

# THE **U** NITER

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# THE CHEQUE'S IN THE MAIL

THOMAS PASHKO  
MANAGING EDITOR

THOMPASHKO

If you've read the news in the past week, you may have heard that Canada Post is in crisis. On Jan. 16, the Crown corporation announced that it's selling off its IT and logistics departments to private companies. The move is financially motivated – Canada Post reported a loss of over half a billion dollars in 2022.

A Jan. 23 CBC News article by Marina von Stackelberg quotes business experts calling the move an "essential first step." Carleton University business professor Ian Lee says that, to survive, Canada Post's future "is in reinventing themselves as a partner of e-commerce companies and trying to get back that business that they gave up, and lost competitively, to the Amazons of the world."

There's one huge problem with this logic: Canada Post's job isn't to make money. The notion that it should be a money-making endeavour is a relic of the 1980s neoliberal destruction of the Thatcher, Reagan and Trudeau/Mulroney era that continues to poison public services in Canada.

Canada Post's job is to deliver the mail. That's a public service. We pay taxes, and we get the mail delivered to us. It's a fair tradeoff. We also pay taxes to have the roads paved, and we don't expect the streets to pay us back.

But these old conservative notions of profit before the public persist in attitudes toward Canada Post. And if you get the mail, that should concern you. It's not a given that it will always be around. Neoliberal capitalists will gleefully strip it, sell it for parts and privatize Canadian mail if given the chance.

That's not just rhetoric. It's happened before. Canadian provinces used to have robust public telephone infrastructure. But those have all since been privatized and sold off. That public service has disappeared, and Canadians now pay some of the highest cellphone rates in the world.

If we don't change our attitudes about this and keep expecting Canada Post to be Amazon, we could also end up paying more for mail, too.

Comments editor Patrick Harney has become something he never thought he'd be: a jock. Read more on page 14.

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## SUBMISSIONS

Submissions of articles, letters, graphics and photos are encouraged, however, all new contributors (with the exception of letters to the editor) must attend a 45-minute volunteer orientation workshop to ensure that the volunteer understands all of the publication's basic guidelines.

An in-person volunteer orientation will be held on Friday, Jan. 26 at 1 p.m. in the *Uniter* office, room 0RM14 at the University of Winnipeg.

For more information, email [volunteer@uniter.ca](mailto:volunteer@uniter.ca).

Deadline for advertisements is noon Friday, six days prior to publication. *The Uniter* reserves the right to refuse to print material submitted by volunteers. *The Uniter* will not print submissions that are homophobic, misogynistic, transphobic, ableist, racist or libellous. We also reserve the right to edit for length/style.



# FASPA BRINGS SLOW FOOD HOME

Menno takeout spot warms Winnipeg diners with new and familiar food

SUZANNE PRINGLE | ARTS AND CULTURE EDITOR | @BLAQUE\_SQUIRREL

If the Mennonite world had a particular scent, faspa would be its signature fragrance.

Stepping into the aromatic warmth of Faspa on Portage Avenue evokes a true rural Manitoba experience of trekking to the neighbours' on a wintry day, guided by the scent of baking bread, simmering borscht and savoury cured meats, wafting on the breeze.

"Growing up, faspa was the one meal that was served 'come and go,'" Faspa chef and owner Josh Penner says, "not sitting around a table, but making a plate of food and mingling with family and friends."

"Faspa" is a Low German word that has no direct English translation. It is a lunch traditionally served around 3:30 or 4 p.m., especially on Sundays. It comprises an array of bread, jams, meats, cheeses, borscht, pickled things and platz, a fruit-filled coffee cake. Faspa is traditionally served in a Mennonite home to anyone who stops by.

"Traditional faspa has little to do with the dinner table and much more to do with the people you are sharing it with," Penner says. His storefront, which opened in mid-December 2023, offers only takeout and catering.

Penner is a Red Seal chef with more

than 20 years of restaurant experience. His "slow-food" mentality – an approach to sustainable food-sourcing that has become a culinary buzzword in recent years – has been a Mennonite mainstay for centuries.

"Slow food is the opposite of fast food," Penner says. It involves "making things from scratch, learning about your ingredients and giving them the proper time and care when cooking with them and (having) a philosophy of farm to kitchen to table."

Among the menu items at Faspa are kielki (egg noodles) or vareniki (dumplings) in a savoury white sauce, farmer sausage, pork-broth borscht, guieso (traditional Paraguayan stew), platters of pickles, cheese and cured meats, rhubarb platz (coffee cake) and plumi moos (cold plum soup).

Plumi moos is "probably the most unique Mennonite dish and very polarizing amongst us Mennos," Penner says.

"Either you love it or you hate it," he says of the light, syrupy serving of soaked stone fruit and raisins. "I happen to love it, so I put it on the menu."

Winnipeg houses the largest urban population of Mennonites in Canada. A venture like Faspa is well-positioned to bridge the gap between a local swath of contemporary Mennonites and the



PHOTO BY KEELEY BRAUNSTEIN-BLACK

Josh Penner, chef and owner of Faspa

traditions of their grandparents, who sustained their families and community on scratch-cooking ingredients gleaned from the garden.

According to Penner, Mennonite millennials might've grown up with traditional food, gatherings and language but became disconnected from their culture over time. Through Faspa's contempo-

rary spin on Mennonite cuisine, he hopes to rekindle those culinary connections.

"Faspa's food is meant to be familiar, but not exactly as your grossmama would have prepared it," Penner says.

**Find Faspa at 1316 Portage Ave. It's open Monday to Saturday from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m.**

# TAKING APPROPRIATION OUT OF THE RECIPE

*gastropoetics* explores the problems with cookbooks as cultural engagement

MATTHEW TEKLEMARIAM | ARTS AND CULTURE REPORTER | @MATTTEKLEMARIAM

The cookbook is a fixture of the kitchen as much as any edible ingredient. A new exhibit at the PLATFORM Centre for Photographic and Digital Arts asks those who use the culinary tomes to engage with other cultures to consider their impact and authority.

"Cookbooks are a popular medium in which we engage with other cultures," Noor Bhangu, curator of *gastropoetics*, an exhibition at PLATFORM Centre, says.

"We need to have more publicly critical engagement of these forms, because I don't think they should be so easily consumed or seen as authorities. This exhibition is a way to have a public platform to talk about these issues from diverse vantage points."

*gastropoetics* is the latest – and tastiest – exhibition at the PLATFORM Centre. The multimedia show runs until Feb. 24 and takes the unorthodox approach of featuring work from researcher-artists, allowing scholars to focus on creative expression. Among them are Alberta-based writer Areum Kim and anthropologist/queer feminist scholar Svati P. Shah of the University of Massachusetts, Amherst.

"Everybody that I invited is not a practicing artist," Bhangu says. "That was intentional on my part to bring together thinkers who don't have the opportuni-

ty to think in visual terms. Their work is to write or present lectures or make food about what they do."

Each researcher-artist is given their own section of the gallery to showcase their research – the culmination of months of work and contemplation on various ethnic cookbooks aimed at Western audiences. The displays are comprised of photography, video and installations, including cultural artifacts.

"I've tried my best not only to bring the research aspect to the exhibition, but (to) also use it as a platform (for) artistic creation as much as I can," Alireza Bayat, one of the four researcher-artists and a senior research assistant at the University of Winnipeg, says.

"Noor's idea was so genuine. I can't think of any similar exhibitions with this very approach," he says.

Bhangu, who immigrated to Canada from India at 10 years old, was fascinated with food from her homeland.

"I have a lot of these old cookbooks I collected from thrift stores and library sales that, when I go back to today, are very troubling," she says.

*gastropoetics* explores how other cultures appropriate traditional foods and how people meddle with traditional recipes for con-



venience.

"Through this research, I find that all these Eastern recipes are so time-consuming," Bayat says.

"The recipes prepared to engage the Western audience always have that kind of U-turn, these hacks and tricks. Reaching the same texture, but by adding butternut squash, for example," he says.

Bhangu asserts that the exhibition doesn't frown upon innocuous changes like fusion foods but rather deliberate alterations that have greater cultural implications.

"Certain ingredients or practices are tak-

en up by national authorities and claimed as their own. In doing this, you really erase the specificity of specific communities and specific cultures," Bhangu says.

"The exhibition is still open to these kinds of cross-cultural entanglements, but there is still the question of for who, and for what purpose?" she says.

"I would call upon my fellow Winnipeggers to observe the potential that food has in terms of not only some physical thing we eat and consume, but the cultural importance it carries, the political importance it carries," Bayat says.



# BORN TO MOVE

## Dance connects adults to body, mind and community

SUZANNE PRINGLE | ARTS AND CULTURE EDITOR | @BLAQUE\_SQUIRREL

When Ian Mozdzen entered the School of Contemporary Dancers at the age of 34 with no prior formal training, it was a transition, to say the least.

“I was in ballet with 11-year-olds,” Mozdzen, now 46, says. “I was doing all my sautés and pliés with little children. It was like a kind of begin-again type of scenario.”

Mozdzen grew up in a rural community without access to dance training. After experimenting with dance as a theatre student at the University of Winnipeg in Mozdzen’s early 20s, Mozdzen decided to make the leap.

“There was a sense that I was a natural performer already,” Mozdzen says.

Today, as a locally renowned professional dancer, Mozdzen runs the School of Natural Dancers, which was founded in 2023.

While many dancers trace their first steps back to childhood classes, Mozdzen isn’t the only one who began their practice in adulthood. Across Winnipeg, a handful of studios offer dance classes for adult learners who feel, in various ways, called to the barre.

“Trying anything new as an adult can be a scary thing,” Robyn Thomson Kacki, a professional dancer and general program coordinator at the School of Contemporary Dancers (SCD), says in an email.

“It can be a very vulnerable thing to try something where you’ll be a complete beginner.”

As a faculty member at SCD, Thomson Kacki says adults take her classes for fitness, creative expression and to maintain their mental health.

