

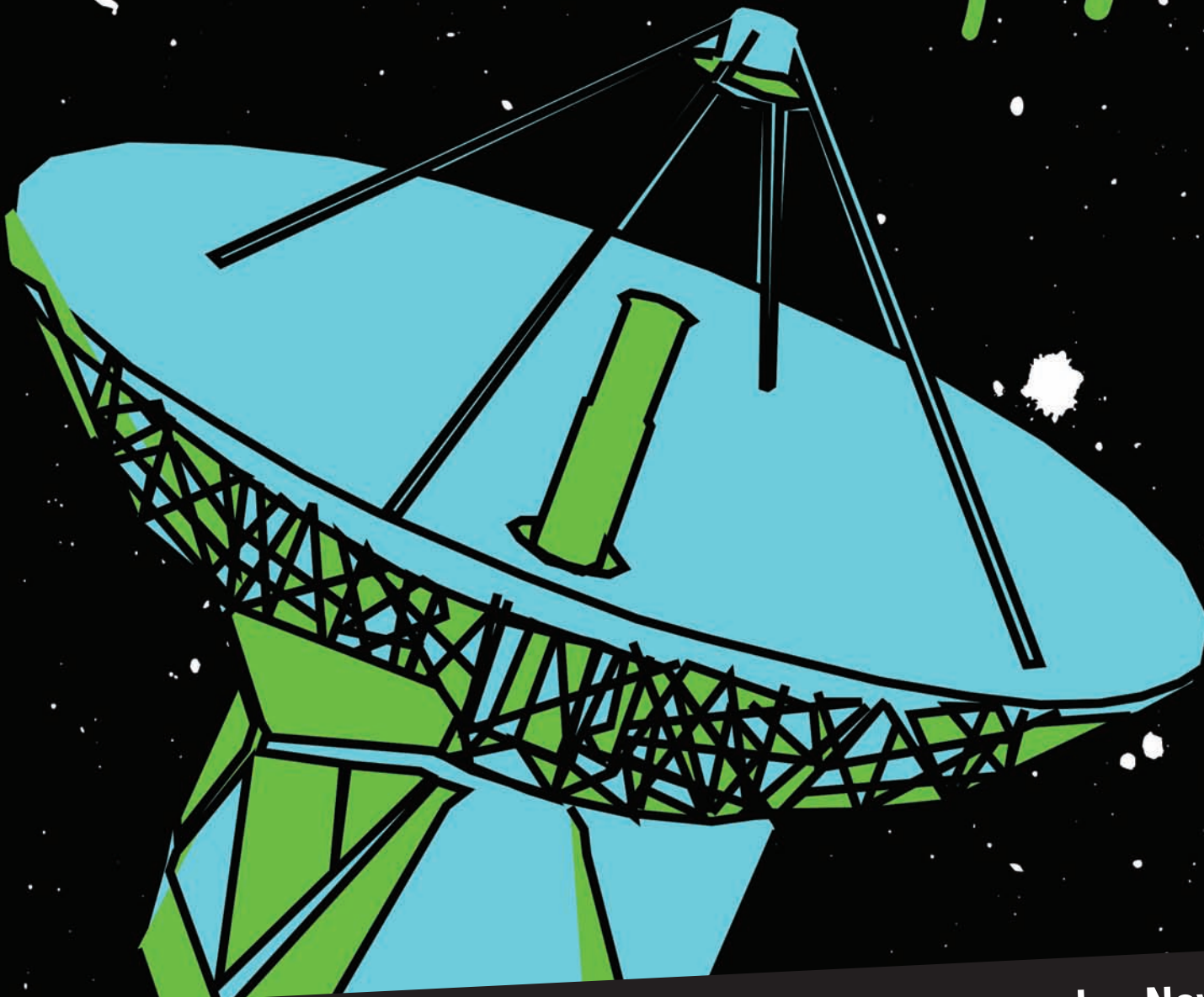


LiNK

concordia's independent newspaper
make love, not starcraft since 1986

After the Space Age

THE LINK EXPLORES SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY
IN THE 21ST CENTURY • SPECIAL INSERT



Concordia scientist criticizes federal cuts to research • News page 3
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Drunk chicks and teenage kicks with Cody Hicks • Fringe arts page 11

'This government just doesn't get it'

Concordia scientist warns drop in research funding will hurt Canada's economic growth

• GIUSEPPE VALIANTE,
CUP QUEBEC BUREAU CHIEF

Concordia University molecular geneticist Dr. Adrian Tsang said the 2009 federal budget shows that Canada lacks a comprehensive science policy, putting the country's long-term economic growth at risk.

While he acknowledged that hundreds of millions of dollars of federal funds are earmarked for the construction of labs and other research infrastructure, he said little was set aside for grants.

"It's a disappointment [...] It's a cutback on science essentially," said Tsang about the fact that Genome Canada, the organization responsible for large-scale genome projects—including Tsang's research—received no new funding in the 2009 federal budget released by Finance Minister Jim Flaherty Jan. 27.

"If we are going to seriously consider ourselves a developed country [...] we need to have research as an integral proponent, otherwise we won't get the good jobs that we want," he added.

Tsang said the United States and other Western countries understand the potential for long-term economic growth through scientific research grants. For example, Tsang said, U.S. President Barack Obama's economic stimulus package includes a \$3.9 billion increase for the National Institutes of Health, which funds medical research.

Tsang is worried that Canadian research jobs might be endangered due to the funding gap and that the Canadian citizenry doesn't seem to mind.

"I don't think the general public appreciates what science contributes," he explained.

"Take Quebec for example. We have a major forestry industry [but Canada hasn't] built a new pulp and paper mill in over 20 years. In places like Brazil, they have new mills that are more efficient, more technologically advanced; they can produce things a lot cheaper on top of having cheap labour. How

can we compete?"

Tsang said the government keeps subsidizing an uncompetitive industry like forestry without investing into research on understanding how trees can grow more quickly in the Canadian climate. He said research could also help to find more environmentally friendly means of bleaching the wood used for paper that will take less energy and therefore less money.

"I don't think the general public appreciates what science contributes."

—Dr. Adrian Tsang,
molecular geneticist

The president and CEO of Genome Canada, Martin Godbout, told the *Globe and Mail* last week that "[The government's money] doesn't keep pace with future funding. We cannot even ask someone to even start writing a proposal if we don't have the money in the bank."

The paper also reported that Genome Canada said "current government funding does not allow it to meet its earmarked spending commitments as of 2010, let alone finance new long-term projects" and the future of several projects are in doubt.

But on Monday, Feb. 2, the directors of Genome Canada released a "key statement" concerning the budget on their website, claiming, "Genome Canada is pleased with the federal government's 2009 budget [...] Although Genome Canada did not receive funding in the 2009 federal budget to fund new genomics research projects, this will not impact Genome Canada's current projects that received a full commitment of funding from previous federal government investments in 2007 and 2008."

Genome Canada also cited that it has two five-year contracts with the government of Canada totalling \$240 million up to



Scientists and researchers have been left out of the 2009 federal budget. PHOTO TERRINE FRIDAY

the year 2013.

A spokesperson for Genome Canada said Godbout is no longer speaking to the media.

"The budget of this year is for three years down the road, so there is a gap there. Who is going to fill this gap?" Tsang asked.

But not everyone in the academic community is frowning at the budget.

André Dulude, VP National Affairs for the Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada, found it difficult to contain his glee during a phone interview.

"I was not expecting to get that much money. I see it as a big win for universities—for all of us," Dulude said.

The Conservative budget includes "up to \$2 billion to repair, retrofit and expand facilities at post-secondary institutions" and \$750 million for leading-edge research infrastructure through the Canada Foundation for Innovation, which funds research infrastructure.

"There is no doubt that if you have an attractive lab you'll have a good chance of keeping your best scientists in the country," Dulude said.

But he acknowledged that 2009 is not a great year for research.

"It's a matter of hoping that next year Genome Canada will get more money."

Student groups battle for sign-ups

• TERRINE FRIDAY

Marketing strategy may be the only difference between two New York trips offered for exactly the same price.

The trips, offered by the Concordia Student Union and the Arts and Science Faculty of Associations, leave within hours of each other and are putting their guests up in the same hotel.

The CSU and ASFA have co-hosted the New York trip for the previous five years. Alejandro Lobo-Guerrero, ASFA's VP social, opted out of the arrangement "given [the CSU's] problems right now."

"I tried to do it as similar as the CSU's so that students could

go to the same place" without signing a contract with the CSU, Lobo-Guerrero said.

Audrey Peek, president of ASFA, rallied for the collaboration to no avail.

"My understanding is that they're the exact same trip," Peek said.

Elie Chivi, VP communications of the CSU, just wants everybody to get along.

"We're not children here and we need to grow up," Chivi said. Chivi noted, "The trip is not costing the CSU any more or any less" because the logistics were always taken care of by the groups separately. "It's just that we didn't sign the contracts together," he continued. "Why would we con-

tinue to do business with them if they make public statements that they don't want to work with us?"

The only visible difference between the trips is their posters: the ASFA poster is bright blue with bubble letters while the CSU's is a black-and-yellow city skyline.

"The [ASFA] poster is really bright," said Camille Massicotte, a psychology student. Although Massicotte said she would prefer to go on the ASFA trip instead of the CSU one, she admitted, "I don't really know the difference between the two trips."

"I like the blue one better," said Concordia student John Dasbal of the ASFA poster.

"I don't know," his friend



There are 33 similarities in these graphics. Can you spot them all?

PHOTOS TERRINE FRIDAY

Emmin Manoukian said. "I like the skyline in the other one better."

The CSU and ASFA confirmed no extra costs were incurred due to lower gas prices and



an ailing economy.

For more info on the CSU's New York trip, please visit csu.qc.ca. For more info on ASFA's New York trip, please visit asfa.ca.

Connecting via BlackBerry

• LINDA GIVETASH, *THE CORD WEEKLY* (WILFRID LAURIER UNIVERSITY)

WATERLOO (CUP) – Ontario’s Wilfrid Laurier University is preparing to provide over 100 MBA students with BlackBerrys and data plans this fall.

Inspired by a program at Mexico’s Tecnológico de Monterrey in August 2008 at its Santa Fe and Mexico City campuses, the program incorporated the use of BlackBerry Pearls into various first-year

programs with the help of Grupo Iusacell, the third largest mobile operator in Mexico.

The purpose of the program is to incorporate social networking and new technology into the classroom. Content will include tests, multimedia and possibly access to the school’s web system.

With professors notified about the initiative only through a press release Jan. 28, the inclusion of specific course materials into the program is still being determined.

Protesting Sri Lankan violence

• LINDA GIVETASH, *THE CORD WEEKLY* (WILFRID LAURIER UNIVERSITY)

WATERLOO (CUP) – Hundreds of protestors gathered in front of Toronto’s Sri Lankan consulate on Jan. 27, and at the same time the Tamil Students Association at the University of Toronto began a 24-hour hunger strike.

The demonstrations were in response to an attack by the Sri Lankan army on the Tamil rebel town of Mullaitivu on Jan. 26.

The Sri Lankan government’s website states Tamil Tigers are using civilian shields which has caused the

high death toll. Exact numbers of those killed or injured remains unconfirmed, as the media is not permitted access to the region at this time.

The conflict has been going on for the past 25 years. With the capturing of Mullaitivu, the government claims the battle is mostly over.

Dr. T. Varatharaja, the regional director of health services for the Mullaitivu district, has made an urgent plead to the Government of Sri Lanka, the International Committee of the Red Cross, the United Nations and the international community due to a lack of medical support.

Outrage over anti-Islam posters

• KAILEY WILLETTS, *THE MARTLET* (UNIVERSITY OF VICTORIA)

VICTORIA (CUP) – Posters calling for the ban of Islam “in the interest of human values and universal love” have recently appeared on the notice boards at University of Victoria.

The posters were not stamped for approval and were removed once they were discovered. Students still voiced their concerns on the tolerance of hate speech.

Designed like a petition, the poster featured various

quotes from “undersigned international petitioners.” It is unknown who posted the messages.

UVic Finance Director Tracey Ho and Students’ Society Chair Caitlin Meggs also found an Anti-Islam cartoon on their sustainability board in the Student Union building.

The posters were discovered around the same time as the Muslim Student Association hosted a lecture series entitled “Islam and the West” to promote awareness and education from Jan. 26 to 28.

Griffintown redevelopment leaves residents fearful

Less money means more alterations to construction plans

• ADAM BEMMA

The Canadian economic downturn is now threatening the homes of Griffintown resident Ron Diamond and his neighbours.

Diamond is worried redevelopment plans for Griffintown, a small neighbourhood located along the Lachine Canal, will be changed or altered by commercial developer Devimco as the recession hitting the Canadian economy worsens.

“They promised the city a certain percentage of student and lower cost housing,” Diamond said. “Their plans keep changing and they keep saying whatever people want to hear.” The Devimco project has been criticized for its reliance on the construction of high-cost condominiums.

Hélène Dansereau, coordinator of the Committee for Sustainable Redevelopment of Griffintown, a citizens group concerned with the future of Griffintown, said that a proposed cut in phase one of the \$1.3 billion project by Devimco should make everyone skeptical.

Dansereau has lived in Griffintown for the last 10 years and doesn’t doubt the fact that the area south of downtown needs to be revitalized, but argues that it should be done responsibly.

“It’s an area that is derelict. It is prime land right next to downtown and it’s not very inhabited,” she said. “If the project goes through it means there’s going to be 10 years of street and construction work. It’s not going to be fun living there.”

The Devimco plan calls for a Griffintown redevelopment of one-million-square-feet, an area close to the size of 20 football fields.

According to Dansereau, the heart of Devimco’s plan has always been the construction of a mall similar in size to the Rockland Centre or the Marché Central.

“My personal fear is that because their project was mostly the shopping centre, if they scale down does that mean that mostly the shopping centre is going to remain?” Dansereau asked. “Does this mean they would scale down

on the housing and keep the shopping centre?”

Devimco has stated since the outset that housing in Griffintown was a priority and has guaranteed 65 per cent of the land be used for residential properties. But now that the global financial crisis has affected the Canadian market, the developer is uncertain if any housing will be created in the first phase of development.

“The market is slow,” said Devimco spokesperson André Bouthillier. “We have to wait before starting the project. It’s very important for us that this project be a residential project.”

Diamond fears that his neighbours are going to lose their homes and businesses because of this large-scale project, with land possibly being expropriated by the city from those who are not willing to sell their property.

“Devimco’s main business up until now is shopping centres,” Diamond said. “There are actually a few hundred people working down here. We’re going to get thrown out.”

THE **LiNK**

The Link
by-elections
Feb. 6, 2009
4 p.m.
H-649

The following
candidate is running:

Graphics Editor
Ginger Coons

The following staff members have contributed to at least four issues and are thus eligible to vote:

Leila Amiri, Mathieu Biard, Justin Bromberg, Sebastien Cadieux, Madeline Coleman, Ginger Coons, Jonathan Dempsey, Terrine Friday, Diego Pelaez Gaetz, Laura Giaccari, Justin Giovannetti, Andrew O’Kill-Griffin, R. Brian Hastie, Cody Hicks, Elsa Jabre, David Kaufmann, Joelle Lemieux, Vivien Leung, Pascale Rose Licinio, Charlene Lusikila, Jackson MacIntosh, Alex Manley, Julien McEvoy, Paolo Mingarelli, Alexandra Murphy, Johnny North, Christopher Olson, Barbara Pavone, Ketan Patel, Clare Raspopow, Sinbad Richardson, Bruno De Rosa, Michael Sabelli, Jesara Sinclair, Amy Smith, Teresa Smith, Cat Tarrants, Rachel Tetrault, Pamela Toman, Sarah Tooth

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Outside cover photo by Jonathan Dempsey, inside cover graphic by Ginger Coons

Recall petition faces more questions

‘This is a test of the checks and balances of the CSU,’ argues plaintiff

• JUSTIN GIOVANNETTI

“This is a unique situation,” said the Chair of the Concordia Student Union’s Judicial Board, Tristan Teixeira, of the state of the recall petition against the CSU executive.

On Feb. 1, Patrice Blais, leader of the recall petition campaign, waived his right to submit a written answer to the defence mounted by the CSU executive. This was supposed to be the third of five steps in the current JB case to certify the petition.

“We have suffered enough from the CSU’s delaying tactics,” Blais explained. “I am doing this to save time, the referendum should have been held this week.”

CSU President Keyana Kashfi already asked for the recall petition to be thrown out on Jan. 20, arguing that any special election against her executive would fall too close to the already-scheduled general election on March 24, 25 and 26.

Blais said he was not happy with the slow pace of the JB. “I am extremely concerned that the

Judicial Board has not realized that delay is a victory for the executive.”

“This is a test of the checks and balances of the CSU,” Blais argued. “It would be ridiculous that if you filed a petition five and a half months into a 12-month mandate, it would be rejected due to not enough time.”

The recall petition, circulated by a

“We have suffered enough from the CSU’s delaying tactics.”

—Patrice Blais,
leader of the recall campaign

“We have no instructions on how to continue this when someone waives their rights.”

—Tristan Teixeira,
Judicial Board Chair

group called “Students for Democracy, Accountability and Sustainability,” collected the required signatures—10 per cent of

the student body—for a recall by-election by mid-December 2008.

The petition was rejected after classes resumed last month by CSU Council Chair Jessica Nudo.

She quit the following day.

Blais brought Nudo’s rejection of the petition to the JB for review, where it remains.

“The JB should take precedent from what other tribunals do; if you have nothing to say, you sit down and the case moves on,” Blais said, hopeful that a ruling will be made soon.

“We have no instructions on how to continue this when someone waives their rights,” Teixeira said of the questions raised by Blais’ decision to waive his right to a rebuttal. “There is something related in our code of procedures: we can’t let someone drop a case if we have good reason to believe a law has been, or will be, broken.”

Teixeira confirmed that the status of the recall petition is to be discussed by the JB at a meeting scheduled for Feb. 3.

the recall: a timeline of events

	A group called "Students for Democracy, Sustainability and Accountability" is launched. The recall petition against the CSU executive starts.
nov. 17	CSU VP Comms Eli Chivi says the recall "is plagued with misleading information and propaganda."
dec. 2	Provisions of Section 247 adopted by CSU Council, changing rules for all recalls.
dec. 16	The recall is delivered by bailiff to CSU Council Chair Jessica Nudo's home.
dec. 19	
new year	Posters appear on campus featuring recall petition leader Patrice Blais carrying away suitcases full of money.
jan. 6	
jan. 13	Nudo rejects recall.
jan. 14	Nudo resigns.
jan. 20	Judicial Board meets to consider the fate of the recall. CSU President Keyana Kashfi calls for JB to throw recall out.
jan. 30	CSU issues written defense statement.
feb. 1	Blais waives right to rebuttal.
feb. 3	JB meets to discuss effect of Blais' decision.
feb. 16	Estimated day of reckoning, according to JB Chair.

INFOGRAPHIC GINGER COONS

Lyonnais stays silent

Defendant fails to respond to costly lawsuit



• TERRINE FRIDAY

Time is running out for Marie Lyonnais, former Concordia Student Union comptroller, to counter the lawsuit filed against her for \$363,238.25 in damages.

Lyonnais, accused of mismanagement and the embezzlement of student funds, has not yet filed a statement of defence in the official dossier at the Quebec superior courthouse, nor does the dossier contain an affidavit of service proving Lyonnais received the CSU’s statement of claim—the document that begins the legal proceedings.

“Last I checked, they were still having trouble finding her,” said Elie Chivi, the CSU’s VP communications. “And that was last week.”

According to CSU President Keyana Kashfi, Lyonnais had a history of taking off from the office without notice.

“When I was an employee here [...] she had left the city for a few

weeks at a time,” Kashfi said. “I was an employee then, so it wasn’t my position or job to question where she was.”

The charges also include failing to file government returns for both the CSU and CUSACorp, the CSU’s business enterprise.

Although the CSU says they were notified of their dire financial situation only after Lyonnais left in July, their statement of claim against Lyonnais states, “the CSU was only informed of [their bank account] seizure in April 2007 [...]”

Fauve Castagna’s mandate as VP finance for the CSU started in July of 2007.

Neither 2006-07 CSU President Khaleed Juma, nor 2006-07 CSU VP Finance Saleena Hussein could be reached for comment.

All parties should appear at the Feb. 23 court hearing scheduled for the matter.

—with files from Clare Raspow

Legal low-down

The lawsuit filed against former CSU employee Marie Lyonnais includes, but is not limited to, the following claims:

- “In or about December 2005, Defendant began to fail to carry out certain important aspects of her duties”
- “As of Dec. 2005, Defendant ceased filing government returns and making the required remittances for payroll deductions at source and related employer contributions and GST/QST payments and the repercussions have been significant, including penalties and interest being charged to the Plaintiffs for each month in default.”
- “On Oct. 4, 2006, as a result of Defendant’s failure to respond to above-mentioned requests and failure to pay estimative assessments, Revenue Quebec seized the CSU’s bank account, as it appears from a notice sent to CSU’s bank [...]”
- “Defendant did nothing with respect to the seizure [of CSU bank accounts] and the CSU was only informed of said seizure in April 2007 directly by the bank.”
- “At least \$129,886 are unaccounted for in the CSU’s accounting books and records, for which the CSU holds the Defendant responsible given her overall responsibilities to maintain such records and therefore avoid any loss to the CSU.”
- “At least \$108,620 are unaccounted for in CUSACorp’s accounting books and records, for which CUSACorp holds Defendant responsible given her overall responsibilities to maintain such records and therefore avoid any loss to CUSACorp.”

Info Desk staff fading away

Employees worried about possibility of losing essential service

• TERRINE FRIDAY

Concordia's closed Info desk window is a familiar sight. The desk, which normally directs visitors and students, used to have six employees and now has two—one of whom is on temporary leave.

"I think it's an essential service," an employee said in an October interview with *The Link*. "Imagine you're a student from China, Italy, or Spain and the only address you have is 1455 de Maisonneuve [...] I'm sure their plan is to get rid of us."



This photo was taken midday. Where is everybody? PHOTO JUSTIN GIOVANNETTI

AGENDA

The Agenda is a free service to publicize events of interest to the Concordia community. Priority is given to non-profit and student groups. Submissions must be 30 words or less. Email to agenda@thelink.concordia.ca
Deadline: 2 p.m. Friday.

THE CRISIS LINE of the Montreal Sexual Assault Centre is a resource for individuals of all ages, who are suffering or in distress and in need of any information and/or referrals. Confidential and anonymous service 24/7. 514-934-4504. For more info or to volunteer contact Mylene Gauthier 514-934-0505x7452

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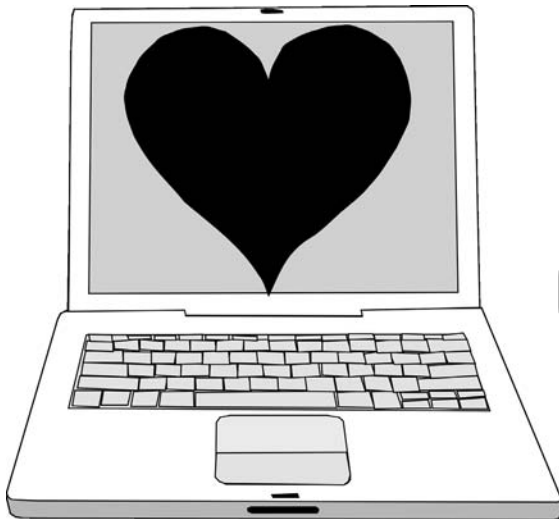
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Fleeting connections

Diving head first into the web of online classifieds



GRAPHICS GINGER COONS

• TERRINE FRIDAY

“To the CL Girl Asking Why Penises Don’t Work Like They Used To” was a thread on Missed Connections, a personals space taken over by the shy and the shameless. It caught my attention.

So did “Indian Guy Acting Like He’s Jamaican” and “McGill Library—Grey Hoodie, Brown Hair, 11 a.m.”

The site, which is popular among Montreal’s Anglophone university students, is a place for people to meet the cute guy who delivered their pizza last Thursday or the shy girl they almost ran over with their shiny red Sorento on Park avenue.

But my preoccupation with this craigslist.org personals page started soon after a *Link* contributor piqued my interest.

“There was a posting for ‘My favourite *Link* Editor’ in Missed Connections,” the contributor wrote. “Was it for you?”

And so began my foray into the database where heart-wrenching stories about fleeting romances, best friends, total strangers, rejects and unrequited love are vomited for potential recipients to sniff around.

