

Tragic irony

ANNUAL ANTI-POLICE BRUTALITY
DEMONSTRATION PROVOKES BRUTALITY
FROM BOTH SIDES • NEWS PAGES 4 & 5

Election candidates: Meet the slates • Features page 13

Cody Hicks closes Art Matters with the debut of Dirty Wedding • Fringe arts page 21

Men's basketball team falls short at nationals • Sports page 26

Where's the \$800,000?

Student money reserve, CSU deficit in question

• TERRINE FRIDAY

Lev Bukhman, former health-care administrator for the Quebec Student Health Alliance—or ASEQ—was officially fired from representing the Concordia Student Union last week.

Bukhman, who last month accused former CSU executive Steven Rosenshein of a \$25,000 extortion attempt, was decidedly relieved of his duties at the March 11 Council meeting.

The allegations against Rosenshein—an employee of the Canadian Federation of Students-Quebec—were never discussed at the meeting. Instead Joel Duff, an admitted salesman for the CFS and advisor to the CSU, made a closed presentation to Council.

“Steven Rosenshein doesn’t work for the CFS,” Duff later said. When told that Rosenshein works

for CFS-Quebec, an affiliate of the CFS, Duff answered it was “a different organization.”

Bukhman was never invited to Council to plead his case.

“Lev Bukhman was in breach of contract and there is a possible lawsuit on account of his actions,” said Elie Chivi, CSU VP communications. “So why would we invite someone who hurt our organization so much?”

Chivi said the current executive has always been open with the overspending that put them in a deficit, now nearing \$800,000.

It is now suspected that a number of CSU financial accounts were used to juggle funds during the period of financial mismanagement circa 2005-2007.

“One of the bank accounts was the health plan reserve and you

can thank [2005-06 CSU President] Mohamed Shuriye and [2006-07 CSU President] Khaleed Juma for that,” said Chivi.

The current \$800,000 reserve of the CSU’s health plan—which was supposed to be used in the 2009-10 academic year under a new retention accounting model—will now be put towards a future health plan with a new administrator.

Chivi said there’s no need for students to worry: “The CSU executives have regularly stated that at the end of our mandate the deficit, in its entirety, is going to be recuperated.”

On Dec. 11, 2008, CSU President Keyana Kashfi signed into an agreement with health care administrator Morneau Sobeco and the National Student Health Network—a working

group of the CFS.

The “Agent of Record” clause blocked other potential health care administrators from tendering to represent the CSU.

Although his ego is bruised, Bukhman says his biggest concern is the students.

“Keyana Kashfi has done everything in her power to keep me from telling the truth to CSU councillors. She has provided false information, she has withheld proper documents, and may have misrepresented the truth,” Bukhman said. “A central question is, ‘Is that money a tie to the recent large losses and misappropriation of funds of the CSU?’”

Bukhman said he has yet to receive any reply from Rosenshein and, if requested, would be willing to take a lie detector test to prove his allegations.



Concordia student Beisan Zubi refuses to leave the room for an in camera conversation regarding the CSU’s health plan. Zubi is currently filming a documentary about democracy in light of the upcoming CSU elections. PHOTO TERRINE FRIDAY

\$68.4 million student centre to come ‘soon’

CSU president says essential agreement will be signed by end of her term

• JUSTIN GIOVANNETTI

The six-year-old student centre project has emerged as an issue in the Concordia Student Union election, but despite promises of fast construction, no slate has actually contacted the CSU for information about the state of the project.

That is part of the problem, says CSU President Keyana Kashfi. “I have worked on this for many hours, nearly 20 hours a week, but from a certain point of view, it looks like no work was done. When we tell people that work has been done they shun us.”

The prospective student centre—which already collects a \$2 per credit student fee levy—is a much-needed project that goes beyond electoral politics for Kashfi.

“We are the only university of our size in Canada that doesn’t have a student centre building,” said Kashfi. “Concordia also has the least amount of space per student in any Canadian university.”

For nearly a year now, Kashfi has negotiated with Concordia’s administration over every line of a management agreement that will solve the problem. The final agreement will control the building’s projected \$68.4 million bill, construction, use of space and hundreds of other stipulations from food to security.

“Although things are still in the negotiation process, we are pretty close to getting a signed agreement,” Kashfi confirmed.

Sitting behind the president, the CSU’s VP Communications Elie Chivi

held his thumb and index finger in the air a centimetre apart, proof that Kashfi’s words were not simple hyperbole.

“The management agreement with the university will be done by the end of my mandate,” promised Kashfi. “We’ve made it clear: it needs to be agreement first, building second.”

“We are the only university of our size in Canada that doesn’t have a student centre building, [...] Concordia also has the least amount of space per student in any Canadian university.”

—Keyana Kashfi,
CSU President

Projected to have a floor area of 20,643 square metres, the student centre will be “a one-stop shop for students,” beamed Kashfi. “We will move all student services into the building. It will be shared space with the university; 62 per cent of the building will be CSU space and one-third will be for the university.”

The nine or 10-floor building will be a hub for student affairs on campus, centralizing the student union, student study space, an auditorium for presentations and university services like financial aid into a single structure.

Kashfi wants the building to be inviting for students, “a home away from home, where students can relax, study or drink coffee with friends.”

The final site of the building has not been released for fears that owners could

increase the lot prices. “Five prospective sites are in the core of downtown, around campus,” said Kashfi. “We want the building near the traffic of students—the Hall building is key, the Library building is key, and it needs to be accessible and visible to students.”

The timeline for the construction of the building will depend heavily on the CSU’s ability to secure financing. “The building and design process will take two or three years, but we can’t start on that until we have enough money to begin. We know we can’t get a loan until we have \$10 million in the bank and a more steady source of income,” said Kashfi. “We won’t have that much money at present rates for another two years.”

With only six million dollars currently in the student centre fund, the \$68.4 million building looks like a large investment for the CSU, especially considering that the student union’s yearly operating budget is only \$1.8 million.

“The university projects that it will cost \$5.40 per credit to sustain and begin work on the building. Personally, I think that is pretty high,” Kashfi said.

Despite a gloomy funding situation, Kashfi is set on sealing an agreement between the university and the CSU before her mandate ends in June. Kashfi is confident, especially due to a strong show of support from the current CSU Council.

“We briefed Council on the summary of the agreement [on March 11] and it passed unanimously. They passed a resolution saying ‘stay on this road and go and bring us back a final draft when it is completed.’”

\$68.4

the cost to build the proposed student centre in millions.

\$6

the amount of money currently in the student centre fund in millions.

\$2

the amount per-credit that the CSU already collects for the student centre.

\$5.40

the amount per-credit that the university believes will be required to sustain and begin work on the student centre.

\$1.8

the CSU’s current annual operating budget.

20,643

the projected amount of total floor space in square metres of the student centre.



Two girls run away from the police officer, who is wielding a baton. PHOTO ION ETXEBARRIA

The Link gets arrested

An account of events at the anti-Police Brutality demonstration



The riot squad was out in full force to halt protest. PHOTO ION ETXEBARRIA



Protesters vandalized the city, here with "Fuck the Police" scrawled across the bus. PHOTO ION ETXEBARRIA

• COMMENT BY R. BRIAN HASTIE

The 13th Annual International Day Against Police Brutality started off the way most people had anticipated: throngs of people from diverse backgrounds clad in black and red, holding signs, chanting slogans and standing off against the police, who had formed blockades around the Mont Royal metro. With guns in hand, they guarded the entrance ready to fire their rubber bullets.

An emergency brake had been pulled on a metro car on the orange line. I had the misfortune of riding in the metro at the time, so I made my way to the demo by bus.

The afternoon turned into a game of cat and mouse as the police kept racing to where they thought the protest procession was going to be. The demo started out at Mount Royal metro and then headed south, down St-Denis Street. When the police blocked off Sherbrooke, the proces-

sion managed to continue and ended up on Ste-Catherine Street in front of Place des Arts.

Trying to get the story

I spent most of the afternoon with Alex Manley, a co-worker from *The Link*. We followed the procession as it snaked along

As we waited, detained without being charged of any crimes, the policeman pointed his gun, loaded with rubber bullets, to the crowd at regular intervals.

the city, and split up at one point to catch up. We reconnected and headed east on Ste-Catherine street, towards Place Des Art. We didn't venture too far into the PDA complex, keeping our distance from the protest, remaining between Jeanne-Mance Street and de Bleury Street. A crowd of people stood on the steps and lookout, throwing rocks, fruits, vegetables, cans and bits of concrete at the police below.

As the police advanced from a block and a half away, we retreated back up Ste-Catherine Street to get to McGill metro.

We continued westward and that's when we realized our error in judgment: the riot police were both ahead of and behind us.

Manley and I simply had the misfortune of picking the wrong exit.

The police trapped approximately 150 of us on the corner of de Bleury and Ste-Catherine Street and held us there, sandwiched between two lines of riot police, for two hours. A municipal vehicle—soon to be replaced by a paddy wagon with an officer in full riot gear—blocked our path to the north and a construction site's fences blocked us to the south. As we waited, detained without being charged of any

crimes, the policeman pointed his gun, loaded with rubber bullets, to the crowd at regular intervals.

Freedom of the press denied

I identified myself as a member of the press to the media relations officer who was checking the masses to make sure no members of the press had been swept up. A team from *Radio Canada* had been allowed to go, but others, such as the reporters for *The Link* and a member of the Association des journalistes indépendants du Québec, were forced to stay back. The media relations officer checked our credentials out and laughed at us, saying "everyone wants to be a member of the press when they get caught." We were then sent back to the throng.

A photographer from the Canadian Press was allowed to leave once a crew from TVA managed to capture, on video, the detained journalist with press credentials hanging from their neck.

I met a man named Pedram, who had the



(Clockwise from top) Protesters throw fruit at police (ION ETXEBARRIA); a man is taken into custody (ION ETXEBARRIA); fire burns in front of Cheap Thrills (CAT TARRANTS); riot squad are ready to handle business (ION ETXEBARRIA)

misfortune of being in the wrong place at the wrong time. He was walking up de Bleury Street on his usual Sunday stroll, a copy of *The New York Times* tucked neatly under his arm, when the riot police swallowed him up and confined him with the rest of us.

Pedram wasn't the only one who was unrightfully caught up in the mess; an Algerian man who did not speak any French and almost no English had also been picked up. He claimed he had just been on Ste-Catherine Street and happened to notice a crowd of people. He let his curiosity get the best of him, walked towards the demonstration and eventually the riot police showed up behind him.

He was confused as to why he was under arrest. The police officers had a hard time speaking English and tried to explain to him why he was under arrest. He complained that the plastic zipcuffs restraining him were too tight, but the police did nothing for him.

Doing hard time

Manley and I both spent four and a half hours with our hands behind our backs, zipcuffs cutting off my circulation, which made my left wrist bleed. We had been separated and herded into police-commandeered city busses.

The scene inside the bus was tense, as the police showed no signs of having a clear strategy. I sat near the front to pick up bits of conversation. A lot of them were frustrated at their higher-ups, who made them work overtime. They spent the evening keeping the detained protesters in line and one officer even made idle small talk with us.

After hours of waiting aboard the idling bus outside of the Municipal Court, the public transit vehicles moved and we caught a glimpse of the other busses, whose captives' zipcuffs had been cut off.

I asked the officer closest to me why they were allowed such a luxury. "I don't trust any of you," he replied, turning his back to us.

After being processed by the police, who



took down names, birthdates and addresses, the busses were on the move again. The officers then started the long task of dropping off the detainees in random bunches of twos and threes. I was released near the Frontenac metro station.

They took mug shots of us outside of the busses with our identifying placards and handed us our \$144 tickets for participating in—or being at—an assembly, march or gathering that threatened the peace, security or order on public property.

The officer cut off my zipcuffs and handed me my placard to hold. My arms, with blood returning to them, couldn't hold the sign up so an officer had to hold it for me. I then dragged the plastic bag with my belongings down the street for a bit and into the metro, unable to open it. It took me another 10 minutes to regain enough feeling in my hands to rip the bag open, grab my coat and make phone calls to friends and family who had called to make sure I was OK.

—with files from Alex Manley

Worried mother denied right to see underaged son

• CLARE RASPOPOW

"I just want to know that my son is getting the medical attention he needs," said a worried Trudie Tulk as she paced outside the municipal court on Gosford Street, to which her son would soon be brought.

"Someone got [a] video tape of my son being beaten against a telephone at the [anti-police brutality] rally," she explained at the corner of Bonsecours Street and Champs-de-Mars Street.

Tulk's son had taken part in the 13th Annual International Day Against Police Brutality demonstration. During the rally her son's girlfriend called to say that the police were beating her son and to try to call an ambulance.

"She was telling me all this on her cell phone and then the police knocked her down," said Tulk just after 6:30 p.m. "And then when I tried to call for an ambulance, the operator told me not to worry and that the police were handling it. Who did they think had done that to him?"

By 8 p.m., pacing desperately outside of the police station, Tulk was bordering on frantic.

Tulk wouldn't receive word that her son was in the police station—though not receiving medical attention—until around 10:30 p.m.

Her son is only 16 years old, making Tulk his legal guardian. Despite that fact, she was not allowed in to see him.

"They called me to tell me that he's inside, but that I'm not allowed to see him," Tulk said. "I just want to make sure that he's okay. I'm his mother and he's only 16 years old. I should be able to see him. The only time they're allowed to take away your rights like this is when it's martial law. And this isn't martial law."

Tulk continued to wait outside the police station until past 11:30 p.m., determined to eventually take her son home.

5 days, 1 charity, 0 showers

Concordians forgo comfort to raise money for 5 Days for the Homeless campaign

• LES HONYWILL

Student life is usually one of living on the bare necessities, but this week eight Concordia University students and alumni will survive on far less than that.

As part of the 5 Days for the Homeless fundraising campaign, the Concordians are camping out on the streets from March 15 to 20 in a makeshift shelter and without food. The group plans on surviving on nothing more than handouts for nourishment to raise awareness for the nearly 30,000 homeless Montrealers and to raise funds for the charity organization Dans la rue.

Environment Canada has predicted four of the five nights of their campaign will dip below zero.

“Warmth is the biggest issue,” said Kristina Partsinevelos, a Concordia alumnus who is co-chair of the 5 Days campaign. “People can go for a couple days without a lot of food but staying warm will be the biggest issue, as will the construction.”

The group, camping out just a stone’s throw from de Maisonneuve and Guy, are literally on a construction site: the underground tunnel running from the Hall building to the Guy-Concordia metro, a \$5 million project to be completed in December 2009, is already under excavation.

Partsinevelos said the close proximity of the group to the early morning noises of bull-



These Concordians are determined to spend five nights in the cold to raise funds for the organization Dans la rue. PHOTO IAN LAWRENCE

dozers and jackhammers could wreak havoc on the sleeping patterns and patience of the volunteers. However, despite these miserable conditions, the group has already seen an increase in the number of volunteers from last year’s three.

“We expect an average of 12 people per night to help,” said Partsinevelos, who expects a good turnout of students ready to forgo their luxuries for a good cause. Concordia professors, like the JMSB’s Dr. Mahesh Sharma, are also slated to make appearances.

Josh Redler, a graduate of Concordia and one of the original three volunteers from last year, decided to come back. While he said his love of camping and the outdoors makes him better suited to spending five nights sleeping outdoors, he said the last day could be particularly tough.

“You have a high spirit at the beginning,” Redler said, “although at the end of it you’re just trying to save enough energy to get out there and shake that jug.”

The campaign raised over \$42,000 last year.

-4

temperature Monday night

5

forecasted temperature for Tuesday night

5

forecasted temperature for Wednesday night

-1

forecasted temperature for Thursday night

—forecasts according to Environment Canada

Enemy of capitalism

Urban guerrilla Anne Hansen to speak during QPIRG-Concordia’s Keeping it Reel film series

• CHRISTOPHER OLSON

Canadian anarchist Anne Hansen, one of the Squamish 5 that committed a series of targeted bombings in Vancouver in 1982, is set to speak in Concordia’s H-110 about the status of Canada’s prison system—a system she knows well, as she’s currently on parole for a life sentence.

“I’ll be on parole forever,” said Hansen in an interview with *The Link*. Hansen’s prison stint lasted seven years, or from 1983 to 1990.

“I still think there’s a role for militant action,” Hansen said. “But it’s sort of a tactical decision based on what’s happening at the time. It’s never been a question of whether there should be grassroots change or militant change, I think both are probably going to be necessary.”

Hansen’s autobiography, *Direct Action: Memoirs of an Urban Guerrilla*, explains why Hansen and four others took part in the bombings.

“We saw ourselves as trying to initiate a more militant practice into the left. We had an analysis of what the main strengths of capitalism were and we set out to attack those areas.”

The Squamish 5—also called the Vancouver 5—targeted an industrial plant, which constructed components of American cruise missiles, a British Columbia Hydro substation and a chain of Red Hot Video stores. The latter had drawn attention from feminist groups

for distributing videos purportedly exhibiting scenes of rape and the RCMP later shut them down.

“In our case, we only did bombings after the grassroots movement was no longer effective. And I’m not saying what we did was perfect,” said Hansen. “So people shouldn’t just go out and start orchestrating bombings, I don’t have that view. I won’t categorically say in all situations that I’m opposed to it either.”

A violation of Hansen’s parole—possession of marijuana—sent her back to prison for the entirety of the summer of 2006. The experience allowed her to reflect on the Canadian penal system since her earlier incarceration and critique its changes, as well as lack of change.

Prisons should serve a rehabilitative purpose, said Hansen, whether it is for problems with drugs or alcohol, or simply a lack of professional working experience.

“If you’re going to take people out of society, there should be a rehabilitative process to go through which isn’t totally hinged on psychological treatment. It’s pathologizing prisoners. That may be the case with some people, but certainly social conditions have a large role to play in why people end up in prisons.”

Anne Hansen will be at QPIRG-Concordia’s Keeping it Reel film series where they will be screening *P4W: Prison for Women* on March 18 at 7 p.m. in H-110.



Anarchist Anne Hansen spent some serious time behind bars. GRAPHIC ALEX MANLEY

Uninvited

Protesters crash Hillel dinner hosting Liberal leader



Young Jews for Social Justice tried to give Liberal leader a piece of their mind as he sat down with Hillel Montreal and Liberal Concordia. PHOTO TERRINE FRIDAY

• **TERRINE FRIDAY**

Federal Liberal party leader Michael Ignatieff has a double standard for human rights and wrongfully supported the Israeli bombing of Gaza in December, said David Lukacs, representative of Young Jews for Social Justice.

Ignatieff, who was invited to the Opus Hotel along with Liberal MPs Irwin Cotler, Marlene Jennings and Marc Garneau, took part in a special Shabbat dinner hosted by Hillel Montreal and Liberal Concordia on March 13.

"We're here as a Jewish group

to condemn his record on Palestinian human rights," Lukacs said. "Since he's eyed the position of prime minister a few years ago, he's gone out of his way to keep contempt on the basic human rights of Palestinians."

The Canadian Press reported in January that Ignatieff supported "the right of a democratic country to defend itself" against Hamas, a group Israel considers to be made up of Palestinian extremists. Ignatieff also said "Canada can't touch Hamas with a 10-foot pole."

"For someone who used to be a former director of a prestigious human rights centre, you think he would know that human rights apply to everyone and not just Israelis," Lukacs said.

Ignatieff was director of the Carr Center for Human Rights at Harvard University's Kennedy School of Government.

Mick Mendelson, a member of Hillel Montreal, was appalled by the demonstration.

"I would hope that most Israeli groups would have the good sense to not interrupt a Shabbat dinner," Mendelson said. "The

fact that they were protesting a Shabbat dinner on Shabbat makes me personally question their validity as a self-identifying student organization."

Mendelson said the dinner wasn't about attracting dissenters, but rather it "was an opportunity for students to have access to a very prominent Canadian politician."

Although a little peeved about the unwanted appearance, Mendelson is happy with the turnout.

"The dinner went fantastic. No one inside could see the protesters."

