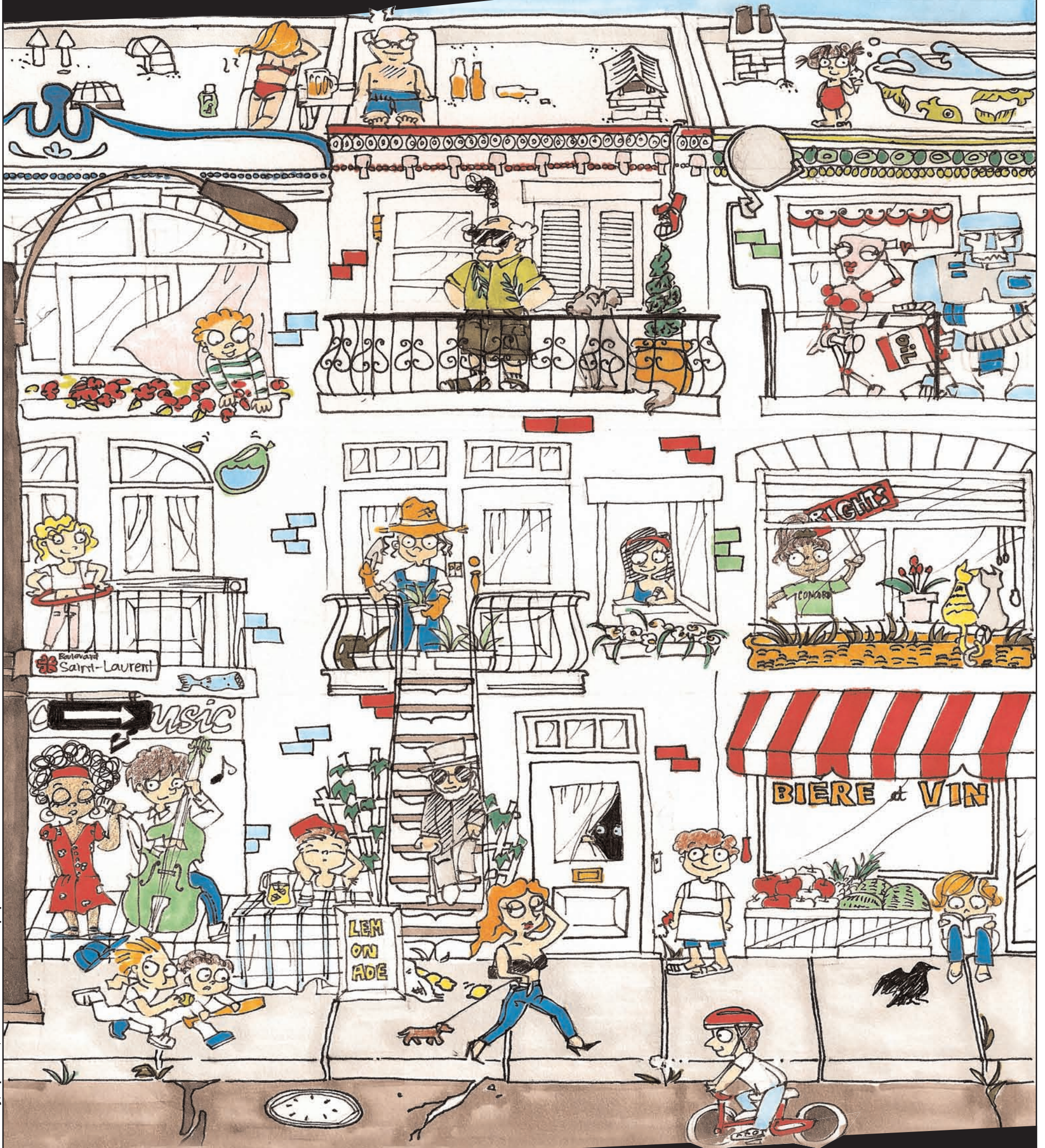




Authors flood Montreal for Blue Metropolis Literary Festival • Literary arts 8

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Home is where his heart aches: A day on the street with John • Features 12

Where has your money gone?

Students have no control over \$500,000 they give to campus groups each year

• JUSTIN GIOVANNETTI

Nearly 40,000 Concordia University undergraduate students pay fees towards the Concordia Volunteer Abroad Program, *The Concordian* and the Sustainability Action Fund, yet they cannot vote nor can they run for a board position.

The vast majority of undergraduate students are not recognized as members of these three organizations—called independent fee levy groups because they are independent of Concordia Student Union oversight—or have any voting rights where policies are concerned.

All together, only 17 people are full, voting members of these organizations. That's the bad news.

The good news is that two of those three groups are promising reform.

CVAP

The CVAP receives nearly \$220,000 a year from Concordia undergraduate students, or \$0.35 per credit. CVAP's 10-person Board of Directors—including seven voting and three non-voting members—provides the oversight on how the money is spent.

According to outgoing CVAP director Peter Schiefke, "the Board structure of CVAP gives representation to all four faculty associations, as well as a representative of the CSU executive, a CSU councillor and a former CVAP volunteer."

CVAP's two directors and the Dean of Students are the Board's non-voting members. All of these people are appointed and students have no say over who they are.

Students are allowed to attend CVAP's annual general assembly

but have no vote.

Schiefke has said that reform will be coming soon to CVAP. "We've decided this year, that as of this September or October, our membership will be extended to all undergraduate students," Schiefke said.

The Concordian

The Concordian will receive \$120,000 from student fees next year—or \$0.19 per credit—but only the three-member Board of Directors will have the right to know how that money will be spent.

"Practically [speaking], we only have five members right now, meaning we are not open at all to the students who pay for our newspaper," said Board President Ben Ngai. "I have a very different vision for the future.

"We need to open up the membership, start having general annual meetings where people can actually have a say and help ratify our constitution, approve our audited statements and ratify the elected Board members. That is the vision I want to go for."

At present, outgoing directors appoint the newspaper's three-person Board that is then solely responsible for the newspaper's finances. When asked if this organization was democratic, Ngai answered "no."

"I am not legally obliged to show you anything. That's what our bylaws say," Ngai said, holding the newspaper's bylaws in his hands.

Although undergraduate students have no right to see *The Concordian's* finances, *The Link* was given a copy without delay or protest of any kind.

"We criticize other fee levy groups for lack of accountability or transparency and we understand that this is

not the way it is supposed to be," Ngai said.

The SAF

The SAF is given \$160,000 of student money every year, or \$0.25 per credit. The Fund was embroiled in controversy in October when the CSU tried to eliminate it.

CSU President Keyana Kashfi chairs the SAF's 12-person Board, composed of a representative from the CSU executive, the CSU Council, the Arts and Science Federation of Associations, the Commerce and Administration Students' Association, the Engineering and Computer science Association, a student recommended by Sustainable Concordia and a student recommended by the Fine Arts Association.

The SAF coordinator, the Sustainable Concordia coordinator, the R4 coordinator and an inter-union council representative have non-voting seats.

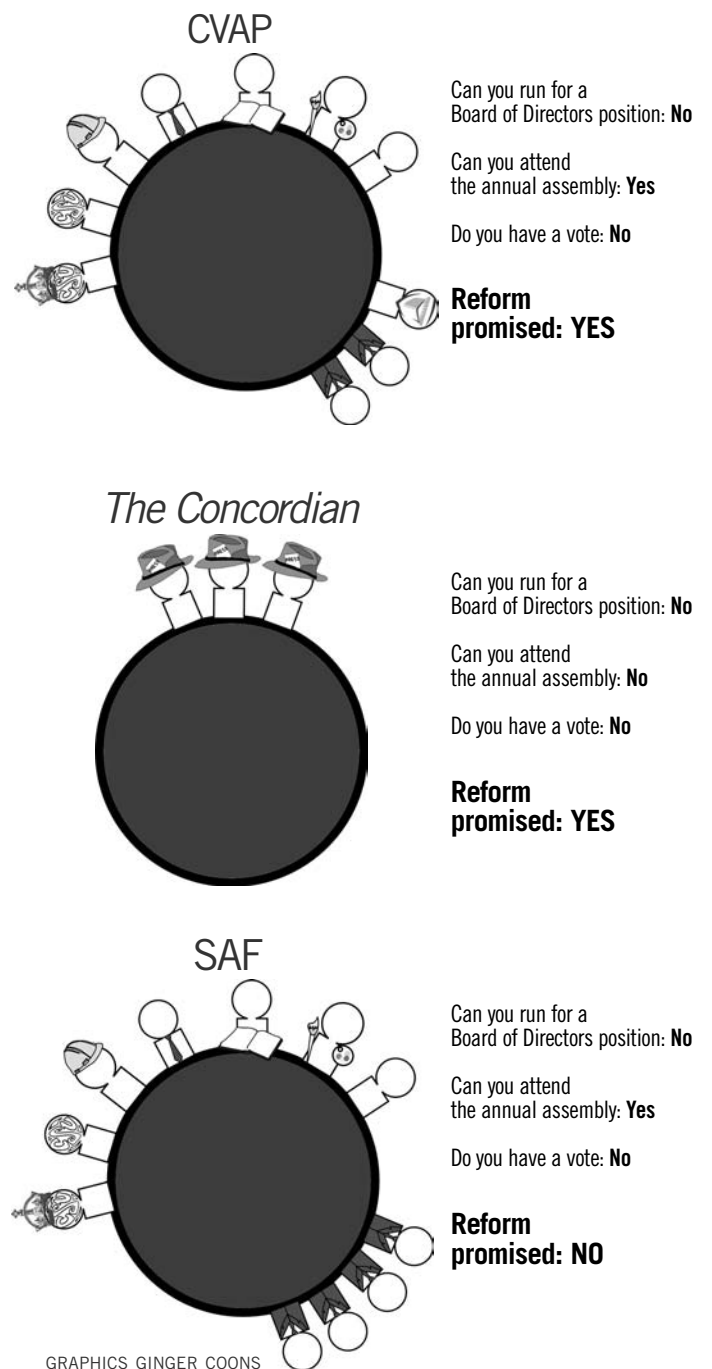
Much like CVAP, the student body elects none of these Board members as they are all appointed.

Although all undergraduate students are considered supporting members of the SAF, they have no vote. The only people considered voting members of the SAF are the representatives from the CSU, ASFA, CASA and ECA.

"If the annual general assembly membership is only those four people, if three of them decide to say no to the Board and all the decisions of the past year, they can do so," Kashfi said. "The SAF has \$160,000 of your student money, yet who is holding these people accountable?"

Although Kashfi said she would like a "total overhaul of the SAF's bylaws," there are no plans at present to do so.

Guide for undergraduate students



Scientology at Concordia

Students protest as Scientology group settles in library atrium

• JOHN COY

On April 9, the Montreal branch of the Citizens Commission on Human Rights—an organization opposed to psychiatry and psychiatric drugs—set up a large exhibit occupying the whole atrium of Concordia University's downtown library building.

Students had no way of knowing that the CCHR is a sister organization of the Church of Scientology, unless they read the fine print of pamphlets being handed out.

By 6 p.m. a small group of students stood outside of the exhibit's entrance with a sign reading, "This is the Church of Scientology." Numerous students who witnessed the event were taken aback by the display.



A holocaust display at the CCHR exhibit. PHOTO ELSA JABRE

"This is extremely creepy [...] it's pretty ridiculous," said Kyle*, a first-year electroacoustic student, about the large exhibit's many television and graphic displays.

The CCHR's presentation included images of Adolph Hitler and the holocaust, blaming psychiatry for

the genocide and headlines that read, "Controlling man like an animal."

There was no advertising on campus in the week before the CCHR exhibit opened, but a notice was posted on Concordia's website's Daily Events page.

Richer Dumais, the president of CCHR Montreal, opened the exhibit with a short French speech where he stressed that everything at the presentation was from credible and documented sources.

"One of the most common treatments today is aimed at students of school age, the majority of which are completely normal," Dumais said as he called for strict limits on Ritalin prescriptions. "Sadly, more and more children are subject to pills and treatments that are dangerous for the goal of ending a problem created by their education."

Some students cheered during Dumais' speech, applauding the presentation as an indicator of Concordia's commitment to free speech. Other students expressed concern at the precedent created by

allowing a religious special-interest group on campus.

According to the CCHR's website, the organization was founded by the Church of Scientology in 1969. The website stresses that the CCHR is an independent organization and "comprises members of the Church of Scientology and many other people of various denominations, faiths and cultural beliefs."

The website also writes that the CCHR works closely with the Church of Scientology and that its objection to psychiatry is based on the Church of Scientology's dogma.

Concordia University and the Montreal office of the CCHR could not be reached for comment.

*Last name withheld to protect identity.

Sustaining the dirty industry

Residents in the east end react to the tar sands

• TERRINE FRIDAY

Lise Archambault has lived in Pointe-aux-Trembles, a borough in the east end of Montreal, for the past 29 years.

Archambault, a senior citizen, keeps track of the oil refineries that dominate the skyline of her town because news of them shows up in her daily crosswords every now and then.

While preparing for her crossword, Archambault read about the proposed reversal of the Montreal-Sarnia pipeline that would pump the tar sands from Alberta to the Petro-Canada refinery near her house.

"You can't put a price on health. This might create more jobs for the area, but if it hurts our health, I am against it [...]. I am against everything that pollutes," Archambault said as she sucked on her cigarette.

they? Only Pointe-aux-Trembles and Montreal East has this shit falling on them."

The Trailblazer Project

The proposed project by Canadian pipeline giant Enbridge, dubbed the "Trailblazer Project," will cost \$346 million and pump 200,000 barrels of tar sands towards Montreal every day. Enbridge currently moves about two million barrels of crude oil daily through its pipelines.

The project is "fairly benign" and isn't as big as some people might think, explains Curt Boechler, Enbridge's senior advisor in communications and investor relations.

"Line 9 was originally built in the mid-'70s to transport western Canadian crude to Montreal," Boechler said. "The line was reversed because of changing market conditions and demand about 10 years ago. Now the market has changed again and our customers are telling us that they require a secure, stable supply of Canadian crude and we're

ny, to be known as Suncor, will own some of the largest reserves of tar sands, considered to be the dirtiest source of energy known to man.

Petro-Canada pumps 15,000 barrels of oil a day from its refineries in the Montreal area alone. The merged company will build an oil refinery system—or coker—in Montreal to deal with the heavy oil from Alberta. The coker's distillation process will emit harmful by-products into the air.

Petro-Canada is currently Canada's second-largest retailer of refined petroleum products. Suncor operates out of Alberta's Athabasca tar sands, under heavy criticism for its effects on the local Native community.

The local impact

Morning Star, an elder at Concordia's Centre for Native Education, was born to a Cree mother and Chippewa father in Alberta.

Big oil companies are destroying the land in Alberta, said Morning Star, and the government isn't stepping in.

"There's acid rain," she said. "The schools on the reserve, there are moments during the summer when they have to keep the children indoors because the air burns their throats. It's usually due to some leakage in a refinery [...]. The air, it just smells so bad."

"At night, the oil refineries are all lit up. The first time I drove by it, I thought it was a big city I was approaching."

—Morning Star, elder at Concordia's Centre for Native Education

arette. "Well, except for this."

Archambault is one person among the 50,000 who will be affected by Enbridge's proposed reversal of Line 9, the pipeline that currently carries oil refined in Montreal to Sarnia, Ontario.

"The refineries bother me," said Pointe-aux-Trembles resident Gilles Gosselin as he motioned towards the Petro-Canada smoke stacks. Gosselin has lived in Pointe-aux-Trembles for 15 years and said that sometimes the smoke "comes out black, black, black and you know it isn't good for you."

Gosselin is pessimistic about the future. "The government was supposed to step in and fix the pollution but they aren't working hard at it, and why would

proposing to reverse the pipeline. So it's actually a reversal that would go in the same direction as it originally did in the '70s, from Sarnia to Montreal."

The Trailblazer Project is on hold indefinitely because it's not profitable right now, Boechler said; the price of a barrel of oil is \$50, down from \$150 last summer.

The oil

Last month, Petro-Canada and Canadian energy giant Suncor announced a \$46 billion merger to be completed by early 2010. The merged compa-

At night, the oil refineries are all lit up. The first time I drove by it, I thought it was a big city I was approaching. That's how big they are."

The communities of Fort Mackay and Fort Chipewyan live off fish and water from the nearby Athabasca River. Massive tailing ponds—which contain the toxic by-products of

oil refinery—bleed into the river, tainting the water and contaminating fish.

Morning Star says the Canadian government is well aware of the implications this has on local Native communities, but they're complacent. "I find the Canadian government is pretending to care for us because to them we're a problem. We're a burden and they just want to keep us under the carpet. So they put out a lot of programs for us, just to put a band-aid on the boo-boo."

