

WHITE PINE PRESS

We hew to the line; let the chips fall where they may.

Who Has The Best Cinnamon Roll in Traverse City?

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Neurodiversity Support Center Opens in Scholar's Hall

Emma Marion
Assistant Editor

As NMC continues to improve efforts to accommodate student needs, The Neurodiversity Support Center (NSC) has recently opened on campus. Located on the bottom floor of Scholars Hall in room 13, the NSC offers an accommodating space to any students with sensory needs. Specifically, the NSC is aimed at bridging the gap between the support to which students have access in high school and college.

Although any student at NMC can use the space when it is open, students can also register to gain access to the full range of services through an online application. Six students are currently registered, with the NSC looking to reach a full capacity of 20 students in the fall. In order to register, the student must have a case open with Michigan Rehabilitation Services (MRS). Once accepted, they will gain access to specialized tutoring, workplace readiness training, and organized social events.

The NSC is open and staffed Monday and Wednesday from 3-5pm, and staffed from 12-3pm on Tuesday and Thursday. However, look for these hours to expand in the future as the NSC gains more resources in the coming semesters. The goal is to have the space open throughout any day campus is open.

This marks an important step for NMC, and community colleges as a whole. It demonstrates the national shifting of attitudes towards neurodivergent safe spaces, and sends the clear message that physical sensory spaces are important for any student to decompress and relax.

More information is available in the links below:

<https://www.nmc.edu/student-services/tutoring-support/support-services.html>

<https://www.nmc.edu/student-services/tutoring-support/neurodiversity-support-center/index.html>



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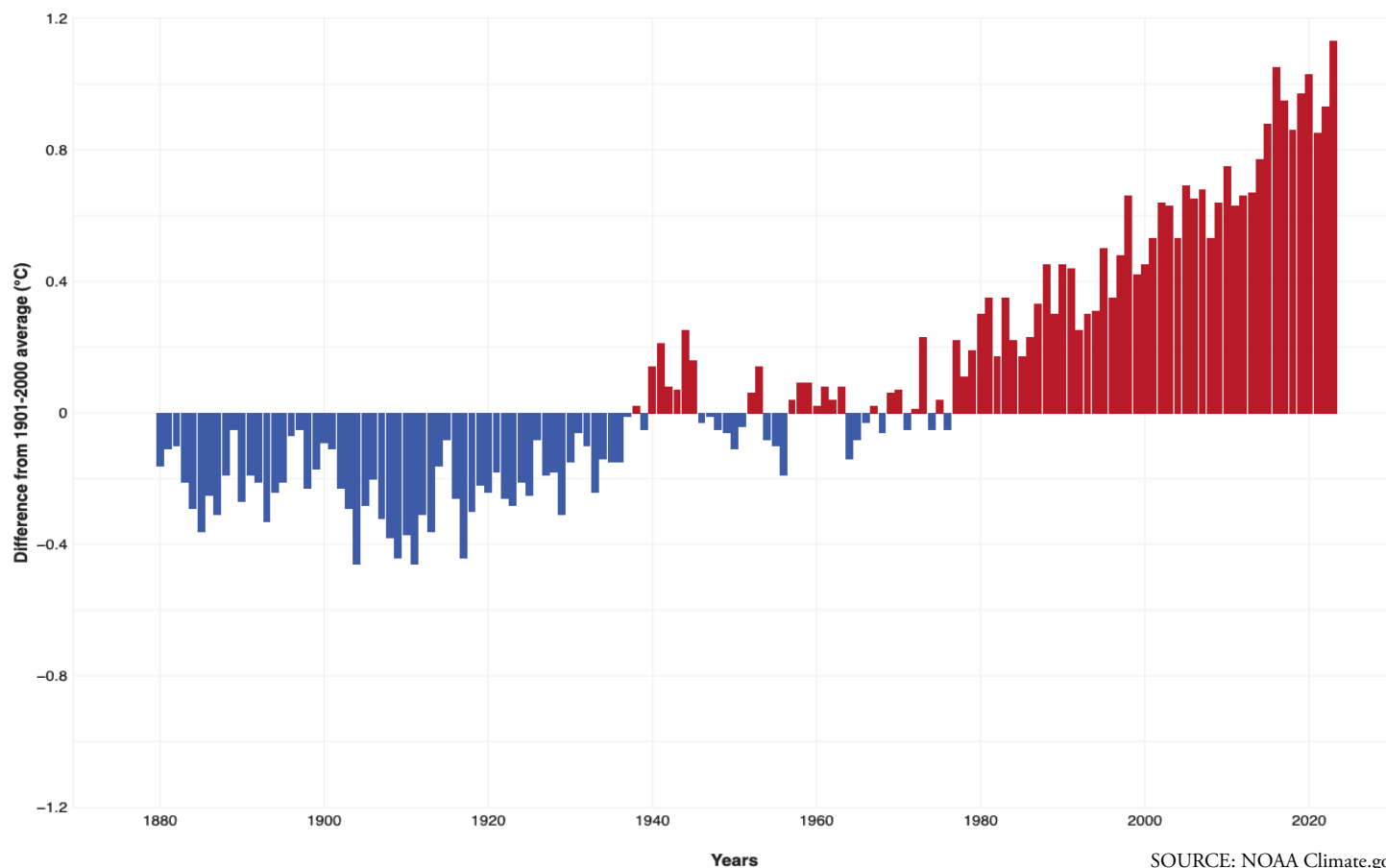
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Climate Crisis Escalates