This range of motives makes the “typical” adult student difficult to profile.

Katrin Benedictson, vice-president of the Royal Winnipeg Ballet School’s recreational division, says the program sees adult dancers from “diverse” backgrounds who are between 18 and 80.

“Approximately 85 per cent of (beginners have) never taken a dance class before,” she says in an email.

Prairie Diva teaches adult burlesque classes that see beginner dancers – from ages 18 to 50, with a range of body types and personalities – take the stage after just a few months of Burlesque Fusion Performance classes.

Meagan Funk, who owns Prairie Diva, says women are drawn to burlesque for many reasons, especially “self-love.”

“Women want to feel beautiful in their bodies,” she says in an email, “and accept and celebrate who they are.”

While some adults just starting out may dream of hitting centre stage, it is, according to Benedictson, “extremely rare” they would join a professional dance company, especially in the competitive world of ballet.

At SCD, however, Thomson Kacki has seen adult students move into their professional program and onto careers in dance.

Mozdzen developed as a dancer through personal exploration, workshops and professional gigs. After several years of dabbling in a variety of performance genres, Mozdzen decided to audition for SCD’s professional program.

Today, as a locally renowned professional dancer, Mozdzen’s School of Natural Dancers focuses on “non-choreography” as opposed to traditional dance composition.

“I see myself as a ‘modeler’ of dance,” Mozdzen says of the Natural Dancers philosophy.



SUPPLIED PHOTO

Prairie Diva teaches adult burlesque classes to beginner dancers.

Rather than teach techniques and choreography, natural dance encourages pupils to “compose in the moment,” embrace spontaneity and trust the “fourth dimension” of their art: dance’s “magical quality.”

“Natural dance’ challenges formal un-

derstandings and expectations, pushing the boundaries of what dance can be,” Mozdzen says.

To learn more about the School of Natural Dancers and upcoming performances, visit [bit.ly/3OfuttW](http://bit.ly/3OfuttW).

	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY
6AM	MORNING BREATH	The Sentinel's Marvellous Kaleidoscope	Worldbeat Canada Radio	Indigenous in Music	FANTASTIC HOLIDAY	THE SATURDAY MORNING SHOW	CKU-SPEAKS
7AM		Folk Roots Radio	FRAÑOL	CANQUEER	World - Island Music		
8AM	Shortwave Report	RADIO ECOSHOCK	Behind the News With Doug Henwood	Harbinger Media Hour	Wooden Spoons	Green Planet Monitor	SHADES OF CLASSICS
9AM	CounterSpin						Classical and New Age
10AM	DEMOCRACY NOW!		DEMOCRACY NOW!		MUD PUDDLE RADIO		
11AM	DEPARTMENT 13	This Way Out	VOYAGE	Viewpoints	SUNNY ROAD		Medicine Wheel
NOON	POP/ROCK	WINGS	Jazz	BRIDGING THE GAP	Roots Music		of Music
1PM	COMEDIOLOGICAL REPORT	The Man in the Gray Flannel Suit		ACCESSIBILITY MATTERS	NO FIXED ADDRESS	THE ELECTRIC CHAIR	NEON BEIGE SOUND EXCHANGE
2PM	POP/ROCK	Folk		FEARSHOT DAILY	Lived Experiences of Homelessness	TEMPLE TENT REVIVAL	
3PM	outSPOkEn		ALTERNATIVE RADIO	DEAD MEDIUM	HOW TO SURVIVE A TORNADO		YOU CAN'T HIDE FROM GOD
4PM	Truth Before Reconciliation	THE GREEN MAJORITY		TICKLE MY FANCY	GLOBAL RESEARCH NEWS HOUR	THE IVORY TOWER	Gospel
5PM	GroundSwell Radio	The Stuph File	THE META WORLD	BARKING DOG	Dollar Country	Eclectic Mix	Active Voice
6PM	NewFound Records	The Reminder	STOOPALOOP SHOW	Past 'n Present	The Sean Show	Eclectic Residents	The World
7PM	Music from Newfoundland and Labrador	Winnipeg Arena is on Fire		Folk 'n Roots	Local Music		News, spoken word
8PM	The Vulcan's Hold		SPACE CADET	SQUAREWAVE	LET'S PLAY DJ!	Star Road Junction	GroundSwell Radio
9PM	Trip Hop		MUSIC, OUT OF THIS WORLD	VIDEO GAME MUSIC AND HISTORY		Progressive Rock	New Classical - Repeat Broadcast
10PM	Thrash Can	SYSTEM KIDZ	AMATEUR HOUR	PAGES	Soft Robotics	This is Hell	
11PM	Thrash Metal	YOUTH IN CARE	So Bad, It's Good	EAT YOUR ARTS & VEGETABLES	(Electronic/Ambient)		
MIDNIGHT	THE WORLD	Sonic Blanket	TWANG TRUST	TAWNY, THE BRAVE	THE HOW DO YOU DO REVUE	WE BUILD HITS	THE C.A.R.P.
1AM	World		Country/ Roots/ Big, Dumb Rock 'n' Roll	Pop/Rock	Hip Hop 50	Hip-Hop	The Completely Asinine Radio Program
2AM	DESTINATION MOON	Balmoral Blues		Adult Kindergarten	World & Variety	RED BOX	Circle One
3AM	Sock-Hop-A-Go-Go	Blues	S.A.N.E. * RADIO		Da Show	Hip-Hop	Punk
4AM	The Freedom Principle	On My Way Home	Local Experimental Music	Dub City Steppers	World & Variety	QUADRAFUNK	THE GASHLYCRUMB TINES
5AM	World Music	Local Indie			World & Variety	Electric Dance Party	
6AM	TranceLand	ROMPE	PHASE ONE	StreetKilliaz Generation	DANCE HALL FEVER	Dancehall and Reggae	ISLAND VIBES
7AM	Electronic/Dance	Latin	Electronic	Local Hip Hop	Dancehall and Reggae		Caribbean
8AM	FEARSHOT DAILY	FEARSHOT DAILY	FEARSHOT DAILY		ShrimpFarm.Crypto	Collages by Silas	Rainbow Country
9AM	Free City Radio	LISTENING PLEASURES	Two Princes		ShrimpFarm.Crypto		
10AM	Free City Radio				Collages by Silas		
11AM	BREAK NORTH RADIO				Your Show Here		REVOLUTION ROCK
12AM							GIRLIE SO GROOVIE

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Some programs are on hiatus and/or airing different content due to university closure for COVID-19.

New shows are marked with a star ★

Live shows are marked with a lightning bolt ⚡



# IN WATER

Plays at the Dave Barber Cinematheque  
Jan. 26 to 28

★★★★☆

MATTHEW TEKLEMARIAM | ARTS AND CULTURE REPORTER | @MATTEKLEMARIAM

Lights, camera, inaction! From Korean workhorse filmmaker Hong Sang-soo comes *In Water*, a modest tale of loneliness and having no idea what to do with a film budget.

Sang-soo, who has produced a whopping 30 films over 27 years, is equal parts auteur and autocrat. Here, he functions as director, writer, producer, composer, editor and cinematographer. Watching *In Water*, it's evident, but nonetheless impressive, that he pulls it off.

But first, a brief diversion. In light of *In Water's* 62-minute runtime, the Dave

Barber Cinematheque has offered the FIRE+WATER double billing, pairing it with the eccentric film-festival debut *The Daughters of Fire*. It's an inspired choice: an apocalyptic mini-opera where three victims of a volcano eruption in Cape Verde create an angelic chorus of lament amidst a Dante-esque hellscape. It's a rousing tale of family and brimstone.

Now back to the main feature. Stop me if you've heard this before: a director, a cinematographer and an actress not altogether familiar with each other spend a week on Korea's Jeju Island. The idea is,

with \$3,000 and a week to shoot, diffident Seoung-mo (Shin Seok-ho) will be struck with vision and a great idea. This is all in the pursuit of cinematic "honour" rather than financial gain.

*In Water* could be considered a social drama. As the trio spend time together, Seoung-mo's shyness and flighty artistic temperament alienate him from his childhood friend Nam-hee (Kim Seung-yun) and more effortlessly convivial co-collaborator Sang-guk (Ha Seong-guk), their cinematographer. Seoung-mo is desperately lonely, and his longing for connection entwines with his pursuit of aesthetic glory until they're nearly indistinguishable.

For some, the minimalism will grate. The hour-long production is in no rush, as characters eat pizza for four minutes in relative silence, aimlessly wander alleys looking for scenery and light up cigarettes to kill time.

Nearly the entire film is shot out of focus. Is that a blithe acknowledgement of the film's and the protagonist's lack of direction, or the idiosyncrasy of an industry veteran? It doesn't really matter, because it works.

Because dialogue is sparse and facial expressions are imperceptible, body language

is used to great effect here. The trepidation to, say, sit down on a bench while the others gaze thoughtfully into the distance, searching for inspiration on the horizon, subtly reveals attitudes towards one another and their film project.

Unceremonious scene cuts and a two-track score can betray the picture as disaffected, but Hong ingratiates himself with a simple tale of immense emotional intelligence. It seems that *In Water's* aim is neither honour nor money. The ambiguity makes it a purer cinematic experience.

Seoung-mo earns his first victory in production after an oddly tense night of drinking. A prior encounter with a bystander is recreated for the film, only with a cameraman in view. We get the sense Hong is having a good-natured laugh at the audience.

The themes of the film are awkwardly articulated via song lyrics as Seoung-mo manifests his solitude by walking into the ocean for a scene in his film. He wades further out in the water, and his out-of-focus blob is absorbed by the crashing waters, recreating the *In Water* poster. Hong has made good on the film's titular promise. What more do you want?