In Montreal East, Nancy Mercure is the assistant director of a day care next to oil tanks owned by Petro-Canada. The day care is about 100 metres away from the St-Lawrence River.

"The location of our day care has never hurt the health of our children," said Mercure, who has lived in the area her whole life.

Although the day care is located close to the refineries, the toxic air doesn't settle close to the day care. "Everything that is toxic and hurts the environment doesn't go over our heads here in Montreal East because the winds push it further east, giving us some protection from anything harmful," Mercure said.

Grassroots activism

Montreal residents Dru Oja Jay and Maya Rolbin-Ghanie are members of local activist group RECLAIM, a collective trying to keep tar sand oil from coming to Montreal.

"RECLAIM is an anti-capitalist environmental group that started about a year ago and we're working on a statement advocating for a tar sands free zone," said Jay.

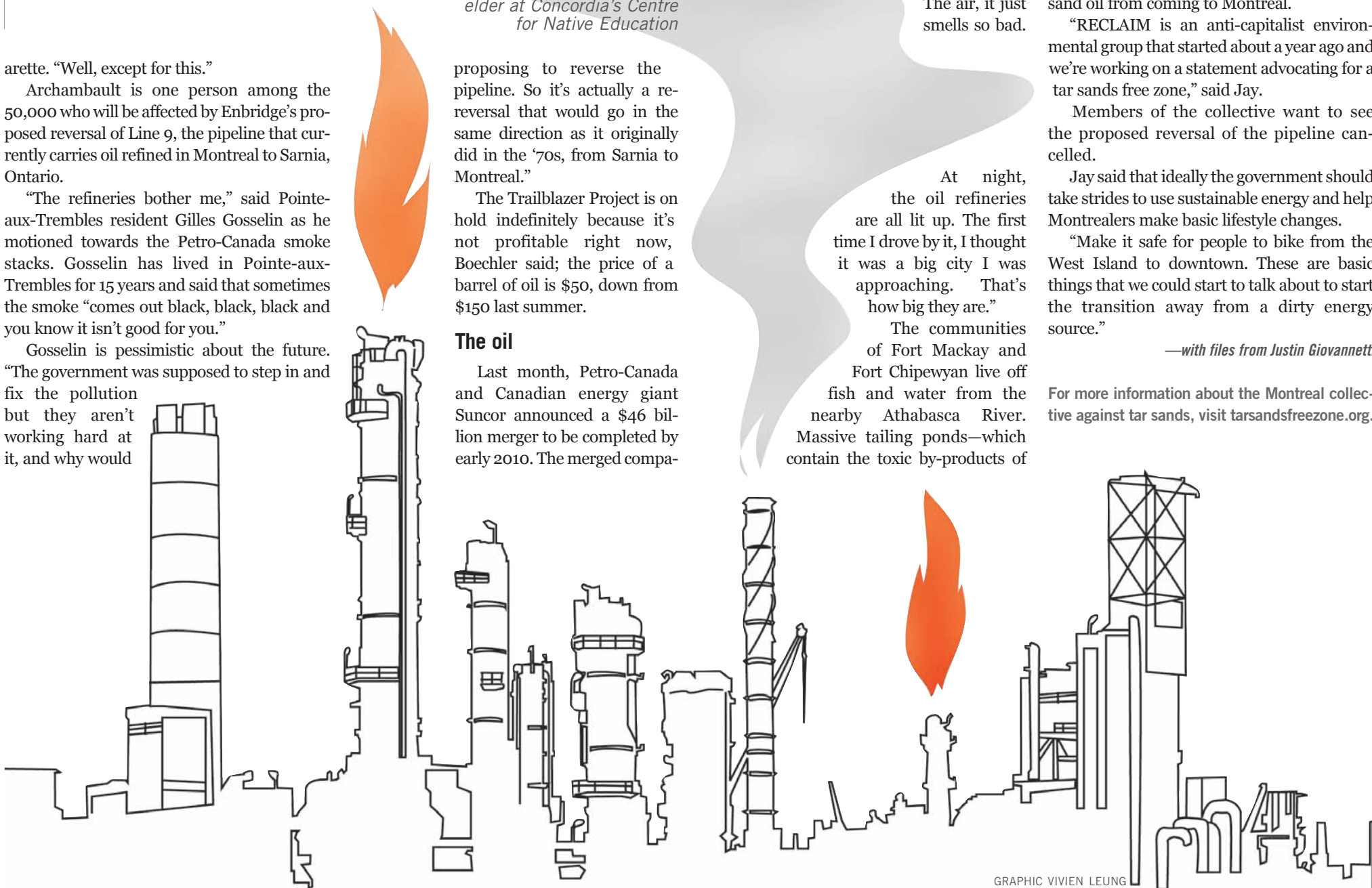
Members of the collective want to see the proposed reversal of the pipeline cancelled.

Jay said that ideally the government should take strides to use sustainable energy and help Montrealers make basic lifestyle changes.

"Make it safe for people to bike from the West Island to downtown. These are basic things that we could start to talk about to start the transition away from a dirty energy source."

—with files from Justin Giovannetti

For more information about the Montreal collective against tar sands, visit tarsandsfreezone.org.



GRAPHIC VIVIEN LEUNG

Let Montreal sprout

Seed bombs and guerrilla gardening is easy

• JUSTIN GIOVANNETTI

Sitting in the lush and stuffy greenhouse of Concordia University's Hall building on April 8, two dozen Montrealers learned how to make bombs—seed bombs, that is.

The seed bomb is the main weapon in the arsenal of the guerrilla gardening movement, a form of non-violent activism intent on saving misused urban spaces through gardening.

"The basic principal behind a seed bomb is that it holds all the qualities necessary for the seeds to thrive: clay, compost, seeds and a little bit of water to make sure it all holds together," explained Alexandra Hall, the host for the Sustainable Concordia workshop called "Seed bombs and Seedlings." "Basically the seed bomb is a mini pot in which the seed can grow."

Seed bombs are well suited for Montreal, a city abundant in derelict lots and neglected neighbourhoods.

"You can use seed bombs wherever you like. Often today they are used to reclaim urban spaces where you can change the landscape and make it beautiful and add some colour and life," said Hall.

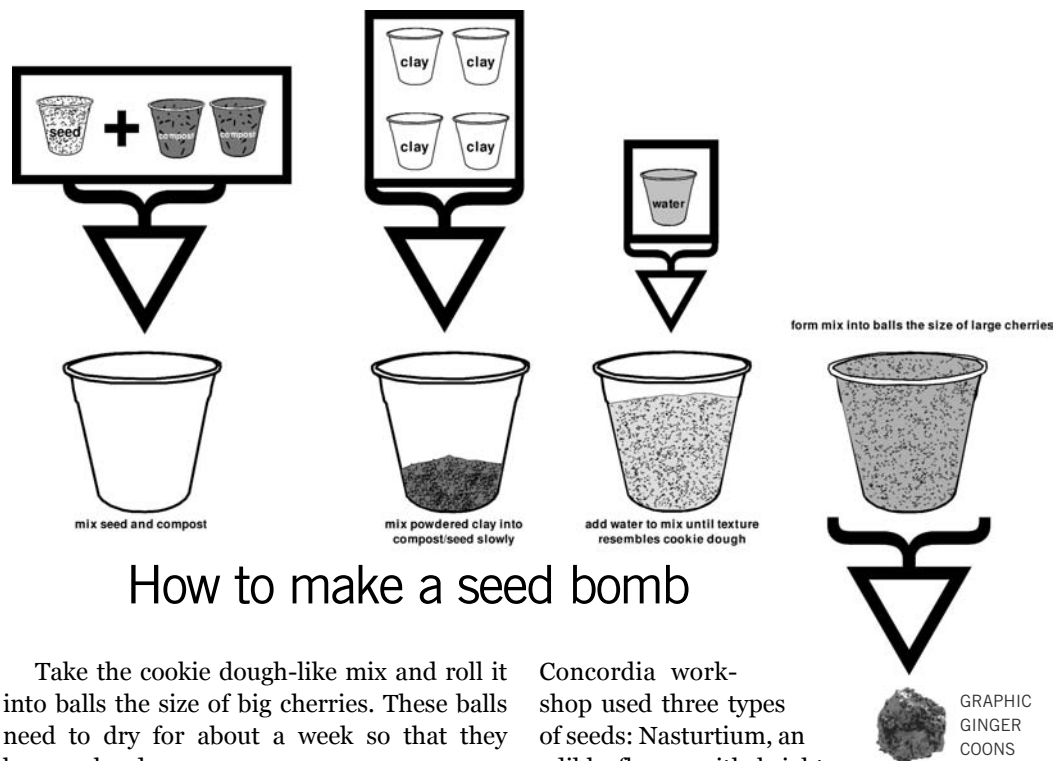
Seed bombs have all the nutrients necessary to live and grow in an arid environment, like a parking lot or downtown tree pit.

How to make a seed bomb

The recipe for a seed bomb is simple. Out of eight parts: four parts clay, two parts compost, one part seed and one part water.

Get ready to get your hands dirty.

In a large bowl, combine the seeds and compost with your hands until the two are well mixed. Then add the clay slowly, while mixing it in with your hands. Add water until you reach something with the consistency of cookie dough.



How to make a seed bomb

Take the cookie dough-like mix and roll it into balls the size of big cherries. These balls need to dry for about a week so that they become hard.

The hardened balls are the final product.

Seed bombs may need to be thrown over fences or walls into closed-off spaces, so they need to be hard to survive the impact.

The best time for bombing is mid-spring to early summer.

Where do you get supplies?

For seed bombs, the hardest ingredient to find is clay, but the shavings left behind from sculptures by Concordia's art students or dried clay from art stores work fine. Any kind of compost can be used, whether homemade or store bought.

As for seed types, plants that are indigenous to Quebec are preferable because they are hardier. As an example, the Sustainable

Concordia work-shop used three types of seeds: Nasturtium, an edible flower with bright colours; Mesclun, a mix of edible greens for salads; and Calendula, an edible marigold with known medicinal qualities. These types of seeds are available at hardware stores.

Guerrilla gardeners prefer edible plants because they serve a purpose beyond looking nice.

Targets

The use of seed bombs is limited only by the imagination of the urban guerrilla: there is nothing illegal about them.

Targets discussed at the workshop included train station platforms, under overpasses, abandoned parking lots, the Hall building's balcony near Reggie's or the tree pits that line downtown arteries like Ste-Catherine Street.

Major referendum awaits student centre

Students may need to pay \$5.40 per credit

• MATTHEW BRETT

A proposed Concordia Student Union student centre is slowly becoming a reality, but the project faces a volatile student referendum vote in November to increase student contributions.

"It remains to be seen if this additional contribution [from the students] will be sufficient for the project to advance," states a report issued by the vice-president of services.

Details of the increased student contribution were not provided in the report and further information could not be obtained as the university was closed for Easter weekend.

The university is suggesting that each student pay \$5.40 per credit, according to outgoing CSU president Keyana Kashfi. Students already pay \$2 per credit for the student centre.

For a student in a 90-credit program, nearly \$500 would be paid before they graduate from Concordia.

The \$68.4 million student centre project relies heavily on the CSU securing upwards of \$10 million in student fees in order to secure a loan.

A working committee is currently finalizing a management agreement between the university and the CSU, and final approval of the agreement is scheduled for next month.

The referendum will likely be a major test for the newly elected Vision slate of the CSU, which begins its mandate in June.

Concordia pleading with Ottawa, Quebec City

• MATTHEW BRETT

The recession has taken visible form at Concordia as the university sells off its physical assets and a delegation of university administrators is scheduled to visit Ottawa on April 21 to meet with the Conservatives and opposition parties.

The Ottawa mission follows on the heels of consultations between federal Public Works Minister Christian Paradis and senior Concordia administrators Russell Copeman and Bram Freedman to discuss infrastructure and research projects.

The Ottawa delegation will be meeting with the newly minted Conservative Post-Secondary Education Caucus, as well as Liberal, NDP and Bloc Québécois MPs. Senior staffers from the departments of Industry and Canadian Heritage will also meet with the delegation.

Copeman, a former Liberal member of Quebec's national assembly, also met with a political attaché to Michelle

Courchesne, Quebec's minister of education, on April 6. A number of "Concordia's priority dossiers" were discussed, according a report from Concordia's vice-president external.

Concordia has put Bishop Court, at the heart of the Sir George Williams campus, up for sale. The university will also be vacating five other buildings: FS, listed as a Fine Arts building near Lucien-L'Allier metro; LS, at the corner of de Maisonneuve and Drummond; ER, the home of health services; CL, the large building across from the Faubourg; and TJ, the prized Theatre and Contemporary Dance building.

A farewell party will be held for the TJ on May 2.

The total square footage lost exceeds 117,700 and the savings are put at nearly \$1.4 million. The Bishop Court asking price is \$3.6 million.

Concordia vice-president of finance, Larry English, recently made clear that "no new funds will be made available to the university sector for the upcoming year."

Briefs

• JUSTIN GIOVANNETTI

Launch of a self-service bike fleet

The Autonomous Social Centre of Pointe-Saint-Charles will start a network of self-service bicycle racks around the small borough neighbourhood of Le Sud-Ouest on April 18. Signs will be posted at all exits of the Pointe reminding people to return the distinctly painted bicycles.

Concordia nowhere to be found

The British-based Top University Guide for 2009 has been released. Harvard, Yale and Cambridge are the Guide's top three picks for world universities. The highest-ranked Canadian university is McGill in the 20th position. Concordia is not in the top 200.

D.B. Clarke theatre rezoned

Due to the move of the Performing Arts department to the downtown campus, the D.B. Clarke Theatre in the Hall Building is now an academic-only space. The theatre had been used in the past for movie screenings and cultural events.

Coffee and snacks from the CSU

The Concordia Student Union will be serving coffee and snacks to students during the exam period on April 20 and May 1 on the Hall Building's seventh floor. Students are encouraged to bring reusable coffee mugs.

Naps from ASFA

The Arts and Science Federation of Associations will be operating a nap centre from April 22 to April 25 at 2150 Bishop, suite 203. Cots, snacks and drinks, sleep and study tips, as well as a wake-up will be provided.

CHANGE goes to Judicial Board

CHANGE slate presidential candidate Kurt Reckziegel has filed a 17-page appeal to the Concordia Student Union Judicial Board against Chief Electoral Officer Oliver Cohen. The appeal asked for the Vision slate to be disqualified or for the election to be annulled.

What a Dahl

Expozine 2008 winner shares his comic insecurities

“Montreal felt to me like a city that was made for cartoonists [...] cheap, dirty, beer-loving, bike-riding cartoonists.”

—Gabby Schulz,
author



Gabby Schulz, aka Ken Dahl, won best English comic at Expozine 2008. GRAPHIC GABBY SCHULZ

• MADELINE COLEMAN

Gabby Schulz had only been in Montreal a few days when he felt an enormous weight lift off his shoulders—what he calls a “mantle of shame, fear and hate that [he’d] been carrying around just being a part of the United States.”

An American who grew up in Hawaii, Schulz spent a couple months subletting a room in Verdun last summer, hanging out with his roommate and, most importantly, drawing.

“Montreal felt to me like a city that was made for cartoonists,” he said. “Cheap, dirty, beer-loving, bike-riding cartoonists.”

Schulz is, first and foremost, a cartoonist—although you’re more likely to know him by the name of Ken Dahl, the alias he’s been using since he began drawing comics.

As Dahl, he’s an outspoken critic of the American social climate, self-deprecating backseat driver and dedicated chronicler of “the kinds of moments that you see passing by without any comment.”

He also plumbs the depths of loneliness and ungraceful aging with recurring character Gordon Smalls, a bespectacled, long-haired “mix between [himself] and that wing-nut with an engineering degree who’s always hanging around Food Not Bombs chapters.”

Currently living in Vermont, Schulz is usually happy to fly under the radar. However, he recently garnered attention this side of the border when his book *Welcome to the Dahl House* won the award for best English comic at Expozine 2008, an experience he called “a complete surprise and an honour.”

Schulz said that, for a kid growing up in a place as isolated as Hawaii, comics offered a bridge to the outside world. He came of age during the independent comics boom of the late ‘80s and early ‘90s, which he says was “lucky” because it meant he grew up on Art Spiegelman and Montrealeur Julie Doucet rather than “adolescent power fantasy” superhero serials.

In the pre-Internet era, the mailbox was a would-be cartoonist’s best friend. When Schulz first got into drawing comics, he would mail them to publications like *Factsheet 5*, establishing pen pal relationships with many of the artists he looked up to.

“Having your own mini-comic or zine was sort of like the price of admission into this whole countercultural self-publishing under-world that, today, seems to have all but disappeared from comics, or [has] at least been watered down by the commerciality and superficiality of the Internet,” he said.

