



# The Death of ASFA?

News 5

**28th Annual Queer Issue • Special Insert**

# NEWS

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# Student Centre Rejected



(Left to Right) Gonzalo Nieto joined one of many grassroots No campaigns in the days before the referendum. Ayanda Dube and Joseph Munyenyiwa toured classrooms for weeks to oppose the Student Union Building fee levy. PHOTOS JUSTIN GIOVANNETTI & CHRISTOPHER CURTIS

## Near-Record Number of Voters Oppose Student Union Fee Levy

• CHRISTOPHER CURTIS

Concordia students handed Fusion its first major political defeat last Thursday, as the slate's proposed Student Union Building fee levy was overwhelmingly voted down.

Coming out in near-record numbers for a Concordia Student Union byelection, 69 per cent of Concordia voters cast their ballots against a series of fee levies that would go towards the purchase of a \$43 million SUB. Had the fee levy passed, students would have paid \$4.50 per credit into the multi-million dollar project by the summer of 2012.

It was the second time in an eight month period that students voted on the purchase of a SUB, which was one of Fusion's central platform points during the 2010 CSU general election.

"I think this referendum struck a nerve with students, and when you hit a nerve, people react," said CSU VP External & Projects Adrien Severyns, who spearheaded Fusion's SUB campaign. "We have to respect the message students sent to us and work towards a different solution for student space."

Fusion was swept into office last March, taking 26 of 29 seats on the CSU Council and every available Senate and Board of Governors

seat. But the team of experienced student politicians met resistance from within their slate and from grassroots student movements in the lead up to the Nov. 23 byelection.

"I think it's just great to see that students got out there and voted," said CSU President Heather Lucas. "Now we're just going to have to keep working with students and see what it is they want."

Opponents of the Yes campaign claimed the referendum question misled students about the cost of the SUB, that the Concordia administration would have too much control over the SUB and that the student cost of the building was unjustified as Quebecers will be facing university tuition hikes in 2011.

Going into the referendum, Severyns was facing accusations that he had abused the CSU's resources, overspent the campaign's budget cap of \$375 and violated a number of the union's electoral procedures.

According to official CSU referendum bylaws, Yes and No committees must have access to the same resources while campaigning.

In a nine-page contestation sent by CSU Councilor Lex Gill to Chief Electoral Officer Oliver Cohen, Gill alleged that Severyns used a salaried employee for his campaign and sent out e-mails to all CSU clubs using the union's mailing list.

In her contestation, filed just days before the election, Gill claimed that none of these resources would have been available to a No campaign.

When asked if he thought the campaign was dirty, Cohen told *The Link* he thought it was "not clean."

The CSU also came under fire from a number of unofficial No campaigns at the university around the time of the contestation.

"We just didn't understand the urgency of having a student centre," said Ayanda Dube, who visited classrooms with his friend Joseph Munyenyiwa to speak out against the fee levies. "We weren't opposed to a student centre but we just didn't think students had enough information about it. And with a project of that size, you want people to be informed."

Dube and Munyenyiwa campaigned without an operating budget or political experience, and without the knowledge that other No campaigns were taking root around them.

"The first time we realized there were other No campaigns was when we were making classroom visits," said Munyenyiwa. "We ran into Sibona [Madewa] in a classroom the week before the election. She presented her 'Vote No' speech and then we went through with

ours. It was encouraging to see other people like us out there."

Madewa, who is the VP Internal of the Political Science Student Association, applied for her opposition campaign to be recognized and provided with a \$375 budget by Cohen on Nov. 17. Her request was denied because it came a few days after the application deadline—but she persisted.

Enlisting the help of fellow student Gonzalo Nieto, MaDewa created a "Vote No" Facebook page that garnered almost three times more support than the CSU's "Vote Yes" page.

The Yes campaign was delivered a final blow on Nov. 17, when Gill confirmed that the Faubourg was the planned site of the SUB.

Although 1,652 of the 2,397 byelection voters opposed the fee levy, Severyns said the student centre project is still very much alive.