13 and counting

Campaign contestations flood election CEO

• **CLARE RASPOPOW**

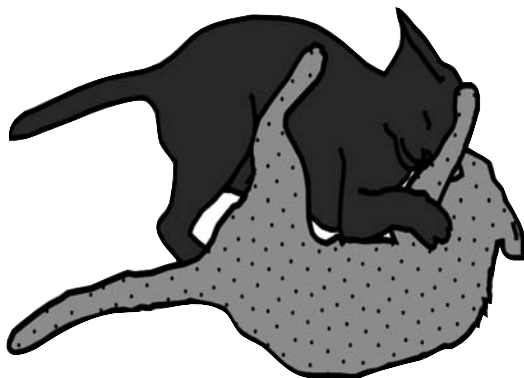
Concordia's chief electoral officer Oliver Cohen is a busy man these days. No fewer than 13 complaints surrounding election campaign practices have been filed with the CEO since last Friday—six of them coming from the current Concordia Student Union executive.

The charges range from the mundane and somewhat expected—postering over an opposing slate's posters, tearing down posters, trash-talking opponents in classroom speeches—to the more serious: using the CSU's offices to print posters, illegally using a student group's list serve to solicit votes, encouraging friends and supporters to become polling clerks, publishing fake endorsements on the slate's website and posting racist comments on a slate's Facebook profile.

"I don't really have time to talk about it," said Cohen, when asked to comment on the situation.

The CHANGE and Vision slates are at the heart of the controversy thus far. The two groups have already met together with Cohen in an effort to work their ever-escalating problems out.

"One of our contestations is actually about the meeting we had with Oliver," said Kurt



This cat-fight of a campaign doesn't show any signs of getting friendlier in the near future.

GRAPHIC GINGER COONS

Reckziegel, CHANGE's candidate for CSU president.

Each of the two slates who have been accused of misconduct during their campaigning are both adamant that the accusations leveled against them are false and are quick to point the finger at their competitors.

"We're very careful to never poster over an opposing slate's poster," assured CHANGE's candidate for VP University Affairs Audrey Peek in reference to Vision's charge. "Our posters are put

up with push pins. My suspicion is that our posters are being moved."

"Thus far there seems to have been a lot of tattle-tailing to the CEO," accused Reckziegel.

However, presidential candidate for Vision Amine Dabchy maintains, "every violation is supposed to be reported to the CEO," as per the CEO's instructions.

Though the other slates—New Union, Decentralization, ATTENTION and Fresh—have not yet filed contestations, CEO Cohen could soon find himself with even more work on his hands.

"We've noticed violations and bad conduct on the part of the other slates so far," said Mike Xenakis, VP External for Decentralize Concordia. "Right now we're considering whether or not we want to report them. We've been very careful to make sure that everything we're doing is legal."

"There might be something forthcoming. We don't know," said Spencer Bailey, a member of New Union who's campaigning for VP Internal. "We see our posters disappearing. I haven't seen anyone taking them down. We don't go around taking pictures like some people. I do notice that there's a lot of CHANGE and Vision posters where ours used to be."

Art symposium

• **BARBARA PAVONE**

The Concordia University Art History Graduate Students Association will be hosting a two-day symposium entitled "Writing between the Lines: Art and Its Historians," from March 27-28.

The symposium will feature several emerging scholars from both Canada and abroad, who will discuss the issue of authorship in art history and whether the political and cultural leanings of art historians have a profound effect on our understanding of the historical narrative of art.

For more info about the symposium and its schedule, visit art-history.concordia.ca.

More conversations with the president

• **LES HONYWILL**

Concordia students will get another chance to meet Concordia University President Judith Woodsworth.

Another round of "Conversations" will be held to provide faculty, staff and students an opportunity to speak with Woodsworth in an informal setting.

The "Conversations" will be held on March 17 and March 24 in GM 801-4. There will be a meeting at Loyola on March 18 in AD-224. The conferences will be limited to 25 participants each, on a first-come first-served basis.

Students wishing to attend can register by e-mailing conversations@concordia.ca.

For more information, visit president.concordia.ca.

Water and sanitation in Zambia

• **LAURA BEESTON**

The Concordia chapter of Engineers Without Borders will be hosting a talk with long-time EWB contributor Trevor Freeman. The talk will surround Freeman's work in rural Zambia, especially water and sanitation in those regions.

The discussion will then be followed by a short question-and-answer period for those interested in the Zambian state.

The talk will take place tonight at 6:30 p.m. at the B-Lounge, located at 2160 Bishop Street.

Online ballots hike turnout across the country

• JUSTIN BELL, *INTERCAMP*
(GRANT MACEWAN COLLEGE)

EDMONTON (CUP) — Students' unions across the country are moving to electronic balloting with various levels of improved voter turnout.

Both the University of Alberta and the University of Ottawa implemented e-voting for the first time this year with an increase in voter turnout at both institutions.

The U of O moved to electronic balloting for the first time this year, doubling their voter turnout to 27.2 per cent, more than the previous two elections combined.

"People underestimate the number of students who are part-time or doing co-op terms or who have disabilities and can't make it [to campus]," said Wassim Garzouzi, the chief information officer for the Student Federation of the University

of Ottawa election. "I think we definitely reached out to those students."

At the U of A, turnout increased by six per cent up to 20 per cent this year, due at least in part to the move to electronic balloting.

It's a marginal uptick, but Patrick Wisheu, the chief returning officer for the U of A Students' Union elections, says he hopes that it will increase more in the future.

"With the availability to send out campus-wide e-mail and getting people to vote works very well," said Wisheu. "It makes voting incredibly easy for people. They can just log on and vote."

System security was also a big factor in the election as there would be no paper backups. Students had to go through a double-verification process in order to validate their ballot, logging in using their student ID, but also providing more information

to ensure their identity. A number of graduate students attempted to vote in the undergraduate elections at the U of A, but were turned away by the increased security.

It was the first year at the U of A where all students could vote electronically, but smaller rollouts have been going on since 2002-03 when study abroad students were able to vote online. It was through gradual upgrades that the all-student upgrade went out this year.

Students at St-Francis Xavier University in Antigonish, N.S. broke records for student election turnout, pulling in just over 60 per cent of students in their executive election this year — higher than the last federal election.

St-FX Students' Union President Matt MacGillivray says turnout at the school has always been high — between 25 and 30 per cent — before electronic balloting. But, they've

been using e-voting for the last five years and have seen increased turnout, making the executives' job easier.

"We do care about having a higher voter turnout, but it's not just a show thing. It gives you a lot more swing with the university, a lot more swing with governments," said MacGillivray.

The Students' Association of MacEwan executive election this year will remain a paper ballot and, but SA President Maigan van der Giessen says she liked the idea of electronic balloting and it could be one way to increase the stagnating voter turnout at Edmonton's MacEwan College.

"I think it's great. We have a huge voter turnout deficit. I think it would be a great way to get those people out who aren't on campus or who don't get out to voting booths," said van der Giessen.

Voter turnout at institutions across Canada

60.4%

St. Francis Xavier University

27.2%

University of Ottawa

20.4%

University of Alberta

10%

MacEwan executive elections

6.4%

MacEwan council elections

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GRAPHIC MOLLY SOWIAK

THE LiNK

THE LiNK
CONCORDIA'S INDEPENDENT NEWSPAPER

Volume 29, Number 26
Tuesday, March 17, 2009

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The Link is published every Tuesday during the academic year by the Link Publication Society Inc. Content is independent of the University and student associations (ECA, CASA, ASFA, FASA, CSU). Editorial policy is set by an elected board as provided for in *The Link's* constitution. Any student is welcome to work on *The Link* and become a voting staff member. *The Link* is a member of Canadian University Press and Presse Universitaire Indépendante du Québec. Material appearing in *The Link* may not be reproduced without prior written permission from *The Link*.

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Board of Directors 2008-2009: Giuseppe Valiante, Ellis Steinberg, Matthew Gore, Jonathan Metcalfe; non-voting members: Rachel Boucher, Sebastien Cadieux. Typesetting by *The Link*. Printing by Transcontinental.

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cover photo by Ion Etxebarria

Media accountable for human rights

Student delegates discuss the role of democratic journalists

• CYNTHIA D'CRUZ

Students across Ontario and Quebec boarded planes to Sudbury, Ontario to discuss "The Rights and Responsibilities of Journalists on Conflict Situations in Developing Countries" on March 6.

The Rights and Democracy organization's Ontario Regional Event, a free two-day conference, was organized by Laurentian University students and brought together Rights and Democracy delegations from universities in Ontario and Quebec. Experts and chapter representatives spoke on geopolitical and ethical challenges facing journalists in conflict, gender equality and women's empowerment.

Jean-Sébastien Marier, a student delegate from York University, has been involved with other Rights and Democracy projects and says journalists are crucial to protecting civil liberties.

"The media has a strong impact on society and they play a major role in fostering the political agenda," Marier said. "So they have a responsibility to understand human rights and report on it when they aren't being respected."

Miriam Raymond-Jetté, a law student at the Université de Montréal, enjoyed the theme since it touched on her interests in equality rights.

"It really deepened my knowledge on the subject and made me more critical of the media," Raymond-Jetté said. "There was a lot of context provided on media during war and the propaganda that can occur."

Raymond-Jetté, who took part in the lecture on wartime reportage and propaganda, will be leaving on March 11 to observe the upcoming elections in El Salvador. The goal of Raymond-Jetté's project, which stemmed from the interest of the U de M delegation, is to observe the democratic process and ensure its transparency.

Rights and Democracy is a Montreal-based organization that seeks to "promote, advocate and defend the democratic and human rights set out in the International Bill of Human Rights." The student network is a small part of the organization, which is always looking for students who are interested in human rights and want to get involved.

For more information about Rights and Democracy, please visit ichrdd.ca



Jean-Sébastien Marier speaks to students about their own responsibilities. PHOTO CYNTHIA D'CRUZ

Benny Park destruction sparks protest from locals

Park set to make way for state-of-the-art sports complex

• JESSE SAMUELS

Notre-Dame-de-Grace residents say the controversy over rezoning Benny Park to build a new sports complex could have been avoided had the borough not shut down the Fraser Hickson Library.

The Benny Park Sports Complex, which will have a six-lane pool, basketball court, outdoor deck and a green roof, was originally to be built on the Benny Farm land across the street from the park. In September of 2007 the borough rezoned Benny Park and made the decision to build the new sports complex over the park's outdoor pool.

"There was never a sufficient explanation as to why they wanted to [rezone Benny Park]," said Cym Gomery, a member of the Save Benny Park petition. Gomery said the \$16 million Fraser Hickson Library project is the real reason the borough chose to rezone the park.

Former city councillor Jeremy Searle said those who campaigned against closing the Fraser Hickson Library just didn't get it: "The whole point was to get a new library for NDG," he said.

According to Searle the idea from the beginning was always to start on the Benny Farm land and then expand, with other projects.

"It's just that the people in office currently have got a bit mixed up," Searle said. "They've turned it around but it was always part of the plan to expand."

The sports complex, once built, will open up onto Monkland Avenue. As a result, the park will lose green space; the complex is 30 per cent larger than the pool grounds the borough intends to build over.



This property will house new recreational facilities. PHOTO ELSA JABRE

The Monitor:
loss of advertising
leads to online-
only publication

• JESSE SAMUELS

Notre-Dame-de-Grace residents are upset about the closure of local newspaper *The Monitor*.

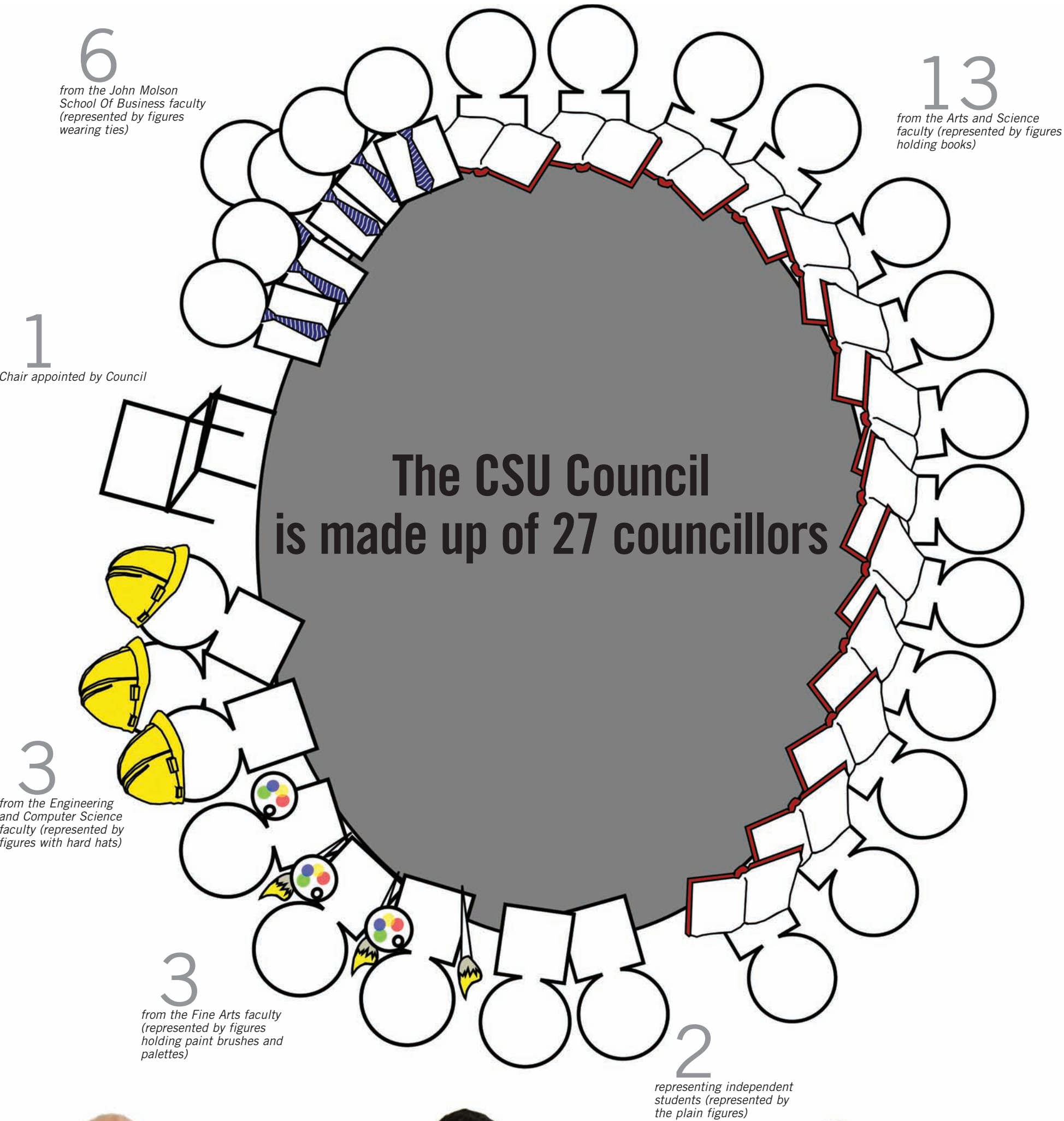
Transcontinental, the company that printed *The Monitor*, is now printing borough newsletter *Le Citoyen* instead.

"What is disturbing, however, about [*Le Citoyen*]'s publication is that it is paid for by the taxpayers while much of it is being used as a vehicle of propaganda," NDG resident Diane Chambers wrote in an email.

The Monitor was a newspaper that published many opinions pieces by NDG residents. It closed earlier this year due to a loss in advertising revenue.

The Monitor is now an online-only publication.

"It was a purely financial decision," said Toula Foscolos, editor of *The Monitor*. "As a journalist, I miss the print version."



Andre Leroy
VP Finance

Colin Goldfinch
VP External

Elie Chivi
VP Communications

Jose Garcia
VP Services

Keyana Kashfi
CSU President

Priscila Gomes
VP Clubs and Sustainability

The race to represent you

The Link asks the slates why they deserve your vote

ATTENTION

1) To get as many eyes as possible watching the CSU in order to prevent illegalities.

2) I, Tessa Star, have attended at least two council meetings. [Average meeting length] eight to nine hours.

3) There is every type of student at Concordia and I believe most have strong convictions when it comes to their personal beliefs. When it comes to student politics there are lots of apathetic students.

4) By telling the truth. I think it will be different enough to get their attention.

5) Concordia has a great image of being a diverse school filled with active students. What worries me is that it is on its way to becoming nothing but a money generating business that only supports ad campaigns and for-profit initiatives.

6) People go into debt all the time in this country. As long as actions are taken wisely and legally it will all eventually work itself out.

7) Trying to get rid of the Sustainable Action Fund was a mistake but they have apologized, and as a fellow human I can forgive them. But going around the rules to allow a non-student to chair the council meetings is simply illegal. Also, the fact that they attack Beisan Zubi in Council meetings for standing up for students and saying her opinion, but don't even blink when Colin Goldfinch yells,

swears and slanders is baffling.

8) They are extremely hard workers and seem to have gotten a lot done in their short time as execs. I also like what I have heard so far about the upcoming student centre.

9) Instead of promoting and helping the Co-op Bookstore and CUTV, the CSU and council did not allow the students to decide whether we wanted to help them with a fee-levy or not. These are amazing resources that Concordia students have worked incredibly hard to offer great advantages to students. They get no aid from the people who are supposed to be looking out for and helping the students. It seems as though clubs have disappeared this year. The only events I have heard of have been faculty associated. It's a sad day at Concordia when Queer Concordia only has two executives and the student union offers no help.

10) Students should not vote for me. They should read about what has happened and what is happening at our school. To do that, search back issues of both school newspapers and read critically. CHANGE is not change, they are in support of the same people who have delegated the CSU for the past six years. Vision is half 'left,' half 'right.' They have the best opportunity to win but you are depending on a minority of them to keep the majority in



Tessa Star, the one and only member of the ATTENTION slate, just wants you to get educated about the issues. PHOTO TERRINE FRIDAY

line. Fresh really are fresh. They are students for the students. New Union really do want to correct the wrongs. I met them in my advanced ethics class so I feel confident that I can trust them. Decentralization are also philosophers. Go Philosopher Kings! They have great points and seem to know what they are talking about. ATTENTION is only here to get your attention, give you information I personally know and ask you kindly to find the facts for yourself.

11) I would watch *The Wire*. That'll work.

We asked the candidates 11 questions so Concordians can get to know them better, and gave them as much room as they wanted to answer.

Questions:

1) In 15 words or less, what's your mission?

2) How many people on your team have attended at least two CSU Council meetings? How long has the average regular meeting been this year (excludes all special meetings)? (please state the names of each exec who has attended at least two CSU Council meeting from Sept. 2008 to March 2009)

3) Is there student apathy at Concordia?

4) How do you plan to engage Concordia students?

5) What do you think of Concordia's image?

6) How are you going to get the CSU membership out of a near \$500,000 deficit?

7) In what area(s) do you think the current CSU executive has failed?

8) In what area(s) do you think the current CSU executive has excelled?

9) How would you rate the services offered by the current executive?

10) Why should students vote for you?

11) If you had to watch repeats of either *The Office* or *30 Rock* for the rest of your life, which one would you pick?

FRESH

1) Increase participation and awareness. End infighting, wasteful financial management. Give the union a FRESH start.

2) Three of us have attended one regular CSU council meeting since Sept. 2008. Joel Suss, Jayme Leitner, and Allan Guindi. The average regular meeting has been 7.5 hours.

3) Sadly, yes. When only approximately 10 per cent of students eligible to vote for the CSU do so, something must be wrong. Our main goal is to reduce apathy and stimulate voter turnout, so that the CSU adequately reflects its members' wants and needs.

4) By showing them that we are students just like them and that we are focused towards improving their overall experience at Concordia. We are determined on getting more students involved and aware about the state and direction of their union.

We are not campaigning like the green or purple team, we are approaching people in order to get to know them and understand what they want out of the CSU. We don't believe that lollipops, Sudoku, or harassment at the escalators would get people to vote, but rather engaging students

on a personal level will have more of an impact.

5) We believe that Concordia's image has been hurt in the past few years because of the scandals surrounding the CSU. This has tarnished Concordia's reputation and taken focus away from all the positives about the university. We love Concordia—you just have to search "Fresh Concordia" on YouTube to see how much. And so we are running for the CSU, so that we can have a union that reflects the true image of Concordia.

6) We will seek alternative ways to raise money for the CSU without increasing student fees. For instance, we will offset the costs of prominent speakers and musicians by charging students \$2-5 each for these events, we will have fundraising events that would target the deficit, and we will work within the budget and cut any unnecessary spending.