Innocent lurker

Apparently curiosity killed the cat. But I reasoned that I was human and could crawl into this Internet haven a little farther.

My curiosity gets the better of me and I figure the best way to get inside the heads of

potential subjects is to post two messages—one as a female and one posing as a male.

After I’d sent my two posts out into cyberspace to be opined and pecked apart and scrutinized by potential addressees, it felt liberating—even though it was far from the truth.

Flattered guys emailed me: “Hey, that was awesome! I hope you find your guy! He’s missing out as we speak.”

“The minute you asked someone out for coffee, the romance was over: it was the tension of not knowing whether you would be accepted that fuelled your passion.”

—Paul Jackson,
gender and sexuality expert

Frantic girls emailed me for more details: “What class?” someone asked. “Can you be more specific?” another questioned.

And so began my obsession with surfing through the Missed Connections personals, eating ice cream in front of my computer, making friends with complete strangers and BRB-ing.

My somewhat-social life came to a halt as I ventured into two weeks of undoubted dedication to the cyber-personals phenomenon. As I cancelled plans to stay home and play the role

of troll/observer, I realized anonymity in the 21st century is dead. It’s easy for someone with basic computer skills to crosscheck a responder’s name with Facebook. It’s also quite simple for someone to take the address appearing on Facebook, or the home phone number, plug it into canada411 and get an aerial view of your front door.

Connecting a consumer culture

My brief addiction somewhat shaken, I contacted gender and sexuality expert Paul Jackson to guide me through the social contexts of Missed Connections.

“There is a narcissistic strain through much of this: dwelling on the relationships we don’t have, but would like. In many cases, you have to wonder why the people haven’t simply greeted the person that they are now trying to connect with in the most unlikely way,” the former Concordia professor wrote.

“There is always a tension [in cultures like ours where romance and sexual relations are accepted as important and crucial to our identities] before you make known your interest in someone you’re sweet on. This Missed Connections database seems to prolong that moment to sometimes absurd lengths and turn global the quest for the perfect mate, sexual encounter or friend: the illusion or the fantasy that those presently in our lives could never fulfill.

I had an old friend who said that the minute you asked someone out for coffee, the

romance was over: it was the tension of not knowing whether you would be accepted that fuelled your passion. Accepted or rejected, the fun was over.”

Jackson noted that vainglory of Missed Connections contributors was caused by an over-marketed culture.

“One promising thing is that this doesn’t seem to be popular everywhere or among all sectors of society where it is popular. Missed Connections is based in a certain cultural context that is, I think, individualistic and narcissistic. I suspect that it is fuelled by a sense of inadequacy and impotence that advertisers have encouraged in our consumer culture.”

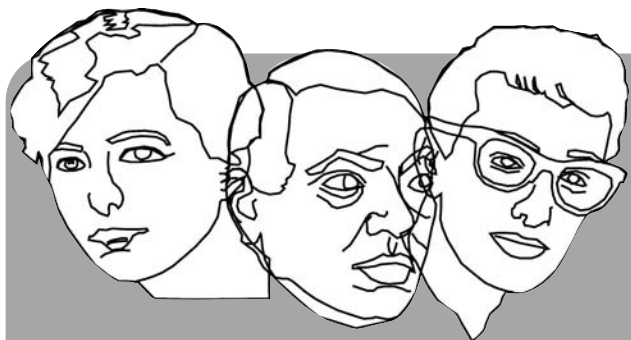
Prognosis

Perhaps Jackson’s explanation of our culture’s ability to place undue importance on our own lives can best be described by Oscar Wilde: “One can always be nice to people about whom one cares nothing.”

In other words, a walk in the park may not lead to a walk down the aisle, and our peers’ omniscience is not a reality but a virtue.

So perhaps the Internet has revolutionized telecommunications and space-time compression, but old-fashioned communication will never go out of style.

NOTE: for the sake of anonymity, some names were changed and interviews conducted via email.



Who’s out there

The trolls

Within this sub-culture of the foolishly in love or lust, there exists a handful of faithful individuals whose sole purpose is to deal out reality checks by the dozens.

“If she: [...] doesn’t reply to your emails; never calls you; and has a disgusted expression on her face if you happen to touch her, well then, she’s not that into you either,” a post reads.

Ariel, a Missed Connections enthusiast, felt it was his civic duty to reply to a thread of posts entitled “I Tripped and You Could Have Helped Me Up,” the tribulations of a young woman who slipped and fell down the icy hill in front of McGill University.

“Winter is not a time to dress pretty, it’s a time to dress practical. You’re probably the kind of girl who, on a cold December day, expects her guy to hand her his warm jacket when you’re freezing because you’re only wearing your hip—but thin as fuck—spring jacket and

a skirt with tights. If that’s your kind, you deserve to freeze and fall and suffer. In fact, you probably deserve to be pushed into a snow bank or, better yet, incoming traffic.”

Ariel reasoned that he wasn’t trying to be insensitive, per se, but rather got caught up surfing the site.

“Eventually I couldn’t hold my opinion of some people’s posts in anymore and decided to start posting [...] The only missed connection I ever posted was to my girlfriend, I know she reads it often and so I thought it would be a fun/annoyingly cute thing to write her one. Otherwise I’ve only answered to other people’s. Usually either to ridicule or just make easy jokes. [...] It’s obviously pathetic that I spend time making fun of other people’s patheticness, but I guess I like irony.”

Ariel admits that although he frequently makes enemies, the threats don’t hurt his ego.

“Of course, I’m a douche.”

The hopelessly-in-love girl

Jennifer, a student at McGill, is secretly in love with her friend who doesn’t know she exists.

So, why not just tell him?

“There’s the chance that it could ruin our friendship. We’ve known each other for years and I’ve seen him through his last break-up. Why should I ruin a good

thing when I have what I can get? Besides, I don’t really want him to know. It was just a good outlet for my feelings,” she confides.

Jennifer said she also didn’t expect to be contacted for an interview, but speaking about her sparse love life caused her to reconsider opening up to her potential beau.

The lonely guy

Chris P., a Concordia student, posted a message to a girl in his class at the end of the fall semester because he’d never actually spoken to her and he “didn’t really notice her until near the end.”

“I didn’t talk to her before because I’m finished with school and I’ve pretty much spent the past semester going to class, keeping my head down and doing my work,” P. wrote.

Although P. let the girl get away, he notes, “I have no trouble meeting women and am not afraid to go up to one and start hitting on her. I date often and I’m pretty casual about the whole thing. It was kind of just a passing thing where I thought, ‘I’ll see if she wants to grab a drink.’”

He also admits it was more for shits and giggles than an actual breakthrough romance.

“Well I did the post as kind of a laugh. My room-

mate did one and I decided to do one. I figured it was a slim chance that she’d see it, but if she did, she’d send me an email and I’d see if she wanted to grab a drink,” he explains. “It’s not like I was going to be really shy and coy. I’m not like that with women. What was I hoping for? Good company and a drink.”

Chris D., also student at Concordia, was looking for companionship whilst studying in the Webster Library.

Yawning in the wee hours of the morning, D. posted a message for any bored young ladies to join him for a coffee in a bid to avoid hitting the books.

“I thought my post was really exceptionally boring,” D. admits. “I had nothing or creative to say to anyone at that time in the early morning and was looking for an escape from the library [...] To the Internet!”

With a little help from his friends

One man gets support in his struggle to stay mobile

• ANDREA PARÉ

If you listen closely these days, you can almost hear the collective sighs of city dwellers fed up with the wintry not-so-wonderland of Montreal. There's no question, it's hard to get around when snow, wind and ice combine to create punishing weather permutations.

For most of us it is an inconvenience to get around—but imagine trying to navigate these obstacles in a wheelchair?

Michael Lifshitz was born with Multiple Congenital Musculoskeletal Abnormalities. The disorder has left him with a knee that does not function properly and a leg with a missing tibia—the bone that connects the knee and ankle. His hipbones never formed properly either.

As a teenager he was diagnosed with juvenile arthritis, and scoliosis—an irregular curvature of the spine. He went through nine surgeries to improve his condition, but it eventually became too much to walk long distances. He uses an electronic wheelchair to get around the majority of the time.

Despite these challenges, or perhaps because of them, the 33-year-old chartered accountant, financial advisor, activist and comedian has never lost momentum. His friend Sylvie Tehbelian, who works alongside Lifshitz (at the Investors Group on Decarie Street) says he is a role model for all citizens, disabled or not.

“Looking at him, he actually inspires me. He makes me feel lazy, and not in a bad way, in a good way. You know you have nothing holding you back, where this person has physical challenges that hold him back, yet he gets what he has to do done,” she explains.

Tehbelian, who regularly sees Lifshitz getting out of his adapted van at work, says he is “completely self-sufficient.”

“He does it all by himself, that's the amazing part. He gets out of his van, because its adapted for his wheelchair [...] he pops his trunk open, gets his briefcase out, and then just grabs the rope and closes the trunk.”

Lifshitz describes his current van, a Toyota Sienna Ramp van, as “great” and driving it, “a seamless process.” He even designed the open rope hatch feature for getting into the van, which he says excitedly, is “really cool—it's a guy thing.”

But driving around wasn't always so easy. Earlier last year, Lifshitz's fighting spirit was tested when his adapted Dodge van broke down. He put in a request to the SAAQ to pay for the adaptation of another van, but it was denied, stating that he needed to wait a full five years.

Because Lifshitz's last van was adapted in 2005, he would only be eligible for the van in 2010. With no transportation, and a job to get to, Lifshitz reached out to anyone who might be able to help him. He took his

request to a higher political level. He contacted his Minister of the National Assembly, Liberal MP Laurence Bergman, who fired a letter off to the Quebec transport minister in September of 2008.

When we sat down to talk in late October, Lifshitz had still not heard from the minister of transportation, and was getting worried. “I realize it takes time but the reality of the matter is, winter is coming and I need the issue resolved,” he confided.

But instead of getting discouraged, Lifshitz came up with a game plan. His decided to start a petition, collecting 32,000 signatures for the \$32,000 cost of the van, to

even more determined to fight on his behalf.

“He was telling me his problems with his van and I said, ‘well why don't you just raise [the money]?’” she remembers.

Lifshitz, has been performing what he's dubbed “disabled comedy” since early 2006. His motto: once you have a disability, you might as well have some fun with it.

Last year, Tehbelian organized a comedy benefit show, “Comedy for a Cause,” at Bourbon Street Westend sold tickets at \$15 each, with about half of the proceeds of the show going to Michael's van.

Lifshitz says they collected about \$850. He got \$200 more from a generous

to dish out much money from his pocket,” says Tehbelian contentedly.

Lifshitz's refusal to take no for an answer has helped move his game plan forward, but perhaps it has also empowered others with disabilities.

“People with disabilities don't necessarily have a voice. And I think that very often there is a tendency to say, well, that's the way the system is,” he said.

He is a firm believer that those with disabilities can and should be productive members of society.

“I have a van, I'm able to go out and do what I have to do for work [...] so the more I

“He makes me feel lazy, and not in a bad way, in a good way.”

—Sylvie Tehelien,
Co-worker and supporter of Lifshitz



GRAPHIC GINGER COONS

send to the Quebec government.

“I started the petition because I was at a loss of ideas, and I didn't particularly think I was being listened to,” he said. “I kept being told that they were studying it, they're looking at it. But I didn't think they were giving it the attention that it needed in order for it to get resolved,” Lifshitz says.

As Lifshitz waited to hear back from the political heavy hitters, and struggled to get his 32,000 signatures, his co-workers at Investors Group were right behind him, rallying for his cause. They looked for any kind of solution to his problem they could find.

“It made me mad,” says Sylvie of the lack of help Lifshitz was receiving. The energetic, feisty Tehbelian is not one to accept defeat. The SAAQ's refusal to pay just made her

Concordia student, who had participated in a 50-50 raffle draw, and anonymously gave him half of her winnings. A fellow comedian at the show, Ward Anderson, gave half of his profits of CD sales as well, notes Tehbelian. Lifshitz was moved by these gestures.

Luckily, the petition wasn't needed. His story was picked up by some local newspapers, and by the CBC and CJAD radio. All of the coverage and an impending provincial election persuaded the SAAQ to grant Lifshitz 80 per cent of the costs for adapting the van. The other 20 per cent was left for him to pay.

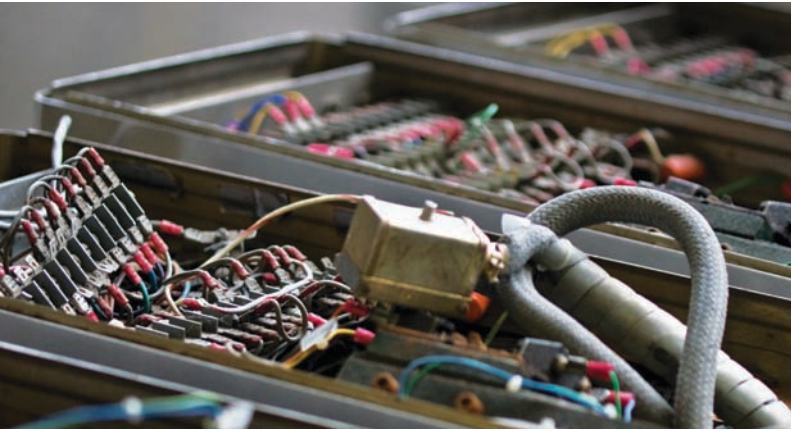
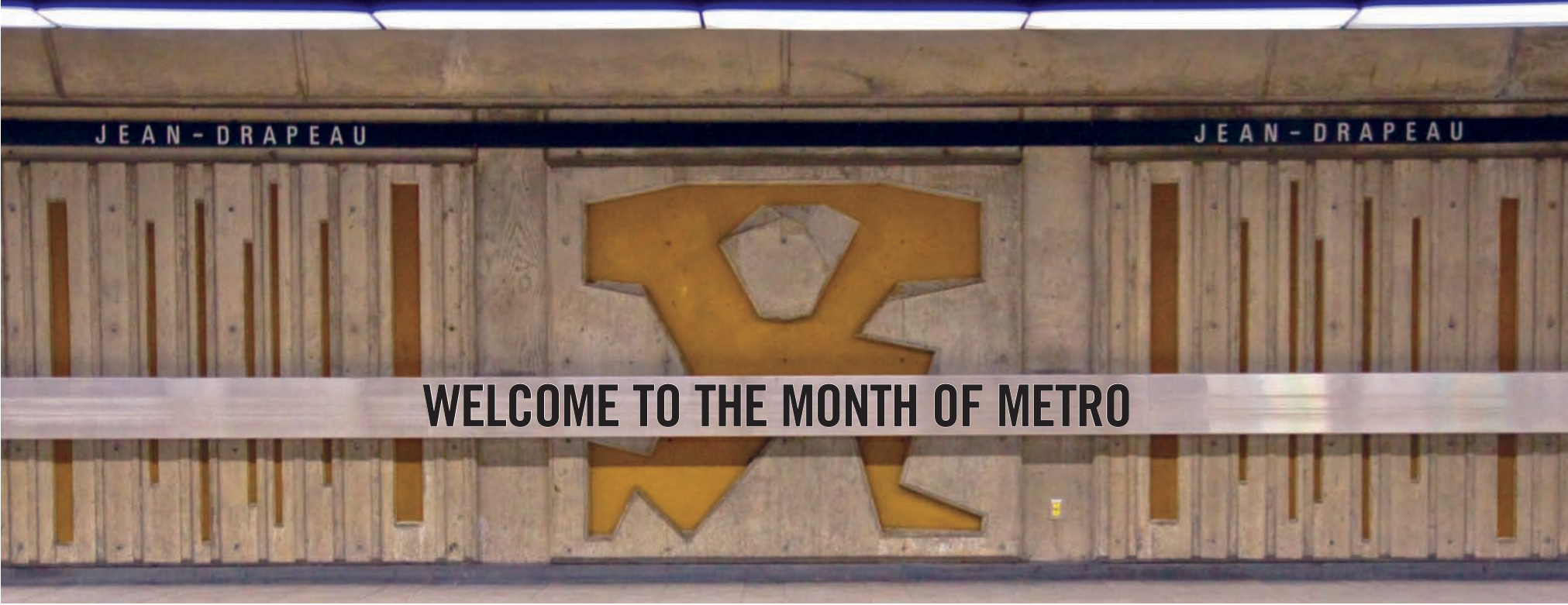
All of the hard work of his friends and co-workers helped him pay his \$6,400 share. “He pretty much broke even, he didn't have

work, the more I'm able to go out, the more money I make, the more taxes I pay,” he said.

Thankfully, with the newly adapted van, Lifshitz can now get out and about, and despite the challenges he has faced, is quite satisfied. “It was a fair compromise—I got what I needed so it worked out well,” he says.

“In winter it becomes an interesting coordination to get to the office. When you're disabled and you have to live with what the government gives you, you have to be creative.”

For more information on living with a disability, go to www.sureican.info or search Facebook for Michael Lifshitz



The Link is kicking off its month-long look at the 66-year-old relationship between Montreal and its metro—how it got here, how it grew and where it's going. Welcome to the month of metro.



Yellow Line: Metro Jean-Drapeau—Inaugurated in April 1967, Île-Sainte-Hélène metro station changed its name to Jean-Drapeau station in May 2001, named after the former mayor of Montreal. The station was designed by architect Jean Dumontier. With the STM introducing the OPUS card, old turnstiles are being removed from all metro stations. PHOTOS IAN LAWRENCE

THE LiNK

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Science & Technology special issue

Welcome to the Science & Technology special issue

If science teaches us one thing, it's not to overestimate the uniqueness of the human race. From our genetic structure to the subatomic particles that hold us together, humans have a lot more in common with other living creatures than we'd ever like to admit.

But if there's one area in which we hold supreme eminence, it's technology.

While bonobo monkeys have been known to use sticks to forage for food and dolphins scrub the ocean floors with sea sponges in

search of tasty bottom-dwellers, only one among all the species on Earth has developed nuclear reactors or atomic weapons.

No one else has built telescopes either, and none—as far as we've been able to reckon—can communicate over vast distances through the use of wireless broadband Internet.

With that in mind, *The Link* presents its annual ode to science and technology. From the failed promises of *The Jetsons* to the validation of century-old theories,

everything remains possible, if we could only reach a little farther.

But who's to say that science and technology has a purpose? From building R/C cars to your own low budget science-fiction movie, gazing up at the stars through a high powered telescope, or looking up at the ceiling of the local planetarium, one thing remains certain: robots will one day overtake the Earth.

—Christopher Olson & Sebastien Cadieux
Science and Technology Coordinators

Lit Writ

The Adventures of Rocket Rodgers and the Rocket Rangers in *the Attack of the Invisible Invaders*

• SEBASTIEN CADIEUX

NARRATOR: Last time we left Rocket Rodgers, he had just returned from his latest adventure on the planet Rane, where he defeated the Pendulum of Death, which threatened the very existence of the peaceful Ranians.

Now, Rodgers has returned to the Intergalactic Space Station, where he and his fellow Space Rangers Dirk Danger and Doctor 6ix are enjoying some much needed relaxation.

ROCKET RODGERS: I tell ya boys, that Pendulum of Death sure could have caused some damage if it weren't for Doctor 6ix and his force field projector.

DIRK DANGER: C'mon, Rocket, don't let the Doc take all the credit! That entire city would have been destroyed if you hadn't thought of distracting the ship that was holding the pendulum.

DR. 6IX: It's true, Rocket. When the ship turned to go after you, the momentum of the pendulum was too much for them to handle and it took the ship down.

Warning! Warning! The Intergalactic Space Station has been boarded by an unidentified life form!

DIRK DANGER: Look, Rocket! The computer says that the ship has been breached, but nothing is showing up on the cameras!

DR. 6IX: Hold on, the computer is getting some heat readings! According to this, there are three distinct heat patterns!

DIRK DANGER: But Doctor, how can that be!? Unless they're—

ROCKET RODGERS: Invisible!

NARRATOR: That's right, folks, just after this break we'll return you to the Adventure of Rocket Rodgers and the

Invisible Invaders!

Commercial break.

NARRATOR: Just before the break, Rocket Rodgers and the gang just found out that some Invisible Invaders had boarded the Intergalactic Space Station!

DIRK DANGER: What are we going to do, Rocket? The heat monitors can't scan this whole space station! The Invisible Invaders could be anywhere!

ROCKET RODGERS: I've got an idea! Doctor 6ix, are all of our computers waterproof?

DR. 6IX: Of course they are, Rocket! But why do you ask?

ROCKET RODGERS: Well if I just set my RX-587 ray gun to heat-ray, and shoot the fire detector, the sprinklers will spray all across the station. Then, Doctor, all you have to do is turn off the sprinklers and we'll be able to see the Invisible Invaders' footsteps when they splash in the water!

DIRK DANGER: Of course, Rocket! Gosh, you're so smart!

ROCKET RODGERS: Alright, boys, here comes the rain!

ZAP!

PFWSHHH!

DR. 6IX: Alright, I've shut down the sprinkler systems! Now go find those Invisible Invaders!

ROCKET RODGERS: Alright, Dirk, set your RX-587 ray gun to freeze.

Click-click!

DIRK DANGER: Set!

ROCKET RODGERS: We'll split up. You take that door; I'll take this one, and remember, Dirk: be vigilant. Doctor 6ix, you stay here and make sure no one gets in.

DIRK DANGER & DR. 6IX: Alright, Rocket!

Fwoosh, shut!

Fwoosh, shut!

DR. 6IX: I sure hope they don't run into any problems.

NARRATOR: Now, we join Rocket Rodgers, patrolling the hallways of the Intergalactic Space Station, ready to freeze any Invisible Invaders who dare cross his path.

ROCKET RODGERS: All I have to do now, is pay attention....

Splish! Splish! Splish! Splish! Splish!
Fweyeyeyeyey!

NARRATOR: And with a blast of his freeze ray, Rocket Rodgers encases the Invisible Invader in ice.

ROCKET RODGERS: That wasn't worth it, now, was it? You big ice cube! But I wonder how Dirk is doing?

NARRATOR: How is Dirk doing? Let's join him and find out!

DIRK DANGER: Oh gee, they could be anywhere. C'mon, Dirk, remember what Rocket said. Stay vigilant!

Splish! Splish! Splish! Splish! Splish!
Fweyeyeyeyey!

NARRATOR: With a blast from the RX-587, another Invisible Invader is frozen solid.

DIRK DANGER: That wasn't so tough! Wait until Rocket sees this!

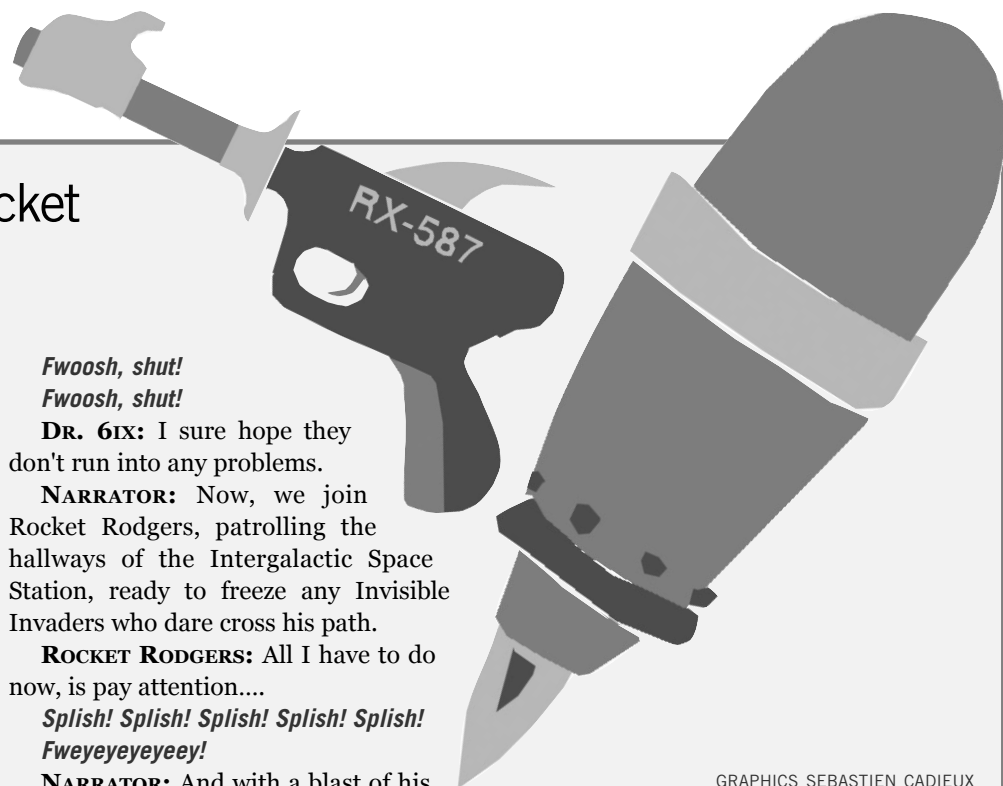
NARRATOR: Good job, Dirk! But how is Dr. 6ix doing, back in the computer room?

