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## New Year's resolution: tune into Canadian women's sports!

Women's sports are becoming more popular, exploding in visibility across North America and around the globe, and are bound to continue on this upward trajectory in 2025. Don't miss out!

Dori Sutherland

While Canadian fans have traditionally had to look internationally to watch their favourite female athletes, investments in domestic female professional leagues have begun to surge in the last couple of years. Here are a few things to look forward to in the Canadian women's sports landscape in 2025 and beyond!

### Women's Hockey

The Premier Women's Hockey League (PWHL) had a highly successful launch last year, with its inaugural season drawing national media attention and large crowds. An April 20, 2024 regular season clash between Toronto and Montreal franchises set a global record for attendance at a women's hockey game, with 21,105 fans attending the game in Montreal and a total cumulative attendance of 392,259 at all games.

Following its successful first iteration, the 2024-2025 season represents a step forward for the league, with branding and team names being introduced to each franchise for the first time.

The PWHL projects strong growth as it enters into its second season. League executives are already looking to add two new expansion franchises as early as the 2025-2026 season, capitalizing on the league's growing popularity and bringing women's hockey to new markets. Possible Canadian contenders for new franchises include Calgary and Quebec City.

Be sure to tune in this season! Canadian teams to follow include the Montreal Victoire, Ottawa Charge, and Toronto Sceptres. With expansion on the horizon, there will hopefully be more teams to cheer for that are closer to



Ottawa's Daryl Watts hits the post as Minnesota goalie Nicole Hensley stretches to make the save during PWHL hockey action on January 17, 2024 in Ottawa | Adrian Wyld | THE CANADIAN PRESS

home. The league boasts an abundance of talent, with many of the world's best female hockey players. Coverage of the league will primarily be on TSN, with some Saturday games and all Tuesday games broadcasting on CBC and Prime Video, respectively.

### Women's Basketball

While it was a great year for professional women's sports, women's basketball was arguably the most successful, surging in popularity and capturing the attention of sports fans and non-sports fans alike.

The 2024 National College Athletics Association (NCAA) women's basketball championship match between the University of Iowa and the University of South Carolina in April was an especially significant pop culture moment. The college final game shattered viewership records with an average of 18.9 million viewers, representing a whopping 90% increase

from 2023 and a 289% increase from 2022.

The hype didn't die there. The 2024 Women's National Basketball Association (WNBA) season, which started the following month, attracted an all-time high of 52 million viewers and a total attendance of 2.3 million fans. The WNBA's 154 sellouts this season marked a 242% increase from the league's 45 sellout games from the previous season.

In the face of this success, the WNBA is expanding into new markets with three new franchises. San Francisco's Golden State Valkyries will begin play in the 2025 season, while the Toronto Tempo and an unnamed Portland franchise will join the league in 2026, bringing the total number of teams to 15.

The Toronto Tempo represents the WNBA's first venture into an untapped

Canadian market. The franchise was inspired by the city of Toronto's vibrant pulse and energy, and fans were able to suggest names, and this outreach received over 10,000 responses.

The Expansion Draft will take place in December 2025, allowing Toronto to create its preliminary roster. The team will take to the court for their inaugural 40-game season in May 2026.

Although it will still be another year and a half before we can cheer on Canada's first WNBA team, Canadian fans can still familiarize themselves with the league. During the regular season, certain WNBA games are available throughout Canada on various streaming services including SportsNet, TSN, Prime Video, CBS Sports Network, NBA TV Canada, Meta, X (formerly known as Twitter), and the WNBA league pass.

Continued on page 13.

# Calling all gamers to the Saskatoon Game Jam!

USask computer science students share their experience with game development opportunities offered on campus.



People sitting on a gaming chair while playing video games | Alena Darmel from Pexels | Canva Pro

## Darshana Lanke

Do you like playing video games like *Minecraft* and *Pac-Man*? Are you interested in creating your own video game? If so, the Saskatoon Game Jam is happening from January 24 to 26!

Game Jam is an opportunity to test your coding skills and passion for gaming, and combine them to create your very own video game. Over the course of 48 hours, you can create a video or a board game based on the specific theme announced at the event. You can work individually or in a team of any size. If you are an avid gamer but not a coder, you are also encouraged to come out and join a team as an artist or sound person for the game development.

The jamming starts at 7 p.m. on January 24 and ends at 8 p.m. on January 26, and takes place on the 3rd floor of the Spinks addition in the Thorvaldson Building. Pizza lunches will be provided on Saturday and Sunday.

USask students and community are invited to test and play the games developed at the Game Jam at 5 p.m. on Sunday!

The event is organized by Micheal Long, who develops games as the director and lead programmer at Foolish Mortal Games and also taught a game development class, *CMPT 306: Game Mechanics* at USask this past Fall 2024 term. Dawson Epp, Kate Wright and Mariana Hans shared their insights from taking the course and their experiences with game development.

Epp, Wright and Hans are third-year computer science students at USask who developed *Gimme Another Round!* in their Game Mechanics class with classmate Elaine Nguyen. Epp mentions that he grew up playing games and that CMPT 306 was the “perfect chance to try [out game development].” Meanwhile, Wright explains her interest in taking the class is because it “is a blend of my complementary passions for technology and creativity – which meant I got to advance both my coding and art skills while taking the class!”

While all of them had two years of coding experience under their belt and are avid coders, Hans and Wright say they didn’t go into the class with a lot

of prior experience developing games and game development-specific knowledge. Hans said that her prior experience included coding small games inspired by online tutorials and that her personal favourite was a cookie clicker dupe, a game where the player repeatedly clicks on a moving cookie to collect points. Epp noted that his experience included coding games during SCI-FI Science Camps in elementary school and in the game engine Unity during high school through the Game On program, offered by the Saskatoon Industry Education Council. This eight-week boot camp explores the logic and mechanics of game development and gets students to create a customized game project. This boot camp was taught to Epp and Wright by USask professor Jason Bowey.

Hans says that she learned a lot about developing software in project settings and game development concepts that are also applicable to other computer science areas through the class. Wright agrees, complimenting the instructors of the course, Jordan Schidlowsky and Michael Long, for giving the students “lots of opportunity to learn industry-

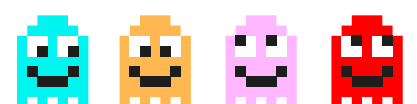
relevant tips and tricks to apply to game development and a future career in game design.” Hans adds, “Shout out to Tristen our TA for being awesome and helpful!”

*Gimme Another Round!* is a single-player, 2-D shooter game with the aim being to have the highest score. Set in a western saloon, to complete a round, the player must shoot all the bottles in increasing numerical order before the timer runs out. While the ammunition is unlimited, every missed shot takes seconds off the clock. Epp encourages readers to try out the game asking, “Will you be fast enough to order another round?”

The group had an initial brainstorming session to gather ideas and outline the project. Hans says “We didn’t want to deal with the physics engine, so that limited our game mechanics options, and Kate had this cool idea of a shooting game where you have to press random keys that pop up on the screen and it just kept going from there. We got the saloon idea from Elaine and then we started our prototype right away.” Epps mentions that from that first meeting “only half of those original thoughts ended up actually making the cut.” Hans talks about prioritizing getting a simple, unique game to work, after which they then “kept adding features like the leaderboard, special bottles, and different game modes.”

