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CONCORDIA STUDENT UNION ELECTIONS MARCH 24, 25 & 26

ANALYZE.VOTE.

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Student lobby group not transparent: board members

Quebec chapter of Canadian Federation of Students' budget shows discrepancies; chair assures it will be looked into

• GIUSEPPE VALIANTE,
CUP QUEBEC BUREAU CHIEF

Members of the Quebec branch of the Canadian Federation of Students are demanding complete audits of the organization's finances spanning the last five years.

CFS-Q Chair Noah Stewart, however, assures any financial discrepancies in the budget will be investigated and addressed at the end of the semester.

Two members of the CFS-Q's Board of Directors sent a letter by bailiff on March 11 to Stewart, alleging he has not provided any "meaningful financial information to members."

The CFS-Q—an affiliate of the national student lobby group CFS—represents students from Concordia University, Dawson College, and the graduate students of McGill. The CFS-Q's annual budget of almost \$200,000 comes from student fees, the major of which is from Concordia students.

The decision to send the formal request was made after it was discovered that there were no official financial statements compiled by accountants for the fiscal years 2007 and 2008 and the CFS-Q's books since at least 2004 are un-audited, says Erik Chevrier, VP External for the Graduate Student Association of Concordia University.

"I found that extremely insulting," said Chevrier, when all that was produced after his requests for financial information were draft budgets and un-audited financial statements.

Chevrier and Adrian Kaats, a CFS-Q Board member and VP external for the Post-Graduate Student's Society of McGill University, say Stewart has not provided them with adequate financial information.

Chevrier and Kaats are demanding Stewart produce a host of documents including detailed itemized lists of salaries and expenditures for the last five years.

The un-audited financial statements that were produced by Stewart for the fiscal years of 2005 and 2006, which were compiled by accountants, show some discrepancies.

In the 2006 financial statement for the CFS-Q, the column for the 2005 budget is different from that of the 2005 statement.

In the 2006 numbers, \$8,094 was added in contributions to the national office, and \$3,286 in administrative expenses, totalling \$11,380 of deficit spending in the 2005 budget, which was unaccounted for in the 2005 statement.

"I have no idea why [the 2005 numbers are different]. I'm not an accountant," Stewart said. "I'm sure the people who were on the Board at that point could explain.

Stewart says he will direct the question of discrepancies in the two budgets to a staffer in Ottawa.

Kaats and Chevrier are also demanding that Stewart bring all financial information back to the Montreal office from CFS national office in Ottawa.

Both Stewart and Goldfinch acknowledge that the discrepancies in the 2005 and 2006 financial statements need to be looked into.

"We're a Quebec corporation in Montreal. For what reason are our books in Ottawa?" said Kaats.

Stewart says the majority of the financial statements that were given to the CFS-Q Board were from the Montreal office, but that a CFS staff member in Ottawa does all the bookkeeping.

Stewart says this move was made to save money for the organization's campaigns in defence of students' rights.

"It just seemed more efficacious," Stewart said. "There was better record-keeping [in the Ottawa office]. There is a big financial centre there. It's just easier."

Stewart says financial information was slow to get to Board members because there has been no secretary-treasurer since the position was created last May.

He adds that it is the Board's responsibility to appoint someone to fulfil the duties of the treasurer, which include overseeing the finances of the organization, but that never happened.

He admits there are no official financial statements for the fiscal years of 2007 and 2008 because of inner turmoil: the Quebec government froze the CFS-Q's assets and locked-out everyone from its offices in mid-2007 until February 2008.

In June of 2007, prospective members of the CFS-Q—who were McGill University undergraduates—fought a legal battle with the

Concordia Student Union for control of the CFS-Q Board.

The legal clash debated whether McGill undergrads—then-prospective members who did not pay fees—could hold executive positions.

A judge sided in Concordia's favour and McGill undergrads were kicked out of the CFS at a national conference, where Federation members voted not to renew their prospective membership.

Stewart says he agrees with Chevrier and Kaats that complete audits for years 2007 through 2009 should be done, but wants to wait for the end of the school term to do all three years at the same time.

As for years prior to 2007, Stewart says the CFS-Q boards at

the time felt it necessary not to have audits, and stands by their decision.

"So far, I don't see any evidence to suggest that they made a bad decision," Stewart said. "Saying now that we should go back five years ago, saying they made the wrong decision, is bizarre and ludicrous."

Colin Goldfinch, VP External for the Concordia Student Union and CFS-Q Board member, agrees with Stewart.

Goldfinch says the only reason the Board hasn't authorized audits for 2007 to 2009 is because it hasn't met yet to pass the motion.

But to go back and audit previous years will cost too much student money, and unnecessarily so, Goldfinch adds.

Both Stewart and Goldfinch acknowledge that the discrepancies in the 2005 and 2006 financial statements need to be looked into, but say that they'd like to discuss the matter with the Board and find a solution that won't cost as much as a full audit.

Stewart was VP communications for the CSU in 2007-2008 and Goldfinch was a councillor that year.

The letter by Kaats and Chevrier gives Stewart 10 days to comply with their demands or they will "pursue any and all further recourses available to [them]."

Kaats and Chevrier wouldn't say what further recourses they are referring to.

LA FEDERATION CANADIENNE DES ETUDIANTES ET ETUDIANTS STATEMENT OF OPERATIONS AND CHANGES IN FUND BALANCE FOR THE YEAR ENDED MAY 31, 2005 (UNAUDITED - SEE NOTICE TO READER)		
	2005	
REVENUE		
Contributions (Note 3)	\$238,475	
EXPENDITURES		
Administration stipends	68,399	
Professional fees	3,674	
Campaign organization costs	33,226	
Bank charges	343	
Office equipment	6,027	
Conference and meeting	3,110	
Office supplies	1,600	
Postage and delivery	15	
Research fees	-	
Telephone and utilities	6,784	
Taxes and licenses	1,813	
Travel	850	
Donations	2,132	
Rent	13,708	
Miscellaneous	561	
Service	1,909	
Per diem	485	
	143,628	
	94,847	
CONTRIBUTION TO CANADIAN FEDERATION OF STUDENTS - OTTAWA	105,759	
DEFICIT OF REVENUE OVER EXPENDITURES	(11,922)	

LA FEDERATION CANADIENNE DES ETUDIANTES ET ETUDIANTS STATEMENT OF OPERATIONS AND CHANGES IN FUND BALANCE FOR THE YEAR ENDED MAY 31, 2006 (UNAUDITED - SEE NOTICE TO READER)		
	2006	2005
REVENUE		
Contributions (Note 3)	\$235,835	\$238,475
EXPENDITURES		
Administration stipends	84,516	70,319 + 14,200
Professional fees	3,655	4,399 + 1725
Campaign organization costs	13,763	33,226
Bank charges	457	343
Office equipment	6,126	6,027
Conference and meeting	1,750	3,110
Office supplies	1,691	1,600
Postage and delivery	17	15
Telephone and utilities	4,362	6,784
Taxes and licenses	1,179	1,813
Travel	320	850
Donations	-	2,132
Rent	12,765	14,081 + 381
Miscellaneous	-	561
Service	1,764	1,169 + 740
Per diem	90	485
	132,455	146,914
BALANCE	103,380	91,561 + 3,286
CONTRIBUTION TO CANADIAN FEDERATION OF STUDENTS - OTTAWA	84,000	114,863 + 8094
SURPLUS (DEFICIT) OF REVENUE OVER EXPENDITURES	19,380	(23,302) + 11,380

Financial statements compiled by accountants Richler and Tabac for fiscal years 2005 and 2006 for the Canadian Federation of Students - Quebec. Administration stipends, professional fees, rent and service for 2005 have increased by \$3,286 in the 2006 statement. Contribution to the national offices has also increased by \$8,094. SOURCE: CANADIAN FEDERATION OF STUDENTS - QUEBEC

In the 2006 numbers, \$8,094 was added in contributions to the national office, and \$3,286 in administrative expenses, totalling \$11,380 of deficit spending in the 2005 budget, which was unaccounted for in the 2005 statement.

CSU round-up: an analysis of 2008-09

All the scandals tie in together...

• ANALYSIS BY TERRINE FRIDAY

As the election period nears, this news analysis serves to clear up misunderstandings and show how one scandal is often linked to another.

The following is an overview of the major internal newsmakers at Concordia University this year.

SAF

The Sustainability Action Fund, hailed as a “high-profile environmental push at Concordia University” by *The Globe & Mail’s* annual “Canadian University Report,” faced the chopping block last fall.

The Concordia Student Union provided unfounded information to their Council in the hopes they would approve a referendum question to get rid of the Fund. Councillors were told by the executive that 70 per cent of the Fund’s resources went to administrative costs whereas in reality—according to SAF’s audited financial statements—70 per cent went towards special projects funding.

The CSU executive later admitted they were apprehensive about the fund because of its ties to former CSU President Mohamed Shuriye.

Shuriye, who established the SAF in 2007—then called the 1% Campaign—has been tied to the CSU’s deficit. Shuriye was president of the CSU when former bookkeeper Marie Lyonnais allegedly misappropriated funds.

(The near-\$800,000 deficit should be paid off by the end of the 2008-09 academic year.)

The SAF question never went to referendum; the referendum—which also included a fee levy increase for the People’s Potato Collective—was halted when it was discovered that former Chief Electoral Officer Jason Druker was not an undergraduate student and was thus holding his position illegally.

Audrey Peek, president of the Arts and Science Faculty of Associations and currently running for VP University Affairs, was criticized for supporting the CSU in their mission to axe the fund—especially since she was a member of the SAF’s Board of Directors.

The CSU later apologized for trying to abolish the SAF.

Where’s my money?

Although the current CSU executive claim the deficit should be repaid in the coming months, the question still remains: where did all that student money go?

According to the CSU, negligence on the part of former CSU presidents Mohamed Shuriye and Khaleed Juma pushed the deficit to nearly \$800,000, up from the estimated \$500,000.

It is now suspected that a number of CSU financial accounts were used to withdraw 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 Elie Chivi, VP Communications of the CSU.

Shuriye has since denied any negligence on his part and maintains his VP Finance and bookkeeper were responsible for the monetary transactions and balancing the books.

Former CSU bookkeeper Marie Lyonnais has since been sued by the CSU and CUSACorp, their corporation, for \$363,238.25. Superior Court Justice Odette Cordeau found Lyonnais liable for the full amount plus plaintiffs’ costs in her judgment, but the case has since been reopened.

Juma could not be reached for comment.

Various lawsuits

September 2008: The CSU executive get an injunction against Concordia University for hiking international student fees at a so-called illegal meeting.

October 2008: Former CSU President Patrice Blais launches a lawsuit in Quebec Superior Court, seeking an injunction to end the pending referendum (intended to axe the Sustainability Action Fund).

December 2008: The CSU and CUSACorp launch a lawsuit in the amount of \$363,238.25 against former CSU bookkeeper Marie Lyonnais.

Lyonnais was hired by Blais in 2000 in the wake of a separate incident involving misappropriation of almost \$200,000 in student money by former CSU executive Sheryll Navidad.

March 2009: Blais launches a lawsuit demanding recognition of his recall petition, which pushed for the recall of the current

executive with support from 3,600 students.

March 2009: The CSU launches a defamation lawsuit against Blais, in the amount of \$125,000, citing maliciously intended libel.

Council

Council started off smoothly this year, mostly because more than 80 per cent of Council was made up of Blue Unity affiliates... or so we thought.

Some councillors later admitted to *The Link* to running with Unity—part of the Evolution, Not Revolution/New Evolution/Blue Evolution/ Experience/Orange Unity dynasty—in order to win.

When students noticed the misinformation handed down to councillors about the Sustainability Action Fund last fall, Unity started to break apart into factions of independently-minded students.

It didn’t help that the Chair, who obviously did not get adequate training, had trouble keeping tempers from flaring during nine-hour Council meetings.

Chair of Council

Jessica Nudo was appointed Chair of Council last summer, beating out Concordia politico Noah Stewart.

Various councillors of the CSU called Nudo, a newcomer to the scene, “incompetent” and incapable of maintaining order during Council meetings.

For example, Nudo voted against a motion in the Nov. 12 Council meeting in order to break a tie. The CSU executive and councillors later admitted that action goes against *Robert’s Rules of Order*.

On Jan. 13, Nudo rejected Blais’ recall petition—which called for the removal of the current CSU executive—on the grounds that not all of the 3,600 students who signed the petition were undergraduates, nor did they know the basis for the petition.

Blais countered that it would have been impossible for Nudo to check the status of all the students who signed the petition in the allotted timeframe.

Nudo resigned from her post as Chair on Jan. 14.

Brent Farrington, national deputy chairperson for the Canadian Federation of

Students—a lobby group Concordia students pay money to—was appointed interim-Chair of Council.

He was then elected to post of Chair at a subsequent Council meeting, even though he is not an undergraduate student.

Farrington was given honorary CSU membership status; according to CSU bylaws, it is illegal to be Chair of Council if you are not a member of the CSU.

Health plan gets sidetracked

The CSU formally fired Lev Bukhman, head administrator of the Quebec Student Health Alliance—or ASEQ—just last week.

Although Bukhman said he’s being punished for declining a \$25,000 bribe from former CSU executive Steven Rosenshein, the CSU and Rosenshein have since denied the claims.

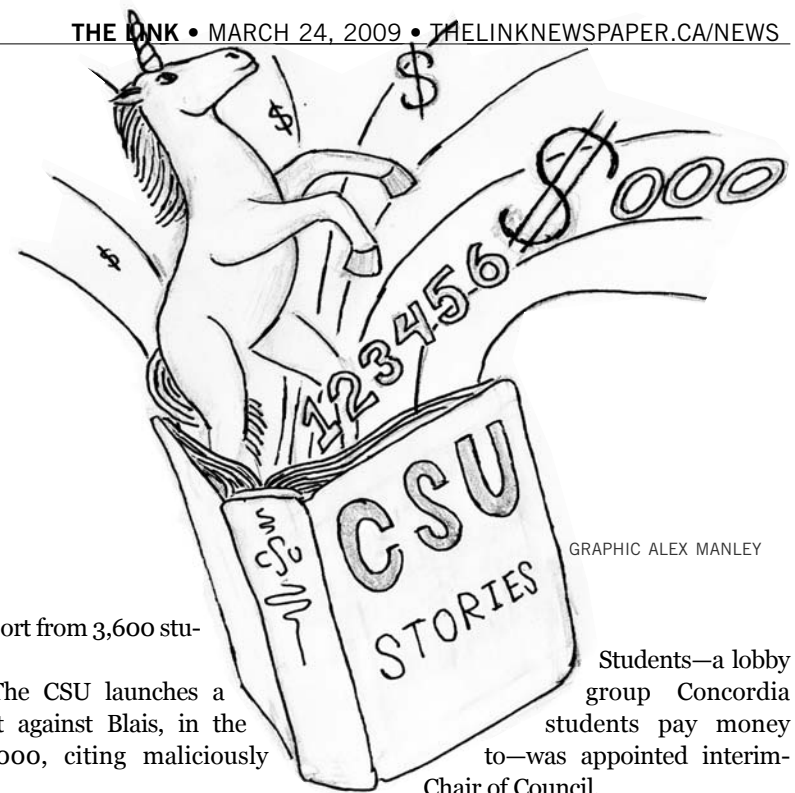
In an article last week called “Where’s the \$800,000?” Bukhman said he hadn’t yet heard from Rosenshein or his lawyers.

However, written correspondence between Bukhman and Rosenshein’s legal teams has since been produced and proves ASEQ has been aware of Rosenshein’s response for at least a week.

Rosenshein’s lawyer, in a letter dated March 9, asked Bukhman to: drop all allegations against Rosenshein; send a written statement to interested parties “rectifying the facts”; have the said statement published in student newspapers *The Concordian* and *The Link*; and claim responsibility for defamatory damages.

Bukhman’s lawyer, in a letter dated March 18, stated Bukhman would not hesitate to stand by the content of his sworn statement and the information contained in his Feb. 9 letter, should it be necessary to do so in order to protect his interests and those of ASEQ (Though Bukhman’s lawyer responded to the March 9 letter, it remains unclear whether Bukhman was aware of it).

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.



GRAPHIC ALEX MANLEY

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Telling it like it is: A year in review with the CSU execs

• TERRINE FRIDAY

The Link gave the outgoing Concordia Student Union executives President Keyana Kashfi, VP External Colin Goldfinch, VP Communications Elie Chivi, VP Clubs and Sustainability Priscila Gomes, VP Finance Andre Leroy, and VP Services Jose Garcia the chance to respond to various questions that arose over the past year.

The Link: Overall, what do you think of the job you've done as an executive team this year?

Keyana: I think for the past year we've really had to pull together and clean up a lot of mistakes, especially due to the oversight and neglect that past executives and employees left for us to clean up.

I think it was unfair that certain facts got misconstrued and misinterpreted to make the current execs look bad. It makes it hard at times to keep on trekking, but it makes me proud to look at the people in this room because they still served the students to the best of their abilities.

Andre: A lot of people still think we're in a deficit and we're not. So, I thought that was a little misleading. In this case, we're being targeted when we shouldn't be. By the end of this year, there will be no more deficit. We will have paid it off.

How has the current executive taken on sustainable initiatives?

Priscila: It was a little tough last semester [due to the Sustainability Action Fund fiasco] but I'm really happy with my campaigns. I recently helped R4 with their waste audit and the final results will come in April. We're going to compare it with last year's results to see the progress. We noticed that most of the waste was due to disposable cups, although we've offered mugs all year.

I also wanted to engage students, so I added the Sustainability Talks to my portfolio. There's so much to be said about sustainability that all students can draw meaning from them.

We managed to get double-sided printing in the library by default. Also, [Concordia's university Librarian] Gerald Beasley said he'd try to lower the price of printing, so it's six cents per page instead of seven.

I'm also looking forward to the Greening of Mackay, a project that would turn Mackay into a student-friendly space with artificial grass, vines and extra plants. Students could use the space just to relax or for arts and entertainment. If it's successful this summer, they'll bring it back next year.

How did services improve for students?

Jose: We launched two new services this year, which saved a lot of student money: the I Volunteer program, for people who want to get

involved, and the Food and Clothing Bank. The Bank has been open for about two months and I just want to make sure it works before it expands, so next year's team won't have to worry about sustaining it.

Two weeks after we launched the I Volunteer program, 50 volunteers signed on. That was in September. Now there are around 150 volunteers.

What else have you done for students?

Colin: Well, this year's been pretty non-stop when it comes to servicing students. But that's probably true for all the execs. We worked on keeping international tuition fees from being increased before we even became execs and scheduled four—or was it five?—demos, had a court case [to prevent the tuition hike, which was approved at an illegal meeting of the university's Board of Governors].

We lobbied to get students to vote for the municipal and provincial elections, and even a federal election—since the federal government decided they want to hold elections as often as the CSU.

Also, I've worked with Keyana on other internal matters like Senate. The University Writing Test was dropped because it wasn't very coherent. Some professors opposed it on Senate. One professor even said she was concerned that students couldn't write. Keyana shot back, saying she was concerned the university couldn't write a simple test.

Did putting out fires keep you from doing your job?

Keyana: I don't think it slowed us down, but it did force us to work harder to show students the facts. Like disclosing the deficit was probably the most transparent thing we've done. It had nothing to do with the current execs, but we were still blamed for it.

Do students respect you?

Colin: We're generally perceived as favourable because students use our services. Like when students come out of [the Off-Campus Housing and Job Bank], they're not thinking, "Oh, I hate the CSU;" they're thinking, "Thank God for that service."

What were the problems with the CSU's Council, your own governing body?

Colin: A councillor once called the CSU a Mugabe government. But I think he forgot: he is the CSU.

Elie: Honestly, we've been bogged down by petty politics and we wasted a lot of time in Council meetings this year.

Keyana: Council should be a place where I could come to them with issues so they could advise us and guide the execs. Instead it was a boxing ring of petty politics and has become an interrogation ground. I don't think all council-



(Clockwise from top) Colin Goldfinch; Jose Garcia; Keyana Kashfi; Priscila Gomes; Elie Chivi; Andre Leroy. PHOTO TERRINE FRIDAY

lors come to Council to ask good questions and get involved.