DR. 6IX: Gak! One of them has got me by the neck! Dirk! Rocket! Anybody!

Fwoosh! Shut!

ROCKET RODGERS: You there! Invisible Invader! What do you want with us, anyhow?

INVISIBLE INVADER 3: Hisss! All we want issss that you sssssuffer!



GRAPHICS SEBASTIEN CADIEUX

Splish! Splish! Splish! Splish! Splish!
Fweyeyeyeyey!

DR. 6IX: Thank goodness you saved me, Rocket! I don't think I could have made it much longer!

Fwoosh! Shut!

DIRK DANGER: Did I miss anything?

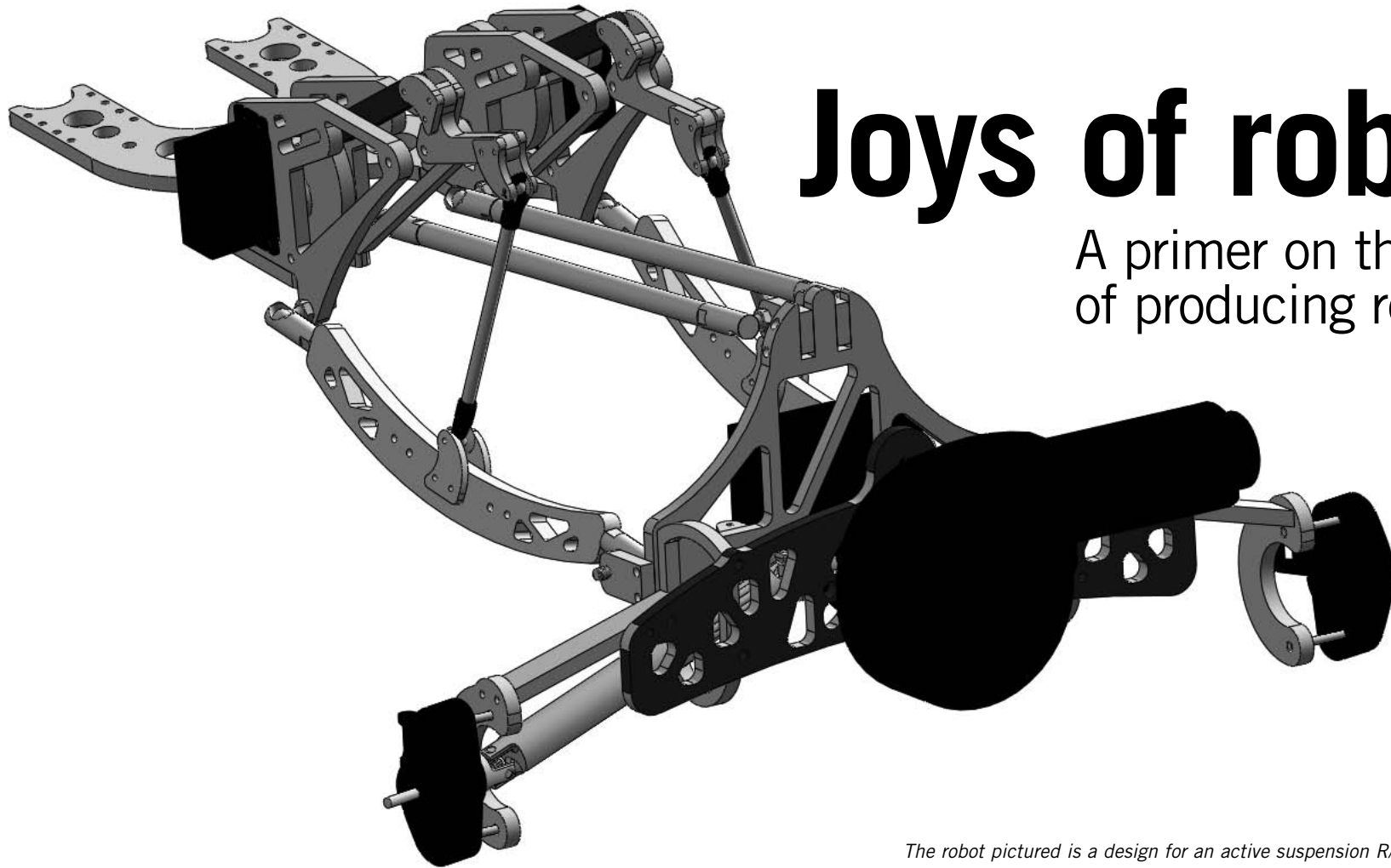
DR. 6IX: Yeah, Rocket just saved my life!

DIRK DANGER: It's a good thing you came back when you did! I guess all we have left to do is get rid of these guys. But how?

ROCKET RODGERS: We'll just launch them off into the icy coldness of space where they'll stay frozen and they won't be able to try to hurt anyone ever again!

NARRATOR: Good work, gang! That's all the time we have for today, so remember, folks, stay vigilant, and tune in next time for more of the Adventures of Rocket Rodgers and the Rocket Rangers!

To submit your fiction or poetry to the Lit Writ column, email them to lit@thelink.concordia.ca.



The robot pictured is a design for an active suspension R/C vehicle. GRAPHIC GAVIN KENNEALLY

• GAVIN KENNEALLY

How it started

My first experience with robotics, like many people, was a local high school competition. I joined the Selwyn House Robotics Team competing at Computer Robot Control, or CRC, a competition with a focus on student leadership and a holistic approach to robotics, including science, multimedia, and hands-on learning.

The competition encouraged all students to participate actively in all facets of the project. Combined with inspired teachers and dedicated peers, a passion for robotics was instilled at a young age.

The competitions were centered around a specific task, such as picking up and moving multiple objects to or from targets through certain obstacles, at the same time as three other teams trying to do the same.

By the end of my experience I had captained the team and achieved numerous successes cumulating in winning the overall competition in my senior year. This was an extremely educational and gratifying experience for me, and had a tremendous influence on my career path.

Design

In my experience, the design process in robotics mostly involves combining multiple ever-changing concepts or ideas in a way that achieves a given goal, or serves a purpose.

I find that designing something often starts with a spark that gets thought about, addressed, forgotten, and remembered many times over, eventually snowballing into a concept. This concept can then be

reviewed and revised endlessly until the designer reaches a point of being satisfied with the current iteration.

That satisfaction, however, is usually quite fleeting, leading to redesigns and more redesigns.

Herein lies, in my opinion, one of the joys of robotics: a constant striving for a final, seemingly unattainable goal. I would

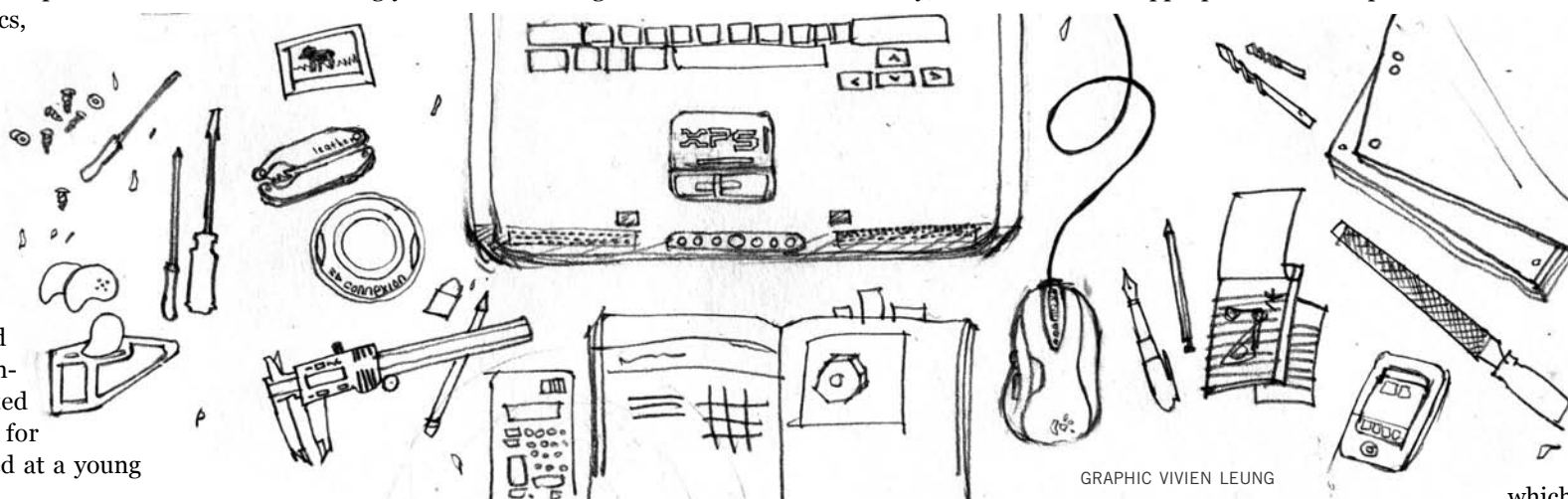
round out an excellent beginner's workshop. I would highly encourage a hands-on approach to construction, however, it is always important to learn how to operate a tool properly before attempting to use it.

In terms of construction materials, imagination is key. Conventional materials such as steel or aluminium can be hard to work on or costly, whereas found or appropriated

high school, I built a 1/5th scale mechanized wheelchair that was capable of climbing stairs.

I had multiple initial ideas, finally cumulating in a working prototype. Over the years, I have built a servo powered hexapod robot, a remote-controlled all terrain vehicle, and investigated alternate forms of land transportation.

My prototypes are usually between 1/5th and 1/10th scale and are built to perform fully at a given size. Currently, I am investigating multiple forms of active/semi-active suspension for off-road vehicles, one of which is pictured above.



GRAPHIC VIVIEN LEUNG

encourage any budding robot builder to document any and all stages of the design process, be they well-crafted blue prints, or sketches on a napkin.

One of the most revolutionary moments for me was learning to use Computer Aided Design software, as this provides an interactive, infinite, 3D sketchpad for a robot builder's mind to go wild.

As a recommendation, initially, SketchUp by Google is an excellent free program that both facilitates the expression of current ideas, and piques the appetite for more advanced CAD software such as SolidWorks or Autodesk Inventor.

Construction

Inevitably, early prototypes will most likely have to be built by hand or with simple tools, but with patience, what can be made with a drill, hacksaw, vice, and a few files should not be underestimated.

The addition of a few more advanced tools such as a drill press and band saw can

materials can often be used. As an example, I have constructed prototypes out of discarded window protectors as well as plastic cutting boards.

Now, however, I am putting together a small home machine shop with a bench top computer numerically controlled milling machine and a lathe. These tools allow almost unlimited construction possibilities, and when properly set up, precision to within 1/100th of a millimetre. This range of accuracy really brings out the art of construction itself, as there is a great deal of knowledge that has to go into machining.

The cost of these small-scale machines has decreased remarkably as manufacturers such as Taig and Sherline gain popularity.

Projects

In the past, I have built and designed robotics projects both as part of school projects, as well as for the purpose of testing my own ideas or concepts. As my final project in

R/C Vehicle

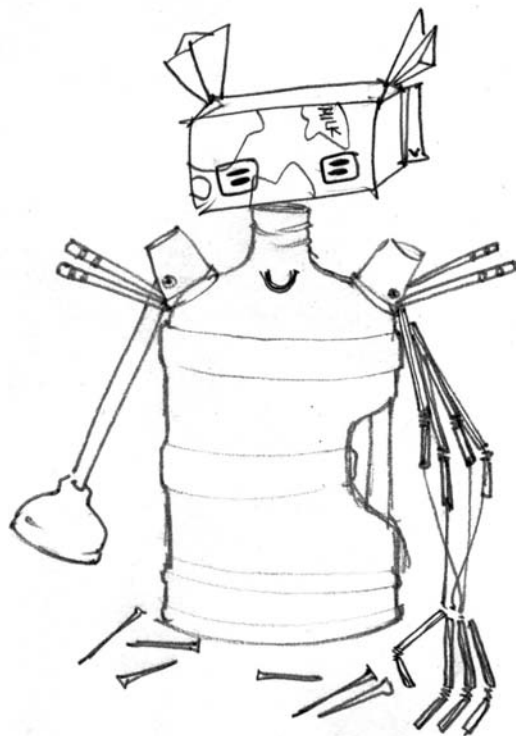
The robot pictured is a design for an active suspension R/C vehicle. By doing research I have only ever seen extremely sophisticated active suspension designs using air bladders or electromagnets, and wanted to see if similar results could be achieved more simply.

My design is based on a four link, solid axle suspension setup, but incorporates accelerometers in the axles that read the tilt of the vehicle. These readings are then sent to a microcontroller that processes that information and converts it into an angle, which is then sent to servomotors at the four sides of the main chassis.

Cams mounted on the servos then get rotated an appropriate amount based on the angle of the axles to add or remove shock preload and ostensibly stabilize the vehicle. I am still in the assembly stage of the development, and hope to be able to start testing and optimizing the setup shortly.

Remember: invest wisely

No Media Kings and Quake Films share lessons on making low budget science-fiction movies



When you've got \$7000 to make a film, use your resources as best you can.
GRAPHIC VIVIEN LEUNG



• CHRISTOPHER OLSON

When one thinks of science fiction, several elements usually spring to mind: sweeping special effects, a futuristic setting, and epic conflicts taking place over huge swaths of space.

Few science fiction films, however, take place in the suburbs of Toronto.

Infest Wisely, the brainchild of science-fiction author, comic book writer and video game designer Jim Munroe, is "lo-fi sci-fi" at its finest. That might not mean anything to the crowds that assembled to see the last three *Star Wars* movies, with its epic battles and dozens of digital extras, but it's making a splash on the Internet, where *Infest Wisely* was premiered in seven weekly instalments.

While George Lucas was a visionary with a team of talented crew members at his beck and call, there are those who equal his drive and ambition, without the massive budget.

Munroe likes the challenge.

"It leads to more interesting solutions. It focuses you on writing and not the effects," says Munroe, who has no professional training or formal education in filmmaking, but nevertheless has proven adept at making movies with his studio No Media Kings.

A low budget also means low financial returns on his investments, however: "We measure our success not in dollars but in the critical response," says Munroe, whose newborn toddler can be heard wailing in the background of the telephone receiver.

"Books have been my base," says Munroe. "They support the rest of what I'm doing."

"I don't know if I've ever made any money off of one of my films," says Craig McNaughton, who produced *Infest Wisely* alongside Munroe, and who heads up his own studio called Quake Films.

Despite an expansive catalogue of 80-plus films under his belt, including contract work for the CBC and the Comedy Network, McNaughton says he has to create his own jobs: "It's not like I have an agent and I'm turning down a lot of offers," says McNaughton, who works as a graphic design-

er in his spare hours.

"In this business there's just not enough work to go around," he says. "People want to act, they want to shoot, to edit, they want to do all these things, and it's great to be able to get an opportunity to do that, regardless of money."

Each of the film's seven chapters have a different director, including McNaughton, who also worked in the editing room to give the film a consistent look.



Set in the near future, *Infest Wisely* is a cautionary tale of nanotechnology run amok—and it's not a coincidence that the film's centrepiece is invisible to the human eye.

"Lo-fi sci-fi" not only refers to the low-tech solutions to making the film's look and feel, say Munroe and McNaughton, but also the types of fictional technology presented within. Rather than setting the action in the distant future, or far far away, says McNaughton, "it's more like five years in the future, and there's these subtle technology shifts that you can kind of see, but it's kind of like everyday life."

Other technologies, like a virtual touchscreen, became commonplace within months of the movie's release, with the release of the iPod Touch and the iPhone. "I designed this thing, it's like a palm top and one of the characters is flipping through an album, and about five months after I did that they released the iPhone," says McNaughton. "So I felt a little pleased with myself, to figure out how the

user interface was going to look like months before it actually appeared. You just have to see what they're doing now and just imagine how ridiculous it can get in a couple of years."

McNaughton belongs to a comedy troupe called All-Day Breakfast, whose output includes such low budget films as *The Secret of Zombie Mountain*, a zombie film with a difference: a complete lack of zombies.

So how do you make a zombie film without

have used it."

McNaughton has tips for young filmmakers eager to make movies but lacking in the resources of a major studio.

The first rule: "Pay attention to sound. You can have a crappy picture, but if you have crappy sound it really demolishes the whole point. Don't use the mike on the camera. Try to get a boom mike or some wireless mikes."

A wide angle adapter also wouldn't hurt: "That's something I learned really early on. [A wide angle adaptor] takes it to a whole other level and makes it look more cinematic, and you can get them for not that much money. It really ups the ante and makes your film stand out."

McNaughton was lucky enough to take a workshop at the Summer Institute of Film and Television with director Deepa Mehta. "She had just made *Water*, so I was a little intimidated sitting down with her. But she started off the workshop by saying 'has anyone seen one of my favourite movies in the past little while? It's called *Shaun of the Dead*.' The experience not only taught him a lot about the art of film, says McNaughton, but that serious filmmaking and experimental art styles can cohabitate successfully.

"*Brazil*, [which is one of McNaughton's favourite films] has a lot in common with Orwell's *1984*. But it's just a ridiculous comedy where Robert DeNiro is this air-conditioner terrorist. It's kind of like life, where it's half ridiculous and half really serious and I think a lot of great films embrace both."

But what does the future hold for *Infest Wisely*? "I think it's a pretty scrappy little movie," says McNaughton. "I think it's kind of tough to get into for a lot of the audience, and that's some of the feedback we received. I want people to find it on their own, but I think it's more like, 'hey, I made this crazy movie, do you wanna see it?'"

Preproduction work has already begun on the film's successor that, like all technological progress, plans to be bigger and better. "We've already started collaborating on that" says McNaughton. "I've been giving Jim ideas unsolicited, whether he likes them or not."

Star gazing

Humbled by the experience of the Planetarium

• SEBASTIEN CADIEUX

I had not been to Montreal's Dow Planetarium since I was small. It was now little more than a faint memory of a dark room where I stared at the ceiling.

When I learned that 2009 was the International Year of Astronomy, I knew that I had to make the trek down to the corner of St-Jacques Street O. and Peel Street to visit this 1960s Montreal relic.

The building, designed to be reminiscent of Saturn and its rings, still operates primarily on the technology that was installed when the planetarium was first built.

"It's a 43-year-old museum but the technology is also 43-years-old," said André Bordeleau, who hosts the different shows that the planetarium

puts on daily.

As he left his control centre, from which he hosts shows and walks visitors through some of the more recognisable constellations, I marvelled at the console of glowing multicoloured buttons that looked like they were pulled straight out of a classic science-fiction film. "That's the original

"It's a 43-year-old museum but the technology is also 43-years-old."

—André Bordeleau,
Planetarium employee

star projector!" he added, pointing to the hulking light cannon at the centre of the room.

Although the technology is the same age as Montreal's metro, leaning back in the old leather chairs and letting the intoxicating view of thousands of stars mesmerize you is a fascinating and

humbling experience. The opening video may need work as the planetarium's 40th anniversary is celebrated, despite it being the institution's 43rd year.

"Montreal's dome of light pollution can be seen from Burlington Vermont—that's nearly 100 miles from here," he reminds me as he argues the

effects of light pollution. "Fortunately, here at the planetarium we can dispose of light pollution fairly easily. What you see above you now is what you should be able to see from your own backyard."

"We still do good quality shows. We're still a good bargain,

we're still worth a visit," insists Bordeleau. Having seen two different shows—and as a student—only paying \$6 each, you can rest assured that the presentations range from awe-inspiring to educational.

Under what other circumstances would you learn about the supermassive black hole at the centre of our galaxy, or how in thousands of years it is going to destroy the Andromeda galaxy?

"Attendance has been down for the past couple of years," Bordeleau mentions with disappointment in his voice. "The perception is that now that they've announced that 'okay, there's the funding, there will be a new planetarium.' That it means 'they're closed, they're not open anymore.' But the truth is that we're open until at least 2010 if not 2011."

Bordeleau insists that having this planetarium is an honour for our city and a tourist attraction. "Ontario doesn't have a planetarium anymore, they haven't had one since 1996. And in the summer people come from east Ontario, New Brunswick, Maine, Vermont, all over."

Weather permitting, Bordeleau—who celebrated his 15th anniversary with the planetarium yesterday—will guide you through a solar observation session following afternoon shows.

As I left the building he reminded me that I could even "take a look at the Copernicus statue, but because of the acid rain it looks more like Alice Cooper."

The Dow Planetarium is located at 1000 St-Jacques Street, or on the web at museumsnature.ca.

Astronomy: 1, Astrology: 0

The International Year of Astronomy kicks off in Montreal in February

• KAMILA HINKSON

Four hundred years ago, Galileo pointed his telescope towards the sky and proved that the Earth revolves around sun, finally answering a question that had been plaguing humans for centuries—although some refused to accept his answer.

The International Astronomical Association, in partnership with the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, have declared this year the International Year of Astronomy to commemorate the anniversary of Galileo's remarkable discoveries, in hopes they can "help the citizens of the world rediscover their place in the universe through the day and night-time sky, and thereby engage a personal sense of wonder and discovery."

Jim Hesser, the chair of the Canadian section of this celebration, stresses astronomy "plays a much larger role in our daily lives than most people realize." He explains that more than 50 per cent of the [Earth's] human population currently live in illuminated urban centres, which corresponds to 3.3 billion people, according to the United Nations, cited by the IYA website.

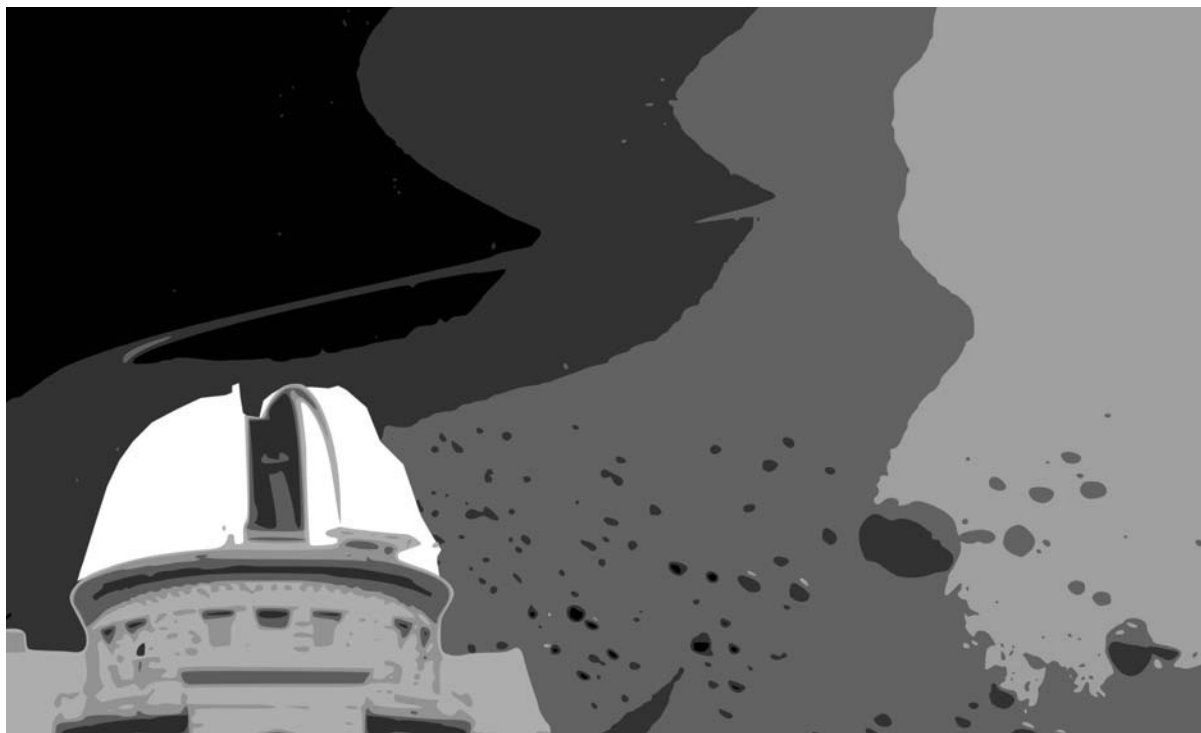
"People no longer realize

there's a beautiful sky above them," he laments. "When there's a power failure in a major urban centre, people look up and wonder, 'What is all that stuff up there?'"