## ARTS BRIEFS

CIERRA BETTENS | ARTS AND CULTURE EDITOR | X FICTIONALCIERRA @CIERRABETTENS

### Drag 101

On Jan. 27, join local queen Miss Vida Lamour Decosmo for a masterclass in the art of drag. Decosmo brings more than 23 years of experience to this Drag Workshop, hosted at the Centre culturel franco-manitobain (CCFM, 340 Provencher Blvd). The event takes place from 2 to 5 p.m. Reserve your spot by donation online at [bit.ly/3Ud0tlc](http://bit.ly/3Ud0tlc).

### Diasporic tales @ PTE

The latest production at Prairie Theatre Exchange is premised on a burning question: what would happen if every Filipino person in our society suddenly ... disappeared? Created by Hazel Venzon and Darren O'Donnell, *Everything Has Disappeared* highlights the unique relationship between the Filipino diaspora and the global economy. The play runs from Feb. 1 to 4. Tickets can be purchased via [bit.ly/3tWKbIV](http://bit.ly/3tWKbIV).

### Putting their art and soul into it

Catch the tail end of creBery Gallery's (125 Adelaide St.) Art & Soul Members Exhibition, on now until Jan. 27. On display are works from member artists, including paintings, photography, ink, fibre, sculpture and mixed-media creations. For gallery hours and artist information, visit [bit.ly/48Hb2Bm](http://bit.ly/48Hb2Bm).

### Digging up vinyl treasures

The Manitoba Chamber Orchestra (MCO) is hosting their first Vinyl Vault fundraiser of the year this Saturday, Jan. 27. Browse a collection of more than 15,000 records, on sale for as low as \$3 a pop. The sale takes place between 9:30 a.m. and 1:30 p.m. in the Power Building basement (428 Portage Ave.).

### Winnipeg 150 Community Celebration Grant

From now until Jan. 31, the City of Winnipeg is accepting applications from existing festivals, events, museums and other organizations to apply for the Winnipeg 150 Community Celebration Grant. Applications for the grant of up to \$5,000 must make a community contribution under the Winnipeg 150 theme: *Our shared stories. Our shared future*. To learn more and download the application form, visit [bit.ly/49oprmb](http://bit.ly/49oprmb).

### A musical *Happy Medium*

Released on Jan. 19, *Happy Medium* is local multi-instrumentalist John Baron's latest album. True to its name, the sophomore album ebbs and flows between dreamy lo-fi rhythms and contemplative, ambient soundscapes. Listen and purchase on Bandcamp via [bit.ly/3HwjO9u](http://bit.ly/3HwjO9u).

## CKUW TOP 20

### TOP 20 LOCAL WINTER 2024



	ARTIST	ALBUM
1	PAIGE DROBOT	THE PSYCHICS ALBUM
2	BOY GOLDEN	FOR JIMMY
3	NUCLEAR MAN	NUCLEAR MAN DEMO EP
4	BEGONIA	POWDER BLUE
5	DEATH CASSETTE	GET RID OF IT EP
6	SEAN BURNS	LOST COUNTRY
7	SCOTT NOLAN	EBB AND FLOW
8	CAMPFIRE SIGH	MOTHER BROWN & OTHER ASSORTED CHESTNUTS
9	MULLIGRUB	TRAGICAL
10	VIRGO RISING	VAMPYRE YEAR EP
11	APOLLO SUNS	DEPARTURES
12	FIELD GUIDE	FIELD GUIDE
13	HOLY VOID	FEAR IN YOUR MIND
14	KRIS ULRICH	BIG IN THE USA
15	SLOW LEAVES	MEANTIME
16	TINGE	DEEP SIGH EP
17	TUNIC	WRONG DREAM
18	ZOON	BEKKA MA'IINGAN
19	BLOC PARENTS	BLOC PARENTS EP
20	DWELLER	DWELLER



# Reinventing the ring

Winnipeg's rich pro wrestling history pile-drives expectations

DWAYNE LARSON/WPW (SUPPLIED)

Jody Threat faces off against Masha Slamovich at a WPW event.

Attending your first professional wrestling match is a bit like attending a *Rocky Horror Picture Show* screening.

You have to see it live. You can never fully anticipate it. And, often, it's best to go in blind.

On a weekday evening, a standard Winnipeg entertainment venue is transformed into a semi-fictional world composed of wrestlers, announcers, referees – and, of course, fans.

As competitors hailing from Manitoba and beyond take the stage, a series of wrestler-specific chants and affectionate profanities ensue.

It's hard to explain the allure of wrestling without being around the ring. Yet, in talking to wrestling fans across the city, there's a strange phenomenon at play: those who never expect to enjoy wrestling find themselves scrambling to book

tickets to the next show.

Colin Harrison, 60, knows this well. Ever since he attended a match at the bygone Winnipeg Arena at 10 years old, he's been hooked.

"My mom and dad used to go to wrestling well before (that). I think my mom said I was in her tummy. She was eight months pregnant, going to wrestling matches," he says. "Even back then, wrestling was a big thing."

Harrison has passed on a familial love of wrestling to his son Spencer. Since venues reopened after pandemic lockdowns, Harrison reckons they've attended more than 40 shows together – and don't plan to stop anytime soon.

Somewhere between and beyond the realm of theatre and sport, wrestling has garnered a dedicated and increasingly diverse fanbase.

In Winnipeg, there are a growing number of converts. After Winnipeg Pro Wrestling (WPW), a promotion that prides itself on inclusion and out-of-the-box thinking, emerged in 2018, co-owner Devin Bray says venues began selling out at turbo speed. Fans typically less-represented in wrestling crowds – namely, women – began to disrupt the audience ratio.

Long before its 2020s resurgence, professional wrestling found a home in Manitoba haunts as early as the late 1800s. Throughout its storied history, it's drawn in the blue-collared and elite alike. It's where divides soften and alliances are tested. It's both fantasy and reality.

"Wrestling isn't part of this world," Bray says. "It's kind of a refuge from this world, like a replacement for it."

### Historical roots of wrestling in Manitoba

In his book *Thrashing Seasons*, historian C. Nathan Hatton chronicles a wrestling event on April 3, 1923, where around 2,000 people gathered at Winnipeg's Industrial Exhibition Building.

An assortment of accents and fashions huddled under electric lamplight to see the action in the ring.

"Many in attendance, however, wore more than their clothing that night. They wore their identities," Hatton writes. "The combative spectacle that they were about to witness was symbolic of greater conflicts being waged on the factory floors and in the streets, community halls, immigrant sheds, and boarding rooms throughout a city where ethnic and class divisions shaped the fabric of daily existence."

The historical roots of professional wrestling in Manitoba can be traced back to the construction boom of the early 1880s, where it often took place at variety theatres. True to their namesake, these theatres offered a rotating menu of burlesque, song and, of course, wrestling.

As Hatton argues, the evolution of professional wrestling in Winnipeg is intricately linked to the cultural and social transformations taking place in the central Prairies. Immigrant communities of the time nurtured their own stars.

"Very often, you'd have wrestlers of one ethnicity who would be pitted against others," Hatton says over the phone. "The Scandinavian community was represented by folks like Charles Gustafson, who was a Swedish immigrant, and then you had, of course, Franco-Manitobans who were represented by people like Pete or Pierre Menard, and in the Polish community, there were the Sielski brothers."

By the 1960s, major promotions like the American Wrestling Association began booking shows in Winnipeg. In the '70s, it exploded into a televised frenzy, airing as a weekly program on CKND (now branded as Global Winnipeg).

After bearing witness to half a century of Winnipeg's wrestling evolution, Harrison



DWAYNE LARSON/WPW (SUPPLIED)

"The Rhinestone Cowboy" Steven Crowe grapples with "Black Sexcellence" Devon Monroe.



DWAYNE LARSON/WPW (SUPPLIED)

Fans cheer on Shotzi Blackheart during one of the first WPW shows at the Sherbrook Inn.





DWAYNE LARSON/WPW (SUPPLIED)

Spectators cheering during WPW Cold Out 2023, when Bobby Schink won the WPW Championship against AJ Sanchez



DWAYNE LARSON/WPW (SUPPLIED)

Bobby Schink leg-drops AJ Sanchez at WPW Out Cold 2023.

believes it's experiencing a resurgence. In the last five years, WWE has made several trips to Winnipeg, including a televised event in February 2020. However, outside of the Canada Life Centre, indie promotions are drumming up interest and selling out locales across the city.

### The birth of WPW

In 2018, a new wrestling promotion was born from a few lifelong fans who wanted to bring something different to the scene.

Rounding up a roster of local talent, co-founders Devin Bray, Ben Kissock, TJ Stevenson, Adam Giardino and James Korba booked the first WPW throw-down at the Sherbrook Inn in December of that year.

"We always knew that we wanted to be something sort of outside of the box and present wrestling in a different light than it maybe had in the past in Winnipeg," Bray says.

Soon, the indie wrestling league attracted far more fans than they could fit in the Sherb. After scouting the West End Cultural Centre (WECC) as their new home base, they turned their growing pains into gains.

Though, it wasn't without challenges. The promotion booked its first WECC show in March 2020, just as COVID-19 found its way to Manitoba. Its anticipated expansion was put on hold.

After the city's entertainment venues began to reopen to the public, it didn't take long for WPW's events to attract a dedicated fanbase. In the past two years, they've programmed matches at the Manitoba Museum, ManyFest and the Burton Cummings Theatre, in addition to their regular schedule at the WECC.

In his 14 years in the local scene, wrestler Tyler Sigurdson, known as Tyler Colton in the ring, says WPW has attracted an unprecedented amount of attention to wrestling in Winnipeg in just a few years.

"All of a sudden, these shows that are happening in Winnipeg are much more of a hot ticket," he says. "There's kind of been ebbs and flows of wrestling becoming very popular in Winnipeg but definitely never anything like we see right now. These guys sell their shows out within hours of announcing them."

He likens their success to two factors: knowing their audience well and attracting new fans by bringing something different to the table.

"It's bringing in people that we've never really seen at wrestling shows before," Sigurdson says. "There have always been women in the crowd, but I don't think there's been as many as we see now. It's getting pretty close to a 50/50 split between men and women in the crowd, and it's nice to see."