"Whether it's in a year, or in five years, it's going to happen," he said.

Concordia students now pay \$2 per credit for the purchase of a SUB and have banked nearly \$7 million towards the project since 2006. The \$2 fee levy is set to expire in 2014, but Concordia administration and the CSU are still under contract for the joint purchase and operation of a SUB, an agreement that could last up to 70 years.

**We weren't opposed to a student centre but [...] with a project of that size, you want people to be informed.**

—Ayanda Dube,  
unofficial No campaigner

# Living In Limbo

## A Refugee Claimant from Cameroon is in Immigration Purgatory



PHOTOS CAMILLE MCOUAT

• MEAGAN WOHLBERG

When Simo Sandrine Téclaire arrived at Dorval airport as an accepted immigrant to Canada in 2006, she was surprised to learn that her file was not going to be accepted after all.

The reason: the abusive husband she had fled did not arrive with her.

The application for immigration listed her ex-husband as the principal sponsor on the family file and because he was not there, her immigrant status was suddenly null and void. She and her seven-year-old son learned they were to be sent straight back to Cameroon.

"When I arrived the agent told me 'no' because I was not the principal name on the file," Téclaire said. "It was my ex-husband. I could not return because I was threatened in my country so I asked for refugee protection status to stay here."

When making a refugee claim, the burden of proof rests on claimants to show that there is no internal flight alternative within the home country where they could go to be safe, nor any other home state protection that could be sought.

But according to Aaron Lakoff of the Montreal-based migrant support group Solidarity Across Borders, this task is extremely difficult for refugees because many do not have the time or resources to create such a paper trail when in a crisis situation.

"In Sandrine's case, which I would argue is understandable, she didn't have the paperwork and the documentation to back all that up," he said. "The government, in putting that burden of proof on women, is not recognizing the real

nature of [...] what migrant women in domestic abuse situations face. The first thing on your mind isn't to necessarily get all that documentation to back up your story. It's to get the hell out of the situation that you're in."

Three years after arriving to Canada, finding work, taking courses and beginning to volunteer for several community organizations, Téclaire heard back that her refugee claim was refused and a deportation order was set for April 2009. But she was already in a long-term relationship with a Canadian man and four months pregnant with his child. Instead of allowing herself to be deported under these circumstances, she did what many refugees do: she went underground.

Despite promises made by the Liberal government years ago, an appeals division at the Immigration and Refugee Board was never created. The only legal alternatives are to apply for a Humanitarian and Compassionate review or a Pre-Removal Risk Assessment, which evaluate a person's contributions to society and risks faced in returning to his or her home country.

"There's a severe lack of justice in there in the sense that refugee claimants don't have access to the appeal," said Lakoff. "What are the alternatives? You can file an HC, but it isn't necessarily going to stop your deportation. The government won't wait for a decision to be rendered on the HC before deporting you, and that could take a couple of years. You're left waiting."

Téclaire applied for the HC one year ago and is still waiting for a the results. And her chances are not great: only three per cent of HC applications are successful in preventing deportation. She says the

waiting is tearing her and her family apart.

"It's a very precarious situation, to live day by day without knowing," she said. "It could be tomorrow, the next day, the next month. It's very troubling for [my partner] also because we have been together for many years and I don't know if tomorrow I will still be with this person."

Lakoff says the poor odds of acceptance are why most would rather take the risk of hiding, even if it means difficulty getting health care or education. In the last decade, the number of deportations has increased by more than 50 per cent to around 12,700 deportees in 2008.

"The reality that people face is that they go underground rather than risk deportation," he said. "It takes a tremendous amount of courage to defy a fundamentally unjust thing, which is deporting people and breaking up families."

Going underground did not stop Téclaire from being arrested and detained. Both the pregnant Téclaire and her son Ange, then nine years old, were found and placed in detention in June 2009 but were released on the condition of having a surety.