The team used Godot, a game engine which they hadn’t used before, for this project and their assignments in the class. Wright says that “in the beginning, there was a lot to learn, but after doing an entire game prototype in Godot, it no longer seems so daunting.” She adds, “It just goes to show that great things can happen when placed in a challenging environment with the proper resources and people to help you succeed.”

Continued on page 14.



# Philosophy for All: A 20-Year Tradition of Thoughtful Dialogue

Marking two decades of fostering meaningful conversations and intellectual exploration with Philosophy in the Community.

Sean Erhardt

For nearly two decades, the Department of Philosophy at USask has organized *Philosophy in the Community*, a free monthly lecture and discussion series designed to make philosophy accessible to everyone. It began in the 2005-2006 academic year thanks to Dr. Emer O'Hagan's vision, and today, it's led by Dr. Sarah Hoffman, the head of the Philosophy Department, as Hoffman explained in a recent conversation. As it approaches its 20th anniversary, this initiative continues to exemplify the department's commitment to fostering intellectual curiosity and enriching the lives of our community.

The series operates as a public service, aiming to share the joys and insights of philosophical reflection and discussion with a broader audience. No background in philosophy is necessary. All that is asked of participants is an open and curious mind. Each session includes coffee and promises thought-provoking ideas and lively discussion.

*Philosophy in the Community* takes place at The Refinery, located in the cozy basement of Emmanuel Anglican Church at 607 Dufferin Ave. The series occurs on the second Friday of each month from September through March, according to the Philosophy Department's website. The event venue is accessible to all members of the public. Attendees with mobility challenges are encouraged to contact the organizer in advance at sarah.hoffman@usask.ca to arrange access via an external ramp and elevator.

*Philosophy in the Community* kicked off this academic year last September with Hoffman's lecture, "Why Hope? Reflections on Addiction and Psychedelics." The room was filled to capacity, with people standing in the back and a mix of faculty, students, and community members in attendance. Hoffman shared her thoughts on how hope plays a key role in overcoming addiction, drawing from the work of Adrienne Martin. She then explored the

potential of psychedelic-assisted therapy as a promising approach to substance use disorders, highlighting how hope can foster engagement with the world and support resilience and transformation in the face of adversity.

The lecture was followed by a lively discussion, which had to be cut short due to the volume of questions. The public shared personal stories about pharmaceutical and recreational substance use experiences. Students deepened the conversation by referencing other philosophical models of addiction, choice, and autonomy. The dialogue on hope and faith was rich, as differing viewpoints gave way to unexpected common ground and new insights.

One longtime participant shared a fascinating story: taking mescaline as an undergraduate before performing with an orchestra in front of a packed audience, including his parents. As he described it, the music seemed to pour out of him effortlessly, as if the boundaries between himself and his instrument had become fluid. He admitted that he'd been chasing the feeling ever since. Afterward, he remembered his mother commenting that he looked like he was having the time of his life, which left the room in laughter.

November's lecture on "Existential Therapy and Climate Anxiety" was presented by Erin Greer, who holds an MA in Philosophy and an MA in Counselling Psychology. Hoffman and Greer shared their experiences with *Philosophy in the Community* over the years during a recent conversation.

Hoffman reflected on the core group of regulars who've been coming for nearly two decades, sharing how fulfilling it's been to see the community grow. Hoffman and Greer noted a significant increase in attendance since COVID-19, highlighting a strong public demand for community philosophy. Hoffman recalled her February 2023 lecture, "Can Psychedelics Really Make People

Better?" which attracted over 100 attendees despite miserable weather.

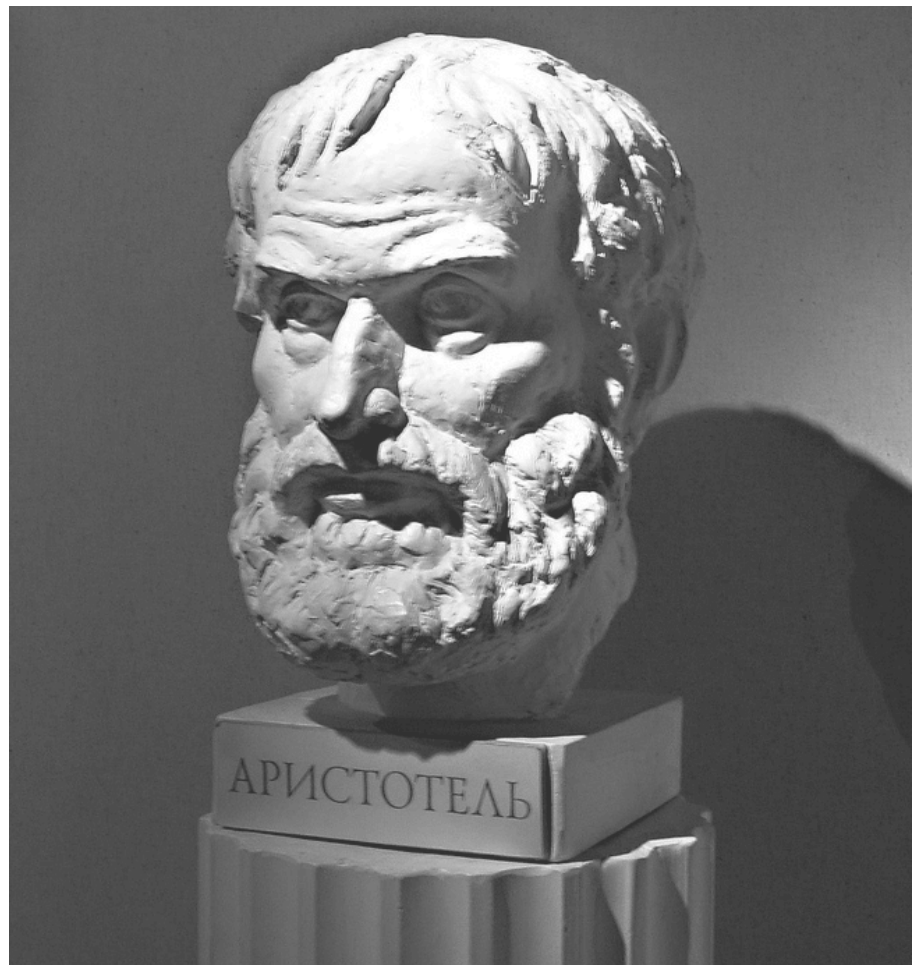
Greer recognized that philosophy can seem intimidating to some, but she pointed out that *Philosophy in the Community* is the perfect place to dive in and get involved. She explained that philosophy is not an isolated pursuit but thrives through discussion and interaction with diverse viewpoints. This format, she noted, fosters critical thinking by encouraging dialogue on a range of ideas in a welcoming setting.

The next talk, scheduled for January 10, will be delivered by O'Hagan, titled "Lies, Respect for Others, and Evil." It will examine Immanuel Kant's argument against lying, which is rooted in the idea that lying disrespects the autonomy of others. O'Hagan will explore Kant's reasoning, including his controversial stance on truth-telling even in morally challenging situations, such as lying to an inquiring murderer. The session will conclude with small group discussions, inviting participants to reflect on the nature and limits of the

wrongness of lying.