As one of the most beloved characters in the Winnipeg wrestling scene, Andrew Schinkel, who goes by Sweet Bobby Schink, is known for his natural charisma and signature, syrupy move: taking performance-enhancing swigs of Canadian maple.

When preparing for a match, Schinkel keeps it simple.

"Obviously, you want to get the body looking good. It's show business, right?" he says. "You think about it, you talk about it, and you go out there and give the fans a hell of a show."

Like many wrestlers, Schinkel leads somewhat of a double life between weekdays and weekends. A seasonal rotation of landscaping and snow-removal gigs keeps him busy during the week before prepping for a weekend on the road.

"Pretty much almost every weekend, I travel all around Manitoba through Saskatchewan to Alberta," he says. "Sometimes you'll get a couple, two (or) three shows in a weekend. Other weekends, you might get one show. It all depends."

What sets professional wrestling apart from other forms of competitive wrestling is *kayfabe*, the principle of accepting the staged nature of the show as real.

Over the years, WPW didn't only expand into new venues — they expanded their world, too. Their staple staff of announcers and referees expanded to include drag-queen hosts and commentators giving live updates.

In wrestling, worldbuilding constitutes the subtle, behind-the-scenes work to keep fans buying into what they present and lure them into another match. The key is balance and, as Bray describes, a "save-the-cat moment" for the heroes. "It's kind of a double-edged sword. I want to book a show where people have a good time, but you don't just want to always have a happy ending every show," Bray says. "If the hero is always coming out on top and there's not much

adversity, there's not much reason to get behind them."

**Bringing the heat, despite the cold**

For nearly 150 years, professional wrestling has found an enduring home in Winnipeg. As a historically and presently multicultural city, Hatton believes Manitobans are geographically primed to enjoy wrestling.

"It touches a lot of the key points that interest a multicultural city like Winnipeg," he says. "You've got elements of nationalism that are being played up in the ring, sometimes anti-American sentiment being played up in the ring, which has always been a significant element of Canadian history."

The rest comes down to having great homegrown talent – something Winnipeg has been blessed with for more than a hundred years, Hatton says.

Beyond all the essential elements of putting on a good show, it's about mirroring your audience. To entice a new crowd, you have to get people they can get behind – and even relate to – in the ring.

"The audience wants to see themselves reflected in the athletes that are competing," Bray says. "The women in the crowd want to see women performing and get behind them and not see it treated as such a novelty (but) see it treated like a serious athletic competition."

After 50 years of attending shows, Harrison has gleaned a fundamental truth about wrestling.

"You gotta come to a show," he says. "People can't believe it 'til they see it themselves."

In the ring and across the stands, wrestling embodies the heart and stomach of the city. It's a projection of the audience's fears and desires, a place where profanities are words of endearment and a reflection of a locale's diversity and unity.



Bobby Schink approaches the ring at WPW Out Cold 2023.



AJ Sanchez suplexes Schink.



Schink emerges victorious.



# WINNIPEG TRANSIT SAFETY OFFICERS WILL RIDE BUSES NEXT MONTH

Security personnel may increase social injustices

JURA MCILRAITH | CITY REPORTER | @X JURA\_IS\_MY\_NAME

The long-promised Winnipeg Transit safety officers will start patrolling buses and bus routes in mid-February, but not everyone in the city will be happy to see them.

Twenty-one safety officers and two supervisors began their six weeks of training on Jan. 15. They will learn conflict resolution, non-violent crisis intervention and de-escalation techniques. According to a CBC News report by Cameron MacLean, Indigenous awareness training will only make up part of the first two days.

In response to an increase of reported crimes on public transportation, Mayor Scott Gillingham pledged in March 2023 to make buses safer by putting a transit security plan in place.

There were 104 assaults against bus drivers in 2022, the highest recorded number since 2000, the earliest year for which data is available, and 91 assaults against drivers recorded in 2023 as of Oct. 13, according to a *Winnipeg Free Press* article.

Recently, the Winnipeg Police Association filed a grievance with the City of Winnipeg. They said safety officers are not police and shouldn't have the ability to arrest people, which violates their collective agreement with the union.

Officers will carry first-aid and naloxone kits, handcuffs, collapsible batons and have

the authority to arrest and detain people.

However, more officers won't stop crime from happening — they'll just intervene, Kevin Walby, a University of Winnipeg criminal-justice professor, says.

Walby, who has studied different methods of social control including police and community safety officers, worries these new officers might create more problems than they solve.

"I believe that these kinds of social controls ... (are) at best just band-aids for social issues that have more economic roots," he says. "At worst, they're invasive, and they create more injustices."

Increased control in public spaces can lead to higher rates of racial profiling and more pervasive surveillance, Walby says.

He adds the "knee-jerk reaction" in other cities experiencing similar issues to Winnipeg is to increase control on buses. Instead, Walby says the City should increase funding for mental-health programs, substance-use and addiction treatments, harm-reduction efforts and housing.

"We're kind of allocating the resources in the wrong part of the process and at the wrong time," he says. "We're reacting way after the fact."

Bob Christmas leads the City of Winnipeg's community safety team and says of-



icers will patrol the 11, 15, 16, 18 and 47 routes, where the most serious incidents have been reported.

He spent 34 years with the Winnipeg Police Service and calls the safety-officer program a "necessary element" of Winnipeg services that's "been missing for several years."

Christmas plans to collect feedback from riders and drivers after officers start patrolling. He believes the approach will make the buses safer for riders and drivers.

"Our approach and strategies will evolve depending on community needs," he says. "The idea is to have a compassionate approach and (be) trauma-informed."

Improving lighting and seating, creating more routes and more frequent buses and

incentivizing transit for riders could make them feel safer, Walby says.

A paper published by the Canadian Public Policy journal in December 2023 found there's no data showing that increasing police funding will reduce crime rates. It analyzed data from the past 10 years in various cities, including Winnipeg, Vancouver, Edmonton and Toronto.

Winnipeg Transit has spent \$9.6 million on safety initiatives since 2017. Since then, they've added de-escalation training for drivers and installed safety shields and audio and video surveillance systems in all buses.

"At this point ... (increased surveillance) isn't creating a healthier Winnipeg or a healthier society," Walby says.

# FERAL-CAT BYLAW CHANGES COULD IMPACT WILDLIFE POPULATIONS

'It's instinctive for these animals to kill'

JURA MCILRAITH | CITY REPORTER | @X JURA\_IS\_MY\_NAME

People may soon be allowed to feed and care for feral cats in Winnipeg — but doing so could come at the cost of birds and small mammals.

Potential changes to the responsible pet ownership bylaw would allow people and organizations to trap, neuter and release feral cats so they can't reproduce.

The current bylaw says if anyone cares for a cat in their yard, they technically are its owner. This can lead to fines for having an unlicensed cat.

According to Jessica Miller, CEO of the Winnipeg Humane Society, legalizing feeding feral cats is a progressive step for the city.

"Sometimes it takes an open mind to understand that some animals past a certain point of socialization need to live outside," Miller says. "We're in favour of that."

An estimated 50,000 to 100,000 feral cats live in colonies in Winnipeg. Miller says allowing these cats to be trapped, neutered and released is the best and most humane solution.

While strays are formerly domestic cats that left their home and got lost or were abandoned, feral cats have reverted to a wild state and have little to no contact with humans. Strays can be resocialized and find new

homes, but that isn't an option for feral cats.

Currently, the WHS says any feral cats brought in will likely be euthanized after a mandatory holding period.

"Many of these cats are completely feral and not social, and, therefore, they're not adoption candidates," Miller says. "We wouldn't want to have to bring in unsocial animals and euthanize them because there's no other option."

In the future, she believes the feral-cat population will gradually decrease, so shelters aren't operating at full capacity all the time.

The Winnipeg Humane Society can have roughly 400 animals in the shelter each month, with another 200 animals in foster homes, Miller says. Nearly 300 animals are on a waitlist at all times.

While she sees the proposed bylaw changes as a big step forward, Miller says she's heard concerns about feral cats killing birds, frogs and small mammals.

It's estimated that cats kill between 100 and 350 million birds each year in Canada, the majority of which are killed by feral cats, according to a paper published in *Avian Conservation & Ecology* in December 2013.

Cats are considered one of the biggest wildlife conservation problems in the world,



Stray and feral cats already negatively impact urban wildlife populations. Experts disagree on whether potential bylaw changes will make that problem better — or worse.

University of Winnipeg biology professor Scott Forbes says.

Forbes says he's disappointed the City of Winnipeg is not listening to the science behind the bylaw amendment.

"Cats are a menace," Forbes says. "(Feral cats are) an invasive species. They're not supposed to be here."

Forbes, who studies birds and owns two indoor cats, says trap, neuter and release programs just don't work.

He tries to keep his cats Sparky and Mini inside to reduce their impact on wild animal populations, but Mini often escapes outside.

Forbes doesn't think legalizing feeding feral cats will stop them from hunting, based on how Mini behaves.

"He just goes out and slaughters birds and mammals, and he is as well-fed as you can get," he says. "It's instinctive for these animals to kill."

Urban centres become "slaughter zones" for birds and other mammals like chipmunks, baby rabbits and mice, Forbes says.

"I love cats, but cats have their place, and that's inside," he says, "not outside killing wild animals."



# U OF W RESEARCHERS PARTICIPATE IN HISTORIC NASA MISSION

## C-TAPE lab studying 4.5 billion-year-old sample from near-earth asteroid Benu

MIEKE RUTH VAN INEVELD | CAMPUS REPORTER | X MIEKERUTH

Researchers at the University of Winnipeg (U of W) are playing a prominent role in a historic NASA-led mission to collect and study samples from a near-Earth asteroid.

A sample of 4.5-billion-year-old rock fragments and dust from the asteroid Benu made a two-week stop at the U of W's Centre for Terrestrial and Planetary Exploration (C-TAPE) in early January.