7) The CSU has failed by losing trust with the student population. By being involved in inordinate amount of litigation, garnering negative publicity, and failing to connect with its paying members. It has also failed by not getting people more aware about their campaigns and services.



Made up of mostly JMSB students, Team Fresh promises to be different than the rest. PHOTO TERRINE FRIDAY

8) In organizing a trip to NYC at low cost, in bringing in interesting and stimulating speakers, and in providing valuable services like HOJO and advocacy for students. They have also excelled in getting negative publicity and tarnishing the image of the CSU.

9) The current executive has offered excellent services for the student body; however we don't believe they have done enough publicity for them. So while the services are very beneficial, not everyone is aware enough to ben-

efit from them.

10) Because we are the only team with creative and original ideas, the only team that is running with the interest of the students in mind, the only team not running on a platform of empty promises, the only team of students for students.

11) We choose not to answer this question, as it has no import on the campaign or the CSU. Also, we can't answer it because we have been unable to come to a consensus on which show we like more.

Students should not vote for me. They should read about what has happened and what is happening at our school.

—ATTENTION

We don't believe that lollipops, Sudoku, or harassment at the escalators would get people to vote, but rather engaging students on a personal level will have more of an impact.

—Fresh

Questions:

1) In 15 words or less, what's your mission?

2) How many people on your team have attended at least two CSU Council meetings? How long has the average regular meeting been this year (excludes all special meetings)? (please state the names of each exec who has attended at least two CSU Council meeting from Sept. 2008 to March 2009)

3) Is there student apathy at Concordia?

4) How do you plan to engage Concordia students?

5) What do you think of Concordia's image?

6) How are you going to get the CSU membership out of a near \$500,000 deficit?

7) In what area(s) do you think the current CSU executive has failed?

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9) How would you rate the services offered by the current executive?

10) Why should students vote for you?

11) If you had to watch repeats of either *The Office* or *30 Rock* for the rest of your life, which one would you pick?

We have to forego facile cynicism and afford students in each department actual, reasonable, practical accessibility to the decision making structure and to the affairs of the department.

—Decentralization Concordia

There are too many good people doing too much good work at Concordia to have it dumped on by self-serving mini-fascists.

—New Union

CHANGE is the best choice for Concordia students because we have great ideas [...] and we have the experience to see them through.

—CHANGE

DECENTRALIZATION CONCORDIA

1) Mission: To give decision-making power back to the students.

2) None of us have been to CSU Council meetings. Your question assumes that Council has either the political efficacy or political will to ensure proper governance. Council has neither. We do not believe that a small handful of individuals have the authority to represent over 32,000 students. Student council is not students' council, but the council of a few. Furthermore, the executive is known not to seek Council's approval, and the Council has not been meeting regularly. If a petition signed by 3,600 students could not get the executive to re-evaluate their decisions, then what good is a council anyways?

3) For sure, and I too have been very indifferent about the CSU. What can we expect when there is such a great distance between the team of seven execs and the student body of 30,000? Why should students care about the CSU? They can't get involved, their voices are not heard, and the likelihood of having more than 10 per cent of students know CSU representatives is very low.

Although students should care, since the decisions the CSU makes affects them, and since they pay for the CSU's dealings, they simply cannot given the structure in place. Why should anyone be happy or content with an executive they do not know, that is hard to get in touch with, that doesn't listen to complaints or demands, and that is also getting paid a salary for it?

4) I think that Decentralization is the only platform where students will naturally get involved in communal affairs. We have to forego facile cynicism and afford students in each department actual, reasonable, practical accessibility to the decision making structure and to the affairs of the department.

Our system is a participatory one, and studies have shown that these systems promote the flourishing of communities. Students will get involved because it will be much easier for them to do so, and because the environment will promote political understanding. Right now, it's hard to keep track of what's going on in school, you'd have to hang out with people who are involved or do your own research. Under our model, these will be stories of the past.

5) Honestly, my opinion varies quite a bit. I studied at the American University of Beirut before coming here, and that is one the top universities in the Middle East—so whatever comparisons I make, they are with regards to A.U.B.

I find academic standards to be somewhat relaxed and not super challenging (come exam time my attitude will change!), but the programs seem to be quite strong. Take philosophy for example. The Philosophy department is quite small and does not employ as much faculty as other departments do, but it is a surprisingly good program considering the funding it receives.

I've taken classes with professors like Smith, Rozahegy, and Morris who totally blew my mind away with the extent of their knowledge and their eloquent lecturing styles. Then again, I've taken marketing classes that left me utterly unimpressed with the teaching quality (this might boil down to preference).

If you want to consider Concordia's image abroad, I think we have a good reputation—although the name McGill somewhat intrudes.



Mike Xenakis, Marouf T. Mahmoud, Humza Ali Makhdoom, Clay Hemmerich make up Decentralize Concordia. They aim to redistribute decision making power throughout the school. PHOTO CLARE RASPOPOV

On the international level, we are mostly known for the business school, but many recognize the school's strengths in engineering and political science. Locally, we also attract lots of art students, and this gives the university a very nice touch. I cannot list all the departments I believe to be strong ones, but this is what I know with regards to our local and international reputation.

The real question is why does the CSU have the image it has? This isn't about who cheers the loudest, who wears more burgundy than anyone else, or who loves the trees on campus. This is about an honest look at our image in the community and among the students.

The central government is too removed to have a close relation to most students. Furthermore, it has become a den of smooth-talkers, self-servers, and cynics. It is no wonder then that both large segments of the student body and the surrounding community find the CSU either incompetent or corrupt.

6) Obviously, healthier business and operational practices will take precedence over anything. It is extremely important that we work closely with the accountants and make sure that the accounting system is fully respected and kept up to date.

It would be foolish of me to commit to a business strategy at the moment. I do not have access to any of their financial statements, and no one knows if it is just \$500,000 missing. The CSU is capable of throwing events grossing up to \$90,000, but what I will be capable of doing remains open until I take office.

One thing I can say for sure is that once our system is in place, we will save the students about \$150,000 a year in executive salaries. If the CSU were to make no profits at all, then the debt can be recovered in less than three and half years. We aren't going to abstain from throwing events for profit however, so I believe the deficit to be manageable.

7) The executive has first and foremost failed its fellow students, and has certainly failed itself. The CSU is supposed to represent the interests of Concordia's 32,000 undergraduate students, but this has not been the case.

The reason I said they have failed themselves is because they were suppose to take on public roles, meaning they would have had to

act in the interest of Concordia's student body. They failed to take on the role they aspired to, and which was assigned to them.

8) I enjoyed watching Talib Kweli. I also think that the "bring your own mug" campaign was fantastic, but they haven't promoted large-scale sustainability. There aren't any poster regulations, just have a look at the ridiculously huge posters printed by Vision and Change, scattered all over our campuses. They are members at every level of student government, but disregard environmental considerations.

9) A more practical way to answer that question is to send out an electronic survey to all the students in Concordia. Nonetheless, I believe that the services offered are necessities—here, I am talking about the Housing and Job Bank, the Advocacy Centre, the Legal Information Clinic, and the Tutoring Centre.

Many students who have used these services are very glad that they are made available to us, and realize how indispensable they are. We certainly feel the same way, but we feel that services are bogged down by executive interference, even if the interference is unintentional. Moreover, the politicization of services is reducing the quality and equal accessibility of services.

10) Only about 10 per cent of students currently vote, and we are aiming to attract the non-voters. A big portion of this demographic couldn't care less about the CSU, and see through the façade of campaigns. If we are elected, it will be the last time students have to vote for representatives of the entire Concordia community.

Instead, they will have the option of voting for representatives of their department—people they are more likely to know, and who have the same academic interests they do. We also want students to be able to vote on specific matters, like which speaker they would like to invite, whether or not they support fee levies for places the Co-op Bookstore, and what kind of facilities are most needed, and at what cost.

Basically, students voting for us are voting for themselves. They are ensuring a future democratic system, and are thus ensuring that their individual interests will always play a part in future policies.

11) You're kidding me, right?

NEW UNION

1) Anyone who can summarize what needs to be done into 15 words isn't being serious.

2) Robert Sonin—two this year, but about 25 to 30 in total over the years. Council meetings have become a farce. They do not deal with any real business, other than that which people from outside Council bring to it (like fee levy groups and the people who hate them), because councillors are for the most part not involved in the daily (mis)management of the CSU. The only resolutions that aren't housekeeping are motions to go into secret session and resolutions that result in yet another scandal.

Average Council meetings go for three to four hours, and at least one went about eight. If the Board of Governors can deal with the entire University's business in one-hour meetings, so can the CSU Council. But, of course, the Board of Governors has a functioning committee system, and competent chair and secretary.

3) No. There is frustration and exhaustion from dealing with the children running the CSU. Everywhere you look students are active and involved—but not with the CSU, because they see the CSU as a clubby, cliquey, high school student council. For some student groups, the CSU has been more of

a hindrance than anything else (that's why Decentralize can seriously propose to get rid of it altogether).

4) The first thing we will do as a new student union is to hold the first General Meeting in over two years, where fundamental changes to the bylaws and regulations will be made openly and democratically. The student union, even assuming the debt is paid off in one year, will have more than \$1.5 million to spend—and most of it will be spent supporting student initiatives, student groups, and student activities. It's amazing what you can do to a budget when you eliminate the graft.

The first thing we will do to the seventh floor office is to physically remove the door between the reception area and the inner office. And the hinges.

5) Concordia's image has taken many hits in the last few years, mainly because of the Unity (formerly "Evolution," "Experience," etc.; now they're "Vision" and "CHANGE") people mismanaging the CSU. Search the *Gazette's* website for CSU—nothing good comes up. Ask people on the street what they think and they'll reply "Oh yeah—Con U." That has to change. There are too many good people doing too much good work at Concordia to have it dumped on

by self-serving mini-fascists.

6) Before addressing this debt (a deficit applies to a budget, the permanent accumulated shortfall is debt), a proper financial system (not merely a bookkeeping or accounting system) must be put in place, including participation from the Financial Committee (some basic starting points can be found at voteforanewunion.com under "A Program for Transparency").

Having done that, we will have to figure out exactly what the deficit consists of and how much of it can be eliminated or renegotiated. The CSU receives enough cash from fees to pay it off in one year if significant cuts are made to unnecessary expenses.

However, we have to keep in mind—and it should be clear to anyone who has read *The Link* over the last year or two—that the CSU's finances are in disarray and veiled in secrecy, so no one can say exactly what needs to be done right now.

7) The space required for a proper answer would be a financial imposition upon *The Link* due to the amount of paper it would require.

8) They've managed to run two slates in the election ("CHANGE" and "Vision"), and to make it seem like they are different from each



(Clockwise) Robert Sonin, Spencer Bailey, Emily Gallant, Dania Sonin, Kai Matthews, and Karl Jeschek make up New Union. They want to give you a student union you can be proud of.

other and the Unity ("Evolution," "Experience," etc.) people that created them. That was a pretty neat trick. They'll probably get away with it, too.

9) The current executive has almost nothing to do with the valuable services that the CSU offers—they have been around a long time, and they mostly run their own affairs. The "Unity" ("Vision"/"CHANGE") innovations have ranged from inappropriate to goofy. Courses in knitting? Discount home and auto insurance? Courses in tantric sex?

People might enjoy making a scarf while enjoying tantric sex without worrying about the replacement costs of their hardwood floors if they puncture the waterbed with a knitting needle, but do we need a student union to provide these kinds of services?

10) 1. We don't lie. 2. We don't cheat. 3. We will help students create a Student Union they can be proud of.

11) We'd be bored of the same thing, year after year. We would probably just turn the TV off and read a book.

CHANGE

1) CHANGE will put petty politics aside and refocus the CSU on student issues and representation.

2) Three members of our team have attended at least two council meetings this year: Samantha Banks, Audrey Peek and Cathy Lin. The average length of the meetings is about five hours with the shortest special Council meeting being 23 minutes on Thursday, March 5, 2009 and the longest being 10 hours on Wednesday, Feb. 11, 2009.

3) CHANGE knows that students at Concordia feel disconnected from their University. Students don't feel ownership over their curriculum, don't feel like their course evaluations make a difference, and are dissatisfied with academic space facilities. The CSU should serve as a vehicle for students to engage their University, and CHANGE plans to be a voice for those students.

4) The CSU needs to work with honesty and transparency to re-enfranchise students. CHANGE will have an open-door policy next year and give regular updates about the work we're doing and about the CSU's finances. We will also work on services and campaigns that matter to all students, like lobbying the University to create a fall Reading Week and working with the STM and the AMT to create a reduced cost universal bus pass.

5) Concordia has taken great strides over the past couple of years, but there is always room to advance. With the new JMSB building opening, fantastic full- and part-time



CHANGE wants to represent you so much, they put their name all in caps.

faculty members, a diverse student body and progressive course offerings, Concordia is becoming an internationally known centre for research and learning. CHANGE members are proud Concordians and will work next year to further improve our school.

6) CHANGE will finish repaying the deficit by trimming the fat from the CSU's budget. We'll perform an efficiency audit at the beginning of the year and work to make sure that every penny of student money is being spent wisely. CHANGE will ensure that mismanagement like this one never occurs again by strengthening the CSU's financial regulatory practices and by ensuring that students are informed about the CSU's finances by posting regular updates on the CSU's website.

7) This year the CSU failed to communicate with the students it represents. Concordia students should know what their union is doing and how it is representing them. The current CSU executive was distant and neglected to report on its progress

to the very people who elected them. They allowed themselves to get bogged down in petty politics instead of focusing on serving students.

8) The current executive has started several of new services and events, like the Food and Clothing Bank and influential speakers like Spike Lee. They also continued to advance the plans for the student centre, although not many students know about these projects. CHANGE plans to continue these projects and communicate with members about our projects, since students should always know what their union is doing for them.

9) The services are one of the CSU's strengths, but they could be improved significantly. The CSU's services are built up over the years and need constant re-evaluation and restructuring.

Next year CHANGE will ensure that all of the services are up and running throughout the year and that they are efficiently serving students. We will expand the tutoring centre

to include a wider variety of courses, better advertise the Loyola Luncheon and ensure that it serves more students, and expand the classifieds section of the Housing and Job Bank website.

CHANGE also wants to begin new services to reach out to students in different ways, like a Financial Information Office that will provide counseling on personal finances and budgeting.

10) CHANGE is the best choice for Concordia students because we have great ideas—like the creation of a fall reading week and a universal bus pass program—and we have the experience to see them through. It's time for the CSU to be brought back to students' issues and focus on students' representation, which are precisely the goals of CHANGE and the role of the CSU.

11) We choose *The Office*, as long as it's the UK version. If it's not, we reserve our right to choose *30 Rock*, because Tina Fey is awesome.

Questions:

- 1) In 15 words or less, what's your mission?
- 2) How many people on your team have attended at least two CSU Council meetings? How long has the average regular meeting been this year (excludes all special meetings)? (please state the names of each exec who has attended at least two CSU Council meeting from Sept. 2008 to March 2009)
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- 9) How would you rate the services offered by the current executive?
- 10) Why should students vote for you?
- 11) If you had to watch repeats of either *The Office* or *30 Rock* for the rest of your life, which one would you pick?

Vision envisions a CSU where the interests of our students are put first, where full financial transparency is in place by being accountable for every single penny students entrust into our hands, and where leadership is combined with accessibility.

—Vision

I encourage all Concordia undergraduate students to participate in the electoral process, by running, by participating in Referendum Committees, by informing themselves on election candidates and issues and of course by voting.

—Oliver Cohen,
Chief Electoral Officer 2009

VISION

1) To give students the better leadership they deserve, ensure transparency and offer more services.

2) Three executives. Four to five hours. Amine Dabchy, Stephanie Siriwardhana, Prince Ralph Osei.

3) There is huge apathy among the student body that can be attributed to the disconnection between the leadership and the entire student population.

Concordia University is an educational institution and, based on our observation, it seems as though some students view their experience at school as a task to complete, or a work shift to get through.

At the same time, students who have the time to get involved at school, or have passions to fulfil, look for ways in which to get engaged—whether it be by going to an event, or joining a student club, etc. Concordia seems to have a wide range of opportunities available for students to be active; it simply takes the initiative of the student to decide to step outside of the classroom.

Apathy, in the case of student politics, seems to be measured by a low voter turnout. However, some students make the choice not to vote, as they may feel that they are not making a difference, or do not benefit from their student union (whether they know it or not).

We also believe that students need to see a benefit to being active at school. In some cases, students are able to fill their resumé with experience, and others are simply happy to make the connections they have made outside of the classroom. For some, the thought of a Council meeting may be regarded as a waste of time, especially when it is portrayed as a playing field for petty politics and personal vendettas.

What it comes down to is that there are many factors explaining student apathy at Concordia, from both ends—the lifestyle of the students, as well as how Concordia presents opportunities of engagement. Somewhere down the line, students need to see the value of being engaged, and that is a very relative statement.

With a stronger CSU in office, one where students can directly see what the executive does for students, we feel students will be more excited to get involved and vote, as they will know their opinions do make a difference and change can



This team is made up of a combination of eager greenhorns and seasoned politicians. They say Vision will show you a better future. PHOTO TERRINE FRIDAY

really be brought about.

4) At the current moment, the fact that there are five slates running is promoting the entire electoral process. Vision is mounting a strong campaign by talking to as many students as possible in an attempt to create awareness amongst the student body. After elections is a whole other issue, however.

Engagement comes from a connection, and Vision intends to be as accessible to the student body as possible. Right now the CSU is an elite group that is cut off from daily life at Concordia. Vision hopes to alter this by having casual weekly gatherings at both Java U and the Hive. We want the student body to be aware that every concern, no matter how big or small, is an issue we want to address.

Vision promises to have an open door policy that will allow students to check in with CSU happenings and ask questions of their own. We also want Concordia students to know what we're up to as their student union, and so we intend to have monthly VP reports accessible online. Vision hopes to engage students by providing opportunities geared towards their specific degrees, allowing our initiatives to affect them directly.

5) We believe there is more room for improvement. The university has had bad publicity recently, and we will be working to promote our university as well as the value of our hard-earned degrees. Concordia has always been known as being a very diverse university where students are not afraid to stand up for what they believe in. However, lately it has been talked about mostly in terms of the different scandals, which have occurred due to the student government. An article in the *Gazette* last Sunday

talked about this very fact.

Therefore it is of utmost importance that the student government changes, thereby allowing Concordia to be known, once again, for all the great things that sets it apart, such as its passion for sustainability and a greener Concordia, its active students, as well as its cultural diversity.

6) Knowing that a large portion of this amount is due to unpaid taxes, we will arrange with the government to pay it back through monthly instalments. We will likely have to make cuts to projects that have been initiated by the current executives that do not benefit students as a whole. We will also be saving by cutting legal fees, as the current executive unnecessarily spent nearly \$70,000.

VP Finance, Sam Moyal: Many of the financial problems that CSU executives have had in the past have been caused by not only mismanagement of funds, but by VP Finances who overspend because they can't say "no" to their fellow executives when a project exceeds the set budget. I am firm in my decisions and have no trouble saying "no" when a project is not feasible. For events such as orientation, which often costs hundreds of thousands of dollars, I plan to put a lot of effort into fundraising in order to spend less student money. With this kind of responsible spending, I truly believe that the CSU will be freed of this large deficit and back on its feet to serve Concordia students the way it should.

7) They have failed in terms of transparency, accountability and have acted in bad faith. In most cases, self-interest and future political ambitions have been at the forefront of their agenda, which does not benefit Concordia students on the whole. The CSU is sup-

posed to be the union for ALL undergraduate students, and we feel that the current executive did not understand this responsibility.

8) They have been able to employ a full-time chef to run the Loyola luncheon, brought some big names to the Speaker series (although this comes with a huge price tag), and their website is very nice and almost always up-to-date.

9) On a scale of one to 10, with 10 being excellent, we will give them a four.

10) Vision envisions a CSU where the interests of our students are put first, where full financial transparency is in place by being accountable for every single penny students entrust into our hands, and where leadership is combined with accessibility. We are running on an open door policy, to answer and interact with the student body on a day-to-day basis and provide very important services with the hard-earned money students pay to the union.