2023 Is Now the Hottest Year on Record

Julia Belden
Staff Writer

As we emerge from a not-so-wintery winter break, with winter’s snow already receding in early February, questions arise about the future of our world’s climate.

According to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), 2023 was the hottest year on record.

El Niño, a cyclical climate pattern in the Pacific Ocean, is contributing to the toasty temperatures. Caused by a weakening of trade winds, El Niño allows warm water to flow toward the west coast of South America, disrupting both ocean currents and weather patterns. The current El Niño event started in 2023 and will reach its peak sometime this year.

“It is looking like there are fairly good odds that 2024 will be even warmer than 2023,” said NMC Meteorology Instructor Tiffani Wilke.

The recent cold snap in mid-January may seem to contradict this warming trend, but Wilke says that this sudden shift is to be expected: “We are likely to see more extremes.” It’s important to note the difference between ‘climate’ and ‘weather.’ To put it simply, ‘weather’ refers to singular, short-term events, while ‘climate’ refers to long-term patterns in an area. A storm is an example of weather; cold winters in Michigan are an example of climate.

The United Nations’ (U.N.) Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) is pushing to limit the increase in warming to 1.5° Celsius. “That window of opportunity to limit us down to 1.5 is rapidly decreasing,” Wilke said. “We’re likely to hit 1.5 degrees warming consistently by sometime in the 2030s.”

Climate change affects all of us — especially young people, who will deal with the consequences for the rest of their lives. The drastic impacts of global warming are already being seen around the globe. Glaciers are melting;

storms are more frequent and intense. Agriculture, a keystone of the Northern Michigan economy, is experiencing effects: a few months ago, the United States Department of Agriculture released an updated Plant Hardiness Zone map to account for rising temperatures.

The oceans are particularly vulnerable. “Scientists are in agreement that if we’re at 2 [degrees warming], if we’ve made it to 2, there is no such thing as our current coral reefs anymore,” said Wilke. Her fear: we won’t be able to do enough in time to prevent worldwide catastrophe. “It is a problem with no great solution.”

What can we do? “I used to be able to say, ‘Here are the little things that you can do that are gonna make a difference.’ We’re at the point where those little things don’t make a difference anymore,” said Wilke. She recommends getting involved with local politics as an advocate for urgent action. It’s often challenging to have productive conversations on such a hot-button issue.

Wilke offers a tip: listen and be likable. “People are much more likely to listen to you if you listen to them.” From there, you can build a foundation for dialogue—and hopefully have a positive impact.