From February to April, the lecture series will tackle diverse topics. Political Studies and Women's and Gender Studies professor Rachel Loewen-Walker will delve into Jeanette Winterson's *The Stone Gods* and Gilles Deleuze's concept of the Living Present, exploring how non-linear timelines can reimagine histories, futures, and our sense of community. Mathematics and Philosophy professor Derek Postnikoff will examine whether mathematical truths are discovered or created. To end the academic year, Philosophy professor Ria Jenkins will explore the philosophical perplexities surrounding the rule of law, focusing on Vincent Chiao's concept of "hyperlexis," or the issue of too many laws, and how this complexity challenges Canada's status as a rule of law jurisdiction.

You can find more information on the Department of Philosophy website under the Community tab.



Aristotle's Bust | PhilSign from Getty Images Signature | Canva Pro

# Second Annual Arts & Science Gala Happening on January 17

The Arts & Science Students' Union presents their second annual Arts & Science Gala, celebrating the success of USask College of Arts & Science students.

Francisca Lopez Molina

For the second year in a row, the Arts & Science Students' Union (ASSU) is hosting a gala at Louis' Pub on January 17, to recognize student success and display some recent work done by the college's students. Fourth-year history student and ASSU President Owen Deis hopes to expand the event compared to last year.

Deis, who served the ASSU as the Vice President of Academic Affairs last year, explained that last year's gala "inspired [the ASSU] to a point — the way we look at it is we just want to make it bigger."

The gala will be held at Louis' Pub in the Memorial Union Building on the evening of January 17. Among music, food, and dancing, it will include a Student Research Symposium open to all Arts & Science undergraduate students and a silent art auction. Students auctioning their art pieces receive most of the profit, but a portion is used to fund Arts & Science scholarships provided by the ASSU.

Last year's gala was very successful according to Deis. Including food, dancing, a silent art auction, and undergraduate research posters, the event was attended by many guests and raised around \$1,500, which was

directed towards providing scholarships for Arts & Science students. Maya Soifer, a third-year political studies major and the Vice President of External Affairs for the ASSU, explained that they are incorporating the silent art auction and undergraduate research displays in this year's gala as well.

Deis also expressed that he's most looking forward to "seeing the student research and art, being able to showcase what the Arts & Science College is capable of — what our students are capable of." He added that part of the goal of the gala is to connect students with alumni, faculty, and hopefully outside organizations, as well as provide an opportunity for students to further their research and art skills.

According to Soifer, a major focus of the gala is community building. "We've talked about this a few times between [ASSU Executives], how a lot of the time in Arts & Science, because it's such a big college, there's not much interaction between departments. People tend to be close in their groups, but there's not necessarily that connection between different people," she explained. "So, we're hoping to have an event where we can bring together all of the different departments, all of the students, and give people the opportunity to network

with faculty and alumni and create that sense of community."

The 2025 ASSU Gala will be held on January 17 at 8 p.m. at Louis' Pub (93 Campus Drive). It is a 19+ event.

For students, "early bird" tickets are available online through the ASSU website and can be purchased for \$15 until January 16. Tickets can also be obtained at the ASSU Office, located in Arts 218 (on the second floor of the Arts Building, walking straight ahead from the ramp into the hallway). Alternatively, tickets will be sold at the reception for \$20. Please note that a student ID or confirmation of enrolment will be required upon entry to the gala. For non-students, tickets are available for \$25 and can be obtained online.

Undergraduate Arts & Science students interested in submitting artwork or original research to be auctioned or displayed (respectively) at the 2025 ASSU Gala should visit their website for the appropriate link and complete their submission before January 10. All forms of visual art are acceptable and should a piece be sold, 85% of the proceeds will go to the artist while the rest will fund the ASSU Scholarship. Research from all College of Arts & Science departments is eligible for display. Students who are successful in

their submissions will receive free admission to the event but most importantly, will have their work exposed to other students, faculty, and the broader community.

The Arts & Science Students' Union welcomes USask students to attend the gala for a night of entertainment and enlightenment. For College of Arts & Science students wishing to get involved with the ASSU, weekly meetings are held on Wednesdays at 5 p.m., at a location announced weekly. Becoming a member of the ASSU costs \$5 for the academic year and gets you many benefits, including access to the office space, discounts, and eligibility to vote for ASSU Executives come election time. The sign-up sheet is available through their website. Ensure to follow all steps to successfully become a member of the ASSU.

For more information or any inquiries regarding the 2025 ASSU Gala, reach out to VP External Affairs Maya Soifer at [assu.external@usask.ca](mailto:assu.external@usask.ca). For general ASSU inquiries including membership questions, reach out to President Owen Deis at [assu.president@usask.ca](mailto:assu.president@usask.ca).

Join us in congratulating the ASSU for organizing and hosting the second-ever Arts & Science Gala and in wishing that it turns out successfully. We hope to see many of you there!

ARTS & SCIENCE  
**GALA**  
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ASSU gala promotional advertisement | <https://assu.usask.ca/events/events.php>

# The Art of Breaking Boundaries: USask Students Shattering Gallery Etiquette and Reclaiming the Creative Process

A celebration of art as a living conversation that invites viewers to join USask students as co-creators.

Sean Erhardt

I arrived early and found curators adding descriptions to the walls and adjusting the placement of the art. It felt as if I were disturbing a sacred and private process. Waiting outside the gallery, I perched on a chair, uneasy, as if anticipating my name being called in a doctor's office.

When I finally stepped inside, the bright lights reflecting off the stark white walls shocked my senses. As more people filled the space, the furniture surrounding a large bowl of colourful markers transformed into a lively communal hub. What happened next left me stunned: the student artists began drawing on the pristine walls. One artist carefully crafted a detailed scene within a square foot of wall space, while the student beside them slashed bold, frenetic strokes like an expressionist. Onlookers soon joined in. I felt a knee-jerk reaction of embarrassment, like a vase had been knocked to the floor—gallery etiquette shattered with it.

As I made laps around the gallery, the walls grew richer and more alive. I noticed a traced hand here, and a bold signature there. Carved into a large section of the wall was the outline of a body in red marker. Someone drew a sun; later, another added a house with a tree, a flower, and a stick figure beneath it. Works gained new meanings through their surroundings. Amateur doodles blended with works worthy of a frame.

This exhibition, titled *(Re)Connecting*, was unlike any I had attended before. The implicit rules of the gallery, ingrained in me for years, had been utterly discarded. The student artists acknowledged these rules and seemed to revel in breaking them.