The influence of seminal cartoonists like Robert Crumb helped Schulz develop his style—although he’s not so sure that has always been a positive thing. Women characters are largely absent from Dahl’s repertoire, appearing in oppositional roles when they show up at all. In “I Will Die Alone,” a story Schulz wrote in 2008 as part of the compendium *Welcome to the Dahl House* about spending time in New York City, he complained about the pretty girls on the street who never give him a second look.

“I know I couldn’t stand to spend five minutes in the same room with any of these fashion-obsessed *Sex and the City* drones,” he humbugged. “Still...why don’t any of them like me?”

“I think for most of my comics career I was afraid that, by speaking through a female character, I’d be risking one of two errors,” explained Schulz of his apparent aversion to drawing women. “Either I’d objectify them, or I’d just make it obvious that I had no idea how a woman really thought.”

He believes his early “worship” of Crumb—who he says now “comes off like a complete psychopath”—contributed to the way he depicts girls.

“I think this is the sort of example young male cartoonists are taught to aspire to,” he reasoned. “So much of comics in general are either openly or latently misogynistic. It’s fucked.”

Schulz may wax nostalgic for the days of postal comic exchanges and bemoan what he calls the “corn-syrup-addled sensationalist mass culture” of his native land, but he is heartened by the rise of the thoughtful, intelligent comics being created by people like Chris Ware, Daniel Clowes and Chester Brown.

Now that the superhero genre has seen its day, at least when it comes to print, cartoonists can stop trying to distance themselves from that “vacuity” and focus on content.

“I think cartoonists in the indie-comic ghetto have finally been growing out of our self-absorption.”



Welcome to the Dahl House
Ken Dahl
Microcosm Publishing
March 2008
128 pp
\$7.00

quick reads

Could it be...
Mack the Knife?



The League of Extraordinary Gentlemen Vol. III: Century 1910
Writer: Alan Moore
Artist: Kevin O'Neil
Top Shelf Productions
April 2009
80 pp
\$7.95

Known for his wizard-like touch in writing graphic novels, Alan Moore has jam-packed his latest volume of *The League of Extraordinary Gentlemen* with enough detail to sustain several readings. This latest version of the team—which contains a number of literary characters borrowed from books published during the same era—includes a few new spies, such as Mack the Knife and Sherlock Holmes’ older brother, Mycroft Holmes.

After investigating a prophetic dream and a slew of murders, the book ends on a bit of a down note, with the League having failed their mission and garnering a few new enemies along the way; it seems to have served the purpose of setting up for future volumes more than being a self-contained story.

O'Neil's art is a wonder for both its storytelling ability and style. While remaining simple and expressive, it also manages to be dense with background details contributing to the story.

Though this edition of the series is masterfully constructed, the story within is a bit lacking and too convoluted for a newcomer to the franchise.

3.5/5

—Sebastien Cadieux

I'll tell you *What's Wrong*



What's Wrong?: Explicit Graphic Interpretations Against Censorship
Edited by Robin Fisher
Arsenal Pulp Press
160 pp
\$21.95

Editor Robin Fisher starts off the book's introduction by stating, rather matter-of-factly, that she's never been a fan of being told what to do. When the Canada Customs people started messing with packages from abroad, whose contents they deemed “obscene,” she knew she had to do something. The products of that work are two comic anthologies, *What's Wrong?: Explicit Graphic Interpretations Against Censorship* and its sibling *What Right?: Graphic Interpretations Against Censorship*.

What's Wrong?, the adult-targeted ying to the *What Right?* anthology yang, explores the issues of censorship meant for mass public consumption and is an interesting read. The illustrations, which range from comical multi-page strips all the way to serious and often beautiful portraits of the human body, are often accompanied by storylines that offer a diverse cross-section of the human species: male, female, intersex, anthropomorphic and completely alien creatures interact with one another on a variety of levels in any given page. Sexual orientations are also diversely represented, as are straight, gay, bi, trans, questioning, non-human and often nonsensical depictions are taken. There's a little bit for everyone within the tome, as an “everything but the kitchen sink” approach is taken. Well worth a perusal.

4/5

—Brian Hastie

Welcome to the World

The 11th Blue Metropolis Montreal International Literary Festival makes a splash April 22-26

• CHRISTOPHER OLSON



For five days a year, authors from all around the world fly into Montreal to take part in the Blue Metropolis Montreal International Literary Festival.

But how did it all get started?

It began, said Linda Leith, the festival's founder and artistic director, when a "bunch of Montreal writers, including myself, got fed up that there was an international literary festival in every major city in Canada and that there was not one in Montreal."

Leith took it upon herself to start one, and in 1999 Blue Metropolis was born.

Since then, the festival has grown from a crowd of 1,500 spectators in its first year to 16,000, and from 56 participating authors to over 350.

"What was really bold about Blue Met is that it brought people from different cultures together and it brought French together with English," said Leith. Spanish was added in 2000, since it is one of the

largest language groups in Montreal after English and French. The number of participating languages grows every year.

"[This is] the first year we're having an event entirely in Urdu for members of the South Asian community," said Leith.

The English motto of this year's festival is "Words that matter."

"We're going through very tough times with the global economic meltdown," said Leith. "I think that it's important, in the midst of all this upheaval, to remind ourselves that words matter and in fact, words matter more than ever in difficult times."

"Some of Blue Met is fun and light and pure pleasure, and some of it has a more serious purpose." This year, for example, will feature a series called "Writers in Peril," an event made to highlight the injustices being perpetrated against journalists worldwide, whether in war zones or here at home.

"One of the underlying and not very well-hidden purposes of Blue Metropolis is education," said Leith, recalling her time as an English professor at Concordia. "I see everything we do as educational."

Each year, the Blue Met hands out a Literary Grand Prix prize to one author. This year the prize will be presented to English writer A.S. Byatt.

"This is a bit of a coup," said Leith, "because A.S. Byatt is not only one of the greatest living writers of English fiction, but she has a new novel that will be launched at Blue Met [on April 22] called *The Children's Book*."

The French translation of Byatt's first novel called *The Shadow of the Sun*, one of many translated books that will grace the festival this year, will launch on the same day.

"We have a really fun event called the 'Translation Slam,' which is basically a Blue Metropolis invention," said Leith. "[It] pits different translations against each other and the audience gets involved and asks a lot of questions and makes comments on the different translations."

With 100 different events, everyone is sure to find something that fits their interests, says Leith.

"The 'Blue Metropolis' is the city that you would like to live in," said Leith. "It's the sort of ideal city, full of diversity and excitement and fun."

The Blue Metropolis festival runs from April 22-26. For more info, ticket pricing and a complete programme schedule, visit bluemetropolis.org.



"Why I Write"
Saturday, April 25 at 4:00 p.m.
Delta Hotel, 777 University St., Regence A room.
\$10

• BARBARA PAVONE

Despite being named one of the "20 Writers for the 21st Century" by *The New Yorker*, Donald Antrim has yet to shed his modesty. When asked how he found himself in the literary realm he jokingly said, "I failed my way to it."

Antrim's introduction to writing was far from the idyllic, poetic renditions one often hears from accomplished artists.

"I grew up in a house full of books and I lived in ambivalent denial about my interest in novels. I always read and told myself I didn't care." The truth is that he "was not the type writing stories at the age of eight." It wasn't until his mid-20s that he "started seriously thinking about it."

With three novels and one memoir under his belt he explains that his writing process has "gone through a lot of shake-ups." In a style that is key to his character, he humbly revealed, "I don't feel I have inspiration. I don't have moments where I think 'Oh, something can happen.'"

The idea for his novel *The Hundred Brothers*, for example, was "an accident."

"I had an image of all these brothers and I thought how about a hundred of them?" he said.

On April 25, Antrim will be participating in three

events at Blue Metropolis where Montrealers will have the opportunity to spend some time in the company of the literary mastermind.

Apart from "Readings at Night," there will also be a panel discussion entitled "Why I Write"—a question Antrim had some difficulty answering at first.

"I need to think for a moment because all the reasons not to do it crowd why to do it out," he said.

"There hasn't been anything else I've found that uses more of me," he said, adding that writing offers a "set of feelings and experiences that I haven't been able to find in anything else I did. It asks more of me than I can do. I've felt mentally, emotionally and spiritually that this was a large and total experience, and that's what's kept me going through the years."

Of the workshop "Writing Ourselves," he said, "One reason I wanted to do it is to find out what will happen. It seemed to me that it might be fruitful to get fiction and memoir writers in the same room."

As for the future, Antrim says he doesn't have any solid plans. "I'm working on a novel for anywhere from the next year to 10 years. It was stalled out and I wanted to bring it back to life, [so] that's why I came here [to Berlin]."

Antrim was reluctant to offer advice to aspiring writers.

"I think I'm adverse to giving advice," he laughed. "Patience is very, very, very important. Not just waiting for things to fall into place, like getting a book published, but a deeper patience with oneself. I know it's very cliché and very basic, [but] if you're a young writer think about it in terms of a lifetime. How will you sustain yourself through the ups and downs?"



"Science That Matters"
Saturday, April 25 at 11:30 a.m.
Delta Hotel, 777 University St., St-Laurent room.
\$5

• CHRISTOPHER OLSON

This year marks both the 200th anniversary of Charles Darwin's birth and the 150th anniversary of the publication of his book, *The Origin of Species*.

To mark this occasion, the Blue Metropolis festival has recruited Tijs Goldschmidt, an evolutionary biologist and author of *Darwin's Dreampond: Drama in Lake Victoria*, to speak about his legacy.

"I consider [Darwin to be] one of the greatest minds that ever lived on Earth," said Goldschmidt. "It's incredible the way in which [he] often quite intuitively guessed in the right direction."

Like Darwin, Goldschmidt uncovered his own biological paradise, which became the foundation for his book.

Similar to the famous Galapagos Islands, Goldschmidt found that the waters of Lake Victoria, one of Africa's Great Lakes, was a veritable slideshow of evolution. The perch-like fish that inhabit Lake Victoria's waters are "comparable to Darwin's Finches," said Goldschmidt. Not only did the fish show the gradual effects of speciation, but they also showed how evolution reacts to sudden and devastating changes in the environment.

In 1985, Goldschmidt witnessed the mass extinction of 200 fish species in Lake Victoria, due mostly to the arrival of the Nile Perch, an exotic foreign predator.

The fish that managed to survive "must have found mechanisms to escape from the Nile Perch," said Goldschmidt. "In fact, what you are seeing is evolution in real time."

The surviving fish have rapidly adjusted their physical traits in a mere one or two years, or the equivalent of 15 to 30 generations.

"For instance, their eyes changed, their gills changed and a number of their anatomical structures changed," said Goldschmidt. "I was really surprised that adaptations can evolve so quickly. [Darwin] thought that the time required to adapt was at least 1,000 generations or more."

Although Darwin could not have foreseen many of the things we take for granted in evolutionary biology today, his hunches have somehow stood the test of time.

"I think Darwin's genius was not that he was good at mathematics or physics," said Goldschmidt. "Rather he was very good at [combining] common phenomena in different areas of interest. For example, in biology and geology."

Despite all the advances that have been made to Darwin's original theory and the mounting evidence that he was right all along, Goldschmidt fears that creationism and intelligent design are on the rise, while evolution is falling fast behind.

"Darwin called the origin of species 'the mystery of mysteries,' and it's no longer that, I think," he said. "A lot more is known about the genetics of speciation."

While he was invited to come speak about Darwin's theory of evolution at Blue Metropolis, Goldschmidt thinks that's too general a topic.

"Darwin's ideas are important in my work, but I'm rather an essay writer, a more personal writer than a science writer."

wide Met



GRAPHIC VIVIEN LEUNG



“Free Lutz!”
Saturday, April 25 at
12:00 p.m. (French)
and 3:30 p.m.
(English)
Delta Hotel, 777
University St., Regence
room.
Free

• CHRISTOPHER OLSON

Using a computer to randomly string words together and form a poem may sound like the antithesis of what a poem is supposed to be—but that’s the point.
“Free Lutz!” celebrates Theo Lutz, “one of the pioneers, maybe *the* pioneer of electronic literature,” said Linda

Leith, artistic director and founder of the Blue Metropolis festival. “This is a first in Montreal. It’s a unique opportunity to get the inside story on how electronic literature developed and to see what’s going on in this brand new field.”
Though relatively modern to Canada, electronic literature has a long history in Germany.
The live performance is based on the work of Lutz, who used a Zuse Z22 computer in 1959 to randomly generate sentences and vocabulary borrowed from Franz Kafka’s *Le Château*.
Using the same algorithms that were used to create Lutz’s “stochastic text,” web artist Johannes Auer will attempt to reproduce his work in a free performance held in conjunction with the Goethe-Institut of Montreal.
“The text is generated by a web server, but the audience can participate and can also write words using computer

terminals and cell phones,” said Auer.
“Normally, the audience tries to bring the speaker [right to the edge]. They play with the speaker,” he said. “Sometimes they also write a bad word and I have no way to prevent this.”
Having a professional speaker—in this case Montreal poet Kaie Kellough—read the randomly generated text is important, says Auer, as “it humanizes the interface.”
“I don’t believe in only computer generated art,” he said. “I don’t think that it works [by itself].”
As soon as people understand the digital algorithm behind a program—which produces computer generated art—the audience’s interest begins to fade, says Auer. For instance, a video game is enjoyable so long as you don’t figure out the enemy’s strategies and routines.
“If you know what the algorithm is doing with you, the fun factor goes down,” he said. “It’s boring and it’s the

same with merely computer generated art and literature.”
After his initial experiments with digital poetry, Lutz would print out his randomized texts then proceed to correct grammar mistakes and sentence structure, subverting the whole idea of the “random” nature of the poetry, says Auer.
However, the hand-written scribbles in the margins of the text, printed on old telegraph paper, added a human element to the poetry.
By editing the text, “Theo Lutz acted as a traditional author,” Auer said.
Auer’s take on Lutz’s interactive poetry will be broadcast live over the Internet, where people all over the world will have a chance to help “co-author” the poem and watch the results in real time.

To watch a live broadcast of “Free Lutz!”
visit freelutz-montreal2009.ca.



Closing Event:
“Extraordinary
Montrealers”
Sunday, April 26 at
4:00 p.m.
Delta Hotel, 777
University St., Regence
AB room.
\$15

• CHRISTOPHER OLSON

This year, Penguin Publishing released a series of four biographies collectively titled “Extraordinary Canadians.”
“But it just so happens that all four of the books are about Montrealers,” said Linda Leith, artistic director and founder of Blue Metropolis.
As soon as she noticed the connection, Leith got the four principle authors together for the festival’s closing event.
“It’s going to be, I think, a very popular event,” she said, “because not only are these famous Montrealers extremely

interesting characters to talk about, but the authors of those biographies are themselves great writers.”
Among the Montrealers who will be celebrated are Mordecai Richler, Steven Leacock, Norman Bethune and Pierre Elliott Trudeau.
Trudeau’s biography was written by former Concordia creative writing masters student and author Nino Ricci.
“However mistaken some of Trudeau’s policies might have been, nonetheless there was this sense of grandeur to him and this sense of vision,” said Ricci. “And we’ve really lacked that since then.”
Trudeau helped define Canada’s uniqueness, says Ricci, and “now the situation [with the United States and Canada] is reversed. You know, we had Trudeau, they had Nixon. Now we’ve got Harper and they’ve got Obama. It’s a complete reversal from what the situation was in Trudeau’s day.”
Ricci approached the book like he would any piece of writing.
“[I tried] to look at him as I look at a character when I’m writing a novel: what were his contradictions, how did they

fit together and how did he form a whole character out of all these often paradoxical little bits that went into his makeup?”
Ricci admits his opinion of Trudeau wavered more than a few times during the writing of the book.
“I began to wonder if he wasn’t just very Machiavellian; someone who secretly wanted power all along and just subscribed to whatever the current hot ideology of the day was to get it. But that view didn’t really pan out. The more research I did, the more complex he seemed and the more it seemed that he really did have a kind of core to him of real values and of a real search for the truth of things.”
Ricci interviewed a blend of Trudeau’s close personal friends and those who simply recall having him as their prime minister.
“I had a lot of informal conversations like that, and arguments, and sometimes fierce arguments about the subject,” he said. “In some ways that was more useful than sitting down with someone who had a personal stake in [Trudeau’s] legacy.”
Trudeau has secured his place in the history books, says

Ricci, “but I think he will always have a very special place for the people who lived in his era that will be hard for future generations to recapture.”
“I guess that was part of the idea behind this Penguin series: to try and keep these people in the public eye and to give people a sense of the important figures in their past.”
This will be Ricci’s second visit to Blue Metropolis, and one of three events of which he will partake in this year.
“It doesn’t have the feel of your standard Canadian literary festival,” said Ricci of Blue Metropolis. “I guess partly because it’s bilingual, but partly because it’s more idea-oriented. It has more the feeling of a literary salon than of a literary festival and I like that difference. I like that sense of being in a place where important ideas are being discussed and where they’re being taken seriously.”