The few times people do pay any attention to the stars in their daily lives, however, is in dubious corners of the professional world, like astrology. Astronomy, on the other hand, isn't all star signs and horoscopes—in fact, astronomy isn't at all concerned with how your day will unfold. The signs that make up the pseudoscience of astrology are the names of actual constellations, but today, that is as far as the relationship between the two goes.

Astronomy is "the scientific study of matter in outer space," according to answers.com, and in the winter months, when many people wake up to and return home in darkness, this time is considered a wonderful opportunity to look up at the sky and gaze at history.

One of the closest stars to Earth, 61 Cygni, is about 11 light-years away. That means the light from this star takes 11 years to reach us here on Earth—and that's just the closest star. The farther the star, the longer it takes, which is why you're looking at history when you look up at those tiny specks in the sky.



GRAPHIC GINGER COONS

Stars can even be used to tell time. Depending on their position in the sky and the time of year, the stars can serve as a 24-hour permanent watch, which could come in handy on clear nights. Even the daytime sky can showcase the wonders of the universe.

The moon is visible during the day, depending on what phase it's in, and a solar eclipse, when the moon comes between the sun and the earth, is also visible during the day, though dangerous to look at. The last solar eclipse vis-

ible in Canada occurred last August.

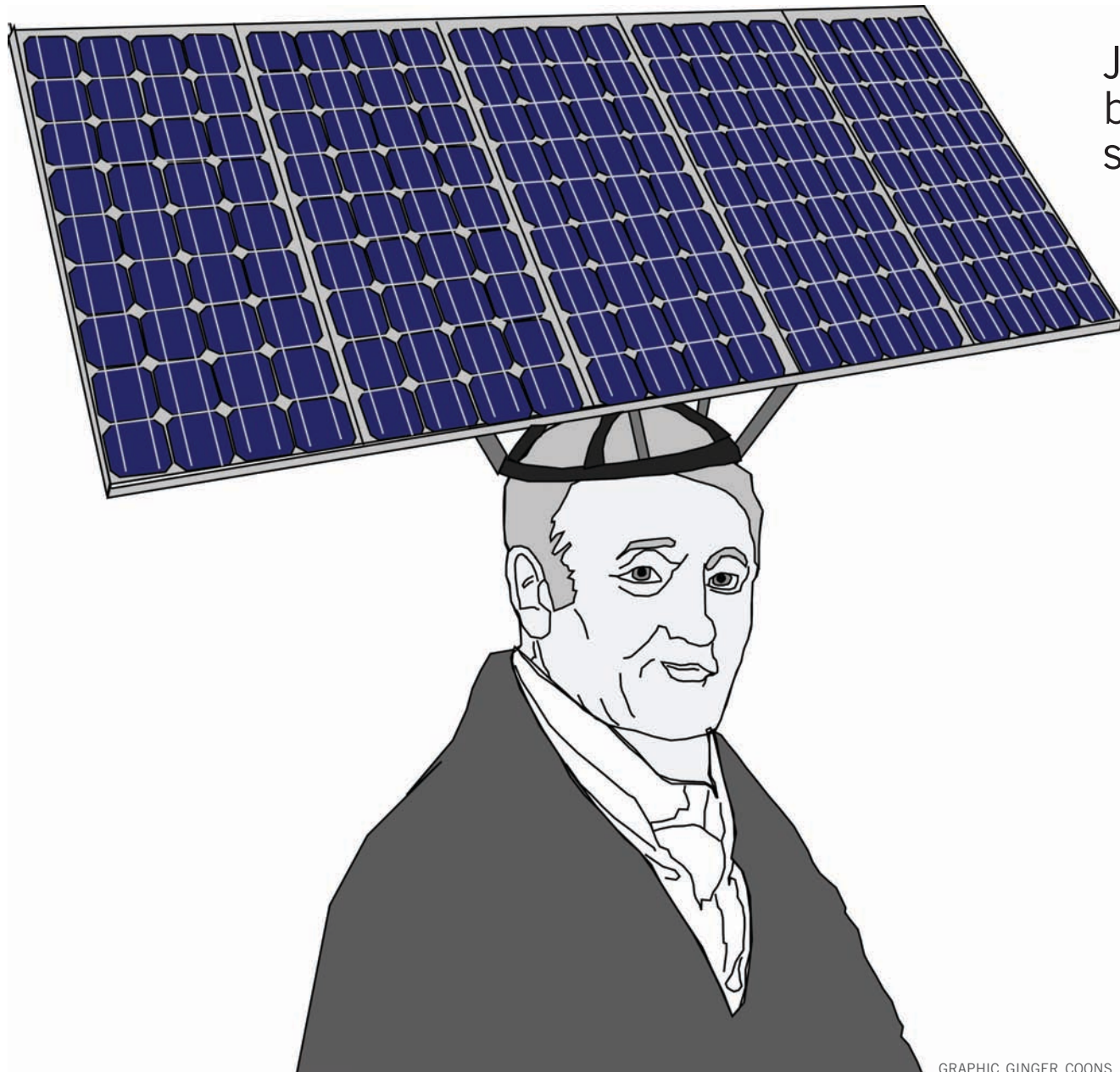
The International Astronomical Organization is organizing events at both the national and international level. One such event is 100 Hours of Astronomy, which is going on across the planet, around the clock, and features a live web cast from research laboratories and public observing events.

Dark Skies Awareness addresses the aforementioned problem of disappearing dark

skies, and stresses the pressing need "to preserve and protect dark night skies in places," according to the website. The website for the IYA's Canadian node, astronomie2009.ca, details the activities going on across the country.

"What we have learned over the past 400 years is thrilling," says Hesser. Galileo's discoveries succeeded in changing an entire worldview, and who knows what we'll be able to accomplish if given another 400 years.

Sunshine on JMSB makes me happy



John Molson School of Business
boasts the world's first combined
solar heat and power system

GRAPHIC GINGER COONS

• KAMILA HINKSON

The sun: the only star visible from Earth night and day, the name of a couple of newspapers across Canada, a television network in Toronto, the bringer of daylight and sunburns and now a source of energy at Concordia.

For the new John Molson School of Business building being constructed at the corner of Guy and de Maisonneuve by using solar panels, the sun will be providing five to ten per cent of the building's energy.

Construction on the new JMSB building started in 2006 and is slated to finish this summer. Installing the solar panels wasn't always part of the plan, says Brendan O'Neill, a Grad student from the Engineering Department who is involved with the Solar Buildings Research Network.

The SBRN is "the major Canadian research effort in solar energy utilization in buildings," according to their website. In November 2007, Natural Resources Canada gave the SBRN \$900,000 in support of various residential and commercial projects the network is involved with, including the new JMSB building.

Solar energy can be harnessed in one of two different ways: solar thermal energy is (the conversion of solar energy to thermal, or

heat energy), and solar electric energy generates electricity.

In the new building, the solar electricity is generated using a photovoltaic, or PV, system. The cells that make up the panel are made of silicon and produce electricity as long as light shines on them.

According to the CanmetEnergy website, a Canadian leader in clean energy research and technology development, the PV cells work better in low temperatures, which makes these systems perfectly suited for the Canadian climate. PV systems also employ the use of batteries, which are charged during sunny periods and used during times where there is no sun.

The solar collector is the main component of a solar thermal system, which works by converting solar radiation into heat. This system also works despite cold weather, although efficiency may vary depending on what kind of system it is. Neither system, for that matter, pollutes the environment.

The JMSB building boasts the first combined heat and power system in a non-residential building in the world.

Dr. Andreas Athientis, the Scientific Director of the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada's Solar Buildings Research Network and a Concordia University Research Chair,

designed the groundbreaking technology. The total energy solar power set to provide the building is split between solar thermal and solar electric energy.

"At their peak, the panels will provide 25 kilowatts of electricity and 75 kilowatts of heat," says O'Neill.

Starting next fall, John Molson students will be able to enjoy the new building and a display in the lobby will show the real-time energy being taken by the sun and used by the building.

Solar power takeover

If you want to use solar power in your home, now seems to be as good a time as any to install a system. The federal government offers a number of interesting initiatives for those who want to renovate their houses or build new houses equipped with solar technology.

The federal budget introduced a tax credit, designed to give up to \$1,350 for home improvement projects, and the ecoENERGY Retrofit program, which is getting infused with \$300 million over two years, provides a \$500 rebate for approved solar domestic hot water systems.

Quebec's Agence de l'efficacité énergétique offers a rebate for the installation of solar heated hot water tanks. Some compa-

nies offer services on their website(s) that enable prospective buyers to build a system that best suits them, depending on their energy needs.

Hydro-Québec is contributing to the shift towards renewable energy by offering a special rate they call the "net metering rate option." This option allows residential customers, small-power business owners and farmers to become self-generators, defined on their website as those who "produce electricity from their own generating facilities to meet some or all of their energy needs."

If a self-generating customer produces any surplus energy, this electricity is fed back into the Hydro grid and they receive a credit on their bill. That means if the customer consumes 1,000 kilowatt-hours of electricity but supplies 400, they are only billed for 600 kilowatt-hours. In order to qualify, however, you must install a photovoltaic system.

Solar energy may not be able to take care of all your energy needs, but it can help shave off the cost of heating and powering your home. After all, as many companies are quick to remind would-be customers, the system must be paid for, but sunlight is always free.

For step-by-step instructions on how to implement solar panels in your home, visit reonac.com.

Vatista's vortices

Concordia professor makes top 10 list of scientific discoveries of 2008 in science journal

• CHRISTOPHER OLSON

Outside the window of the Audio Visual Building teachers' lounge, the wind creates vortices that pick up speed before destabilizing and depositing flakes of snow in small embankments on a rooftop.

I point dumbly at this spectacle as Professor Georgio Vatistas, who teaches Mechanical and Industrial Engineering at Concordia University, explains the results of his three decades of research. He's been studying this same phenomenon for most of his professional life, and last year he made a breakthrough, making Québec Science magazine's top 10 scientific discoveries of 2008.

He did so by proving a 127-year-old theory first proposed by Nobel Prize winner J.J. Thompson in his *Treatise on the Motion of Vortex Rings*. Thompson's theories were widely accepted by scientists, but no one had been able to prove his theory in a laboratory setting until now.

"The way that we proved it was really simple," says Vatistas. "Anybody could have done it."

In fact, he stumbled upon it largely by accident.

"I was trying to find a way to separate solid particles immersed in liquids, when I thought something out of the ordinary was happening, and I was excited. I'm still excited," he explained. "I didn't expect these beautiful patterns to appear. Humans love symmetry. Anything that is symmetrical, most people

will find beautiful. So when I saw the symmetry, naturally I'm human, I loved it. But I wanted to know more."

If all vortices were as unstable as the funnel of water that appears in a bathtub drain, or the vortices of wind that appeared outside the teachers' lounge window, then the universe itself would cease to exist.

Vortex rings not only contribute to the circular rotation of galaxies and solar systems, but the rotation of atomic particles that make up all matter. From devastating tornados to the science that keeps airplanes elevated, vortices manifest a variety of behaviours, both good and bad.

"Lately they've discovered that at the north pole of Saturn there is a hexagonal storm. They can't explain that one," says Vatistas. "I think this can, with a little bit more work."

"This is basic research. And like any basic research it may be important to a wide variety of situations."

Research into vortices could result in early warning detection for tornados, he predicts. "A tornado has a very particular signature as far as the sound waves are concerned. Because it's subaudible—or infrasound—it has very low frequency, and these waves can travel far without attenuation. By having very sensitive microphones you can detect this signature and detect an impending tornado earlier than a radar."

Vatistas feels his research may contribute to our understanding of the phenomenon of synchronization in nature, a process that is

not well understood, but is as ubiquitous and difficult to pinpoint as vortex rings.

"Imagine you are in a theatre," says Vatistas, "and the crowd starts clapping. In the beginning it's random, but if the audience loves what they heard, they might synchronize." The same is true for biological systems: "the heart is comprised of many different cells," says Vatistas, "and if they synchronize, they will create the beating of the heart. If this synchronization isn't there, you have arrhythmia. If you introduce a metronome to the cells, like a pacemaker, it basically tells it to synchronize."

The natural ability for currents of air or water to form vortex rings may be a form of synchronicity. "For synchronization you need communication," says Vatistas, and like a crowd erupting into applause as an auditory response to a single ecstatic audience member, some natural form of communication between particles must exist in order to manifest these unconscious behaviour in matter.

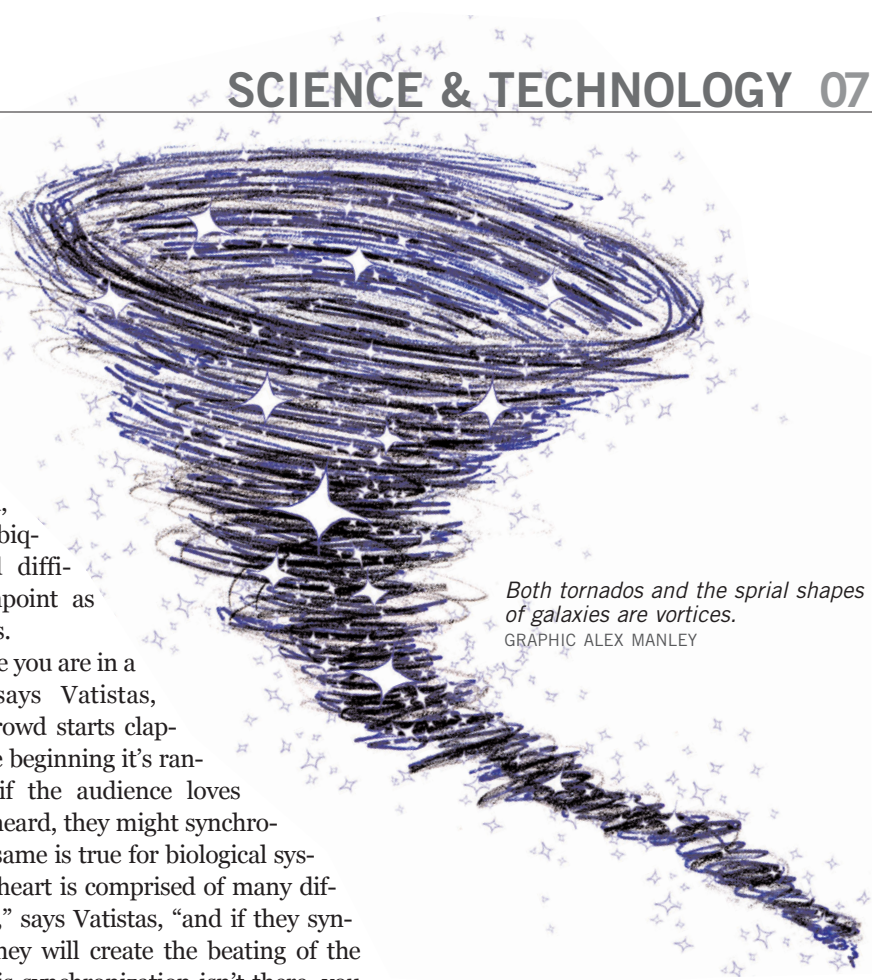
Without stating explicitly at the time, says Vatistas, J.J. Thompson's research helped contribute to the origin of String Theory, or the theory of everything.

Communication is an important aspect of his teaching as well, says Vatistas. "I'm in con-

stant communication with my graduate students. In our team, we all do the research together. If the students are working, the professor should be working equally, if not more. So I'm getting my hands dirty also."

Vatistas' professional career began in 1977 at Concordia, where he did his undergraduate and graduate studies. The recognition he and his students received, he feels, validates his work as both a scientist and a teacher. "What a professor wants, first and foremost is to see that you contributed to the success of your students."

Meanwhile, his work on vortex rings is far from over. "It's never finished, you just change levels. You have to set the bar somehow, you might never catch it, but it's fun trying to do it."



Robotism, and the gaining robophobia

They may dream of electric sheep, but they're people too... or are they?

• MELANIE KOZLAN

Eerily human-like robots; we've seen variations of them in nearly every science-fiction film and whether it is a moral dilemma or a matter of life and death, eventually we will have to face our mechanically constructed counterparts.

In Japan, where people have a more receptive view of robots and technology, androids are being viewed as delightful companions to the elderly and exceptional aids to the handicapped. Automotive manufacturer Honda, has been manufacturing a dream-team of humanoid robots that are projected to be available within the next ten years, meanwhile another Japanese company, ASIMO, has already created androids that entertain and help care for the elderly by reminding them to take their medicine, and helping them move from their bed to a wheelchair. In Canada, inventor Le Trung has created "Aiko,"—meaning "baby" or "child" in Japanese—an alarmingly realistic fembot that is receptive to touch, performs

household duties and speaks both English and Japanese, boasting a vocabulary of 13,000 words.

Some wonder if the bilingual android is a glorified sex-doll or whether it proposes the potential for greater human kinship. Will robots become our esteemed colleagues or should we fear that which we created?

Aiko in particular is supplied with an antifeminist agenda. Le Trung has described her as "the perfect woman," explaining that "she doesn't need holidays, food or rest and she will work almost 24 hours a day." The only difficulty he seems to acknowledge with humanoids is that they lack human experience and social skills that we take for granted; for example, interpreting situations, gestures, or sarcasm. Another challenge will be creating a positive and comfortable relationship between humans and androids.

Research has shown that a person's response to robots is only truly positive when they are completely indistinguishable from actual humans. As Japanese

roboticist Mashahiro Mori's Uncanny Valley theory explains, when robots look too human-like, humans become suspicious of them and are instinctively repulsed.

Although this theory presupposes that we will one day be able to construct robots that are capable of appearing indistinguishable from humans—something Aiko and others can't yet claim—numerous examples of the Uncanny Valley in television and film add credence to Mori's theory. We don't know a lot about robots from our everyday experience, but science-fiction often depicts a future in which the machines we see now have created a desolate landscape, incapable of supporting human life, but ironically suitable to the machines who's invention was supposed to make our lives better. It's no wonder that in Japan, where robots are often depicted as heroes and not simply the human race's antagonists, is one of the leading researchers and developers of humanoid robots.

Given the antifeminist nature of



Fritz Lang's *Metropolis* features the first famous robot: Maria. GRAPHIC KETAN PATEL

Aiko, combined with man's current relationship with machines creates an interesting dilemma: should a humanoid robot be treated as an object or as a person? Dogs are reputable as man's best friend—while cats are more like tenants than anything else—and yet humans routinely objectify ani-

mals. Are robots our pets or are peers, or some disaster in between?

In my most paranoid and inventive opinion, it is becoming impossible to tell if we are living in the age of technological advancement or merely the beginning of a bad science fiction movie.

Is it inevitable?

Cars are getting ready to take to the sky, but can the idea really fly?

• JUSTIN GIOVANNETTI

The future is still very far away.

“One hundred years from today we shall have no batteries of skyscrapers to point out to our trans-Atlantic visitors. On the contrary our future cities, because of the aerial eye, will be flat-topped, and two out of every three buildings will serve as some kind of landing area for a super-auto gyroplane or a transcontinental express.”

Francis Keally’s prediction of the world of 2031, written in the Dec. 6, 1931 issue of the Missouri-based *Daily Capital News*, now seems moot due to the notable absence of one of the most elusive of technological prophecies, the flying car.

Since the 1960s, the flying car’s failure to emerge has been so complete that simply asking about its existence is seen as a form of social commentary. “Where is my flying car?” has become an expression of dismay, questioning progress’ seeming inability to match Jetsonian dreaming and science fiction.

Yet inventors and idealists have been trying to build a successful flying car for nearly as long as the airplane has existed—the first patent for an “aeromobile” was granted 15 years after the first flight by the Wright brothers.

After 90 years of tinkering on flying cars, current technology and enthusiasm have created the two serious proposals being held as a symbol of renewed interests in moving highways into the sky.

The Moller Skycar

The more established of the two proposed flying cars is being built by Moller International, a skycar company owned by McGill alumni Paul S. Moller, who has spent nearly \$200 million on research and development over the past two decades.

For the millions invested, Moller has built one prototype, the M400, which has flown only once for less than a minute. According to the company’s website, the skycar is part of the “evolutionary path to independence from gravity.”

The M400 looks more like a private jet than a car. The vehicle’s aerodynamic fire-engine-red body is boxed by four large ducted fans at its corners that spin during flight to allow the skycar to takeoff like a helicopter and fly like a conventional aircraft. The final vehicle is supposed to fly at nearly 400 kilometres per hour, while carrying four people.

The skycar’s main drawback is its \$1 million price tag and an extremely limited car mode—restricted mostly to landing and parking.

The Moller proposal’s drawbacks are a perfect example of the problems that have plagued flying car development. By attempting to mix the features of a car with that of an airplane, developers often make sacrifices that create an expensive, bloated final product good at neither flying nor driving.

“Its like trying to mate a pig and an elephant,” said Lionel Salisbury, the editor of

the *Roadable Times*—an exhaustive website devoted to flying cars—to USA Today. “You don’t get a very good elephant, or a very good pig.”

Terrafugia Transition

Unlike the Moller vehicle, the Terrafugia Transition sticks much closer to the flying car in most people’s imagination. The \$194,000 aircraft looks like a Toyota Prius two-seater, with wings that fold up during driving and unfold for flight, along with a propeller behind the backseat.

Unlike earlier trials to build a car-like aircraft—including an experiment in the 1970s that saw an engineer attach wings and an aircraft engine to a Ford Pinto—the Transition is based on cheap technology that has been recently developed, including lightweight engines and a carbon-fibre airframe.

Despite the Transition’s more utilitarian

appearance, the vehicle is not designed to replace a normal car. In fact, it is targeted at existing pilots who will enjoy the ability to drive to the airport, takeoff, fly to a destination at 185 kilometres per hour, land and then drive around.

Designed by MIT engineers at Terrafugia’s office outside Boston, the company calls the flying car a “transition roadable aircraft.” Expected to fly for the first time later this year, the first deliveries of the Transition are expected in early 2010.

Still grounded

Although there are more flying car-like vehicles being developed at this time than nearly ever before—backed by solid engineering and venture capital—this is hardly a golden age for flying car enthusiasts.

The concept of what is a flying car has been distorted and changed beyond recognition. These aircraft are cars only in name.

Unlike the vehicle piloted by George Jetson or the near-ubiquitous flying car of campy science fiction, current proposals to make cars airworthy are nothing less than toys for the rich and bored.

The two proposed flying cars both demonstrate this problem, the Moller skycar is a jet designed to fly and land, not to drive. The Terrafugia Transition is simply a slimmed down Cessna-like aircraft, capable of driving on the road, but only for small hops.

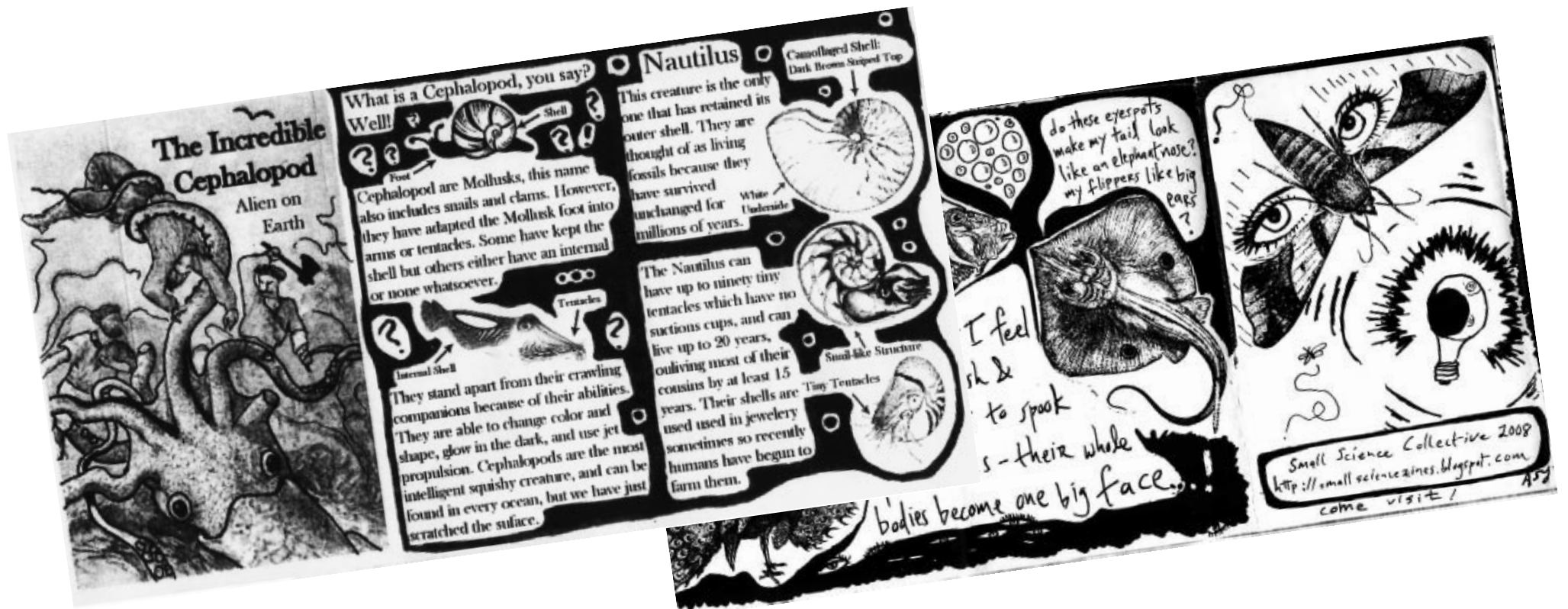
Both of these proposals are really just crudely disguised light aircraft that are being marketed as flying cars. They are not likely to be mass-produced anytime soon, ensuring traffic jams in the clogged arteries of major cities for years to come.