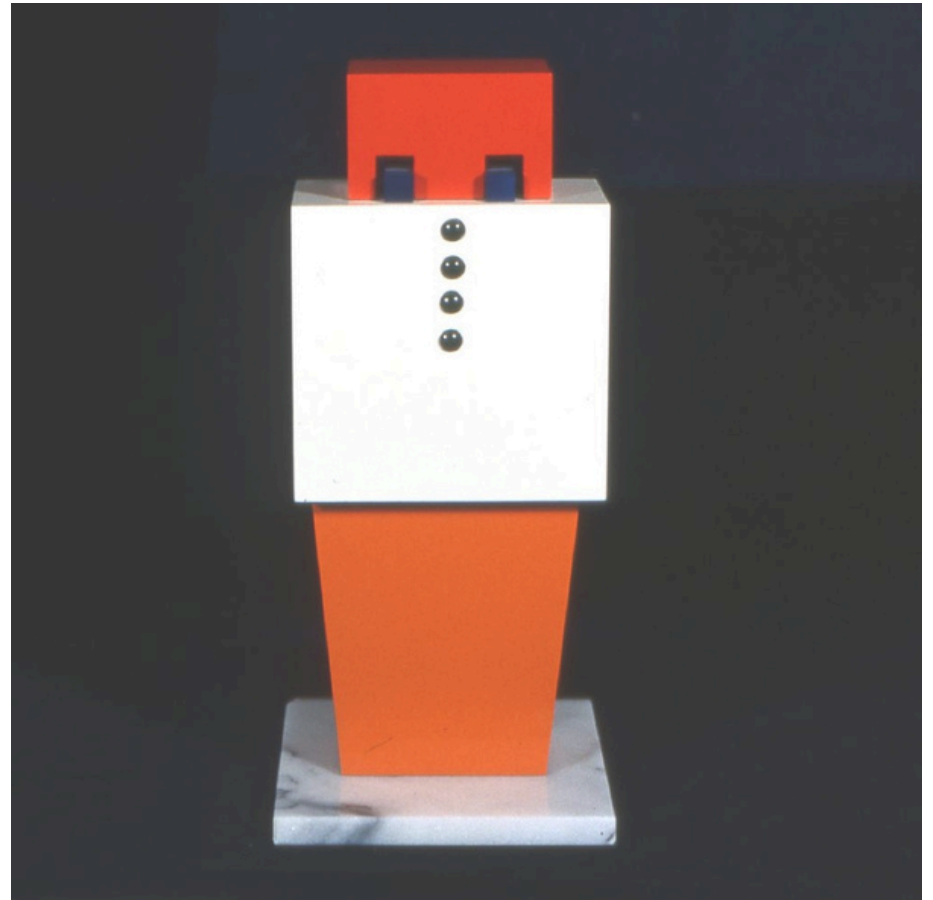
As I sat watching the walls fill with

unique designs, I overheard a conversation between a student and a professor about the gallery statement written in marker on the wall. Its opening sentence read: "As we grow older and modern everyday public spaces increasingly resemble the traditional White Cube of a gallery, our classrooms and offices have often become deprived of warmth and coziness."

The student remarked on their dislike of the word "older," and the professor agreed, remarking that we do not "grow older, but simply grow." Without hesitation, the student picked up a red marker and crossed it out. The professor followed suit, covering the word with strips of painter's tape. It was a striking moment, one that embodied the exhibition's central theme: a reclamation of spaces, an invitation to reject the rigidity of modern life, and a call to reconnect with creativity and wonder.

One of the most striking works on display was *Composition, 1970*, an abstract expressionist painting by Saskatchewan native Mina Forsyth. In the center of the piece, the word "fuck" is written in pencil. As curator and artist Mileva Elias explains in the exhibit label, this vandalism was discovered in 1994, after the painting was relocated to the Health Sciences wing.

Elias suggests that the graffiti reflects Forsyth's bold mark-making style and her exploration of emotional responses through colour and composition. The incident raises questions about the relationship and dialogue between art and its audience. Forsyth may not have intended for her work to be altered, but removing the graffiti could risk damaging the painting. Elias acknowledges that every art display carries the risk of damage. Yet, she



*(Re)Connecting* promotional image; *Tower/Dan (1993)* Ron Kostyniuk, Collection of the University of Saskatchewan, gift of the artist, 2002 | USask Art Galleries

poses a provocative question: "If there is no viewer to see it, can an artwork fulfill its purpose?" Much like Forsyth's painting, we take risks through expression and connection. But the alternative—shielding ourselves from pain—is unthinkable. 'Fuck' is more than just an act of vandalism; it's a raw, honest mark that reflects our shared suffering.

*(Re)Connecting* made me question the very function of art. As children, we are all artists. We create without hesitation, colouring the sky green and the ocean purple. Why not? As adults, we often lose that connection. Art becomes bound by rules, standards, and conventions—as the world does—distancing us from the act of creation. This does not mean our inner artist is lost, and these USask artists urge us to reconnect with that perspective of discovery.

Art is not reserved for the few; it belongs to all of us. From prehistoric handprints on cave walls to the bold strokes and doodles filling the gallery walls, art has always been a way to express what it means to be human. Through the act of breaking rules, this exhibition offered rediscovery, expression, and the simple act of being human together.

At its best, art helps us feel less alone, spreading messages that matter. At its core, it is an expression of feeling—a reminder that we are still here, connected to ourselves and one another. If that's not what art is about, I'm not sure what is.

Keep an eye on <https://kagcag.usask.ca/> for all ongoing and upcoming USask art gallery events and exhibitions.

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# Chasing the Northern Lights: Science, Community

The science and stories behind the aurora borealis, and how they foster community in the province

Nammi Nguyen

Saskatchewan has been graced with many prominent northern lights displays this year. In Indigenous cultures, this natural phenomenon has a deeper meaning that goes beyond its mesmerizing beauty—and in our province, it has created a passionate “aurora hunting” community.

## The Science Behind the Lights

The aurora borealis is created by magnetic storms triggered by solar activity. This includes solar flares (explosions on the Sun) and coronal

like shapes are due to the lines of force in Earth's magnetic field. The two primary gases in the atmosphere, nitrogen and oxygen, are responsible for the different colours of the phenomenon. The green colour in the aurora is typical of oxygen, while shades of purple, blue, or pink arise from nitrogen. Occasionally, a vibrant scarlet red hue can be observed, which results from high-altitude oxygen interacting with solar particles. This phenomenon only happens during particularly intense auroras.

Currently, the aurora borealis is more

## A Community of Aurora Hunters

People's shared love for the aurora has fostered a large online community within our province. The Facebook group “Saskatchewan Aurora Hunters,” open for anyone to join, has garnered over 90,000 members since its inception in 2014. The group has continued to attract more members as Saskatchewan residents become increasingly aware of the surge of possible aurora sightings.

The admins of the group post daily forecasts and members can share anything aurora-related, from photos

The Inuit refer to the aurora as aksarnirq, meaning “ball player,” and associate it with the spirits of the dead dancing in the sky. According to their beliefs, these spirits sometimes carry torches to guide the living or play a celestial game of soccer, using a walrus skull as the ball.

Among some Algonquin peoples, the northern lights are linked to Nanahbozho, a cultural hero who, after creating the Earth, moved to the far north. They believed he lit great fires there, which, reflected as the aurora, are a sign to his people that he was thinking of them from afar.

Many other Indigenous cultures, such as the Nakoda Cree Saulteaux, view the northern lights as the movements of ancestors in the sky, deserving of respect and reverence. These celestial displays, known as nîmihitocik or “the ones who dance,” represent a timeless energy, reminding people that they are never alone and always connected to the prior ancestors of the land. Ceremonial practices and behaviours tied to the lights have been passed down through generations.

While stories about the lights vary across Indigenous cultures, they consistently emphasize respect for nature. Some Indigenous people believe photographing the northern lights is inappropriate due to their reverence, while others understand society's necessity to evolve and accept capturing and admiring the phenomenon if it is done with respect and an understanding of their sacred significance.

## Tips for Viewing the Northern Lights

As aurora activity peaks in the coming months, here are some tips to enhance your next viewing experience.