Ricci will visit Concordia on April 23 in the
J.W. McConnell (Library) Building, 1400 de
Maisonneuve Blvd. W. Ricci will present a Q&A
in conjunction with the Concordia Student
Alumni Association.



Adam Leith
Gollner

“Words that Matter: The World Around Us”
Sunday, April 26 at 1:00 p.m.
Delta Hotel, 777 University St., Regence A room.
\$10

• JUSTIN BROMBERG

Local Montreal writers Taras Grescoe and Adam Leith Gollner will present their non-fiction works—both on the topics of food and sustainability—along with two other authors at the Blue Metropolis festival on April 26.
Grescoe’s *Bottomfeeder*, a deep-sea profile of the fishing industry and our consumption habits, tells us why we should be eating fish on the bottom of the food chain in order to preserve the future of fish stocks. Gollner’s *The Fruit Hunters* is a personal quest for the world’s most exotic fruits and what we can learn about the future by eating into their past. As food insecurity, climate change and an economic crisis loom, these books will likely spark up the discussion in the festival’s science department.

The Link: Do you think people know about environmentally safe seafoods?
Taras Grescoe: This came as news to a lot of people. Yet in Australia, for example, everyone seems to be aware of what’s happening. There’s a sort of conceit here in North America that we should get the best of everything while we can. But I think there are enough people who care to make a difference.

Are you optimistic that the availability of fruits will lead to a demand for better varieties?
Adam Leith Gollner: I think the quality of fruits is always evolving. It’s wrong to think that things were better in the past. In the past 50 years, we’ve created availability. The next phase is to not only have them available, but to have them taste good, too.

What changes or discoveries have you seen since your books’ release?
TG: It’s part of a dialogue that’s ongoing. There’s a lot of interest in sustainable seafood. I’ve been trying to highlight people who are doing it right.
You know, I’m optimistic. I know that the oceans are in a lot of trouble, and it’s really disturbing, but the oceans are pretty resilient. And I really think that politicians would score a lot of points by setting up marine reserves.
ALG: This past week alone, I got an email from a 21-year-old, half-Aboriginal Australian who had read the book and it touched him profoundly. He wrote me this letter about remembering—with his family—going to the Outback and finding the gubinge. Apparently it doesn’t taste good, but with every bite it gets better and better. [...] The organizer of the Fruit Hunters club in New York is also convinced that there’s this fruit, somewhere in Turkmenistan, that must exist deep in some forest, and when you eat it, it allows you to fly.

Pop-ed activism

Reproduce Freely zine promotes pro-choice

• BARBARA PAVONE

In an old, drafty apartment filled with aged copies of activist zines and sewing machines, I find the small and rather quiet launch party for *Reproduce Freely*, a publication that advocates reproductive freedom for women.

After a slight delay, the final copies of the zine arrive and I get a hold of two of the masterminds behind the project, Sarah Golightley and Dee Sharp. After the initial stun of noticing a rat relaxing around Sharp's neck I begin by inquiring about the origins of the project.

It all started when Concordia's 2110 Centre for Gender Advocacy began a campaign protesting Bill C-484. The bill presented to Canadian Parliament last year stipulated that in some situations a fetus should receive rights separate from the mother. For example, an assailant killing a pregnant woman would be guilty of not one but two counts of murder. This, the 2110 argued, would have paved the way for the possibility that abortion could

be re-criminalized.

The bill died when a federal election was called last fall, but the 2110 kept their movement for reproductive freedom going. They joined forces with a pro-choice group affiliated with the Union for Gender Empowerment at McGill and after some brainstorming they settled on the idea of launching a zine.

"Zines are a good way for people to talk about things that are otherwise hard to talk about," Golightley explained. "They give people a voice," she continued, and allow people "to express [themselves] in a way that's not governed by a corporate board."

The pro-choice, reproductive autonomy zine took about three months to put together and includes submissions from across Canada dealing with different viewpoints related to reproductive choice, autonomy and justice.

"We didn't want only a certain class of people to submit, we were open to transgendered writers as well, so they're not all personal submissions," said Sharp.

The zine not only features personal

poems, narratives and opinions but also gives facts, definitions and information on clinics offering abortions.

So what exactly is "pro-choice?" As the back cover concisely defines it, it means "that no one has to face giving birth against their will [and anyone should] have genuine access to—and information about—all options, including parenting, adoption and abortion."

The truth is that even in Canada, a country that appears to be more open-minded than most, "abortion is not easily accessible, there's not a lot of support around and it's expensive," Sharp said.

Although *Reproduce Freely* addresses the issue in a popular manner, their biggest hope is that "people will get a different per-

spective on bodily autonomy and open their minds to new ideas," Golightley said.

Pick up a copy of *Reproduce Freely* at the 2110 Centre for Gender Advocacy at 2110 Mackay St.



GRAPHIC BARBARA PAVONE

Lit Writ

Triple sec

• ALEX MANLEY

Coward, he looked out the window and hummed a Bob Dylan tune. He couldn't recall the name of it, just then. He had trouble matching songs to their titles sometimes. It was a mental problem, pathological. Whatever.

He felt the night come onto him like an old lover in a dream. Before long, the sky was black again—black as he remembered it being behind closed eyes. The sun had painted an awful, frightened likeness over him and turned out the lights when it left.

He breathed in and out quietly, trying to soften the flow of air in the room, afraid to disturb the abyss waiting, predatory, all around him. He knew this was no time to panic, inside.

After a few minutes he started moving his left foot, slowly, an inch or two at a time. This was good; this was it. This would be his solution. He would out-slow the inky molasses of the night. He tried counting the seconds between his slightest movements but could never grab a hold of the numbers. His mind kept wandering. In the shadows he could discern the faces of all the horror-movie madness he worked so hard at times like these to forget.

Rarely did it come to this. Most nights he was okay, tolerable, at least, if not quite the keenest of peaches—tonight, not so. He was a tundra. He was a herd of yaks. He was lichen. He was a caribou corpse.

He waited for the aurora borealis to come out and in waiting he forgot, in time, about his waiting. This was a tedious game, a childish play. He jumped up and strolled quickly

through his door and down the hall, wide-eyed but seeing nothing, phantoms at his heels. No panic, baby. No panic.

All this time, all these years... how had they failed to steel him against this?

He broke out into the open, the air fresh against his face and his neck and it poured down his chest like a welcome, electrifying shower. At times like this he was thankful for sweat and the things it did to him.

He remembered that he was alive. The dark of his apartment could only entomb him for so long.

Out here there were streetlights and neon signs behind store windows. Out here there were no closet doors hiding hanging bodies with smiles and whispers. He wandered south, to be among the saints, hallelujah.

Catherine was his favourite, of course. She of the manifold wonders: the drug dealers, the reckless hobo drummers with everlasting rhythm. She of the strip joints.

He stalked her body, the length of it. The slow, slow build-up through Westmount. He passed Atwater. He passed Guy. He rolled, mellifluous, through the city air.

This sort of walk was a balm to his battered body, straining under the weight of the week's waves. He remembered one he had taken a few months ago. People had been shouting and screaming in the streets. Who knew what drove people to early-November fits of public madness? Mental strain? He pictured Victorian mental hospitals, the peeling wallpaper. The insomnia.

Everything tonight was unburdening, though. He could not feel the straits, or the jacket. He was free. It was the spring. He traded Catherine in for Denis, or maybe



GRAPHIC DAVID BARLOW-KRELEINA

their brother Laurent, and hung a dirty left up into the belly of the goings-on. There would be a concert for him there, somewhere, some young people. He could dance this shit away. He didn't even need to buy too many of those perfect, orangey drinks for himself; he was already pretty fucked up. Anyway, the worst of it had passed. He was going to be all right, for another night, at

least. It wasn't the best strategy, but it worked well enough.

Really, if he thought about it for a while, it was pretty. It was pretty and it was pretty basic.

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

Make love, not war... with robots

A military expert and a chess champion weigh in on the future of robotics

• CHRISTOPHER OLSON

Technology is a double-edged sword: it could be used to pleasure us or manage our wars, fulfil our search for companionship or end our search for Osama Bin Laden. Which path will we choose?

Peter W. Singer is the author of *Wired for War: The Robotics Revolution and Conflict in the 21st Century* and director of the 21st Century Defense Initiative at the Brookings Institution, a Washington think tank.

He sees robots coming to play a critical role in not only the future of armed warfare, but in current conflicts as well.

The Iraq war is “where we finally accepted robotics into our system,” said Singer. “It’s the war where we went from using zero unmanned ground vehicles to 12,000. It’s a war where we went from a handful of drones to now over 7,000.”

Even as the economy’s downward slide forces budget cuts, “there is one sector that is going to grow,” said Singer, “and that is unmanned systems.”

After interviewing top Pentagon officials and fiction authors for his research, Singer discovered parallels between classic science fiction and contemporary military and says science fiction is where the military often gets its ideas.

H.G. Wells’ short story *The Land Ironclads* is famously credited with giving Winston Churchill the inspiration for the tank. Nowadays, “researchers [are] being

asked by their pentagon clients to build the ‘Hunter Killer’ [an unmanned aircraft] from the *Terminator* movies,” said Singer.

In addition to being normalized for their potential in war, computers are increasingly omnipresent in our lives—even if they go unnoticed or unappreciated.

“We have these preconceived notions of what [technology and robots] are supposed to look like,” said Singer, who cites C3PO from *Star Wars* as a classic example.

“A good number of them would ask me, ‘Are you also looking at sexbots? Because that’s a future we all look forward to with great relish!’”

Having robots that look human isn’t just a marketing ploy for the robotics industry, but an end unto itself, says David Levy, an International Master of chess and the author of *Love + Sex with Robots: The Evolution of Human-Robot Relationships*.

Levy sees robots playing a positive, if not romantic, role in our lives.

“People are more receptive to interacting with robots that look human than with robots that don’t,” said Levy. “Obviously, we can design them to look however we want them to look, but in terms of being more human-like, I don’t see why computers cannot develop all the intellectual and emotional qualities and facets of our character, of our

personality, plus some more of their own.”

Since seeing the evolution of robots flourish exponentially in his own lifetime, Levy is certain of their potential to one day become our equals.

The first computer Levy ever encountered was a Stantec Zebra in 1966, which was programmed with data by using a rotary phone and whose software glitches could often be cured with a simple tap from a socket wrench.

—Peter W. Singer,
author of *Wired for War*

Despite the primitive state of robotics at the time—or maybe because of them—Levy posed a public challenge in 1968 for engineers to program a machine that could beat him at chess within the next decade.

“Twenty-one years after I made the bet, I actually lost to a computer,” he said.

Rather than betting against the odds today, Levy figures that robots with complex intelligence will exist in the next 40 years as technology continues its exponential growth and new breakthroughs are made.

Instead of waging our wars, Levy hopes robots could be made to mend our broken hearts.

While robots that can provide emotional

and intellectual companionship may be 40 years off, says Levy, “in terms of sex, I think that will happen within five years.”

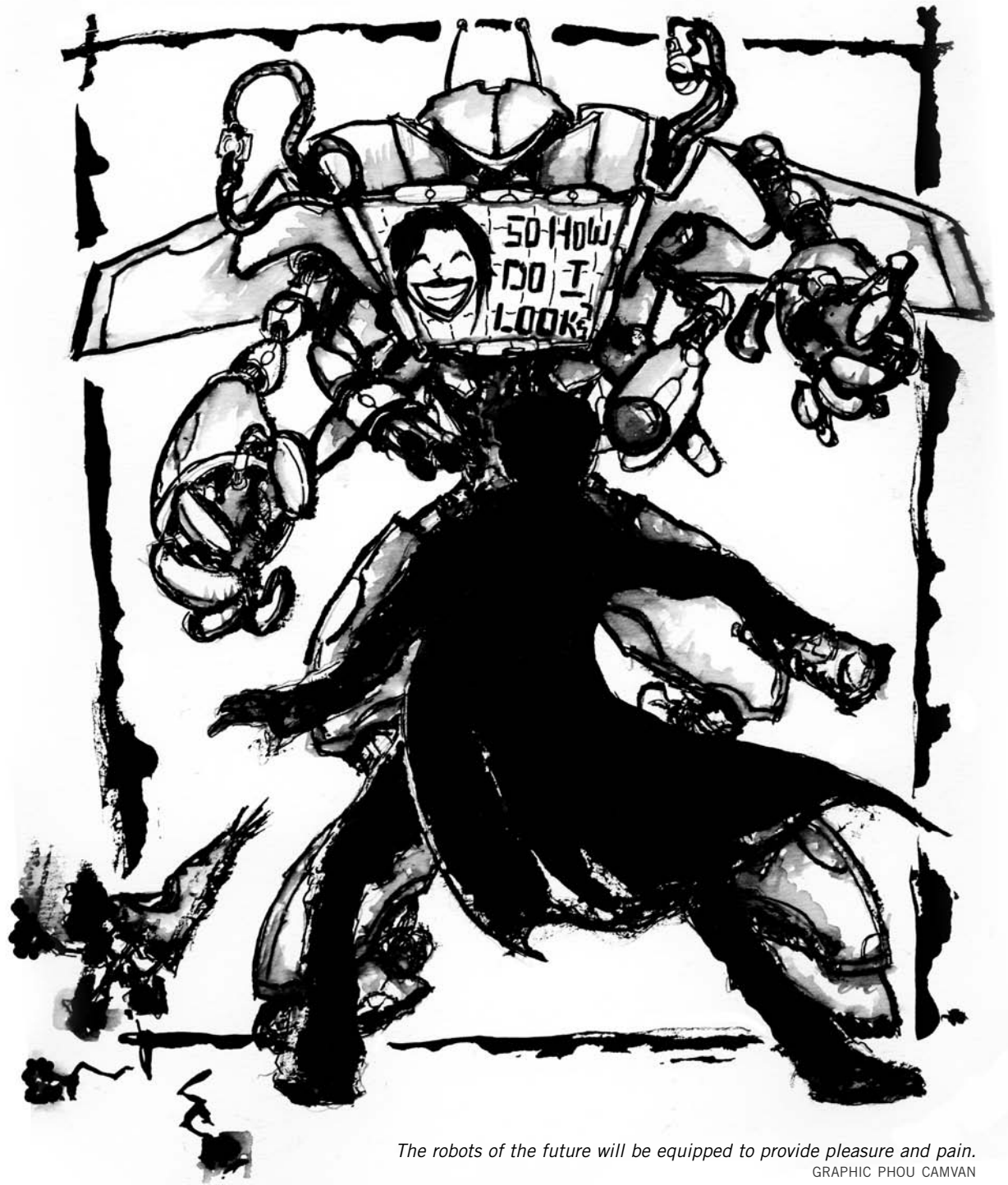
Sex dolls already sell for \$7,000 a pop, but with a little more investment “a doll could be endowed with speech to tell the human owner how handsome he is and what a great lover he is, and so on,” said Levy. “There are groups working on artificial skin that looks human-like and has sensors imbedded in it that gives it the ability to feel when it’s being stroked or touched.”

Recognizing the effect pornography has as a technological innovator—from the market’s adoption of Blu-ray technology to web browsing software—Singer believes the pornography industry may also one day have some say in the production of robotics.

During his interviews with Pentagon officials, Singer claimed “a good number of them would ask me, ‘Are you also looking at sexbots? Because that’s a future we all look forward to with great relish!’”

“Represent[ing] the best and worst traits of mankind,” robots often raise mixed emotions from people, says Singer, citing how *The Terminator* was honoured in both friend and foe categories by the American Film Institute’s “100 Years... 100 Heroes and Villains” list in 2003.

Equal parts seductive and destructive, the robots of tomorrow could have the power to both please and overpower us, leaving our own levels of aggression and sexual frustration to decide just how much.



The robots of the future will be equipped to provide pleasure and pain.
GRAPHIC PHOU CAMVAN

Homeless heartache

One man's story reflects the hardships of living on the streets



After purchasing a rain poncho, John stands in front of the Dollarama on Ste-Catherine Street. John relies on an income of welfare and money he finds in parking meters and on the street, which allows him to purchase only the most necessary items. PHOTOS IAN LAWRENCE



"Just because I'm homeless doesn't mean I have to be an ass. I care for people, too," John said, after buying a birthday card and chocolates for his friend's mother who occasionally takes care of him. "I always call her 'mama,' as if she's my mom," he explained. "Anytime she asks me to do something, I'm there."



"If I don't eat at the mission or from the garbage, I eat here. And that's if I got the money [...]. Three bucks, I eat good," said John, showing that his Dollarama-diet primarily consists of white bread, crackers, canned meat and instant coffee.