Jose: For example, I opened two new services and no one commented on it; it's for you. It's for the students. But nope, no comments.

Andre: There are often obvious conflicts of interest, especially when it comes to voting, but people don't abstain. How are you looking out for the best interest of students?

Priscila: What really bothered me was when councillors started using lawyers' letters to shut people up [from speaking about pending legal and/or private matters]. And they said Mugabe government? Most students don't have the money to consult with lawyers. It's Council; students should be allowed to speak freely.

It does seem as though the CSU gets caught up in frequent legal battles.

Keyana: Actually, I'm surprised about how much contact I've had with our lawyers this year—but not necessarily for legal battles. Even simple things, like labour consultations, include speaking with our lawyers. And on our [bill] it only says legal fees.

Andre: There was lots of negligence in the past due to lack of consulting, so if we seek consultation on a matter we're not sure about, it protects us. I also want to clear up any talks about busting our budget on lawyers. We're not over budget in our legal fees at all.

What else can you say about the past year?

Keyana: I'm really proud of the progress made for the Student Centre.

Colin: I have more grey hair.

Andre: I have less hair.

Jose: Me too.

CSU Bursaries

• ALEX MANLEY

The Concordia Student Union has extended the application deadline for its CSU Bursaries to March 31.

Since 2004, the CSU has rewarded deserving undergraduate students with bursaries of \$500 on a yearly basis. This year, 30 such bursaries will be awarded.

The bursaries are designed to help students in need deal with the financial stresses of expensive post-secondary education, and to reward both academic and extra-curricular student achievements.

Students interested in applying for a bursary can visit bursary.csu.qc.ca or email services@csu.qc.ca for more info.

Senate approves student union motion

• TERRINE FRIDAY

At the university's Senate meeting on March 20, the Concordia Student Union saw their proposal for digital course offerings approved.

The original motion called for university Librarian Gerald Beasley to "investigate means by which faculty members might be encouraged to take advantage of digital alternatives to paper course packs [...]" thus cutting course pack costs.

It also called for Beasley to "provide a report with specific recommendations to the Senate Committee on Academic Planning and Priorities" so that it can be considered at the May Senate meeting.

More Canadians getting accredited

• JENNIFER FREITAS

According to a March 11 Statistics Canada report, there was a five per cent increase of students who received university degrees, diplomas, and certificates in 2006. Sixty per cent of them were awarded to women. Women have outnumbered men at every level except at the doctorate level since 1994. The per cent of qualifications granted rose in every field except mathematics, computer and information sciences. The health, parks, recreation and fitness program had the most people graduating.

Judgment against former CSU bookkeeper rescinded

• CLARE RASPOPOW

The \$363,238.25-plus judgment in favour of the Concordia Student Union and their corporation CUSACorp was rescinded last week due to the defendant's constant change of legal representation.

Marie Lyonnais, accused of misappropriating almost \$400,000 in student money, was found liable on Feb. 23, but that judgment has been deemed invalid since she did not have official legal representation.

According to Jean-Pierre Michaud, lawyer for both the CSU and CUSACorp, the real reason for the judgment's revocation is Lyonnais' continual counsel swap.

When William Desmarchant initially appeared on Lyonnais' behalf at Quebec Superior Court for her hearing on Feb. 23, he was not her official counsel, according to Michaud.

Lyonais was found liable that day for the \$363,238.25, plus the plaintiffs' legal costs.

"Unfortunately, if [Desmarchant]

is to blame [for invalidating the appearance], it would be hard to convince the judge that [Lyonais] is to blame [in the proceedings]. That's why we didn't contest [the motion of retraction]," explained Michaud.

Court records show Lyonnais dropped Desmarchant as counsel and then retained lawyer François Hamel to represent her.

Although Michaud claims Lyonnais will soon retain Desmarchant as her official counsel, Superior Court employee Anna

Dragulesko confirmed Hamel is still Lyonnais' lawyer.

Michaud said that all he and his clients want is for the legal tango to be handled quickly. Though these problems with Lyonnais and her counsel are frustrating, Michaud is unwilling to trample her rights to ensure a speedy trial.

"We're suing her for \$300,000, but that's not a reason for not giving her a chance to defend herself," he said.

Both Desmarchant and Hamel were unavailable for comment.

Unwanted witnesses

Colombian journalist speaks out against violence in Latin America

• JUSTIN BROMBERG

Veteran Colombian journalist Hollman Morris hosted a conference on March 19, in tandem with the fourth annual Montreal Human Rights Film Festival, to discuss the use of violence against independent journalists operating in Latin America.

Morris was in Montreal to present the Quebec premiere of a documentary about his work called *Témoin indésirable* (or “unwanted witness”). Joined by Concordia Journalism professor Ingrid Bejerman, Morris was straight-faced and concise about the everyday risks of conflict reporting in his home country.

“The case of Colombia,” began Morris, “is that in the last three decades, 170 journalists have been assassinated. In the last three decades, journalists have lived through the threats of narcotics traffickers, of guerrilla insurgents, of paramilitary groups, and of corrupt politicians.”

Forty-year-old Morris is the producer of *Contravia*, an independent TV program that—since 2002—has investigated the rurally-based civil war.

A recipient of awards from

groups like Human Rights Watch and Reporters Without Borders, Morris’ work hasn’t brought him similar acclaim within Colombia. According to both him and Amnesty International, the investigative journalist has been the subject of numerous death threats—at least 50 this year alone—because his work criticizes the current government and is considered “friendly” to the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC), Colombia’s principal rebel group. (The government of Canada also considers FARC a terrorist organization.)

“In 2005, I was accused [in a video released by a paramilitary group] of having made an alliance with FARC; several hours after the declaration, I was denounced on national radio,” he recalled. “Colombians know that when you are attacked in this form, next comes your death.”

Morris fled the country in 2005 and again in 2007, following a series of emailed death threats, and was most recently condemned by Colombian President Álvaro Uribe Vélez himself on Feb. 3.

“[It’s] important to distinguish between friends of terror-

ists who act as journalists and those who are real journalists,” the president had said. The country’s defence minister later added that Morris “had a lot in common with the FARC.”

The journalist stressed that the victims of wars like Colombia’s are most often unarmed civilians, and how his work has revealed their dignity to him. Therein, he continued, lies the responsibility of journalists.

“Listening is an act of respect. And we believe it is here that we can create the narrative against war.”

Furthermore, many of the country’s people remain without a voice throughout this conflict: the indigenous, the Afro-Colombians and the farming populations “merit much more respect than the officials that are often represented,” said Morris.

These citizens are essential to the conflict’s reporting, according to Bejerman, who was formerly director of the Foundation for a New Iberian-American Journalism in Colombia. Their goal, Bejerman explained, was “to give the tools of journalism to those there, to help them tell the stories of corruption and war.”



Témoin indésirable features the story of Colombian journalist Hollman Morris. PHOTO JUSTIN BROMBERG

Thanks to the Internet, she continued, there is a power and an access to information that was never before possible. The present goal, however, is to accelerate this change.

“In the face of adversity, we present our best work,” she reflected, giving credit to both Morris and author/journalist Gabriel García Márquez.

In response to an audience member’s question about what Canadians can do, Morris mentioned the current free trade

agreement about to be ratified between Canadian Prime Minister Stephen Harper and President Uribe: “This treaty should be subject to the amelioration of human rights on the part of the Colombian government. And [Canada] shouldn’t sign until it’s guaranteed.”

Hollman Morris’ English-language website is contravia.tv. Check out Human Rights Watch or Reporters Without Borders’ websites for more info on Colombia.

Con U artist prevents British bombing

‘Technology these days really cuts down the distance,’ says the fine arts student

• TERRINE FRIDAY

JP Neufeld says his friends now call him “Super JP, Hero of the Internets.”

Neufeld, a Concordia University student, still hasn’t gotten used to the attention he’s received since he averted a high school bombing in the United Kingdom.

Neufeld, the oldest of four siblings, insists that he’s just a regular

student who did the right thing.

“The attention is kinda freaky, I must admit,” Neufeld said as he chomped on his M&M Easter Eggs. “I Google my name and all these articles pop up, whereas just last Tuesday, if you Googled ‘JP Neufeld,’ you’d find this doctor doing very doctory things.”

Neufeld, a Fine Arts major, was uploading music to newgrounds.com when he noticed some odd postings on the site’s forum: a high school student had threatened to bomb his school in the coming hours.

“Most school shooters have put something online, whether they’re bragging or they want to be caught,” Neufeld said. “I kept that in mind and thought, ‘Hey, I actually have the chance to maybe prevent something here.’”

Neufeld, who used Google to find the local police’s number and used Skype to call them, was surprised the police took him so seriously.

“They didn’t ask if it was a hoax or anything, they didn’t ask why someone from Canada would bother to call them,” he continued.

Police apprehended a 16-year-old Brit with flammable contents on his way in to class on March 17.

“Technology these days really cuts down the distance,” said Neufeld, a native of Winnipeg.

Neufeld said he moved to Montreal in 2007 because “Concordia is the only place in North America that has this really intense and involved electro-acoustics program.”

Since he was home-schooled for much of his life, Neufeld credits his start to banging pots and pans on the living room floor.

Aside from his musical aspirations, Neufeld said, “My mom and dad are very proud of me” for averting what could have been a catastrophe.

Neufeld is a moderator for the audio-visual website where the bomb threat was made.



JP says he was just a regular guy in an extraordinary situation. PHOTO TERRINE FRIDAY

Racial comments cause disqualification

• TERRINE FRIDAY

Alaa Salman was officially disqualified from running for Council in the Concordia Student Union's 2009 election.

Salman, running with the Vision slate, was ousted for sending racially charged items via her Facebook account.

In her note, Salman wrote "With all due respect, I have nothing against Jews and I'm not a racist, but by voting for CHANGE, you're voting for Jews."

Salman went on to say that if CHANGE won, it "would affect all the Arab associations, including [the Arab Student's Association] and [Solidarity for Palestinian Human Rights]. SPHR will have difficulty hosting events and booking rooms for their political activities."

ATTENTION gets the boot

• TERRINE FRIDAY

ATTENTION slate Tessa Star was disqualified from the Concordia Student Union elections on March 17 because, according to Star, she did not hand in her financial records on time.

Star said that although she's no longer in the running, she's happy with her overall campaign.

"I got the exposure I wanted in the paper, I can still do classroom talks and most importantly, I never planned on being on the ballot."

New electoral procedure gets vetoed

• TERRINE FRIDAY

CSU President Keyana Kashfi has vetoed resolutions passed by Council to make the current electoral process more transparent.

At the March 5 special Council meeting, councillors adopted a motion to safeguard against electoral fraud and secure ballot boxes.

The new resolution called for university security to accompany the ballot boxes to and from polling stations, as well as keep the boxes in their offices with access limited to the Chief Electoral Officer and Deputy Electoral Officers.

But according to Kashfi, the motion adopted is "a violation of standing regulation 205" of the CSU, which gives the CEO complete control over electoral rules and procedures.

Kashfi also ordered, by presidential decree, for ballot boxes to be stored in the CSU's offices.

Attack ads on the rise



This attack page advertised on Facebook features Unity executives (2008-09) and those currently running on the CHANGE slate.

CHANGE not really a change, some say

• TERRINE FRIDAY

As the CHANGE and Vision slates have posted advertisements on Facebook, an unnamed group has followed suit making claims that CHANGE is anything but.

The ads, appearing along the sidebar of

facebook.com, say "Don't be fooled! Click to uncover the truth about the CHANGE slate and their ties to the current Concordia Student Union. Then vote to save your CSU."

Both CHANGE and Vision currently have ads targeting Concordia students to vote for

them in the upcoming general election.

Due to Facebook's complicated advertisement scheme, it's impossible to know exactly how much CHANGE and Vision have paid for the ads. However it can be estimated that it far exceeds the Chief Electoral Officer's campaign allocation of \$750.

A funny thing happened on the way to the polls... Concerned students will be tracking the vote this year

• ANDREW HAIG & ETHAN COX

If you plan on voting in the Concordia Student Union elections this week, chances are you'll notice a new addition to the familiar polling stations. If all goes according to plan, students—many armed with video cameras—will be tracking the ballot boxes everywhere they go.

This is certainly a large undertaking, involving dozens of volunteers and the support of more than one slate, but as two students who have decided to do our small part to monitor this election, we thought we'd share with you who we are and why we think this is necessary.

To answer questions you might be mulling over: Andrew Haig is a card-carrying member of the federal Conservatives, while Ethan Cox is a campaigner for the New Democrats. Between us, we've worked on a dozen election campaigns at the federal and provincial levels, often against one another.

Understandably, we agree on little when it comes to politics. What we do agree on, however, is that corruption and voter fraud are unacceptable in a modern democracy. It offends the sensi-

bilities of anyone with integrity, be they left or right.

For years, CSU elections have been marred by persistent allegations of electoral fraud—from missing ballot boxes to duplicate voter lists to massive election overspending.

Sadly, our faith was shaken this weekend when CSU Council Chair Brent Farrington, acting under the advice of the CSU executive, submitted a request to the Judicial Board designed to invalidate the new electoral monitoring rules.

Any and all of these practices would have been utterly unacceptable in any federal or provincial campaign. It is precisely for this reason that scrutineers of all parties monitor federal elections.

Until this week we had remained fairly confident that security was in hand for this election; that is because earlier this year, independent members of the CSU Council put new rules in place designed to ensure transparency in the electoral process.

These rules require ballot boxes to be accompanied by Concordia security at all times and prevented the Chief Electoral Officer from accessing

the room in which they are stored unless he is accompanied by the chair of the Judicial Board.

Sadly, our faith was shaken this weekend when CSU Council Chair Brent Farrington, acting under the advice of the CSU

executive, submitted a request to the JB designed to invalidate the new electoral monitoring rules. Farrington argued that what might appear to the average student as fair and sensible precautions were, in fact, unjustifiable infringements on the CEO's absolute authority. Farrington argued, essentially, that the CEO should be able to do whatever he wanted with the ballot boxes.

Although the JB wisely declined to hear Farrington's request, his actions might suggest bad faith and a determination to interfere with the transparent operation of the electoral process. Farrington, it should be remembered, is deputy chairper-

son of the Canadian Federation of Students and is sitting in his position illegally, given that he is not a student at Concordia.

For an election to be legitimate, it must not only be fair and open, it must be seen as such, because democratic legitimacy is like reputation: a lifetime to build up, a minute to destroy.

With the CSU's history of questionable election practices, students, regardless of political orientation, should view any assault on the integrity of the vote as offensive. The actions of the Unity executive and their protégés on the CHANGE slate are deeply disturbing to those of us concerned about the legitimacy of student government.

That's why volunteers have come together to monitor the ballot boxes for the entire three days of this election.

We hope that students will forgive any intrusion into their privacy and forgive us if our actions seem to be overprotective.

We would like to encourage all students to vote in the next three days, and if you see a cameraman hanging around a polling station, remember: they're there to protect your ballot, and ours.

Don't vote on an empty stomach

The People's Potato wants students to try them out, hoping for an extra 10 cents per credit at the ballot box

• JUSTIN GIOVANNETTI

The People's Potato, Concordia's on-campus answer to vegan cuisine, is getting a second chance at 10 cents of your money.

In late October, the Potato's first attempt to secure a fee levy increase ended in failure when a controversial question on the same ballot—to terminate the Sustainability Action Fund's future—caused the cancellation of the whole referendum.

The Potato's question will be on the ballot of the Concordia Student Union general election this week, asking for a \$0.10 increase per credit up from the current \$0.27.

“Put simply, we need this money to meet high demand and high prices, especially due to the increase in the price of food and gas,” said Lise Kuhn, a member of the Potato's current 10-person collective.

“We also haven't had a fee levy increase since we were founded in 1999,” chimed in Gustavo Rodriguez, another collective member.

Food prices have increased a lot in the past 10 years, Kuhn said. For example a bag of Quinoa bean, a staple of vegan cooking, has tripled in

price in the last year. Concordia's collective appetite has not adjusted commensurate to the price.

For those students who are more frugally minded, the increase can be easily rationalized. “For one full-time student, the total they will pay is \$4.44 per semester, or less than the cost of one restaurant meal,” Kuhn said. “For that money, they get a semester of food.”

“Concordia is known nationally as an interesting place to be, not for the JMSB but because of student groups like the Potato.”

—Gustavo Rodriguez, member of People's Potato

Three hundred to 400 students per day eat at the Potato, a heavy demand the collective is trying to keep up with. “It's such demanding work that we need paid people,” Rodriguez said. “If it were only volunteers, it's unlikely that we would serve 300 people a week.”

To meet the demand, the Potato

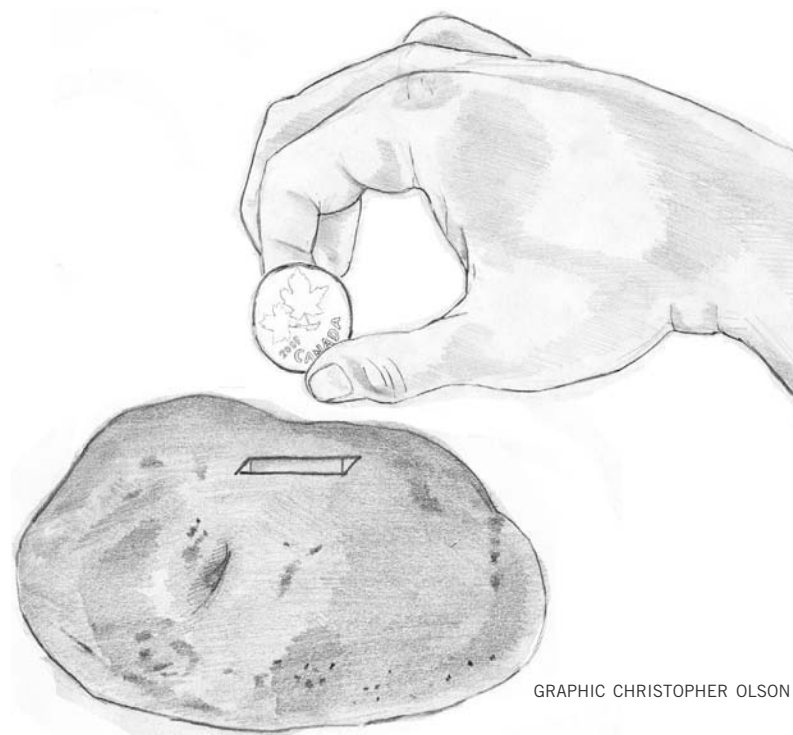
currently pays its employees \$13.90 per hour, or approximately 70 per cent of its total budget. This is a “living wage,” argues Rodriguez.

“We have actually cut down on wage hours over the past year,” said Kuhn. “We had people start the semester late and finish early to cut down on wages.”

When asked if the high wages were a problem, Kuhn confirmed, “Well, the reason we are asking for a fee levy increase is because we need the money, so yeah.”

Kuhn and Rodriguez also hope that students vote to give the Potato the fee levy increase because the money will help to sustain a symbol of the university's students. “Concordia is known nationally as an interesting place to be, not for the John Molson School of Business but because of student groups like the Potato,” said Rodriguez.

“We get emails once a week from schools in San Francisco, Vancouver, Toronto and here in Montreal, various places with the same question: how did the Potato happen?” Rodriguez added. “They all want advice to start their own version on their own campuses. It's really exciting.”



GRAPHIC CHRISTOPHER OLSON

Services offered by the People's Potato:

- Free vegan meals on the seventh floor of the Hall building, daily.
- Cooking workshops—as well as a CSU 101 class. With the fee levy increase, the 101 class should be free.
- A “good food box” where students pay a minimal fee for a large amount of vegetables every two weeks.
- Street servings such as sandwiches and pitas distributed once a week—twice when it's warm outside—to students around the downtown campus.
- A fundraising campaign, selling t-shirts and cloth bags.
- A vegan cookbook.
- An exam period food bank. The fee levy increase should allow for expansion to a year-round food bank.