### Use resources that track the aurora

As mentioned earlier, the Saskatchewan Aurora Hunters Facebook group is a great community to help anyone interested in all things aurora. The daily forecasts provide a summary of the likelihood of viewing the aurora throughout the night as well as cloud conditions. Apps such as



Aurora Borealis in Saskatoon 2024 | Nammi Nguyen | The Sheaf

mass ejections (bubbles of ejected gas), which release energetic charged particles carried to Earth by the solar wind. While most of these particles are deflected, some are captured by Earth's magnetic field and funnelled toward the north and south poles. When these particles collide with atoms and molecules in Earth's atmosphere, they heat up, creating the glowing lights we see.

The aurora's wavy patterns and curtain-

visible than usual as the sun approaches its solar maximum, the approximate midpoint and most active phase in its 11-year solar cycle. During this phase, the sun's magnetic poles switch places, transitioning from a stagnant to a highly active state, resulting in frequent flares and solar eruptions. The current solar cycle, the 25th recorded since 1755, began in 2019 and is expected to peak next year, meaning conditions for increased aurora visibility will persist for months.

and videos to tips and questions. On the exciting nights when the aurora puts on a show, the group is flooded with members sharing photos and videos they captured. Members are united under the same sky, expressing gratitude and appreciation for the natural phenomenon.

**Indigenous Perspectives on the Aurora** In many Indigenous cultures across Canada, the aurora borealis is much more than just a light show.

“Aurora” also relay similar information and can send notifications when the chances of viewing are high. These predictions are based on the metric “Kp,” which is the level of geomagnetic activity. The Kp index ranges from 0 to 9, with a higher value signifying a higher chance of viewing. From Kp 3 to 5, there’s a decent chance of seeing something, and anything above a Kp of 6 is almost guaranteed.

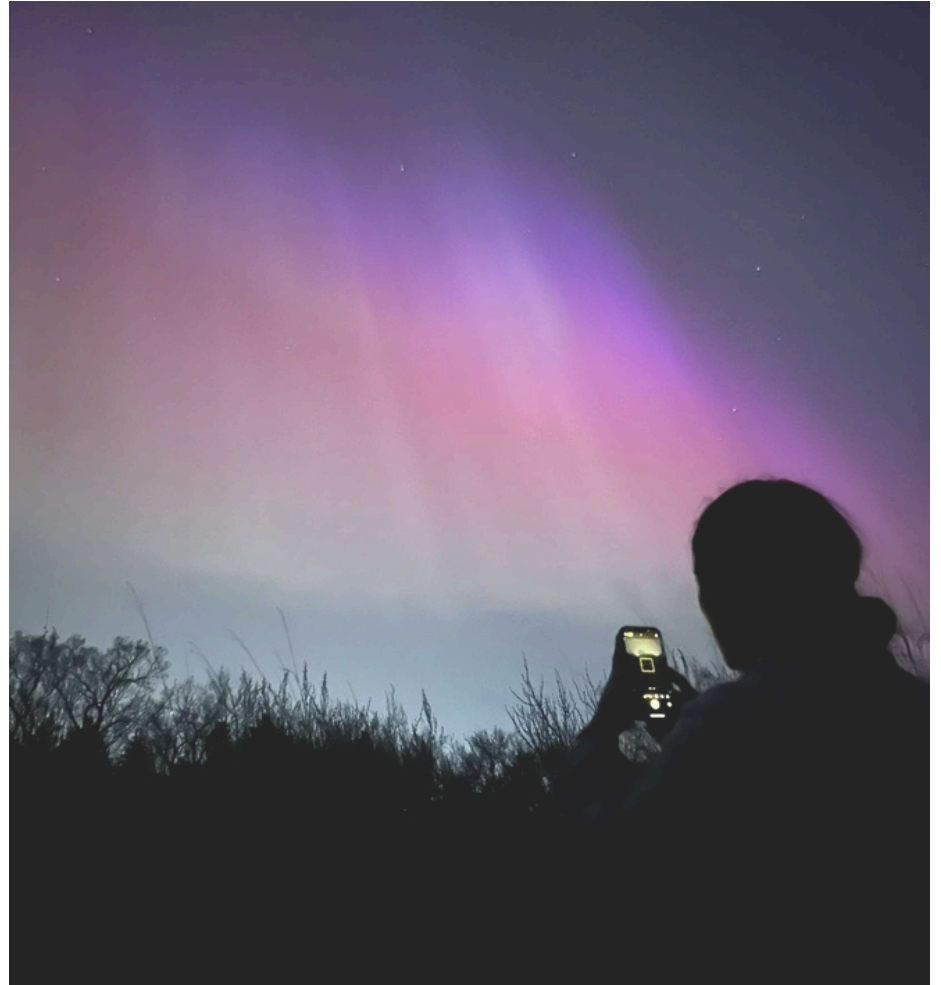
**Optimize your viewing spot** To optimize your chances of getting the best view of the aurora, ensure the sky is clear. You’ll also want to get away from any bright lights. Heading away from the city will help evade light pollution, and going specifically north will increase your chances of viewing even more. Also, check what phase the moon is in since a bright full or almost full moon will illuminate the sky, reducing your chances of seeing the aurora.

**Be patient** The aurora can flare up and

become active at any moment and typically occur at altitudes of 100 to 300 kilometres above Earth. Because they occur so high in the atmosphere, the same aurora display can often be seen across large areas, whether you’re on one side of the city or the province. On nights when the aurora is particularly strong and skies are clear, it will be visible from almost anywhere in Saskatoon. Just pick your spot, grab a lawn chair and keep your eyes peeled.

**Use night mode when photographing** The easiest way to photograph the aurora with a smartphone is by using night mode at the longest capture time (usually 10 seconds) and holding your phone as still as possible. This will increase the exposure of the photo, rendering the aurora brighter. Don’t be surprised if the aurora looks even better in photos than to the naked eye!

Keep your eyes on the sky during these next few months. You just might witness something extraordinary!



Aurora Borealis in Saskatoon 2024 | Nammi Nguyen | The Sheaf

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# The Beauty of Colour, Culture, and Craft: Three Art

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Laila Haider

As we welcome the new year, we should look forward to new beginnings while still reflecting on the past and its impact. So, while these installations are still open, make sure to take some time to check them out, and appreciate the work, inspiration, and messages of the artists.

## New War Posters from Ukraine

Closing January 11, 2025.

Last year, the Ukrainian Museum of Canada opened its latest installation, *New War Posters from Ukraine*.

Featuring works from the artist collective Pictoric, which is composed of illustrators based in Kyiv, this evocative collection of posters gives the audience direct insight into how the ongoing war has been affecting Ukrainian citizens and communities.

The posters featured were created in response to the continuous attacks on Ukraine and its people, which has left millions reeling. Each one captures the experience of a nation under siege, expressing brutal anguish, resilience, and defiance in the face of violence. It's a collection that seeks not only to raise awareness of what's going on

overseas but also to highlight the importance of art during historical geopolitical moments and its role in documenting the realities of those suffering. Art is a method of mobilization, and in dire situations, it acts as a vessel for hope.

"Art has the power to tell stories, raise awareness, build hope, and move people to action," said Jen Budney, executive director of the Ukrainian Museum of Canada.