"When you're in your 20s, you need to be...," says John to Tim Knight. "I might be 48, I'm there."



"Relax in my home," said John to Concordia finance student Tim Knight, inviting him to where he spends the night but wishing to keep the location private. John, who "can't afford good living situations," met Knight during last month's 5 Days for the Homeless campaign. "[People] think we have the plague. So what? We may not smell the greatest, but we're still human beings."

• LES HONYWILL
& IAN LAWRENCE

John is homeless and has been that way since January of last year. He says a dispute between his landlord over reparations and rent forced him out on the street and left him homeless.

After a lifetime of hardships, John, who requested his last name be withheld, is well aware of how important it is to stay strong. Conceding how difficult the previous 13 months have been for him, it was impossible for him to hold back his emotions.

"You spend every day just trying to give yourself a reason not to kill yourself," he said with tears streaming down his face.

Like many in his situation, John was beaten when he was young. According to a study done by Health Canada, there were 114,607 substantiated cases of child abuse in Canada in 2003, which amounts to 18.67 out of

every 1,000 households.

"My mother would hit me," John said. "You did not want to make your bed wrong; you did not want to leave anything out. You'd come home and she'd hit you on the back of your head with her high heel. She made me pass out. She did that with all five of us kids."

After years of abuse, John finally found refuge.

"When I turned 14, that was it, she'd never hit me again," John said. "My teacher knew there was something wrong. He and his wife took me in their house. This was the family I never knew. I never saw a family in history like that—no arguing, no yelling. Coming from a family of abuse, I was in heaven. All they did was give me love, and to this day they are the ones that give me hope, because if it wasn't for them I'd be gone."

John moved in with his teacher for nine months, with whom he says he still has a great relationship today.

Since that time, John said he has worked odd construction jobs and most recently worked at the Hall Mission, taking time to help other homeless people. John said his employment at the mission ended after a dispute over the size of portions he was giving out. He said he felt the portion sizes were too small to feed everyone properly and refused to give out what he felt were inadequate servings.

He has also found a friend who allows him to wash his clothes, shower and recharge at his house. John also befriended his mother, whom he helps run errands. Last week, even with the limited resources he has at his disposal, John made sure to get his friend's mother a birthday card from the dollar store to express his gratitude for the compassion they continue to give him.

In the bitter cold of March, John found further inspiration in the volunteers of 5 Days for the Homeless, a group of youth camping out on

the street to raise awareness for the homeless.

"They treated me so good," John said, grinning ear-to-ear. "I'm almost 50 years old, [but] they make me feel young."

John ended up spending three nights with the group, helping them with their campaign and sharing stories of the street. What John may not have anticipated was the impact his presence would end up having on the group.

"One of the best parts of the five days was having John there," said Josh Redler, one of the project coordinators. "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."

"I got so much more out of that than what I put in," John said. "Raising awareness for the homeless, not just me but everyone else, was so important. You take me, I've been out here for 13 months and

I'm nothing. Some of these old guys have been out here for years."

John went on to say that the most important hand out he can get from a passer-by is acknowledgment.

"Just acknowledge [and] say hello. You don't know what that could mean to someone who wants to kill themselves. You could save their life.

"We're not trash, but that's how people treat us," John continued. "Everyone has their problems in life, [but] for some of us those problems take a turn for the worse. I would never choose to be on the street."

The 5 Days for the Homeless fundraiser gathered an estimated \$28,500 for Dans La Rue, a charity that works to feed, educate and provide shelter for the homeless youth of Montreal. The campaign raised more than just funds; it raised the spirits of the homeless they encountered like John and, hopefully, awareness for their plight.



a little wild. Thirty, you gotta slow down," but I can be young at heart, too."



With less than a quarter to his name, John explains that he still needs to borrow money from a friend to feed his alcohol addiction. "My head goes 100 miles an hour. It don't stop. The only way I can make it stop is when I drink," said John. "If life is gonna suck, it might as well suck drunk."



In front of Concordia's Hall Building, John enjoys a slow drag from his cigarette and reminisces about the difficulties of his past, explaining about his abusive mother and a car accident that left his back injured. "I always try. I keep trying. Every time I think it's going to be okay," he lamented. "No... life isn't always roses [...] I'm not strong like I used to be... the longer I'm around, the more I don't give a fuck."

Getting physical

Local band BODIES want you to move your...well, you know

• MADELINE COLEMAN

It's a Sunday night at Bar St-Laurent 2, and the room is full of bodies touching BODIES.

The band's bassist, Josh Frank, has backed his way into the crowd, mic in hand, rubbing up against the audience. Keyboardist Kristin Li abandons the stage for some in-crowd hopping. Nicolas Boisvert-Novak furiously scrubs his guitar. Sebastian Norfolk's drum kit is taking a beating.

"Can I get more keyboard?" calls Li between songs, having just completed, with Frank, the noisiest call and response this side of country music.

"It's at the maximum," replies the bar's sound guy.

A week later, the members of BODIES are ready to relax. The four McGill students are more than happy to take a break from studying to talk about something that comes a lot more naturally: making music. The band practices in a space above a meatpacking factory with a scent of urine that has "heavily influenced [their] sound," said Boisvert-Novak.

"We come across songs more than we write songs," he said of their music, which the band describes variously as "impressionistic," "experimental" and even "pop."

Frank agrees. "There's sort of a haphazard charm to [our song-writing technique]," he said.

While BODIES' current lineup only solidified a few months ago with the addition of Boisvert-Novak, the band already knows what they want: to break down the divide between performer and audience. BODIES is a band that wants to be experi-

enced in the flesh, not on record.

Frank professes a love of crowd confrontation ("Sometimes I'll crawl through the audience and try to tie people up with the microphone cord"), but Li says she's more interested in "the ability for music to create a space" and act as a "social project."

The call and response style of singing she does with Frank was influenced by her love for older country music, a genre she praises for its history of audience involvement.

"One of the things I like about it is the way it was distributed," she explained. "At shows, they gave out pamphlets with the song lyrics in the back."

In the same spirit, Frank and Li have thought of making a manual for how to play their own songs, which they could hand out at gigs. The secret behind BODIES' desire to connect is that they truly believe that anybody can get personally involved with music.

"What we lack in technical proficiency we make up in other areas," said Norfolk, comparing their aesthetic to noise bands' apparent lack of musical skill. "Anybody can do it, but only they choose to do it."

While Boisvert-Novak isn't down with the noise genre (he compares noise bands to "monkeys with typewriters"), he admits "a willingness to cover up [their] music" with theatrics. For all their lofty ambitions about musician-crowd interaction, he says BODIES really just want to put on a show.

"[We want to] act it out onstage in a way that's most impressive."

BODIES play at Zoobizarre, 6388 St-Hubert St., on April 26 at 9 p.m. with Slowest Runner and Valley of the Shadow of Death. Tickets will be \$6 at the door.



BODIES want to "act it out onstage in a way that's most impressive." GRAPHIC MADELINE COLEMAN

Life outside of the womb

So long, suckers!

• CODY HICKS

This is the end—that's right kids, I'm graduating!

In the midst of a total mental and physical meltdown during my last week ever of school, I tried to buck this column, but my editor begged me to write it. I was about ready to put it on autopilot and fart out something of no consequence, but the gods of journalism smiled upon me and dropped a beautiful, golden punk-rock egg right into my basket.

Two of my childhood heroes are storming the gates of our fair city with bizarrely named new projects. This Wednesday, Chain and The Gang will kick the doors down at Lab Synthese, led by none other than Ian Svenonius, the prolific Washington, D.C.

soul-punk, author and online host of the Vice TV show *Soft Focus*. They'll be joined by the mysterious The Hive Dwellers, fronted by DIY punk legend Calvin Johnson, founder of K Records, member of the legendary Beat Happening and owner of the smoothest baritone this side of R&B!

Svenonius' slurred and lisping vocals drip sex all over Chain and The Gang's debut record *Down With Liberty... Up With Chains!* Musically, this is reminiscent of his older projects, filtered through a timeless sound. While less aggressive than the punk-influenced groups of his past, there is an overt swagger to these primitive left-wing jams.

Although The Hive Dwellers have no promotional music to listen to, I wouldn't worry—Calvin

Johnson's track record is impeccable. Plus, they share a backing band with Chain and The Gang and sound tight as hell on The Gang's tracks, so imagining them coated in Johnson's butter-smooth baritone is enough to convince me.

As I mentioned, Svenonius hosts *Soft Focus*. If you haven't seen it yet, I recommend visiting the Vice TV website and so you can drool over the roster of underground legends that he's had the pleasure of interviewing.

Svenonius interviews like a sexier version of Nardwuar, coolly dropping knowledge on the likes of Henry Rollins, Mark E. Smith, Andrew WK, Will Oldham and, yes, Calvin Johnson.

Despite being weighed down by cartoonish ankle weights, The Gang is doing a furious North

American tour and was unavailable for comment. But Svenonius has conveniently titled one of his tracks "Interview With The Chain Gang," making things pretty easy for lazy columnists. Let's play pretend!

Cody Hicks: How does the sound of Chain and The Gang differ from your old groups?

Ian Svenonius: How do we describe our sound? Something we just found. Yeah, we dug it up, right from the ground.

CH: So, this primitive sound, is it a reaction to new rock?

IS: What do I think of rock 'n' roll in its current state? I try not to listen. I think it's in poor taste.

CH: I see. Um...Ian, you're known for being outspoken in

your political stance. Does this come through in your new group?

IS: [crooning sensuously] What's my stance? Well, you know, I like to dance and smash things up, if I get a chance.

If you've never bothered to take my advice before, now's your last chance: ten bucks for two of my heroes and a BYOB venue? Don't be foolish. Oh, and finally, in all seriousness, I publicly challenge someone to fill my shoes next year to make sure rock 'n' roll journalism lives on in *The Link*! So long, all!

Chain and The Gang and The Hive Dwellers play with Darling Arms on April 15 at 9 p.m. at Lab Synthese, 435 Beaubien St. W. Tickets are \$10.



The Whitsundays in their natural habitat. GRAPHIC VIVIEN LEUNG

Edmonton's The Whitsundays roll into Montreal

• XAN SHIAN ELCOCK

Not many bands would have the balls to compare their sound to a 1967 soccer match between the Kinks and the Zombies using Syd Barret as the ball. Then again, not every band is Edmonton's The Whitsundays.

Including members of bands like The Faunts and Shout Out Out Out Out, the group acts as a side

project for vocalist and keyboardist Paul Arnusch, bassist Lyle Bell, drummer Scott Davidchuk, guitarist Smokey Johnson and 12-string guitarist Aaron Parker.

Their sound is ephemeral, like a fleeting thought that leaves you with a lasting memory. In other words, they're good. Despite the audible influences in their music, The Whitsundays are original, not a reincarnation of somebody else's

mistake. The band members' diverse musical tastes add variety to their music, which fuses electronic, indie pop and hints of New Orleans blues.

Named after an old t-shirt, The Whitsundays' Myspace page cites their mission as "a loose, passionate love letter to the past 40 years of 'timeless music.'"

Currently on tour, Arnusch claims the worst thing to happen to

the band was a cold cut drummer Davidchuk stuck to his forehead, which the band then forced him to eat so as not to waste food. Well, if that's the only bad thing that has happened so far, then The Whitsundays are definitely off to a good start.

The Whitsundays play Green Room, 5386 St-Laurent Blvd., on April 16 at 8 p.m.

The Whitsundays call their sound "a loose, passionate love letter to the past 40 years of 'timeless music.'"

International mag of mystery

A student magazine from Nova Scotia expands its horizons

• SHANNON TIEN, *THE XAVERIAN WEEKLY* (ST. FRANCIS XAVIER UNIVERSITY)

ANTIGONISH (CUP) — The first submissions came from down the street. Then from London. Then South Africa. Before Jeff Diamanti knew what was happening, his small student-run micro-press had gone international and it was time to play catch-up.

Diamanti was born in a suburb of Toronto—a wonderland of zines, blogs, and other forms of self-publishing. But when he moved to Nova Scotia to study at St. Francis

Xavier University, where micro-press culture is more theory than reality, he had to take matters into his own hands.

So *Frequent & Vigorous Quarterly* was born.

"When I came here, it was immediately obvious that there was no publication here [and that] there could very easily be one," said Diamanti, who launched the magazine with co-editor Katie Arthur.

What the two didn't know was how quickly it would take off.

While he and Arthur initially envisioned a local micro-magazine, the two are now

planning national distribution strategies from Toronto to Vancouver. And with submissions coming from as far away as England and South Africa, the world is at their fingertips.

"I think we both decided around the same time that as the magazine grew larger, in terms of interest and submissions, that it would be in everyone's best interest to consider wider distribution," said Arthur.

With Vancouver and Toronto checked off, though, Diamanti and Arthur aren't resting on their laurels. They still want to see *Frequent & Vigorous Quarterly* in a few

more major cities—including Montreal, Halifax and Edmonton—to better reflect the base of their contributors.

"The bulk of our submissions are national or international," said Diamanti.

However, the editing duo remain firmly rooted in Nova Scotia.

"We want the *Quarterly* to continue to be rooted in Antigonish because that's how it started," Diamanti said.

To read back issues of *Frequent & Vigorous Quarterly*, or find out how to contribute, visit thefvq.com.

The
DOWN-LOWEvents listings
April 14-20

ART

Drink & Draw Comics Jam
Get together for some collaborative comic drawing. Bring paper and pens.
Wednesday, April 15 at 7 p.m.
Casa del Popolo
4873 St-Laurent Blvd.
drinkanddraw.wordpress.com

2X4X22

Concordia students from the ARTX program take their art to the streets on carts dispersed around the city. Cart corral outside the Canadian Centre for Architecture, 1920 Baile St., Saturday, April 18 from 1:30-4:30 p.m.
Runs until Sunday
Various locations, more information on the website
artx399.wordpress.com

Complot 6: Espiègle

Multimedia art from past and present UQAM students.
Until Saturday, April 25.
Art Mûr
5826 St-Hubert St., third floor
projetcomplot.net

MUSIC

Starfucker
With Guidance Counselor and Sweet Mother Logic
Sunday, April 19 at 8:30 p.m.
Il Motore
179 Jean-Talon St. W.
Tickets: \$10 advance, \$12 at the door

Bell Orchestre
With Colin Stetson and Little Scream
Sunday, April 19 at 7:30 p.m.
La Tulipe
4530 Papineau St.
Tickets: \$15

Azeda Booth
With Valleys and Nightwood
Saturday, April 18 at 9 p.m.
Green Room
5386 St-Laurent Blvd.
Tickets: \$6 advance, \$8 at door

THEATRE

Cherry Docs
A Jewish lawyer is assigned to defend a neo-Nazi skinhead accused of murder and finds himself questioning his own liberal values.
Wednesday through Saturday at 8 p.m. until Monday, April 26
Theatre Ste-Catherine
264 Ste-Catherine St. E.
Tickets: \$15 students, \$21 general

— compiled by Madeline Coleman

After school special

Ponytail on jamming, Eno and the church of Fleetwood Mac



Ponytail: plays well with others

• BARBARA PAVONE

Want to start a band and travel the world making eccentric, crowd-pleasing music? Then take a class at the Maryland Institute College of Art. That's what Ponytail did.

Guitarist Ken Seeno says that he, Dustin Wong, Jeremy Hyman and Molly Siegel hadn't known each other before they registered for that fateful class in 2005.

The premise of the course was that "the teacher put you in a band" and you had to play a show at the end of the semester, and that was that. "We just kept going," said Seeno.

Having chosen their name for its "double meaning; it's a hairstyle and a horse's ass," the aspiring musicians stumbled upon a sound as atypical as their roots. With no bassist, an aversion to lyrics (be prepared to hear Siegel hoot and chant) and a union of energetic and soothing beats, it's a challenge to find a similar sound.

"We're all really different people," said Seeno. "It wasn't like we were all listening to the same CD and then we made a band."

Despite their diverse tastes, the song-writing process is a team effort, said Seeno. "All songs are written with the four of us in the

room [and] a lot of jamming going on."

The band's second full-length album—and Seeno's admitted preference—called *Ice Cream Spiritual* offered "more time recording and sculpting it out" than the band's debut, *Kamehameha*.

When it comes time to name someone they'd love to collaborate with, the answer doesn't arrive too easily. Siegel offers up Erykah Badu, Wong picks the London Symphony Orchestra, and, after an initial choice of Bill Clinton on saxophone, Hyman says his "serious answer" would be Prince. Seeno picks Brian Eno, or "any member of Fleetwood Mac. When we put on their music, everyone is jamming. It's like church for our band."

"I felt like I was living out a dream I had had my whole life," Seeno said of the band's first European tour—truly a pinnacle in his eyes.