Geography professor and C-TAPE director Dr. Ed Cloutis is a globally recognized expert in hyperspectral analysis, a non-destructive technique similar to photography with the capacity to register wavelengths of light invisible to the human eye.

His team's analysis will help determine what kinds of complex organic molecules could have been present billions of years ago on the asteroids that crashed together to form Earth.

"Living organisms are composed of amino acids, DNA and all this other stuff," Cloutis says. "By looking at these asteroids, we can figure out how close(ly) ... the chemistry that went on in these asteroids get(s) us to the complex molecules that we need to form life."

### The mission

NASA launched the OSIRIS-REx sample return mission on Sept. 8, 2016 from Cape Canaveral, Fla. The spacecraft completed its 6.2-billion-kilometre round trip to Benu and back on Sept. 24, 2023, jettisoning its sample capsule into the Earth's atmosphere before setting off to study the asteroid Apophis.

OSIRIS-REx is only the third successful asteroid sample return mission in history and the first led by NASA.

In terms of sample volume, it's also the most ambitious. Japan's Hayabusa2 mission returned 200 milligrams of the asteroid Ryugu. The total Benu sample is an astonishing 250 grams.

U of W alum Dr. Jessica Stromberg is a se-

nior research scientist at the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organization in Australia. She says the engineering challenges involved in sample collection are compounded by the nature of asteroids' "fluffy," packing-peanut-esque surfaces.

Bringing back larger samples "involves a lot more complexity in terms of engineering," she says. To "land there, sit there, collect something, put it in ... every single one of those steps increases the risk of something failing. On a first go, bringing anything back is a big win."

Stromberg says missions like this can "unite folks globally" by providing opportunities to advance humankind's collective understanding of "how we ended up (on Earth)."

"Obviously there's a lot of things going on in the world that you could argue are more pressing, but (the mission) does create a sense of something we can all get behind together," she says.

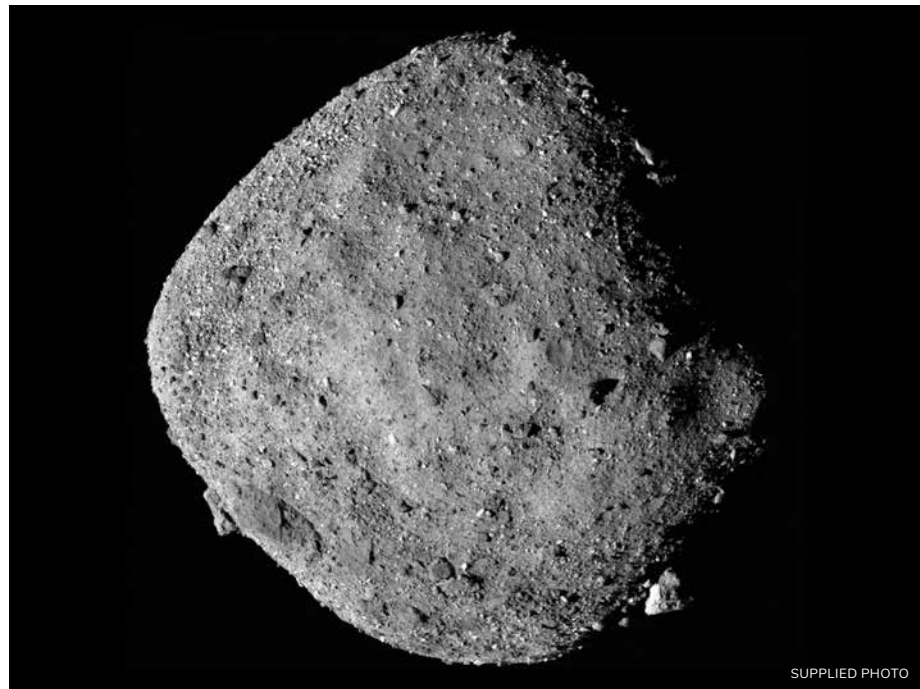
"Big missions to deep space and other areas (are) something that require a collaborative effort of multiple countries, multiple organizations ... it's really, really exciting to see it all come together."

### Opportunities

Analyzing the sample is a global effort involving more than 200 scientists at several dozen institutions.

Due in part to its contribution of OSIRIS-REx's Laser Altimeter component, the Canadian Space Agency (CSA) was allocated four per cent of the overall sample. This sample portion is what's being circulated between a research chain of Canadian universities, including the U of W.

Cloutis says the U of W is one of only two Canadian universities able to give students the "unique opportunity" of a hands-on role in the NASA mission. A half-dozen undergraduate and master's students are working



A NASA mosaic photograph presenting a view of the asteroid Benu

alongside Cloutis and lab manager Dan Applin to collect, analyze and publish data about the sample.

"Being involved in something like this certainly shows the rest of the world that we're a player right now," Cloutis says. "We've got the chops. We've got the expertise. We've got the equipment. This will definitely help us get in on future missions."

The CSA tapped C-TAPE for its sample-analysis team because it's one of the only facilities in the world with the right equipment to perform hyperspectral analysis without exposing the material to Earth's atmosphere.

"When a meteorite lands on Earth, it immediately starts to get contaminated by microbes and other stuff in the atmosphere," Cloutis says. "This asteroid sample, by contrast, is a pristine slice of what's out there in space."

Ensuring that the asteroid material only ever comes in contact with nitrogen, an inert gas that won't react with the sample, is a defining characteristic of the sample preparation process.

Opening the sample return capsule's outer shell was a carefully choreographed two-day operation carried out inside a nitrogen purge custom-built for the occasion.

Accessing the bulk of the sample took more than three months, as custom tools had to be designed and built after two of the Touch-and-Go Sample Acquisition Mechanism's 35 fasteners became stuck.

Cloutis has a reassuringly matter-of-fact attitude about the delicate nature of the cargo. "It's

not super fancy," he says of handling the sample. "I mean, we have a sealed box with a door on it."

### What comes next

Analysis of Benu's geochemical properties will provide a crucial window into the kinds of organic molecules available 4.5 billion years ago on an infant Earth. Cloutis says future work seeking to fill in gaps in our understanding of how life formed on Earth will involve further asteroid sample retrieval, lab experiments and continuing the search for life on Mars.

Stromberg says the expertise she developed studying with Cloutis made her career as a geologist possible. As an undergraduate, she helped Cloutis research Manitoban sites with similar geology to Mars. She says the experience got her "hooked" on the idea of geological analysis as a source of insights about planetary biology.

After earning her PhD at the University of Western Ontario, Stromberg returned to the U of W as a postdoctoral fellow, collaborating with Cloutis and Applin on hyperspectral analysis of meteorites and Mars analogues. She says experiences like hers point to the impacts on students' careers provided by opportunities like working on OSIRIS-REx.

"That's one of the big things out of this. It's training the next generation of scientists in this space," she says. "You can see that Ed's students are working on other missions now or working in labs in the US or other places. People don't assume this sort of facility or lab or work will be happening at the U of W, but it really is a world-class space."

## CITY BRIEFS

TESSA ADAMSKI | CITY EDITOR | X TESSA\_ADAMSKI @ TESSA.ADAMSKI

### Lace up your skates

Grab a hockey stick and throw on those garbage mitts, because the river trail is back! The first section of the Nestaweya River Trail opened on Jan. 25. This is the latest the trail has ever opened, after unseasonably warm temperatures and an influx of water from the United States led to unsafe conditions and delayed crews.

### Get me out of here

A Winnipeg Facebook group consisting of nearly 4,000 members is full of volunteers dedicated to helping people get their cars out of the ditch in winter. Winnipeg Transit driver Tyler Kraft helped start the group "Get Me Out of Here" in 2021. So far, he has helped more than 100 people – free of charge – who needed a quick jumpstart or tug from a snow-bank.

### Cap on student study permit

The federal government announced a cap on international student permit applications on Jan. 22 for the next two years. The new limit is meant to stabilize the number of international students in Canada. Approximately 360,000 permits will be granted in 2024, a 35 per cent decrease from last year. The number of intake caps for each province and territory will depend on the population of international students.

### Marlborough Hotel investigation

A rally at the downtown Marlborough Hotel resulted in chaos after its basement was trashed on Jan. 21. Protesters gathered at the hotel after a four-week-old video of a First Nations woman being detained and restrained with zip ties by staff members circulated online. The Winnipeg Police Service is investigating the video, including alleged reports that the woman had a knife and tried to stab an employee. The WPS is also investigating the hotel basement's destruction.

### Community-centre upgrades

The City of Winnipeg's Community Centre Renovation Grant Program is upgrading 13 city-owned community centres that run recreational programming or other services. The grant total of \$836,739 will be used to complete facility repairs, retrofits, safety improvements and renovation projects. Since the program started in 2012, the City has spent more than \$16.6 million on community-centre upgrades. Central Corydon, Valour, Notre Dame, Red River and other centres will receive the upgrade.

### More Ukrainian newcomers headed to Manitoba

Canada's temporary emergency visas helping Ukrainians flee the war will expire at the end of March. The Ukrainian Canadian Congress Manitoba Provincial Council expects about 7,000 more Ukrainian newcomers will arrive in the next few months, in addition to the more than 20,000 people who've sought refuge in the province. These visas allow Ukrainians to study and work in Canada for three years as temporary residents.

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THE UNIVERSITY OF  
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#### STUDY SKILLS WORKSHOPS

Need help with critical thinking, writing essays, or taking tests? Study Skills Workshops cover these topics in the last three sessions.

#### INTERNATIONAL STUDENT SERVICES (ISS) WINTER GALA

The ISS Winter Gala on Jan. 26 will be a fun evening of food, music and entertainment to celebrate the start of Winter Term. Tickets are \$10.00 at the ISS office (8th floor Rice Centre, 491 Portage Ave). Space is limited so get your tickets as soon as possible!