Unlike the flying car imagined by the Jetsons and other products of the dreamy futurism of the 1950s, the future looks like it’s going to stay grounded.



GRAPHIC GRAPHIC KALI MALINKA

So you've decided to make science zines



The Small Science Collective, bringing you science in easily digestible portions

• CHRISTOPHER OLSON

When it comes to science education, our society is falling way behind. Fighting scientific illiteracy while simultaneously channelling the creativity of its contributors, The Small Science Collective, a blog founded by Andrew Yang and J.S. Oishi, is taking back the public consciousness one zine at a time.

So how did it all get started? Yang, a professor at The School of the Arts Institute of Chicago, explains.

The Link: How long have you been making zines, and were they always based on science?

Andrew Yang: I made some zines in high school and spent a lot of time as editor of my school's newspaper, which I thought of as a kind of large, collaborative zine among students. I taught English in Japan post-college for a couple of years and would make zines mainly for the students in the schools I taught on English language, culture, interviews, and the like—but not science.

The idea for Small Science Collective was born from all the Chick tracts—religious propaganda brochures—that I came across a lot on chairs and desks at my university. It irked me they were so much better at having their word on every little bus bench in town and wondered why science couldn't have its say similarly, especially in the case of some of these very anti-science pamphlets out there.

So is the SSC just a hobby, or is it connected to your work?

In a sense it is a hobby in that it is my own time and money at runs a lot of the project—mainly in the form of photocopying. I'm trained as a biologist, do biology research and the like, but I came to the Art Institute specifically to interact with a different community

of people and share science in what otherwise would be thought of as a “non-science” context. As a biologist I feel SSC is completely part of my job. A lot of people might disagree with me, but I think communicating and activating discussion about science is as much an important form of knowledge-making as doing basic biological research.

Where do your contributions come from?

Initially the contributions have primarily come from students at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago. I feel it's important for them to be as much a part of “the conversation” of science as professional scientists or Discovery Channel producers. The public is increasingly being put in the position of being mainly consumers rather than producers of scientific understanding.

Now more and more scientists are also getting involved writing zines for the collective—it is an outlet they don't usually have given [that] their work goes either into a professional journal or into the notebooks of their students in the classroom. But lots of scientists are really passionate about sharing their ideas and curiosity with others, and I think SSC can provide them an outlet they wouldn't otherwise have in this regard.

Who came up with the conceit of publishing them online and having readers leave them in public places?

Since leaving them in public places and unexpected and unsanctioned spaces is part of the idea of the project, the Internet seemed like a natural extension of that possibility. The Internet provides this odd form of engaged anonymity and shared knowledge, which is what the SSC project is about in many ways.

Our hope is that the website can act as a resource for people who have the urge and

interest to put the zines out there; the even bigger hope is that people will make their own to distribute, activating the notion of a collective—even perhaps if it is one in which the members don't know each other.

The Internet is seen by many as the end of hand-making, hand-distribution and the physicality of reading, and the like. Beyond the practical aspects of getting the zines out there, to the extent that online formats could potentially [be] used to promote media outside the internet via zines is the part of “the conceit” that perhaps is the most interesting to me.

Are the zines made simply to inform the general public or to correct public misconception of science and to debunk scientific myths?

Both. The author of the *Endless Spirals* zine is an astrophysicist who really got tired of all scientifically questionable/new-agey associations that people seem to make about the universality of spirals as some unifying physical process. But he was also interested in also conveying his own love of spirals—to inform while also debunking. It's good to be critical, but if there is nothing contributive about it, then what's the use?

Many of the myths about science that bother me have to do with evolutionary biology—that is why Chick tracts were so motivating to me. Their anti-evolutionism tires me. The zine *Snake Legs and Wisdom Teeth* was done as a homage and parody of a Chick tract. There are also a lot of misconceptions about bacteria and insects as being categorically bad things. I study insects, so I like to challenge those assumptions through the zines collective members create. Many of the zines are more equivocal about things and seek to pose questions rather than just “inform.” Fascinating facts are of course wonderful on

their own, but it is also in the service or promoting greater engagement, curiosity and questioning of just what science, technology and the natural world are all about.

How much traffic does your web site receive?

The website has been getting more and more traffic. I think most still comes from Chicago though, as those are where most of the hardcopy zines are likely to be found randomly by people. The recognition in the web is really good assuming it motivates people to share science by distributing zines and creating zines themselves.

Have you ever encountered one of your own zines in coffee shops, bars, or in waiting rooms?

The other day I came across one of our zines in an exhibit of a group called the Chicago Underground Library, which was pretty exciting. I have never heard of them and I am not sure where they picked up the zine in the city, but it means they are getting around, which is the whole idea.

These days, I am also finding the zines in virtual places on the internet in a way that is wonderful to see: Italian-language blogs, or hearing about certain zines being downloaded and distributed in New Zealand—that kind of thing is exciting and makes me feel good about the web component of the project. As long as people actually print the zines out and put them in the world.

To print and download a science zine, simply visit smallsciencecollective.blog-spot.com, print out a zine, fold along the edges, and presto: a short and nifty guide to the science of cephalopods, protein structures, DNA-based computing, and the human gut. Step two: place it in a public spot, where others can stumble upon it and expand their minds.

I can has internets?

Intrepid *Link* reporter undertakes Great 100 Hour Webathon

• ALEXANDER H. MANLEY

Projections in the first half of the 20th century as to the future tended to predict (correctly) improvements upon all the existing technologies. Cars, planes, the television, these all became significantly better at exercising their basic functions. The invention, (and subsequent impact) of the Internet, however, went almost entirely unforeseen.

Now, several decades later, we spend hours upon hours each week sitting in front of our computers, interacting with this unexpected invention. How come? We already had the television, the telephone, the newspaper. How, then, did the Internet gain its grapple hold on us? Is it just its combinatorial powers, its ability to be a host of things all at once, or is there more to it?

Like any good gumshoe, I needed to immerse myself in my subject; I needed a field study. To this end, I decided this past January to forego real life for 100 hours straight, in favour of the endless delights of the Internet. Starting Tuesday, January 20th at noon, I would abstain from anything offline—with the notable exceptions of sleeping, eating, and excreting—up until Saturday the 24th at 4 p.m.

It was a bold plan. I drew up a list of rules. No phone-communication was solely to be made via the Internet. No leaving the apartment. If I needed anything from the outside world, I would use the Internet to bring it to me. No iTunes, CDs or radio-only streaming music. No television or DVDs. Only online video. No playing around in Photoshop or other offline applications. Perhaps the most important rule however, was one that did not deny me anything, but rather told me to try new things.

As a means of testing out the Internet, and as a means of keeping the experience from becoming simply an extended goof-off session, I resolved to, during my hundred hours, do things I had never before gotten around to.

Though I typically spend four or five hours online every day, by force of habit I tend not to try new things unless my friends force them on me. During my experiment however, I would seek out sites I knew about but hadn't previously bothered with. I would use my Google-fu to get me whatever I was after. I would embrace Web 2.0.

I arranged the beginning of my incarceration to coincide with Obama's inauguration for two reasons. Much has been made of Obama's use of the Internet in his presidential campaign. If not for his online involvement and

fund-raising, he likely would not have won the election.

To boot, running against an opponent who admitted to not knowing how to use the internet, his win signalled a victory of sorts for all things forward-thinking, and his creation of the position of Minister of Technology evinced a willingness to take the internet seriously in ways his predecessor never did. Additionally, I actually wanted to watch the speech. What way could be more fitting than watching it in real time, online?

Day 1

At noon, after stocking up on some candy and sugar-coated peanuts to tide me over until I started ordering food online, I hit up justin.tv, a site that enables users to broadcast their webcam feeds, but also allows for the streaming of television live and for users to comment on the content in real time.

I've spent many nights watching Montreal Canadiens games at this site, switching from one hockey channel to another, searching for the highest quality stream. Unsurprisingly, a channel streaming CNN's broadcast of Obama's speech was the most popular. I began to watch.

The new President took the stand and I was glued to the screen—until Chief Justice John Roberts flubbed the Oath of Office. Watching Obama trying to respond properly was painfully awkward. I switched tabs in my browser.

No phone—communications were solely to be made via the Internet. No leaving the apartment—if I needed anything from the outside world, I would use the Internet to bring it to me.

It was an extremely Internet moment.

The spectators watching live could not do this. TV watchers could mute the sound and keep the picture, but not vice-versa. Radio listeners never had the visual to begin with. I revelled in my power. Before long, he began his speech, and I began watching again. It was an interesting listen, but I ended up switching tabs again. He's a handsome fellow, but I couldn't help but feel my eyes would be better served elsewhere.

I checked back in every now and then, however, and thankfully managed to catch the infamous bow-hat on Aretha Franklin. Eventually, Obama's spot at the podium was taken by a host of other speakers, and before long, I closed the tab. Well, here we are, the future.

Soon afterwards, I signed up for a Twitter account and began micro-blogging, in keeping with my “trying new things” credo. My Twitter account would also double as an online diary of my slow but steady progress through the 100 hours. I was pleasantly surprised to find not only that I had a few friends already on Twitter, but also that the novelty did not wear off after the first couple of days.

Before long, however, I moved on to bigger and better things, namely, ordering food online. After finding out Domino's online ordering did not extend its' service north of the 49th parallel, I sought out some more Canadian fare, and Pizza Pizza, an Ontario-based chain, delivered—both literally and figuratively. After a brief sign-up process, and a 35 or so minute wait, the pizza arrived, problem free. Mission: accomplished.

Encouraged, I decided to try my hand at ordering some groceries online to stock my languishing refrigerator. IGA was ready and willing to deliver an order with \$35-minimum by the next day. I signed up for the service and set about stocking my online cart. Eventually, when the total hit \$35 exactly, I headed for check-out. After taxes and a number of heretofore unmentioned hidden fees, IGA charged my credit card \$49.16.

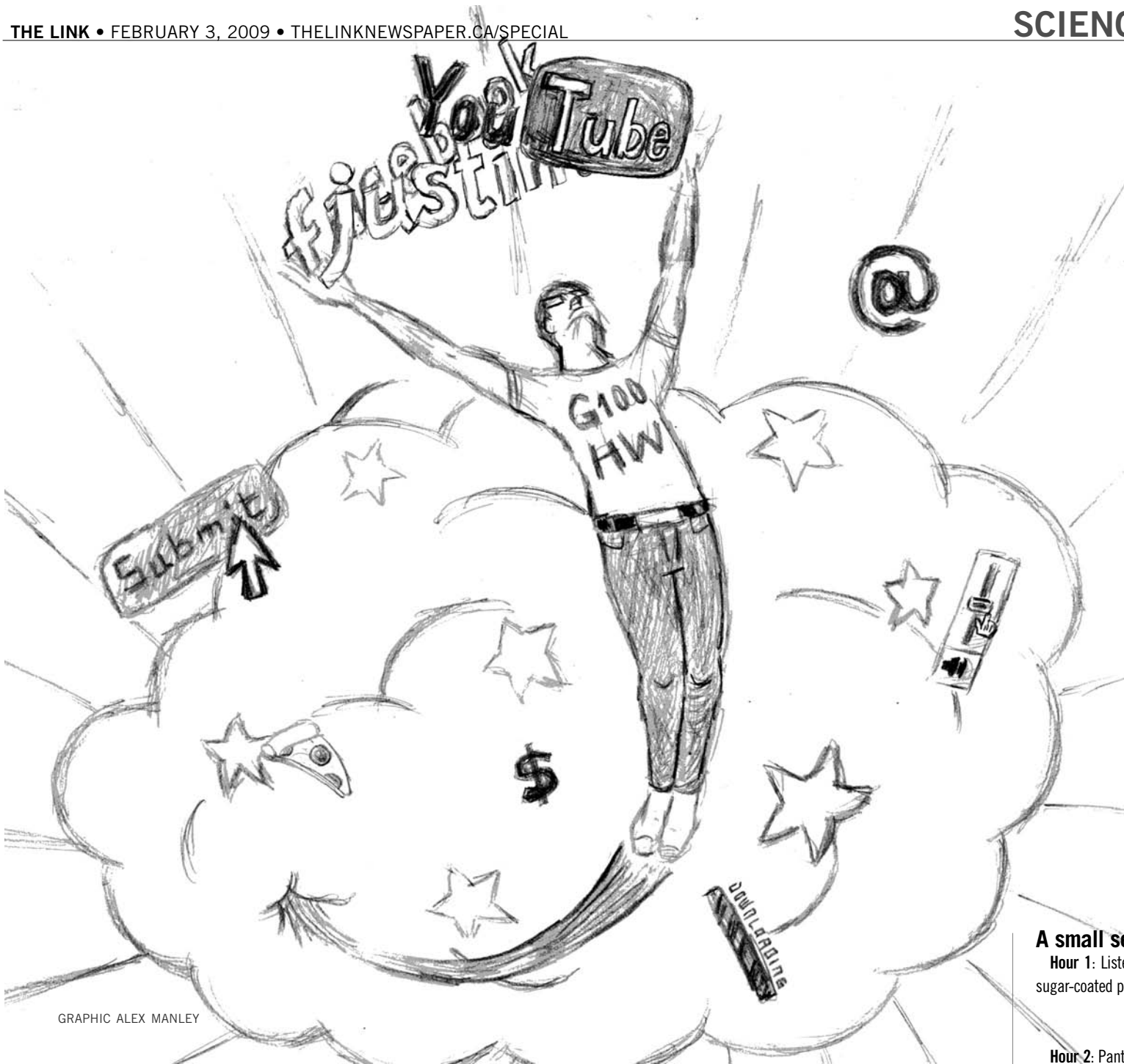
Over the course of the evening, as I finished off my pizza and the onion rings that came with them, I watched a high-quality stream of the Habs' abysmal loss to the Thrashers at atdhe.net. as justin.tv has had little NHL fare of late, with the major networks catching wind of its existence and getting habitual game-streaming accounts banned. After staying up to talk via Facebook chat with a friend, I eventually went to bed around 2 a.m.

Day 2

Though I had sworn off use of my phone, IGA called around noon, and I knew if I didn't answer, my order might not get delivered. I gave in, feeling terrible, only to learn the order would be a few hours late. I was suitably unimpressed.

Needing something to do in the interim, I attempted to watch some “Arrested Development” online. I downloaded TOR, an IP-masking program that would enable me to watch all the free content available to the US at Hulu.com. Unfortunately, the router only worked with Firefox, which didn't recognize my Flash plug-in. After frustratedly puzzling over this for an hour or so, looking up potential solutions, and re-downloading both Flash and Shockwave, I gave up on Hulu and headed over to tv-links.cc and surfthechannel.com, which, though their collections were significantly less complete, still let me watch the bulk of the first season.

My groceries arrived early in the afternoon, but I realized I had poorly thought out what to buy in relation to what I already had and what I needed. The online ordering had been significantly more frustrating than I expected. Part of it was no doubt the fact that, as a visual person, having my vision restricted to a list of 50 similar products per page was



GRAPHIC ALEX MANLEY

With more an 100 new Facebook friends, and having rated the day's two films at IMDb.com, I fell asleep.

extremely frustrating.

One should not overlook, however, the middling quality of the product catalogue. Many of the foods lacked accompanying pictures. It was also unclear as to whether I was not seeing a certain product because IGA didn't have it, or because I wasn't looking in the right place. It was a bit of a guessing game.

Later on, I spent some time turning a clip from a song on YouTube into a ringtone, with the help of file2hd.com and some free mp4-to-mp3 conversion software. Feeling technologically invincible, I hit the sack, ready for another online day.

Day 3

For the past two days, I'd been meaning to test the powers of Facebook as a social connector. I decided to finally add all the people I knew but was not Facebook—friends with yet, going through the friend lists of a few of my closest and most popular pals. At Hour 50, I went on an adding spree. From 2:32 p.m. on, every couple of minutes would bring a new confirmation to my Gmail inbox. Within a few hours my friend total had ballooned from 221 to nearly 300.

Feeling somewhat under the weather and no doubt suffering from a debilitating lack of sunlight, I contented myself with spending the rest of the day wending my way through my remaining food supplies, the archives of some of my favourite webcomics, and a handful of online flash games. Despite my general inactivity, the participation of legions of old friends and acquaintances made Day 3 an internet success, and proved beyond a shadow of a doubt that my generation spends too much time on Facebook.

Day 4

The last day was yet slower and sparer than the three previous ones. The cold I'd been nursing for the past couple of

days began to wear on me significantly. Despite my exhaustion, I stayed up, vowing to use the Internet's powers to keep me awake and entertained with a minimum of participation on my part, and watched *Doubt* and *Notorious*, the Biggie biopic, free of charge thanks to watch-movies.net.

As well, I talked with a friend using Skype, a free VoIP and videochat program. At one point, he positioned his laptop in front of a mirror. I stared into an abyss of infinitely repeating video representations of myself, each a second or so behind my movements in real life, the awful power of the Internet reflecting and magnifying my awe on forever. It was trippy.

Around Hour 88, with more than 100 new Facebook friends, and having rated the day's two films at IMDb.com—9 and 8 out of 10, respectively—I fell asleep, ready for the home stretch.

Final Four Hours

I woke up some time Saturday afternoon, nearly done with my e-shenanigans and restless for the outside world. A friend showed up with a half hour to go and helped me kill the final minutes searching for a free DVD-ripping program. Finally, the hour of freedom, 4 p.m., was upon me. Escaping from my self-imposed web-prison, I headed to the nearest dépanneur, in search of the delicious sugar-coated peanuts I had first tasted 100 hours earlier.

My experience trapped on the internet taught me that this was not so different from a typical week for me—the missed classes, the poor sleep schedule, the hours wasted doing things online that would never matter—lit a fire under me.

For all of its abilities to ease and improve day-to-day human existence, for all the possibilities it represents, the Internet must be taken in moderation. I vowed, henceforth, to spend less time on it, a sort of three-weeks-late New Year's resolution, and re-embrace the analog, the offline, the real.

If you would like to follow Alexander H. Manley on Twitter, go to twitter.com/alex_icon, where you can read all of his posts, and see how he's doing with his resolution.

A small selection of Twitter posts

Hour 1: Listened to Inaugural Address while Facebooking + MSNing. Ate sugar-coated peanuts + Starbursts. Listened to Lymbyc Systym. Tired.

1:37 p.m. Jan 20

Hour 2: Pants: on. Cold: on. Food: dwindling. Hoping: the neighbours don't start fighting again. I wonder if you can call the cops online.

2:12 p.m. Jan 20

Hour 8: Filled out an order with my local IGA. Should be here tomorrow noon-ish. I'm excited for food. Habs losing, despite great stream.

7:44 p.m. Jan 20

Hour 10: Habs suck, great stream notwithstanding. Internet-ordered pizza + onion rings arrived, mostly consumed. Pants: on. Tired.

9:39 p.m. Jan 20

Hour 14: Still feeling emotional, blogged at length. The 21st century is weird.

2:09 a.m. Jan 21st

Hour 25: Answered phone. IGA was telling me the order would come in later. Felt terrible; wished phones could be answered online somehow.

1:00 p.m. Jan 21st

Hours 51-53: Added probably more an 100 people on Fbook. So far: 42 accepts. Feel strangely popular. Debating what movies to watch tonite.

5:07 p.m. Jan 22nd

Hours 57-58: Herb & Chives cream cheese + chocolate milk. Verdict: Last.fm radio sucks. MSN + Fbook chatting simultaneously. Sooo sick.

9:37 p.m. Jan 22nd

Hour 59: Read rough the last couple of months of Penny Arcade. Engaged in a Facebook duel. Last nine hours yielded 90 new friends. Insane.

11:12 p.m. Jan 22nd

Hours 66-74: Slept. Visited by soup + apple juice fairies. Had a feverish dream (while wearing an Ian MacKaye shirt, even). More FB friends.

2:58 p.m. Jan 23rd

Hour 83: Please just let me die. I need this torment to be over. Thankfully I can sleep most of it off. The internet's luster is gone.

10:39 p.m. Jan 23rd

it is so good to have itunes music back seriously people. also: the outdoors. other people. movies on dvds. the like.

2:23 a.m. Jan 26

Putting freedom back in software



GRAPHIC GINGER COONS

Free software movement founder speaks on software human rights

• NICHOLAS SMITH, *THE MCGILL DAILY*

The father of the free software movement descended into H-763 at Concordia on January 26, to explain to 125 people why freedom is just as important in software as it is in the rest of life.

Richard Stallman, founder of the Free Software Foundation and lead architect of the GNU Project—which developed part of the GNU/Linux operating system—stressed that there is an ethical requirement to use software that is “free as in freedom, not as in beer.”

“People are not taught to ask ‘How will it affect my freedom?’” Stallman said of software. “A program is free software if it

respects a user’s freedom and the social solidarity of its community.”

He argued all ethical programs must allow the four freedoms: the freedom to run the program for any purpose, the freedom to study how it works and adapt it to your needs, the freedom to redistribute copies so you can help your neighbour, and the freedom to improve the program and release it to the public to benefit the community.

The vast majority of computer programs are proprietary software, containing licences that make it illegal to exercise some or all of the four freedoms. This leads to ethical dilemmas, according to Stallman.

“Whenever a friend says, ‘I like this program, can I have a copy?’ you have a dilem-

ma,” he said. “[One solution] is don’t have any friends; the other is to reject proprietary software.”

Stallman has always focused on freedom since beginning the GNU Project in 1983 and maintains that software is undemocratic if it fails to provide the four freedoms to users.

In his own life, Stallman tries not to use propriety software, such as Microsoft Word and iTunes. His boycott leaves him unable to use cell phones, taxis with map finders, and most laptops. He admitted in the talk, though, that his flight to Montreal likely used some proprietary software.

“If someone offers you a proprietary program to use, you should say no, for your freedom’s sake,” he said, emphasizing that the

relative freedom of programs concern all consumers, not just programmers.

While Stallman supports free software, such as Firefox, OpenOffice, and different distributions of the GNU/Linux operating system, he said that calling these projects “open source” dilutes the emphasis on freedom.

He also encouraged schools to teach students how to use free software, so that students are not locked into using proprietary software from a young age—a preference which becomes costly once they leave school.

“If we want freedom to prevail, we have to fight for it,” he said. “If you teach people about freedom, they’re more likely to care about yours.”

Why I go to class

Or how I learned to get credits while surfing YouTube at home

• R. BRIAN HASTIE

Online education has usually been seen as a freeing act, one that allows all people to access the same materials while working towards a scholastic goal.

The idea that one can learn anytime is enticing and exciting, and can be seen as a positive experience. But with that there comes certain dangers with allowing oneself to submit to the materials at hand.

Course modules are in place and all one has to do is pay the course fee, buy the material required for the class, and off they go reading, watching and receiving information.

But school is never just about the materials. It is also about interactions, the discussions and new discoveries that happen throughout a semester. It is about the experience, one that is sorely lacking when engaging with online content.

The teaching method employed decades ago was seen as a straight arrow, instead of a circular cycle: the professor taught and you would shut up and take notes. That model, over the past few decades, has steadily changed to allow the professor to be in on the learning experience too as they allow class discussion.

It’s not nearly as hegemonic of an experience as it once was—class participation allows a recombination of ideas and thoughts and brings new meanings to old material. There’s a joy in feeling included in an active discussion or an activity meant to push the class curriculum forward.