This exhibition comes at an especially critical moment for Ukraine, as they now face renewed and escalating acts

of violence. As recently as December 13, 2024, there were immense missile and drone attacks against the country's energy infrastructure, which resulted in millions going without power. These attacks marked the 12th major assault on Ukraine's energy sector in 2024, once again reminding us all of the exhaustion and seemingly endless grief Ukrainians have had to deal with daily, because of the ongoing war.

As we move into the new year, the Ukrainian Museum of Canada will continue to raise public awareness about the war. On January 22, they will open *The War That Changes Everything*, an installation that features items including war-damaged doors from *Doors: Through the Horror of War*, a collection that toured the country and was first shown at the museum in early 2023. They will also be hosting a reception and gathering all day on Saturday, February 22, to commemorate the third anniversary of the full-scale invasion of Ukraine.

*New War Posters from Ukraine* is a collection of work that offers a raw insight into what Ukrainians have been feeling since the war began. Check out the museum before this unique installation is gone, and gain a glimpse into what people on the ground experience during a life-changing crisis.

Ukrainian Museum of Canada  
910 Spadina Crescent East

Museum Hours are:  
Wednesday to Saturday  
10:00 am - 5:00 pm



New war posters from Ukraine promotional image | <https://umcnational.ca/recipes/new-war-posters-from-ukraine/?portfolioCats=74>

## Kaija Sanelma Harris: Warp & Weft

Closing March 9, 2025.

After emigrating to Saskatoon in 1973 from Finland, Kaija Sanelma Harris (1939-2022) quickly emerged as a trailblazing figure in Canadian fibre arts.

Born and raised in Finland, she was trained in fibre and textile work, and her passion and love for the craft was evident from the very beginning of her

career. She worked to create incredible textile pieces that express a fervent and undeniable love for weaving. Through her breathtaking technique, she exemplified an incredible understanding of the roles of colour, texture, and light in fibre arts. It's clear even to the untrained eye that she was an incredibly innovative artist who moved beyond the established limits of craft. She utilized the functionality of weaving alongside its aesthetic components and created pieces that established her as one of Canada's most

important textile artists.

The entire collection of *Kaija Sanelma Harris: Warp & Weft* is being presented in two venues: Remail Modern and the Saskatchewan Craft Council (SCC). The exhibit at Remail Modern puts her works within the context of visual art history throughout her career, while the pieces being shown by the SCC will focus on the changes in her works using a more personal lens, highlighting the creative and technical evolutions she went

through throughout her life.

Both installations work in tandem to tell one united story—the story of an artist with vast talent and unending dedication, whose works had a tremendous impact on the art and craft community in Saskatchewan. The installations include pieces from across various decades, preparatory drawings, fibre studies, and archival materials, all woven together in an intricate display of who Harris was as an artist.



# Exhibitions You Should Check Out in the New Years

with these three art exhibitions before they close this spring.



Installation view, Kaija Sanelma Harris: Warp & Weft, 2024, Remai Modern, Saskatoon | Carey Shaw

Throughout her career, she continuously showed immense passion, talent, creativity, and industriousness. Her art, and this collection in particular, is a testament to that. Her technical skill, use of colour, unique designs, and innovation all cemented her as a pillar in the community ensuring a long-lasting legacy.

Visit these installations while they're still on display, and experience the impact Harris had on textile craftsmanship across Canada.

Saskatchewan Craft Council  
813 Broadway Ave.

Museum Hours are:  
Monday to Saturday  
11:00 am 5:00 pm

Remai Modern  
102 Spadina Crescent East  
Museum Hours are:  
Saturday, Sunday & Wednesday  
10:00 am 5:00 pm  
Thursday & Friday  
10:00 am 9:00 pm

## ***Nancy Lowry: Colour in Place***

Closing April 6, 2025.

This exhibition focuses on works from Saskatoon-based artist Nancy Lowry that explore the unique intersection between abstraction and landscape. *Colour in Place* serves as the largest display of her works, featuring newer pieces as well as several others from the last two decades.

Lowry's works expertly tread the line between landscape and prairie abstraction, referencing history and nature throughout the installation. She creates "paintscapes," unique depictions of landmarks and natural environments that exhibit traditional styles of landscape painting while also existing within the world of abstract art. She demonstrates an intimate understanding and awareness of the relationship between the two methods of expression and their connection to how the vast and expressive nature of places is conveyed through art.

While they might not be large and imposing, her paintings are compelling and draw audiences in with their dynamic colouring and the distinct nature of her style. She uses bold colours, strong strokes, and gestural markers that captivate the viewer's eye. She challenges the traditional nature of landscape paintings while resisting the classification of abstract, allowing her audience to experience a whole new perspective.

Also included in the installation are various different works, from artists Reta Cowley, Mina Forysth, Dorothy Knowles, Margaret Vanderhaeghe, Tammi Campbell, Landon Mackenzie, Elizabeth McIntosh, Leah Rosenberg, Monica Tap, and Sylvia Ziemann.

This exhibit is vivid and engaging, perfect for audiences of all ages. Lowry's dynamic and unique style re-frames how places can be visually

perceived, making *Colour in Place* a stand-out installation. Be sure to check it out while it's still on display!

Remai Modern  
102 Spadina Crescent East  
Museum Hours are:  
Saturday, Sunday & Wednesday  
10:00 am 5:00 pm  
Thursday & Friday  
10:00 am 9:00 pm



Nancy Lowry, Fir Peat's Sake, 2019. | Remai Modern promotional image

# Levels of Life: Discovering new passions within your studies

Your path is not set in stone. As young adults, it's important to know that it's okay to change your mind.

Katherine Walcer

As a first-year undergraduate student, I came to university with a plan and a dream career I saw down the path I was trekking. I was yearning to study physics and begin to unravel the secrets of the universe within my own hands. During these studies, I planned to possibly get my PhD in theoretical physics in the far future.

For the majority of my first semester, I spent a great deal of time within the walls of the Murray Library in awe of the plethora of books that the university welcomes you to read and study. The multitude of genres within its six floors reminds me of all the levels of life we go through, every book representing the things we learn and memories we make. The thousands of books that tell drastic stories of fiction or history are all within the reach of our curious minds. Books of other languages, with forgotten annotations in the margins, are also waiting to be discovered.

The sixth floor is what I call the world of art, showcasing all types of art forms and their history within the pages of beautifully bounded covers. I discovered a book by Ross King called *The Judgement of Paris*. Little did I know, this book created a new pathway on the road I was wandering— it



Female student studying at College Library | Jacob Lund | Canva Pro

invited me into the history of impressionism and history around the well-known man, Napoleon. It rekindled my passion for art and history, discussing both themes while providing interesting facts about the period to explain the art pieces more clearly.

As someone who planned to study physics and pursue a career in the field, this book introduced me to a whole wonderful new world of learning. After immersing myself in these books, I fell in love with learning literature, and decided to take similar classes. I rediscovered my admiration for reading and found the inspiration to complete

my own poetry and written works. Writing about the things I have read or experienced helps me through the knotted strings in my mind.

Since placing my feet on campus ground, I felt I only had to stay within the walls of what I have chosen to study, but this is the beauty of university—the welcoming pathways of studies that open up to you. The endless possibilities given to you to help you find your spark and your passion within academia and life.