Vision is a group of dedicated students that are fed up with the current petty politics of their student union. We are all involved in a variety of different clubs, unions and activities here at Concordia and we feel that the CSU could provide more for its students. Our slate has a combination of individuals who have been involved in the CSU politics, and those who have not been involved at all.

We feel that a new approach is needed, and this balance will help us in bringing a fresh perspective to the CSU. Through our involvement with FASA, ASFA, IEAC, IFC, various clubs and committees, we understand what is required of student representatives and are eager and prepared to step up to the challenge.

11) *30 Rock*

Voting takes place March 24, 25 and 26

For more information about the slates, visit their websites or talk to a representative.

• changeconcordia.ca
• decentralizeconcordia.ca

• visionconcordia.com
• voteforanewunion.com

• search YouTube for "Fresh Concordia"

It ain't necessarily so

Guy P. Harrison knocks down the pillars of religious reasoning

• CHRISTOPHER OLSON

As a travel writer, Guy P. Harrison has been exposed to a wide number of climates, cultures and religious cults.

"I've been to every continent except Antarctica, and while hanging out with people, inevitably I'd ask them about religion," says Harrison. "What fascinated me is that many different belief systems will reach into the same grab bag of arguments to defend their particular religion."

The most common answers that Harrison heard were compiled into *50 Reasons People Give for Believing in a God*, which aims to correct some of the more fallacious arguments in defence of religion.

"I wanted to make them reasons that were common to more than one belief system. They had to overlap."

The nature of religion is "infinitely flexible," and that's why it's important to criticize the rationale for religiosity rather than organized religion itself, says Harrison.

"A person can gravitate towards what they like. [Religion is] like a paradise for confirmation bias. Many times I'll say to a Christian, 'Did you know that this is in the Bible?' And they'll say, 'I bet you \$100 it's not there.' And of course it is."

In fact, many Christians nowadays haven't actually read their Bibles, says Harrison.

"I think I know why. I think so much of it must just fly in the face of everything they think they knew about Christianity. Their faith would waiver if they actually read it."

Setting out to compare and contrast different religious beliefs, what Harrison found is that they don't contrast so much as compare.

"When I hear a Hindu in India say 'Ganesh cured my mother of her health problems and therefore I know Ganesh is real,' and then I hear a Christian in North Carolina say 'Jesus healed my daughter of her migraine headaches,' I know Jesus and Ganesh are not floating around in this universe together. So either one of them or both of them is wrong."

Being able to leave home and observe other cultures has been a wake-up call, says Harrison.

"Religion seems to make a lot of sense so long as you're surrounded by people who are saying the same thing, but once you step out of your neighbourhood, once you step out and take a good look, there is plenty of reason to have doubt," says Harrison.

"You have to ask, why aren't we all worshipping Zeus today? It's not because Zeus didn't have enough good, hard evidence. It's because Athens lost its grip on the world. Greece had its heyday when they were the epicentre of everything. And then they faded away, and so did their gods and their religion."

Harrison has a feeling more people are atheists than are willing to let on, citing several cases of fundamentalist preachers who later admitted to being atheists—even while excoriating their congregations for their sins—simply because they didn't want to give up their livelihoods over a lapse of faith.

"My gosh," says Harrison. "If there are fundamentalist Christian preachers who aren't believers, then it's not far-fetched to believe that there are a lot more people in society who aren't."

Harrison was once reluctant to call himself out as an atheist to his family and friends, preferring the term agnostic.

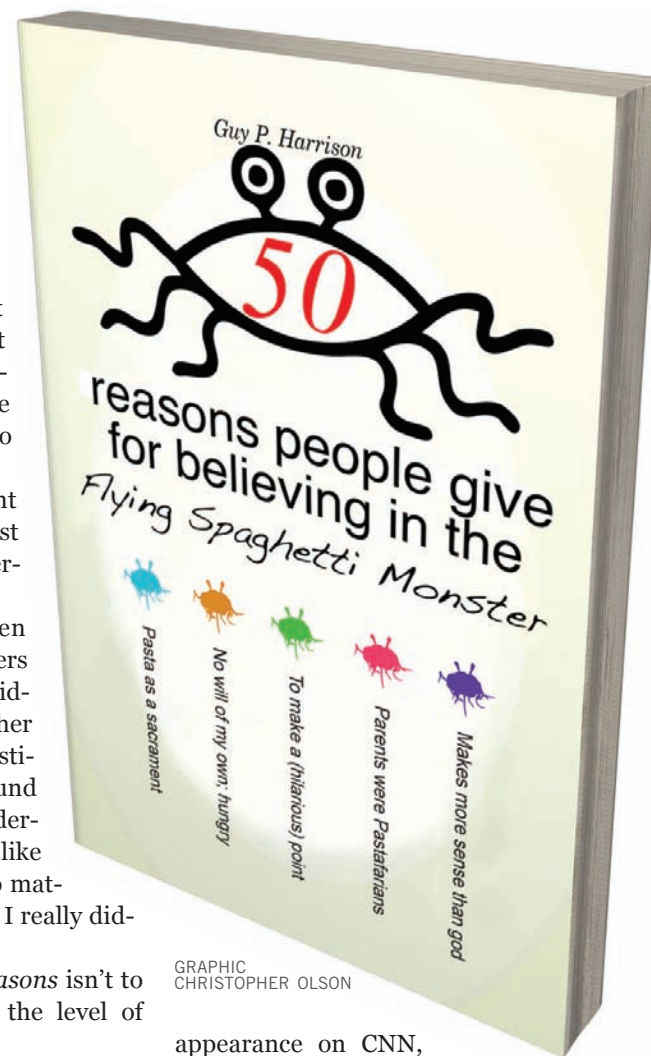
"It's traditionally been thought that there are believers on one side, agnostics in the middle and then atheists on the other side. I incorrectly saw agnosticism as a happy middle ground that would make me seem moderate and tolerant or something like that. I was really an atheist no matter what I was saying, because I really didn't believe."

Harrison's goal with *50 Reasons* isn't to win arguments, but to raise the level of debate.

"The fact that today there are millions of happy, content atheists with families that are doing just fine, that shows that there is no absolute human need for religion."

In the meantime, Harrison will be keeping an open mind.

"I'm completely receptive to someone coming up to me and saying 'Hey, look, we have an 8 x 10 glossy black and white photo of Zeus and we have 1,000 witnesses, and here's some DNA evidence.' I'm not going to close my mind. Five minutes from now, Mutubu, the African god could make an



GRAPHIC
CHRISTOPHER OLSON

appearance on CNN, and then we'd know that at least one god is real."

Ten minutes later, the likelihood of Mutubu's glorious return began to seem more and more remote.

50 Reasons People Give for Believing in a God
Guy P. Harrison
Prometheus Books
June 2008
354 pp
\$15.89



Lit Writ

Deleted

• MONA SACUI CATRINESCU

I can delete you.

Look, the simple press of a button and you are gone, obliterated, erased!

The 'delete' button invites me, smiling. Or maybe I'm the one who's smiling.

Because I know I have the power. Do I not delete images, documents, words and letters every day? I can delete you just as well. Do you hear?

But you won't stop, will you? You'd much rather humiliate me with your silence and those sharp words of reproach. Well, I will delete you and that sad grin off your face. I can't stand the sight of you much longer. I'll drag and drop you out the door, and I'll never see your mass of pixels again.

But somehow I can't seem to get you in the crosshairs of my cursor. No matter how hard I try, I can't see the arrow touch you. And frankly I can't even see the shift key anywhere, or the 'delete' button for that matter. And where is the keyboard?

While I deliberate on these things, you

send me an MSN nudge and ask me if I'm feeling well. At least you stopped ignoring me. And what business of yours is it if I'm feeling alright? But you would have saved both of us some time if you had just typed "R U OK?" I don't have patience for you anymore, or for anyone else for that matter. I'm busy and I have no time for you. My patience is running out through my high-speed connection.

Please, quit typing in so many questions in my brain. Feelings for you? You misinterpreted my emoticons. What feelings? You mean, stress? Yes, you are a significant source of stress.

No. I don't love you. Oh, don't start crying. I don't need this right now. I don't love you. I never did.

But it's not your fault. I just cannot process that word in my mind. An error always occurs. L&-oV#e. I won't let this virus infect me.

Our faces have been desaturated. The glow of the monitor has made our skin pale, livid. Oh, will you stop whining? Can I minimize this conversation window now? Or could I at least open another tab? "This is real life," you hiss at me, as the lights of your modem blink frantical-

ly, "real life!"

But it's all the same really. I have completely meshed with computers. My hard drive is saturated and my motherboard can barely hold me together. I browse. I process. I analyze. I store. The screen stares back at me with bright indifference. I should stop working so much, you say? Stop working so much? Stop telling me what to do.

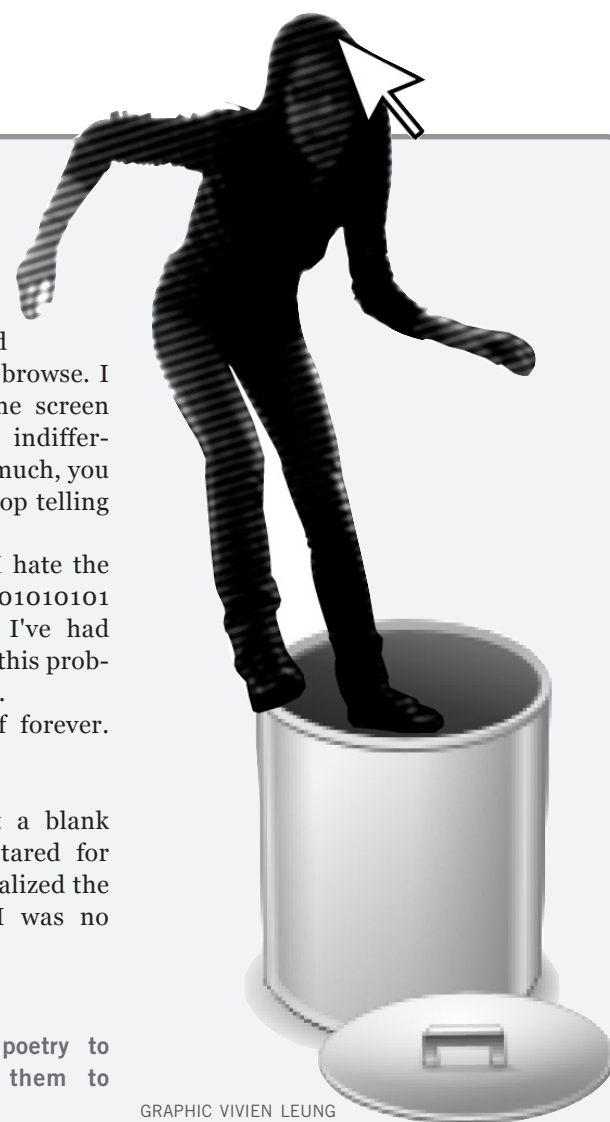
Oh, I've had enough. How I hate the pattern in your eyes. 1010101010101100010101101101101010. I've had enough. It's so simple; I can fix this problem with one stroke of a button.

Goodbye. I will log you off forever. Adieu.

I just sat there, staring at a blank screen for hours on end. I stared for hours, still and silent, until I realized the horrible truth. It was true. I was no longer part of the real world.

I had deleted myself.

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



GRAPHIC VIVIEN LEUNG

A high caliber Pistol that isn't full bore

Anthology of Concordia Creative Writing students' work is hit and miss

• JACKSON MACINTOSH

Reading takes a lot of time, so it's natural to want to spend that time with books that have officially been deemed good. Anthologies, uneven by design, can't live up to that.

If you're not on the editorial board, you're not going to like everything in it. But the good thing about anthologies is that you'll probably like something and it's a great way to get the lay of the land of an unfamiliar or emerging literary scene. I kept this in mind while reading *Pistol Vol. 1, No. 1*, published by Pistol Press.

Like any anthology, I didn't like everything, but at least very little of it was bad, and some of it was terrific.

Pistol Press emerges from the Concordia Creative Writing Program, although in this volume they extend their reach into the greater Canadian literary scene. The book includes many contributions from current and former Creative Writing students, but it also boasts an impressive number of professional contributors, especially for the initial sally of a young press.

Best among them—for me at least—is Sheila Heti, who has been published by McSweeney's Press and who originally organized the Trampoline Hall lecture series in Toronto and New York.

Her contribution, "The Book of the Writer's Union of Canada," is a dialogue between a personified Writer's Union and a

suspiciously Socratic teacher, who remains nameless. It's the most exciting thing here formally, but it remains jokey, sharp and makes fun of Canadian writing, all admirable qualities in my book. It stayed casual enough in tone and construction to potentially be a toss off, but if it is, my God, what an impressive throwing arm.

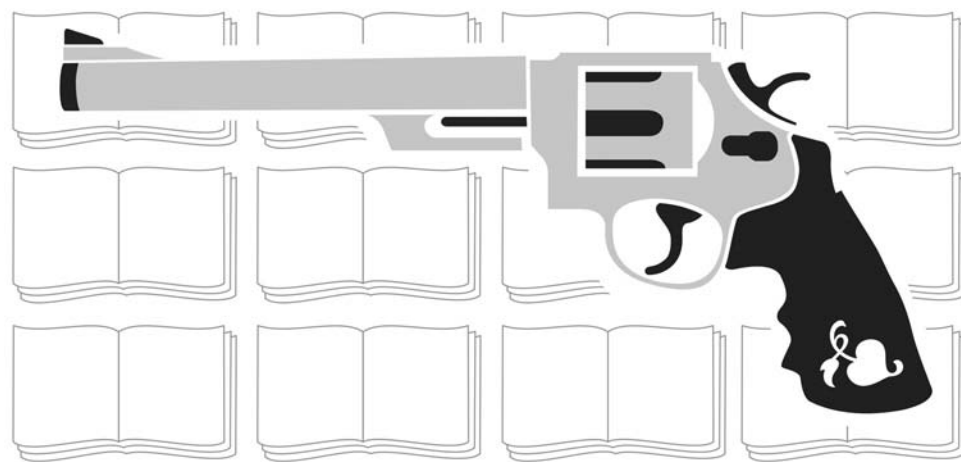
Similarly ambitious is Gil Filar's short story "On Receiving Criticism" narrated by a mediocre, arrogant writer who is expelled from a creative writing program for plagiarism.

Unfortunately, Filar parodies the style of a bad creative writing student. I've never enjoyed the sneering condescension of purposefully bad writing, and as one of the workshop participants in Filar's story says, "I'm lost on where the writing tries and where it succeeds," but the attempt itself is ballsy.

Other highlights are co-editor J.P. King's poems, many of which also appear in his excellent short volume of poems, *We Will Be Fish*. King has a unique, funny, and poignant voice and you would be well advised to get on board with him early in his career.

David McGimpsey, a faculty member of the Creative Writing Program and a Respected Canadian Poet, turns in the wittiest use of the haiku form I've seen, writing wryly about the sundry pleasures of firearms.

Mike Spry's poems contained a number of lines that landed with an audible thud, but his story "Jesus of Thunder Bay" is the best piece



Pistol Press' first volume of creative writing holds some hidden gems, but some are less likely to sparkle. GRAPHIC DAMIR CHEREMISOV

of humour writing in the collection, detailing the aftermath of the Lord's resurrection at a Neil Young concert. Expert deployment of hoser dialect is always welcome and usually funny, even if he allows it to become the focus of the story.

Melissa Bull's writing is appealingly plain-spoken, and captures the effortless glide between French and English that characterizes contemporary Montreal.

Elsewhere you'll find an encomium to the lowly handkerchief, illustrations from five artists and lots of poems and prose, most of which is worth reading.

Although Pistol Press has only published three books so far, they've all been impeccably designed and edited. The amount of care they

put into producing the books is equalled by the irreverence, wit and skill of the writing.

In short, I liked them before I read this volume and I've only had my high opinion of them confirmed by this book. I am certain that they will continue to put out work of a high caliber: without a doubt, they are the .44 Magnum of small Canadian presses.



***Pistol Anthology*
Vol. 1, No. 1
Edited J.P. King
Pistol Press
December 2008
224 pp
\$14.95**

Easy steps for eco-living

Author provides guide to new methods of sustainable living

• GAËLLE ENGELBERTS

Dreaming of going green but think you don't have the time and energy to do so? Scott Kellogg might have the answer.

His do-it-yourself guide *Toolbox for Sustainable City Living* is packed with advice on how to become a perfectly green urban dweller.

From managing your own livestock to building a wind turbine from recycled bicycle parts, Kellogg's book makes sustainability accessible to the masses.

"It means creating systems that are affordable, simple, and that utilize a lot of salvaged recyclable materials," says Kellogg.

Kellogg came up with some of the handy tips in *Toolbox for Sustainable City Living* along with co-writer Stacy Pettigrew while serving as the co-founder of the educational and activist organization Rhizome Collective. Some of these tips are innovations that originated in the Collective itself, while others were adapted from already existing ideas and techniques.

"For instance the parabolic cooker; that's actually a design that dates back to ancient Greek times," says Kellogg. "It's Archimedes's



Some lifestyle changes are inevitable, says Kellogg. PHOTO RACHEL TRETAULT

death ray that we actually built using similar principles but we've taken it to this point where we're using recycled satellite dishes."

Greek scientist Archimedes was said to have repelled Roman warships with the use of a device that focused sunlight on the coming enemy fleet causing it to catch fire.

Inspired from this ancient myth, the Rhizome Collective created a low-cost and eco-friendly device that produces enough concentrated heat to cook and light fires.

Tips like these ones were developed in response to what the collective perceive as inevitable lifestyle changes that will be forced upon

society in the near future.

"We will need to do a pretty rapid transition into a society that consumes drastically less as we're faced with the converging trends of climate change and energy depletion," says Kellogg.

"We want this transition to be as peaceful and gentle as possible and not to have it result in suffering and in a [global] die-off," he adds.

In order to survive the transition from a fossil fuel based economy to a self-sustainable society, Kellogg believes we have to explore new methods of living now, while we still have the leisure to make mistakes and are not completely dependant on these alternative techniques.

So where should busy students start if they want to move towards a sustainable lifestyle? Kellogg suggests that a good way to make one's home a little greener is worm composting.

"It involves just having a little plastic bin that can be kept underneath the sink or on top of a refrigerator and that contains a species of worm called the red wiggler," he explains.

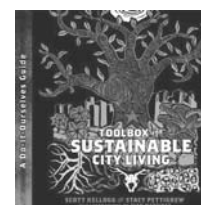
The red wigglers, or *Eisenia Foetida* as they are officially named, will eat your vegetable

scraps and turn them into fertilizer that can be later used for gardens, houseplants, or even sold.

"It doesn't smell, it doesn't take up a lot of space, you don't have to have a back garden and you don't have to have sunlight either," he adds.

Kellogg's message is simple: we shouldn't wait for governments or corporations to switch towards sustainability. As he writes in his guide, this transition should start as of today if we are to "survive the implosion of a society that has overextended its natural limitations in every capacity."

The future is in our hands, says Kellogg. "We, as people, as communities, as neighbourhoods, as grass-root organizations need to begin this work now, to take it upon ourselves to redesign our communities and build a sustainable infrastructure."



***Toolbox for Sustainable City Living*
Scott Kellogg
South End Press
June 2008
242 pp
\$16.00**

A century of epiphanies

An old friend remembered through the lens of Joyce's *Araby*

• NORM RAWVIN

Many students who try an introductory course in literary studies are likely to encounter James Joyce's much-anthologized story *Araby*, which is now nearly 100 years old. The title refers to a "splendid bazaar" where a boy goes to find a gift for a girl who lives on his street.

Araby presents a singular lesson in the despairs of first love, but also in the workings of the modern short story. At its end, Joyce employs his breakthrough method of narrative epiphany—a flash of recognition, which reveals the main character's moment of growth and change, which is linked to the reader's own appreciation of a new kind of self-knowledge.

For young writers, *Araby* can present itself as an over-determined model, a story so exemplary, compact and effective that the careful reader is tempted to copy its strategies and motifs.

But there are moments in life when that flash of recognition conveyed at the end of Joyce's story actually flare up, tsunami-like.

Let me tell you about one such moment:

When I was a young man living in Toronto in a Victorian walk-up not far from Kensington market, I had a remarkable and strange friend I'll call David S.