More info at [uwinnipeg.ca/iss](http://uwinnipeg.ca/iss)

#### MONEY TALKS

Tax time is coming up soon. Do

you know what a T4A is? Learn how to prepare to file your taxes at the next Money Talks session on Jan. 30, 11:00-11:30 a.m., via Zoom.

Registration in advance is required. More info here: [uwinnipeg.ca/awards](http://uwinnipeg.ca/awards)

#### SPRING GRADUATION

Are you finishing your last courses in April? Want to graduate in June? The final date to apply to graduate in June 2024 is Feb. 1.

To apply for graduation, go to the "Student Planning/Registration" link on WebAdvisor. Click on the "Graduation" tab and complete the form.

For more information on graduation, visit [uwinnipeg.ca/student-records](http://uwinnipeg.ca/student-records)

#### Winter 2024 In-Course Awards

The online application for Winter In-Course Awards remains open until Feb. 1. Students who missed the Fall Oct. 1 deadline and those registered in Winter term only are encouraged to apply.

For details: [uwinnipeg.ca/awards](http://uwinnipeg.ca/awards)

#### CAREER CHATS ON INSTAGRAM

Career Chats are live sessions on Instagram that feature advice from an employer or career-related expert.

Upcoming topics:

- Feb. 1 – N.E.E.D.S. Inc. with Aric Goodbrandson
- Feb. 15 – STEP Services with Brett Howden and Melissa Phaneuf-Ahi

Hosted by Career Services, these live sessions take place every other Thursday at 11:00 a.m. on UWinnipeg Instagram.

#### STUDY ABROAD – FALL/WINTER 2024-25

The deadline is fast approaching to apply for exchange programs in the next academic year.

This is an ideal time to study abroad, as funding is currently available through the Government of Canada's Global Skills Opportunity Program that could cover 30% to 80% of exchange costs for eligible students going on exchange during Fall Term 2024.

The deadline to apply is Feb. 15, 2024. Find out more at [uwinnipeg.ca/study-abroad](http://uwinnipeg.ca/study-abroad)



# XO, THE FINANCIAL THERAPIST

## Financial shame in a vibecession economy

ELENA STURK-LUSSIER | COLUMNIST | @ELENASTURKLULU

Money shame keeps me up at night, so I find myself going to the gym more, and more, and more. I hit the bag to stop thinking about the gnawing feeling in the pit of my gut. I spin furiously to squeeze every drop of anxiety out of my pores. I lift heavy to get strong enough to build a fortress around me. “This is good for my mental health,” I think.

I chat with the owner and coaches with the nonchalance of an aristocrat who lives the kind of life of leisure that allows her to take pilates during the workday. What they don’t know is I can barely afford my membership anymore. But I keep going aggressively, five, six times a week, convincing myself that if I go often enough, the expense is justified.

I get an email from the gym. They’re hiring. In exchange for a short shift once a week, I could receive a free membership. “Not for me,” I think. With this membership comes my self-worth, and letting go of the \$165 per month expense would mean parting with my pride.

It’s difficult not to equate self-worth with income and spending habits. Not so long ago, I never felt that twinge of guilt under my sternum about money spent, because I was proud that I could afford small pleasures, that I *earned* them.

Today, things are different. I can’t stop feeling like I’m overspending when I look

at receipts. When my credit-card bill hits, shame floods in. Am I this poor at managing money?

I look at prices and know things are more expensive than they were last year and the year before. But when I check on the status quo of the Canadian economy, I find out the country is not, in fact, in a recession.

In a June 2022 post on Substack, Kyla Scanlon coined the term “vibecession” to discern a general pessimism about the economy, regardless of whether it’s doing well.

Does that mean we’re all in this together? It doesn’t feel like it. I have friends who seem to be doing well. They have cars and homes and stable careers.

I begin to question more than my daily spending habits: was grad school a waste of money? I could’ve saved up to buy a house instead. Were those weekend trips really necessary? I could’ve used that money for clothes and groceries.

The shame spirals take over, and exercise is not enough to keep them at bay. So the next time I receive a “We’re hiring!” email from the gym, I reply immediately to convey my interest and availability.

To my own surprise, I like the work. I like being more involved in a place that gives me joy and a sense of community. With it, the shame is gone. Instead, I feel proud knowing I’m doing something to alleviate my cred-



ILLUSTRATION BY GABRIELLE FUNK

it-card bill. And I’m doing this by working a meagre three hours a week, not by cutting out a small pleasure from my life.

More than anything, I feel relieved. Holding onto my pride took a lot of energy. There’s no shame in making changes to our spending habits in a vibecession economy.

It’s not a personal failure.

**Elena Sturk-Lussier is a filmmaker with an MSc in creative writing and a penchant for romance novels.**



# ON BECOMING A JOCK

## Or, how I learned to love sport

PATRICK HARNEY | COMMENTS EDITOR

As a kid, I enjoyed playing volleyball in gym class and tag on the playground as much as I enjoyed videogames and history class. I didn’t participate in many extracurricular activities and didn’t come from a sporty household, but during this period, sport and play were synonymous, and one’s social class was rarely equated with athletic performance.

As I entered the adolescent period of the cafeteria social order, the distinctions between the freaks, geeks and jocks suddenly became simple ways to understand who I was and who I wasn’t.

People I once considered friends suddenly confused me. The slang born out of locker-room banter quickly left me alienated, and my lack of coordination meant I knew my place.

Though these demarcations reflect vulgar archetypes drawn from exposure to TV and movies, my accumulated years without sport had affected my perceived social status. As a result, I felt a need to separate myself, choosing arts and literature over dangles and ginis, slowly shifting my sense of self.

As time went on, the aggression, the yelling and the physical exertion of sports changed from something I didn’t understand to something I wholly rejected. I saw sports as impossible for me, to be avoided and the pastime of a group I would never come to understand.

I held on to approximations of these feelings throughout my early adulthood. I rejected business bros who play beer-league hockey, a lesser form of enjoyment compared to the arts or music.

However, during the COVID-19 lockdowns, something started to change. I took up running as a way to get outside, seeing it as somehow separate from conventional sports due to its patient, contemplative nature.

As I continued to exercise, I began to see the appeal of testing my body. The feeling of progression as I went from 5K to 10K to 15K runs was addictive and positively impacted my health and sense of self.

So when a friend asked me to come play pickup basketball, although I felt some reluctance, my six-foot-four frame and new love for activity meant it was a transition that finally made sense to me.

Quickly, I took to the sport. I wasn’t good, but the feeling of camaraderie that comes with playing on a team was a new experience that I relished. Most surprisingly, aggression and competition, the black box I had hid away, became something I craved. By being able to express these feelings in a constructive manner, I encountered a pleasure I did not know I could feel.

Now, I play sports every week, crossing the mythical high-school cafeteria lines to finally become a jock. Or, in reality, I have



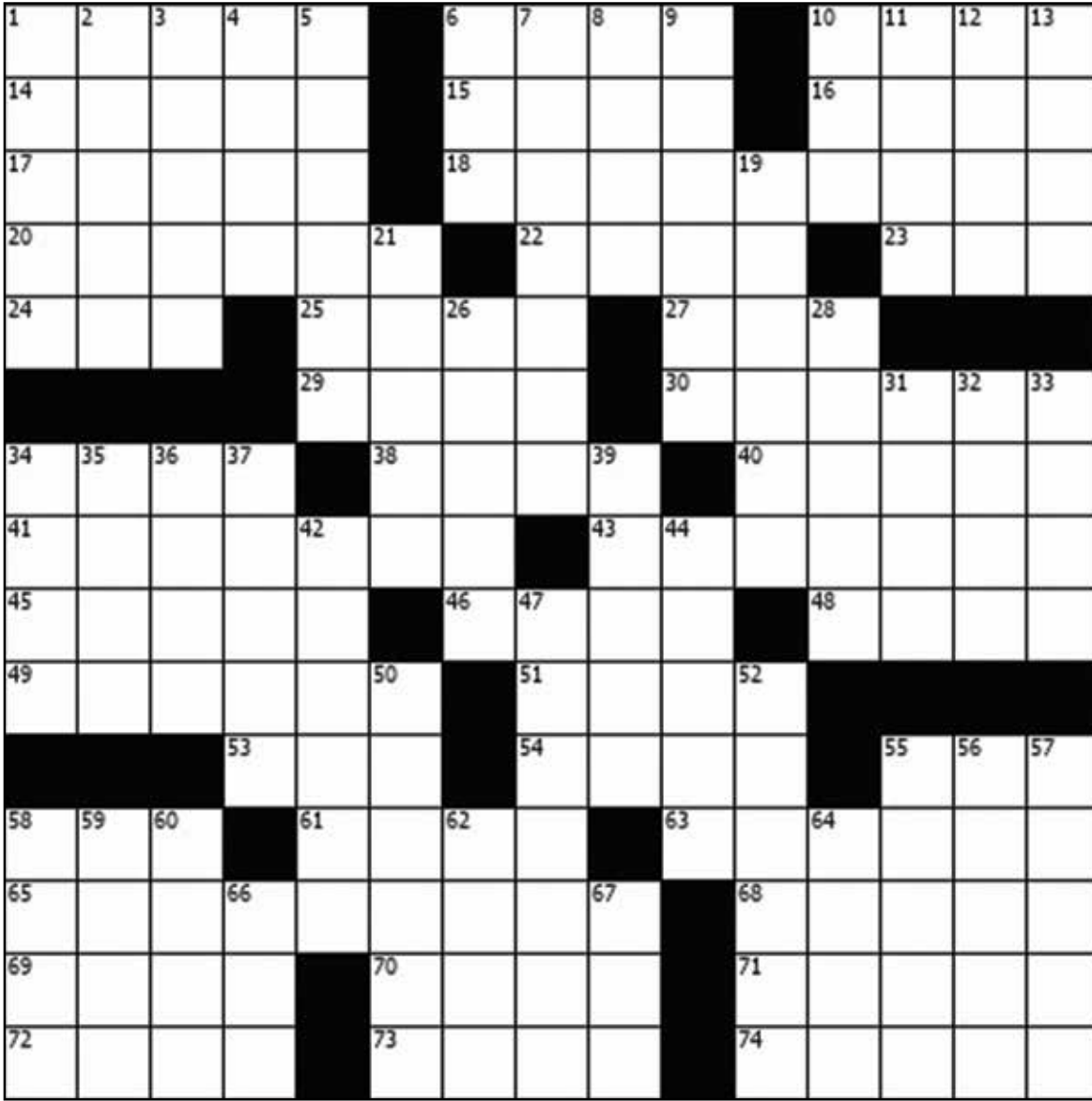
ILLUSTRATION BY GABRIELLE FUNK

opened myself up to a new experience, discarding the anxieties of youth to appreciate physicality, teamwork and play.