Although the situation seems bleak, there is some good news: technological advances in wind and solar power have made renewable energy far more efficient and cost effective. College students pursuing degrees in STEM fields will find their skills in high demand as industries seek innovative ideas for combating the crisis. Luckily, we’re in the right place: thanks to the temperature-moderating effects of the Great Lakes, Michigan is a climate sanctuary. “On pretty much any report of ‘Where should you live in a climate-changed world,’ Michigan ranks #1,” said Wilke. “Buy property now!”

The Search for Traverse City's Best Cinnamon Roll

Megan Thoreson
Staff Writer

Ever had a life changing moment produced by the most delicious thing you've ever sunk your teeth into? A day-changing, total attitude adjustment with just a single meal or dessert? A cinnamon roll from a local restaurant did that for me last year, and sparked my search for the best cinnamon roll in Traverse City.

Cinnamon rolls have a long and convoluted history, with both the Swedes and Nordic countries in Europe claiming to have invented the original "sweet roll". Called "Kanelbulle" in Sweden, its claimed country of origin, the classic cinnamon roll was not brought into this world until after World War I. Today it is the 12th most popular breakfast pastry in the world!

A few local cinnamon roll connoisseurs coordinated a contest last August to determine the answer with a survey, judging each roll based on presentation, aroma, texture, taste, afterglow and value on a scale of 1-5. The judges only sampled rolls from three different restaurants, and concluded the results as "incomplete." Now, in 2024, they are repeating the contest with nine potential locations in mind!

"Everybody loves an ooey gooey cinnamon roll. The first thing to note is how the cinnamon roll looks," said NMC Culinary Arts Instructor Mike Skarupinski. "Sight is the first seller. It has to look so good that someone passing by simply can't pass it up. Next is the smell. Last being taste and texture. What makes most people stand apart, is that cinnamon or cinnamon/chocolate filling. Personally, I begin with a pastry cream cinnamon filling that allows the cinnamon roll to be more moist and gooey. A really nice tip is that when they come out of the oven and have had time to cool but are still warm, I take a cream cheese filling and rub it over the roll, and it melts in and keeps the roll really moist."

Chef Mike elaborated on the "afterglow" part of the experiment: "The franchises have perfected what the consumer wants, and unfortunately you get so many odd ingredients. You can end up with a headache from eating a bunch of chemicals. Places like Meijer and Tom's use a white fondant icing over the classic cream cheese frosting to save on costs, again adding to a less satisfied afterglow."

The nine contestants for judging include: Common Good Bakery, Fresh Coast Market, Potter's Bakery, Bay Bread Company, Tom's, Oleson's, Red Spire, The Omelette Shoppe, and Sugar 2 Salt.

The first contestant was from Red Spire, who recently celebrated seven years in business. Their cinnamon rolls sell for \$5.09 per roll. The judges graded the roll on a 5-point scale for each category, and collectively, the red spire cinnamon roll scored 53 points.

The Bay Bread Company was judged next. A single roll, at \$3.75 apiece, instantly scored high in the value category. Visually, the roll scored high as well, being topped with a thick layer of what could only be homemade cream cheese icing. Collectively, Bay Bread scored 74 points.

The Omelette Shop's cinnamon rolls are renowned in the area. At \$3.50 apiece and also rather large like Bay Bread, the roll impressed the judges. This roll collectively scored 50 points. My daughter, Miss Hope Thoreson, a 9-year-old bystander for the contest, scored this roll the highest. So maybe a kid's favorite!

Tom's and Oleson's cinnamon rolls scored lower in each category. They are priced at \$1.50 - \$1.00 a roll, generally sold as a lot of 3. Like Chef Mike had said previously, a white fondant frosting was used in place of the classic cream cheese icing. The judges found the rolls "underwhelming." Tom's scored 38, Olsen's 32.5.

Common Good is a popular bakery in town with a great reputation and amazing baked goods; its cinnamon roll took a more croissant/cinnamon twist appearance. It impressed the judges despite not being what is generally expected of a cinnamon roll. Collectively the roll received a total of 47 points.