I met David in Vancouver, where we both went to university. Our connection ran deeper than this; our mothers had been girlhood friends in the city in the 1940s, when a great Jewish act of rebellion was the willingness to slip out for a cheeseburger at the Aristocratic coffee shop on the corner of Broadway and Granville, where the buses rolled down the hill towards the water.

Before I knew David I'd heard about his father, who was so abusive that David's mother abandoned him and his brothers. Raised by a succession of his father's housekeepers on the Prairies, David eventually found his way back to Vancouver to reinstate a life with, or at least near, his mother.

When he and I were students at U.B.C. I would cross paths with David on campus. But I saw him downtown too. He lived in an attic apartment back on West Sixteenth, by the University. My apartment was in the West End, not far from English Bay and Stanley Park, at a time when the downtown nightlife and gay counterculture were at a high point. The places of choice nearby included nightclubs called Luvafair and Gandy Dancer (after the railroad worker who throws his

weight against a crowbar to force loose rail ties back into place), while dinner was served with high gay panache at Hamburger Mary's, among other places, on Davie St.

A movie was made around this time called *Hookers on Davie*, which documented the underground economies of drugs and prostitution that generated a good deal of attention from the rest of the city, and even from the rest of the country, much the way the downtown east side presently captivates non-Vancouverites as a site of taboo-busting despair. I lived on the West End's reputedly mean streets,

heavy pre-AIDs time. A decade later David died a fast, awful death from the disease that wiped out a generation of gay North Americans. Even with good care (David's Toronto doctor was a leading early advocate of experimental treatments) his end was grim, grim, grim. But it is moralistic and false of me, I know, to imagine a link between those highflying days of cruising on Davie and the end, in a Toronto hospital, a decade later.

The events I want to describe took place before David got sick, when we were both U of T students in the early 90s. This was the time

Allan Gardens on the east side of Toronto's downtown. It was there that the Police sent what they called their Morality Squad, ostensibly to maintain order in response to the park's nighttime culture of marginals and non-straight.

David was beckoned to by a man in street clothes who was half hidden by bushes. I learned what happened next by way of a late night phone call, which David began in a tone of voice I'd never heard him use. He had been beaten up, he said. The undercover cop had waited till he'd reached out an arm to him, and then the cop and a partner had

Inspector Pork. But he might well have been called Dork. Or Hork.

There is no doubt in my memory, however, that between his mutton-chops, while delivering his testimony, he wore a smirk. I watched the judge nod as she listened to him, and her agreement with his way of telling the story seemed to be clearly marked on her face.

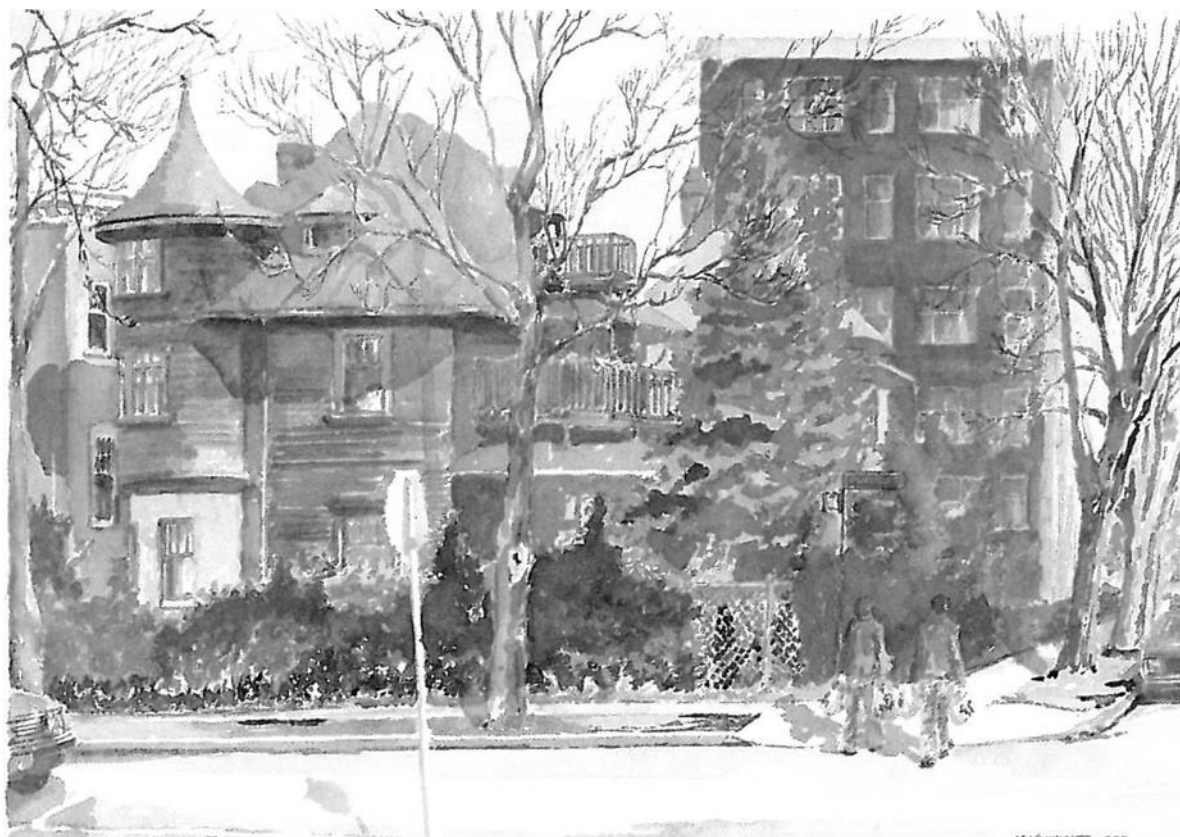
When I took the stand David's lawyer invited me to describe our long friendship and my sense of his non-violent character, which was so self-evident to me that to argue for it seemed absurd. David was a talker, a cruiser, a collector of tin cans on Davie, a swimmer, a son who'd been abandoned and had then pursued the abandoner. He was no fighter. A survivor, yes. But not more. I tried to convey this.

When the prosecuting lawyer—a woman just a few years older than myself, just out of law school and in need of a reputation for go-gettiness—began, she said: "Now, we want you to remember that what is on trial here is not the accused's sexuality." To which I responded, "That's exactly what's on trial." To which the judge said, "The witness will be found in contempt if there is another outburst like that." After which my status as a character witness was destroyed, because I had set myself up as a hothead advocate of some kind. I had undone whatever use I could be to David with my youthful directness.

The judge concluded the hearing by handing down a suspended sentence, which meant that David was not going to prison. He would, however, have a criminal record, which he could apply, down the line, to have removed. In the meantime he was marked. Case closed.

We stepped out onto the downtown street. David and his lawyer stood behind me. The city rushed by us—traffic, pedestrians, the usual lunchtime activities. What I felt came home to me in the image of a camera lens clicking into focus. The day, the events leading up to it, our weird hour in the old court room all offered a flash of clarity, which brought with it an understanding of how things must play out if the earth is to continue spinning in its own undeniable way. Like the boy in *Araby*, I felt my creatureliness keenly, and recognized the terms by which we are dealt our fate. Then the three of us parted.

Norman Rawvin is a fiction writer and teacher. His most recent publication is an excerpt from a recently completed novel manuscript in *Descant*. He Chairs the Concordia Institute for Canadian Jewish Studies.



Vancouver's West End, just off Davie, once the street of hookers and cruisers of all stripes. GRAPHIC MICHAEL KLUCKNER

"Now, we want you to remember that what is on trial here is not the accused's sexuality." To which I responded, "That's exactly what's on trial."

though I knew no despair at all. Some of the people featured in *Hookers on Davie*—including a rail thin male prostitute in drag, who was murdered by a john wielding a hammer—were regular sightings on my walks up Davie for late-night groceries.

Once in a while David was one of my late night sightings. I would see him coming out of Hamburger Mary's or Doll and Penny. He was cruising, primarily. But on occasion I also saw him digging in garbage cans for empty pop tins or bottles. He didn't live like someone who needed to scavenge the West End's waste, yet when I saw him up at campus his gym bag often held his take—clanking tin cans and beer bottles for return.

I think of that era's culture of cruising as being emblematic of a

when I got to know him best. We saw films together and we talked often on the phone. My memory of a typical call being: the phone rings, I put the receiver to my ear, and David's voice comes out in the middle of the conversation we're about to have.

Sometimes he began archly, with his habitual pronouncement: "Oh, you're there!" which struck me as vaguely accusatory, as if he knew by the tone of my voice that I wasn't quite up to another of the rambling, digressive calls that were his trademark.

Before David got sick, my last real engagement with him had to do with trouble he had with the Toronto police. This was a drawn-out fiasco initiated by a rather common pastime of David's, which was to visit the gay cruising scene at

knocked him down and cuffed him. The bizarre outcome was that David had been arrested and charged with assault. As I describe these events now they make no sense at all, but at the time the story of entrapment struck me as familiar and unsurprising.

The assault charge was heard at the old court house on Dundas and Bay St. I appeared as a character witness, which seems sad, since I was a university student at the time, and nothing more. Admittedly, I had known David for a long time and could say a good deal about his harmlessness, his routines, his inability to do the kind of aggressive thing he'd been accused of.

The judge was a middle-aged woman. I forget her name, but remember her high curly hair and her flat Ontario accent. The main witness for the prosecution was the policeman who claimed that David had beaten him. He was beefy and mutton-chopped and his name is registered in my memory as

Take it off!

Strip spelling bee has players showing off their brains and their bare skin

• MADELINE COLEMAN

The lights are dimmed.
The beers are in hand.

The ravenous crowd is hooting and hollering as the sweat-drenched figure onstage peels off yet another article of clothing, one less shield between their skin and the unwholesome eyes of slaving masses.

A man leans close to the microphone and, with great levity, pronounces the word that will determine the figure's future:

"Glockenspiel."

Welcome to the exhilarating world of the strip spelling bee. Most bees provide the chance to show off your brains—and if you're willing to do that, Sherwin Tjia, the Honeysuckle Strip Spelling Bee Night organizer, figures why not show off some other things too?

"I'm a pretty good speller," says Tjia, but "as good as you think you are, there's always someone better."

This won't be Tjia's first spelling extravaganza. He hosted one touted as a "hipster spelling bee" at Cagibi last year, but felt it lacked a certain je ne sais quoi.

That missing element was, as it usually is, nudity. Upping the stakes even higher this time around is the \$50 that will go to



Exhibitionism and orthograophy meet in unholy union at the Strip Spelling Bee.

GRAPHIC MADELINE COLEMAN

the winner—and every participant is guaranteed a free drink!

Tjia has a penchant for social events last suffered in middle school; he also organizes

the popular Slowdance Nights with *Lickety Split* editor Amber Goodwyn.

The former Concordia student says he "[has] noticed that [he likes] to take old

things and make them new." For him, this seemingly nostalgic brand of festivity is really all about exorcising old demons.

"[High school] was when I lived my most trauma," he admits. "I didn't know how to navigate that world so I just stayed out of it."

Now that the hormonal nausea of adolescence is a thing of the past, former school dance wallflowers can join Tjia as he "[reenacts] old traumas and [makes] them okay."

Middle school spelling bee enthusiasts were, to their peers, about as cool as getting excited about homework. Here we are at the other end of the tunnel, where exhibitionism and orthography meet in unholy union. Has the great unwashed finally decided intelligence is sexy?

Tjia remains skeptical. "I'm not sure how much better it is to be smart. I think it's still better to be beautiful."

What's more beautiful than a well-spelled word?

The Strip Spelling Bee takes place Saturday at the MainLine Theatre, 3997 St-Laurent Blvd. Doors 10 p.m., sign up for spellers at 10:30 p.m. and the Spelling Bee starts at 11 p.m. Tickets \$6, free drinks for spellers.

Life outside of the womb

Here today, gone tomorrow...

• CODY HICKS

Last Saturday Galerie Artefacto was abuzz as art students, art lovers and party animals alike gathered for the Art Matters Closing Party, where the beer was cheap, the bands were dirty and the bathroom line-up was legendarily long and winding.

Kudos to all the ragers who braved the journey to the depths of St-Henri! Finding the cavernous and gritty garage space at the end of the highway for the culmination of three overwhelming weeks of bleary-eyed vernissage hopping.

Things kicked off with the last-minute debut of Dirty Wedding, featuring vocals and tambourine smashing by yours truly and, despite my Red Mass experience, I'm still pup when it comes to music making.

Technically it was our second set (having drunkenly bullied our way into an acoustic open mic a few nights earlier) but the audience at the first show consisted mostly of stoners, more keen to melt into bean bag chairs than get up and shake some action.

I was a nervous wreck before the show so I suited up in

makeshift armour: a fur coat, sunglasses and a beer jacket. This crowd was more receptive of our drunken attempts to simultaneously channel The Replacements and The Rolling Stones, culminating in a mid-song guitarist walk-off cigarette break (an inevitable result when a band is paid in beer).

The dynamic tension maxed out when it was my turn to sing. Our seasoned guitarist started spearing me in the back with his guitar like a pirate pushing a mutineer off the plank to swim with the sharks—I was busy singing the first song I've ever written.

Before I knew it, it was over and my post-set senses were overwhelmed. My nerves rattled as I rode the shaky high of opening act jitters.

I spent the rest of the night grinning ear to ear, pacing back and forth through the remains of *IN/DECENT xposure*, the exhibit currently on display at the gallery that served as the controversial de facto centre-piece.

Next up, St-Henri's favourite basement scum-punks Dead Wife followed and really got people gyrating to their raucous sounds. This young band just



*Cody Hicks makes last minute debut at Art Matters closing party last Saturday. (Left) Cody Nashville (Centre) Chicago Hicks (yep, Cody ...) (Right) Tallahasee Sharma (Not pictured but equally important) Miami Boyd *Pseudonyms! Didja guess?! PHOTO ELSA JABRE*

keeps getting better and better as evidenced in their blistering cover of Jay Reatard's "Not a Substitute." They tore through that fiery pop punk nugget as passionately as if it were one of their own.

With the schlock rock and the punk skronk over, it was time for last week's spotlight and winner of the Cutest Band of the Night title, Matt Perri, to woo the crowd with a stripped back set of stomping acoustic jams. Halfway through the night and sufficiently sauced, the steadily

growing crowd's inhibitions melted away and they started to take part in traditional no-bones art school dancing.

Perri set the stage for the positive-energy-overload of Pete Samples, a duo comprised of bobbing guitarists who fed the audience with their unbridled enthusiasm. Headliners The Witchies finished the night with a solid set of skewed pop music that was the perfect woozy soundtrack to the mad dash to imbibe as much payment as I could get my hands on.

I stuck it out to the end, after the venue-draining dash for the Metro, where the real die-hards kept on dancing through the DJs attempts to clear the room with choice cuts off Captain Beefheart's Trout Mask Replica.

After a stressful three weeks it was great to see the Art Matters brigade cut loose and plow through the St. Ambroise pyramid that was not-so secretly tucked behind a curtain backstage.

Good luck trying to top this next year!

Nothing to forget

VAV Gallery features three students to keep your eyes on

• LEILA AMIRI

They say two is company and three's a crowd, but when it comes to the works of one Concordia threesome, crowded isn't so bad.

"It was actually professor Eliza Griffiths, who strongly suggested we submit together," explained Rhonda Chamberlain and Laura d'Alessandro in an email. The two will present their work, with colleague and friend Emily Cloutier, in an exhibit at the VAV Gallery called *Forecast Forget*.

"Our works are all very individual [...] There are a couple important threads that create a unison between our paintings, though. First, we've all been stirring up settled memories, trying to make sense of them, and in the process, discovering new significance," they explained.

"Second, we experiment with our portrayal of space through the use of unrealistic colour combinations, and it helps that none of us are very attached to realism."

The trio "spend a lot of time together outside of the studio, as well as in it and have grown to be completely hon-



Forecast Forget features work (above) by Rhonda Chamberlain, Emily Cloutier and Laura d'Alessandro.

est with one another," they revealed, stating that "[they] learn a lot from each other just by hanging out and conversing on a regular basis."

While they don't see each other as consciously influencing and being influenced by each other, they're sure "seeing all our works hung up together in our show will let us know for sure," said Chamberlain and d'Alessandro.

Each having exhibited on their own before, Chamberlain and d'Alessandro agree that, "the amount of opportunities made available to students to

exhibit their works by the Fine Arts department is motivating. [...] It offers experience and it's incredibly encouraging when the VAV Gallery or Arts Matters is around to reward hard-working students."

Marked with poignant colours, memorable subjects and a play on visual space, this trio is not to be missed.

Forecast Forget runs until March 27, at the VAV Gallery, 1395 Rene Levesque Blvd. Vernissage tonight at 6:30 p.m.

Assume nothing

Montreal playwright Ann Lambert's *The Assumption of Empire* touches on Iran, the Cold War and the Dawson College shooting

• BETHEA CLARKE

A slide projector clicks on and photos flash across the stage, the only light in a darkened room, timeless and instantly recognizable. These are the images of events that forever change those who witness them.

Four actors take their positions and begin *Unwashed Grape's* presentation of *The Assumption of Empire*, a new play by Montreal playwright Ann Lambert.

An old man sits behind the projector, the other three (a man, a woman and a teenager) sit together, the perfect representation of a cohesive family unit. The audience soon discovers that any semblance of cohesion in this family was abandoned long ago.

After a tense conversation with her husband (played by Bill Croft), Sophie Wiseman, the mother and wife, reads an obituary that shocks her to the core. Suddenly, the audience is transported back in time to a period in her life when she was passionate, driven and convinced she could make a difference.

The play spans the years 1979-2006 and follows the life of Sophie (played by Laura Mitchell). Throughout the play momentous events like the Revolution in Iran, the first referendum in Quebec, and the fall of the Berlin Wall are used as time markers.

Eventually it is revealed that while at university she had an affair with one

of her professors (played by Tim Hine) and although it was a tumultuous relationship, the two married. Their passionate marriage ended suddenly when it became apparent that they had conflicting desires; he wanted a family and she wanted to change the world.

A shift back to the present reveals that shortly after her divorce, Sophie remarried and now has a teenage daughter (played by Alice Abracen). Their relationship is strained to say the least and every conversation is a battle.

Sophie's life is not how she had imagined it would be, and the obituary, it is revealed, was for her ex-husband's wife and compels her to contact him. Old feelings resurface between the two and through their interactions Sophie rediscovers her sense of self and some old ambitions.

However, the audience is brought sharply back into the present when Sophie's daughter, a student at Dawson, calls her in a state of panic. She is barely 17, but her life has been changed forever, mirroring how major events marked turning points for Sophie throughout her life.

It was an insightful play, that author Lambert says is all about "the empires we assume we have, both personal and political."

The use of real events as symbols was an interesting tactic, but it made some of the transitions awkward and static. Quite often, part of the audi-



A lighter moment between Tim Hine as Ivan and Laura Mitchell as Sophie Wiseman.

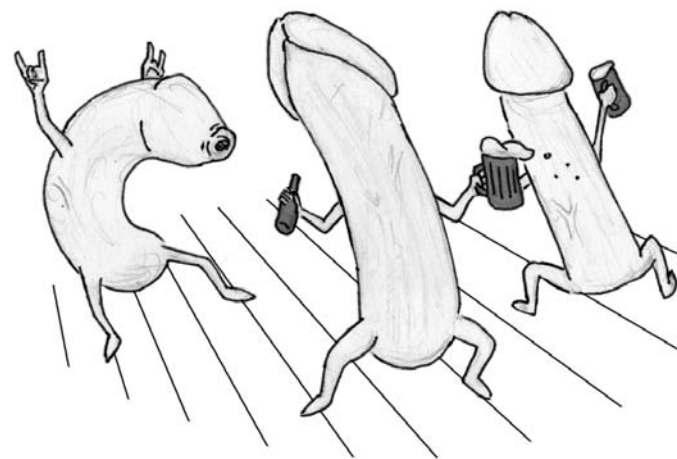
ence was forced to watch the back of an actor's head due to the theatre's three-quarter round stage.

While sometimes preachy and superficial, ultimately you will appreciate the excellent acting and topical subject. It's a bit lengthy, but it's definitely worth your time.