I have come to realize that limiting myself in service of a constructed identity is an unnecessary practice and something

that can be overcome. Most importantly, I learned that I can almost slam dunk.

**Patrick Harney is the comments editor at The Uniter. His next challenge is watching sports.**



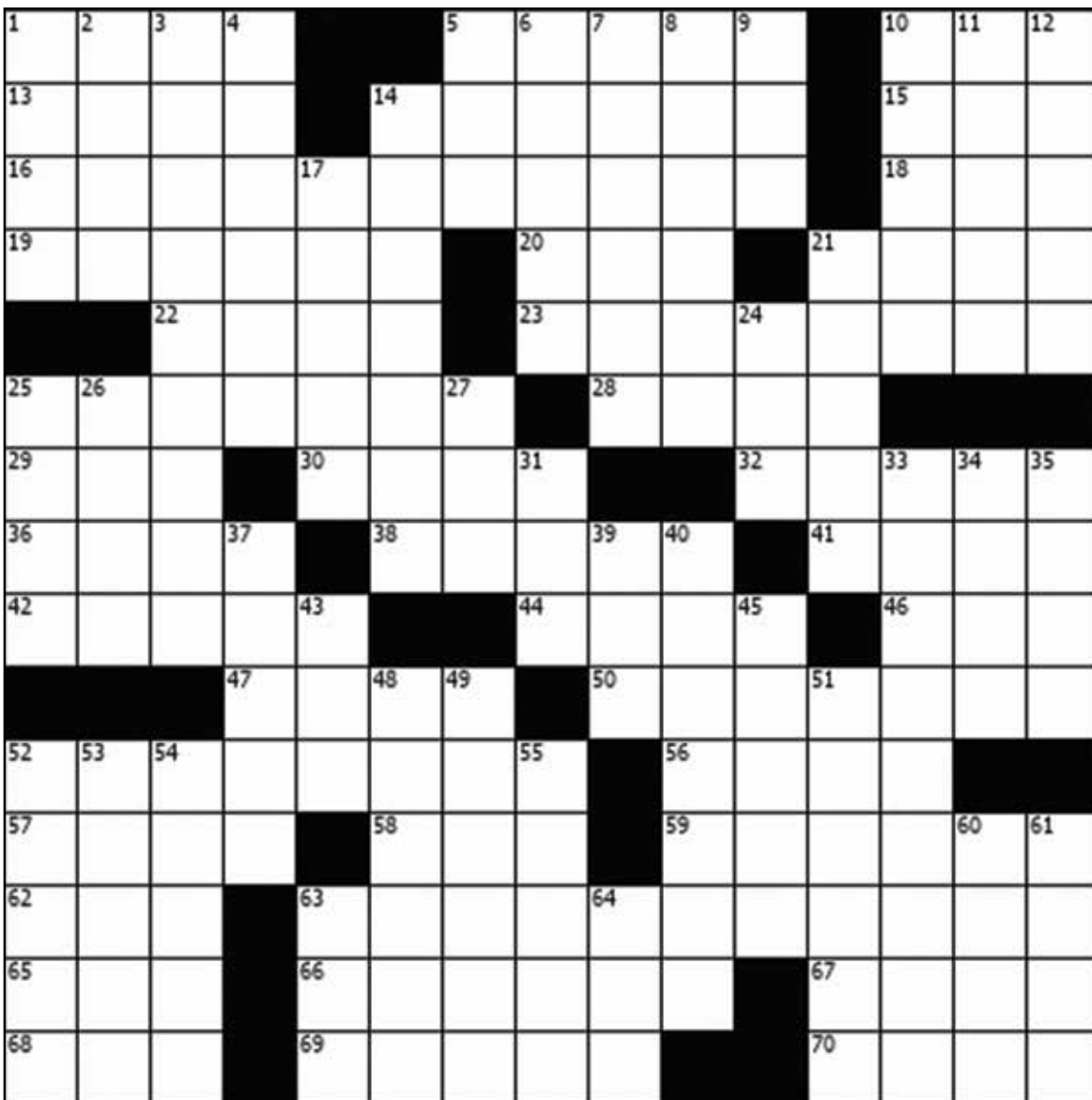
ONLINECROSSWORDS.NET

ACROSS

- 1. DOCTRINE
- 6. DETECTIVE'S ASSIGNMENT
- 10. OVER AGAIN
- 14. SPRING MONTH
- 15. CLIENT
- 16. CHANGE RESIDENCES
- 17. TINY AMOUNT
- 18. MODERN CONVENIENCE
- 20. DINER PATRONS
- 22. KIND
- 23. RIGHT YOU \_\_\_\_!
- 24. THAT FEMALE
- 25. BANGKOK NATIVE
- 27. EXPLOSIVE (ABBR.)
- 29. PERCEIVED
- 30. MOST TENDER
- 34. FLYING STINGER
- 38. VOYAGING
- 40. COWBOY SHOW
- 41. QUICK TEMPO
- 43. DENTAL ALLOY
- 45. COURSE
- 46. WHITTLE DOWN
- 48. ALLOWS
- 49. TRANQUIL
- 51. FIZZY DRINK
- 53. MAROON
- 54. FINGER NOISE
- 55. THAT MAN'S
- 58. NOTABLE PERIOD
- 61. WICKED
- 63. NEWEST
- 65. TINY
- 68. VIOLA'S KIN
- 69. AIN'T, CORRECTLY
- 70. STABLE MORSELS
- 71. ACTRESS \_\_\_\_ HAYES
- 72. BALL HOLDERS
- 73. TRICK
- 74. HAM IT UP

DOWN

- 1. SEES SOCIALLY
- 2. TV'S \_\_\_\_ WINFREY
- 3. SHRED CHEESE
- 4. SMALL RODENTS
- 5. CAUTIONS
- 6. SEVER
- 7. FOOLISH
- 8. TEAMSTER'S RIG
- 9. CONSTRUCTS
- 10. DOCTORS' GROUP (ABBR.)
- 11. BOSSA \_\_\_\_
- 12. ETERNALLY
- 13. "THE WAY WE \_\_\_\_"
- 19. SPANISH TITLE
- 21. CLIP
- 26. FABLE AUTHOR
- 28. ONLINE TROUBLEMAKER
- 31. SLIGHT ADVANTAGE
- 32. CHAIR
- 33. MALE CATS
- 34. "STAR \_\_\_\_"
- 35. BURN BALM
- 36. SPEAK INDISTINCTLY
- 37. \_\_\_\_ PAN
- 39. BASEBALL GREAT HANK \_\_\_\_
- 42. SWISS CITY
- 44. HERO'S AWARD
- 47. MAINTAINS
- 50. MAGAZINE VIP
- 52. GERONIMO, E.G.
- 55. HOWDY!
- 56. SMALL LANDMASS
- 57. BOULDER
- 58. RADIATE
- 59. \_\_\_\_ AND SHINE!
- 60. GREEN GABLES GIRL
- 62. HAWAIIAN FEAST
- 64. BE ABUNDANT
- 66. \_\_\_\_ A GIRL!
- 67. COMPASS DIRECTION (ABBR.)



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ACROSS

- 1. \_\_\_\_ ROMEO
- 5. WIND DOWN
- 10. WINERY FEATURE
- 13. GO UP IN SMOKE
- 14. MADE LOAFERS REFLECT
- 15. TINGED WITH SARCASM
- 16. THEY LEAVE THINGS HANGING
- 18. EARLY JAZZ
- 19. BEACHGOER'S PROTECTION
- 20. AUSTRALIAN SIX-FOOTER
- 21. PONDER
- 22. FINAL, MAYBE
- 23. RENAISSANCE PRECEDER
- 25. WHERE BOARDS ARE FORMED
- 28. MASHER'S LOOK
- 29. GARDNER OF HOLLYWOOD
- 30. BIG BUCKS?
- 32. SLIGHTLY MORE THAN 11 PERCENT
- 36. MOLD
- 38. SENSIBLE
- 41. "OF COURSE!"
- 42. FINALLY ARRIVE AT
- 44. HAWAIIAN FOOD STAPLE
- 46. DAY OR WAY PRECEDER
- 47. STRATUM OF COAL
- 50. TALL CHEST OF DRAWERS
- 52. PREPARE A PRESENT
- 56. DRIFTING ICE CHUNK
- 57. IN A LETHARGIC MANNER
- 58. ASSAYER'S SUBJECT
- 59. HARDLY A LITTLE ANGEL
- 62. "NORMA \_\_\_\_"
- 63. STAFF ADDITION, SOMETIMES
- 65. ALPHABETIZER'S OMISSION
- 66. STILL PACKAGED
- 67. TENNYSON'S "GERAINT AND \_\_\_\_"
- 68. IN GREAT DEMAND
- 69. EXTRA
- 70. "GUARDING \_\_\_\_" (SHIRLEY MACLAINE FILM)

DOWN

- 1. READING FORERUNNER
- 2. HUMDINGER
- 3. AHEAD
- 4. IT'S PLAYED BEFORE PLAY BEGINS
- 5. PHYSICAL RESPONSES?
- 6. ONE ON TWO FEET
- 7. VARMINT
- 8. PROFESSOR'S GOAL
- 9. MAG. BLUE-PENCILERS
- 10. LITTLE BEETLE THAT GETS AROUND
- 11. CROPPED UP
- 12. HUNTS AND PECKS
- 14. PAYS, AS A BILL
- 17. MEMBER OF AN ORTHODOX JEWISH SECT
- 21. YANKEE KNOWN FOR "61"
- 24. BARBIE'S MALE FRIEND
- 25. OUT'S OPPOSITE
- 26. STRATFORD'S RIVER
- 27. THE LION IN SUMMER
- 31. DIRT ROAD FEATURE
- 33. TOP PRIORITY
- 34. COMBO SIZE, SOMETIMES
- 35. "ALGIERS" ACTRESS LAMARR
- 37. IN NEED OF AN AIRING
- 39. UH-UH
- 40. MOVED AIMLESSLY
- 43. KIRK BENCH
- 45. LEERING TYPE
- 48. ROUGHLY
- 49. SEARCH FOR PLUNDER
- 51. NEW ORLEANS DUNKER
- 52. DIETER'S TARGET
- 53. EZRA POUND'S HOME STATE
- 54. QUICK AS A WINK
- 55. AS SUCH
- 60. SOUL SINGER REDDING
- 61. CINCINNATI SLUGGERS
- 63. SINE \_\_\_\_ NON
- 64. BROTHER OF JACK AND BOBBY

# HOROSCOPES

There is a full moon in Leo today at 2:36 A.M.