—compiled by Justin Giovannetti

Casting your ballot in the general election

The down-lown on how to get the know-how about voting for you-know-who

• R. BRIAN HASTIE

The Link always loves to remind you about your rights as a voter. Consider this the official 411 on the electoral process.

The preamble

Before voting on March 24, 25 and 26, please make sure to have the following: your Concordia ID, an appendage by which to cast your vote (a hand or a foot is usually preferred) and a clear mind. Don't vote if you have no idea why you're voting; make an informed decision when partaking in the electoral process. Don't vote just because your friend asked you to if you're not sure of the candidates and their platforms.

The battlegrounds

Downtown, you can vote at the Hall Building (both in the lobby and 4th floor), EV, GM and VA (in the lobby of each

building), in the basement of the Faubourg and the atrium in the Webster Library. At Loyola, you can vote in the lobby of the RF, SP and TJ buildings, the atrium of the Vanier Library and on the second and fourth floors of the CC building.

The main event

There are three stages to voting.

The first ballot they'll hand you is to elect an executive slate. They'll have all of the parties listed and you can pick one (or if you're so inclined, pick none). These people are featured on the horizontal sheets all over school, standing back-to-back with each other, or in some cases, their heads are actually just staring at you. Or in other cases, they don't even have heads on their promo stuff, just thoughts and ideas.

The second ballot deals with councilors. Depending on which faculty you come from, you'll have to vote for different

people within your respective faculty. This means that if you're in Arts and Science, you cannot elect a council candidate from the John Molson School of Business. You can vote for up to a maximum amount of councilors—as will be specified on the voting slip—depending upon your faculty (larger ones get more seats at Council, smaller ones get less seats). It is not mandatory to enter a maximum amount of people. If you feel like you do not know these people or what they stand for, you can decline to vote in the suggested number of councillors.

The third ballot contains two referendum questions. The first has to do with The People's Potato Collective looking to have their per-credit fee levy raised from \$0.27 to \$0.37 per credit, and the second has to do with Special By-Law G of the Concordia Student Union by-laws, which looks to raise their fee per credit to \$4.75, up from the current \$4.50.

These are yes or no questions.

If you're unsure of the two referendum questions, there should be pertinent documents provided for you at every polling station. Each station is required to have these documents available to you for your perusal.

The potential problems

If a pollster announces that you have already voted and you know you clearly haven't, you must announce this to the scrutineer on the spot. They will then contact the Chief Electoral Officer immediately and deal with the problem. If you do believe that electoral fraud is afoot, please don't drop the issue at hand because you believe it to be a hassle. It would be a disservice to both yourself and to other voters who have the same potential problem.

With this in mind, have fun voting. Let this beacon of democracy shine upon you and once again, think before you vote. Get informed. It's your money at stake, and it's your vote that will influence the outcome.

Sustaining the wild

The business of trapping fur in Quebec's woodlands

• JENNIFER FREITAS

Gripped in Serge Larivière's right hand is a white bucket. It holds a dead pigeon and leftover fish from his supper. With a muskrat fur hat on his head, Larivière walks through the forest on his 15 acres of land in Saint-Apollinaire.

Larivière throws the pigeon underneath a tree, hiding it from the six crows flying in circles overhead. He says it won't be long before a coyote hears the crows' raucous voices and makes its way towards the pigeon. However, these coyote paw prints will not be the first marks left in the snow. Further down the path, Larivière points out red fox tracks, and a Canadian lynx a few more feet away.

Forty-year-old Larivière is a fur trapper. Of Aboriginal descent, Larivière started trapping furs with his father when he was five years old. He has been walking the trap line on his own every fall since the age of 20.

"It's a labour of love," says Larivière, smiling. "It's a passion, a hobby, and a side job."

Larivière doesn't trap animals on his property. "I just can't because I feel like this is a little haven for them," he says while walking out of the forest. So, he sets his traps several kilometres away from his land.

Larivière indulges in the trade whenever he has free time, which is usually in November. Quebec's legal fur-trapping season runs from the beginning of November to the end of February.

Right now, Larivière is preparing his fur pelts for the North American Fur Auction that will be held in May.

"I'm just hoping the prices will be as good as possible," says Larivière, referencing the devastating sales of the NAFA held on Jan. 7. A NAFA report released on the same day as the auction announced that the economic crisis had lowered fur pelt sales, especially in Russia, which is one of the hungriest countries for wild fur. This economic downturn continued to have a negative effect on the NAFA held in February. Fur pelt sales did not prosper.

Herman Jansen, president and CEO of NAFA, addressed a letter on Feb. 23 to all wild fur producers. The purpose of the letter was to explain why NAFA was not able to sell all of the wild fur. In the letter Jansen wrote, "Besides the devaluation of the Russian currency as a result of the financial crisis, the Russian banks have had a lot of financial troubles. The government had to bail out many of the Russian banks and has since limited credit facilities to the consumers as well as businesses."

Last year, over 40 Russian companies showed up at the NAFA to purchase wild fur. This year, only 12 were present.

"Nobody gets rich trapping," says Larivière. "You don't do it for the money, you do it because you have a passion for nature and love for the outdoors," he says, opening the door to his garage. Once inside, all you see are fox, fisher, coyote, mink, and red squirrel fur skins hanging on the wall.

"Yet, once you've harvested an animal it is the duty of the hunter to make sure this animal is worth as much as possible," says Larivière as he runs his fingers through the fisher's smooth black hair.

For Larivière, making money selling fur skins isn't such a priority because it isn't his full-time job. He is the director general of the Cree Hunters and Trappers Income Security Board, an organization that helps maintain the participation of Cree hunters in their traditional way of life based on hunting and trapping.

He says the financial aspect of fur trapping is a lot more serious for the aboriginal trappers. "Many of them will continue harvesting fur animals [when fur prices decline] because of the meat they provide," says Larivière. "And the decreased fur prices means one less source of income for these people living in job-poor communities."

One of Larivière's duties as director general is teaching a two-day mandatory trapping course to people planning on practicing the trade. "The basis of this course is to teach people what is modern trapping, how to trap properly, and how to make sure the animal dies humanely."

Larivière says that three of the best trap companies in North America are situated in Quebec—Belisle Traps, Sauvageau Traps and Rudy Traps.

"This is the most humane trap we have," says Larivière as he pulls out the Conibear Trap from a box, a trap used for catching muskrats and mink. The Conibear Trap has a four-way trigger that closes the trap when an animal pushes the trigger from any direction, including the side. "A good trap kills the animal instantly and doesn't damage the fur," continues Larivière.

The potent odour of skunk fills the space where Larivière keeps his fur pelts drying at the back of the garage. To the far left are about two dozen skunk skins. With no big market for this fur animal, its skins value varies between five and 15 dollars. Yet, these black and white-striped fur mammals fascinate Larivière.

He has a PhD in biology from the University of Saskatchewan where he wrote his thesis on the ecology of striped skunks and how these skunks prey on duck eggs.

"I try to be careful when handling the fur pelts because any damage done is money coming out my pocket," says the skunk expert as he turns a coyote fur pelt inside out and slides it back onto the rectangular board for the second stage of drying.



Serge Larivière holding a fisher, red fox and coyote fur pelt outside of his garage.
PHOTO JENNIFER FREITAS



Serge Larivière holding squirrel fur pelts. PHOTO JENNIFER FREITAS

The process, from trapping an animal to drying it, takes roughly eight to 10 days. Once the animal is caught, you make two cuts behind its legs and pull the hide out like a glove. You then take a scraper and scrape off all of the fat.

Larivière never throws away the fat; he instead puts it into his bucket to feed the other animals roaming on his land. He likes to call this “recycling.” You then proceed to the two stages of drying. When the drying is finished, Larivière says you take the hide off the board, and depending on the animal, sell the fur pelt either leather side out or fur side out.

“This is usually a job for my kids,” says Larivière as he takes a brush and starts brushing the coyote’s fur.

Larivière is husband to 38-year-old Nancy Dion, who accompanies him a few days on the trap line, and father to four children—Cassandre, Véronique, Nathan, and Kassiopée—all under the age of 13.

Cassandre, who is 12, has been helping her dad prepare animal skins since she was eight years old. “Handling fur is like arts and crafts, so I like to do that,” she says.

Although Larivière’s two eldest daughters already know how to skin muskrats, he doesn’t expect them to become fur trappers in the future.

“I want them to at least grow up understanding that the sustainable use of renewable natural resources is one of the best ways to help the environment and appreciate nature,” he says.

Larivière mentions that when it comes to trapping the wild animals, trappers will seek the most abundant populations and only take a percentage of them. “If you don’t trap, you’re not going to have more animals because nature will come in and clean it up itself.”

Larivière believes that animal welfare is a human concept and that when nature kills an animal, there’s no welfare involved. “The wolves start eating the moose before it is dead, whereas we trappers make sure the animal is dead [before we start skinning it].”

Larivière says trapping animals is important because it lessens the problems of over-abundance and rabies. “The worst thing that could happen is to find diseased animals on your trap line,” says Larivière. He’s making reference to the rabies virus detected in 2006 in south-western Quebec along the Vermont border.

James Grant, a Biology professor at Concordia University, agrees with Larivière that there needs to be management in animal populations—to a certain extent.

“Some populations, we would probably benefit from harvesting them. Most populations probably don’t need to be harvested, but probably can be harvested if done humanely and responsibly,” said Grant.

Grant says the populations that do need controlling are invasive animals, pest species, and disease-carrying animals. However, he does not worry about the fur animal population because they are in good hands.

“Most of the populations being trapped aren’t endangered because these trappers do know what they are doing,” said Grant. “It’s like they are farming the wildlife; so it is in their interest not to over harvest,” continued Grant.

Besides monetary profits, Grant points out environmental benefits to harvesting.

“You think about a Native person harvesting a fur pelt and wearing it rather than buying something at Wal-Mart, which is nylon and has a chemical, ecological and energy footprint to it,” said Grant.

Larivière supports the slogan “Fur Is Green,” an advertising campaign put out over a year ago by the Fur Council of Canada. This campaign highlights how fur is renewable, durable, recyclable, biodegradable, and resource efficient. But more importantly, that this trade respects the land, the animals, people and cultures.

Alan Herscovici is the vice-president of the Fur Council of Canada and the author of *Second Nature: The Animal Rights Controversy*. He says people like Larivière, whom he meets with regularly at Fur Council of Canada meetings, are doing a very important job for the animals and for society, yet people tend not to acknowledge that.

“It is very nice to say we love nature, but animal rights are a fantasy because animals do die,” says Herscovici. He claims that one of the main reasons why people are not aware of the benefits of harvesting fur is that trappers are away from the city and all the media buzz, so people don’t get to hear their side of the story.

“Animal rights activists are in the city close to the media and do a street demonstration just in time for the news,” says Herscovici, “but the trappers are out in the bush away from all the media.”

Larivière agrees. “If trappers are guilty of anything, it’s remaining quiet for too long,” says Larivière. “We’re not out there to kill the animals, we’re out there to harvest the fur.”

Larivière always makes sure to respect the environment he’s taking from and to do whatever he can to support the animal life.

“The whole idea of fur trapping is you take from nature, but you also have to give back to nature,” he states. “You can’t just take, take, take, it doesn’t work that way.”

Larivière will keep an eye out for more paw prints in the melting snow and continue to leave food for his furry friends in the forest. He wants to make sure they stay healthy and produce lots of offspring, that way it ensures fur pelts for next year.



Serge Larivière turning a coyote fur pelt inside out for the second stage of drying. PHOTO JENNIFER FREITAS

“Most of the populations being trapped aren’t endangered because these trappers do know what they are doing. It’s like they are farming the wildlife; so it is in their interest not to over harvest.”

—James Grant,
biology professor at Concordia University



Red fox and coyote fur pelts hanging in the entrance of the garage, ready for the North American Fur Auction. PHOTO JENNIFER FREITAS

Comparison of the North American Fur Auction sales for Western Northern raccoon pelts

January 2008	100 per cent of stock sold	Average \$25.78 per pelt
January 2009	15 per cent of stock sold	Average \$19.24 per pelt
February 2009	50 per cent of stock sold	Average \$18.56 per pelt

Trying to find a place like ho



A fifth of Montreal's population are immigrants, and have come here from countries all over the globe. GRAPHIC ROSEN II

New immigrants have a difficult time adjusting to life at

• JOSÉ ESPINOZA

Some Concordia University students worry about finding school programs to help them meet their academic needs. Sung Ly, a Concordia Engineering student, worries about where he will sleep next month.

Ly is a young man from Cambodia. In 2007, he left his home and family and headed for Montreal in search of a brighter future. "I found it difficult to make friends or to find help with housing issues or translation services," said Ly about his first experiences at Concordia. Ly is currently sharing an apartment. He will have to find new accommodations next month.

"The situation is stressful, rent is very expensive and I am afraid there's nothing much available," said Ly.

In the beginning, Ly turned to the International Student Office for help. According to Ly, "The ISO is helpful, but it seemed to me that they were more concerned with my paperwork and tuition payment than my integration to life in Montreal or at the university."

The ISO was established to help new immigrants entering Concordia and is part of Concordia's advocacy and support services. The services offered range from an information session on settling in Montreal, handling health care needs, publication of the international student handbook and guide and counselling to help with student life. Also available

at the ISO are emergency services for international students, assistance with immigration matters, administration of emergency loans, and a liaison with sponsoring agencies and government sponsors.

Ly believes the ISO offers helpful programs, but the problem is that new immigrant students do not feel understood. Samia Saif agrees with that statement.

"There is a lack of services and a lack of structure in place to help new immigrants who need an emotionally-safe educational atmosphere that fosters rapid language learning, acculturation, and access to a wide range of support services."

—Gregory Johannson,
proposal coordinator for
Concordia Immigration Support Centre

Saif is an international student studying to become an accountant at Con U. She is from Morocco and has been studying at Concordia since 2006.

"The International Student Office is not something that I knew about in my first semester at Concordia," said Saif. The emphasis on academic and university related issues at the ISO bothered the 24-year-old Commerce student.

"The ISO was not helpful when I tried to find work for the first time," said Saif. "The proper paperwork seems to be all they are interested in." According to Saif, the ISO is a good place for tuition payments and finding

out university requirements. For anything else, Saif believes there is a lack of empathy when it comes to international students' issues.

Concordia students take pride in the profound, and continuous diversification of the student population. Some students, like Gregory Johannson, are looking to develop a new program for immigrants at Concordia.

Johannson is the proposal coordinator for a project to establish a centre for immigrants at Concordia called the Concordia Immigration Support Centre.

According to Johannson, new immigrants entering Concordia face numerous obstacles upon arrival: general confusion, being unaware of the opportunities available, needing help to find affordable housing and integration into student life.

The centre for new immigrants would assist past and current students who study at Concordia, said Johannson. "There will be resources like an education campaign, conferences on work and integration, assistance with

paper work, translation services and most importantly an environment that welcomes a holistic approach." According to the proposal there are two levels of involvement. one is an involvement in community projects, the other is involvement in Concordia projects.

Johannson believes this centre would be more efficient than the ISO. According to Johannson, the ISO's services are not well advertised and lack a comprehensive approach that makes students feel at home. Johannson feels that it is important to centralize these services as part of a welcome package for new immigrants studying at Concordia.

"There is a lack of services and a lack of structure in place to help new immigrants who need an emotionally-safe educational atmosphere that fosters rapid language learning, acculturation, and access to a wide range of support services," he explains.

Professor Steven High teaches a conference dealing with immigrant services at Concordia. According to High, one of the biggest challenges is to ensure that these services are "not merely delivered to young immigrants but that they have a real say in determining what their needs are and how they might be best served [...] If we are to go beyond token consultation, this requires political will and openness on the part of the university."

This is a thought shared by Professor

20.6%

of Montreal's population
born in another country

12.5%

of immigrants living in Montreal
who immigrated between 1996 and 2000

22.3%

of immigrants living in Montreal
who immigrated between 2001 and 2006

29.3%

of immigrants living in Montreal
born in Asia and the Middle East

me



Concordia and living in Montreal

Frank Crooks, who believes that Concordia needs to do more.

“I hear all sorts of complaints from students in my law classes who were not born in Canada. These complaints range from the additional fees that they pay, to the ‘not so nice’ treatment they may receive from stores and service people,” says Crooks. “There is also the issue of the French language which you need to get a job here and the lack of jobs in general.”

According to a Canadian census on population, the highest percentage of new immigrants in Montreal reside in neighbourhoods like Côte-des-Neiges and Ahuntsic. The census also found these new immigrants moving closer to the city because of school facilities.

For these new immigrants, the Quebec government has a provincial program in place called Immigration et Communautés culturelles. In Montreal, this program offers several services and resources for new immigrants

“The ISO is helpful, but it seemed to me that they were more concerned with my paperwork and tuition payment than my integration to life in Montreal or at the university.”

—Sung Ly,
Concordia Engineering student

Crooks is right about the lack of jobs for new immigrants. A 2008 study of census employment figures by Jack Jedwab, executive director of the Association for Canadian Studies, found that Montreal had the highest unemployment rate for immigrants with university degrees.

It is important to understand that the stigma associated with a new immigrant does not apply to one particular culture. In fact Statistics Canada found that new immigrants living in the city of Montreal came from about 100 different countries around the world.

In recent years, Montreal has seen a shift in cities where immigrants prefer to settle.

such as help with affordable housing, information sessions and French language courses. On the Immigration and communautés culturelles website, there is detailed information on procedures for work permits, student visas and sponsorship programs.

The downside to this government program is that it aims to offer services more to the community and less to the individual. The Immigration et communautés culturelles is mostly concerned with multi-cultural programs aimed at ending racism and bringing together multi-ethnic communities.

There are other programs available to new immigrants but these are not specifically put in place for them. The Women’s Centre of

Montreal and the Genesis Project in Côte-des-Neiges have services in place for new immigrants like French language courses, but their focus is centred on neighbourhood problems or the promotion of anti-violence campaigns.

Earlier this year, Johannson presented the proposal for the new immigrant centre to the Concordia Student Union. The CSU turned it down. According to Johannson, the financial pandemonium and the existence of the ISO program is at the heart of the negative decision.

Johannson is disappointed but he hopes that next year’s administration will give the project the go ahead.

Ly is still looking for an affordable apartment. He asked for help at the ISO and was informed that they offer a housing support group but it’s only available in mid-August or in January. Ly then tried to contact someone at Immigration et communautés culturelles, but no one has called him back. Ly is resigned that he will have to overpay for an apartment far away from campus.

Saif is now working as a tutor, she received help from a program at the John Molson School of Business. Saif tried to find help at the ISO. “They offer a work on campus program but does little to help apart from explaining what paper work needs to be processed in order to work off campus.”

Both Ly and Saif believe a Concordia Immigration Support Centre with centralized services would be a welcome change.

Resources for new immigrants

If you’ve been having trouble integrating into life in Montreal there are a number of resources designed to help you out.

Immigration et Communautés culturelles

Provides detailed information on procedures for work permits, student visas and sponsorship programs.

Website: micc.gouv.qc.ca

Women’s Centre of Montreal

A non-profit organization dedicated to helping women help themselves toward greater autonomy and self-esteem through educational and vocational training, information, counseling and referral services

Website: cnd-m.com

Project Genesis

Uses individual services and community organizing to assist people to better understand and defend their social and economic rights, especially those related to housing, basic income security, and access to public healthcare.

Website: genese.qc.ca

International Students Office

The ISO is located on the downtown campus in H-653 in the Hall building and is open from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. from Monday to Friday. Phone 514-848-2424 ext. 3515.