Since then, Téclaire has tried to stay integrated in daily life despite the ever-growing threat. She continues to volunteer for different community organizations, provide child-care for people, and will be starring in a play again this December.

"It's distressing," she said. "Being without status is the worst situation that someone could be in. You can't go forward. You cannot back up. You cannot do anything."

## Canadians Launch Birth Control Class Action Suit

Complaints Range From Strokes and Heart Problems to Gall Bladder Removal

• MEGAN SARRAZIN—  
INTERCAMP

EDMONTON (CUP) — Two brands of birth control pills prescribed to roughly two million women in 2009 are being named in a national class action lawsuit alleging serious health side-effects to some of its prescribed users.

Yasmin and Yaz, both products of Bayer HealthCare Pharmaceuticals, are targets of the class action lawsuit by Siskinds, a law firm based in London, Ont.

According to Matthew Baer, the lead counsel representing Siskinds, they receive several calls a week from people noting injuries resulting from the use of Yasmin or Yaz.

"It just started getting over-

whelming, the number of people calling with respect to this particular brand and so we started looking into it and seeing that there were a lot of issues in the U.S. as well," said Baer.

"We started researching it more and it appears that there's science showing that the risks of serious injury with Yasmin and Yaz is worse than comparable contraceptives. But the warning that's given is that the risk is the same," said Baer.

Many of the reported side effects include strokes, pulmonary embolisms—a blood clot in the lung—various heart problems and, what Baer calls the most overwhelming, is many young women having to get their gall

bladders removed.

There have been about 4,000 individual cases against Yasmin and Yaz in the U.S., as well as most provinces in the country filing class action lawsuits against the drugs, according to Baer.

Siskinds has been receiving calls for about a year, in which time they have logged about 300 significant complaints of side effects, but Baer says, "it's quite possible there could be thousands of people."

Before the case can go to court, there are several steps it must go through, including a certification hearing, when lawyers will try to convince the judge that it's a suitable case to be presented as a class action lawsuit rather than

individual claims.

This is the stage the lawsuit is currently in, with more people expected to come forward once the case reaches certification.

"We have to be very careful what we choose and if we choose a case to do it's because we're very confident that it will be successful at the end of the day," said Baer.

Due to the overwhelming amount of calls the law firm has received in regards to Yasmin and Yaz, Baer believes the case will be a success.

He is hoping for an outcome with two major focuses.

"We want to try to get compensation for people who are injured from using the drug and two, and just as importantly, we want there

to be a proper warning," said Baer.

"If it is true, as we allege, that there's a significantly greater increased risk of health problems with people using this drug as compared to other ones, we want there to be a proper warning in place so that people can make informed decisions about what they're putting in their bodies," he added.

Although they are nine or 10 months away from seeing any significant progress with the case, Baer is confident that there will be a settlement.

Since these oral contraceptives are widely prescribed in Canada, he expects more people to come forward once the case reaches the settlement stages.

# Math Association Challenges ASFA Goliath

‘ASFA in principal is a good thing, but it needs to be changed dramatically’

• JUSTIN GIOVANNETTI

The Arts and Science Federation of Associations, representing 17,000 Concordia students, will undergo a serious shakeup over the next few months. Leading the upheaval will be the Mathematics and Statistics Students Association, which represents 560 members.

While ASFA calls itself a federation, the student group actually controls the budgets of its 27 constituent members.

What began as a budget disagreement in September, when ASFA discovered that MASSA had opened a bank account for itself, leading to the group being stripped of its \$450 budget, has become something much larger for the math association.

“At the moment, the Concordia Student Union tells ASFA what to do, then ASFA tells its member associations what to do, then we tell students what we are going to do,” said Bruno Joyal, a MASSA executive. “It should be the other way around; it’s absurd. Students should have power over their student associations.”

On Thursday, MASSA filed for

accreditation with the government of Quebec. If its request is accepted and math students give the go ahead, the small student association will hold the same legal status as ASFA and it will collect money directly from its own students. If that happens, MASSA will be financially independent from ASFA.