Potter's is a local favorite, with a long standing in Traverse City. The roll was quite large, priced at \$3.50 apiece. A more classic buttercream glaze adorned the top, with deep dark swirls of cinnamon sweetness underneath. Its appearance was rated high, as well as the taste. Total score was 53.

Fresh Coast Market near Moomers supplies their cinnamon rolls from 9 Bean Rows in Lake Leelanau. This roll was a croissant cinnamon roll. The judges noted that in flavor this roll stood out, being a different take on the classic baked good. "Nothing ooey or gooey about it, but it's delicious." These pastries go for \$4.50. Fresh Coast/9 Bean Rows scored 54 points.

Sugar 2 Salt was the last contestant. Visually the roll scored high, as well as in the aroma category for all the judges. Being the most expensive of our test group, at \$5.75, it lived up to its price! The overall score was 65.5 points. Turns out the owner is NMC alumni Stephanie Wutala. She is the head chef and owner who actually trained under Chef Mike. It was from her restaurant that I had my life changing cinnamon roll moment!

The anonymous group of cinnamon roll connoisseurs and their efforts will hopefully lead the *White Pine Press* readership to delicious cinnamon rolls. Bay Bread holds the title of overall best for aroma, taste, presentation, afterglow, and value. The Omelette Shop was the "kid favorite". Sugar 2 Salt is still my favorite — I love the addition of caramel and the warm fluffy flavor. Bear in mind, the judges have no authority on the culinary arts, so take these assessments with a grain of salt...and perhaps a grain of sugar too.



Photo Credit/JACOB WHEELER

Grand Traverse Citizens Organize for Peace and Freedom



Photo Credit/NOA CURRAN

Noa Curran
Staff Writer

If you've tuned into any world news recently, you've most likely heard about the genocide occurring in Palestine, and the rising tensions among U.S. citizens in regard to it. While the images and testimonies from Gaza are devastating — and the actions

of the Biden administration in response deeply unpopular — it may seem to Traverse City residents like an issue far from home. But some members of the community are bringing the matter front and center. Last Wednesday, Jan. 24, several from the small local grassroots coalition, TC Solidarity, gathered in NMC's West Hall Innovation Center to show up for Palestine in a unique way.

TC Solidarity came together in December to brainstorm ways to help, and have since staged weekly demonstrations downtown on weekends, including one during the annual Cherry Ball Drop on New Year's Eve, as well as presenting a ceasefire resolution to the City Commission on Jan. 9. Traverse City resident Veruca Mamula, 22, said of being active with the group in the past months, "Organizing and getting involved is much easier once you step outside your comfort zone."

Last week, TC Solidarity met at NMC to put together zines, ranging in topics from information on lifestyle, art, important figures, and history in Palestine, to helpful safety tips for protestors and activists. Zines, coming from the term fanzines or fan magazine, refer to a form of media which gained popularity in the 1940s as a way for sci-fi enthusiasts to hand-publish and circulate art, fan fiction and niche information to their community. Zines are often small paper booklets that can be easily made with a photocopier and a stapler, and have since thrived as simple methods for artists and activists to produce and distribute their ideas. After assembling the zines this week, some copies will be put in Little Free Libraries around Traverse City, and some will be available at an upcoming fundraiser.

Joelle Hannert, a faculty member at NMC library who has been reading and making zines for 15 years, points out that, "Zines are created and distributed outside of the traditional structures of publishing, so they can be a place for marginalized voices that may otherwise be censored." She added some examples of Palestinian censorship, such as Adania Shibli who was to receive an award for her novel *Minor Detail* at the Frankfurt Book Fair in Germany until it was postponed, after which the fair posted "Frankfurt Book Fair stands with complete solidarity on the side of Israel," [to Instagram], and Mohammed El-Kurd, a poet and journalist whose lecture at the University of Vermont (UVM) was canceled, with UVM stating "Based on conversations over the past week with community members, campus partners and public safety officials, our assessment

is that holding the event on campus this week raises safety and security concerns that cannot be sufficiently mitigated." She also referenced an article in the *School Library Journal* [Censorship of Palestinians is So Normal, Even Antiracists Don't See It by Nora Lester Murad] detailing the difficulty Palestinian children's authors go through to get published.