Website: supportservices.concordia.ca/iso/

34.4%

of immigrants living in Montreal
born in **Europe**

14.7%

of immigrants living in Montreal
born in **Africa**

10.3%

of immigrants living in Montreal
born in the **Caribbean and Bermuda**

.05%

of immigrants living in Montreal
born in **South America**

5 days out of 365

A peek into the lives of Montreal's homeless with 5 Days for the Homeless campaign

• LES HONYWILL,
PHOTOS IAN LAWRENCE

An emotionally and physically drained group lay sprawled across chairs and couches in the GM business building. In their last moments of desolation, the volunteers could barely muster the energy to speak, let alone count the money spread out on the table beside them—money raised during five cold and eye-opening nights on the streets.

The participants of 5 Days for the Homeless had few complaints despite living on nothing more than handouts to raise money and attention for the charity Dans La Rue.

"It was tough on the first day. After that, the true meaning of what we were doing took over," said Tim Knight, a finance student. "I didn't even care about being a student anymore; it felt like what we were doing was a lot more important."

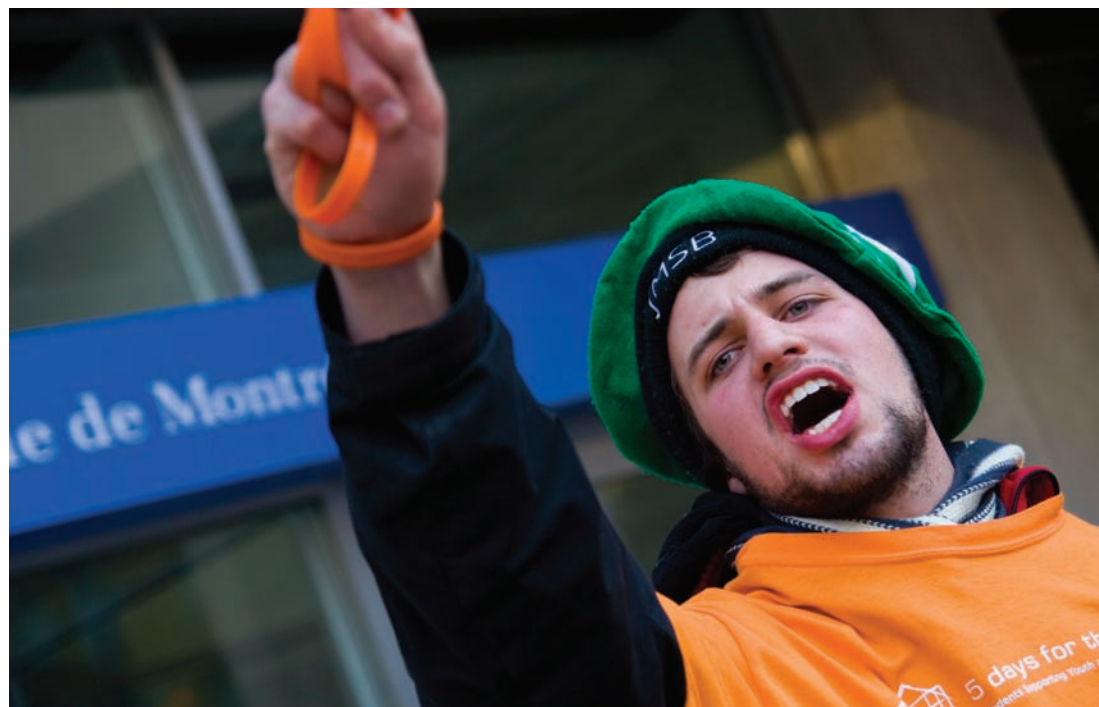
Beginning Sunday evening last week, the group slept on cardboard and in donated sleeping bags outside of the business building for five days, eating only what was handed to them, to raise awareness for the plight of the homeless.

The sacrifice of the volunteers was in full display in their final hour of homelessness. Eyes were bloodshot, baggy and noticeably sleep deprived. Mouths, which spent the previous 120 hours pleading with the masses to help the cause, drooped open. Lips were chapped and voices were depleted to painful sounding croaks. Heads tilted in every direction but up, while limbs hung motionless from armrests and desks.

Their incredible efforts were in the name of Dans La Rue, a charity that helps disadvantaged youth by offering a safe haven, food, and education for the homeless. Executive director of the program, Aki Tchitacov, described the dire straits homeless teens could find themselves in.

"The street takes its toll on you, it's very easy to be taken advantage of," said Tchitacov. "Montreal is a major centre for drugs, gangs and juvenile prostitution; this is what the kids we work with have to contend with."

The final amount raised for Dans La Rue will not be known until the last of the donations are received in a week, but project co-Chair Josh Redler estimated the group collected \$28,500. However, the feeling in the room that Friday afternoon suggested the gain was not simply monetary. Emotions reached their thresh-



(Top left) First year Translation student, collecting money in front of the John Molson building, Tim Knight pleads, 'If you could keep your brother off the street, is that all you can do?' (Top right) Bus driver, Pierre DuChesne, takes inventory of donations. The bus offers clothing, toilet paper, and food. (Right) A toonie is added to Monday's total.

olds as the group recounted their experiences with the homeless they met on the street.

"This elderly homeless man came up to us with money in his hand and he kept just the pennies and the nickels, and he gave the rest," Knight said with tears welling up in his eyes. "He said he didn't have any kids and he wanted to give to the next generation. When he gave us the money it was so touching it made me break down. I offered him food but he wouldn't take it, he said he had already eaten."

Over the course of the week the group formed a strong bond with a man named John, who said he had been living on the street for a little over a year.

"One of the best parts of the five days was having John there," said Redler. "Getting close and personal with someone who lives on the

streets and knowing that they're no different from us; they need affection too. He hung out with us for a few days and helped us give food to other homeless people. It was absolutely incredible to have someone like that take initiative to help other people like him."

"One night he was singing and dancing with us, and he told us that was the best time he'd had in 13 months," said Knight.

"They're on the streets, they have no one to talk to and nothing to do," said Kristina Partsinevelos, co-chair of the program. "This is one of the things that John said, they're all so lonely and it would mean so much just to have someone to talk to."

"There were those I spoke to who said, 'If people could just acknowledge us and give us a smile it would mean a lot.' We felt that. We know how it is; to have so many

people walk by and ignore you is demoralizing. They don't necessarily need money."

Participant Stéphanie Durand echoed the same feelings of loneliness after the second night.

"Even though I am surrounded by a crowd of people, I still feel extremely lonely," said Durand. "I can't call my friends to see them, I can't see my family and I can't use the Internet to get in touch with any of them."

"I would love to take a shower, check my email and call my friends, but I'm proud to be sacrificing my comfort for those that can't have these things."

Unfortunately for the group, moral blows were not the only factor of the streets they needed to contend with. With an average temperature of -2.2°C for the five nights, culminating in a freezing -7.4°C on Friday

30,000

estimated number of homeless people on the island of Montreal

morning, the group experienced first hand the difficulty of living in bitter cold. Coupled with the temperature was the looming threat of rain, which gave the students a rude wake up call on Wednesday morning.

"We woke up that morning at seven and immediately had to run under the cover of the awning of the business building," said Partsinevelos, who said she had to fight through the fatigue and spring to action, making sure all supplies weren't ruined. "We had to immediately rush everything under the awning of the business building, especially the sleeping bags and



(Far left) The volunteers sleep in front of the John Molson building with temperatures dropping to -7. (Left) John, a homeless man who stayed with the volunteers for three nights. When asked why he doesn't beg for money, John responded "because they just laugh at you." (Above) Volunteers collect money for Dans la Rue in front of Concordia's Hall building. (Bottom) Exhausted Engineering student, Husein Damjal, rests after five days of homelessness.



Stephanie Durand, takes a break from the John Molson Building. (Left) In front of the John Molson building, volunteers ask passer-bys saying "if five bucks is it worth it?" (Above) Dans la Rue displays the supplies given to the volunteers, and hot drinks for the homeless. The group's approximate total of \$2500.



cardboard which we couldn't let get soggy."

Already sleep deprived, the group said they had no choice but to sleep through many of their classes. Despite the miserable conditions, the group managed to keep their heads held high.

"We can't complain," said Partsinevelos. "We're students doing it for five days for people who are out in the cold every day. Besides, last year it was freezing."

In 2008 a team of only three managed to endure the temperatures that hovered around -10°C at night and included snow on four of the five days. In spite of the harsh weather from the year before, the group tripled in 2009 growing to nine, including all three participants from 2008. In part due to the growth of the project, Partsinevelos was able to summarize the week

with one question.

"Is there a word for something greater than a success?"

The 5 Nights for the Homeless campaign has become an important event for Dans la Rue, generating close to \$60,000 for the charity since the event's inception last year.

"It is important for two reasons, the first being because it's a fundraising event," said Tchitacov. "The second important contribution is the attention. This is groundbreaking in itself as it is becoming a key event for drawing attention to the plight of the homeless."

Tchitacov said that on a nightly basis approximately 20 homeless youth, some as young as 12 years old, take shelter in "the Bunker," a refuge for homeless minors. It is these minors who are the most vulnerable on the streets, according to Tchitacov.

"You never know how life is going to turn out for you. There are some young people who don't have the benefit of good people around to guide them through life as a normal human being."

In the Bunker the teens have access to food, shelter and an education. Tchitacov said one of the Bunker's most important functions is to help disadvantaged youth get a leg up, back into society.

"The Bunker is very important because, in the whole city of Montreal, there is only the Bunker where minors can get some sleep and be safe from the street."

Naturally, Tchitacov believes it's vital for university students to refrain from turning a blind eye to the homeless.

"When we are at that point in our lives, we pride ourselves on our open-mindedness. It's part and par-

"There were those I spoke to who said, 'If people could just acknowledge us and give us a smile it would mean a lot.' We felt that. We know how it is; to have so many people walk by and ignore you is demoralizing. They don't necessarily need money."

—Kristina Partsinevelos, co-chair of 5 days for the Homeless

cel of the university experience. There's something wrong with a society as well off as ours that has such a high level of young people who have been abandoned. That is an aberration in our society and unfortunately most of us are able to cope with it. As a society what do we do? Do we just let them drown? If we're going to be civilized it's not just about doing the things that are easy; it's about doing what needs to be done."

According to Partsinevelos, what needs to be done is rather simple.

"People need to realize that homelessness [exists] 365 days a year, not just at Christmas. That's what John told us. Everyone only thinks about them at that time."

As the group solemnly nodded their heads to John's advice, the question was asked, "Who would come back next year?" Without hesitation everyone in the room raised their hand.

quick reads

Too good to put down



Too Cool to Be Forgotten
Alex Robinson
Top Shelf
Productions
July 2008
128 pp
\$14.95

Having visited a hypnotist to help quit smoking, middle-aged Andy Wicks finds himself transported back to high school. While reliving high school to correct one's past mistakes is an idea that runs through most people's minds every now and again, the concept proves to be quite complex when executed.

Andy figures that if he refuses his first cigarette, that he will be returned to his adult life, but when that doesn't happen he begins to break down. The experience he does need to go through, however, is acutely painful and personal.

Robinson's art has a cartoony quality to it, but remains emotional and evocative.

With some successful experimentation in page design and narrative devices, this story doesn't take long to turn from a fanciful trip down memory lane's "would have, could have, should have" section to a haunting examination of the repercussions of decisions we make in our day-to-day lives.

4/5

—Sebastien Cadieux

Move over *Twilight*

Dead Until Dark
Charlaine Harris
Ace Books
May 2001
320 pp
\$7.99

Vampires are back in a big way. Not since Buffy, Angel, and Blade has bloodsucker-mania been so big. Much of the thanks-or-blame-must go to *Twilight*. *Twilight* is the hit book-to-movie explosion that has the tween-to-teen set buying everything related.

But credit is long due to *Dead Until Dark*, the first book in the Sookie Stackhouse series by Charlaine Harris, which has spawned the hit HBO series *True Blood*. Small town. Girl meets boy. Boy is a vampire. Love ensues. Some people don't approve. Love conquers all?

Luckily this series isn't that simple. The series is set in the fictional town of Bon Temps, Louisiana. It's erotic, and violent. If you thought *Twilight* was too tame, this might be for you.

In this world vampires are out of the coffin, so to speak, drinking synthetic blood made in Japan, and living among ... the living. Sookie is a sassy waitress who is also a mind reader. Bill is the new vampire in town. They court in old fashion Southern style—and local murders are the only complication.

Just be warned: the first book is the entire plot for the first season of *True Blood*.

3.5/5

—Elizabeth de Grandpre

I am not Johnnie Ray Rousseau

The differences between an author and his literary alter ego



Disclaimer: Larry Duplechan is not Johnnie Ray Rousseau, although he does control every facet of his life. GRAPHIC SYLVIA

• LARRY DUPECHAN

Since the publication last fall of my fifth novel, *Got 'til it's Gone*, I have received several very kind emails from readers, expressing sympathy for the death of my mother. The fortunate fact is, my mother is—knock wood—very much alive, quite healthy, and looking remarkable for her age. But in the last few pages of the book, the mother of Johnnie Ray Rousseau dies (yes, it's a spoiler, but not much of one). Johnnie Ray Rousseau is the recurring protagonist of four of my five published novels, and a supporting character in the remaining one.

Johnnie Ray Rousseau is also, as I have admitted from the beginning of my writing career back in the mid-1980s, my literary alter ego and mouthpiece. Which can make for a certain amount of confusion, even for people who really should know better; sometimes, even for me.

Johnnie Ray, like me, is an African-American gay man of Louisiana Creole descent. He's my age—actually, five days older than I am, born on Christmas Day, 1956.

Like me, he's rather vain, ambivalent at best concerning the physical aging process, and addicted to the gym and to keeping himself looking, well, remarkable for his age. Like me, Johnnie is also addicted to American pop culture, including but not limited to Hollywood movie musicals of the 1930s and '40s, and "girl group" music of the 1960s. Like me, he is either a scintillating wit or a relentless smart-ass, depending on whom you ask.

Johnnie Ray Rousseau is, basically, me. Through this five-foot, eight-inch, athletic-looking (if not actually athletic) literary device, I have been able to express my preferences, pet peeves, and opinions in print for going on 25 years now. Remember, back in 1985, there was no such thing as a blog. If you wanted to give the world (or even a miniscule subset of the world) a piece of your mind, you either spray-painted it across a

public wall, or you somehow had to get yourself published.

So, why a fictional alter ego? Why not write memoirs?

Well you may ask, two main reasons: First, to get a memoir published, it usually helps to be at least passably famous. And as I am neither a show business celebrity, nor a former Capital Hill call-boy, nor the mother of octuplets, I fear the list of prospective buyers for my memoirs would be (if possible) even shorter than the list of prospective buyers for my next novel, if any. Second, my life is really rather dull. I am contentedly married to my college boyfriend (we celebrate 33 years together this month). I'm physically healthy and no more neurotic than the average—heck, I'm not even in therapy. I have more friends than any one person really deserves. I make a reasonable living as a secretary in a law firm, and I write the occasional novel. I am a reasonably happy man.

You can't write novels about a happy man. Well, I suppose you could; but believe me, no one in his right mind would want to read them. So, in Johnnie Ray Rousseau I have created a character very much like myself, whom I place in situations which I may or may not have ever experienced. Of all my published books, *Blackbird*, my high school coming-out story, is probably the most true to my own life experiences; but even there, Johnnie has sex with a man while in high school, which I didn't until college.

He undergoes a sort of exorcism in an attempt to "go straight," which I never did (though people are forever asking me what it was like). Similarly, in *Captain Swing*, Johnnie's father dies of pancreatic cancer, even as Johnnie mourns for the untimely death of his life partner, Keith Keller.

So it comes as little surprise to me when people assume my own father (again, very much alive as of this writing) died of pancreatic cancer. Though I was taken somewhat aback when my husband, Greg, turned the last page of *Captain Swing* (he only reads

my work in first edition, never in manuscript), and exclaimed, "You killed me!" It never occurred to me that I would have to explain to him that Keith Keller (despite being a handsome, Caucasian banker—like Greg) was a fictional character, not to be seriously confused with my husband; certainly not by my husband.

Having portrayed Johnnie at the ages of 17, 22, 35 and 48, I am often asked (and have often asked myself) if there will be further stories of Johnnie—at 55, or say, 70. I don't know yet. Currently, I'm leaning toward retiring the character, having left him on the last page of *Got 'til it's Gone* as a happily partnered middle-aged man, sitting in bed watching television with his life partner—exactly where you're likely to find me by 8:30 on any given evening. It strikes me as a nice place to leave him. Of course, I didn't plan to write a fifth novel—so I've learned never to say never.

Johnnie Ray Rousseau's personal (not just chronological) development often reflects my own: in his twenties, Johnnie was an admitted "snow queen," as I was in my twenties—in *Eight Days A Week*, Johnnie waxes poetic about the beauty of white men (and blonds in particular); some twenty-five years older in *Got 'til it's Gone*, Johnnie is an equal-opportunity fuck (as am I), and he ends up partnered with a black man.

Johnnie also allows me to play the "what-if" game with some of the major decisions of my own life: in *Eight Days*, Johnnie chooses his nascent career as a nightclub singer over his relationship with Keith. This is me having it both ways, since I chose to jettison my own singing career back in the early 1980s, in order to stay with Greg. Johnnie goes on to record an album, do a good deal of club work and television shows, which I did not.

As for me, I wrote books. Or have you heard?

Larry Duplechan is the author of five acclaimed novels, including *Blackbird* and *Got 'til it's Gone*.

For an audience of one

Newfoundland author Kate Story on being motivated to write

• KATE STORY

I can't write about writing without writing about time.

You need to make time to write. For me the best time is the morning, but you might prefer nights or afternoons—whatever—as long as you make and take the time. Also you need time to let your brain unfurl, to play. Walks, runs, yoga, naps, museums, whatever turns you on—these are great ways to let your mind work away at creative challenges. But you have to go alone.

Also space.

Close your door. Have a door to close. Don't even think of answering e-mail. And I don't need to tell you to turn off your cell phone. Writing is a solo performance with an audience of one. It's lonely and it's important. If you cheat yourself of the loneliness you'll never finish; you might not even start.

I am a pretty bossy person by nature, so when asked to write this article, I found myself wanting to give reams of advice. You'll have to forgive me. I want to demystify the work; you have to be practical to be a writer.

A lot of people talk about discipline. I think discipline is a crock of shit. I'm somewhat disciplined, but mostly I love writing and there is no way in hell I'd write if I only worked from a place of discipline. You have to constantly trick yourself into loving it, or remembering why you love it. I think a bit of what they now call ADHD, is a great asset for a writer. If I'm bored while working on something, I guess a reader would be too. So I change it up. Pleasure.

Years ago I was in the early honeymoon stage of a relationship, and my new lover came across a small piece of paper with the words "Grama must die soon" scrawled across it. It took some explaining. I'd been struggling with my first novel and it was getting out of control—endless anecdotal bits about living in Toronto, mostly drawn from my journal, and this tension between the present and past, this world and the other—but no way to break out of it.

I was stuck.

And one night I'd been walking around on the streets and letting my mind wander, and it came to me—the main character's grandmother back home in Newfoundland would die, early in the book, as a catalyst for... well, the rest of the book. I wrote it down, as I do each and every one of my images, ideas, character notes, plot notes, pretty turns of phrase, and weird seemingly disconnected things that I see or imagine as I go about my day: on a scrap of paper. I do this until I have lots and lots of bits of paper.

Then I start shuffling through the bits and throwing out the ones that are boring. And a shape emerges and I start ordering the bits. I find gaps. I write new ideas on new pieces of paper. I keep re-ordering the pile. I get elastic bands and group the piles.

I take a break. A week or two. I don't look at the piles, my cats sit on them.

Then I get onto the computer and I start



Newfoundland author Kate Story. GRAPHIC CHRISTOPHER OLSON

writing. Using bits of paper like this, it's like connect the dots, and the whole "blank page/screen" phenomenon is eliminated. It's practical (and it can make for some interesting explanations if people find the notes).

I can't recommend this method enough, especially for longer works. Sometimes I use it for short fiction too, but often the shorter stuff explodes into my mind more or less fully-formed and ready to go. They let you play, the pieces of paper—and they let seemingly unrelated things breathe and sometimes this is what makes the soul of your work, what makes it extraordinary—these strange connections, like lightning coming up out of the ground.