It’s no secret that people learn best when at play, and that’s exactly what happens when interactions and connections are made. Participants move around and break out of the static position of simply taking notes and

posing the occasional question, only to return to the note-taking position.

Sadly, though, this freeform environment is all but eroded in an online setting.

The marginal sharing that goes on in an

online environment can never take the place of the instantaneous sharing that takes place in a live setting.

Sure, a line of communication is established via e-mail, but its delayed response turns off any desire to truly engage, relegating it to a simple question-and-answer format.

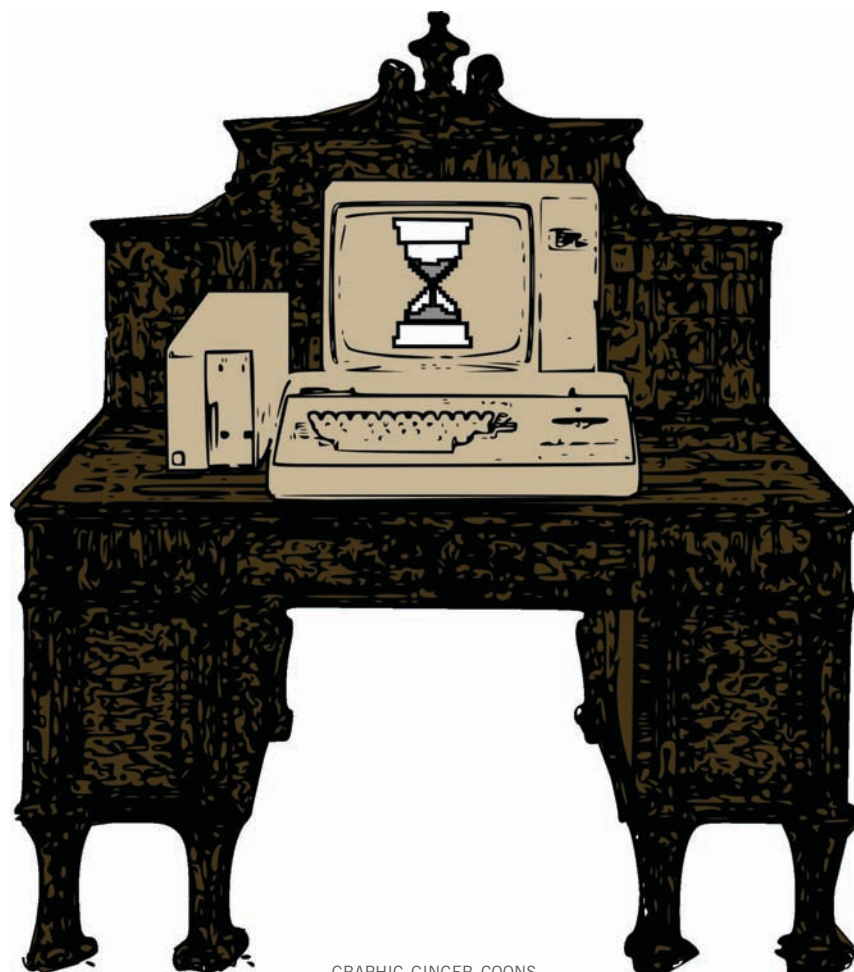
With this media, we slowly return to a system where a teacher teaches—via video—and we listen. The feedback is lost and the cycle is broken.

We are back to shutting up and taking notes, only asking questions when we really need to know something, and even then it may be a few days to get a proper response instead of the moments it would take to drop by a professor’s office and clear up a misunderstanding.

eConcordia course teaching assistants, for example, offer “virtual office hours,” but I’ve never actually seen them being used to a great degree. I’ve seen perhaps two or three threads throughout the course of a semester and even then they’re nitpicky, small questions that would be better suited to e-mail.

As the march towards embracing technology continues onwards, we find ourselves faced with a nearly limitless choice of education options.

But we have to understand the trade-off that comes with technology: the loss of true interaction, the loss of new conclusions in a communal setting, the lost ability to actively engage one’s peers and the chance to partake in an activity rather than a chore.



GRAPHIC GINGER COONS

Colourful and awkward animation

Best of Ottawa 2008 International Animation Festival features superheroes, tormented souls and abstract art

• JOHNNY NORTH

Ever imagined what it's like to watch soft-core porn in a movie theatre with your dad? That's just one of the many weird themes explored in the *Best of Ottawa 2008 International Animation Festival* being screened at Cinéma du Parc this week.

Ten short films featuring stick figures, hand-drawn art, 3D models and shapes are just a few types of animation shown throughout the 70-minute presentation.

The opening showcases cartoon characters from the different shorts floating and crashing together, giving the audience an idea of how chaotic the animation can be. This clash eventually causes their world to be turned upside down—literally.

The film *It's Always The Same Story* is a French narrative of a young boy, Jean-Luc, explaining his joy of going to the theatre to watch *Emmanuelle* with his best friend when he was 16. Jean-Luc looks happy—at least according to the new colour and shape of his 2D character—but when his dad wants to take him a second time it ends up changing his outlook on the film, and his dad, forever.

Simple drawings, but the theme



Run Wrake's *The Control Master* lets the animation speak for itself.

is so bizarre it made the film worth watching.

I Slept With Cookie Monster is not the deviant *Sesame Street* short one would expect from the name. Instead it tells the hardships that a woman goes through with a baker who makes cookies and ends up being an abusive jerk. While pregnancy doesn't solve her relationship problems, it gives her the strength to realize she has to make a change.

The blend of styles between flash animations to painted tissue paper makes it feel like the film

changes as the serious themes start to pick up. Not the best animation, but you'll want to see how it ends.

The Mixy Tapes starts off with messages of how difficult it can be to make animation and then features a mix-mash of animation styles as the creators try to tell their story in the short. Unfortunately, the mess of styles is so distracting that the story is easily lost.

Run Wrake's *The Control Master* is a 2D superhero adventure flick that doesn't have any

voice acting, relying strictly on newspapers and the facial expressions of characters to guide the story.

The near-destruction of an entire city by an evil, giant scientist forces two heroes to save the day. Wrake did an excellent job of action, drama and variety of music, especially considering he only had seven minutes to work with.

Most of the films stick close to the five- to eight-minute mark, except for the 25-minute Australian film *Chainsaw* that goes

from a romantic story, to a bull named Chainsaw, tied together by how the world evolves over the time and the use of the word chainsaw.

Short and sweet films were worth watching in this dozen. Anything that went over the 10-minute mark dragged on and isn't worth your time.

The Best of Ottawa 2008 International Animation Festival will be screening at Cinéma du Parc starting Feb. 6. For a list of showings check out cinemaduparc.ca.

Life outside of the womb

Teenbeat brings home power pop

• CODY HICKS

At the age of 14, in Saskatoon, I caught the record-collecting bug. Any money I didn't blow on pizza or pharmaceuticals went to local record shop Vinyl Diner where I would buy anything that looked cool or had a name I recognized.

During my embarrassing (but short) ska phase I stumbled across the self-titled record by The Beat for four dollars. I was jazzed to get my hands on what I thought was the U.K.-group responsible for *Mirror in the Bathroom* but, to my surprise, this was The Beat, led by Paul Collins.

It was a beautiful mistake. To this day, I consider that 1979 debut to be in the same class as *The Ramones* or *Singles Going Steady* for pure pop satisfaction, and I attribute it to my current obsession with no bullshit hard guitar-drum-bass music.

Collins is power-pop royalty. In 1974 he founded The Nerves, who are most famous for the best song on their EP "Hanging on the Telephone," which was stripped of it's nervous desperation and popularized by Blondie a few years after they broke up.

Since then, he's recorded albums with

his louder, faster power-pop group The Paul Collins' Beat, and solo country-influenced records with the Paul Collins Band.

But, for the past couple years, he and a new generation of The Beat have been getting fired up playing loud rock 'n' roll, culminating with 2008's *Ribbon of Gold*.

I caught up with Collins on the road from Tennessee to talk about his new shit-hot support group and their tour. Right away he sounds charged up as he informs me that young Atlanta power-poppers Gentleman Jesse & His Men are not only opening for The Beat each night, but they will also be backing Paul as his new Beat, effectively doing two sets a night.

"When you hear these guys play my shit you'll be blown away," he says confidently. "They're taking all kinds of antibiotics and vitamins and shit and mixing it with beer so they're doing well and keeping the energy high."

Gentleman Jesse is an Atlanta, GA pop whiz-kid whose 2008 self-titled LP sounds like it came out a few weeks after The Beat. Although his album cover apes Elvis Costello's *This Year's Model*, he out-hooks Costello with gusto, ditching the glossy synths and witty lyrical couplets for clean,

chiming guitars and songs about girls.

Jesse and Collins met at a power pop festival in Austin, Texas and have kept tight ever since. Seeing as Gentleman Jesse is the spiritual successor to the power pop throne it was only natural for them to join forces.

"When you hear these guys play my shit you'll be blown away."

—Paul Collins, lead of The Beat

This is a legendary show you won't want to miss. I was ready to skip school and take a burger-fuelled road trip to Toronto when I saw that it was The Beat's only Canadian date. But, being a grubby student with no cash, I was glad to find out that brand new promoters Teenbeat Takeover managed to lure them to Montreal for a last minute show.

Oliver Besner and Matthew Fiorentino are the Montreal locals behind Teenbeat Takeover, a product of their obsession with "the era before teenagers started wasting their time on video games and picked up guitars and started primitive

and raw groups in their parents' garages," according to Besner.

The duo wants to bring music back to the kids and wrestle it out of the hands of rock stars and pretentious experimentalists.

Keep an eye on the Teenbeat Takeover boys, who made their unofficial debut weeks ago with the blazing Magic Christian show. Although they will concentrate on shows, they ideally want to hold what Besner calls "happenings," complete with screenings of obscure '60s midnight movies and obsessive DJs ready to unleash their rarest 45s.

This won't be an Animal Collective show, so don't come expecting anything too wanky. This is unpretentious, beer-drinking rock music played by dudes who are concerned with getting drunk, getting chicks and teenage kicks.

The show is this Wednesday at Il Motore, 179 Jean-Talon O. and tickets are 12 dollars. Make sure to come early because Ottawa's premiere hairy-rock group Mother's Children are opening and I'm told they're wild enough to hold their own against power pop veterans Collins and Gentleman Jesse.

The DOWN-LOW

Events listing
Feb. 3-Feb. 9

ART

Kevin McDermott Vernissage
With special guests including Toronto Slam Poet Spencer Butt and art by Kevin McDermott.
Tuesday, 6-10 p.m.
Casa Del Popolo
4873 Saint-Laurent
Donation.

Passages

An exhibition of works by members of the Association Indépendante de l'Art.
Until March 7
Tuesday through Saturday, 12 - 5 p.m.
Galerie l'Envol
372 Ste-Catherine W, #522
For info (514) 489-0356

Nothing and Everything

Two multi-part video installations realized over the last 10 years: an adequate history of conceptual art (1998-1999) and after Hiroshima Mon Amour (2008).
Until March 7
Leonard and Bina Ellen Art Gallery,
1400 de Maisonneuve O.
Free admission

MUSIC

Grilled Cheese Thursdays
With DJ New Money, guests and sandwiches.
Thursday, 8 p.m.
Blue Dog
3985 Saint-Laurent
Tickets \$5

First You Get the Sugar
With Revised Edition and Amos Joannides.
Thursday, 8:30 p.m.
Jupiter Room
3874 St-Laurent
Tickets \$7

Inside the Frozen Mammoth
Blog launch featuring Tune Yards, Shapes and Sizes, and Nut B.
Friday, 9 p.m.
Il motore
179 Jean-Talon O.
Tickets \$6

Peter Kutin
With Black Hargreaves, Andre Goncalves and The Human Athlete.
Friday, 9 p.m.
Lab Synthese
435 Beaubien O. #200
Tickets \$5, BYOB

That'll Be the Day
Buddy Holly and friends remembered, featuring Craig Morrison & the Momentz, Vintage Wine, The Never-Be Brothers + guests.
Friday, 8 p.m.
Oscar Peterson Concert Hall, 7141 Sherbrooke O.
Tickets \$15, \$8 for students

—compiled by Joelle Lemieux

From south central to the red carpet

Academy Award-nominated filmmaker Scott Hamilton Kennedy discusses the pitfalls and perils of community planning

• CHRISTOPHER OLSON

"It's been a very good year for docs [at the Oscars this year]," says Scott Hamilton Kennedy, director of *The Garden*, "and maybe that sounds vain because I'm in it."

The film, which screens at the D.B. Clarke Theatre next Monday as part of Cinema Politica, and which will feature a video introduction by the film's director, is the second film by Kennedy to be shortlisted for the Oscars, but the first to actually be nominated.

The Garden documents the four-year struggle of an L.A. neighbourhood to save the largest community garden in the country—spanning a total of 13 acres of farmland in the middle of the urban jungle—from demolition.

"It's really about how complicated it is to get things done in any political situation from the grassroots level all the way up to the mayor," says Kennedy, who cited *The Wire* as one of his sources of inspiration for its top-down depiction of society and its even-handed depiction of good and evil.

"[It's also about] how hard it is to maintain your integrity and your honour in the things you set out to do," continues Kennedy.

The film's antagonist, in the traditional sense, is Ralph Horowitz, a landowner who makes a back room deal with potentially corrupt city councillors to sell the urban garden and convert it into a soccer field.

"I can't see inside his soul," Kennedy says of Horowitz.

"I'm not a religious person, but in a lot of ways, it's thereby the grace of God go I. I'm happy I haven't gone down the same road as Mr. Horowitz, and I don't know if he's struggling with himself. Does he get up everyday and think he's got to do the right thing and he just failed at this time?"

But "it's as much a failure of the system as it



Spanning a total of 13 acres of farmland, the urban garden is exactly that.

is a failure of the ego," says Kennedy. "The movie is really a portrait of how politics are done, and hopefully a few years from now we'll be looking back on it and saying, 'Oh, look. That's how it used to be done, and we've moved onto a little bit more of a transparent time and a fair time in terms of justice for all.'"

In a bit of unintentional foreshadowing, the urban farmers make use of the catch phrase "Yes we can"—a full four years before President Obama.

When word gets around that a candidate for President of the United States plans to stop by the garden, anticlimax inevitably hits the audience when it's revealed to be Dennis Kucinich.

"That is one of my favourite, favourite little scenes in the film," says Kennedy. "[It's] the excitement, the innocence, the hope, and then the sort of ironic kind of let down, that it's Dennis Kucinich. But then Dennis Kucinich gets it absolutely right when he says this 'should be a place that should be in cities all over the country.'"

spins

Franz Ferdinand *Tonight: Franz Ferdinand*

Sony



With their third album Franz Ferdinand take a step in a new, electronic direction. *Tonight: Franz Ferdinand* has been three years in the making, mixing electronica and '80s synth-pop to their upbeat indie sound.

While lead singer Alex Kapranos' lyrical choices are sometimes questionable, his voice still sways you in all directions. The opening track, "Ulysses," is a perfect example of their cool, new sound merging with classic Franz tempo. The next two songs play it safe, sticking to their previous beats, although "No You Girls" has an awesome chorus and guitarist Nick McCarthy really lets it wail.

The rest of the album serves as introduction to their addition of the electronic keyboard. Kapranos, before releasing *Tonight*, let his fans know that the new album would be "quite new [...] quite different sounding from everything we've ever done before." And they delivered; "Lucid Dreams" made no secret of their new sound, as I questioned

whether I was dreaming or still listening to Franz Ferdinand.

On the whole, *Tonight: Franz Ferdinand* is a step in the right direction for this Scottish quartet, but there's still some work to be done in weaving their new style with elements of their old, much loved, post-punk guitar tricks.

3.5/5

—Kevyn McGraw

Andrew Vincent *Rotten Pear*

Kelp Records



Dear Andrew Vincent,
Where have you been all my life? Your voice is so endearing, and your subject matter so sweet, I've immediately fallen in love with you. I can't help but wonder, are you as handsome as you sound? The opening track, "Hi Lo," was the perfect introduction to your sound. "Can I see you later tonight?" you plead (...gee, Andrew, you could see me any night!) And, the follow-up, "Nobody Else," comes on so strong—kind of the way I wish you would.

But, to be brutally honest (you can handle it, can't you?) the album loses it in the middle. I

mean, "Diane" is a pretty good song... you got my name wrong, but that's OK.
Is the next track, "Sleep to Dream," an homage to Fiona Apple? Because, that'd really seal the deal for me if it was. And, "Under Your Thumb" is such a rockin' track—I know you were channeling the Rolling Stones. When you sing, "Just wanna be under your thumb," I couldn't agree more. Although, "I wanna tie you up/ I wanna tie you down," crosses a line for me (I hope that's not a problem).
Oh, Andrew! You really hit it at the end! I was digging the accordion on "Rotten Pear," but "Hounds of Love" is beyond reproach.
So, whaddya say, Andrew? Write a song for me on the next one?
I know there will be a next one because, really, this one showed so much potential, how could there not be?

3/5

—Joelle Lemieux

P.O.S. *Never There*

Rhymesayers



Rhymesayers (and Doontree collective member) P.O.S. returns after a 3-year

absence with *Never There*, an album that's sure to delight fans of the rhyme dropper's previous efforts.

Over half of the beats on the album are made by P.O.S. himself, incorporating a lot of live instrumentation. The second single "Drumroll (We're All Thirsty)" is propelled by a simple drum roll and fuzzy bass guitar as P.O.S. drops rhymes, sounding as if every bar were his last breath, his last chance to drop science and then collapse.

The album's production is in stark contrast to his second album *Audition*, which had a more sombre approach to it. *Never There's* bombast production feels more like a mainstream release, which is actually an asset; a sheep in wolf's clothing when one considers P.O.S.'s lyrical content.

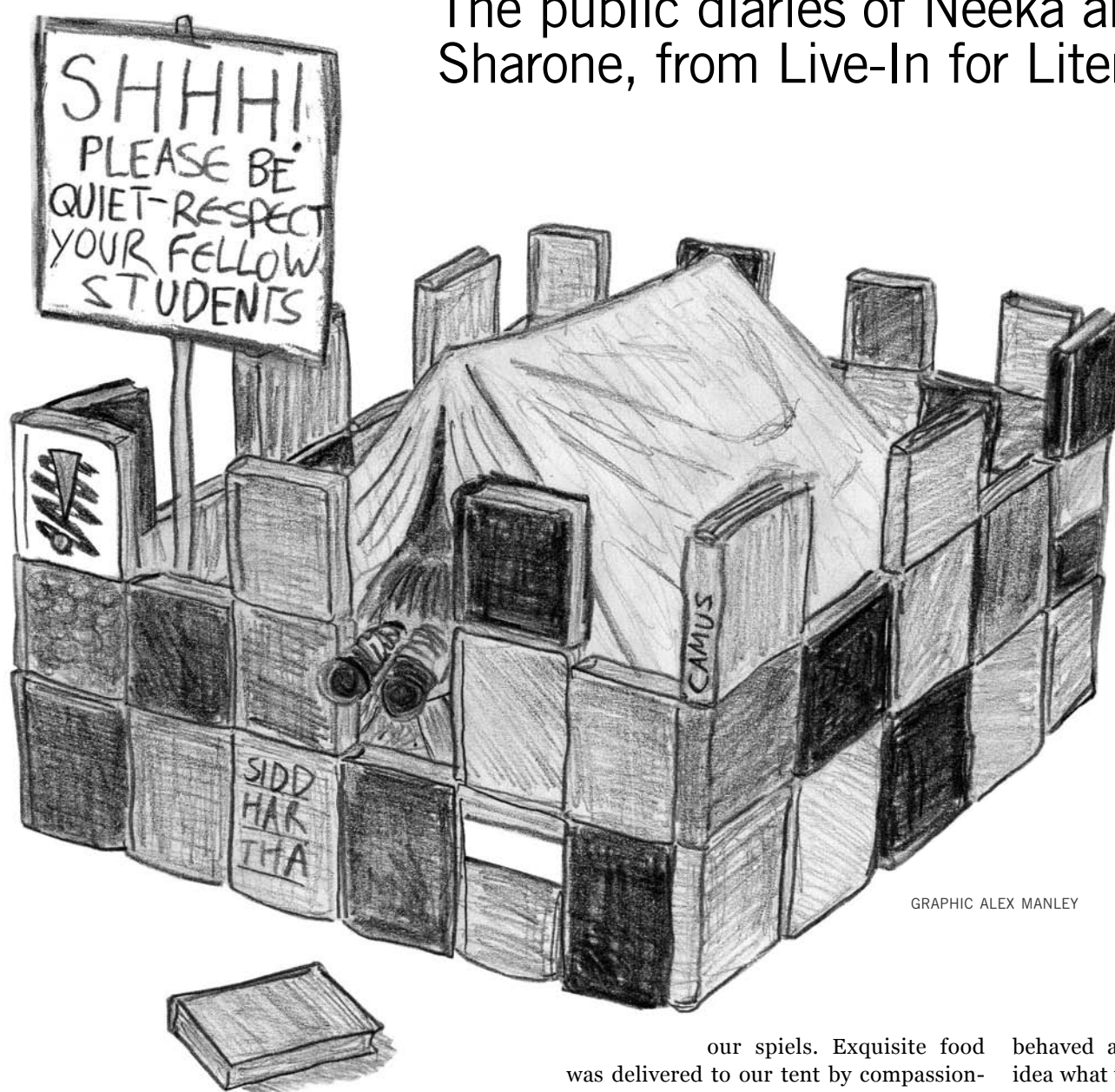
As for rhymes, well, he's managed to come up with more unconventional rhyme schemes and lyrically comes off as more venomous than ever. He's got a lot to get off of his chest and does so with real conviction, running through a list of state-of-affairs-style topics that aims to alarm and inform.

4.5/5

—R. Brian Hastie

Living it up for literacy

The public diaries of Neeka and Sharone, from Live-In for Literacy



• NEEKA FEDYSHYN
& SHARONE DANIEL

For ten days, from Jan. 16-25, Neeka Fedyshyn and Sharone Daniel took up residence in Concordia's Library Building to raise money to build a library in India for Live-in for Literacy. The following is their first hand account.

Day 1

Neeka: Setting up camp was funny. Sharone thought her locker was jammed, so we tried to find someone on campus with a lock cutter. Turns out, in her haste, she was trying to open the wrong locker, so whoever's locker it was, we're sorry!

We finally got the tent up when the funny looks began. Keeping in mind we had met only once before, Sharone and I were now completely immersed in new surroundings. We already had tent issues. Set up continued with more funny looks and a few queries. A retired teacher asked me questions for which I clearly didn't have the answers. What a great start.

If these were the kinds of questions I would be receiving, then we need to bone up. At first there were no major hiccups except that I was really wondering "how is this gonna work out?"

Night one was surprisingly quiet. Not as much traffic as expected, but then again I'm sure people like to go anywhere except the library on a Friday night in Montreal, the Canadian sin-city. We tried to sleep

around 1 a.m. and I was surprised how easily I fell asleep—so much excitement in the quietude really exhausted me. I began to miss my cat.

Day 2

Sharone: I have always had a tendency to think of myself as being tougher than I actually am (I balance it out with a lack of common sense). So I didn't bring a sleeping pad and my pillow was an afterthought. I did have enough clothes to sink a ship though, which I didn't need because we wore the same two t-shirts every day—see how it balances.

Needless to say, I discovered that the cold cement floor was not as comfortable as I had imagined it to be and spent much of the night trying to find a soft spot.

As morning broke I decided that the laws of physics were not going to change in my favour and made my way to the couch Neeka and I had commandeered the day before. It was perfect. Not too soft, not too hard, but just right.

I spent the remainder of my nights there, perhaps not quite in the spirit of "camping out" (though one never knows what one may find in a forest). Morning brought in a trickle of people with quizzical looks and some questions, but it was a pretty quiet day on the whole. We took the time to do some homework and practice

our spiels. Exquisite food was delivered to our tent by compassionate friends. The room service, combined with constant offers of help from library staff, made me feel I was in a hotel—thank you!

Day 3

Neeka: Brain freeze! Sunday, Sunday, Sunday, the day of rest, and yet Sharone was, as usual, awake hours before me. I woke up in a rage! Last night some person—this being that became the bane of my night—kept me awake til about 6 a.m. singing out-of-tune reggae at an operatic volume, making me contemplate how much trouble I'd have gotten into if I got up and screamed "shut the "\$@#%&*" up!"