"We don't take anything for granted and savour every moment and opportunity. We're so flattened. Right now is great."

Ponytail plays at La Sala Rossa on April 28 at 8:30 p.m., 4848 St-Laurent Blvd. Tickets are \$10 in advance, \$12 at the door.

spins

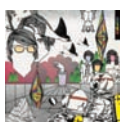
Ferras
Aliens & Rainbows
Capitol Records



Ferras touches, however briefly, on many genres in *Aliens & Rainbows*. While most of the intros are played on piano, some songs are introduced with synth, electric guitar or bass drum. Listen to the songs a little longer and you'll find that, when it comes to lyrics, Ferras' music is definitely pop. When he sings "put your blue jeans back on" in "Hollywood's Not America," you can feel a small wave of country dilute the pop, but the rest of his lyrics, even when accompanied by the simple but pleasant piano, are infiltrated with clichés and faux depth. They impose a feeling of starchy, unsatisfying emotion on the listener. Although Ferras does have a few good sounds here and there, can keep decent rhythm, and adding the tracks to a playlist wouldn't be too outrageous, any instrumental talent is stuffed in the shadows of the over-emphasized lyrics.

3/5
—Keely Covo

Starfucker
Starfucker
Badman



Maybe it's the pot of coffee I drank this morning, but I honestly started swinging my head from

side to side as soon as the pop-rocky sounds of Starfucker's debut album started blasting out of my computer speakers. These four dudes from Portland have a happy, foot-tapping sound. They make up for their high-pitched and whiny vocals with good synth and a strong foundation of drums and guitar. Whatever they're whining about, at least the beats are catchy. Their song "Laadeedaa" sounds strangely like a B-52s song, but with a little more whining. Their overall sound is comparable to a good trip, complete with flying manta rays, astronauts and multi-coloured diamonds. I'd even go as far as to suggest this album to a friend. Hop on the next flying manta ray and find yourself a copy.

3.5/5
—Will Charbonneau

Ponytail
Ice Cream Spiritual
We Are Free



Ponytail may not fit the mold of a mainstream band—they were formed by a teacher, have no bassist and are adverse to lyrics—but from the first track of *Ice Cream Spiritual* you realize that this novelty suits them just fine. You're attacked by their originality from the get-go and can't help but listen in utter bemusement as vocalist Molly Siegel howls, chants and grunts everything but lyrics. Even more shocking is how well it works with the strong beats and rhythms of the other members. Combine that with

Ponytail's unique ability to drastically change moods throughout one song, it's no wonder the sound is so infectious. "Sky Drool" starts off with a hint of blues, which rapidly dissolves into electro pop. My favourite, "Celebrate the Body Electric," moves from a lively intro into a mellow Pink Floyd trance. It's definitely a love-it-or-hate-it situation, but when it sounds like it was churned out of The Factory, how could you do anything but love it?

4/5
—Barbara Pavone

Zaki Ibrahim
Eclectica (Episodes in Purple)

District Six



I must have been drunker than I thought when I agreed to this date. Should have seen it coming when he asked me to meet him at Buona Notte. Now I'm trapped across the table from the smarmiest human this side of Toronto. He's telling me another story about the hilarious trip to Cali he took with his college roommate as I become fascinated with his hair. Is that brylcreem?

I haven't spoken more than two words in the last half hour and I suddenly notice the music. It's a relaxed night at Buona Notte; Zaki Ibrahim is on the stereo. Her voice is dulcet. I start swaying slightly in my seat. My date's voice fades in and out, the way screams do when you're standing next to a rollercoaster.

I realize I'm digging on restaurant music. I feel nauseous. Excusing myself, I get up and walk towards the washroom, then spin on my heel and sprint out of this yuppie paradise. I remember that I have left my coat on my chair, but it's hard to care.

The best part of a bad decision /5
—Madeline Coleman

Metric
Fantasies
Last Gang Records



The first time I heard Metric's song "Gimme Sympathy," I was at the Toronto Virgin Festival in 2007. Back then the song was called "The Hooks." It was just as awesome hearing it then, and again in numerous iterations over the following months, as it is hearing the final product now. The core of the song has remained thankfully unchanged and it speaks to Metric's skill at writing undeniably catchy songs. The lengthy tinkering process the song underwent echoes the fact that it has been four years since their last album, *Live It Out*. Stylistically, the band has changed a lot and it's debatable whether this is a good thing. However, it's hard to deny that *Fantasies* serves up 10 highly listenable cuts of dreamy indie pop-rock goodness by a band becoming less prone to missteps as it ages.

4/5
—Alex Manley

Stingers football shapes up for fall

Ten hot new recruits to join squad next season

• JENNIFER AOUAD

With the pain of another Utech Bowl loss behind them, the Stingers are gearing up for another competitive season of football. The coaching staff has proudly announced that 10 players will be joining the team for training in August.

“These kids were recruited by everyone in the country and we are very fortunate to have them be members of our football program,” said Brad Collinson, assistant coach and recruiting coordinator for the Stingers.

of the Markham Marauders, Dan Lavinkas of the Champlain Cougars and all-star Scott Mironowicz of John Abbott College, proclaimed 2007 CEGEP AA Most Outstanding Offensive Player and Canada Cup Team Quebec Offensive MVP. Dumitru Ionita of Woodstock, Ontario, has also signed on as kicker.

Collinson is proud of this crop to say the least. “This year’s recruiting class is one of the best we have had in a long time. All these recruits were recruited by every school in Canada and some

“All these recruits were recruited by every school in Canada and some even had NCAA interest.”

—Brad Collinson,
assistant coach and
recruiting coordinator

Among the new arrivals is Montreal’s own Nathan Taylor, two-time all-star player from Vanier College. His remarkable stats and 11 CEGEP career interceptions made him one of the most sought-after recruits in Canadian Interuniversity Sport this year.

Joining him on defence are three Ontarian defencemen; Kris Robertson from St. Mary’s Catholic Secondary School, two-time Toronto city all-star Michael Livingston and Mike Sutton from St. Ignatius of Loyola.

Right before signing a full scholarship for Mississippi, Raymond Tonye had a change of heart and decided to join Concordia. He will help round out the offensive side of the team.

The Montreal native said he feels great about his decision to come to Concordia.

“I like the system, I like the coaches and I like how they set up the team. It was my first choice,” he said, admitting his road wouldn’t be easy.

“It’s a challenge for me since I’m coming from a French school with a French background; it’s a new beginning,” Toyne explained. “I look forward to playing with the team as a teammate.”

Tonye will be joined by four offensive recruits: Terrance Morsink, a quarterback from John Abbott College, Chris Nagy

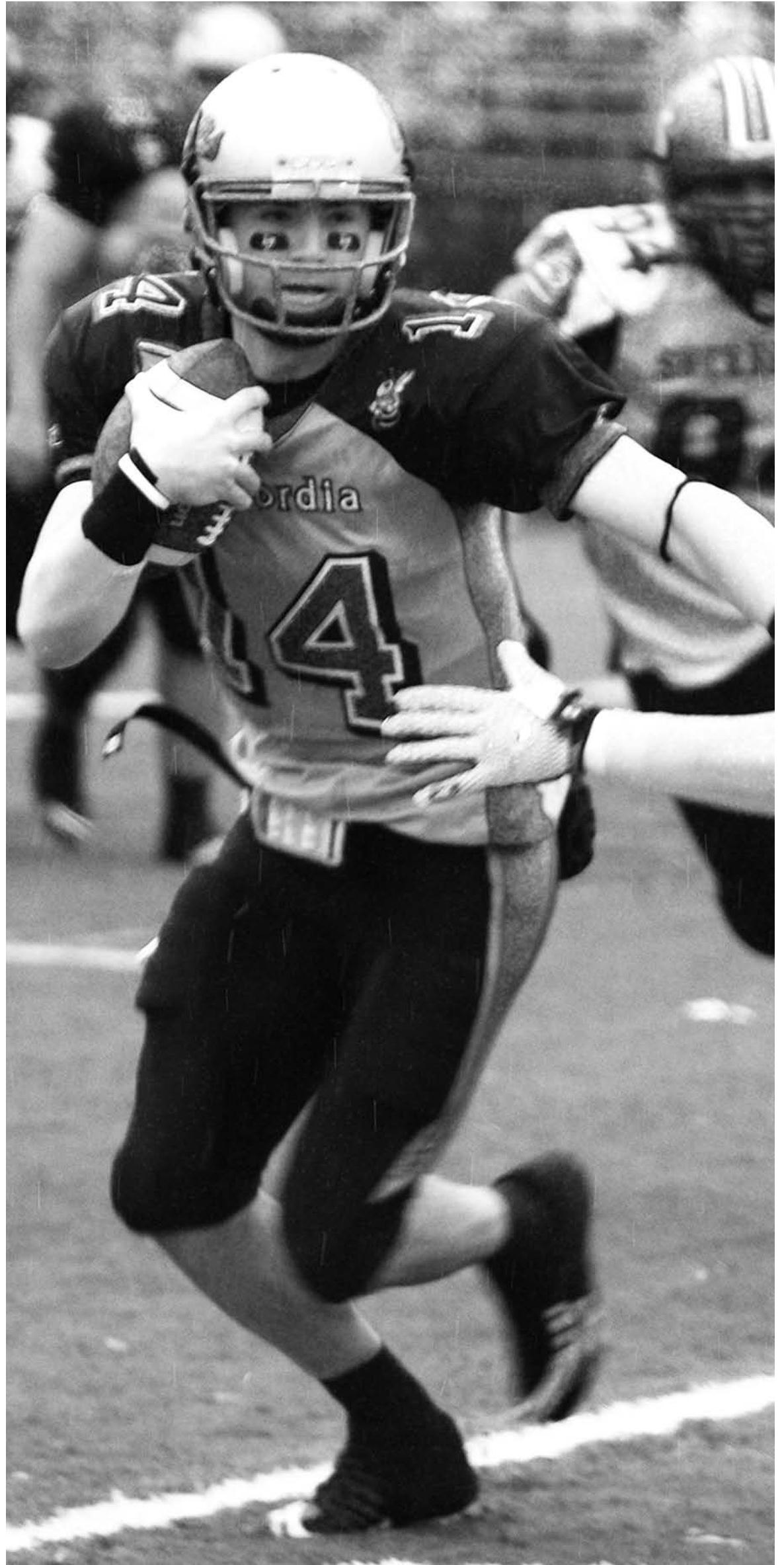
even had [the United States’ National Collegiate Athletics Association] interest.”

With the departure of linebackers Nathan Agadzi and Darnell Danglade, offensive guard Connor Smith, defensive end William Miller and slotback Blake Butler, the newcomers have big shoes to fill.

“The team is sizing up to be a very competitive one for the upcoming season. We have lost a few key veterans but hope that some of the younger players can rise up to the opportunity and fill the roles of the graduating players,” said Collinson.

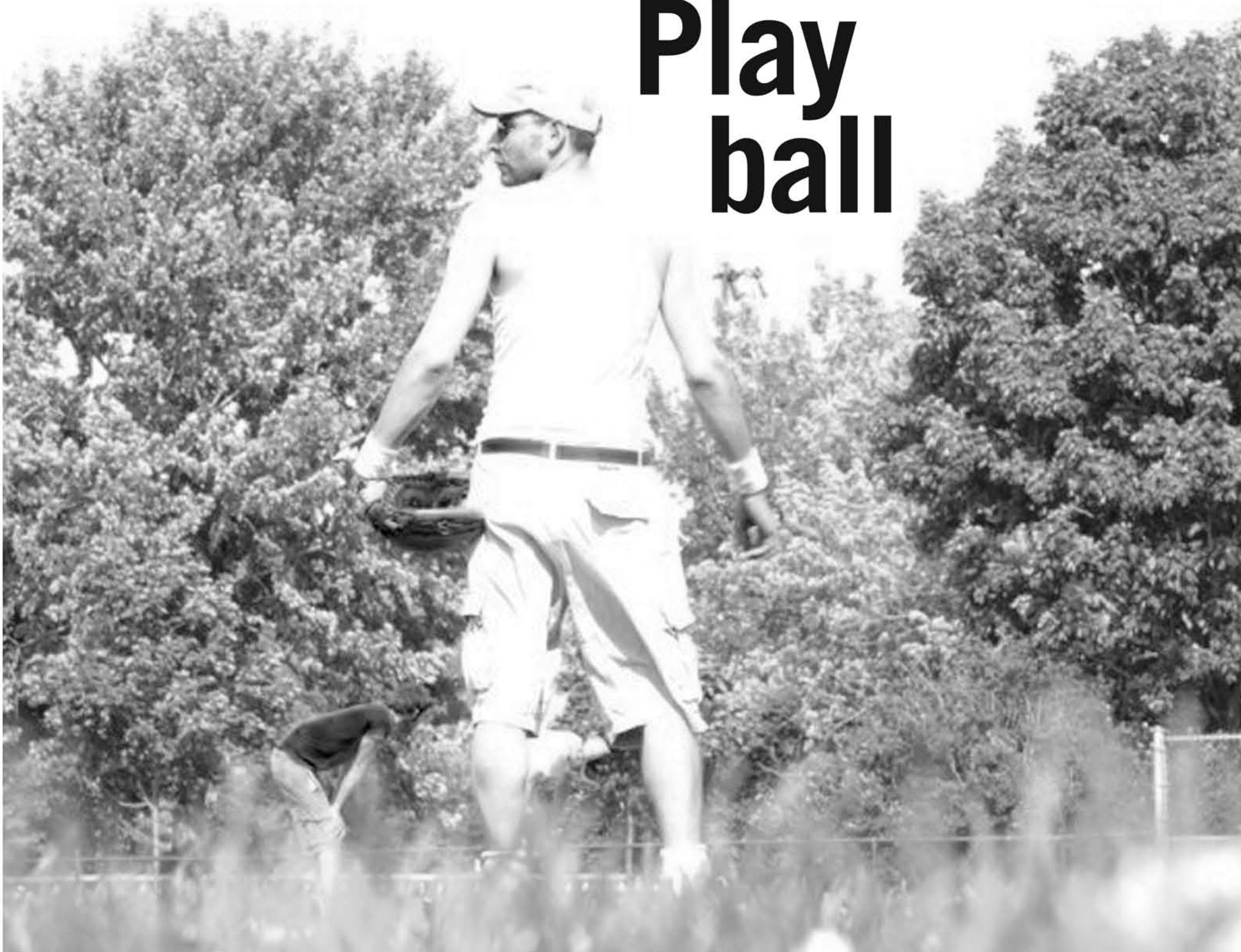
The team announces no major changes for the fall. However, one previously announced recruit will not be attending. In late March, the Stingers website reported that Raul Thompson from Our Lady of Mount Carmel Secondary School in Ontario would be signing on to the team as well. Unfortunately for Concordia, the speedy running back chose to return to Mississauga for a final year before heading to university.

“[We’re] excited to get going,” Collinson said. “We have just finished spring practices and we ended it with an inter-squad scrimmage where we had a chance to look at the players in a game situation. We were very pleased with the outcome of spring football and hope that it will carry over to August when we open camp.”



Stingers football will be doing some major shuffling next fall. Liam Mahoney will no longer be playing quarterback.
PHOTO ION EXTEBARRIA

Play ball



Sael Gueydan-Lacroix waits in the outfield, glove at the ready. PHOTO JUDITH MIGNAULT

The LBVAM proves diamonds can be everyone's best friend

• CLARE RASPOPOW

Off in the distance the batter waits at the plate. Swinging his bat in anticipation of the pitch, he eyes down the pitcher who paws the dirt, bull-like in his concentration.

The sun beats mercilessly down on all the players standing in the outfield of Jeanne-Mance Park's baseball pit. Mentally, I rehearse exactly what I have to do: keep my eyes on the ball. Get ready to run if a pop fly comes my way. Make sure not to step on the open bottle of Labatt Blue sweating in the grass at my feet.

How did someone like me, who in grade school faked an illness—several illnesses—to get out of a phys-ed baseball game end up making the pilgrimage to a park in Montreal 15 years later for the very same experience? Chalk it up to the seductive blend of nostalgia, summertime euphoria, camaraderie and beer that makes the Ligue de baseball vraiment amateur de Montréal (the Very Amateur Baseball League of Montreal) almost irresistible.

The LBVAM is a mish-mash pick-up league specifically designed for those with

more enthusiasm than skill. For five bucks, Etienne Mignault, founder and organizer of the LBVAM, takes care of organizing the rental of the field, brings the bats and balls and provides some extra equipment for those who may have tossed their baseball gloves along with their ashen dreams of major league glory (or may have never owned one to begin with).

For an extra five, each player can help themselves to the supply of deliciously chilled beer, also provided by Mignault, that sits in a giant cooler next to the bench and takes the edge off the summertime heat. The league meets every Saturday during the summer months at Laurier Park, LaFontaine Park or Jeanne-Mance Park, depending on the availability.