She also noted the importance of critical reading in regard to zines, saying, "Consumers of information should always be aware of the credibility, authority and bias of the information they are engaging with, regardless of the source. Zines have a long history of being associated with underground movements such as punk, DIY, and riot grrrl, so you can expect the content to be left-leaning (although many zine-makers would probably reject that label and consider themselves outside of that spectrum). A good informational zine should tell you who authored it and where the information is coming from, and you can cross-reference this by looking up the author or organization who is responsible for the zine if you're not already familiar with them."

As the zines were being assembled, members of the group talked about the importance of bringing the topic of Palestine to Northern Michigan, mentioning among many things the prevalence of Israel's influence in U.S. politics and police militarization, as well as the relationship between the occupation of Palestine and local Indigenous experiences.

Jamie-John, 22, a local artist and member of the Grand Traverse Band of Ottawa and Chippewa Indians, described the similarities in more subtle forms of violence that native peoples are subjected to, such as being priced out of their land, the compromising of freedoms in treaties that were broken anyway, and the weaponization of food and water resources. They noted Palestinian support for Standing Rock in fighting against the Dakota Access Pipeline, and concluded, "'Land Back' means [Palestinians'] right to return, to their olive trees, to their homes where their families are, and their ancestors are buried"

The next project for TC Solidarity is a fundraiser on Feb. 4, at Hexenbelle, a Palestinian-owned cafe in the Warehouse MRKT downtown. The event will feature more zines, food, arts and crafts, live music, and will be generating money to buy eSIM cards for those in Gaza to use to contact survivors and loved ones they otherwise would be cut off from. To learn more you can follow the group on instagram at @tcsolidarity, and look out for a new display in the NMC library in the coming weeks featuring books about Palestine.

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You Got Me Slippin' n Tumblin'

Aidan Pool
Staff Writer

The Michigan winter can truly be what you make it. I have gone through the ringer as an uneducated Louisiana

boy. From Vitamin D deficiency to seasonal depression to icy roads and sidewalks, it was definitely more than an adjustment. However, it's not all hardship and sadness. I often find joy driving in the snow and doing drifts. Although there is snow in Louisiana about once every five years, it is not the snow that we get here in Northern Michigan. It is very slushy and just not a fun time.

Drifting is just one thing though, why not try some of the other winter activities that I might not get another opportunity to try? I have heard a lot of my fellow cadets talk about skiing. What better time to try it out? A lot of cadets from Louisiana do not plan to stick around in Michigan after graduation, myself included.

The idea of skiing never really appealed to me. I didn't give it much thought. That was until a friend of mine talked up the experience they had at Schuss Mountain. Forty dollars for everything, including the lift, rental, and ticket. This is exclusive to Wednesday nights from 5 to 9 pm. One of the main reasons that I had not seriously considered skiing before was because I had heard how expensive it was. For \$40 though? I was in. Especially if it meant I got to act a fool with some friends.

Putting the gear on wasn't that much of a challenge and initially getting around wasn't either. Until I discovered my worst enemy of the day, a slight dip in the terrain. One of the two biggest struggles that I had all day. I was told countless times, "It's just like ice skating". My buddies must have forgotten... I am still from the south, and I have never ice skated.

However once we finally got to the lift my childish excitement returned to my body. That was, until we got to the top of the lift where I

promptly fell on my face for the first of many times that evening. This led to another learning curve: getting up with the skis on. Getting up sideways was more of a mental struggle than a physical one. I still struggled to navigate to the slope, and once I got there it was not much better. The concept was completely foreign to me. I had no idea what to move, when to move it, how to slow down, or how to turn in the slightest. This led to me popping each of my knees every time I fell on my face for the entirety of the first slope. The pain wasn't as bad as I expected. Usually when you feel a pop in something as important as your knees, you expect the worst. Probably the scariest thirty minutes I've had in a good while. However, the pain quickly subsided as I figured how to navigate the skis and the slopes better.