Also I have a writing group. This provides the kick in the ass for those days when taking two hours to write seems impossible: my inbox is full, my work is busy, my lover needs attention, I haven't been to the gym in a month, and the fridge is full of rotting vegetables.

Knowing that I have a deadline, and that the performance and audience of one is going to expand soon and I better be ready, is immensely sustaining. My writing group is actually organized by one person who does not submit work to the group. We pay her a relatively small fee to organize our work (make sure everyone has copies a week in advance), schedule the meetings,

and hound us to write. In the group I learned to write consistently, and to take critical feedback. More often than not, the comments have something very important in them. Even when I don't agree, the ensuing discussion illuminates fissures in the work. And then I rewrite.

Writers who talk as if they do it all themselves are liars. They may be underestimating support they get from friends and/or editors; they may be falling into the "discipline" trap. The support and supportive criticism of my group gets me through the dry spells when no one is biting and through the early years when I'd not yet written anything ready to send out.

One last piece of advice: if you're working on something, and it's in the early stages—you're just beginning to think about it and tease out what it might be—do not talk to anyone about it. It's your secret, and if you talk about it, it deflates like a great wrinkled flaccid balloon. And then you will not write it.

Performance and audience of one. Write! It's the most difficult and rewarding thing I've ever done.

Kate Story is a Newfoundlander living in Peterborough, Ontario. Her first novel *Blasted* came out with Killick Press in 2008, and her story *Runaway* was shortlisted in this year's CBC Literary Awards.

lit' Lit Writ

Leviticus

I give birth in the desert and feed
Leviticus to my young,
Chewed to a gentle pulp, to explain
to them, if
instinct isn't in it, why

all of us will be staying here and
letting the sun do its job from now on.
This is where the prophets live, and

if you know how to love a desert, you
can
munch rocks and sweat sand and be
loved, maybe,
by the light-soaked dust between
your teeth.

You could give birth to narrow feelings,
fierceness,
clarity, or nothing but faithfulness:
because
you would have known all these things
and tasted light.

I am a tribe against—
laden with harshness under a copper
sky
carrying my young with me among
the rocks.

—Dalia Tebechrani

Miss Cramp's art class

we all paint
my friends and me

i can see them

their emotions mix yellow
passions are lost in the
blue

i add more water

i paint the sun
a big round one
a natural beginning

then i paint you in the centre

and me a little smaller
over to the side

mom is smaller again

but miss cramp complains
because everything is black

so i add a little red to your hands

—Michael Sweet

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

The Bratz effect

How young girls are being made into sex objects

• CHRISTOPHER OLSON

Adolescent girls are increasingly becoming the targets of advertising, often depicted in highly eroticized roles, says M. Gigi Durham, an advocate for children's rights. But despite these alarming trends, few people are actually taking notice.

"No one really takes the media seriously except media studies people," says Durham, who teaches media studies at the University of Iowa. "Even when I teach my college classes, there's very little media literacy education, and it's during my classes that that light bulb goes off."

Durham compacted 13 years of research into *The Lolita Effect: The Media Sexualization of Young Girls and What We Can Do About It*.

Very young girls are being used in advertising, but they're shown in highly sexualized and eroticized ways, says Durham.

"12- and 13-year-olds should not be seen as legitimate objects of sexual desire. It's not okay for us to see young girls that way. But that's not the same thing as saying they shouldn't know about sexuality."

The lack of support for sexual education in schools in most parts of North America is perplexing, says Durham, and probably one of the root causes of the commodification of sexuality.

"We're so squeamish about having a straightforward, factual discussion about sex, and at the same time we have this 'anything goes' attitude towards the media."

Even advertisements that seemingly do the right thing, like the Dove "Real Beauty" commercials, are constructed by the same people who are responsible for the campaigns of Axe body spray and Slimfast.

"I think it tells us something about corporate hypocrisy and double standards," says Durham. "What does it mean that they're doing this on the one hand, and then at the same time they're peddling products that depend on the very imagery they're critiquing with the other?"

It's important to know, then, that these ideals are not instinctive, says Durham.

"We don't just naturally gravitate to them. I think what the media is best at and what advertising is best at is creating desires. In real life it's impossible for someone to be 5' 9" and to weigh 110 pounds, and at the same time have large breasts. That just doesn't happen, because when weight is lost, it's lost all over, and so it takes artificial means to maintain the very thin body but the very voluptuous breasts."

"That wasn't the case with Twiggy," says Durham. "Twiggy was just thin."

So why aren't parents doing more to protect their children from the media?

"Parents are in the same culture that everyone else is," says Durham. "They're also in this media-saturated environment. They've grown up with it. They [...] don't have the tools to analyze it [either]. It's probably that they just haven't thought very hard about how problematic some of it is, or why one might stop to question why one might put high heels on a baby."

Although different body ideals have existed throughout human history, and across cultures, the current standard of beauty peddled in advertising is spreading.

"Unfortunately it's global now. These images are impacting cultures where other body types and other understandings of sexu-

ality were in place from earlier times."

Durham doesn't believe censorship is the key to keeping the media in line.

"[However], I do think we should start thinking about regulating advertising in children's media. Some countries have bans on advertising on media for children under 12, just because cognitively they're not able to handle it. I think it's worth looking into."



The Lolita Effect
M. Gigi Durham Ph.D.
Overlook Press
June 2008
286 pp
\$27.50

GRAPHIC VIVIEN LEUNG



Lit Writ

The Elementary Debate

• RAY LEONARD

[School auditorium. On the stage the moderator, an elderly teacher, sits at a table, on stage left behind a podium is Sam, stage right Leslie.]

Moderator: As moderator of this school debate, I will pose questions to each of you individually and you will have a brief moment to answer, at which point your opponent may reply, or rebut your statement, now to get-

Leslie: Uh, before we begin here, Bob-

Moderator: It's Mister Stanford to you, Leslie.

Leslie: Of course, before we begin I'd just like to say what an honour it is to stand before you all tonight [nods to audience] and how grateful I am to be standing here-

Sam: And I would also like to say how privileged I feel to be here before you. I see many familiar faces out here tonight, some younger, some older, but on all your faces I see pain. You are tired, you are worn, and my 'honourable' opponent here would have you believe that she is the better candidate- [Moderator sighs]

Leslie: I am!

Sam: You certainly are not.

Moderator: If we could begin-

Sam: She would have you believe that she can bring about the change this school needs. Yet, every time a bill is put into motion she

stamps on it. Remember last year? My "pinball machine for every classroom" campaign? Squashed like a bug in the schoolyard by this-

Leslie: What Sam here isn't saying, fellow schoolmates, is that in order to get a pinball machine in every classroom we would have had to raise the money. And where would this money come from? Would we have to start taxing lunch money, just to pay the bills? Or perhaps he would have us canvas the neighbourhoods...

Sam: I would just like to remind you all, while listening to this witch's frightful dirge, that I caught her picking her nose and sticking the boogers under her desk last recess-

Leslie: Slander!

Moderator: Now listen here you two...

Leslie: You're so busy necking with Sally Dunkin every chance you get, it's a wonder you even showed up to this debate at all. This man, fellow schoolians, is nothing short of a pre-pubescent man-whore, who will run this school into a ditch; a ditch my older sister, Mary, dragged it out of five years ago when she became the first female school prez in history!

Sam: Hah! Under the Mary Administration this school saw an increase in homework and pop quizzes by as much as

25 per cent! As School prez I will all but eliminate any work that is not fundamentally necessary and enforced by the district school board-

Leslie: An army of idiots. That's what Sam here wants. A nice flock of stupid sheep to follow him around, and do as he says, and wait hours in the rain outside the bowling alley, alone, wondering why he hasn't to show up...

Sam: Oh, not this again...

Leslie: ...While he's off sucking on Sally 'pumpkin face' Dunkin's lips like a

soda-straw-

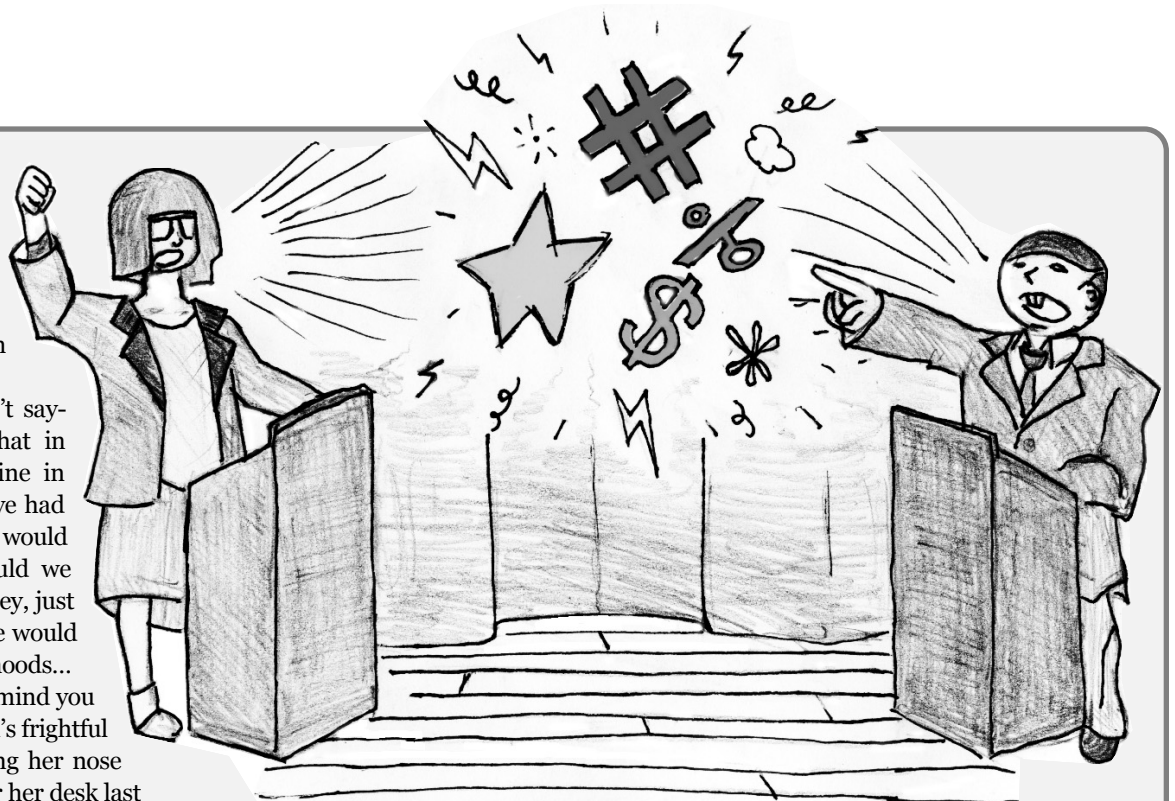
Moderator: Okay! That's enough! Debate is over. Never, ever, in my life have I seen two people act so immature. Do you think this is how politics are conducted? Random mud slinging? Who taught you to act like this?

Sam + Leslie: The T.V.

[Moderator Sighs]

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

GRAPHIC ALEX MANLEY



Consistently classic

Maestro Yuli Turovsky talks pop versus classical music and what it is to be real

• JOHNNY NORTH

“When I was still in Soviet Union, I played in the Moscow Chamber Orchestra, which was one of the best orchestras in the world at that time,” said 72-year-old Yuli Turovsky, who was born and raised in Moscow.

“When I immigrated I was thinking of creating my own and that’s what I did.”

Turovsky, who’s been playing music since he was seven years old, immigrated to Canada in 1983. Since then, he’s been all over the world performing and recording chamber music, either solo or with his 15-member string orchestra, his “baby,” I Musici de Montréal.

Turovsky formed his orchestra by recruiting his students from Université de Montréal and his daughter Natasha. Following the success of the first three records, Turovsky started performing concert series—25 years later he’s still at it.

“I think it’s been the same for the last 300 years, with little variations. Unfortunately, chamber music and classical music get a reputation that it’s for the elite, which is wrong. You don’t need special education or a special degree to understand classical music. All you need is to listen with open ears.”

Turovsky performs different

forms of baroque, classical, romantic and contemporary music in over 100 concerts a year. He has released over 40 albums with IMM, which have been distributed in over 50 countries. While Turovsky enjoys playing the work of neo-classical composer Dmitri Shostakovich, he also enjoys branching out and playing not-so well-known 20th century symphonies and Canadian composers.

Turovsky believes that because jazz and pop music come from classical music the genres should not be seen as polar opposites.

“They both have the same rules to move people. The classical music that is still playing today is very accessible and it’s of very high quality, which is not always the case with pop music [...] people see what is real, what is fake and what is original.”

IMM recently finished off two of their concert series in Montreal: *Eat, drink and be merry!* and *Oxen invades Paris!* Turovsky was pleased with the latter as exploring the theme of “Paris” allowed him to explore the classical and roman-



Maestro Turovsky with his orchestra.

doesn’t hold back whether they’re playing Place des Arts or in a small village.

“It’s the same thing for us no matter where. People came for certain emotions to feel with us. It’s our habit to give those emotions.”

The next concert series for Turovsky and IMM is entitled *Democracy in action!* starting on May 7. In this series, fans can vote at imusici.com/en/cv6.php to create their own program for the evening. The concert will be held at Salle Claude-Champagne, 220 Vincent d’Indy. Tickets are \$17 for students.

from École national de cirque and two professional ones, Maria Monakhova and Vitali Makarov. Since there are no words, they tell the story by using their circus skills.”

“He told me ‘prohibition, it’s too far from us, it doesn’t click,’” said Turovsky. “So he suggested a finer idea: ‘It’s a bordello that becomes a hospital.’”

There is no average concert for IMM. If they’re playing, they’re giving you their best. Turovsky

tic periods with different twists—Jean Cocteau’s ballet *Le Boeuf sur le toit* was modified from the United States prohibition setting.

“We took his story and made our own,” said Alexandre Marine, stage director for *Oxen invades Paris!*, who was invited by Turovsky. “We had eight actors

Life outside of the womb

Making stress work

• CODY HICKS

Rest, relaxation and nourishment are overrated.

You can rest when you’re old, relax when you’re dead and eat when you’re rich. We’re approaching the reckoning, the end of semester mind-melt of gorgeous weather and compounding deadlines. I couldn’t be more excited to ride the jittery wave of social anxiety and caffeine towards freedom.

It’s safe to assume that if you’re reading this, you’re a student, and that means you’re probably young enough to handle a stress binge. If you’re on the dark side of 30 years old, have a heart condition or are prone to nervous fits and spasms you might want to do some heavy breathing and yoga. For you young bucks, there’s no better

time to push yourself to the limit and spin endless yarns of run-on sentences, 20-minute chorus-less songs, and sprawling monolithic drawings.

It’s Sunday afternoon, gorgeous outside, and all I want to do is lie down in a park and blissfully giggle the day away, but I’m currently riding the mind-bending wave of four cups of diner-grade coffee, three hours of sleep and the kind of body bruising hangover that feels like you’ve just run a 10 km half-marathon. Its days like these that my mind rolls along at a mile a minute and I contemplate the intricacies of the minutiae of reckless youthful behaviour.

So instead of kicking back in the sun, I’m tap-tap-tapping out pseudo-conversational reflections on why and how I’m able to keep living the way I do.

But I can’t attribute it all to stress. There’s also hunger. Always stay hungry! What have you ever accomplished after a half-chicken and greasy French fries that amounted to more than fusing your ass to the couch? Eventually you can learn to channel the rumbling in your stomach into nervous project-driving energy.

It can be a challenge to maintain anxiety levels, so I recommend tuning into a wound-up soundtrack that is sure to keep your brain buzzing.

Throw out your Enya and whale sound CDs and plug into some Glenn Branca, the seriously punk rock avant-garde composer from New York who utilized alternate tunings of the electric guitar to create some seriously long and tense music.

This guy has some serious

street cred as Thurston Moore and Lee Ranaldo of Sonic Youth played on this guy’s early recordings. You’ll have your own 10-page run-on sentence by the time the third movement of “Tonal Plexus,” his first symphony, reaches its crescendo.

Conversely, if you’re not in the mood to have your ears shred and you can resist the temptation to cut loose I recommend *Love Visions* from Nobunny. This bunny mask-wearing freak recently played a furious ass-shaking set at Le Divan Orange supporting Demon’s Claws and he put out one of the most unabashedly fun pop records I’ve heard in a while.

From the minute I saw the Ramones aping cover art and the title’s clear nod to Jay Reatard’s *Blood Visions*, I sensed spazz-pop greatness. This isn’t an origi-

nal record by any means but the icy drum machine sound and hilarious love letters to Chuck Berry and 60s garage rock make me want to jump on the bed like a caffeine twisted child.

The upper levels of stress can get you pretty wiggled out, so if you feel like your heart is close to jumping out your throat you probably need an escape hatch. When I need to hit eject I douse myself in spicy comfort food.

Someone once told me that spicy food releases endorphins in your brain. Each time I tuck into a plate of jerk chicken smothered in scotch bonnet sauce at Caraïbe Delite on Parc I leave the place feeling like a teenage stoner giggling dumbstruck.

But I’m not ready to leave this discomfort zone. No, I’m gonna keep on downing coffee until I can see through time.



Sweet Mother Logic performed last Friday at La Sala Rossa. PHOTO PETER NG

Smooth melodies and chaotic climaxes

Montreal's Sweet Mother Logic makes music that speaks without words

• LES HONYWILL

The sound of Sweet Mother Logic is indefinable, seamlessly melding classical with heavy metal, electronic with alternative rock and funk with baroque.

Two cellos lead a plethora of other instruments in forming an unmistakably unique sound which, after much discussion, cellist J.P. Saint-Cyr hesitantly called "experimental electronic."

The roots of the band's sound can be traced back to the musical training of its members. Cellists Justin Wright and Saint-Cyr met while studying the cello and classical music in elementary school.

"I grew up with a lot of classical, but I never really liked the repertoire," Saint-Cyr said.

Pianist Eric Kaplin, who classifies himself as a rock person, said finding the band's sound was not a difficult process.

"We just sat around in a room and this is what was conceived," Kaplin said, adding that naming the band took much more time. "We couldn't think of anything for four to five months and eventually we just started stringing words together. Finally one of us said sweet... mother... logic."

Entirely instrumental, the band is not in any rush to include vocals.

"We've thought of introducing vocals, but not a lead

singer," said Saint-Cyr, staying true to the old adage: if it ain't broke don't fix it.

The band has plenty of reason to leave their style unchanged. Their first EP, *Ascension Island*, progressively moves through the tracks bridging smooth melodies with chaotic climaxes that keep listeners on the edge of their seats.

The EP's title track is a testament to the band's style. It begins with a light melody by Kaplin and then quickly taken into a rhythmic foray by Saint-Cyr and Wright, putting the outfit's classical and heavy rock elements on full display. After a couple of frenzied minutes, the track flawlessly regresses back to Kaplin's original melody. The tracks that follow do not fail in awing the audience with the sheer talent possessed by this group, all of whom are Concordia students.

However, to fully appreciate the mood swings and rhythm transitions of Sweet Mother Logic they must be seen live. The band's set includes a captivating visual to accompany their show that, along with the sounds of the cellos reverberating off the ceilings and walls, makes for an incredible performance.

Following in the big footsteps of this EP will be the band's first LP, being released this summer. If their debut sounds anything like *Ascension Island*, great things are sure to come.

Guerrilla gays raid Reggie's

• LAUREN PETTIGREW

Campus bar Reggie's was taken over last night by Queer Concordia's first guerrilla-gay bar event, "Reggie does Archie."

"We wanted to play with the classic assumptions," said Joseph Donnelly, a collective member of Queer Concordia, and one of the event's organizers. "And what better way than with Archie and Reggie and all

that high school drama?"

Known for holding sex-positive, gender-bending, and at times outlandish events such as last week's Sex Toy party in collaboration with Gender 10, Queer Concordia is now trying to be more active in raising awareness right on campus.