The LBVAM was originally created by Mignault to fulfill his own wish to indulge in one of summer's most iconic pastimes. After working for a time as a sailor, he returned to Montreal with the urge to hit the diamond but found a lack of opportunity.

"When I got back I wanted to play baseball, but there were no pick-up leagues and I wasn't good enough to play in the other

leagues," Mignault explained. He hadn't played competitive baseball when he was younger and wasn't looking for the atmosphere of a competitive league. Mignault saw a niche to fill. If there were no pick-up leagues for the extreme amateur, he would just have to make one for himself. And so, the LBVAM was born.

Despite his commitment and love for the game, it was a struggle to establish the league at first.

"It was hard at first to get the 18 people you need to really make it fun," he said. "There were points when it was just four of us."

But the LBVAM must have been doing something right. "At one point we had too many people," said Mignault. "We had to start playing in three teams and rotating."

At the heart of the league's popularity is the open environment it provides to those who have an interest in baseball, but little talent. There's no grumbling from your teammates if the only thing your bat hits is air. A strike out will probably get you a high-five, a slap on the ass or a "better luck next time."

The mood at the games is friendly and

accepting. The skill level of those who come out ranges from first-timers (or might as well be first-timers) to those with more experience who nonetheless just want to have a good, relaxed time.

Mignault runs the league with the help of his sister Judith Mignault, who also serves as the league photographer. The two owe much of the league's success to social networking platforms like Facebook. The league has its very own Facebook group with almost 70 interested participants, some of whom have already been asking Mignault when the 2009 season will begin.

"The city won't be organizing the parks until mid-June, but we will start playing half-legally by May—as soon as the grass starts to come in," Mignault assured.

Last summer, it took a few goading emails from a friend before I was convinced to actually come out to a game. But once you do play, prepare to be hooked. In the meantime, oil up your glove if you've got one and get ready to play ball.

For more info on how to join the league, search Facebook for the Ligue de baseball vraiment amateur de Montréal.

From pick-ups to toe picks

Eight ways to get active in the city this summer without breaking the bank

• CLARERASPOPOW

1. Run away from it all

For some, running is a solo activity—just you, the road and maybe your iPod. For others, running requires partnership; they need someone to jog with.

However you approach it, running is a cheap, easy way to stay in shape and get to know your surroundings. If you feel like combining education with fitness, check out the Running Tourist. This group offers to host private runs for you and your friends, or you can get in on one of their events.

For \$5 you can run through the Old Port while being educated about Montreal's colourful past. This service is designed for tourists who are avid runners, but that doesn't mean you can't bust a stride. The next run is April 18 and admission is free if you bring along two friends. For more information, the group has a Facebook page.

2. Stairway to fitness

Now this one falls more into the punishing than the pleasurable category, but if you feel like getting fit this summer, running or walking up the stairs on Mount Royal is one of the best ways to do it. Depending on how hard you take it, this activity can range from a mildly winding but exhilarating experience to a lung-burning, stomach-turning gauntlet.

It doesn't cost you a thing and the only gear you need is a pair of running shoes and a bottle of water. The best part is, once you're finished with the painful part, you get to enjoy the beautiful vision of the Montreal panorama... and it's all downhill from there.

3. Dig, spike and serve

Montreal may not be a tropical destination, but you can still get sand in your crevices with a vigorous game of beach volleyball. On the southern end of Jeanne-Mance Park are two sandy courts—yours for the playing on. Go by yourself and join one of the pick-up games or drag a bunch of your friends for a beach volleyball battle-royale. It only costs a couple of dollars to reserve the courts. Dig your toes into the sand surrounded by the Montreal skyline and try not to get a spike in the face.

4. Get medieval on someone's ass

Go to Mount Royal Park on a Sunday. Now, make your way past the multitudes playing their djembes and that guy in the billowing white pants who's spinning like a dervish and who may or may not be a Raëlian. There, just north of the crowd, in a sparsely wooded area, you'll find a blast from the past with a modern twist: a medieval battle with self-designed foam weapons. It's called Live Action Role Playing. Players line up at opposite ends of the clearing and charge each other. If you get hit on a limb, in the LARPing world, it's gone. If you get hit on more than one limb or in the chest, you're dead meat. Head and hand hits are discouraged.

You don't have to have a pimped-out sword or stunning body armour to participate. As long as your weapon is padded and won't harm the other participants, you're good to go. Who knows, if you get into the spirit of it, you can always join a guild.

5. The ultimate way to spend the summer

It's not a Frisbee, it's a flying disc—and it's one of the cheapest ways to get active this summer. If you're a hardcore competitive Ultimate player and you don't mind shelling out a little money, you can register with the Association de ultimate de Montréal and play in a proper league. The individual fee is \$40. Teams must be a minimum of 14 people, including six women.

If you're looking for something much less structured, the AUM has a pick-up league that plays every Sunday at Jarry Park behind the police station. The pick-up league welcomes all skill levels and won't cost you a thing. For more information about the competitive and pick-up leagues, visit montrealultimate.ca

6. Start a soccer sensation

Soccer is one of the most popular sports in the world. All it takes is a patch of grass, some nimble feet and a soccer ball. On a sunny day, you can probably find a casual game in most of the parks in Montreal. But if you feel like doing something a little more organized, try going to the social networking site Meetup.

If you search for soccer you're guaranteed to find no fewer than 30 people who are just waiting for someone to organize regular pick-up games somewhere. If that sounds like a little too much work for you, search Facebook for "soccer Montreal" and you'll find a slew of leagues, from the serious to the laid back, just waiting for your fancy feet.

7. Go ride a bike

The bike paths around Montreal are springing up like mushrooms and the city plans to keep adding to them. Biking in the city is not only a cheap way to get around, but it's also a great way to really get to know the neighbourhood if you don't normally pay attention to what's whizzing by the window when you're riding the bus. The initial investment for a bike can be a bit steep, but that bike will pay for itself when you consider the money you won't be paying the STM.

Though you may see a fly bike sitting tied to a parking-meter with a sign reading "For sale: \$40," do not buy it. That bike is stolen. Canadian Tire usually has a summer sale where you can get a new bike for \$100. But one of the best ways you can guarantee that you're buying a quality bike that's not stolen property and is helping the environment is to go to SOS Vélo in Hochelaga-Maisonneuve. This operation takes old bike parts and recycles them into fully functional, practically brand new bicycles. Wherever you decide to procure your bike, don't forget to buy yourself a good helmet.

8. Hit the ice

For most Montrealers, as soon as the air won't freeze their flesh, they're out in shorts, on patios or playing with Frisbees. But summer isn't everyone's cup of tea. If you're an air-conditioning addict who does nothing but dream about snowdrifts all summer long, you can still be active.

Just off the Bonaventure Metro in the Atrium Le 1000 de la Gauchetière is a year-round ice skating rink just calling to you. The large glass windows of the building will allow you to enjoy the summer sunshine while executing a double-axel. On April 18 at 5 p.m., the ice rink is throwing its Bermuda Ball. Throw on a lurid flowered shirt, tie those skates up tightly and glide into summer to the sweet sounds of The Beach Boys.



Letters @ thelink.concordia.ca

Hillel responds to Shabbat dinner criticism

While we don't advocate one homogenous perspective, most Jews at Hillel do agree on Israel's basic right to exist. Likewise, as groups who seek to demonize Israel on campus, you too share some common characteristics:

You promote yourselves as anti-oppression activists, but you shamefully ignore the most extreme injustices around the world if they do not indict the Jewish state;

You label Zionists as racists and warmongers yet turn a blind eye to Hamas-produced children's shows that call for the mass murder of Jews;

You rail against the unbearable nature of

military checkpoints while dismissing the horrors of daily rocket attacks from Gaza;

Your more extreme members hail fanatical suicide bombers as martyrs and freedom fighters while the rest of you simply disregard their existence;

You believe in women's rights and gay rights, yet you are silent when Israel's neighbours trample those rights, so focused are you on bashing the one country in the Middle East that protects these civil liberties;

You compare Israelis to Nazis, seemingly unaware of the irony that it is Hamas and its allies that have explicitly called for the extinction of the Jews, not the other way around;

You equate Zionism with racism but do not

do the same with radical Islam;

You argue that Israeli civilians are legitimate targets because Israel has universal conscription. You will never hear anyone from Hillel argue that Palestinian women and children are legitimate targets because they have been used as suicide bombers in the past;

You demand justice for war crimes such as the use of phosphorous and the settlement of occupied land, yet you are silent when the war crimes of deliberately targeting civilians, using civilians as human shields and openly calling for the destruction of a UN member are perpetrated.

We advocate for a peaceful solution to the conflict. You stubbornly demand the righting

of historical injustices and the restoration of Arab pride, ever mindful to whitewash crimes against Jews in Israel, Palestine and throughout the Arab world over the last 100 years.

You label us pro-war. We don't label you pro-terrorism.

Hillelers have never demonized the Palestinian people or minimized Palestinian suffering. As supporters of Israel, we have

long since given up on expecting the same basic respect.

Yesse, you are smarter than you seem in your letters. You and others like you on campus think you're making a point, but your hypocrisy clouds your message. Please take this perspective into consideration the next time you choose to protest a Shabbat dinner.

—Mick Mendelsohn,
Hillel Concordia

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.

Pot of (insert name here)'s gold

Unknown third-party funds went towards attack ads, says CHANGE candidate

• AUDREY PEEK

Audrey Peek is affiliated with the CHANGE slate and ran for VP University Affairs during the Concordia Student Union general elections.

Peek is the spokesperson for the CHANGE slate and has criticized the Chief Electoral Office's policing of the 2009 election campaign.

It was unprecedented. Never before have such astronomical sums of money been spent on attack campaigns during the CSU elections. Flyers, websites, ad trucks, call centres: money was no object for the third party that reared its ugly head during this year's elections. The time has come for the students of Concordia to ask themselves who should really be deciding who represents them? Shouldn't we defend the right of students to decide for themselves, without external entities spending thousands and skewing the outcome?

CHANGE Concordia is contesting the undeclared expenditures and illegal third-party involvement of the last CSU election, with one goal in mind: to make sure that the CSU elections can never be bought again.

Shouldn't we defend the right of students to decide for themselves, without external entities spending thousands and skewing the outcome?

The attack was coordinated, multi-faceted and never ceased to escalate. It started out with a website in the first week of campaigns. CHANGEconcordia.com (not .ca) stole the content and layout of the slate's original site to make a disturbingly similar copy with misleading informa-

tion. Stickers marked ".com" were placed on all of CHANGE's posters to redirect people to the attack site and flyers started appearing that had a design similar to the website with equally false and slanderous slogans.

In the second week, the organizers of this attack campaign took it up a notch. Students began complaining that they had received phone calls on their home phones, which meant that someone was using an illegally obtained list of every Concordia students' contact information. The callers were originally calling on behalf of Vision but as soon as the telemarketing campaign was revealed callers started pretending to be from the CHANGE campaign, leading students to believe that our slate was invading their privacy.

On the final day of voting, an expensive ad truck drove around the downtown campus allegedly promoting CHANGE, making it seem that our slate was breaking the rules to campaign on a voting day and overspending our budget.

All of these measures cost thousands of dollars, none of which was declared on any slate's expense sheets.

So if it wasn't a slate, then who?

The CSU's bylaws expressly state that the elections must be run according to the rules of fair play and that third parties may not undertake unauthorized spending for any purpose.

If we start allowing this sort of activity, it sets a dangerous precedent. What if a business could sway

the elections based on what sort of contracts one team promises to sign? What if the administration could support whatever slate bowed to their interests? There is a reason these rules were written. Now they need to be enforced.

CHANGE Concordia has filed multiple complaints over the course of the election, over half of which were thrown out for no reason by the Chief Electoral Officer. Our slate has brought our case to the CSU's Judicial Board, and a ruling is



The source of funding for the attack ads during the CSU general election remains unknown. GRAPHIC ALEX MANLEY

expected in the next few weeks.

We are asking that the elections be overturned. We are not asking to be appointed by default and we are not in this for personal interest. We have undertaken this initiative because we see no other way that the

principles of democracy and fairness can be upheld. This sort of third-party involvement cannot, and will not, be allowed to stand. No one should be able to purchase an election, and non-students have no business in our student elections.

Stop waging war on our campuses

Rational debate should replace dogmatic ideology on our campuses

• STEVE BIREK, *EXCALIBUR*
(YORK UNIVERSITY)

I cannot claim to fully appreciate and understand the specific aspects of student activism at your specific universities. But many of you are my friends, near and dear to my heart, and it saddens me to see what a shocking frenzy you've worked yourselves into over the Israel-Palestine discourse.

Never has he referred to me as a supporter of terrorism and never have I dared call him a Zionist conspirator.

I wish to express my sincere hope that you channel your passions away from the chaos of disorderly rallies and into the civilized realm of the debating hall.

For years, I've been concerned about the divisions in school communities over the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

While I applaud the intelligent debate common at university, I am disturbed by the recent displays of rage in your halls and forums.

I feel that any notion of healthy debate has been replaced by fear and distrust. Instead of lively, respectful discussion, I see havoc on campus. I watch your YouTube videos for clarity and insight on your ideas and arguments, but instead I see messages that have been drowned out by shouting and buried under flags.

I read newspaper articles to try and understand the direction of the debate around this issue, but instead I find out that death threats, racist slogans and public intimidation are the norm for both sides.

I expect more from universities, full of some of the most diverse and intelligent citizens in North America.

I think of my own home, where my father and I often come to debate this sensitive issue, replete with our own agendas and sympathies, but with a far different temperament.

My father lived in Israel for a time in the '70s in hopes of finding a home. Within a year of his arrival, however, he chose to leave because he was drafted into the Israeli Defense Forces. While he was then, and remains to this day, a vocal supporter of Israel, he

refused to join the army on the simple wish that he be allowed to live in peace. He fled to Canada where he found that discussion was the greatest tool to achieve this peace he so desired.

Around the dinner table 30 years later, he often finds his support for Israelis clashing with my own sympathies for Palestinians. Our debates are lively and passionate, but clear boundaries exist. We don't allow what's happening overseas to manifest itself in the dynamics of our house.

Never has he referred to me as a supporter of terrorism and never have I dared call him a Zionist conspirator. Our debates end with a handshake and we discover time and time again how close to agreement we are on all the fundamental issues surrounding the ongoing state of war in Israel and Palestine.

As students in a common space, you have let the tensions in Gaza, Israel and the West Bank seep into your house. I'm afraid the intellectual, academic heart of university is slipping dangerously into the mindset and mentality of warfare.

Right now, the militant hardliners in Yisrael Beiteinu and Hamas are thrilled to see their anger and rage adopted around the world.

Imagine the impact you may have on them when, in six months to a year from now, they might be able look at your campus and see your two opposing camps having, say, weekly debates in a lecture hall where speakers are allowed their equal turn and their opinions are held to intellectual and rational scrutiny rather than threats and accusations. They might see the opening for another way.

I'm afraid that if my father took a good look at the recent rallies on your campus, he would recognize not what he has found in Canada, but what he remembers of his time in Israel. Worse yet, he may say something like: "University is going the way of the Weimar Republic, and we all know what happened to that society."

Heed the call of peace activists when they say, "another world is possible." University is the best place to start this new world and you'd better start it soon. You would be fooling yourselves if you think matters can proceed the way they are going now, both in the Middle East and on campus.



Former University of Ottawa physics professor Denis Rancourt.

In support of Denis Rancourt

Concordia report validates dissident prof

• MATTHEW BRETT

Ottawa University physics professor Denis Rancourt was escorted off campus by university security and banned from the premise this past December. His laboratory locked and equipment seized, Rancourt's nanoparticle research came to an abrupt end.

His crime was giving all 24 of his advanced physics students an A+. Rancourt's story has direct bearing on Concordia, which is in the process of digesting its own set of bold proposals that will directly affect our education.

This Friday, April 17, a working group on teaching and learning will submit a report to the Senate, Concordia University's highest academic body. The report has an impressive 46 recommendations and while students will sigh that a universal A+ grade is not one of them, the report is quite possibly one of the most exciting documents to reach the Senate this academic year. It is to Concordia what Rancourt is to Canada.

The report opens with a well-researched truism: "For today's students, society is not a hierarchy-based structure, but a flat, non-linear, constantly changing system of exchanges. [...] Many of them are thus extremely sensitive to notions of social justice and acutely conscious of the need for transparency and validation."

All 46 recommendations pivot around this statement and it is precisely this reality that Rancourt has responded to for the past five years. Rancourt is a vocal proponent of "critical pedagogy," a method of democratizing education by giving students a strong say in curriculum and class discussions without grading them. He compellingly argues that the current academic system is a failed model, and his dismissal from Ottawa University was an abrupt end to five years' work creating a new academic model within his classroom.