Through all of this, one valuable lesson I've discovered during my studies is that no matter where you are on your

journey—whether just beginning or well along the way—it's perfectly fine to embrace the open paths before you and choose a different direction if it feels right. These are our desired paths, where we encounter new subjects we could discover a deep love for. No one has a set path to follow from birth, as you grow you decide what you want to do. With the opportunities we are given, we are allowed to design our lives how we see fit in the most beautiful ways.

It is okay to take the unforged path you didn't plan to trek. The world is waiting for you in wonderful ways.

Dr.

*Aaron Bazylak*

Dentist

**fresh**  
dental

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# Friday evenings are for girls who code

It is important to harness the abilities of a young kid by showing them that STEM can be a fun place.

**Darshana Lanke**

This past semester I spent my Friday evenings teaching young girls how to code. I taught them about the power of conditional statements and circuits. As I looked at my group of girls, I saw curiosity on their faces, brilliant minds, and empathetic souls... who sometimes instead of building their robots, used the LEGO® bricks to build bracelets and necklaces for themselves.

While I know this passion exists inside of them, the statistics show that the majority will not go into STEM fields. Only 31% of STEM students are women. The gender gap is especially high in the computer science and engineering fields with this statistic decreasing even more to 23% and 21%, respectively.

career in a STEM field. While some are amazed and intrigued to try out coding, I often have conversations like the following, too:

*“I just don’t get this.”*

*“Hmm okay, do you want to show me what part you don’t get? I can maybe help you understand that bit of code.”*

*“This is too hard!”*

*“I know it’s not as easy as some of the examples we did as a group, but they are similar! It may seem impossible but let’s sit with the question for a little longer and maybe we will see it’s not as hard as it may initially seem.”*

*“This is in a language I don’t even know”*

some time and resources, but you can achieve anything you put your mind to!

When I reflect on my journey, I am amazed that I even ended up in this field! I had never taken a computer science course before university. The first time I did any coding was in Jeff Long’s CMPT 141 with a simple `print “Hello World”` statement.

My reflections take me back to Grade 4. It was then that I learned about the existence of fractions, division, and negative numbers. I remember singing multiplication times-table songs and using yellow and red squares to do calculations with negative numbers. Throughout it all, I was always told that I was good at math. My teacher said I could do it. My parents said I could do it. So, I believed I could do it.

bands and being amazed by a classmate’s creativity in creating the evolution timeline taught in biology using just LEGO® bricks.

I would not have pursued a degree in STEM if I had not had people, including myself, believe that I could do it. I would not have even opened the engineering pamphlets that USask handed out during orientation if I had not gotten the courage to overcome tough topics in math like fractions in Grade 4. I would not have contemplated a career in the field if I didn’t think that STEM was fun.

If I wasn’t encouraged or shown how fun these fields are as a kid then I would have not pursued the opportunities that I did throughout my elementary and secondary education



Laptop near notebook and ceramic mug on table | Negative Space from Pexels | Canva Pro

As a computer science major, every day I see and experience this stark gender gap. Not only do I feel underrepresented when I look at my peers in my classes, but after over two years in the program I have yet to have a computer science course taught by a female professor.

My everyday experience is why I am so passionate about encouraging more young people of all backgrounds to give STEM fields a shot.

I have been in many classrooms leading presentations and activities to inspire and show the potential of pursuing a

*“Yeah, computer languages are kinda weird. The point of them is just so humans can communicate with the computer. I like to think about it as learning English or French to communicate with your family and friends.”*

*“I JUST CAN’T DO THIS!”*

As a computer science major, I am saying this: coding is hard. But if there is anything that I have learned, it’s that even hard things are not impossible. If you don’t understand something and feel like you can’t do it, that doesn’t mean you aren’t smart. It might take

As someone who enjoys baking, fractions just made sense. I use them all the time to measure butter, sugar, and flour when creating cinnamon buns or my favourite chocolate chip cookies. I give all the credit for my understanding of the complexities of derivatives and the Krebs cycle to my amazing high school teachers, whose notes and teaching style made me easily grasp these concepts.

They all taught in a way that made those subjects fun! My fondest memories of my earlier education include building cars for my physics class using toilet paper rolls and elastic

which opened my doors to exploring these specializations further as an adult.

It is through this experience of leading Girls Coding every Friday that I have come to learn that the most important part is not actually making sure that kids can execute perfectly a while-loop or know exactly what a string data type is. Instead, it is showing them that they are capable of doing whatever they put their minds to. And that, most importantly, STEM fields can be a space that is fun, cool, and interesting!

# Giving ourselves extensions on our New Year's resolutions

Resolutions in the new year are helpful to a lot of people, but they unfortunately lead to a lot of guilt when we fail to follow-through with them. Let's change that.

Jaclyn Edwards

*Exercise more, lose weight. Get organized. Learn a new skill or hobby. Live life to the fullest. Save money/spend less money.* These are some of the most common New Year's resolutions according to a quick Google search. It seems like every year the top resolutions stay consistent, surrounding personal health, personal growth and money. It's humanity's excuse to press the imaginary "reset" button on our lives. Just because the digit on the calendar is different, you can be too.

In Sarah Pruitt's *The History of New Year's Resolutions* for History.com, she explains that the ancient Babylonians are said to be the first people to make "New Year's resolutions", approximately 4,000 years ago. The Babylonians may not have labelled their festivities as a New Year's Eve party but they would make promises to the gods to repay debts or return borrowed objects, and essentially be on their best behaviour. It was believed that if the Babylonians kept their word, their gods would show them favour in the upcoming year. And if they did not keep their word, they would be in jeopardy of losing their god's favour, which could lead to crop shortages or droughts. So, these promises to essentially *be better* in the new year could be suggested as laying the groundwork for what we now call "New Year's resolutions."

In Ancient Rome, it was Julius Caesar who adjusted the calendar so that January 1st was the beginning of the new year, back in 46 B.C. The month was named after the two-faced god, Janus, whose spirit inhabited doorways and arches. January had significant meaning for the Romans, as they believed Janus could symbolically look backward into the prior year, and also into the future. The Romans offered sacrifices to Janus and made promises of good behaviour in hopes of reflecting goodness into the upcoming year. I wonder whether their promises of good behaviour ever involved pledging to hit the gym more?

Despite these semi-religious roots, New



Hand starting 2025 goals list in notebook | Carlos Pascual | Canva Pro

Year's resolutions today are not particularly spiritual or religious. In place of making promises to the gods, most people make resolutions for themselves. It has become a very personal practice. Resolutions focus on self-improvement, or the intention of making better personal decisions which may benefit the environment or society, such as *recycle more, use less, drive less, volunteer more*, and so on.

At the end of 2022, Hayatullah Amanat wrote an article for CTV News that described some interesting statistics surrounding resolutions. Canadians were found to set an average of 1.7 resolutions each year, and 61 per cent find resolutions beneficial. A survey taken by 1,000 Canadians showed that 29 per cent wanted to improve their personal fitness and nutrition, and 22.3 per cent wanted to reach their financial goals through improving how they handle their money. Interestingly, only 3.9 per cent of Canadians wanted to learn a new skill in 2023.

Finally, there were 14.1 per cent of Canadians who entered 2023 without setting any resolutions at all. And of those who did set resolutions, close to 70 per cent did not follow through with them.