Anyhow, since the interview Saturday we heard that we would be in the *Gazette*, and yet finding a copy was near impossible. My mom saw it but was not forthcoming with details, so I called the restaurant where I work to find out exactly how the article turned out.

"The picture's so cute" cooed my workmate gently into the phone. She was mid-shift and rather busy. I was still missing Sly, my cat. Good news about the picture, and it occurs to me I ought to check the paper.

Weird things keep happening and people keep showing up, including a CTV cameraman who showed up unannounced and then just started filming us while we

behaved awkwardly because we had no idea what was going on. I guess press isn't calling, but just showing up to get the authentic feel of camping in a library.

Day 4

Sharone: This whole live webcam thing is going to be the death of me. I'm sure I've picked my nose and danced jubilantly in front of it on more than one occasion. I tried to comfort myself with the thought that no one was likely to bother with it but gleeful phone calls and messages from friends and family have informed me otherwise.

I suppose life will go on.

On that note, did you know the library never sleeps? I woke up at 4:30 a.m. last night to find a dear-old Greek man mopping around my couch. It was a surreal experience. He whispered for me to go back to sleep as he would be done soon.

I awoke again to find that Monday was a much busier day than previous ones. Donations finally started to accumulate and people were so generous in bringing us food we actually had to start refusing it.

Neeka had said we would subsist on a diet of nuts and fruits and drop a few pounds during the 10 days. That doesn't seem likely, so feast we will. We are truly enjoying people's company and I've perfected my sound bite: "we're living in the library to raise money to build libraries."

continued on page 14



Neeka Fedyshyn and Sharone Daneil in their library enclave. Date unknown. PHOTO IAN LAWRENCE

continued from page 13

Day 5

Neeka: It's sad that the days seem to meld together: Tuesday was Day 5. It's the day of Obama's inauguration. The beautiful flat screen at the Library entrance was soundless, so we decided that streaming is what smart people do, also known as "smrt" people, according to Homer Simpson, since EVERYONE IN THE U.S. HAD THE SAME IDEA.

So let's skip on to more interesting things: Interviews, people, press, shock, it's really surreal to think that people want to talk to you and that what you're doing is so surprising to them. I had gotten so used to the idea I'd forgotten it was a novel one. It's amazing how well philanthropic deeds are received and reciprocated.

Day 6

Sharone: As I returned from a shower this morning I was informed that Radio-Canada International was here to interview us for a show that would be broadcast all over the world, including India. This was a big deal to me, not because we were going to be on international radio (what's a two minute segment, anyhow?). It was the idea that one person, even just one, in India would hear my voice and know that I love them fiercely.

You see, along with my lack of common

sense and such, I harbour an unbridled and unabashed—though I hope not blind passion for my country. The radio show allowed me to step back, momentarily, and to emotionally connect what we were doing here with what was going on there. I am so thankful to God for that undeserved moment.

Day 7

Neeka: Day 7, I think I've actually started to lose my mind.

As much as this has made me fall in love with the project over and over, I seem to be developing a bruise from the falls. Still doing interviews.

We've hit the week mark and at this point the tally of stolen items from our food is: bananas and a bag of apples.

Things we've commandeered from the library furniture supply: plant, couch, chair, wall, envelopes.

Seems like a fair trade, despite the oddity of imagining why our fruit has disappeared, or who had done it. Oh, and someone thought our food on top of the fridge was garbage and added their own. Who doesn't know about a bar fridge?

Day 8

Sharone: Today was absolutely splendid. We LOVE having people stop by to chat (and will never forget Alain and his

badly-cooked beans story) and will be quite sad to leave our little library community behind. We had a campfire tonight. Neeka went through a considerable amount of trouble to design a beautiful fire made of sticks and Bristol boards and a friend brought all the appropriate campfire treats, chocolate and marshmallows and so on. We are quite comfortable and happy in our little corner of the library, though the 16 hour days are starting to take their toll on me. It will be a bitter-sweet goodbye.

Day 9

Neeka: Saturday! OMG we have just a few more hours! Sharone, the sweetest roommate, went to McDonald's during her five minute break while I slept to get us some junkfood breakfast. Unfortunately, being as she left it unguarded for 5 minutes, some extremely inconsiderate person stole it. What is wrong with this?

This must be personal, whoever you are please reveal yourself! The vendetta against literacy advocates is driving me nuts. Oh, and I'm almost completely dead from exhaustion... I've eaten so much sushi, I wonder if the sushi shop would consider sponsoring, then I could eat sushi for every meal.

It's the last night and I think I'm actually going to miss this place. The interviews are fun too. So many smiling faces,

and the guy I chased, whose friends gave me money, probably just for the dedication. Time for packing and maybe some walking.

Day 10

Sharone: Alas, it is over. Day "End" as our poster says.

We had our most nerve-wracking interview this morning. A nine year old boy sat down in an armchair across from us, took out his recorder, informed us that the show would be broadcasted in his fourth grade classroom, and then proceeded to ask us the most difficult and thorough questions we had encountered all week.

I should have gotten his autograph.

After that we began to pack up, started to say our goodbyes, and had some 'final' conversations with the diligent students who practically live in the library themselves.

A hurried but audible countdown from 10 ensued and it was over, at least for this year.

Thank you so much to all the librarians who were so considerate to us, to all the students who took time out of their studies to keep us company, to the reporters and photographers who covered the story and were patient with us, to the cleaners who were so caring, and to all those who donated their time, money, smiles, food, and so much more. You're wonderful!

“Black Panther” hunted down

Link reporter watches as Juan Urango destroys hometown favourite

• MELISSA BULL

I’m such a wuss that I cried when I watched the Peter Jackson remake of *King Kong*. At the end, you know, when the ape is clinging to the Empire State Building and everyone’s trying to kill him, I cried big, embarrassing, gut-wrenching sobs.

I find myself at a boxing match at the Bell Centre. I’ve seen some sparring before; amateurs showing us how it’s done, all covered up in protective gear and hulking around, but I’ve never seen the real thing. I’m worried I’ll pass out when they start snapping back each other’s faces, because this is real.

Cameroon-born, locally-trained light welterweight Hermann Ngoudjo, aka ‘The Black Panther’, is fighting to hold onto his championship title against Colombian beefcake Juan Urango.

Urango is first to saunter past the gluttonous VIPs and into the ring at the centre of the halved-off stadium. A wave of boos and heckling resounds. Boom-boom music cues a dozen girls to start shaking on their jacked up, underlit pedestals, all wrapped in asymmetrical red foil, looking like buxom Hershey’s Kisses; the perfect eye candy for the 15-70 year-old crowd of mostly men.

You want to like Ngoudjo, and not just because he’s our hometown contender, or because he’s a winner already (if you’re one of those people who only hangs with champs), but because of his spirit.

The cameras pick up the smile in his eyes when he shows up between the go-go girls in a theatrical glory of lights and smoke. He jog-bounces his way to the ring. Cheers all around.

I’ve got my scorecard and I’m the only girl in a couple of rows at least surrounded by dudes who know their boxing. Their bellowing keeps me informed. I’m total-



GRAPHIC ALEX MANLEY

Later we find out that Ngoudjo fights the next nine rounds with a broken jaw.

ly at the mercy of their enthusiasm.

Here are the stats. Hermann Ngoudjo, 29, has won 17 fights, lost two, knocked nine out. Juan Urango, 28, has won 20 fights, lost one and he’s the king of knock-outs with a whopping 16 already under his belt. Ngoudjo’s at a disadvantage: his trainer’s been suspended for pushing a referee. For all intents and purposes, he’s out there alone.

The bell rings and Urango comes out swinging like a mechanical wind-up toy. They call him the Iron Twin, but his nickname should be Captain Hook because his hooks are his mainstay. Urango throws them out in an unwavering one-two, one-two rhythm. Right left, right left, right left. And his southpaw hammers pack punch.

Ngoudjo, to the dismay of the 5000-strong crowd, dances around his opponent, staying at arm’s length, throwing jabs, messing Urango’s face a bit but doing little damage. Worse, Ndoudjo keeps hugging the ropes. Éric Turcotte, the guy sitting next to me, shouts in French, “Enough with the jabs! Hook! Hook! Protect yourself, Hermann!”

There’s a foursome of old men behind me. One of them shouts, “C’est le champion du monde, calisse, l’autre il respecte pas!” Indeed, Urango’s driven and shows no respect for the world champion. It’s clear from the get-go he wants the championship title for himself.

By the third round things are bad for our Montreal boy. Urango knocks Ngoudjo down twice; once with a left uppercut and again

with a straight left to the jaw. The mic floating over the ring amplifies the crack in the air. “Oh, that’s bone on bone,” someone in front of me says. Ngoudjo picks himself up and gets through the bout. Later we find out that Ngoudjo fights the next nine rounds with a broken jaw.

Very little changes from the third round until the end. Everyone knows it’s a losing battle. It would take a knock-out for Ngoudjo to beat Urango at this point, but the volleying cry “NG- OUD-JO!” surfs around the horse-shoe stadium anyway.

Ngoudjo keeps out of the centre but manages to stay afoot. He takes a beating but gets in a bunch of quick combination punches that show off his mettle. Between rounds, the ladies dance, we “chin-chin” one another over

malty cups of beer and catch our breath.

There’s a gladiator thrill to watching people fight it out. It comes as much from witnessing the proficiency of the boxers’ skills as it does a kind of empathetic adrenaline rush. The intimacy of boxing is engaging. The fighters are close, they’re reading each other, intimidating one another and seeing what the other can dish out. It’s as much a match of wits as it is brawn.

It’s no surprise when the judges unanimously award Juan Urango the International Boxing Federation light welterweight boxing title. Ngoudjo smiles and congratulates his opponent.

Urango’s trainers pick him up and Iron Twin raises his fists into the air.

I’m hooked.

scoreboard

	Home		Away		Record
Men’s Hockey	Concordia 1	— vs —	McGill 8		13-11-0
	Concordia 5	— vs —	Ottawa 4		

schedule

	Who	When
Men’s hockey	vs. UQTR	Wednesday, 8 p.m.
	vs. Carleton	Friday, 7:30 p.m.
	vs. McGill	Sunday, 3 p.m.
Women’s Basketball	@ Laval	Friday, 6 p.m.
	vs. Laval	Saturday, 6 p.m.
Men’s Basketball	@ Laval	Friday, 8 p.m.
	vs. Laval	Saturday, 4 p.m.
Women’s Hockey	@ McGill	Sunday, 3 p.m.

thelinknewspaper.com/sports

Stingers feeling ill

Men's hockey squad gets stomped as several players struggle with flu

• SEBASTIEN CADIEUX

Concordia 1 McGill 8

"We played the way we felt, which was sick," said Stingers men's hockey Head Coach Kevin Figsby on his flu-ridden team. "I can't say enough about the character of our team, the way these kids battled just to dress on Wednesday night."

After a difficult 8-1 loss to the McGill Redmen last Wednesday night at Ed Meagher Arena, the coaching staff took some serious steps to disinfect the team's locker room and equipment.

"In between the first and second period [goaltender, Maxime Joyal] went into the bathroom to throw up, and I didn't know about it. I only found out at the end of the second period," said Figsby.

As if an ailing team wasn't enough, the game was plagued with penalties, with referees dealing out a total of 62 minutes of time in the box between the two teams. "It's not the way you want to play a game," commented Figsby on the physical match, which had its tone set not 10 minutes in.

When McGill's Yan Turcotte was ejected from the game for checking from behind, it was clear to both teams that this was going to be a physical game. "That's the second time we've played them, and that's the second time that [Turcotte]'s run someone from behind," said Figsby.

By the end of the first period,

McGill's Ben Gazdic and ConU's Marc-André Rizk had each put a point up on the board. "That's exactly what we wanted to do, have a 1-1 game after the first period," said Figsby. But with five unanswered goals on Concordia's Joyal, and some questionable officiating, the Stingers began to get a bit frustrated.

After McGill centre Sam Bloom scored the team's seventh goal at 12:38 into the third period, Concordia put in their back-up netminder, Sheldon Baerg. But with less than thirty seconds to warm up, #37 just wasn't ready when another one of Bloom's shots found its way into the net.

With the home crowd growing increasingly belligerent towards the referees, the coup-de-grace came when a clear high-sticking call against McGill was waived off. "[Alex Sciangula]'s got a pretty fat lip because of that," said Figsby. "He waved it off with both arms, emphatically denying that it was a penalty."

Concordia 5 (SO) Ottawa 4

"On Sunday's game the guys really rebounded to come back and win the game at home in the shootout. We're still down bodies, we're nowhere near healthy," said Figsby of Sunday's match up.

With the team having practiced their defensive systems and penalty killing since their last game things began to turn around for the Stingers.



Stingers forward Marc Andre Rizk advances puck. PHOTO CHRIS GATES

"From my perspective, [last Wednesday's game] is in our rear-view mirror right now," said Figsby. "We haven't lost two games in-a-row all season."

Baerg having won this one for the Stingers was a real confidence booster for the team, who

now have their sights set on Université de Quebec a Trois-Rivières who they'll be facing off against on Wednesday night at Loyola. "We're gonna have a couple more guys healthy, and that's going to be a benefit to us," said Figsby.

The Stingers play three home games this upcoming week. Wednesday they entertain the league-leading UQTR Patriotes before facing off against Carleton on Friday and have a rematch with McGill on Sunday at afternoon. All games are at the Ed Meagher Arena.

More than being stoked and stoned

Tips for the new snowboarder from a university student

• ALEXANDRA FOX,
THE CARILLON (UNIVERSITY OF REGINA)

REGINA (CUP) – The first Olympic snowboarding competition took place in 1998. Canadian Ross Rebagliati won the gold medal only to have a urine test reveal positive for marijuana use. This event changed the stereotype of snowboarders forever, but this sport requires some serious skills.

On slopes anywhere, snowboarders are viewed as the rebellious, freestylin' snow bunnies—the renegade ex-skiers turned boarders.

I have heard of people selling their boards and trading them in for skis. The reason is simply: "It's just too hard."

Snowboarding is not as easy as it looks. Many people get by with pure athleticism, but it can be a vulnerable and dangerous sport if you are not prepared for it.

Here is my advice for the newcomers to snowboarding:

Wear bright colours. Not only is this a freestyle point, but it also helps when you hit a ditch while night snowboarding.

You can always pinpoint a newbie because their arms flap out to the sides, similar to surfing. Drop your arms and learn to balance. Keep your knees bent and fake it until you make it.

There are two types of riding: Regular means your left foot is in front. Goofy means your right leads. Traditionally, people think it is best to put your strongest foot forward. Do not be fooled. Unlike wakeboarding, carving in snowboarding is done by shifting your back foot.

Plowing is not the same thing as carving. Plowing refers to only going down the hill on your heel-edge – which is for lazy people. Carving is the ability to switch from toe to

heel-edge at will. Only plow in panic situations.

Taking the chairlift is a bitch. If you are a newbie, sit on the side of the chair that you lead with. You can avoid a lot of awkward collisions by doing this. Also, do not stop right when you get off the chairlift because I, and most others, will not pause before running you over.

Screaming on the hill is not sexy. Don't do it.

If you get separated from your friends, do not waste time looking for them. Everyone is headed in the same direction anyways. Slide your ass down the hill while following the above advice.

Do not take off your snowboard on the hill. I cannot stress this enough.

Speaking from personal experience, there is nothing more horrific than watching your snowboard slip through your mitts and race

down the hill, pummeling all the helpless skiers.

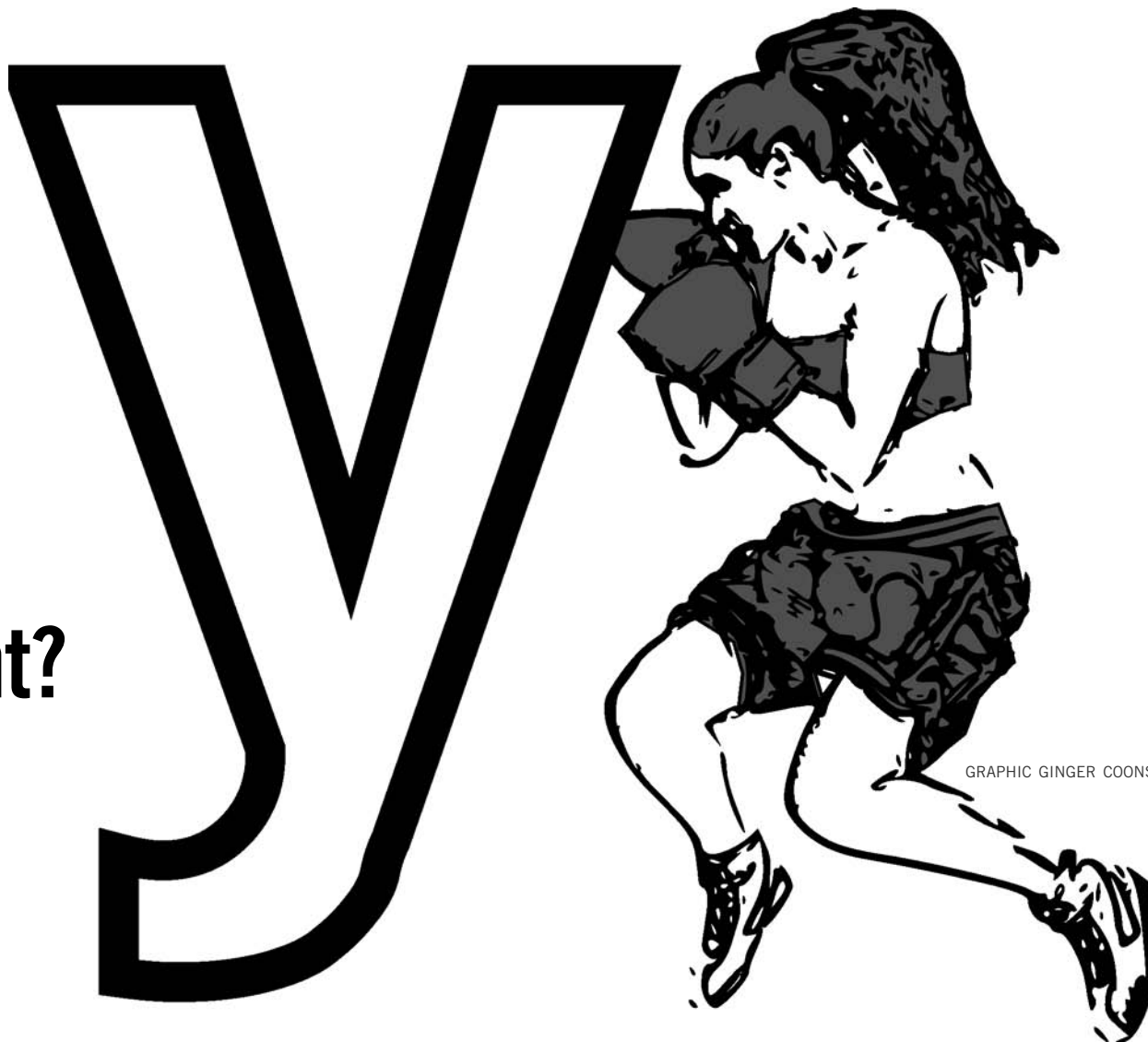
Don't bother wearing make up on the hill. Tear ducts tend to water when they are really cold, causing mascara, and your attractiveness, to smear everywhere. A little bit of cover-up and SPF 15 lip chap is all that is required.

I would not recommend attempting a jump until you can carve. Things get ugly when you are in mid-air and realize you can only steer in one direction.

There is absolutely nothing wrong with showboating on the hill. Assuming you do not screw up.

If you run into someone, acknowledge it. Do not awkwardly speed away without a word. Just apologize, crack a quick joke, and then speed away. If they are cute, act like you did it on purpose and offer to buy them a drink.

Will changing one letter help or hinder the women's—or womyn's—movement?



GRAPHIC GINGER COONS

The XX gender deserves a Y

• KAVEH NAMDARAN, *THE CAPILANO COURIER* (CAPILANO UNIVERSITY)

VANCOUVER (CUP)—Sexism still exists; there is no doubt about that.

As a male, I readily admit that prejudice against women is still rampant in society. We shouldn't completely dismiss the advances we have made in achieving equality between the sexes, but we also shouldn't ignore the battles we still need to wage in the future.

One of those battles is on the front lines of language. Language provided humans with an early survival mechanism: it enhanced social cohesion, which allowed humans to protect themselves and to hunt more effectively.

Language also allowed humans to develop a greater intellectual capacity—a capacity that many sociologists and biologists have described as an “intellectual niche.” Expressing concepts with more complex words and grammar led to a greater ability to reason. In essence, language is the way in which we interpret our lives and ourselves.

Therefore, “women” should be written “womyn.” That's right, a man is advocating that the opposite sex should be womyn with a Y.

The root of the word “woman” dates back to the proto-germanic word *mannaz* or *man* which means man or person. Several online resources say the origin of the word “man” was based on a gender-neutral and all-encompassing word for humans in general. I find it a little hard to believe that this term actually was gender-neutral, considering that past literary and political writings show the prevailing sexist ideologies that existed in those times.

“Man” probably referred only to men, because women were second-class citizens. Language ultimately represents the socio-political beliefs and ideas of the specific time and place in which it evolved.

Humans have the ability to alter language as necessary to reveal new beliefs and ideas. We no longer believe that womyn are second-class citizens. Womyn now have the right to vote. Womyn have the right to earn equal pay for equal work. Womyn have the full and inalienable right to make decisions related to their bodies and their individual wellbeing. Womyn are active members of political, business, and social life, and need not be reduced to the level of an appendage to the words “men” and “man.”

Language is the mechanism by which we define ourselves. For example, take Vancouver's Capilano University. For years, it was Capilano College. With the new name comes a new definition and a new mindset in the people who hear and use the term. You get degrees at a university. A university has a higher status and better name-recognition. A university also has a new governance structure. The new name represents a new idea and a new view of ourselves, in this case, as university students, not college students.

Spelling womyn with a Y doesn't hurt anyone. It takes time to adapt, but I believe it's worth the effort. It's not a matter of political correctness; it's a matter of respect. Spelling womyn with a Y redefines our society's view that a womyn is an equal and productive member of society.

Men should stay men, and women can become womyn. Humans have the unique ability to alter language, which also alters our understanding of the world.

Y take my right to be a woman away?

• CHRISTINE MCLAREN, *THE CAPILANO COURIER* (CAPILANO UNIVERSITY)

VANCOUVER (CUP)—For hundreds of years women have fought for the right to be recognized as equals in a society dominated predominantly by men.

In many ways, the battle is won. Women's suffrage is a far distant memory of great-grandmothers; universities house more female students than they do male ones; and it was a very accepted reality that Hillary Clinton was tearing her way through the preliminaries.

That is not to say that there are no laps to left to be run. Sexism still exists; there is no question about that. Despite our high numbers in universities, men still dominate the high-end positions in most companies, leaving women earning less on average, and on the continual receiving end of stereotyped roles.

Women's rights still need to be fought for. But, the particular battle for the spelling of “women” as “womyn” is not only wasted energy in fighting for women's rights, it goes against the very foundation of the concept of equality.

Removing the “man” from “woman” is counter-productive to the goal of creating a unity between the sexes. It only exemplifies the hostility and “man-hating” attitude that turns so many people away from the idea of feminism. People who might otherwise be open to hearing the ideas of the many other rational, intelligent women out there fighting for women's rights, will be turned from the cause.

If anything, the inclusion of a similarity between the words for the male and female gender is a stronger display of the equality between us than having two unrelated words.

It only emphasizes the fact that we are, in fact, of the same species; that we are less different than we often think.

Furthermore, think about what it would take to truly re-evaluate our language to make it entirely gender neutral. First the “he” should be taken out of “she,” then the “his” out of “history,” and the “man” out of “human.”

Let's take it one step further. How about the hymen? The reasoning behind changing “women” has no more etymological, or logical, basis than any of these examples. The idea of entirely revamping the English language to accommodate such absurdities is unthinkable. It is misspent energy when there are a thousand other women's rights cases to be fought for, all of which are far more pressing.

Equality between the sexes should not include special treatment; it should include equal treatment. Over-the-top statements like fighting to change the very basics of the English language to accommodate one sex or the other do not encourage equality—they only serve to draw more attention to the problem in the first place.

“Woman” has always referred to a woman, not as an extension of a man by means of prefix, but simply a person of the female gender.

It wasn't womyn who fought for their rights through the darkest times of female oppression—it was women. Women sacrificed themselves and fought for the right to be recognized and respected for what they already were, not a newly created idea of what they should be.

To be respected as a womyn is to gain respect for a self-created, exclusionary title of intolerance. To be respected as a woman is to gain respect for what you really are. That's empowerment.