To the credit of the authors of Concordia's report, many of Rancourt's pedagogical ideas are reflected to a degree in the report itself.

"The goal of teaching is not to 'cover' content 'for' the students, but rather to help students learn how to 'uncover' content for themselves," the report reads.

The circumstances that led to Rancourt's dismissal are relevant, and it's a shame he lost his job

fighting for the same goals espoused in Concordia's proposals.

"Flexibility in methods of measurement should be encouraged," the report continues. Rancourt was aiming for more than "flexibility," but this revised approach to measurement should give Rancourt some sense of validation. Educational achievements will not be the only component to be measured in a new way, if the report gets implemented. Teaching evaluations will also be revised to understand not how "receptive" students are but how "effective" the teaching methods are.

Rancourt is treated as a martyr or a moron, depending on which daily paper you read, but all can agree that this professor has decimated tradition and fostered some desperately needed debate on what education really is.

These are all incremental steps toward Rancourt's ideal, and fortunately, some of the proposals are a complete reversal of current trends. It will be interesting to see how the recommendations are received and implemented, particularly by overly-rigid and often backward social science sectors.

There is some reason for concern with the report's emphasis on devolution of learning objectives and core competencies to the departments themselves. This will invariably revert to, or even intensify, the push to 'cover' content and limit academic flexibility, but the report is really an exciting prospect nonetheless.

Students should be clamouring to get onto any future task forces or committees established to implement the report's recommendations. A strong student voice will bring us closer to the ideals which Rancourt continues to strive for, ideals that seem entirely sensible and perhaps necessary.

Rancourt is treated as a martyr or a moron, depending on which daily paper you read, but all can agree that this professor has decimated tradition and fostered some desperately needed debate on what education really is. The timing could not be better for Concordia.

Tricks of the trade

Former student gives advice on how to get a leg up in media industry

• LAURA COHEN

Laura is a freelance editor and media-maker in Montreal. As a Communications graduate from Concordia University, she has worked on projects that range from documentaries to short films and corporate videos.

Life after school was a major reality check. With new standards to live up to, professional skills to acquire and hours of cold calling lined up, I was no longer protected by the ivory tower. It was the end of my innocence and the beginning of my quarter-life crisis.

When I was in CEGEP, I was studious and had a fairly decent social life but like most 18-year-olds, I was ambivalent about my future. I flirted with the idea of becoming a geographer because it seemed like the only feasible solution to travelling the world for free. But I soon discovered that creativity is a necessity for maintaining a reasonable level of sanity, so I considered professional dancing. My mother shot down the idea immediately, insisting that I'd spend my life "recycling tea bags and nursing pelvic injuries."

As a young whippersnapper, my passion trumped my pragmatism. So after six years of dancing, I started teaching hip-hop. I spent five or six hours a week designing choreography for a one-hour class filled with parents. This was exciting, especially with the 35-year-old dad who added that extra touch to every move—but I was getting paid a whopping \$22 a week.

I now agreed with my mother.

I decided to edit films. This may not seem like a huge leap in terms of increased salary but it's surprisingly lucrative (translation: it pays for rent, alcohol, rice meals and the occasional trip to Ottawa). I'm doing what I like and making money doing it. This is fun.

I graduated from university, made some award-winning videos, rubbed shoulders with a handful of VIPs in the field (which is a rare occurrence outside of Toronto and L.A.) and have begun to dig my roots in Montreal's fertile, creative industry. It's where people like me thrive because it's easy to collaborate with like-minded people and discover that you share 15 Facebook friends who also made a documentary on homelessness around Guy-Concordia metro.

I've had enough experience in this town to understand the basic dos and don'ts of working in the film/television industry. That is



Countless students will be using the summer to find jobs in the industry. GRAPHIC ALEX MANLEY

People are more interested in what you can produce, not what grade you got in Communication Theory.

why I would like to offer a few pointers for media students or young professionals who seek catharsis:

1 - Academic achievement is overrated.

Although a university degree does assure a potential employer that you're not completely ignorant, boasting about your GPA score in an interview with a director or producer is like mentioning you got over a rough break-up on your CV. Sure, you're stronger and wiser because of it but that's not what will get you the job.

Don't get me wrong; emphasizing your achievements is crucial when you're searching for work. In fact, a lot of employment offices and professional training centres have begun to spearhead workshops and programs for artists who want to learn how to hone in on their self-marketing

skills (Youth Employment Services offers a range of cutting-edge resources at yesmontreal.ca).

But, people are more interested in what you can produce, not what grade you got in Communication Theory. A portfolio is your best bet as it demonstrates your talent and ability. Put your finest work out there and you will get noticed.

2 - People have big heads and little patience.

Creative people are notorious for ego-tripping. It's a dog-eat-dog world where people cut corners to make sacrifices for their art. You want to prove yourself and work hard but you have to know when to leave—especially if you're asked to do something unethical. Consequently, you start to grow thick skin once you've had a few gigs.

The media field can be rough, but sometimes you can fall into amazing work environments where bosses macro-manage and recognize good work.

3 - Assume the workhorse role.

When you're first starting out, it's beneficial to work for free or do internships because you learn the ropes and develop your CV. A lot of aspiring filmmakers, actors and even journalists kick-start their careers as production assistants (Mira Sorvino and John Woo, to name a few). You may also choose to run off to L.A. for some serious mingling.

"Production assistant" has no standard definition, therefore tasks can range from brewing coffee and chasing ambulances to holding a boom pole and logging tapes. Remuneration comes with experience, so keep track of your worth.

4 - Don't mess-up.

It's obvious: when you get the

gig, try hard to avoid mistakes. I've broken enough things to understand what it means to want to crawl into a dark little hole. If it's getting the extra hour of sleep or just reviewing your notes from the previous day, then do it. Be alert and all will be well!

5 - Contracts are your friend.

Unless you're one of the few full-time filmmakers currently employed at the National Film Board of Canada or you work a stable, lucrative job in Toronto (a city that kicks our ass with job opportunities), freelancing is a common path for artists and media-makers. It's a contract-based field so it's important to balance job security with career ambitions.

6 - Network, network, network.

Consider the words of Jeffrey Gitomer, author of *The Little Black Book of Connections*: "All things being equal, people want to do business with their friends. All things being not quite so equal, people still want to do business with their friends."

Ninety-five percent of my work experience derives from my connections. Two years ago, I was trying to build my network and happened to see a documentary that I really liked, so I contacted the producer in Toronto. We met and she told me to join the Documentary Organization of Canada, which connected me to a whole slew of other people and projects. After launching my portfolio website, I ended up getting a few decent contracts through DOC.

Whether it's a personal website, blog or Twitter, the web is an excellent platform for self-promotion and can be very effective for building stronger networks.

That being said, make yourself known. Talk to your dentist, cousin, neighbour, janitor, teacher and, of course, Facebook friends. Be sincere. Whether it's schmoozing at a film festival or meeting Mr. CEO for a job interview, it's important to be yourself. If you're smart, focused and genuine, people will want to help you.

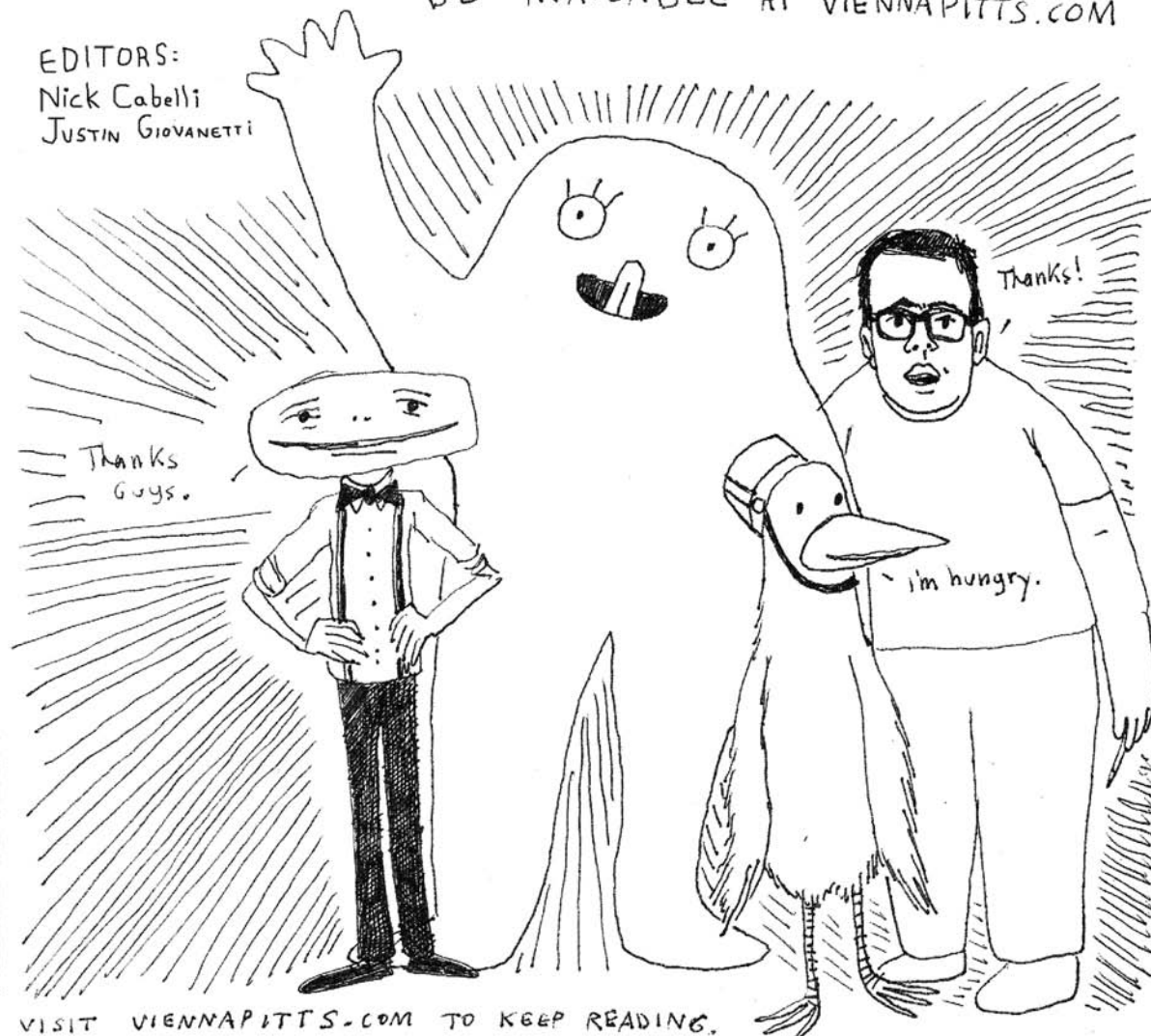
Whether you're bound for Hollywood or making a guerrilla film, media-making can be very rewarding and exciting. But like anything, there are just a few lessons to be learned along the way.

viennapitts.com presents:
IT'S GETTING LATE with Jennifer Harris
 BY SINBAD RICHARDSON

THANKS FOR READING!

Well, there you have it folks. IT'S BEEN A GREAT TWO YEARS HERE AT THE LINK. NEW COMICS OF "IT'S GETTING LATE WITH JENNIFER HARRIS" WILL NOW BE AVAILABLE AT VIENNAPITTS.COM

EDITORS:
 Nick Cabelli
 Justin Giovanetti



VISIT VIENNAPITTS.COM TO KEEP READING.

CALLING ALL ARTISTS

The Link is celebrating 30 years of serving the Concordia Community! All Concordia students (including those graduating in 2009) are invited to use our distribution boxes as on-campus display canvases.

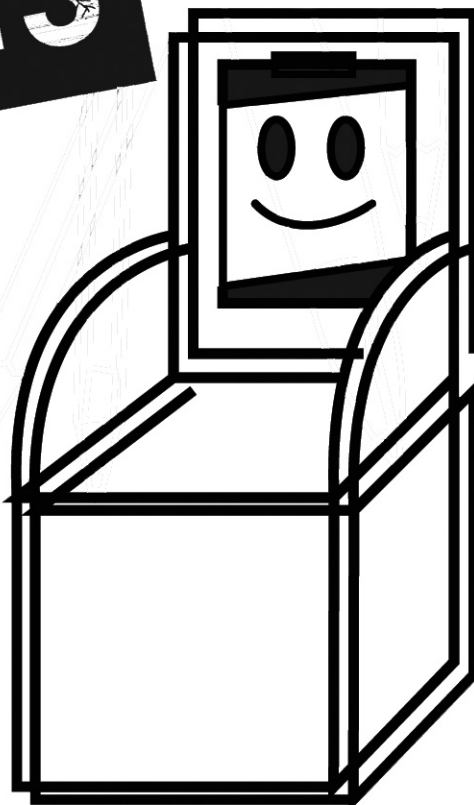
Submit a proposal! A panel will select the top 10.

Please send name, student number, a description of the submission, and a PDF of the sketch to boxes.thelink@gmail.com no later than May 12 at midnight!

The theme is Concordia.

The boxes will be on display for a year at the end of which the student body will vote for their favourite. **The prize is \$200**

Submissions containing images promoting sexism, homophobia, racism or xenophobia will not be considered. For more information: thelinknewspaper.com



editorial

An alternative summer

With the summer break upon us, many students look forward to the opportunity to drink themselves into a stupor after a stressful year. Thankfully, Montreal offers more than just alcohol. With a whole summer ahead of you, why not shake things up and try something new?

Summer is a perfect time to be constructive, but it is too often squandered trying to squeeze a maximal amount of drinking and working into the day. This summer, students should do something for their city; they should get their hands dirty and become guerrilla gardeners. There is no reason that flowers should not grow on concrete. Parking spaces can become an urban oasis and rooftops can become vegetable gardens. Throw seed bombs, plant trees, help a flower grow. The city will thank you for it.

Another idea for change is to not take your usual road trip, plane trip or whatnot, but to stay and soak up the sun in Montreal. While you're doing that, go see an indie film or a band you've never seen before. Meet a new friend and go on adventures in the forest, like the little forest in Ile-des-Sœurs; take your binoculars with you so you can do some bird watching.

If you haven't already been told to, I'll hazard telling you a second time: read a book this summer, or even pick up a zine. Better yet, write one.

Groups like smallsciencezines.blogspot.com and Concordia's own *Reproduce Freely* show that you don't need big bucks or a fancy English degree (although one wouldn't hurt) to start your own zine. All it requires is patience and tenacity.

The suggestion to sign up for a class over the holidays sounds crazy at this point in the exam crunch, but Quebec is certainly the most convenient place in Canada to become bilingual. So if you're from out of town, why not learn French over the summer?

Besides improving your chances to wind up with a part-time job that doesn't involve telemarketing, taking advantage of the opportunities to learn and practice French is something you'll thank yourself for later—especially if the government is willing to pay for it. The French Montreal School Board has free programs in place.

For those of us inclined to exercise, gym memberships are costly, and why would you want to be inside during the few months of warm, welcoming weather this city offers? You don't have to worry about shelling out lots of money or not being fit enough to get involved. This city is full of opportunities to be active outside without breaking the bank.

Bike adventures can be the perfect solution to your exercise needs. Are you dying to break-free of downtown smog and take Lady Three-Speed on the vacation she's always dreamed of? Three good places to start: St-Michel Flea Market, Jean Drapeau Park and Jarry Park. Hometown holidays are highly underrated.

Or, check Facebook for the Ligue de baseball vraiment amateur de Montréal and enjoy a pick up game of baseball or just bring a Frisbee to the park on a Sunday. Pick up games of volleyball and soccer pop up all over the city. They are a perfect opportunity for you to get involved and meet some friendly, like-minded people while enjoying the beautiful summer weather.

There's a reason why university students have summers that last twice as long as high school kids. The decisions we make now will impact the rest of our careers. Our four-month summers are the perfect time slot for internships, career-advancing personal projects and pondering what we want out of life. Summer is an opportunity to get ahead and break out of the throngs of students who ditch the thought of school for more frivolous forms of summer fun.

Of course, all work and no play makes Jill a dull girl, so on those rare days off make sure to treat yourself to a little play—after all, we are young and beautiful and the city is our oyster.

There's something magical about the arrival of summer and celebrating it on a terrace with a drink in hand, but I propose a change to this ritual for you this summer: I'm going to call it stooping. It's the practice of sitting on your porch, front steps, what-have-you, with a drink in hand and a smile on your face. Instead of spending your hard-earned student dollars on expensive drafts at your local bar, be a part of your neighbourhood and save money by leering at pedestrians.

You'll probably make friends with your neighbours, and maybe even save enough to eat something other than Ramen for dinner. Oh yeah, that's an alternative summer.

—The Link Masthead