"It's important to be present outside the village," Donnelly explained. "I can't think of one queer event that's been [held at Reggie's] since I've

been on campus."

Jacob Robitaille, a Concordia student, agreed, stating "gaying up a space is a way to promote equality."

Proceeds from the event will be going to Head and Hands, a non-profit organization working to get sex education back into Quebec schools.

"It's not just parties," Donnelly stated, "it's advancing human rights."

Personal renaissance

Director Murray Siple talks about his journey from the wheelchair back to the director's chair



Filmmaker Murray Siple takes a break from shooting with film subject Fergy.

• CHRISTOPHER OLSON

In 1996, a car accident took filmmaker Murray Siple out of the director's chair and into a wheelchair. It took him close to a decade to relearn his daily routine, and re-establish himself as a filmmaker.

"It took me close to three years to rehabilitate and learn to live with this new body. After that I wasn't sure how to get back into filmmaking because my hands didn't work well enough to use a camera," says Siple.

"I started to relearn how to be a director by building a house. Doing drawings and working with an architect showed me that I was ready to direct again and delegate tasks."

A cash settlement against the driver who caused the accident allowed Siple to get the house he always wanted, but he didn't feel like settling for a life of easy comfort. It was during a routine trip to the grocery store, says Siple, that he encountered the stars of *Carts of Darkness*.

"I noticed these guys were returning bottles and it was right beside where I parked my van in the wheelchair parking spot. These guys were really funny. They were drunk, it was summer, they were shirtless and they were bugging the normal customers."

When he told them that he was a filmmaker, "they were all excited," says Siple, "because they wanted me to film them riding shopping carts. They reminded me of snowboarders and skateboarders, because they were doing something rebellious. And because it was also somewhat

illegal," says Siple.

"With that, I knew I had a film," said Siple, who first had to overcome some of his own prejudices. "I had the stereotype that because they're using a shopping cart, they're obviously homeless, they're obviously drug addicts or something. But as I got into their world, almost none of them were homeless and most of them chose to do it."

Many of them, in fact, started shopping cart riding as early as high school.

"In North Vancouver there's a grocery store on the top of the hill and the high school is at the bottom, so they'd literally steal shopping carts every day to get to school instead of taking the bus."

Gradually, Siple began to notice the struggles they each shared. "I found out all this stuff about them and it made me think about myself. When people see me in a wheelchair, how do they perceive me? I have an education and skills that people don't put together with someone living in a wheelchair. I was able to make this film, for instance."

Meanwhile, Siple's filmmaking renaissance is just beginning. "I think I'm done with documentaries for the time being, and I'd like to work with actors. I've never had the opportunity to pursue it, and now I have a bit of freedom and an open slate, so that's my goal."

Carts of Darkness will be screened on Monday, March 30 at 8:30 p.m. in Room H-110, 1455 de Maisonneuve Blvd. For a full list of screenings, check out cinemapolitica.org/concordia.



Although it looks “controversial as hell” and it might “fly in the face of what some people would think at first,” the street nurses are actually adhering to a strict ethical code, says Director Nettie Wild.

Taking it to the streets

Filmmaker Nettie Wild explores Vancouver’s safe injection site and what it really takes to kick the habit

• CHRISTOPHER OLSON

You’re more likely to catch bees with honey than with vinegar and you’re more likely to reform a coke addict with kindness than by wagging your finger.

That’s what filmmaker Nettie Wild discovered while making *Bevel Up*, a film about the street nurses who patrol North America’s only safe injection site in Vancouver, to be screened at Cinema Politica next week.

Vancouver hosts one of only 30 safe injection sites in the world.

“If you ask me,” says Wild, “there shouldn’t be one in Vancouver, there should at least be five or six.

“It’s not my job or your job or a nurse’s job to convince someone not to use drugs,” says Wild. “What I found is that better

health care can be brought to all people, including people who use drugs, whether or not they quit.”

Although it looks “controversial as hell” and it might “fly in the face of what some people would think at first,” the street nurses are actually adhering to a strict ethical code, says Wild.

“There was this supposition that there’s no such thing as a healthy drug user. It was an oxymoron, that until you kick drugs, really and truly there’s not much we can do. And I realized that what was really speaking there was my own moral baggage.”

“There was this supposition that there’s no such thing as a healthy drug user,” says Wild. “It was an oxymoron, that until you kick drugs, really and truly there’s not much we can do. And I realized that what was really speaking there was my own moral baggage. You can get healthi-

er as a user without getting off drugs and you can, as a health care worker, help someone get healthier without that person getting off drugs.”

The foundation of a health care relationship has to be laid down before the crucial question of quitting can be raised, and then only on the user’s terms, says Wild.

“What the street nurses are advocating is that it has one huge advantage over policing, and the advantage is that it works, whereas this wagging your finger and saying we will provide all these services if you clean up, flat out, doesn’t work.

“If you think that it’s important that people are alive instead of dead, then it’s a success,” adds Wild.

In order to get users to speak on camera, Wild had to do as the nurses did.

“We found that if we approached people as human beings as opposed

sons [they end up this way]. This is not just a matter of some frivolous bad decision.”

As human beings, says Wild, we might think, “My God, it’d sure be a lot healthier if you got off drugs.”

But if someone asks, “What about that wound? Can I take a look at that? Are you in some kind of pain? Can I help you there? What tends to happen is that you’ve entered into a discussion as opposed to a lecture, and you’ve started a health care relationship which may sometime get to the point where you can have that conversation about how to get off the drug.”

—Nettie Wild,
director of *Bevel Up*

to drug addicts, often we’d end up with people who wouldn’t talk with us at first and then the problem became that they’d never stop. They unloaded their entire life story because they really want people to understand that there are circumstances, there are rea-

Bevel Up will be screened on Monday, March 30 at 7:30 p.m. in Room H-110, 1455 de Maisonneuve Blvd. For a full list of screenings, check out cinemapolitica.org/concordia.

The DOWN-LOW

Events listings
Mar. 24-Mar. 23

ART

Friction

Three Montreal artists come together for a truly memorable event that explores the works of the artists in black and white. Through its combination of explorations of the figure and line with footage of events from the art collective The Room 22, *Friction* is a showcase of the aesthetics of visual culture.

Vernissage Friday, 7:00-10:00 p.m.
Club Coda, 4119 St-Laurent Blvd.

Headgames: hoods, helmets & gas-masks

For its inaugural exhibition, Battat Contemporary is pleased to present the work of Montreal artist and Concordia University graduate Sophie Jodoin. The exhibition uses war-related headgear as a symbol exploring the trauma of war. The exhibition is comprised of 75 drawings and a projected video that Jodoin created in collaboration with David Jhave Johnston.

Until April 25

Battat Contemporary, 7245 Alexandra Street, #100

LECTURE

"Writing between the Lines: Art and its Historians"

The Concordia University Art History Graduate Students Association presents a two-day symposium bringing together a group of emerging scholars from Canada, the United States and Europe. This symposium explores the problems of authorship in art history and questions the relationship between critical and historical writings and the meaning of art objects, especially in today's environment of scholarly redefinitions.

Friday and Saturday

EV Building, 1515 Ste-Catherine Street O.
For a full schedule visit
art-history.concordia.ca

MUSIC

Akron Family

With Born Ruffians

Wednesday and Thursday, 8:30 p.m.

Il Motore, 179 Jean-Talon Blvd. O.

Tickets \$15 in advance, \$18 at the door

James Finnerty, EP Launch

With James Lamb, Miss Emily Brown,
Daniel Isaiah Schachter, Marcus Lobb,
Risa Dickens and Jean-Fred Lizotte
Thursday, 7:30 p.m.

Le Zigoto Café, 5731 du Parc Ave.

Tickets \$7

Tokyo Police Club

With Ruby Coast

Friday, 8:30 p.m.

La Sala Rossa, 4848 St-Laurent Blvd.

Tickets \$15 in advance, \$18 at the door

—compiled by Joelle Lemieux

The place you love to hate

Poetic director Terence Davies travels back to 1940s Liverpool

• JOHNNY NORTH

With the use of archived black-and-white footage of 1940-60 Liverpool, director Terence Davies relives his bittersweet childhood memories, showcasing the plight of the working-class who struggle to survive each day of mid-century Liverpool, England.

With men punching in at work and women lifting heavy sacks over their heads Davies says in a dry voice, "Between birth and dying, some lovely moments grow, and sorrows not known until tomorrow, cloud the happy hours spent dreaming in the sun."

He succeeds in sounding miserable with his heavy, melancholy narration but can also be humorous. In criticizing The Beatles, he gets worked up over how they were a bunch of "political solicitors."

Davies, a Catholic trying to keep his homosexuality a secret, grew frustrated with the activities of the church, finding, "its all lies, paradise betrayed. There was no



Director Terence Davies returns after an eight-year hiatus to explore his bittersweet childhood and the reality of 1940s England.

God, only Satan sauntering behind me with a smirk saying, 'I'll get you in the end.'"

Featured along with his own poetry are the borrowed words of poets Percy Shelley, T.S. Eliot, and Sir Walter Raleigh, among others, adding to the sense of the impending death of humanity that Davies emphasises throughout the film; "Thy cap, thy kirtle, and thy

posies. Soon break soon wither, soon forgotten. In folly ripe, in reason rotten."

In what feels like an unnecessary shift, the film shows clips of the Korean War to the tune of The Hollies' "He Ain't Heavy, He's My Brother." While it relates to the people of Liverpool, it feels out of place as the focus is mainly on their living conditions.

Davies' film brings to life emotional scenes with well-timed poetic wisdom and powerful imagery, with the potential to interest anyone who's childhood was less than sunny.

Of Time and the City starts screening at Cinéma du Parc this Friday, March 27. For a list of screening times check out cinemaduparc.com

spins

JBM

Not Even In July

JBM



Montrealer Jesse B. Marchant's new album starts out strong with a melancholic instrumental intro, "Years," which sets the tone for the remainder of the tracks. The album quickly loses momentum and punch as the sorrowful mood becomes overpowering and uncomfortable. One cannot help but begin to slip into a depressed state of mind, especially with lyrics like: "old folks that start dying in their sleep," on "Going Back Home." The instrumentation is strong and stands out on every song, especially the piano on "Red October" and the rhythm of "Friends from Fireworks." Unfortunately, the weakness of the vocals overshadows the instrumental strength. "Swallowing Daggers" has great guitar undertones, but the vocals, which are reminiscent of the recital of a poem, are distracting. The one thing all 10 tracks have in common is a religious mood (tune in to the gospel-reminiscent chant on "Red October"), which is no surprise as the album was entirely recorded in a church studio. The one gem is "Ambitions and War" with its powerful lyrics, which haven't ceased to stick in my mind; "everyday I pull further away from the crowd."

3/5

—Barbara Pavone

Nat King Cole

Re:Generations

Capitol



Nat King Cole is reinterpreted on *Re:Generations*, a collection of signature Cole

reimagined by artists like Will.I.Am, The Randy Watson Experience (which counts among its two members The Roots drummer Questlove), Damian Marley and TV On The Radio's Andrew Sitek.

The album opener "Lush Life (Cee-Lo Green Mix)" couldn't be better, setting the old-school feel that's to follow in the next tracks. Album highlight, "Straighten Up And Fly Right (Will.I.Am. Mix)," is the second track and is successful in its simplicity, keeping it in its classic context.

"Calypso Blues (Damian 'Jr. Gong' Marley & Stephen Marley Mix)" has an imaginably unavoidable reggae feel, but it's great even if predictable and I know it's going to be my new summer jam.

The album, like any collection from various artists, is hit or miss. Tracks like "Pick Up (Just Blaze Mix)" make you wonder how anything on the album is worth listening to, tracks like "Walkin' My Baby Back Home," set the perfect mood for Sunday morning breakfast-making.

Check out Andrew Sitek's Mix of "Nature Boy."

4/5

—Joelle Lemieux

Left Of Zero Blame The Gun

Independent



I don't get it. Left Of Zero's Jade Lamarche has vocals that are neither strong nor impressive; a bad version of the vocals on The Dears' "Crisis 1 & 2." So, why then, do the other members of the band feel no responsibility to pump up the jam? The genre falls somewhere between indie rock-lite and cop-out electro. It's emo in the worst way—

slit your wrist-sounding without any genuine emotion. I really don't understand where it's coming from, and not in an enigmatic, I-want-to-know-more way. Of the three-track EP the third is easily the strongest; "Your Father, My Father," comes the closest to what I imagine the band wants to be and Lamarche's voice finally reveals itself (not bad at all).

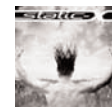
What is mediocre for a debut is worse as a sophomore release and as good as the last track is, ultimately Blame The Gun falls short.

2.5/5

—Joelle Lemieux

Static-X Cult Of Static

Reprise Records



I don't consider anything I listen to a guilty pleasure; I enjoy the fine vocal stylings of many boy bands and occasionally partake in the listening of nu-metal offerings. I like what I like, and that's pretty simple. Static-X is also a band that I happen to like a lot. Their brand of "evil disco" (as they call it) has sort of waned through five albums worth of material, turning it into a more by-the-numbers metal outfit, complete with rhythmic guitars and nice grooves.

The last couple of albums (Shadow Zone and Start A War in particular) have veered more towards guitar-thrashing and largely kept away from the electronics that marked their first two studio albums. Wayne Static and Co. try to rectify this situation with an overabundance of electronics on *Cult Of Static*, a wildly uneven outing that tries to unify their two strongest points, often with mixed results. Album stand-outs "Nocturnally" and "Hypure" manage to satiate fans of both

campy of the band, but the rest of the 11-song collection falls flat.

3/5

—R. Brian Hastie

Two Tongues Two Tongues

Vagrant Records



A supergroup that consists of equal parts of emo powerhouses Saves The Day and Say Anything sounds like a daydream to most folkly-challenged kids who spend their nights clutching their Warped Tour programs of yesterday and hoping that Taking Back Sunday will one day play Tell All Your Friends in their entirety. Rest assured, though, that in this age of weird happenings, this occurrence has already come to pass.

Max Bemis and Coby Linder from SA and Chris Conley and Dave Soloway from STD threw down and put together an album that, for all intents and purposes, definitely sounds a lot better in theory than in practice. Expectations were high for an album of this magnitude, and although it is a good record, it is far from the memorable collection of hooks and self-deprecating lovesick songs that most expect.

The album's infectious pop grooves and straight-forward musical stylings complement Conley's nasally drawl and Bemis' wavering baritone perfectly. An enjoyable half-hour, though most songs are far from instantly memorable. An honest piece of work that is hurt by its context, this 13-song set is a nice listen. Definitely better than the current crop of kids slinging six-strings and hoping for emo stardom.

4/5

—R. Brian Hastie

Concordia Stingers 2008-09 highlights

• JOHNNY NORTH & DIEGO PELAEZ GAETZ



Stingers Sebastien Martin (#14) in action against UQAM.
PHOTO ION ETXEBARRIA

Men's basketball
Final record: 12-4

Concordia's men's basketball squad rebounded from a one year hiatus from the national championships with a dominating campaign, as they handily won Quebec with a thrilling 79-76 victory over UQAM. The Stingers made the national championships for the third time in the last five years.



The baseball club defeated John Abbott and McGill in the post-season.
PHOTO ION ETXEBARRIA

Baseball
Final record: 9-7

An incredible comeback performance by the Concordia Stingers baseball club in Game 2 of their provincial championship series set the stage for an unfortunate loss to the Lafleche Dragons in the final game of the best-of-three series.



Con U in action against the McGill Redmen. PHOTO CHRIS GATES

Men's hockey
Final record: 15-13

After a disappointing 2007-08 season, the Stingers rebounded with a 15 win season and a playoff berth, a four win improvement over the previous year. The dream season came to a close with a hard fought 2-1 series defeat to Carleton in the OUA playoffs.



Stingers captain Melanie Tranchemontagne in action against Laval.
PHOTO ION ETXEBARRIA

Women's rugby
Final record: 4-2

The Concordia Stingers women's rugby squad lost to the Laval Rouge et Or in the provincial final following an overtime where both teams could not score. The loss stopped Con U from going to Nationals for a second year in a row.



The football team ended the regular season with a 5-3 record.
PHOTO ION ETXEBARRIA

Football
Final record: 5-3

The Stingers fought a bitterly contested provincial final in Ste. Foy before their hopes of making it to the Vanier Cup were shattered in the last two minutes of play, as they suffered a heartbreaking 28-17 loss at the hands of their nemesis the Laval Rouge et Or.

Women's Hockey
Final record: 3-15-0

The women's hockey team struggled to find consistency with a young roster and succumbed to national powerhouse McGill in the playoffs. Goalie Audrey Doyon-Lessard showed flashes of brilliance, and the promise of good things to come.

Men's Soccer
Final record: 1-8-3

Despite a rough start to the season, second-year coach Lloyd Barker's squad showed mettle through the last month of the season, with a 1-0-2 record. A promising recruiting class means there might be light at the end of the tunnel for the long suffering squad.

Women's Soccer
Final record: 1-11-2

A late season injury to star goalkeeper Fanny Berthiaume was the final nail in the coffin for this team. With Berthiaume and captain Allison Burgess returning, the Stingers hope to rebound and earn a playoff berth next season.

Women's Basketball
Final record: 5-11

A late season run allowed the Stingers to sneak into the playoffs and put a scare into top ranked Laval before succumbing 74-65. The Stingers lose captain Krystle Douglas, but hope that the emergence of star forward Anne-Marie Prohete and a stellar recruiting class can help them take the next step.

Wrestling
Third at Nationals

The Concordia Stingers wrestling team captured six medals including two gold medals at Nationals in Calgary in February.

At the Con U Invitation Wrestling Tournament back in October, the wrestlers won six medals as well. Con U won three gold medals, with Alex Dyas having an impressive performance in the 90 kg class.

—with files from Jennifer Aouad

Green space

Is it dark in here?

• BETTINA GRASSMANN

Preparing for this last of my GreenSpace contributions, I've been reading over my past sustainability articles and I'm struck by how many times I use such thunderous words as "devastating," "catastrophic" and "disastrous."

I won't confess to alarmism, but I realize that despite the magnitude of the environmental damage we're incurring, the Earth is not the only thing that needs to be sustained. We also need to preserve our mental health. So without further ado, here are my four solutions to the environmental crisis, coming to you straight from my tongue and cheek.

Clone David Suzuki

My friend Michael proposed this solution and I thought it wasn't a bad idea, although I wasn't sure Suzuki—or his clones—would approve of genetic manipulation. "So let's convince lots of women to sleep with him," I suggested. "Assuming he can still spread his honey," Michael replied. But I suspect that Suzuki's honey is in fine form. He doesn't smoke, eat food with pesticides and as he demonstrated a few years ago, he is remarkably buff for a man of his age. So, ladies—get him while supplies last!

Domesticate a black hole

I don't know how serious they are about this, but some scientists suggest that the solution to both the energy crisis and excess waste is to find a black hole. Black holes emit a huge amount of energy when they suck things up and there really isn't any limit to how much we can stuff into them.

It's like a bottomless garbage can that doesn't stink.

The black hole can power any electronic gadget we care to buy. So bring on Wal-Mart, bring on disposable bags, bring on useless plastic ornaments from the dollar store. The more waste, the more energy and the more we can continue to consume.

Now where do we find a black hole? Maybe the Large Hadron Collider can help.

Indoctrinate Children with Buddhism

Psychologist Dan Gilbert states, "a shopping mall full of Zen monks is not going to be particularly profitable because they don't want stuff enough." Not only that, but neurological studies have shown that Buddhist monks and nuns are some of the happiest people on Earth. It's not just their fetching robes that fill them with such joy and serenity, meditation actually changes the chemistry in the brain.

So here's my solution to over-consumption and ADHD: convert kids to Buddhism. Let's start them early, before the children's advertisers manage to convince them that happiness requires a Game Boy and an iPod. Send kids to camps where they abstain from material pleasures, sleep on floors and meditate 24-7.

Tell people God said, "Be green"

I volunteered to help an environmentalist in India who used scripture to advertise solar cookers. Among the verses he quoted from the Hindu Vedas was: "Solar cooking is great!"