Green space

Journey to the Tar Sands

• BETTINA GRASSMANN

In the summer of 2007, 19 environmentalists of the Sierra Youth Coalition went on a 1,300 kilometre bicycle tour of Alberta, all the while asking locals one question: how has the tar sands boom affected you?

The cyclists were already aware of the tar sand's effect on the environment. Thirsty oil plants in Fort McMurray are guzzling water from the Athabasca River at alarming rates, draining a rapidly diminishing glacial water source. The lives of hundreds of millions of birds are also currently in peril due to dangerous ponds of toxins and a loss of habitat.

By 2015, tar sands development will be responsible for at least 57 megatons of greenhouse gas, which alone will make the Kyoto reduction targets unreachable.

Despite these urgent problems, the cyclists didn't go to Alberta with a quasi-colonial attitude of "we're going to tell you Albertans what to do." Instead, they embarked on a fact-finding mission that resulted in a book and film entitled Journey to the Tar Sands, which recorded their inspiring experience.

Although not exceptionally well-written, the book is a lively, entertaining and informative read. It is arranged in scrap-book format, containing a miscellany of photos, journal entries and fact sheets. Edited by Montrealer Tim Murphy, one of the tour's participants, the book chronicles the SYC three-month journey.

The film was produced and directed by Jodie Martinson, who cycled with the group. One of the film's memorable moments is a plane ride over Syncrude and Suncor's tar sand operations where the true scale of the ecological damage is exposed.

The most distinguishing features of this bleak landscape are the tailings ponds. These ponds—more adequately described as lakes—contain the excrement of the tar sands plants, a toxic soup of mining by-products that have already claimed the lives of hundreds of birds. On average, there is at least one tailings pond leak per year, which probably accounts for the cancer epidemic downstream.

The film ends on a light note, with one of the cyclists being given a ticket for urinating outdoors.

With a budget of \$8,000, the cyclists relied on the hospitality of local Albertans and sometimes resorted to eating food out of dumpsters. Wherever they went, they contacted the local media, participated in local protests and interviewed anyone interested in talking: politicians, oil mine workers, activists and housewives.

The pace of oil mining is putting considerable strain on Alberta's land and the government is doing precious little to regulate the environmental impact.

Some of the most harrowing stories are those of the First Nations people in Fort McKay, a reserve downstream of the tar sands. In this small community of 1,200 several people have died and been diagnosed with rare forms of cancer, including bile duct cancer.

Although the SYC tried to gain a balanced perspective, one side of the story is conspicuously missing—that of the oil companies. This wasn't for lack of trying.

Despite numerous phone calls to representatives at Syncrude, Suncor and other companies, all the cyclists received were promotional videos. In Fort McMurray, an employee at one of the plants informed the SYC that his company circulated a memo warning the workers not to speak to the cyclists because they were "suspected terrorists."

There is some good news. Our "suspected terrorists" encountered several initiatives that shatter the stereotype of Alberta as ecologically backward. These include the municipality of Okotoks, which derives most of its electricity from renewables. Nearly every building has solar panels and the town capped its population at 30,000, the maximum capacity it could support within its boundaries.



Letters@thelink.concordia.ca

Gold gazes at Uranus

I was shocked and appalled that I was so harshly criticized in the most recent issue of *The Link*. This isn't because of the mean spirited comments made in my direction, but rather the planet to which I was assigned. Uranus.... Really?

I didn't quite know how to handle such an honour of being so close to the students, until I realized what planet I actually was. I have been associated to nothing more than a gassy, cue ball-like mass. I felt the need to research this planet in desperate hopes to find out that maybe it wasn't all it was cracked up to be.

Located behind Saturn, Uranus brings up the rear as the second least dense planet. I'm hoping that was done intentionally to praise my intelligence. Most importantly, we need to talk about the size of Uranus. It's important to note that the drawing by the amateur astronomer is in no way done to scale. C'mon, where are the rings around Uranus? Uranus makes Earth look small. It's roughly four times larger than its counterpart. Also unlike Earth, it is uninhabitable because of poisonous gases. Even though it is far away, it is still visible to the naked eye.

I hope that my fun facts have inspired you but I cannot take the credit for them. The recognition for discovery should be given to scientist Ben Dover, so that we may all look up at Uranus from now on.

—Adam Gold,
CASA President

An open letter to Beisan Zubi

Beisan,

Here is a point-by-point reply to your recent piece (Issue 20, vol. 29 of *The Link*, "The CSU: An insular system.")

Elections and petitions,

1. The Annual General Meeting is also where the CSU is supposed to present the auditor's report, as well as financial documents specified in the Companies Act. Now we know why they didn't want that financial information known.

2. CSU President Keyana Kashfi and VP Communications Elie Chivi are especially egregious in their lies, mainly because the lies are so transparent. But, apparently, egregious lies are permissible—it's "just politics."

What can and must change,

1. Hold the CSU accountable. Well, I tried that. I made several complaints about accountability last year to the Judicial Board that were dismissed ("Me & the JB", *The Link*, 31 March 2008). So we can see the kind of respect that this supreme court of the CSU has for your right to hold the CSU responsible for anything. No democracy? No annual meetings? No minutes? No financial records? No problem!

2. Run for office. Okay, I'll run for president—I hope you will too. But it will only be an exercise, because I doubt the election will be fair. The people who run the elections are sitting on a major scandal and have a very special interest in making sure that no honest person wins.

3. There should be a serious inquiry [...] we should consider dismantling the CSU. Start fresh. This is something we can do. I will be filing an informal complaint with the Dean of Students—we'll see what the Code of Ethics is worth.

I have some ideas about the CSU which amount to wiping the slate clean, and I'll throw those into the public square. But I question whether we really have a public square to put ideas into anymore. That has been the real cost of the "evolution" of the CSU.

—Robert Sonin,
Philosophy

ConU President is silent as the world burns

On January 7, 2009, I wrote an open letter to Dr. Judith Woodsworth, President of Concordia University.

Given the murderous rampage of the IDF in the Gaza Strip, I urged President Woodsworth to break with the Concordia administration's past tradition of supporting the Israeli government and I urged her, as the President of Montreal's own "Gaza U" to call upon the IDF to stop targeting Palestinian educational institutions.

I have not received any official response from President Woodsworth—not even an acknowledgement that she received my letter.

But, unfortunately, her actions speak louder than her words.

On January 21, 2009, Concordia security photographed SPHR members wearing paper signs and standing silently in the Hall Building lobby to raise awareness about the humanitarian crisis in the Gaza Strip. The photos are apparently to be used in an investigation.

Message received, President Woodsworth. You do not care about the hundreds of dead and thousands of injured civilians in the Gaza Strip.

You have opted to stand with the fourth largest military in the world, backed by the world's only military superpower. You have decided to help silence any voices of protest that call out to end the slaughter.

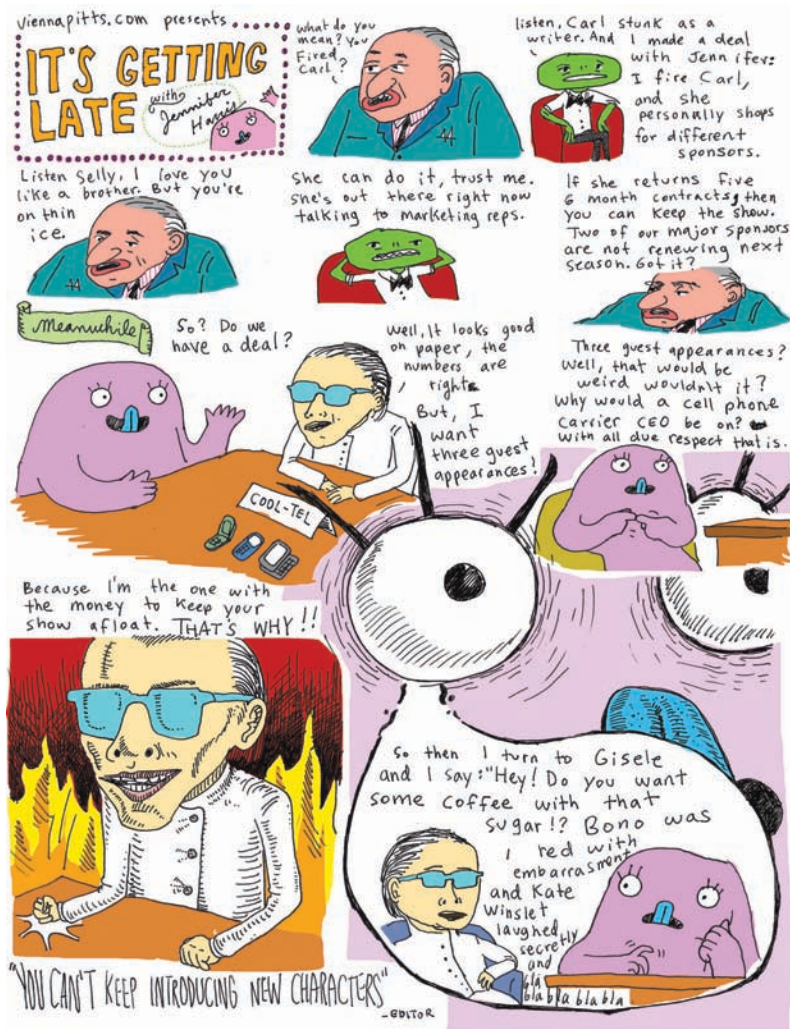
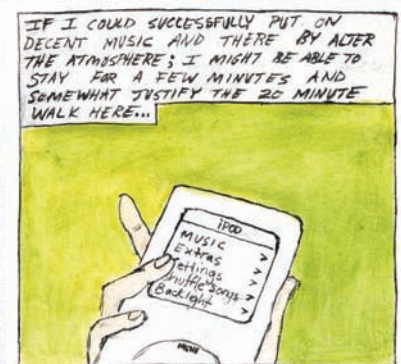
But it will not work, President Woodsworth. The world is watching. And Concordia is watching too.

—Dr. David Bernans, Ph.D.,
Concordia University Alumnus

The Link's letters and opinions policy: The deadline for letters is 4 p.m. on Friday before the issue prints. *The Link* reserves the right to verify your identity via telephone or email. We reserve the right to refuse letters that are libelous, sexist, homophobic, racist or xenophobic. The limit is 400 words. If your letter is longer, it won't appear in the paper. Please include your full name, weekend phone number, student ID number and program of study. The comments in the letters and opinions section do not necessarily reflect those of the editorial board.

Lame Party

...continued from last week



COMIC SINBAD RICHARDSON

Retraction

In vol. 29, issue 20 of *The Link*, Beisan Zubi reported ("The CSU's insular system") that university spokesperson Chris Mota had confirmed that CSU President Keyana Kashfi had contacted Institutional and Information Technology Services and told them that Nestor Sanajko was the new Chief Electoral Officer.

Mota never confirmed that Sanajko was the new CEO and a student list was never made available to Sanajko, who was a Deputy Electoral Officer. *The Link* apologizes for this error.

crswrdpzzlo

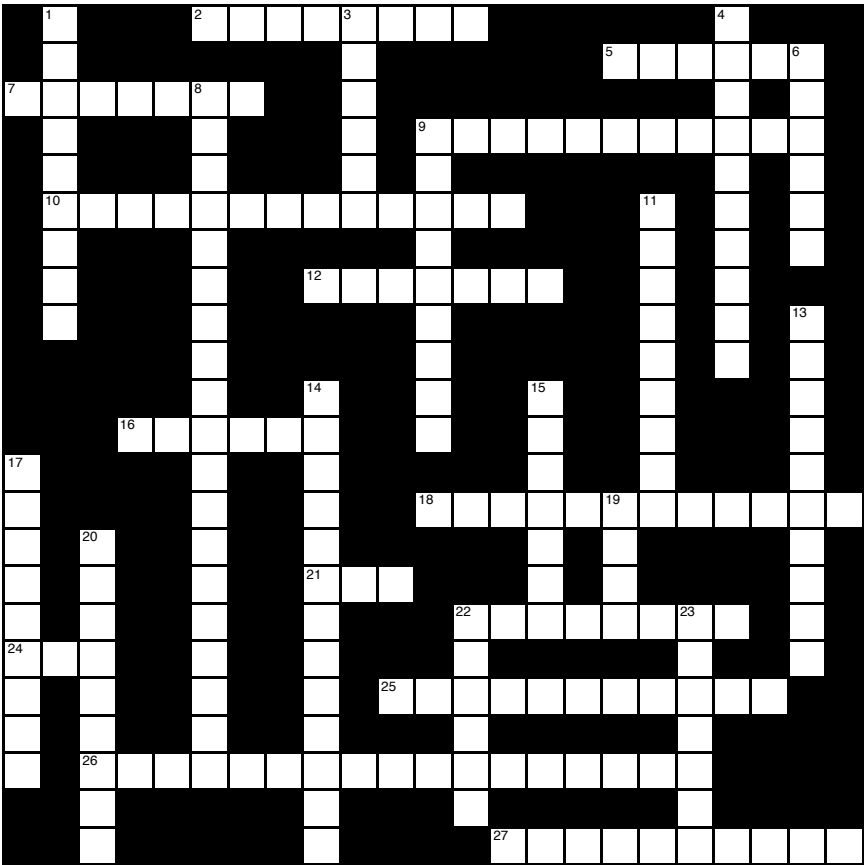
HI-TEK EDITION • R.BOT HASTIE & KRZR DE ROSA

ACROSS

- 2. Microscopic robots that may end up in your bloodstream. Be afraid. Be very afraid
- 5. Shot out of a space cannon, used to slice you wide open, otherwise also used to point things out in PowerPoint
- 7. Audio program plug-in meant to make you sound like Cher circa “Believe.” T-Pain thanks you, plug-in
- 9. The point at which computers become self-reliant and self-improving, leading to exponential growth in numbers. Bad robot, bad
- 10. Aural assault on a person, currently used by police and military. It’s 10,000 times worse than an air horn
- 12. Star Trek weaponry, can be set to stun
- 16. Amazon-created tablet book reader. We personally think it’s stupid. Yeah, that’s right. The tablet book reader sucks. Hardcover for life
- 18. Technology that permits someone to be in one place, and feel like they’re in another through a manipulation of the senses
- 21. Giant science experiment that may yet bring about the end of the world through its inadvertent creation of a black hole... if it ever works again (abbreviation)
- 22. Canada can now space high-five whoever the hell it wants
- 24. “I told you that there was no bridge, but you trusted this stupid contraption more than me and now our SUV is a fish hotel!”
- 25. Using light instead of electricity for connections, such as the Internet
- 26. Now you can moon your boss live without the physical ramifications. You can also hear your boss fire you
- 27. Adage that states, “As an Internet discussion grows longer, the probability of a comparison involving Nazis or Hitler approaches one”

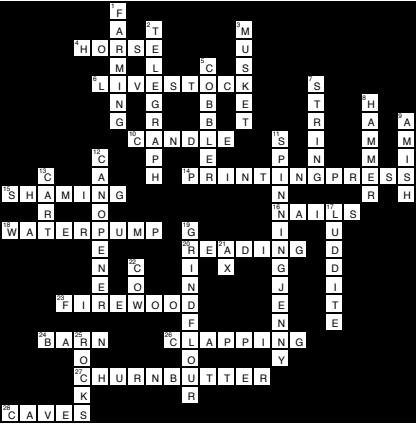
DOWN

- 1. Stipulation that the number of transistors on a CPU grows exponentially, doubling every two years
- 3. *Alien* franchise android. His face totally melts, and then he goes on to star in “Millennium”
- 4. They eyeball your eyeballs using a red light to make sure you’re legit
- 6. Fictional computer network that will one day own our souls, unless John Connor has a say
- 8. Pulse that causes an intensely fluctuating magnetic field caused by the photoelectrons in an explosive device. Really long-winded way of saying “kaboom and no more Internet”
- 9. New Microsoft program that’s being unofficially labelled “music apocalypse”
- 11. Dinosaur, or more appropriately, FBI program designed



- to watch what you say. Don't say terrorist. Just don't. Really, don't type terrorist. Or terror. You've been warned
- 13. *Blade Runner* robots that may or may not know they're robots. Is Decker one? Only speculation will tell
- 14. Biological neurons. Inappropriate for schoolwork
- 15. American Internet monitoring system whose towers are giant, white, bulbous and kinda menacing
- 17. Four wheels, two wings, one accident. Sorry, dad. Crashed it into a blimp again. I escaped, but the wreckage is now a hotel for birds
- 19. The mark of the beast... or a chip under your skin
- 20. Contrary to popular belief, this was not destroyed by Transformers on Mars. It did send pretty pictures that are probably used as desktop backgrounds
- 22. More machine, less man. All action. Or in certain cases, some action
- 23. Weapon with the ability to shoot bullets using high-powered magnets... not as good as the BFG, but we'll still take it

issue 20 solutionz



THIS WEEK IN HISTORY

“New library may mean Campus Centre for SGW”

• JUSTIN GIOVANNETTI

As the groundbreaking date for Concordia’s yet-to-be-named downtown library building approached, a race for space began in the Hall building.

The bookstore and art gallery were set to move across de Maisonneuve to the new building, opening additional student space in the Hall building. The Concordia University Students Association was more than eager for new room, having lost the Sir George Student Centre in 1976.

CUSA’s plan for the space was complicated, involving a transfer of \$400,000 to the university, and a set of new areas to make up a new student centre. The blueprint approved by CUSA called for a new Reggies, with its main door on the reno-

vated Hall building back terrace, as well as a café, a lounge and open space for students to gather.

Furthermore, CUSA was vacating its offices in the sixth floor of the Hall building and centralizing student government in the EN building on Mackay Street. CUSA was paying for the move and the renovation with money from its sale of the student centre, nearly \$750,000 in the bank at that time.

By the time the library was completed, early in the 1990s, the university’s plan for the building had changed substantially. The design put forward in 1985 for the Library building was nearly half of what was constructed, being only as wide as the still-existing Sir George Apartment façade for half the structure.

JANUARY 29, 1985

New library may mean Campus Centre for SGW

by Paul Gott

Plans for a new student centre on the mezzanine of the Hall Building are going back into gear now that Concordia's new library is on its way.

Government support for the downtown library, in the form of an \$8.7 million grant, was announced by Minister of Higher Education Yves Bérubé at a news conference last Thursday.

The new library, to be built across de Maisonneuve from the Hall Building, will include the downtown bookstore and art galleries currently housed at the back of the mezzanine, freeing the space for other non-academic uses.

A student association plan to move Reggie's Pub to the vacated area and to establish an adjacent lounge and cafe will most likely go into effect, though some differences between CUSA and the university remain on the project.

"The proposal is still subject to change," says Stephen Blanchard, CUSA's physical resources vice-president. "Everything that PRET (the university's Physical Resource Evaluation Team which studied the project) decided would have to be approved by CUSA's Board of Directors."

Renovations on a mezzanine could begin when the library is finished. The administration hopes library construction can begin by late this year, and projects three years of construction.

PRET took the CUSA proposal and changed the financing so that the students' association would pay a base price and a percentage of the costs of renovating the space, leaving no absolute limit to what CUSA

might end up paying. They also reduced the amount of space in the original proposal.

"We don't want to be left in anything open ended," says Blanchard, referring to the financing. "We also want the university to pay for all renovations that will have to be done."

However, the university might be open to changes in the PRET proposal since the students' association can afford to put more money into the project according to Blanchard.

Money for the centre has more than doubled since the sale of the \$210,000 centre a decade ago and it is still growing.

"Right now we have over \$500,000 in the fund," says Blanchard. "And by the time the money is turned over it should be close to \$750,000."

The new centre on the mezzanine would not only give students more lounge and study space, it would also avoid current security problems for Reggie's by giving the pub a street entrance by the back terrace of the Hall Building.

"We're optimistic about the deal," says Blanchard. "The mezzanine is a quality space and to have a real presence there will just be wonderful."

The mezzanine proposal may be linked to a CUSA plan to exchange their sixth-floor Hall Building offices for space in the Mackay street EN Annex, making the entire building student association space.

A student centre on the mezzanine is already part of the university's plans, according to the chairperson of PRET.

"As far as I know, the student centre is still a go," says J.P. Pétoullas, Concordia's assistant vice rector, physical resources. "CUSA still has to officially approve the project, which they haven't done yet. But as far as we're concerned, that's part of the library project."

A day earlier, coming out of a cabinet meeting, Quebec's acting premier Bernard Landry told reporters he hoped for the renaissance of groups promoting the French fact in Quebec, like the "McGill Français"

Is Quebec spoiling

by Peter Kuilenbrouwer

for Canadian University Press

Though Concordia has only just received government support for its much needed new library facilities, there has already been some backlash against more provincial government funding for an anglophone institution.

While Quebec's acting premier declared the Parti Québécois commitment to keep Montreal French last week, a report in *La Presse* last Friday noted that the new Concordia facilities would give the city's English universities more library space than French universities.

When the new downtown library opens in 1989, McGill and Concordia together will have 49,086 square metres of library space though only 18,000 of that total will be at Concordia. This compares to 43,603 square metres of combined total at Université de Montreal and Université du Québec à Montreal.

Concordia currently has only 8.1 square feet of library space for every full-time student, compared with a provincial average of 13.1. And one-third of the libraries' books are stored in a downtown warehouse because of a lack of space.

The Parti Québécois government will contribute \$18.7 million to the new Concordia library, Yves Bérubé, minister of science and technology and advanced education announced at Concordia on Thursday.

A day earlier, coming out of a cabinet meeting, Quebec's acting premier Bernard Landry told reporters he hoped for the renaissance of groups promoting the French fact in Quebec, like the "McGill Français"

editorial

Who you choose matters

The STM

Montreal’s city government wants a better public transit system. How can you tell? Two words, one name: Michel Labrecque.

Labrecque doesn’t have a driver’s license and rides the metro when it’s too cold to bike. On Jan. 30 he started his new job as the chairman of the board of directors of the Société de transport de Montréal.

Who better to revolutionize and re-popularize our crumbling STM than a man who relies on it himself to get around? Labrecque’s predecessors have done a good job of turning the struggling STM around—buying new train cars, reinvesting in infrastructure and solving labour troubles—but planning for the future requires a different touch.

Labrecque knows the sting of being shoved and squished in an over-packed metro and of standing on a platform as a metro goes by, too full. He can relate to the thousands of people who depend on public transit to get to work every day.

Labrecque’s resume merges perfectly with the direction in which the STM has professed to be going. As one of the founders of Vélo Québec, Labrecque is bound to have some very non-traditional views on urban planning. In 1997 he wrote an in-depth paper called *Cocktail Transport* that argued for a mixture of car sharing, public transportation and taxis to service urban travellers.

This man is so dedicated to properly serving his new constituents that he has already volunteered to take the bus out to the West Island to see exactly how well—or poorly—the system works.

In him, the politicians of Montreal have clearly and definitively chosen a man who is not only equipped to handle the management of our circulatory system, but to lead it into the future.

The CRTC

You would want your dentist to have a passion for teeth, you would want your electrician to be curious about wires, but Canadians have shown little concern that their national broadcast regulator seems to care little about either regulating or content.

Michel Arpin, the vice-chairman of the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission, told *Playback Magazine* on Dec. 15, 2008, “I’m not that interested in televised fiction or even feature films. I would prefer to read a novel.”

This revelation sent shockwaves through the Canadian artistic community.

The man responsible for choosing what can be shown on television and movie screens across Canada did not actually watch the stuff he was accepting or rejecting—and he couldn’t care less.

The CRTC was created to act as the guardian of Canada’s cultural identity by carefully balancing home-made content with that from around the world.

Arpin has abandoned the CRTC’s traditional mandate, surprising few due to his previous employment.

An important fixture in the Canadian broadcast and regulatory landscape since the ‘60s, Arpin served as a lobbyist for Astral Media—Canada’s largest radio broadcaster and specialty television provider—before he was appointed as the deputy head of the CRTC.

Arpin now chairs the CRTC meetings where groups and corporations ask the government regulator for a piece of Canada’s finite public broadcast spectrum—including requests from his old boss, Astral Media.

The strategy that informed the federal government’s decision to hire a lobbyist for a regulatory position is broken. The result has been a system built on deregulation. Although the free market is good for a lot of things, culture has never been one of those things.

The STM’s example should be followed. The CRTC, Canada’s main regulator and cultural defender, should be headed by someone with a personal interest in culture. How about looking at the National Film Board or the CBC for someone to regulate our airwaves, not a corporate privateer?

—Clare Raspopov and Justin Giovannetti, Features editor & Opinions editor