The Assumption of Empire will be playing until March 22, Tuesday through Saturday at 8 p.m. with matinees Saturday and Sunday at 2 p.m. at MainLine Theatre, 3997 St-Laurent Blvd. Tickets are \$20, \$17 for students.

Booze-soaked and vulgar

Dancing Cock Brothers' *Cockaholics* marks the return of founding member



Ryan Hipgrave joins his "Cock Brothers" in their first show since December. GRAPHIC ALEX MANLEY

• BIANCA BOURGEOIS

Smart, dangerous, booze-soaked and vulgar, the Dancing Cock Brothers describe their humour as the kind you don't take your mother to.

Founding member Ryan Hipgrave is a current Political Science major at Concordia. He began the troupe in 2005 with Adam Kelly and George Mougias, both graduates of the Theatre Performance program.

The three actors quickly recruited Kyle Allatt, known for his commercial and film work, and James McCullough from Dawson's Dome Theatre. Over the years, the troupe has seen personnel changes, with Mougias and McCullough leaving and the addition of Matthew Legault in 2006. Even Hipgrave took a leave of absence.

"I'm very excited to be back with the troupe. I couldn't ask to be part of a more talented and funny group of guys," said Hipgrave.

He insists the transition has been smooth and he's more than ready to perform again. He says he's not nervous about returning to the stage at all. "If I'm going to get smashed, I might as well be doing something other than playing Rock Band," he joked.

Their new show revolves around one simple theme: "Booze. We drink it before, during and after our performances, so we figured we should create a show soaked in beer and gin."

Cockaholics will feature a mix of new and classic sketches, like "Nun to Confess," in which Hipgrave plays an Irish alcoholic priest (and claims this isn't a big stretch), as well as "Rebound Boy," a sketch that takes an absurd look at relationships.

"The great thing about sketch comedy is that I get to play all these crazy characters in scenes with other crazy characters."

Cockaholics also includes "Goodbye Toronto, Bonjour Montreal," an original song about Hipgrave's move from Ontario to Quebec which was featured in Let's All Hate Toronto, a documentary that aired on CBC.

"We did the song twice, and we're only in the film for five seconds, so there is still lots left of our 15 minutes of fame."

Cockaholics signals the start of a busy season for the troupe. In May, they perform at Montreal Sktech Fest and then it's onto the Montreal Fringe Festival. Also for the first time, they'll be performing at Fringe Toronto.

Hipgrave, who holds a diploma in Comedy from Toronto's Humber College, is proud to host the troupe in his hometown.

"Finally, my parents will see where all their money went," he laughed. "They will disown me."

Cockaholics will be presented at Theatre 314, 10 des Pins Ave. O., March 27-28. Both shows are at 10 p.m. with a \$10 charge at the door.

The
DOWN-LOWEvents listings
Mar. 17-Mar. 23

ART

As much as possible given the time and space allotted

Curated by Rebecca Duclos and David K. Ross in collaboration with students and gallery staff.

A team of students and technicians will sequentially remove as many art works as possible from the Gallery's storage vault and install them. Once the Gallery is saturated, the project will reverse its strategy, leaving the Gallery in its former "clean" state.

Until April 17

Leonard & Bina Ellen Art Gallery,
1400 de Maisonneuve Blvd. O.

FILM

Montreal Human Rights Film Festival
72 films from 22 countries and 48 premieres including after-screening debates, a conference by the Colombian journalist Hollman Morris and photojournalism exhibition on human rights at Coeurs des Sciences.

Until March 22

Cinema du Parc, 3575 Parc Ave.

NFB Cinema, 1564 St-Denis Street

Coeurs des Sciences, 174 President-Kennedy Ave.

For information on tickets prices, locations and screenings of films visit ffdpm.com

P4W: Prison for Women

QPIRG-Concordia's Subversive Cinema Series next feature film, followed by a special lecture by Ann Hansen, author of *Direct Action: Memoirs of an Urban Guerilla*.

Wednesday, March 18, 7 p.m.

Concordia University's Hall Building
Room H-110, 1455 de Maisonneuve Blvd. O.

MUSIC

Glory Glory Man United

With Archipelagos and Open Fields

Tuesday, March 17, 10 p.m.

Bar St-Laurent II, 5550 St-Laurent Blvd.

Equinox Party

With Sweet Mother Logic, Akido and The Coward and The Pelican.

Friday, March 20, 8 p.m.

Sala Rossa, 4848 St-Laurent Blvd.

Tickets \$10

The Young Dads

The Young Dads are a New York-based comedy-pop duo that draws comparisons to Flight of the Conchords and Tenacious D with a small but loyal cult following in NY for their catchy hooks, witty observational humor, and extended gibberish solos.

Saturday, March 21 8:30 p.m.

The Yellow Door,

3625 Aylmer

Tickets \$8, students \$5

—compiled by Joelle Lemieux



Director Sabiha Sumar sits with local mullahs (a muslim man educated in Islamic theory) to discuss Pakistani feudalism.

Elections and other forms of coercion

Cinema Politica asks: can a dictator lay the foundation for democracy?

• CHRISTOPHER OLSON

Pakistan is rife with paradoxes, says Sabiha Sumar, a filmmaker who was once granted an exclusive interview with Pakistan's former president, Pervez Musharraf, who took control of the country in an October 1999 military coup.

Sitting down with Musharraf over dinner, Sumar and co-director Sachithanandam Sathanathan were struck by his candidness and introspection, the highlights of which were included in her film *Dinner With the President: A Nation's Journey*, which will be screened at Cinema Politica next week.

One year after the film's release, Musharraf was forced to resign after an 11-month battle that strained Pakistan's constitution, Supreme Court and media.

All this is proof, said Sumar in an interview with *The Link*, that Pakistan wasn't yet ready for democracy.

"I don't understand how Pakistan reels from one crisis to another and every crisis is of its own making," says Sumar. "We have nobody else to blame for all this, because the liberals in Pakistan decided that they didn't want a dictator."

"In my view, quite honestly, he should have [called] martial law, and ruled the country for a good 10 years," says co-director Sathanathan.

Having had a private audience with the president, Sumar and Sathanathan were convinced that Musharraf was the one great hope Pakistan

had for making real progress—whether he was elected by his people or not.

"[Pakistani elections] are really another form of coercion," says Sumar. "It's not about people's individual will at work. It's about having a campaign, building a personality in the media, it's about sending trucks out into rural areas, filling them up, bringing them to a polling booth and insisting that they stamp your name or symbol on the election card."

Sumar doesn't see the use of voting, "because a large majority of the people in Pakistan don't have the concept of individual rights. Actually, [holding free elections] means legitimizing feudal rule because Pakistan's political parties are made up of feudal landlords."

Pakistan's current elected President, Asif Ali Zardari, the husband of slain former President Benazir Bhutto, is a case in point, says Sathanathan. In her will, Bhutto handed the reins of the Pakistan Peoples Party to her husband.

"[It] goes back to what I said earlier about feudal values, where they have no concept of democracy. How can a political leader in her will hand over the party to her husband?"

Sumar sees Pakistan's future outside of democracy.

"What Pakistan needs is a strong benevolent dictator who has a vision for the country," says Sumar. "That vision should be modern, and should really allow for the growth of a strong middle class, because that's the only way that

Pakistan can progress."

Unlike Bhutto's regime in the mid-90s, Musharraf was making inroads towards women's emancipation in Pakistan, say the two filmmakers.

"It was really during Musharraf's time that me and a lot of my female colleagues felt free, not only on the streets, but in our work places and being able to say and do what we want to do," says Sumar. "Ironically, it's in democratic times I feel scared. Nobody really understands outside of Pakistan what it means to live under a democracy. For us it really spells a lot of trouble."

After the country's troubling elections, Sathanathan confronted a group of intellectuals who had supported Pakistan's dramatic shift towards democratic rule.

"I asked them, 'now that you have worked your democracy, what do you have to say?' And they were of course very sheepish, but maintaining a straight face, they told me, 'you have to go through a bad democracy to reach a good democracy.'"

That's not the way to do it at all, says Sathanathan. To get a good democracy, you have to start with a good dictatorship.

Dinner with the President: A Nation's Journey will be screened with *Please Vote for Me* on Monday, March 23 at 7:30 p.m. in Room H-110, 1455 de Maisonneuve Blvd. For a full list of screenings, check out <http://cinemapolitica.org/concordia>.

spins

The Lonely Island
Incredibad

Republic Records



Comedy troupe The Lonely Island gained some amount of fame as the poster children for what's right with *Saturday Night Live*; their comedic multimedia presentations became Internet sensations and transcended television to become cultural events. Their first album of material, *Incredibad*, is an uneven-handed collection of tunes that relies heavily upon their brand of white-boy rap. Tracks like "Lazy Sunday," "I'm on a Boat," and "Natalie's Rap" all had their start on *SNL* and are indicative of this brand of Beastie Boys-cum-

Bloodhound Gang bravado. New tracks "Like A Boss" and "Santana DVX" display more of this musical approach. Unfortunately, their flow is all the same and the songs could possibly be interchangeable if it were not for the fact that each song's rhymes pertain to the subject at hand (being a boss, rapping about champagne, and beating one's chest over the awesomeness of being on a boat).

Thankfully, though, the group branches out into other musical stylings for a number of songs. They pay lip service to reggae on the song "Ras Trent," display a fondness for Boyz II Men with "Dick In A Box" and flirt with euro-dance on first single "Jizz In My Pants," which has seen extensive play on this nation's video channels.

The group's at their best when the subject

they engage in is rife for exploration. "Ras Trent" in particular is great because of its social implications. Sadly, the album is filled with too many doodie rhymes to be truly considered a contender.

3.5/5

—R. Brian Hastie

Empire ISIS
Brand New Style

Monumental Records



I don't want to say it's nothing new, and I'm definitely not one of those people who believes that there are no more original ideas, but Empire ISIS' second album, *Brand New Style*, is pop—plain and simple. Actually, it kind of reminds me of a one-woman TLC who's sold out to synthesizers

and gangster rap. The lyrics are tired, the sound is borrowed, and her monster ego keeps me from relating to any message that may be fighting its way out. The title track is a commercial effort that puts ISIS' public persona in the spotlight: "You don't know where I'm from / Don't judge me 'til I'm done." In the last minute, she breaks it down "Under the Bridge"-style and while I'm tempted to believe her, I've listened to the whole album and I know this book can be judged by its cover. Fortunately for listeners, the best track is also the first; "Get Up On It," which sounds the way a brand new, white Cadillac Escalade looks and ISIS is in the back seat, waving a bottle of Cristal, wondering why she isn't famous.

2.5/5

—Joelle Lemieux

Pondering her future

Stingers forward Karen Stewart looks back on another disappointing soccer season and her break from the sport

• JOHNNY NORTH

The first time I met Karen Stewart she was too drunk to remember it. Three years later it's rare to see her go out and party with her teammates.

"The first two seasons were cool and new," she said. "I used to be a bartender, it was a part of the lifestyle. Now I just stick back home, I go to class, I go to work as a receptionist, then [I go] home with my dog."

Following three disappointing seasons with the Concordia Stingers women's soccer team, Stewart, a 5'4" forward and third-year Human Relations student, has taken a break from playing soccer. She isn't playing with the team during their current indoor season for a number of reasons, including nagging injuries.

"I'm taking care of injuries, throughout the years I've been neglecting injuries. My right hip and my groin are really bad," she said. "I got sciatic nerve pain that's all linked in my joints. I've

athletic ability, pushing her to work hard on her game and improve her abilities.

"She is probably the best athlete in the whole family."

"I love team sports," she said. "I love all the aspects of it. I love the girls, I love the competitiveness, the team unity."

The Stingers' 2008 outdoor season was filled with high expectations for Stewart, but considering the Stingers ended the season (1-11-2) with one win they definitely fell short of reaching them.

"I can't really give you an explanation as to why it turned out that way," she says. "There's so many reasons, so many factors. There's so many different personalities, there were some that weren't as committed [...] There's nobody that stands out and takes charge of the team. Everyone is just at the same level, show up do the work, there's no progress."

For Stewart, the Con U sports athletics department have done an excellent job providing the team with field and gym time.

"I can't really give you an explanation as to why it turned out that way [...] There's nobody that stands out and takes charge of the team. Everyone is just at the same level, show up do the work, there's no progress."

—Karen Stewart

had doctors look at it, had x-rays and had therapy. I'm taking it easy right now, just playing ringette. Which is good, I found a new love in playing a new sport.

"For three years I was just soccer, soccer, soccer. Not that I wasn't enjoying myself, but it felt like soccer was something I had to [do] instead of enjoying doing it. Concentrating on one thing alone is very tiring, you need new things to spice up your life. Ringette did that, it's not really running, just gliding."

Stewart played soccer competitively at Lindsay Place High School in the West Island and in CEGEP with John Abbott before coming to Con U in 2006. It was her lifelong dream to play soccer at the university level.

"She is very focused," said Jorge Sanchez, head coach of the Stingers women's soccer team. "Her work ethic is something everyone could follow."

"She's always been sports-oriented, playing on elite teams and excelling with them," said Donald Stewart, Karen's father. He cites her three brothers, two of them older than her, as influencing her

"[The current sports complex] portrays Concordia's view on athletics, because if you go to any university that's high-standing, it's very devoted to athletics. [L'université de] Sherbrooke is nuts. It blows our complex out of the water. You just wonder how much money goes into it. What kind of a stadium doesn't have real stands? I understand that Concordia has come a long way from what they used to be with the athletics and I guess it's baby steps.

"We are going in the right direction, I just hope the dome happens, because it will save Concordia money. We won't have to rent out training facilities. If we had a dome we could host tournaments, we could have half the teams that practice [off campus] come here."

During her time away from soccer Stewart has focused on her academic career, taking Education classes in order to build up a possible minor in the program. While the classes haven't been exciting for her she hopes to be involved with kids after graduation, teaching them



Concordia women's soccer forward Karen Stewart. PHOTO BROOKS YARDLEY

to stay active.

"I would love to be a gym teacher—I've done sports my whole life. Considering the epidemic with obesity, I would love to introduce physical activity. I've worked with kids my whole life, maybe I'll do it... you never know. I don't even know what I want to do in my life. Right now I'm just concentrating on graduating.

"I find kids need role models because there's a lot that kids deal with these days. I always said I wanted to be a high school teacher. Dealing with high school

kids now, they're punks. They are not nice people, they don't respect authority, it's just a different life these days. Kids at 12 years old know a little more than I [did] when I was 16-17, everything is accessible [on the Internet] to them."

Stewart will be returning to Concordia university next year to complete her academic career, but is not sure yet if she will be playing for the Stingers. Setbacks over the years are making her think twice about her decision.

"I'd love to come back, but

after so many disappointing seasons it's hard to come back. There are several factors, what girls come back, how the recruiting goes. I haven't really thought about it because I was so aggravated after this season that I just needed a break.

"I don't care who's on the team, I don't want to go there as a leisure thing, I want to be competitive. If we're not going to be competitive, I'm not going to give them the time. I'd love to come back, I just want it to be competitive."



Stingers guard Damian Buckley. FILE PHOTO JONATHAN DEMPSEY

Stingers overwhelmed at national championships

Men's basketball team lose their first game of the tourney and consolation game

• DAVID KAUFMANN

The Concordia Stingers basketball team battled hard, but came up empty handed at the two-day nationals tournament last weekend at the Scotiabank Place in Ottawa.

Con U fell short to the Calgary Dinos, defeated the Dalhousie Tigers, but succumbed to the Ottawa Gee-Gees in the fifth-place consolation game.

Concordia 67 Calgary 76

The Calgary Dinos opened the scoring, but the Stingers got off to a great start as they managed to hold their opponents to only 14 points in the first quarter, with Con U scoring 23.

However, even with their offence clicking, their defence

took a back seat in the second quarter. From that point on the Dinos picked up every loose ball that moved. The Dinos tied the score at halftime at 32.

In the third quarter, Dinos forwards Ross Bekkering and older brother Henry were dunking everything in sight for a combined total of 44 points. The Stingers struggled to get on the board, as they couldn't score a basket until the quarter was seven minutes old when Stingers guard Dwayne Buckley finally found his way to the net to end the scoring drought.

The fourth quarter saw a brief comeback by the Stingers as they closed the opposition's gap to 62-56. However, the Dinos' lead was too much for Con U to overcome. The final score was 76-67 for Calgary.

"We just didn't get it done, I

don't think we got the effort we needed from a lot of guys. They beat us to loose balls, they beat us down the floor," said John Dore, Concordia head coach. "They're a lot bigger and more physical than we are. We let them come; they fed off the dunks and the excitement," he added.

This game marked a bitter-sweet ending for players like Jamal Gallier, Levi Vann, and Dwayne Buckley. "I'll never win a national championship and I hope the younger guys could learn from the experience," said Dwayne Buckley.

Vann, who had to watch the game from the sidelines due to a season-ending injury, also felt the heartbreak of not winning it on Friday.

"That was heart wrenching. I mean, with me being injured as

well, I'm just on the sideline being helpless. Its not that me not being out there is hard, the fact that we lost is even harder," said Vann.

Concordia 72 Dalhousie 61

Unlike the day earlier, the Stingers played a full 40 minutes in a 72-61 victory over the sixth-ranked Dalhousie Tigers last Saturday after the previous day's heartbreaking loss.

Like the previous game, the opposition broke the ice, but once the Stingers registered their first basket, they never looked back. In the first quarter the Stingers got off to an 11-5 start before the Tigers nearly caught up.

Dwayne Buckley's younger brother Damian, guard Decee Krah, and forward Evens Laroche

weren't going to let a tight score get to them as they got out of the quarter leading 18-10.

In the second quarter, the teams were evenly matched, yet the Stingers still managed to widen their lead to as high as 19 points before the Tigers closed the gap to 13, ending the half down 39-26.

In the third quarter, Tigers guard Simon Farine made life difficult for the Stingers, as he finished the night with 25 points.

When Laroche slam dunked over the opposition 3:30 into the third quarter indicated that the Stingers were going to emerge victorious from this game. Sure enough in the fourth quarter, the Stingers held the team from Eastern Canada at bay for the win.

Despite the heartbreak of the previous day, Dore was satisfied

“You have to give these guys a lot of credit. It’s tough to get up on Saturday and play after a disappointing loss the day before, but they did it, and they did it with class.”

—John Dore,
Men’s basketball head coach

with his team’s performance. “I thought we played well enough to win,” said Dore. “I don’t think we played our best basketball, but we played well enough to win.”

Although there wasn’t much to gain Saturday, the coach and his team saw the game as a good experience. “It is for pride, but it’s also for the younger guys that are coming back, giving them a chance to see what they have to work on and what they have to do to come back here [to Nationals],” Gallier said.

Concordia 73
Ottawa 86

Concordia failed to come up on top in the men’s consolation final last Sunday against Ottawa.

Despite the loss, this was a milestone game for Damian Buckley, as he scored his 2000th career point. “It felt good. I didn’t really know how many points I needed, but I guess it’s quite an accomplishment,” said Buckley when asked about his milestone.

The Stingers enjoyed an early lead to start the first quarter but Gee-Gees centre Dax Desserrault, also playing his last game, wasn’t going to let the deficit stop him from going out on a high. He had a total of 25 points.

Although the Stingers gave up their 11-2 lead before the end of the first quarter, they still managed to keep it close, ending the quarter down 22-20.

In the second quarter the opposition stepped up their game, but the Stingers still hung in there, going into the second half down by eight.

The second half saw the older Buckley brother getting a bad call from the ref, causing coach Dore to get frustrated with the official. Despite a strong effort, the Stingers lost the bronze medal game by a score of 86-73.

Dore was satisfied with his team’s overall performance. “We played okay, but we made some mistakes; a lot of mental errors,” he said concerning his team’s loss. He walked away from the weekend proud of his team.

“You have to give these guys a lot of credit. It’s tough to get up on Saturday and play after a disappointing loss the day before, but they did it, and they did it with class.”