Now, I won't for a moment pretend to be an authority on the Vedas, but that doesn't sound majestic enough to belong in a religious work that's 4000 years old. Besides, unlike most Indians, my friend is an atheist and I somehow doubt that he's read much of the Vedas either.

Here in Canada, *The Bible* can be found in every hotel room. It would be a bit hard to get away with quoting Matthew as saying, "Blessed art those who cook with solar ovens!" But we could still try.

Problem solved

So there it is. All we need in order to rescue the environment is have David Suzuki's children, Buddhist boot camps, a black hole and the "discovery" of ancient biblical scrolls in a cave near Kyoto.

But none of these ideas seem more absurd to me than this one: "Let's just do nothing and let future generations fix it all up."



Letters @thelink.concordia.ca

Hillel stands with Iggy against other Jews

As a member of Young Jews for Social Justice and someone present at the Ignatieff rally last week [Vol. 29, Issue 26 "Uninvited" page 9], I take issue with the comments made by Hillel bureaucrat Mick Mendelson.

Because we were protesting the pro-war positions of Ignatieff and Hillel on Friday night he questions our "validity as a self-identification student organization." The pomposity!

Who made Mick an authority on Jewish identity?

I challenge Mick, any place, any time, to go mano a mano on Mishnah, or toe-to-toe on Talmud. Instead of rebutting our points, he decides to go below the belt, ad hominem style. Let me assure Mick, I carry the Jewish mark.

What his comments demonstrate is that the pro-war Jewish organizations, Hillel among them, do not represent the entire community on Montreal campuses. He explicitly states it. I am happy to let Hillelniks eat cake with Iggy and the Grits. Let them play attack politics to the end of the rainbow.

For those interested in solemn and alternative discussions of Jewish identity, come to our film screening at McGill next week. Called, you guessed it, "Young, Jewish, and Left."

—Yesse Gutman,
McGill Law

Cops and reporters

The relevant editorial by Opinions Editor Justin Giovannetti last week [Vol. 29, Issue 26 "The media failed us on Sunday" page 31] is especially important if it can get long overdue reforms in two areas of our society: the police and the media.

For an individual to be permitted to be a member of any police force, whether at the municipal, provincial or federal level, they must be required to have the highest ethical qualities. Every person who wishes to enter this profession should be screened for the potential for criminal behaviour and once accepted, must be exemplary in their

obedience to the law if they want the respect and legitimacy that every human being should merit.

The media has a most significant role to play. Their objective should be to report the truth regardless of the power of certain segments of our civilization. If our world is ever to possess true democratic ideals the influence of money on the electoral process and the media must forever be eliminated.

—David Sommer Rovins,
Independent Student

The real Vision was not on Facebook, says prez candidate

Vision is composed of a diverse group of students who want to bring about a real change to our campus. These past two weeks we've encountered many students who have been encouraged by our campaign to envision a better CSU and a better Concordia.

Our team in no way, shape or form supports any racism or discriminatory comments against any groups on campus. We were saddened and disappointed with comments that were made without our consent against a particular group and apologize for any hurt this has caused. These comments do not represent the values of diversity, respect and inclusion that our team is about.

We have many diverse candidates from all walks of life and that are active all over campus. Representatives from Hillel Concordia, the Concordia Irish Society, the Chinese Student Association, the Italian Student Association, the Muslim Student Association and many more are running with Vision.

This campaign should not be negative and instead should be about the issues that affect students. Issues such as our university's reputation which has been tarnished this year because of scandals with the student government, illustrating the need for an open-door policy at the CSU and proper financial transparency; the high costs of books at the bookstore that can be alleviated with a book exchange; the need to lower the

CSU's expenditure on lawyers so student money can go towards improving campus life by supporting our clubs. This is what we want this election to be about, and students have time and time again told us they agree.

We look forward to continuing to meet students and seeking to address their needs.

—Amine Dabchy,
Vision presidential candidate

Salman apologizes for Facebook misunderstanding

This is my third year at Concordia University. I've been involved in student clubs, but never in CSU elections, until now. What led me to participate? When I noticed that Vision is a party that consists of students from diverse backgrounds, has a strong platform and wanted to bring about a real change on campus. That's why I decided it was worth getting involved.

Members of Vision have one goal: make Concordia University a better place for everyone. We are an inclusive group that wants to build a responsive, multicultural CSU that reflects our community.

It is very unfortunate that I was disqualified from the CSU elections for being misunderstood. I felt the ruling was unjust. I did not mean any harm or insult in my private message to my friends. I simply wanted to inform them of my opinion of how important this election was. I apologize for any misunderstanding or insult.

All those who know me—friends, classmates, professors—know that I have many friends from all over the world, and that I'm an honest and sincere person with a big heart. I truly cherish diversity and this is why I'm a member of the International Ethnic Associations Council of Concordia.

I have the privilege of meeting and interacting with people from different cultures on a daily basis. I am also very committed. In fact, I was nominated for "Most Dedicated Executive" by the CSU for 2008-09.

I really wanted to win the JMSB Senate seat to make students' vision of a better university come true. I wanted to bring more to JMSB and to the rest of Concordia. I had spoken to numerous students, who explained to me their academic problems and I wanted their voices to be heard.

Thanks to these students, I had several ideas in mind that I was hoping to implement. I wanted to suggest the introduction of a double major into JMSB, to improve the Data Analysis minor, to enhance and simplify the online registration process, and more.

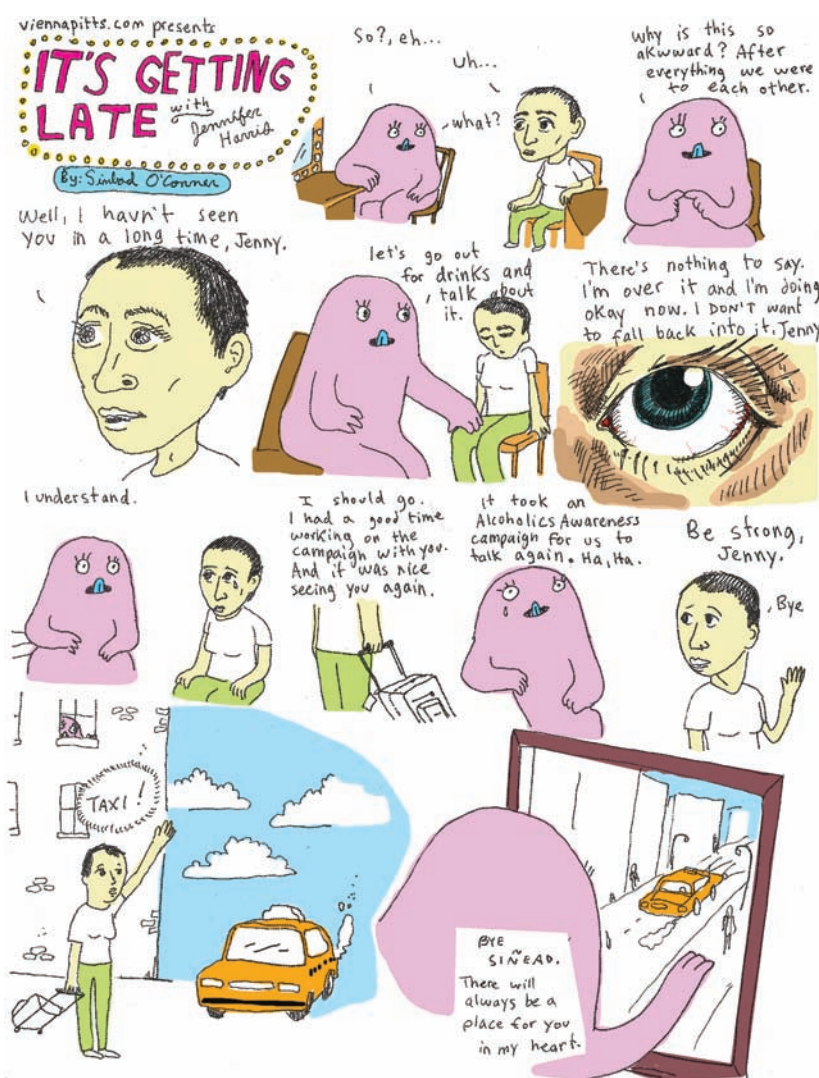
Essentially, I want to apologize for any misunderstanding, and the message I want to get across to my fellow students is that Vision is a diverse and ambitious team. Many students, campus clubs, and multicultural groups are supporting Vision. This is truly a coalition for real representation.

—Alaa Salman,
Marketing

More than a Facebook faux pas

It seems that everywhere I turn there is some article or situation drenched in latent or overt forms of racism, anti-Semitism and generalized discrimination. I am told that education will alleviate the problem, and perhaps this is so. But lately university campuses, including Concordia, have been fostering these forms of hatred.

Although I have moved on from Concordia and carry with me the fondest memories of a worthwhile undergraduate experience, I find it impos-



sible to ignore some of what I have been witnessing on Facebook. While I realize that people speak more freely on the Internet and might not express similar sentiments with comparable vehemence in “real life,” I propose that the presence of any of what I have witnessed cannot be dismissed.

One of the most troubling of these online interactions is that of a communication sent out by a Vision member, Alaa Salman. In her message she is “cautious” to note that she has “nothing against Jews” and states that she is not a racist, but confusingly goes on to say that a vote for CHANGE is a vote for Jews and calls for the utmost discretion in circulating her message.

I have no idea what would possess an individual, especially one who is running for a political position, to assume that an expression of this sort is anything other than anti-Semitic, let alone appallingly misguided and blatantly libellous. Salman and all Vision members who stand behind this sentiment should be ashamed of themselves.

I am not familiar with the slates running, but I am now familiar with several instance of condemnable behaviour on the part of Vision—Salman’s communication foremost among these—making Concordia and the concept that education can alleviate hatred look like a joke.

It is my hope that Concordia students will intelligently elect a slate that represents all students and does not resort to the lowest form of human interaction: discrimination, libel and hatred. I urge Salman to step down and take the time she would have spent pretending to serve the interests of her constituents, to connect with and respect all humanity, not just in name but in action as well.

—Alyssa Blank,
Political Science Alumni

Vision needs to say no to bigotry

I am writing to express disgust at a Facebook message circulating by the Vision slate that made clearly anti-Semitic statements against Jewish students running in the election.

At the risk of stating the obvious, Concordians should unequivocally condemn all acts of anti-Semitism and bigotry.

Any act of discrimination should not be tolerated by the Concordia community and makes me hesitant to vote for a team that could lead Concordia back to the days when Jewish students feared attending class due to a viciously anti-Semitic student union that went so far as to take away Hillel’s club status as was done in 2002.

I call upon the Vision party to make a commitment to battling bigotry on this campus in order to better ensure that intolerance and hate have no place at Concordia.

—Leora Kimmel,
Applied Human Sciences

A Unity in CHANGE clothing

Most of the students that I talk to in the halls, or in class, seem to want something different in this year’s elections—they want a fair election, which will throw out the party that has been wasting our money. The funny thing is, though, that many of them are convinced that CHANGE is somehow going to deliver this new government.

Well, I have news for you all out there: CHANGE is the same old party that we’ve all

grown to hate. They may have changed their colour scheme, but they’re still up to their same old scheming.

CHANGE is Unity, simple as that. They’re running against their own record—like McCain running against the Bush’s legacy and they expect that students will fall for it if they give out enough lollipops and green condoms.

Well, to all you out there who are looking for something new, I just have to say, wake up. Don’t get suckered by the same old party, try and vote for someone you know and trust, not just the team with the best graphic designer.

—André Lechamps,
Engineering

Cathy won’t ask “Change? Change?”

Every year during elections when I hear teams with big ideas, I find it hard to believe them. This year however when CHANGE promises to bring students a Fall Reading Week, an online note and exam bank and extended shuttle bus hours I believe them and I am confident that they will be able to follow with all of their great ideas.

Cathy Lin, current Arts and Science Federation of Associations VP Finance is running for VP Clubs and Sustainability with CHANGE. Over the past two years I have seen the amazing things that Cathy has been able to do. She has succeeded at everything she has tried and I am confident that she will be able to CHANGE the CSU and Concordia!

I believe whole-heartedly that Cathy and the CHANGE team will be able to meet all of their goals and really improve our university. This election I know what I’ll be voting for, I’ll be voting to CHANGE Concordia.

—Asako Shimatani,
Political Science

The irony of CHANGE

I would like to express my extreme dissatisfaction with the CHANGE slate. Not only do they make irresponsible campaign promises—like free Habs tickets—but also, these people are the cronies and supporters of this year’s CSU executive.

As a reminder, it is this year’s executive that has been linked to a signed affidavit from ASEQ’s president stating that the campaign manager for Unity and its “successor slates” sought to extort \$25,000 for campaign finances from him; arbitrarily attempted to kick members of the independent Judicial Board off for not toeing the party-line and committed a host of other acts breaching CSU bylaws.

CHANGE is only the latest manifestation of the Evolution, Experience, Unity dynasty that stole the CSU from Concordia students and sold it out to the Canadian Federation of Students. The irony of their name is a frustration for me. Do they think we are stupid? Something must be done about this mess.

Although I have my share of scepticism of any parties running this year, I see Vision as the best alternative to cleaning up the mess CHANGE and its predecessors have left us with. The team is made up of a variety of people from many backgrounds in the Concordia community, three of which I have worked with personally and can vouch for. They have shown their commitment to reforming the CSU.

I am especially impressed by the promise their councillors made on Facebook to involve the other parties running this year in making changes to CSU bylaws as a means to prevent

what’s been happening to the organization—our organization—for too many years now.

—Louise Birdsell Bauer,
Sociology

Forget the playground politics

It is the time of year for CSU elections, and students must make an informed decision about who will represent them for the year ahead.

Over the past two weeks I have heard a number of classroom speeches from both the Vision and CHANGE slates. I have been struck by one thing: the pettiness of the Vision slate. While CHANGE’s speeches have discussed their platform and what they have planned for Concordia, every speech I have heard by a Vision campaigner has focused entirely on the faults of the other team.

I may not be as informed as I could be about school politics but I know that I won’t be voting for a team that spends all of their time dishing negative politics. It’s juvenile that over-20-year-old campaigners spend all their time putting down the other team. Vision is playground politics at its worst, and I outgrew the sandbox a long time ago.

—Cayley Butt,
Études Françaises

Clarity, please

I would like to question a letter by Ms. Goldfinch, “Free Tickets from CHANGE.” We need a transparent explanation on how CHANGE will implement these promises.

The promises are vague at best and are far-reaching in terms of achievement. CHANGE, if you’re planning to lower STM fares and fight tuition fee increases, what is your action plan? Ideally, it would be great to have cheaper everything, realistically; we’re stretching our resources thin.

On a larger scale, the STM is already unionized. Any changes they apply to us would have to be applied to all universities across the region.

On a final note, which Quebec universities have Fall Reading Week? It would be a strain on a large number of students to have a break in the Fall. Those students will also agree on the doubled workload and deadlines. The semesters may be the same length, but length of time is not a predictor of the amount of work to do.

On a positive note, students, please inform yourselves on all slates by digging to the source. Make an informed decision based on a tangible change.

Vision and Decentralize have shown such transparency. The executives have been ready to answer attacks with clear-cut action plans, to these teams I say excellent job on your campaign.

You have given us a reason to hunt for information.

—Azarakhsh Zarei,
Psychology

Don’t be fooled by “change”

When John McCain ran for president, he told voters he would “change” Washington and fix the mess his own party had created. Thankfully the American people weren’t fooled. They knew McCain represented a continuation of Bush’s discredited legacy and they voted overwhelmingly for Barack Obama.

This year at Concordia, the slate called CHANGE is trying to pull a John McCain.

“Change” is merely the new name for the party of the current CSU Executive. Its candidates and volunteers are CSU loyalists who have spent all year defending the CSU against one corruption scandal after another.

ASFA President Audrey Peek, who was kicked off the board of the Sustainability Action Fund for conspiring with the CSU to illegally remove its funding, is running for “change.” So is CSU Councillor Sam Banks, who voted to remove funding from the SAF, voted to bar CUTV cameras from council meetings and voted to allow Steven Rosenshein to sit on Council illegally after the Judicial Board convicted him of electoral fraud.

This year the CSU acted like it was above the law. From day one they broke by-laws and Quebec laws with impunity and thumbed their noses at anyone who complained. They even ignored a legally binding petition of over 3,600 students to recall them from office.

They think they can fool students by calling themselves “CHANGE.” I don’t think students will be fooled anymore than Americans were fooled by McCain’s promises of change.

Research the issues and find out which slate best represents you, just don’t be fooled by “CHANGE.” All we can expect from them is more of the same.

—Ethan Cox,
Independent Studies

A Vision without ivory tower politics

I am writing to express my support for Vision in the CSU elections next week. Vision is an experienced group of individuals that are committed to reforming the CSU to make it more representative of the vibrant student community that makes Concordia such a valuable institution.

Vision epitomizes the coming together of a diverse group of people, representing a range of interests at Concordia.

Candidates on the slate have united behind the idea of putting childish infighting aside and fighting for a vision of more student representation that is not exclusive to a small group of ivory tower student politicians. In essence, this team envisions a more democratic student union with more transparent financial practices—one that is more aligned with the students they are mandated to represent.

What makes Vision different from CHANGE? CHANGE is only the latest manifestation of the Experience/Evolution/Unity political party that has been treading on student rights and representation for 4 years.

Vote Vision to clean up the mess this 4-year dynasty has left us.

—Audrey Depault,
Political Science

A team for the world

As co-president of the Concordia International Students Association I am very aware of the impact the CSU can have on our experience as students studying abroad. This election I am excited to be running with CHANGE.

We need a CSU that will fight to keep school affordable for international students and make life in a new city less complicated. We need a team that recognizes what international students bring to life at Concordia. And we need a team that will ensure that the CSU will put students first, politics second. We need CHANGE.

CHANGE is the only team that has the experience and skills needed to improve our university and our union. They will fight all international tuition fee increases, work to create a reading week in the Fall semester so students can have more time to study and work hard to move away from the petty politics that has hijacked the CSU this year.

On March 24, 25 and 26 I will be voting for CHANGE and I want to encourage you to join the movement and do the same.

—Catherine Dicaire
Human Relations

They live among us

SOS! Some keyboards at Concordia University have more germs than—believe it or not—an office toilet seat.

Studies done by Charles Gerba, a microbiologist at the University of Arizona and by British microbiologist professor, Sally Bloomfield, showed that the number of germs on computer keyboards was 60 times higher than the number of germs on an office toilet.

There were 3,295 bacteria per square inch on keyboards. This is an alarming finding for anyone who uses computer keyboards. Who knows what health problems at Concordia University—which is a green university—are related to this?

The germs are also not discouraged by hand washing because I have found that many soap dispensers in library washrooms are empty for days.

Yes, these germs live among us. What can we do about it? When I worked as an employee in an IT department of a corporation, I came up with the idea of cleaning keyboards at work by using an air compressor to blow air on a keyboard to blow all the dust, air particles and hairs off a keyboard. In addition, after the treatment with the air compressor, I used an industrial wet wiper—a wet cloth moistened with alcohol—to clean the dirt off the keyboard. This procedure became routine in the corporation.

Maybe the new CSU executive could set up a project to have all public computer keyboards cleaned routinely. I would be the first person to volunteer with this project.

—Vahdat Ahmadpour,
Pure and Applied Mathematics

Vote for a Vision, not a few lollipops

As a Political Science student, it is difficult to remain oblivious to the gross mismanagement of the CSU over the past year. Stories about corruption, financial scandal and blatant disregard for policy have become shamefully frequent, both in the student press as well as in *The Gazette*.

Let’s be clear: this is not only an embarrassing circumstance for informed Concordia students, but one that has the potential to devalue our degrees and serve as a detriment to the school’s reputation at large.

A union is meant to genuinely represent the interests of its students, and I am more interested in financial and political accountability than I am in lollipops or Habs tickets. Vision is the only slate with a chance to win that will impose real accountability.