As hard as I tried, I did not manage to put together a run where I did not fall on my face. The closest I got was one. I learned throughout the night that it was similar to driving in the snow, you can't let the snow put you where you don't want to be. I also learned about the technique known as carving. Where you "carve" little c's and s's to slow yourself and keep yourself in control.

This might seem cliché, but from my experience on the slopes and off of them, one of the best things you can do is keep getting up. The more I got up the more confident and less frustrated I felt. I'm not quite sure if I would go on my own. But as long as I have my buds to encourage me and occasionally make fun of me, I'll get up until I physically can't.



Photo Credit: AIDEN POOL

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AI on the Frontline: Ethical Battlegrounds in Journalism

Emma Marion
Assistant Editor

During a panel at the Michigan Press Association conference in Lansing on Oct. 26 2023, charged energy filled the air as a mix of journalists and speakers from around the state began raising their voices. The previously peaceful writers convention transformed into a battleground. The presenters defended their stance, while journalists argued over ethics and technology. Throughout the day there had been a sense of connection and oneness in the air that had slowly slipped away. What happened? Two words: Artificial Intelligence (AI).

The public's understanding of artificial intelligence has greatly increased over the last year. Large language models such as ChatGPT and image generators like DALL-E have become mainstream products. Now, AI summaries are built into Google search and AI image generation is baked into Instagram's messaging platform. It's almost difficult to avoid AI products in 2024. No matter where consumers turn their heads, AI follows.

This begs the ridiculously difficult question: what now? AI is poised to be the next big technological shift in society, with ramifications more far reaching than ever before. Educational institutions are struggling to agree on how to teach AI, artists watch their art get used without consent to train AI image generators, and journalists are struggling to implement and leverage AI tools in their workplace.

As it turns out, AI is a massive legal gray area. The company that created any given AI model does not own the rights to what it generates, and neither does the consumer prompting the AI. This creates a unique problem for journalism, where vast amounts of writing, ideas, and content are not owned by anyone. These ideas are not any living person's original ideas; they are a set of ideas created by a machine that does not have the ability to legally own its outputs.

Regardless of the philosophical and ethical dilemmas surrounding AI rights, figuring out how to accurately report and vet content created by AI is a new problem journalists have to face. If someone wants to publish content in a newspaper, it is the newspaper's legal responsibility to make sure that the person submitting the work owns the work. However, as many newspapers are already struggling to stay in business, it is highly unrealistic to ask these small staffs to stay on top of the evolving landscape of AI legislation.

Luckily, the three pro-AI presenters at the writers convention offered a solution to these problems. Two words: Artificial Intelligence. Before the presentation started, they conveniently placed a comprehensive list of different ways to use AI in journalism and writing at every table. At the end of the presentation they revealed that the list itself had been generated by AI, to which no one was visibly impressed.

Throughout the presentation AI was pitched as a tool to speed up production times in small, harmless, yet impactful ways. However, this pitch quickly fell through the gutter with one skim of the list they passed out. Number x on this list was "fact checking," which was clearly said to be one of the weaknesses of AI during the presentation. In short, AI lied about what it was good at when asked to generate a list of its own strengths. This perfectly demonstrates how using AI to aid any stage of the

writing or journalistic process is extremely difficult to navigate.

As legislators continue to lag behind technological innovations, it is left up to the journalists in the news rooms to self-regulate their usage of AI. For example, the title of this article was generated by ChatGPT (this wouldn't be a hit piece about AI without an AI twist somewhere in it). As the panel at the Michigan Press Association reveals, few journalists agree on how and when these tools should be implemented. The water is made even muddier by the fact that some individuals are trying to sell journalists AI solutions in order to turn a profit, regardless of ethical concerns. Although the current AI landscape is treacherous, it is up to the writers and artists of the world to shape how these tools will be used in the future.