The economics and history student associations, representing nearly 2,000 students, have also shown interest in pursuing accreditation. Joyal hinted that other groups could follow.

“At the moment, we are not legitimate, we are only a committee within a student association,” he said. “ASFA in principal is a good thing, but it needs to be changed dramatically.”

ASFA President Aaron Green dismissed the argument that MASSA was pursuing accreditation to increase student control over politics at Concordia. According to Green, the dissatisfaction is a direct consequence of the confrontation between the two groups in September.

At the start of the school year, MASSA had money from a wine and cheese where potential employers paid to attend. The math

association wanted ASFA to cash its cheques, but it was told that ASFA’s accounts weren’t ready yet. MASSA was told to go to its department, who told them to open a bank account. When ASFA found out—opening an external bank account is a violation of the federation’s bylaws—MASSA’s budget was frozen and moved under the direct control of the ASFA executive.

“It was quite a sanction and MASSA was quite unhappy with the decision. But council made the right choice and upheld the decision,” said Green. “Otherwise anyone could have ignored our financial bylaws.”

With its budget considered as special projects funding by ASFA, Joyal said that planning events was nearly impossible.

“Every time we need money we need to fill out forms and explain everything. We need to say we want this type of beer and they say, ‘Are you sure you want this type of beer? What about this kind?’ It’s ridiculous, we were punished and it shows our lack of legitimacy. If you are legitimate, you can open a bank account,” said Joyal. “My intention is that this whole thing changes,

and that it changes fast.”

While MASSA can get accreditation, Joyal warned that ASFA’s current rules make it mostly useless. Under the federation’s bylaws, individual members cannot seek independent fee levies.

“If they are alone, they won’t have the representation that ASFA has in the university,” said Green.

“Collecting an independent fee levy would not be in compliance with ASFA’s bylaws and I think that might be their goal,” answered Green when asked if he thought that MASSA wanted to leave ASFA.

The president warned that if MASSA left the federation, students may have to pay more due to possible misappropriation of funds in years to come.

“While we might like this executive, four years ago, there was a lot of misappropriation of funds at the MA level,” said Green, explaining that the ASFA council stripped its own power to have a bank account due to the corruption.

“ASFA has a lot more oversight than any of the member associations,” said Green. “If they collected their own fee they

wouldn’t have the checks and balances that ASFA has.”

If MASSA wanted to stay in the federation, many of ASFA’s bylaws would need to change and the organization would need to undergo a radical overhaul.

“We are getting into a constitutional challenge of ASFAs bylaws,” said Green. “I don’t know what members would think of that.”

While Joyal admitted that there were risks, he said that not changing the current system—responsible for apathy and a close relationship between ASFA and the CSU—could be just as risky.

“This system is the same way I inherited it: from a lousy student association with no status and every year it is the same way, with the system being passed on from year to year,” Joyal said. “If students put their foot down and decided to be legitimate, this will be handed on from year to year. This is not a thing where you take a step back.”