Because I want to know where my money is going, I’m voting for Vision.

—Alexandra Gill,
Political Science



More Letters@thelink.concordia.ca

CHANGE is green

Although there are many pressing issues out there, none matter more to me than sustainability. I am impressed by CHANGE's platform for sustainability. Not only are they running a VP specifically charged with overseeing the CSU's green projects, they are also promising to fight water privatization on campus, bring in more sustainable transportation options for students and push the university to create a responsible investing policy.

I believe strongly that it is essential to incorporate sustainability into every part of our lives and I am very happy to see a CSU slate that is as dedicated to this as I am.

This week I'll be voting for CHANGE and I hope all of you will be doing the same.

—**Manuela Magno,**
Spanish Translation

Little Vision with JMSB

I recently visited the Vision website to learn more about their platform. I am very concerned that a large number of their promises relate to services and events already offered by other organizations.

Vision has promised JMSB students that they will start a career fair and hold networking cocktails. As VP Recruitment for the John Molson Accounting Society, my fellow executives and I work tirelessly to provide network and recruitment opportunities for accounting students. As a member of the CASA community I know that many other CASA member associations do the same.

Candidates are elected to the CSU executive to be full-time representatives for students. It is important to elect a team that will show more initiative than simply recreating events and projects that are already offered by other groups. That's why on March 24, 25 and 26, I'm voting to CHANGE Concordia.

—**Randy Guerzon,**
Accounting

'A stand up guy'

Dia dhuit,

I would have to say that Andrew Martin—the Irish Society's former VP Finance—has been an asset to the society and he will be sadly missed as he takes on this new endeavour with Vision in running for the JMSB Council.

To me, Andrew is rooted in his strong Canadian Irish upbringing, and being from Ireland this rings through clear. His no-nonsense sensibility in dealing with any given situation and his strong sense of justice, fairness, accountability and above all honesty make him a stand up guy.

Overall, he is a go-to individual for these reasons, and an asset to any organization who is lucky enough to have him. Andrews's involvement in the Society, from my own perspective, came out of sense of pride in his heritage and also a belief in that what we were doing in promoting and sharing our Irish culture was very important.

Again, in his work with Vision one can see his qualities shine through.

As an executive and co-founder of the Society, I remain non-political in the university's student government affairs. However I do wish Andrew all the best in this endeavour and I foresee great things in the future for him.

Slan agus beannacht leat.

—**Thomas Monaher,**
Concordia Irish Society

Vision's plan for grassroots democracy

All Vision CSU Council candidates have vowed, if elected, to form an ad-hoc committee in Council with the leaders or representatives of all slates running in this year's election—De-Centralization, Fresh, Attention, New Union and CHANGE—and two additional students-at-large, that would meet once a month and report to every regular council meeting.

This committee will be mandated to investigate and recommend substantial and fundamental reforms to CSU bylaws and standing regulations that would prevent the abuses of power that have characterized the CSU for the past five years. While we envision a different future of the CSU than these other slates, we share a belief with many running this year that open deliberation and wide-ranging input from students that have not otherwise been involved in CSU politics is essential in improving the long-term ethical practices of the organization.

With the 13th anniversary of the CSU next year, the time has come to incorporate more grassroots democracy in to CSU decision-making. This committee will be the first and most important step in that direction.

—**Gregory Johannson,**
Political Science

Dabchy not fit to lead

Vision presidential candidate Amine Dabchy is not fit to lead our student union. Although Dabchy has been involved in Concordia politics for less than a year, his tenure has been marked by infighting and corruption.

Just over a month ago a series of leaked emails detailed his plans to have a "friendly" CEO hired to run the CSU elections, illegally use a private and confidential email list to his personal advantage and manipulate his fellow councillors. What most students probably don't know is that there is currently a resolution pending at the CSU's Council to impeach him and a case before the Judicial Board to find him in dereliction of his duties as a member of Council.

I for one don't want to see another year of the CSU lost to petty politics and infighting. The last thing Concordia needs is a Dabchy-led CSU.

The biggest issue facing Concordia?

This week I was one of the many students who listened in on the CSU presidential debate. I was shocked by Dabchy's statement that the most pressing academic issue facing students is JMSB students not being allowed to double major.

I feel that there are a lot more pressing issues out there facing the 30,000 students at Concordia, such as the extremely high cost of tutoring, the university's draconian attitude towards plagiarism and the general lack of support for students by Concordia.

Vision might have a good idea for a party but is out of touch with Concordia students on the most important part of their university experience: their studies.

—**Eleanor MacPherson,**
Independent Student

CHANGE won't put their ego first

At this point in the CSU election, I'm sure most students are sick of all the teams and everything else that's associated with campaigning. This year was my first year involved in the elections and I was surprised at all the hostile, negative campaigns being launched by some of the candidates. Then it occurred to me that no matter how negative a campaign is, it only further

emphasizes how important it is for Concordia students to vote for the team that has conducted itself with the utmost respect and dignity, CHANGE Concordia.

One of the biggest platform points that CHANGE wants to accomplish next year is to finally put an end to petty politics we've seen all year. I think that no matter how many Book Exchanges or Career Fairs you want to host next year, if people are going to continue to conduct themselves in the manner that puts their egos first and students second, we're never going to get anywhere.

The CHANGE team have already proven themselves these past two weeks by keeping their heads high, and kept their focus on the students no matter how negative or false the attack. In doing this, they've shown the student body that they are not going to let bullshit get in the way of serving students.

I encourage you all to seriously think about this campaign and which team kept their focus on students. I encourage you all to vote for real CHANGE on March 24, 25 and 26.

—**Sonia Merena,**
Political Science

Audrey Peek? Really

I have to admit that I was amazed that anyone would write letters in support of Audrey Peek as an executive for the CSU. Peek has no direct experience with the running of the CSU, she has never successfully run any large student organization and has never demonstrated any competence for using students' money to advance the interests of those who study here.

What Peek does have are ties to the current corrupt Unity government.

Actually, Peek's only experience appears to be her penchant for wasting student money on pet projects rather than pushing for interests that really favour students' interests.

As ASFA president, Peek was censored twice by her own council for selling them out to the current CSU executive and she was fired as chair of the Sustainability Action Fund for undercutting Concordia's environmental movement.

Peek is very good at getting her friends to speak out for her, but it doesn't seem like she's the leader Concordia needs. This university needs something different, but more and more it's looking like this CHANGE crew is just more of the same.

—**Karen Dennsson,**
Fine Arts

A vote for CHANGE

I would like to encourage all students to vote for CHANGE in this year's CSU elections. As a member of team CHANGE I am excited to be working with such a committed and talented group of individuals.

CHANGE's platform includes a number of great new initiatives for Concordia students including a note and exam bank to help students pass tough classes, cheap tickets to go to Habs away games and cheaper bus passes to promote sustainable public transit.

On March 24, 25 and 26 make your voice heard and vote to CHANGE Concordia.

—**Zeyad Saadeh,**
Marketing

Vision = great people

Vision is a dynamic group of individuals that is truly representative of the diverse nature of our school. I have worked with many of these

people in professional capacities and can testify first-hand that they are in the best position to move our student union ahead to new heights. We have all heard of the problems plaguing the CSU in the past. Lets move forward and elect a slate with a vision of how the CSU should be—and not how it has been.

—**Laura Schuelke,**
Political Science

Jonesing for an indy student

I'm Adam Slater and I'm presenting my candidacy as an independent student for CSU Council, because I think that my experience can benefit the CSU as a whole and because I have seen that the CSU's representation of independent students over the past few years has been non-existent.

I have more university-wide experience than any candidate running in this election for any position. While pursuing my BA, I represented students on departmental committees as well as on the Board of Governors, the University Senate, the Concordia Council on Student Life and the Advisory Health & Safety Committee.

Having served on many boards of directors, and as a board treasurer for two years, I possess the know-how to immediately step in, to improve the financial oversight of our student union. Over the past few years almost \$500,000 of student money has gone unaccounted for.

As a CSU Councillor, I will ensure that annual General Meetings are held each year to publicly present audited financial statements to the membership. I will also push for members of CSU Council and the executive to receive training in governance, so that they truly understand their fiduciary responsibilities.

Independent students have had absolutely no voice on the CSU Council for the last two years. Last year, the only slate that ran did not include any independent students. The previous year, Steven Rosenshein—an Arts & Science student—illegally posed as an independent student. This year, only one slate is running an independent student candidate.

Independent students have issues that are particular to them, yet have had no representation and other student reps have done nothing to help.

As a member of CSU Council I will push our student union to fight for the rights of independent students to register earlier for courses and to sit on University decision-making bodies like Senate and the BoG where such decisions are made.

Vote YES to Adam Slater for Independent CSU Councillor.

—**Adam Slater,**
Independent Student

Cross Sam Banks off my ballot

When I saw an endorsement for Sam Banks in this week's paper, I gotta say, I almost lost my nut. Banks is running under a slate named CHANGE, but I just don't see what's different about her.

When she was on Council this year, she worked hand-in-glove with the current, corrupt executive on all of the worst issues—from trying to gut the Sustainability Action Fund, to stacking the Judicial Board, to railroading

opposition councillors.

Banks is infamous around Concordia for the way she fought to keep cameras and recording devices out of the council chambers—apparently she seems to believe that what goes on in student government is no business of the students who pay for it.

Banks was a Unity councillor all last year and she's still one today. It looks like she's hoping a new nametag and a green logo are going to confuse students enough for her to slide through unnoticed. Again.

—**Rachel Wasserman,**
Arts & Science

Noah A. Timmins Jr. is back

The man who built the York Theatre has come to restore his legacy. What Concordians now know as the EV building was once one of Montreal's grandest movie palaces. 1487 Ste-Catherine Street O. spent decades of the 20th century covered in the golds, beiges and greens of late Art Deco.

The Art Deco glory that has been allowed to deteriorate needs to be restored. The decor originally envisioned by Emmanuel Briffa, one of the most talented and prolific movie theatre decorators of his time, needs to make a comeback. The austere, staid building that has replaced the majestic York Theatre must learn what it means to live and breathe and feel the mark of its inhabitants. The ghost of Noah A. Timmins Jr. will see that it does.

—**Noah A. Timmins Jr.,**
Owner of the York Theatre

Forget the election, how about some music

I am writing this letter to the editor not because I want to tell you who to vote for or because I have a gripe about something that's been said. It's for another reason.

One of the bands that performed at the CSU Winter Orientation concert, The Ease Down, has a show this Friday at O Patro Vys with the music starting at 9 p.m. It is a free concert and will be amazing. I don't know about you but I can't pass up on a band who when we did an interview, the lead singer and pianist Ben Wilkins classified their music as "Pop music is preferable, and then Gangster Pop followed by Roid Rock."

When Wilkins cites references like Rufus Wainwright, Fiona Apple, Stevie Wonder and the film *Notorious*, it has to be something special and worth a Friday night of your time. If that isn't enough to convince you to take a chance on this very talented group of strings, guitar, drum and piano, just take a listen to their song 'Shape shifter' and you will be smitten.

So, I hope to see you all at O Patro Vys on this Friday, March 27 to discover or remember a little known Montreal treasure.

—**Colleen Johnson,**
Political Science

Marketing of the street

Change? Change? Cigarette? Cigarette?

Fuck you.

—**Evan Beaton,**
Human Environment

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.

crswrdpzzlol

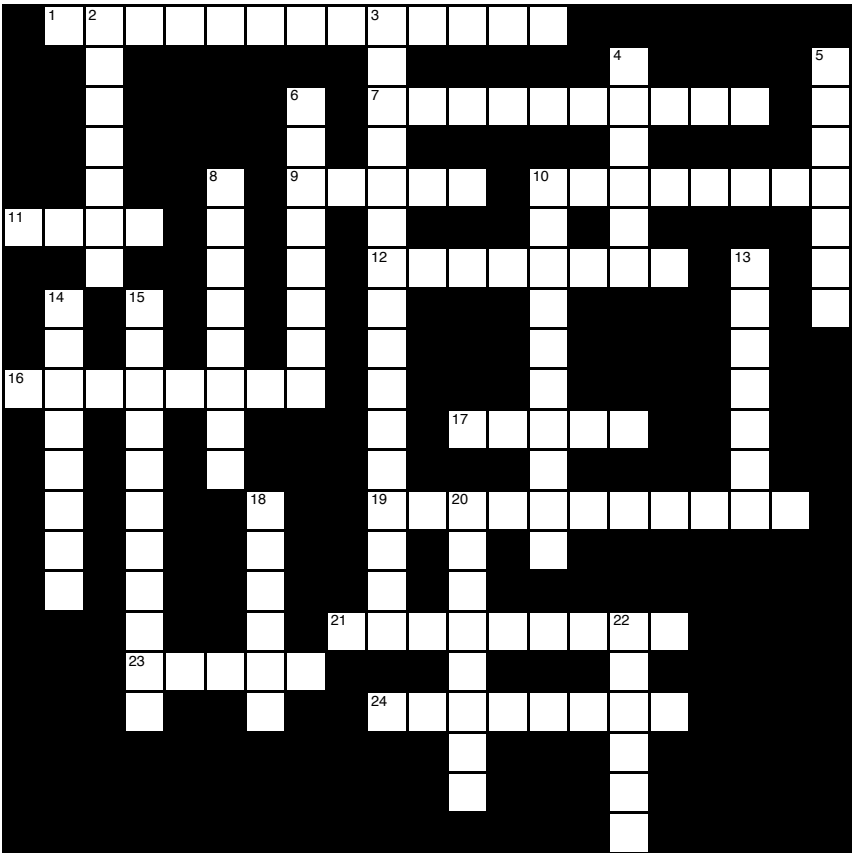
EXAM TACTICS • R. SCORE HASTIE & BRUNO DE ROSA

ACROSS

- 1. Skill of twins or the ability to pretend to be someone who appears knowledgeable without the use of glasses and a fake moustache
- 7. The ability to march backwards through time and give yourself infinite study time or go forward and get the results. It's a win-win situation, unless it's a performance review
- 9. The electronic correspondence that allows your peers to warn you of impending exam doom. Like texting, but with a computer
- 10. Notes in your pocket, writing something on your hand before the test, carving equations into the back of your eyelids. If you try this or any other techniques and get caught, the exam will be the least of your worries.
- 11. How can you do the exam if it's somehow turned into a pile of ashes?
- 12. This isn't supposed to be at school, but your doctor will get to know you quite well after this examination
- 16. If you're already sweating bullets and feeling light-headed, feel free to treat yourself to a quick trip face-first to the floor
- 17. You weren't born a twin, so forget it, you'll make your own. Hurray to heretical science
- 19. For most people, this is just to clean up in a washroom stall. But for some, it can be used to store notes in a last minute review
- 21. If you're wearing only this during your exam, it's just a dream... hopefully
- 23. Telling your Chem prof that you're radioactive from nuclear fallout won't fly. It may work on your English Lit prof
- 24. Three simple words, one simple action. Like Indiana Jones escaping that giant boulder, it's a definite life-saver/responsibility-dodger

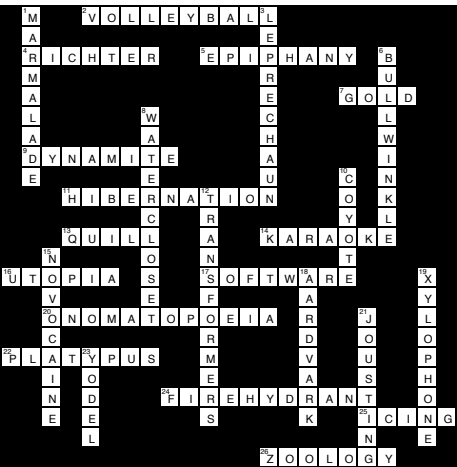
DOWN

- 2. An intricate arrangement of these on the ceiling and walls will allow you to view a classmate's answers
- 3. Your physical body is in the exam room, but you're mentally in your room, sifting through the garbage and dirty clothes to find exam notes
- 4. Shutter Click. A picture is worth at least an A-
- 5. "Please, please, please let me get a good grade"
- 6. Oh, a Manila envelope, full of answers... I guess it somehow ended up in my schoolbag through the use of magic. Just let me throw away these latex gloves
- 8. The most difficult way of getting a good grade.



- Only the foolish and the extremely nerdy adhere to this tough work ethic
- 10. Who needs to read an entire book when these exist? It's like reading a book's best of
 - 13. The divine intervention that allows you to score good grades. Praise be to God/Allah/any number of other religious deities. Nihilists have only themselves to thank
 - 14. The normal way to prepare for an exam: textbooks, notebooks, little time and lots of Mountain Dew—not a LAN party.
 - 15. An exam tactic that only the deaf—or those who are well versed in this language—could appreciate
 - 18. Sticking the thermometer into the lamp when you were seven works on your mom. Now that sort of trick will not work with your prof on exam day
 - 20. The ultimate resource for any information, from proofs to the depths of human depravity. Just don't get sucked into Second Life the night before the exam
 - 22. These extraterrestrial beings told you all you needed to know about calculus. All it took was to tell them where the president of Canada was. Haha, foolish Martians

issue 26
solutionz



Correction
In "eConcordia headliner cancels for ABC primetime show" [Vol. 29, Iss. 25, page 4] the sentence, "The Summit's unexpected change of date will cost eConcordia close to \$28,000" should have read, "The Summit's unexpected change of date *could* cost eConcordia close to \$28,000." Further, the number is an estimate based on the flat registration rate (actually \$425 not \$420), and does not account for the early bird registration offered before Jan. 15 of \$375. *The Link* regrets the error.

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.

editorial

If you don't care,
don't vote.
If you do care,
educate yourself

Democracy cannot succeed unless those who express their choice are prepared to choose wisely. The real safeguard of democracy, therefore, is education.
—Franklin D. Roosevelt

Students are being bombarded from every angle these days. "Vote CHANGE," "Vote Vision," "Vote for the decentralization of your student government," "Just vote!" It's being pounded into our heads that if we really care about our school, we'll show up to the voting booths on March 24, 25 and 26 to scribble on some colourful pieces of paper and keep the wheels of democracy greased and spinning. But that's not really true. Ideally, democracy depends on individuals educated on the issues coming together to have their say on just about everything. From who they want to represent them to how they want to be governed.

This is the classic ideal of democracy and is held in such high esteem by so many that we've extended it to just about everything we can: publicly traded companies, American Idol and more importantly to Concordia's student government. But the key word that's often skipped over when we talk about democracy is "educated." It was assumed, when this wacky system was dreamed up, that the people casting their votes would cherish their right enough to do their best to read all of the pertinent data, think about the issue rationally and then mark their "X." But like most practical applications of an ideal, democracy doesn't always work the way it's supposed to. These days it's the action, not the spirit of voting that's being encouraged. Here's a lollipop. Be a good child and go draw on that slip of paper. Here's a pencil. Go find our slate name on a ballot and use it to put an X next to every name that's affiliated with it. With catchy slogans and easy colour associations, they try to make everything easy for you. But being a real member of a democracy shouldn't be easy. Showing up isn't all it takes to be part of this system. You should be reading platforms; you should be asking questions; you should be weighing the promises candidates are making against your deeply held beliefs and values to come to a decision about which one best represents you.

If done correctly, this will make the candidate think as hard as you do, and if they can answer you in an intelligent way, maybe that is a candidate worth looking at. Voting blindly on issues you are completely aloof about helps no one. Marking an X next to someone's name because of who they're affiliated with and not because of who they are, turns student government into a pale imitation of what it's supposed to be. If democracy is something you value, get educated about the people who want to represent you. Despite what you're being told, parties will not govern you, but individuals will. Voting for a space-filler candidate, who knows nothing about what's going on at our school, because of who they're affiliated with will only get you empty representation. Voting according to something superficial—like how pretty a poster is or tic tacs—will get you a superficial student government. If none of this advice appeals to you, that's okay. Just do the rest of the school a favour this week. Don't pretend to be interested in something you don't care about. You're not doing democracy any favours. Don't vote.

—Clare Raspopow,
Features editor