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Detroit Lions Restore The Roar

Fans Enjoy Best Season in Generations

Jacob Pszczolkowski
Editor-in-Chief

I don't personally care for football. I don't follow stats and players or know who's playing every week. It's an inferior version of rugby with 12 times the game pauses and commercial breaks. 90% of the time, the NFL elicits no emotional reaction for me whatsoever. Of course, as a lifelong Michigander, the exception to my apathy is the Detroit Lions.

The Lions have never been to the Super Bowl. Once every three blue moons, they make it to the playoffs as a last-place runner up. Hell, when I was five, the Lions lost every single game of the 2008 season – the first team in the league to ever go 0-16. Yet somehow, the 2023 season seems to have broken the team's curse.

For the first time in 30 years, the Lions won their Division Championship and entered the playoffs for real. And for the first time in 30 years, the Lions actually won a playoff game. For the first time in my life, I was paying attention to the NFL. Of course, I always held the attitude that we would soon be defeated. But somehow, the Lions made it one game away from the Super Bowl, competing against the San Francisco 49ers for the spot. I spent most of that day behind a cash register, reloading Google on my phone to check the score whenever the customers were kind enough to leave me alone. I finished my shift around halftime, the Lions holding a sound 14-point lead over the 49ers. I returned home, threw dinner in the microwave, and watched the Lions blow that lead in under two minutes. And then fall behind by three. And lose the game.

I shouldn't complain too much, this is by far the best season the Lions have had in my lifetime, and in the end this won't really affect me at all. But for a time, it was interesting to start seeing football the way real fans do.

Not Your Dad's Lions

Aidan Pool
Staff Writer

This year the Lions cruised to a division title and a home playoff game, something they haven't done since the 1993 season. Who was the playoff game against? None other than Matthew Stafford, previous Lions quarterback from 2009 to 2020. The script could

not have been written any better. The game was gritty, but that is where coach Campbell thrives. The Lions won. The Lions WON. The impossible was possible. The Lions followed this up with another playoff victory against the Buccaneers.

The NFC Championship game was a wild one. The first half looked very promising, and the Lions looked poised to run the 49ers out of their own building. With a 24-7 lead at halftime, the team flashed the talent that could clinch their first Super Bowl appearance ever. Unfortunately, a string of bad luck and a couple of questionable decisions from Coach Campbell brought about the eventual collapse of the lead and the season. First there was the decision to go for it on fourth down while up 14 in the third quarter, instead of trying a field goal to push the lead back to 17. Wide receiver Josh Reynolds dropped the pass, turning the ball over on downs.

After a few nickel and dime plays by the 49ers' offense, the bad luck hit. 49ers quarterback, Brock Purdy, uncorked a deep ball that looked to be an interception for the Lions, only for the ball to bounce off of the players helmet and into the arms of 49ers receiver, Brandon Aiyuk. Aiyuk later scored to cut the Lion lead to 10. The very next play for the Lions offense resulted in a fumble, giving the 49ers a short field and an easy touchdown for their stud running back, Christian McCaffery.

The Lions offense continued to go quiet with another key drop from Reynolds resulting in a quick three and out. The 49ers responded with a field goal to take a three-point lead. The Lions offense realized the urgency of the situation and began to piece together a drive. However, the offense stalled 30 yards away from the endzone. This led to another questionable decision from Campbell to once again go for it on fourth down instead of trying to tie the game. The pass fell incomplete. The 49ers once again drove down the field for another touchdown with little resistance — all but clinching the Lions fate.

The Lions did score a late touchdown with less than a minute left but the proceeding onside kick failed. The Lions lost 34-31. Campbell himself does not regret the decision to go for it on both of the fourth downs, saying "it's easy in hindsight... but I don't regret those decisions." To be fair, that is how the team had played all year.

The loss against the 49ers stings, but this team is set up to compete for years to come. They have overcome the narratives and they are here to stay. These aren't your dad's Lions. They are no longer the "lie downs." Now here they stand, a new team. Here's to an unforgettable season in Lions history.



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