Stingers senior leader Dwayne Buckley. FILE PHOTO JONATHAN DEMPSEY

Calgary	Calgary 76-67	
Concordia		UBC 79-74
UBC	UBC 78-54	
Dalhousie		
Western	Championship bracket	Carleton 87-77
Ottawa	Western 75-48	
Carleton		Carleton 66-65
St-FX	Carleton 94-57	

Concordia	Concordia 72-61	
Dalhousie		
Ottawa	Consolation bracket	Ottawa 83-76
St-FX	Ottawa 85-63	

Green space

Advertising pollution

• MADELYN LIPSYC

Advertisements are taking up every last bit of our blank spaces, from metro walls, to toilet stalls and taxicabs.

The real problem is that ads are not promoting essential goods or services. They're part of an excessive push for consumerism that is using up an awful lot of dirty resources and energy in the process.

There is very little written on the topic of advertising pollution. Perhaps that is because writing negatively about advertising impacts the very people or organization that are writing the most. Nearly all media advertises, so writing about ads could be somewhat hypocritical.

Louise Story from *The New York Times* is an exception; she wrote that "a person living in a city 30 years ago saw up to 2,000 ad messages a day, compared with up to 5,000 today." Most of those messages are not written on recycled paper with organic ink.

\$500 billion

Yearly cost of global advertising

Reading a magazine like *Cosmopolitan* or *GQ* you often have to endure 150 pages of ads printed on non-recycled paper using poisonous chemical dyes promoting cigarettes and alcohol. Multimedia ads are not much cleaner. Television and Internet energy usage is higher when viewers are constantly turning away ads. A 22-minute television show has eight minutes of commercials.

Bus shelters, billboards, blimps, and the like are constantly spouting messages.

The infamous Montreal trucks towing an ad encased in glass or a half-naked woman telling you to visit her at a strip club, is not only demeaning, it's also wasteful. L'Association Quebecoise de lutte contre la pollution atmosphérique discovered that Montreal ad trucks travel more than 2.3 million kilometres yearly.

Advertising is only necessary for excessive profit

Does a company really need to advertise excessively to succeed? If we look at local businesses like Wok Café, Copies Concordia and Marche Lobo, they all do well without advertising. Instead of harmful advertising a better business plan would focus on location, planning and word of mouth. The planet would be thankful.

Another aspect of advertising and business is marketing. Provigo and Loblaws have a brand called President's Choice Mini Chefs for kids. While promoting nutritious snacks for kids, their marketing strategy has gone overboard and they have sacrificed clean packaging for profit. They actually sliced apples into eight individually wrapped packets ready for school—pre-sliced and not brown, you need to wonder, what's in there? These eight packets are then packaged in an even bigger plastic bag to contain them all.

While it is important to feed kids nutritious food, this should not be done at the expense of the environment or our wallets. Is our society that gullible?

Why not just buy the real thing: an apple.



Letters@thelink.concordia.ca

Linkies made bad choices

I saw your March 10 cover, featuring male basketball players with the caption "Ballin'," and didn't know whether to laugh or cry.

Did none of you think twice about the irony—and inappropriateness—of making that the cover of your annual women's issue? I found the cover of the special insert, tongue-in-cheek as it might have been, to be equally obnoxious. Was that free-flowing nature/swamp goddess truly the best representation of 21st century women your editorial board could come up with?

Though I was inclined to question the necessity of a women-themed issue in the year 2009, your bizarre cover choices made me reconsider my optimism.

You disappoint me, *The Link*.

I know you know better.

—Leah Pires,

McGill Art History & English

Justin Giovannetti is an idiot

Mayor Tremblay is an idiot, but Giovannetti says that Tremblay is only committed to public transit in a superficial manner. Certainly the only tangible difference in Montreal's transit network that have arrived due to his administration is not an improvement in public transit service, but a marked destruction of the quality of service offered by the road network to all vehicles.

However, I am almost delighted Tremblay isn't paying an extra \$40 million to the STM. The STM is chronically mismanaged and under funded, or in reality, over-extended.

Less than 40 per cent of the STM's budget comes from fares. This is an unsustainable practice. It is one of the prime reasons for the poor quality of service, as the STM has no initiative to provide for the consumer, manage itself efficiently, nor is competition possible.

In Hong Kong, the fares make up 159 per cent of their budget—that is, a significant profit, and the system is one of the most efficient in the world. And it is strange that with so much support for user-pay systems, for public transit it's all but forgotten, even though that is the situation that existed in Montreal before the 1976 election of the PQ—ah, the culture of delirium.

It wouldn't take a huge hike—the average cost of a trip on the STM is \$1.60. The only real increase would need to be the monthly passes. Perhaps a return to the maximum age of 18 for student passes and an increase in the adult fare to \$80. Still a bargain, but at least marginally reasonable. The STM could also save money by reducing wasteful bus routings, like most suburban lines during the day when only one or two people are riding. The headway could be reduced to 60 or 90 minutes and cut a significant cost, at no real decrease in service—nobody is heading to work at 1:30 p.m. And if I can dream, running the 221 bus all day instead of the crappy 211 [the main lines serving the West Island].

In closing, mortgaging our future by running up the municipal credit cards is not an option, nor is outright theft of citizen money. The octopus of the municipal government of Montreal and its expensive low quality services needs to be fixed. Ideally a "slash and burn" tactic should be employed, allowing a fresh, dynamic operation—comparable to Laval perhaps—to grow in place.

The unions would hate it.

—James Augustynski,

Mechanical Engineering

Not in our name

A number of high profile and well-financed Zionist organizations claim to represent the Jewish community in Canada in its entirety. We have formed a new group on campus to make it clear that they do not. What they represent is a Zionist political stance: an unconditional defence of the policies of the state of Israel. These organizations speak and act for themselves alone and

not in our name.

Not in Our Name—Concordia has been formed to reject the way the Zionist project attempts to assimilate our identities and our voices for their own purposes. Through the existence of our group, we strive to counter the often-expressed notions that equate all Jews with Zionism, and understand an Israeli Apartheid analysis, and stand in solidarity with Palestinians resisting colonialism as anti-Semitism.

We believe that both Israel and Canada must be held accountable for their violations of human rights. We stand in solidarity with the Palestinian people, as with all Indigenous independence movements. In particular, we stand against Israel's racist laws and Canada's complicity, while calling for a solidarity that stretches beyond borders and nationalities.

Our experiences are diverse—whether from Canada, Israel or elsewhere—but we are unified as Jews implicated in the struggle against Israeli Apartheid. We endorsed Israeli Apartheid Week, and were encouraged and inspired by the results: powerful speakers, nuanced analyses, diverse perspectives and empowered voices. We stand behind the role of Israeli Apartheid Week on university campuses and the Concordia community.

We recognize the historic nature of anti-Semitism in the world and oppose anti-Semitism wherever we see it. We see Israel's violent acts in the name of Jews as providing additional fuel to anti-Semitic actions and claims. Furthermore, we reject the violence of Zionism to impose an identity of oppressor on all Jews.

With this in mind, we believe that it is important to oppose anti-Semitism while recognizing the nature of Israel as an apartheid system that oppresses Palestinians, and fight against this system until Palestine is free. In our struggles against oppression we find it most important to decry, with loud voices, oppression perpetrated in our name. Thus, as Jews, we strongly decry Israeli Apartheid. Not in our name.

—Kinneret Sheetreet, *Women's Studies*

—Aaron Lakoff, *Women's Studies*

—Jackson Hagner, *Women's Studies*

—Nadia Hausfather, *Humanities, PhD*

—Afek Launer, *English Literature*

Election promises have major errors

As a current CSU executive, I feel compelled to clarify some major errors in team Vision's platform. Three prominent points being advertised are: "Finally launch the Student Centre," "Open a café at the Hive" and "Bring back the Loyola luncheon."

These points, although definitely high priority for all Concordia students, are extremely deceptive. As current CSU Councillors who have had several opportunities to be informed about the Student Centre project all year, Vision's presidential hopeful Amine Dabchy and VP Services Prince Ralph should know better than to promise students a building that still requires several more years of collecting fees before construction can begin. To claim that no work has been done on this project for the past four years is also terribly misleading.

Anyone who attended the March 11 Council meeting can attest to the incredible amount of progress the project has seen this year in the form of the new, concrete Management Agreement negotiated by President Keyana Kashfi that was approved by Council.

Stating that that a café at the Hive is also going to magically open without difficulty is concerning given that the current executive has spent months negotiating a lease agreement with Concordia Administration that is beneficial to students. Clearly, a café at the Hive has always been in the works but without a lease, no project could've ever been initiated. To come in at the end of the negotiation process and capitalize on what we are accomplishing for students is appalling.

Vision is also claiming that the Loyola Luncheon has been inactive all year. Though there were two months in the fall semester where the Luncheon was not serving students due to internal restructuring, the Luncheon has been back for the past three months and is now serving delicious vegetarian meals five days a week. Why is this promise, as well as others such as their Subsidized Tutoring Database, Career Fairs, and Book Exchanges, included on their platform when they all already exist either through the CSU or other associations?

At this point, I would have expected a little more from Councillors Dabchy and Osei. They are both smart individuals who should have spent their time on Council actually learning about what the CSU offers instead of continuously encouraging the petty politics and hostility that has plagued the CSU all year in hopes of one day ruling the CSU.

—Elie Chivi,

CSU VP Communications

CHANGE for best orientation in Canada

I am voting to CHANGE Concordia! For the past year I have been looking for a reason to get excited about the CSU and now I've found it. CHANGE Concordia has assembled a dedicated and innovative group of candidates. Their platform shows that they understand student needs and know how to change Concordia for the better.

I would especially like to speak out in support of Samantha Banks, candidate with CHANGE for VP student life. Sam is an outstanding person who cares about her peers and her school. She is always willing to take the time to listen to students' concerns and work to make school a little more fun.

I know that Sam will organize the best orientation Concordia has ever seen and continue to put the CSU on the map for having the best orientation in Canada. But we also need a VP Student Life who will be able to throw events that will cater to the diversity on our campus, which seems to always be an issue with the CSU and I think Sam's experience and diverse background makes her perfect for the job.

—Alli Burgess,

Exercise Science

Get involved, do research, vote

I'm sure you have noticed it is that time of year again, Concordia's CSU elections. This is the time where you see hundreds of posters using up all the space on the bulletin boards, you are bombarded with flyers from the different slates while travelling in and out of school and finally the ever so inspiring class room speeches.

I am writing to you today because regardless of the typical political tactics used here at Concordia, this year's elections are one of the most important. The CSU has slowly made its way down a path where students do not feel connected to their student union and most students have a negative aura of the CSU. It is unreasonable how our student union is guarded when it comes with meeting with students in their offices. It has come to the point now where you make an appointment to which you'll never meet with any of the executives.

Lastly, I do not understand how student council is the strongest body of the CSU, yet they do not carry any office hours or there is no information available to contact them even though they are "representing the student body."

It is time for students to take an interest and engage in student politics because it is in their best interest and it is their money that funds the CSU. Take the time to research all the executive teams and councillors and then make an informed decision. When it comes to councillors, you do not have to pick an entire slate, instead pick and choose the ones that will be the most

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.

effective regardless of the slate they are running with.

I will highly encourage students to vote for my fellow incoming ASFA executive teammates, President Leah Del Vecchio, VP Academic Affairs Dane Perera, and VP External Adrien Severyns as councillors, as well as Stefan Lefebvre who is running as an independent councillor this year.

I will leave you with one last piece of advice, with this year's election being so important, and with proper research done on all the teams that are running you'll see that you do not need glasses, contacts or laser surgery to help your vision on which one is best suited for the CSU in 2009-2010.

—Amir Sheth,
Political Science

Free tickets from CHANGE

My name is Anna Goldfinch and I am running for Arts & Science councillor in the upcoming CSU elections with a great team called CHANGE. Many of you may have seen CHANGE around school last week in bright green t-shirts running around campus! We've been having a lot of fun talking to students about how we want to change the way things work here at Concordia.

Students are especially responding to our Fall Reading Week idea! Many think at first that it's a pie in the sky idea but I'm really happy to tell you all that it is very feasible. Several other universities in Quebec have a Fall Reading Week because the fall and winter semesters are the same length!

Having a Fall Reading Week is an opportunity to take on more hours at work and make extra money, a week to catch up on readings and papers or to go away and be relaxed and rejuvenated for the rest of the semester. CHANGE will lobby the administration for this change in the academic calendar so all Concordia students will get a much needed break.

Something I really love to talk to students about is our plan to sell subsidized movie tickets! You'd be surprised how many people wait till cheap Tuesday to go to the movies. CHANGE Concordia wants to make it "cheap Tuesday" every day for Concordia students! By bulk buying movie tickets from the AMC and the Scotia Bank Theatre we'll be able to sell them for reduced prices directly to you!

So Concordia students, on March 24, 25 and 26 make sure you go out and vote! Make an informed decision and get the CHANGE that you deserve!

—Anna Goldfinch,
Political Science

Hey candidates: Fix the school

Once again it's student election time at Concordia, and one of the candidates running for CSU president requested five minutes of precious class time to give a short campaign speech. What is the main focus of his party's platform? Lobbying to add a "spring break" during the fall semester.

This is the most pressing issue at Concordia that requires attention? What about the decrepit state of the building and facilities? How about lobbying for better classroom equipment? Overhead projectors from the '70s that no longer focus are not acceptable. Neither are broken chairs that require delicate balancing for two and a half hours.

If they tried hard enough, maybe classroom temperatures can be regulated somewhere between igloo and sauna. At the very least, can

we get escalators that actually work? I don't think I should even try to ask for more competent teachers.

Apparently, an extra week off trumps all these other issues. I'm sorry to disappoint you Mr. Candidate, but adding another break will not help prepare students for the real world. A semester is 13 weeks long. If you somehow manage to get a job and then request a vacation every 13 weeks, you're in for a real eye-opener. Besides, if you cannot concentrate on your schoolwork for 13 weeks in a row, you should seriously reconsider your place in life.

In my opinion, spring break should be eliminated. It exists for students to catch up on their studies, but I have yet to meet one who uses it for that purpose. Therefore, it is inefficient and unnecessary. However, if your party chooses to do the smart thing and cancel the weeklong drink-fest you will never get elected. Now that's a real Catch-22.

—Arbel Ben-Or,
Operations Management

Kurt's the right guy for the job

I'm sure a lot of people in the Concordia political scene aren't familiar with Kurt Reckziegel, the candidate running for CSU president with CHANGE Concordia. Through working together in several associations under CASA, I learned that Kurt is one of the most honest, hardworking, and enthusiastic people I've ever met.

One of the reasons I actually chose to even run for JMSB Council with CHANGE is because I believe Kurt has not wasted his time bashing his peers all year, or ever got involved in any scandals with past Concordia politicians. I think the only way for us to be able to truly affect change at our school, is to have someone who simply wants the CSU to go back to serving students, not attacking them.

I encourage students to stand behind Kurt, I encourage students to join the movement, and I encourage students to vote for CHANGE.

—Christopher M. Calkins Jr.,
Management

Where does Mo fit?

All year the campus newspapers have been filled with stories about money that was over-spent and financial records that can't be accounted for at the CSU. All of those articles say that the problems started in Mohammed Shurye's year as president. Now it seems there is reason to believe that Mo is the campaign manager for team Vision.

Over the course of this campaign I've even heard some members of Vision try to link their opponents to last year's executive. It is absurd that the team backed by the executive that started this mess, who have been the most guilty of mudslinging this year are pretending that they have a new vision for the CSU.

I for one am sick and tired of reading the same old story in the student papers every week. I want to see my CSU executive do work that I actually care about. That's why I'm voting to CHANGE Concordia.

—Eleanor MacPherson,
Independent Student

Accountants for Change

Is anyone as upset as I am about Vision's platform for the Concordia Student Union elections? Their flyers advertise that they will create a subsidized tutoring database but the CSU already offers that service. Surely they must have been aware of this since their candidates

for President and VP Services are both CSU councillors this year.

Vision also wants to create an inter-faculty book exchange. Were they not aware of the book exchanges already run by the Arts and Science Federation of Associations, Commerce and Administration Students' Association and the Co-op bookstore?

Next on the list are faculty-specific career fairs. These types of fairs are already run by a number of student associations and Concordia's counselling and development services.

Vision's flyer also let me know about their website so I figured I'd check that out too. There I found as many redundant services and projects as I saw on their flyer but what bothered me the most was Vision's platform for Loyola. They are promising to build an enclosed shuttle bus shelter. Really? The shuttle bus shelter again? Every average Loyola student knows that the shelter is too close to Loyola's chapel, a Canadian Heritage site, to be allowed any kind of construction. It is shocking that a group of student leaders were either oblivious to the last three CSU elections or trying to pull the wool over Concordia student's eyes one more time.

Vision's platform is an unimpressive grab bag of projects that other groups already do or projects that aren't feasible. Do they think Concordia students are stupid or that we weren't paying attention? This March I'm voting for real CHANGE.

—Karl Dingfeld,
Chartered Accountancy

Check off Sam Banks on my ballot

I would just like to express how excited I am to see that Samantha Banks is running with CHANGE Concordia as VP Student Life and Loyola. I think we need a passionate person like Sam who will ensure that the needs of students on both campuses are properly met. Knowing her for a while now, I have to admit that I have yet to see her take on a task that she hasn't been able to fulfil.

With all the drama surrounding the CSU this year, someone like Sam is exactly what we need to put the interests of students first, and petty politics second. With all due respect to all other teams running, after looking at the CHANGE team it becomes pretty clear which team is actually going to be able to fulfil their promise of progress.

It's time we take back our CSU. It's time for CHANGE.

—Leora Kimmel,
Human Relations and Religion

CASA for CHANGE

As incoming President of CASA for the 2009-10 academic year, I strongly urge all JMSB students to vote for CHANGE Concordia. I sincerely believe that CHANGE has a platform of new ideas that accommodate the needs of students and can realistically be implemented within the upcoming year.

Their platform addresses some of the most critical concerns that students face. The proposed Financial Information Office will remedy financial anxiety and academic assistance will be available through the online note and exam bank. Furthermore, the Fall Reading Week will provide students with an opportunity to relax, regroup, and re-energize before mid-term season.

CHANGE is the only slate with the drive and experience to improve our union and our univer-

sity. This March vote to CHANGE Concordia.

—Lea Zimmerman,
International Business

A bright future with CHANGE

I am writing to declare that after a year of endless internal drama within the CSU, we finally have some hope that we can move away from hostility and towards a CSU that will put progress before politics.

I am running for CSU Arts and Science Council with CHANGE Concordia but I am not a student politician. The reason I'm running with CHANGE is because I'm of sick seeing my union in the papers for all the wrong reasons. I came into this campaign thinking that we were going to be fed a bunch of unrealistic promises but saw a list of well researched, feasible ideas that our school desperately needs like Water Bottle Free Zones, Fall Reading Week and an Online Note and Exam Bank.

I also came into this campaign and met a group of honest, hardworking people who want to put the troubles we've seen this year behind us and move us in a direction that will unite, not alienate, the student body.

Though I am a candidate running with CHANGE, I am also a regular student who is swept up by this movement. I sincerely believe that under the leadership of Kurt Reckziegel and the rest of the team, we have an unprecedented opportunity to help shape our community the way we are supposed to, from the bottom up, with every one of our voices heard. That is what the CHANGE campaign stands for and that's why I've chosen to run with them.

—Sarah Cole-Burnett
Sociology and Sexuality Studies

Change to help our clubs

As former president of the Concordia Canadian Asians Society I would like to express my support for CHANGE Concordia in the upcoming CSU elections. CHANGE has a great platform that demonstrates their experience, creativity

and commitment to changing Concordia for the better.

I am particularly excited about their plans to help clubs on campus. CHANGE's clubs platform includes a dedicated clubs newsletter, assistance for clubs seeking funding for events and projects, and the creation of a new special projects fund for club collaborations and office improvements. All of these initiatives will allow clubs to do even more to for student life at Concordia.

By contrast, CHANGE's competitors haven't even developed a clubs platform. This March I am voting for the slate that understands how important clubs really are. I'm voting to CHANGE Concordia.