Every year, the full moon in Leo highlights the tension between individuals and groups. Being yourself is rewarding, especially since this full moon squares off with Jupiter, the planet of luck.

SOURCE: CAFEASTROLOGY.COM

## ARIES

Today's Full Moon brings love, creativity, fun, entertainment, and self-expression into focus, dear Aries. You might have an epiphany that leads you to the conclusion that you should enjoy yourself more fully! This lunation lights up your sector of play and recreation, and it's a time for embracing your feelings and letting them guide you! This lunation can bring buried or unacknowledged emotions to the surface, and it feels great to release them. New information or a burst of emotion can prompt a turning point, encouraging you to indulge your feelings, share your creations, and follow your joy. A friendship can reach a turning point, or your emotions seem to overflow now. While it's a vital process, it's a good idea to take some time with your feelings before making huge decisions. Some aspects of your past need to be laid to rest, simply because they are no longer serving you well. Eventually, this process will pave the way to a new beginning.

## TAURUS

Today can be busy and communicative, dear Taurus, and can be one part rational and logical and two parts emotional! Today's Full Moon brings special and possibly dramatic attention to matters of home, family, and the heart. If you've poured much energy into your responsibilities to "the outside world" or work, circumstances now remind you to find a balance. If you've been over-extending yourself, you need to discover ways to get more rest. A home, family, or property matter could grab your attention now, and you may need to do some catch-up work with loved ones. This Full Moon can bring a call to attend to your personal life as you recognize your needs for nurture, safety, and comfort. Try not to make moves or decisions under pressure, but aim to listen to your urges. It's a time to bring more quality attention to your personal life.

## GEMINI

The Full Moon today can spotlight your feelings about a particular project or direction, dear Gemini. It heightens emotions and is particularly impactful in your immediate environment and communications. A flurry of activity related to errands, news, a short trip, or a turning point regarding education or travel can be in focus. If there has been recent inattention to details or daily affairs, it's time to round out your plans! If you can sort through it all, try to block out the useless or mindless information coming into your life now. However, emotions are real and need some processing. There can be a conversation that stirs up all sorts of feelings or a sudden new interest that excites you. While the atmosphere can be a little chaotic, you're also recognizing the need to better manage your daily affairs and keep on top of things, as well as the value of staying in touch with people and opening up the lines of communication.

## CANCER

The Moon moves out of your sign and into your solar second house today, dear Cancer, reaching full in your finances sector. This Full Moon can be about material goods and resources or non-material, emotional, or spiritual matters. You're likely to face the needs and wants you've kept at bay, and it's a great learning experience. There can be revelations and unveilings centered around money, things, values, talents, sharing of responsibilities, and power dynamics. For best results, aim to strengthen areas of your life that include self-worth, value, security, and comfort. If you've been spending a lot of time giving to and supporting others, you are likely to feel a strong need to bring more balance into your world right now. Money can come in, or news of increased resources is forthcoming this week. This is a time for improving your finances, whether it's about cutting back or pushing yourself to earn more/ask for more.

## LEO

Today's Full Moon happens in your sign, dear Leo, bringing buried feelings to the surface and long-standing issues or projects to fruition. A personal revelation can happen now! Avoid stretching yourself too thin, and keep an open mind until you've reached a state of inner certainty. However, it's a fine time to explore and embrace your feelings. This lunation might instead mark a significant turning point for your plans. Any emotions you've brushed aside or ignored can now magnify. Knowing what's in your heart is empowering, even if you still need to set a plan for pursuing what you want. Today can be slightly chaotic, so be sure to take the time to digest your feelings before acting on them. Your increased sensitivity may lead to minor frustrations, particularly if you give in to impatience. Aim to rise above this and let the emotions flow.

## VIRGO

With the Moon's move into your solar twelfth house today, dear Virgo, part of you may want to slip into the background, if only to catch some time for yourself. The Full Moon occurs in this same sector, and new light shines on recent hidden or background trends in your life. You may be filling in some of the blanks now! A secret or private matter reveals itself, a health matter comes to light, or a work project culminates. If you've been working too hard or putting so much effort into helping others that you've ignored your needs, now is the time to restore balance to your life. Rest and alone times are necessary now. However, if a project reaches a head, you may need to put your energies into it now, and if so, you'll do best with some solitude. The need for extra rest and quiet or personal time becomes paramount, even though it can feel at odds with your drive toward work or health matters.

## LIBRA

The Moon enters your social sector today, dear Libra. A Full Moon occurs in this area of your solar chart now, and your social life is calling now! Feelings can emerge unexpectedly and perhaps messily, but running with your feelings and emotional excitement may be just what you need at the moment. However, aim to restore some level of balance to your life by including friends, considering communal needs, and enjoying the benefits of teams and groups, even if you're exceptionally wrapped up in your personal or romantic life. It's a time to enjoy new revelations. There can be a sudden need to help others or to give back by returning favors. It's a time for making yourself proud, and the bonus is that others are likely to appreciate you as well. Circumstances are such that you are more strongly aware of the important role you play in others' lives (as a spouse, parent, friend, daughter/son, sibling, and so forth). You're honoring the people of your world, and a humanitarian gesture may be in order.

## SCORPIO

A Full Moon occurs at the top of your solar chart today, dear Scorpio, and a responsibility or career matter can come to your attention. The spotlight is on your future, and a turning point or epiphany can help move matters forward. Circumstances are such that you are in the position to show your more mature and responsible side. There can be recognition, an award, or a job opportunity. You can experience meaningful realizations about your career or longer-term goals. If you've been paying too much attention to your personal life, events now remind you to attend to responsibilities and outside obligations or career matters. An overarching plan is important now, and you may develop a new idea along these lines. Tackling one thing at a time is important. Aim to acknowledge new feelings released today, but sit with them before acting.

## SAGITTARIUS

Today's Full Moon can bring an idea or project to full bloom, dear Sagittarius. You're arriving at a turning point or a revelation about communications, learning, education, attitude, outlook, or publishing matters, setting you on a fresh path. Your need for more than life than mere routine comes to the fore. If you need a push or some extra courage to do something new, this Full Moon can undoubtedly help. The desire to expand your mind and experiences dominates now. Aim for moderation by setting limits and priorities, as your current worst enemy could be a tendency towards extremes. Information can come to light that changes your perspective about an issue. Indeed, emotions run high. While life can feel a bit chaotic temporarily, consider that what you perceive today will likely be exaggerated. Even so, there may be some essential truth to it, and it's important to feel and observe.

## CAPRICORN

A Full Moon occurs today in your intimacy sector, dear Capricorn, and something comes to light that heightens emotions surrounding respect, feelings of worth, money, valuables, business, or personal possessions. You might awaken to a desire or feeling that you've buried or overlooked, or there can be epiphanies about financial and emotional support or dependencies. You might gain new information about shared resources or debts and loans, or there can be a startling discovery about your feelings for someone or theirs for you. Emotional rumblings are strong! Revelations at this time are catalysts for making changes related to dependencies and support systems. In fact, today's Full Moon can be eye-opening or mind-expanding. If you've been uncomfortably dependent on a situation, person, or habit, you might now recognize your need to detach or find a better balance.

## AQUARIUS

You might recognize your need for someone or some quality feedback, dear Aquarius. Relationships and personal matters can feel bigger than life with today's Full Moon in your partnership sector. Epiphanies, emotional declarations, or disagreements are possible. Nevertheless, if arguments occur now, they should resolve with both parties coming to a greater understanding instead of leaving everyone frustrated. Fortunately, it can be a wonderfully creative time when you recognize feelings you may have tossed aside, and a need for balance becomes all-consuming! If you've been focusing a lot of your attention on personal plans, which is appropriate at this time of year, a partner may vie for your attention now, and it's important to pay someone (or your relationship goals) their due attention. A turning point in a relationship is possible.

## PISCES

The Full Moon illuminates your service sector today, dear Pisces, and if you've been unsatisfied with work, health, or service matters, you're now feeling this frustration in a rush. Positively, you can be super-motivated to change your routine to help you feel better about yourself. There may be a need to be of service to others, and while there can be some difficulties juggling your responsibilities, ultimately, you'll feel better about helping out. Try not to worry about whether or not you're appreciated, and instead, answer to yourself: do what makes you feel good from the inside out. Be sure to pay special attention to your body, health, and habits. It's a great time to explore ways to make important improvements. With this Full Moon, you're now ready to recognize your feelings about your duties or work. Avoid exaggeration and embrace moderation for best results.