With this in mind, it is interesting how

often people establish resolutions just to break them within the first week or two of the new year. Why is setting a resolution so compelling, especially when the majority of people decide not to follow through with them anyway? Even with our best intentions, sometimes it's next to impossible to fulfill these resolutions. And without fail, we blame ourselves and feel guilty for not seeing them through. We end up with immense feelings of guilt and regret when our resolutions don't pan out or we end up failing to reach set goals within a set amount of time.

Personally, I've set many goals in my life. I'm sure many people can relate to being a successful high school student, then making plans to sail through my degree and begin the dream job of my choice, all while having a flawless personal life. Sadly, things haven't worked out exactly that way. If there's one thing I've learned from all of the ups and downs that life has thrown my way, it's that you need to be kind to yourself — especially when you feel like you've failed. One of my favourite biochemistry professors, Scott Napper, once said to me, "Failure only occurs when we lose our willingness to improve."

So think about some of the big goals you've set for yourself, especially the

ones that you didn't reach, and give yourself permission not to dwell on the guilt or regret. Moving on is an important skill to have for personal growth. When it comes to deciding to exercise more, or any other New Year's resolution, by all means pursue it as hard as you can. But if you don't finish it quite the way you planned to, factor in a little kindness for yourself.

Despite our best intentions, planning and efforts, life can still find a way to completely throw us off course. If you need an extreme example, look at how we are all still recovering from the trials of 2020 and everything that resulted due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Life is complicated, and I doubt there is one person out there who hasn't faced some form of adversity.

Perhaps this year, instead of focusing on resolutions, we can focus on giving ourselves grace when it comes to reaching our goals. We are often our own worst critic, and yet, at the same time, we need to be our own greatest cheerleader. So what I propose for 2025 is: let us acknowledge that we have the power to become our best selves, but also that betterment has to come with patience, which means that in most cases, it will take more than 365 days.

# New Year's resolution: tune into Canadian women's sports!

Continued from the front cover.

### Women's Soccer

Canada has been a global powerhouse in women's soccer for years, with the national team notably boasting bronze medals in the 2012 and 2016 Olympics and a gold medal at the 2020 Olympics. The team is currently ranked sixth in FIFA's global rankings and went an entire calendar year without a defeat in regulation or extra time for the first time in history.

livable wage, promising a minimum salary of \$50,000 a year for its players and a \$1.6 million salary cap. This minimum salary puts the NSL ahead of many other well-established women's soccer leagues around the world in just its inaugural season. Following closely behind the success of the PWHL, the NSL will hopefully serve as another trailblazing Canadian league on the global stage.

Despite Canada's consistent dominance on the global stage, female players have had to take their talents internationally to compete for professional clubs—until now. In April 2025, Canada's first professional women's soccer league, known as the Northern Super League (NSL), will kick off featuring six teams based in Vancouver, Calgary, Toronto, Ottawa, Montreal, and Halifax. Each team will play 25 games a season between April and November.

While schedules are yet to be released, the NSL will be visible thanks to a multi-year streaming deal with TSN and CBC. Teams are actively signing players, so do some research to find your favourite team and follow along in the build-up to the season!

### Huskie Athletics

You can also support female athletes right here at home! There is a wide range of talented Huskie teams on campus playing this Winter semester, including women's hockey, basketball, volleyball, track and field, and wrestling.

The league has already turned heads internationally thanks to its commitment to paying female players a

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## Calling all gamers to the Saskatoon Game Jam!

Continued from page 2.

In relation to the group work, Epp says that “almost naturally we all gave ourselves unofficial roles, with Kate handling the majority of user interface, Mariana doing anything lower level, Elaine handling all the art, and myself doing most of the game design and mechanics.” The team used Google Docs, Git, and a time tracking sheet to organize, share their progress, and ensure a fair workload, with Hans estimating 180 hours of time spent developing the game as a group.

Students from CMPT 306 showcased their games to their peers, instructors, and the USask community on December 5 in the Spinks Addition building. They all mentioned how meaningful that showcase was to them. Epp explains, “This may sound shallow at first, but getting complimented by a

professional in the industry is an amazing feeling, especially when they tell you they think you should publish it because they think it is very good [and] has potential.” They all also agree that one of the best parts of the class was the group aspect of it. Wright says, “There is a certain kind of magic to developing something with such a tight-knit and successful group. During the project, it was always amazing to pull and see new code that fixed [or] implemented some new feature – yet it was code that I didn’t write on my own!”

Hans encourages gamers and non-gamer computer science students to try out CMPT 306! Epps leaves the reader with the advice to just start and “not be afraid of mistakes” because that is “how you learn.”



# CROSSWORD

**Across**

- 1. The start of "Veni, vidi, vivi" in English
- 6. Soil
- 10. Talk briefly
- 14. Director Christopher of Interstellar
- 15. An apple \_\_ \_\_\_\_\_
- 16. Japanese name meaning flower
- 17. 1/2
- 18. Film \_\_\_\_\_
- 19. Quickly!
- 20. Type of 65 across: Agaricus bisporus
- 22. Fitting anagram of "taps"
- 23. Capital of Eritrea
- 24. +
- 26. Weed
- 27. National Theatre School for short
- 28. Type of 65 across: Cantharellus cibarius
- 32. Society for a genius
- 33. Advice to treat illness in the Victorian era
- 34. Rip off
- 37. English household spirit
- 39. Molecules that code for proteins
- 40. Deceiving publications
- 43. Type of 65 across: Morchella esculenta
- 46. "I'm stumped"
- 48. Word in French
- 51. Suffix denoting "more"
- 52. White-Handed Gibbon
- 53. Fake
- 55. Like Nicholas II
- 57. Type of 65 across: Pleurotus eryngii
- 60. Subreddit used to get judgement on a conflict (acronym)
- 61. Pelvic bones
- 62. Cristina at the USask dental clinic
- 63. Knocked out
- 64. Like a 41 down
- 65. Kingdom including yeast, mold and many clues in this puzzle
- 66. Terminates
- 67. Grains used in bread
- 68. An Italian child

**Down**

- 1. Like onions being sauteed
- 2. Share the microphone
- 3. Startles
- 4. Mediterranean archipelago country
- 5. Impose
- 6. Like Hans Christian Anderson
- 7. Someone to look up to
- 8. Reprimand
- 9. Multiple orange mooses
- 10. Pal
- 11. Is Prepared
- 12. Asia Minor peninsula

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Crossword | Greta Mader Stevens

**Down continued**

- 13. Bartenders
- 21. Train in Hamburg
- 25. Dr. of rap
- 29. Cinder
- 30. Osaka of tennis
- 31. Note quite a Marquess
- 32. Year of "The Dress" (Roman style)
- 34. Type of 65 across: Lentinula edodes
- 35. Two water molecules sticking together
- 36. Like a great bond
- 38. Gym bro's goal
- 41. Moray
- 42. More cunning
- 44. Emilio Estevez's "\_\_\_\_ Man"
- 45. Oven cleaner
- 47. The Who's "Baba \_\_\_\_"
- 48. Turning off the sound
- 49. What a poet might die of?
- 50. Type of protein that makes ATP
- 54. Wipe in Montreal
- 56. Geom. units
- 58. Longest river in Africa
- 59. A pride is made up of lions; a group at Pride is made up of \_\_\_\_\_

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