girls team, which ultimately succeeded.

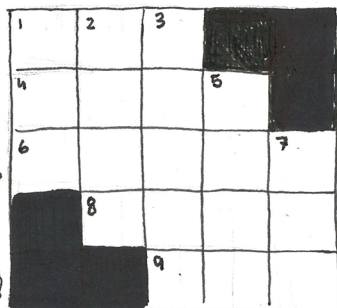
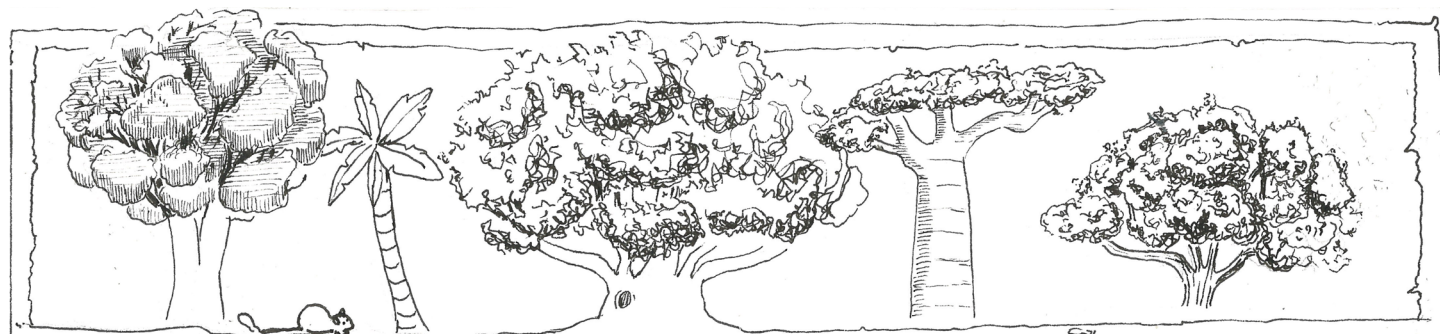
Despite being approved, the school wasn't able to fund a whole new robot due to the uncertainty of the team's ability to compete last year. As a result, the team members personally financed the initial robot while applying for grants. Their efforts paid off when they were awarded the Gene Haas Grant, receiving approximately \$2,000 USD at the end of the season.

This year, the Codettes introduced five new members to FTC and doubled the number of girls participating in the Aberhart Robotics Club. In their first competitive season, they successfully designed and programmed a three-artifact shooting robot. In December, the team placed second at the Buffalo Jump Scrimmage and placed fifth in the qualifiers last weekend!



by: Max C.

## PUZZLES



## DOWN

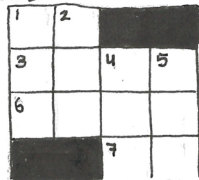
1. WHAT YOU MIGHT FEELING AFTER A WORKOUT  
 2. MESSY EATER  
 3. CIVIC MAKER  
 4. BARTLETT, BOSC, ANJOU, E.G.  
 5. WHERE YOU ARE (TO A PILOT)  
 6. POKEMON PROTAGONIST  
 7. HOOFBEAT SOUND  
 8. FOOD THAT CAN'T SPOIL  
 9. ANNUAL CELEBRATION, BRIEFLY  
 10. STORY LINE PROGRESSION

PUZZLE BY MAX  
SHEET

FIND 8 TREE TYPES HIDDEN IN THE WORDSEARCH!

A O G P T O R S P B D A O M L  
 C P I I B A O B A B O P E A R  
 O I N N Q C D R L C U P T P I  
 L H G E B E E V M R G L R O L  
 O A K B A F H D M T L E S N U  
 S E O M L O S O E H B Q F M A  
 P K L V S F L K V R S H I L Z  
 M A S M A P L E R F S O R T M

## X-TRA CROSSWORD



## ACROSS

1. TWO KISSES  
 3. CANDLES DISPLAYED ON A ROMAN'S 40TH BIRTHDAY?  
 6. ANOTHER WAY TO WRITE A MONOMIAL 4TH-DEGREE POLYNOMIAL  
 7. EYES OF A CARTOON CORPSE

## DOWN

1. WINNING TIC TAC TOE MOVE?  
 2. TENTACION (RAPPER)  
 4. MOONSHINE LABEL?  
 5. RELATING TO EXPLICIT MATERIAL

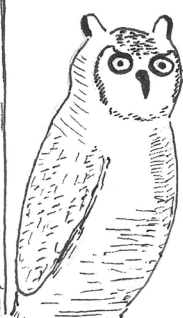
WHAT LETTER GOES IN THE ?  
SQUARE CONSIDERING THE PAT-  
-ERN

• A N G L E

• R E

• G O N

• ?

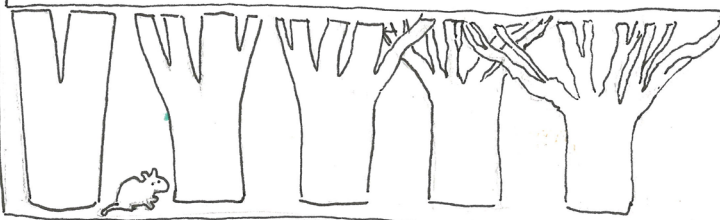


WINSTON THE GREAT HORNED OWL HAS BEEN UNSUCCESSFUL IN HUNTING. HELP HIM OUT BY CIRCLED 8 PREY YOU CAN FIND AROUND THE SHEET. GOODLUCK!



COUPON FOR FREE JUICE BOX (IN THE CAF)

"ALL THE BRANCHES OF A TREE AT ANY STAGE OF IT'S HEIGHT WHEN PUT TOGETHER ARE EQUAL IN THICKNESS TO THE TRUNK." - DAVINCI. USING THIS TIP TRY DRAWING A TREE AS WELL.



— DRAW TREE HERE —