—Vivian Shum,
Economics

Vote for Audrey Peek's change

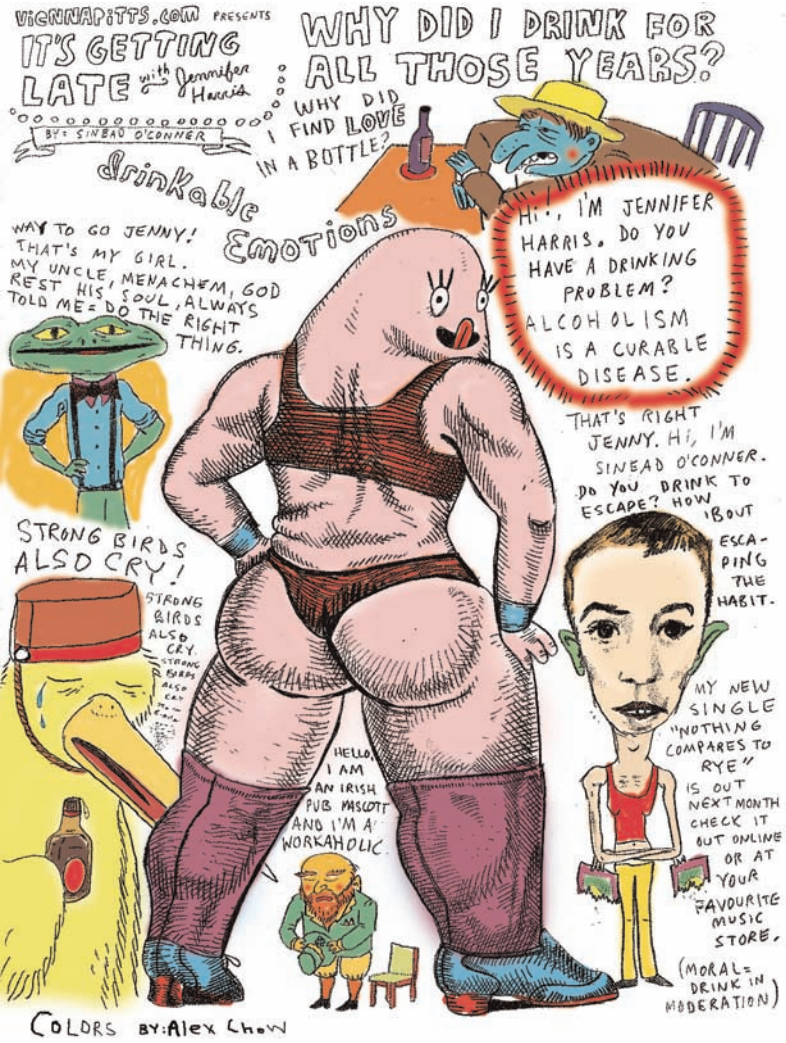
Another year, another election. Lots of flashy posters. Big promises. Tons of free candy. Why should students care? Students should care because of the candidacy of one person, Audrey Peek, and the changes to the CSU and Concordia proposed by herself and her team

As someone who has known Audrey for quite a while now, I have to say that I very excited that she decided to run for the CSU with CHANGE Concordia. Through her work as president of ASFA and two years on University Senate—among many others positions she's held representing thousands of students—Audrey has consistently proven just how hardworking and dedicated she is.

Audrey is a strong and influential advocate for us, the students, and I think the CSU desperately needs independent thinkers like Audrey, who are sincere enough to truly help change the current climate at the CSU.

I am proud to be supporting Audrey Peek for VP University Affairs with CHANGE, and I encourage you to do the same.

—Tara Dominguez,
Liberal Arts College in History



Pro-life groups deserve a place on campus

Honest methods must be used in spreading the message

• WENDY GILLIS
THE SHEAF (UNIVERSITY
OF SASKATCHEWAN)

SASKATOON (CUP) — You would be hard-pressed to raise the subject of abortion and not have it strike up a heated debate.

The topic has been and likely will always be a contentious one, capable of arousing deeply emotional reactions.

Aside from the dichotomous pro-life versus pro-choice arguments, there are other crucial considerations: How late into the pregnancy should a woman be able to have an abortion? Should the Canadian government regulate this? Doesn't the father have rights? The list goes on.

Even among like-minded individuals, there are likely to be differences in opinion with one aspect of abortion or another.

Since the legalization of abortion in Canada in the 1980s, fervent abortion debate has been quelled somewhat. But pro-life activist groups have taken to fighting this legislation as well as attempting to convince individual women to choose against abortion.

This has recently been seen at the University of Saskatchewan with the Students for Life group, and through presentations by Silent No More—a group of women affiliated with Anglicans for Life who say they regret having had abortions.

The U of S is far from being the only campus host to a renewed abortion debate. The issue is being publicly discussed across the country, with some universities halting funding for pro-life groups.

In June, the Canadian Federation of Students, a national student lobby group, went so far as to ratify a motion to support student unions that deny funding to pro-life groups, to the disappointment of even some in the pro-choice camp.

Denying funding can be viewed as a step towards outlawing the groups on campus altogether—

something that would go against the right to free speech.

Although there are certainly specifics in each case, it is not a solution to slowly push pro-life groups off campus. It halts healthy debate at universities—where healthy debate should happen—and sets a dangerous precedent. Pro-life groups deserve to be a part of campus as much as any other club.

However, the issue is not whether such groups have the right to say what they are saying; it's the way they are saying it.

In cases where pro-life groups have been criticized, it is often due to the tactics they use and the information they distribute.

Just last week, a poster of an unborn fetus donned a wall at the U of S next to signs that read: "I regret my abortion." Some women claim to have been harassed by members of the group as they walked past.

If a woman is to pick up a pamphlet or visit a pro-life website, they are likely to read one-sided, pseudo-scientific facts regarding the potential implications of an abortion.

To be sure, there are potentially horrific psychological consequences following an abortion, and many women maintain they are permanently changed after having one. The decision is incredibly difficult precisely because of the numerous negative effects and women should be aware of all of these beforehand.

When a woman is faced with this decision, it is important that she has the resources available to her to help her make the best choice. These resources include spiritual guidance or peer support. But, both pro-choice and pro-life groups must be cognizant of their ability to inform this significant decision and ensure that the tactics used are honest and accurate.

Ultimately the matter is unquestionably personal and one person's view—no matter what it is—should never be forced on to another.



More Letters@thelink.concordia.ca

An end to petty in-fighting

The CSU elections are coming up on March 24, 25 and 26 and you should get out and vote. Every undergraduate student is a member of the CSU and on polling days I encourage you to vote for CHANGE.

I am proudly running with CHANGE to represent Arts and Science students on the University Senate. I have been actively representing students as an executive with the Women's Studies Student Association as an ASFA Councillor and on several departmental and faculty committees for the past three years. I have to say, I am sick of seeing petty in-fighting and politicking on the part of our elected student officials.

We desperately need stronger representation at the university level, advocating for students rights first and foremost. CHANGE candidate for VP University Affairs, Audrey Peek, has been a strong and vocal representative for students and I believe we need folks like her to represent us and change things for the better.

CHANGE is what we need. The CSU represents tens of thousands of students, and I want a strong student union, which will use our collective power to improve things for us. CHANGE has put forth exciting and important initiatives, such as subsidized standardized tests like the LSAT & GMAT, the creation of an online note and exam bank, and lobbying the university for a Fall Reading Week. Like the winter, a fall reading week allows students to relax a bit, catch up or get ahead on their course work and gear up for the second half of their term generally improving our grades and saving our sanity.

CHANGE has the experience and the drive to make real change in our lives as students. I encourage everyone to make an informed decision and check out the full platform online. If, like me, you want a union that cares about students' needs, that uses our money to fund services that we need, like cheaper STM and AMT passes, and that spends its time fighting to make Concordia a better place, then please vote CHANGE.

—Carolyn Wilson,
Women's Studies

Paradox with CHANGE

In the season of student campaigns, the hard work must be saluted. On a note of concern I beg to ask the Change slate about the following: Fall Reading Week; stopping tuition increases; decreased STM fares and massages

during exam time.

On a feasible and financial level we are stuck in a paradox. On the one hand, to fight tuition fee increases would imply fewer resources for university. On the flipside, how will the promises of reduced fees for standard tests, massages and other perks come into effect? The STM is a unionized organization, for them to reduce the already low student fares would be a lengthy process. A change for one university body must be applied to all students in the region.

Finally, would Fall Reading Week be suitable in this turbulent economy? Students and professors voices must be considered on this point before a proposal is put forward. A large number of students will agree with the doubled workload during "Reading" week, true to its name.

CSU's elections are edging near. Students are encouraged to vote for Vision. Vote for a transparent mission before a promised action. Following the CSU's unresponsiveness on certain issues this year; namely, refusal to give financial statements, attacking campus sustainability and running a \$50,000 legal budget, we need to withdraw from a myopic system.

The Vision slate executives have a brilliant track record. As an example, this year Amine Dabchy & Prince Ralph Osei fought the CSU's attack on the Sustainability Action Fund. Amine and Prince Ralph have been true to their word this year and will be next year as well. Students, inform yourselves with Vision and vote on March 24, 25 and 26. To everyone, good luck.

—Azarakhsh Zarei,
Psychology

It wasn't their fault

As a current CSU councillor, I have to admit that I was severely disappointed to hear that several members of team Vision were making classroom speeches claiming that it was the current CSU executive that lost or stole thousands of dollars of student money.

I have worked closely with Andre, the VP Finance, and can attest that he, and the rest of the executive have spent long hours ensuring that the deficit incurred is properly explained to students in the most transparent way possible, and to legally pursue all parties who are at fault.

Just in case, I would like to remind Dabchy and the rest of his team that the deficit started in 2005, when his friend and campaign manager, Mohammad Shuriye, was president.

I realize that this is an inconvenient truth, but

Vision should respect the work and the long hours the executive and fellow councillors put in to properly inform the student body and not continue to spread defamatory rumours that make Vision sound good and taint the executive's reputation in the process.

—Edouard Fuchs,
Accounting

Vision is a real change

I would like to comment on this year's student union elections. I, like many students on campus, have heard a lot of speeches in my classes from all parties, been given many goodies, seen a lot of posters, and been given many flyers. However, one party sticks out: Vision Concordia.

This team is the real deal. They are the ones that really want to change Concordia for the better. All the members of the executive have the drive, commitment and the integrity to reform the mishaps that have been going on this last year.

It was a tough choice to choose one team. There are many teams that are vying to control \$1.6 million of student's money.

I think everyone can agree that we need a new direction and Vision Concordia is the only team that offers that. The main reason that I, as president of the Liberal Concordia Student Association, have faith in Vision Concordia is because they understand how the Concordia Student Union operates.

Some of Vision's members stood up to this year's current CSU executive when shady operations were going on, and you need a vision if you want to change the CSU for the betterment of student life while being accountable at the same time.

From Amine Dabchy and Steph Siriwardhana making sure ASFA students were put ahead of personal politics to Prince Ralph Osei making sure that the CSU executive was held accountable for many misdoings and devious operations; whether it be Helen Downie, Kristen Gregor, Sam Moyal or Ayoub Muntasar making sure their student associations were well represented to John Kyras trying to make sustainability a priority on campus, this group is ready to change Concordia.

I hope many students will see the same and I encourage everyone to vote on March 24, 25 and 26 because it's your say for a new vision, a new direction, and—with Vision Concordia—change we can actually believe in.

—Zach Battat,
Political Science

Notice of elections for *The Link* Board of Directors

The Link is currently looking for three (3) persons to sit on *The Link* Board of Directors. These three members must be staff (contributed to four or more issues this semester), and none of whom shall hold an editorial position within *The Link*.

Candidates for the Board must present letters of intent by Friday March 27, 2009 at 3 p.m. to the business manager (business@thelink.concordia.ca or at *The Link's* office, 1455 de Maisonneuve Blvd. O. room H-649)

NOTE: This year masthead elections are held the same day as the election for staff representatives on Board of Directors, therefore you can run for a masthead position and for the staff representative on Board of Directors. If you are elected to masthead your application to the Board of Directors will automatically be withdrawn.

Corrections

In last week's Women's Issue (Vol. 29, Iss. 25, pg. 11) of *The Link*, we reported in "A woman's wish for her son" that Melca Salvador died of breast cancer in 2004. Salvador died on Feb. 27, 2009. A picture for "Calm and sedate... just what we wanted" on pg. 8 of the same issue was credited wrongly to Clare Raspopow. Elsa Jabre took the picture. Two weeks ago (Vol. 29, Iss. 24, pg. 9) *The Link* reported in "Arts and Science election results," that Catherine Dicaire was elected as an independent councillor when it was in fact Gabriella Foglia. In the same article Stephanie Siriwardhana's last name was misspelled. *The Link* apologizes for the errors.

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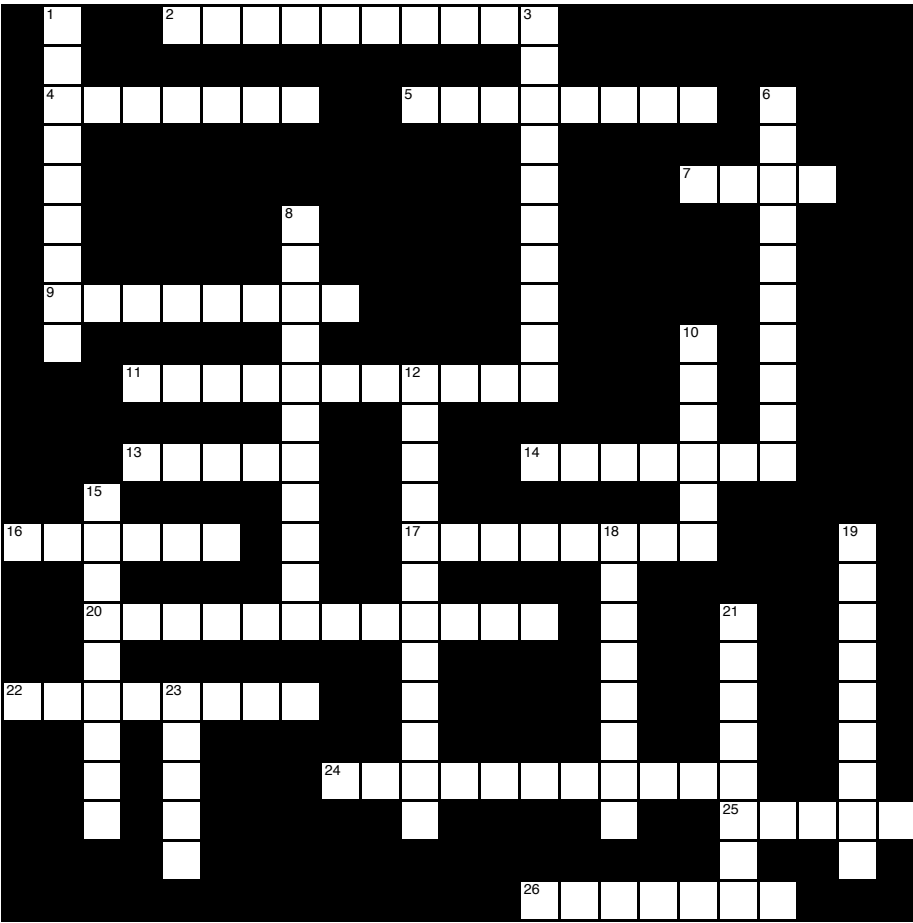
THE ALPHABET: FROM EH TO ZED • R. BRIAN HASTIE & TIME LORD DE ROSA

ACROSS

- 2. A sport that has more spiking than an American high school graduation punch bowl. Can be played in the sand or on solid floor
- 4. Scale used to measure earthquakes. When this baby hits 10, we'll all be shaking
- 5. A moment of clarity, usually of a religious nature
- 7. Good precious metal to invest in today's global economic recession
- 9. This goes boom. Red sticks that are the best way to clear a path through a mountain.
- 11. Winter has come and gone. This means that the bears will be ending their sleep, beware the bears
- 13. Ancient writing utensil, typically a feather
- 14. The only time you are allowed to sing "Living On A Prayer" in public and get away with it
- 16. The ideal society. Not a city made of chocolate and gummy bears
- 17. Typically installed on a computer. Bad examples of this include viruses, trojans and Second Life
- 20. KAPOW! ZAP! BOFF! Often used in comic books to represent sounds
- 22. An aquatic animal that has webbed feet, fur and a bill
- 24. Used by firefighters to combat flames or used by pet dogs to mark their territory
- 25. The best part of a cake and a hockey term
- 26. Branch of biology that involves the study of animals

DOWN

- 1. A sweet preserve that is made with citrus fruits
- 3. Mythical creature that hides gold at the end of a rainbow. That's where da golds' at
- 6. With his pal Rocky, they were often entangled by Boris and Natasha
- 8. It means washroom. It even starts



ed•i•to•ri•al — noun: a newspaper article written by or on behalf of an editor that gives an opinion on a topical issue

Want to write *The Link's* editorials?

Then run to join *The Link's* masthead—the newspaper's body of editors—and you get to choose.

Letters of application must be posted in *The Link's* office [H-649] before March 20, a minimum of four contributions in the Winter semester are necessary to apply.

To following positions are open:

Editor-in-chief / News editor / Features editor / Fringe arts editor / Literary arts editor / Sports editor
Opinions editor / Student press liason / Graphics editor / Photo editor / Layout manager / Copy editor
Managing editor / Webmaster

editorial

Fresh eyes see the CSU's election

I don't know what's going on with Concordia's election. In fact, it seems to be part of my charm. So when elections started, I decided to get down to it. From what I gather, CHANGE and Vision are comprised of members from last year's slate, Unity.

When I talked to CHANGE about it, they became suspicious and shut down—I guess I got my answer.

Vision didn't back down or attack the other side, but they made it clear that there had been differences in the now ironically titled Unity. So where does that leave me?

Fresh has been nowhere to be found—how can I think they'll represent me if they don't even want to see me? New Union—with its intimidating Gonzo-reminiscent fist—stands at the bottom of the second-floor escalator. "Tired of purple and green?" they ask.

Yes, I am tired. But more of student politics than the ridiculous colours you align yourself with. Where are these slates coming from, and what inspires them? I'd rather know why you're running for student government than your platform.

Slates like CHANGE and Vision seem to be more like extra-curricular loving CV fillers than normal students. I can see it in your photos. You don't want to make a difference in student lives, your end game is corporate—why should I vote for you?

I met some representatives for Decentralize Concordia outside Le Social on Thursday night. They handed me the skinniest piece of paper with a simple message, "DecentralizeConcordia.ca." I don't know about you, but drug dealers have approached me in the same way. You want my attention? You definitely don't have it.

It's not as if I'm anti-social, anti-government or holed up under some rock, I'm probably the best representation of the 90 per cent of Concordia that can't be bothered to vote—except I do vote, I love democracy. But candidates, you aren't making it easy.

—Joelle Lemieux,
Fringe arts editor

The media failed us on Sunday

The English news media's coverage of Sunday's Anti-Police Brutality demonstration was shameful.

Until yesterday morning, *The Gazette* was reporting that 21 people had been arrested—down from the wild estimate of 30 arrests posted the previous night. The CBC reported the same impossibly low number until 11 p.m. on Sunday night.

Yesterday's edition of *The Globe and Mail* reported to the nation, along with many factual errors, that "three dozen protesters" were arrested. The Globe's story painted the portrait of calm and balanced police officers standing up to the dangerous horde of violent young protesters.

To make matters worse, the picture accompanying the article reinforces the official story: a hoodie-clad protestor throwing a table at riot police cowering behind shields as wisps of smoke wash over them.

Anyone at the demonstration would have seen the crowd of hipsters talking on cell phones, grandparents shaking a finger at ranks of armoured police and yes, the occasional grungy punk looking for trouble. But 22 individuals out of 600—a single man in a red mohawk has seen his image beamed across the country—arrested on criminal charges is not proof of a crowd bent on being violent.

To oppose those 600 protesters, the Montreal police deployed hundreds of riot police armed with tear gas, rubber bullets and batons to rap on shields and skulls. Horses, armoured vehicles and helicopters were also brought out and a metro station was closed down.

This is the same police force whose union head told *Le Journal de Montreal* in August, "Our job, as police officers, is repression. We do not need a socio-cultural agent as director, we need a general. After all, the police is a paramilitary organization, let's not forget it."

On Sunday the English media decided to ignore the protesters and talk to the easily available talking points provided by the police. As a result they painted the protesters as loud and angry animals "sedated" by the calm and orderly police officers in attendance.

Unfortunately for the media, roles get muddled in these skirmishes. Life isn't as easy as it seems.

—Justin Giovannetti,
Opinions editor