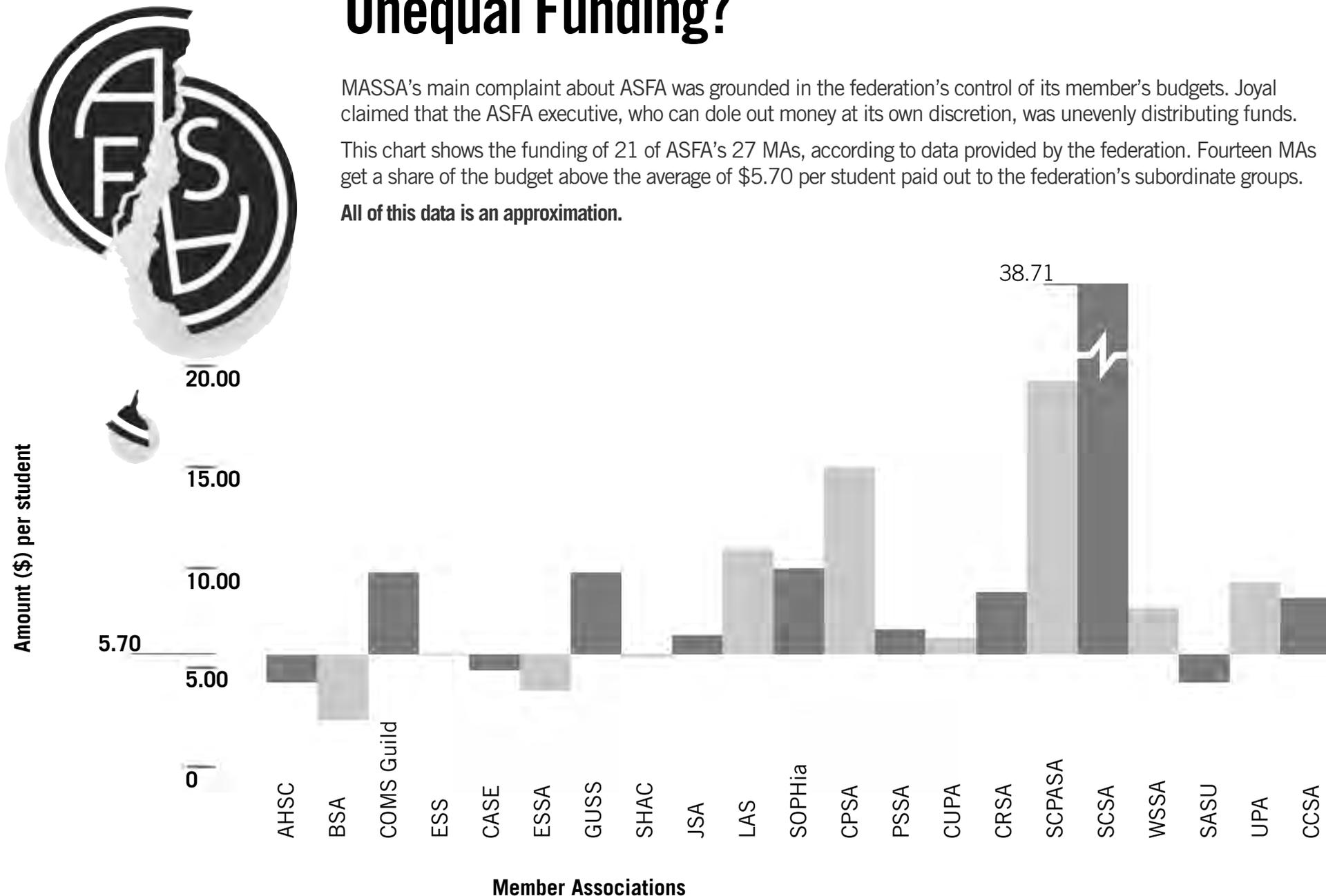
The Mathematics and Statistics Students Association will need to get the approval of 25 per cent of its members before March to approve an independent fee levy.

## Unequal Funding?

MASSA’s main complaint about ASFA was grounded in the federation’s control of its member’s budgets. Joyal claimed that the ASFA executive, who can dole out money at its own discretion, was unevenly distributing funds.

This chart shows the funding of 21 of ASFA’s 27 MAs, according to data provided by the federation. Fourteen MAs get a share of the budget above the average of \$5.70 per student paid out to the federation’s subordinate groups.

All of this data is an approximation.



## Let's Can Hunger



Concordia students raise money for *Moisson Montréal*, the largest food bank in Canada. Every month, over 140,000 Montrealers use emergency food banks. PHOTO ANDY VATHIS

## CEGEP Students Walk Against Tuition

• JUSTIN GIOVANNETTI

At the start of a new school week at the CEGEP du Vieux Montréal, students stood outside the college's entrance on the morning of Nov. 22 and told arriving classmates that the school was closed. All students were locked out.

Over the weekend, the CEGEP's administrators had heard a rumour that students planned to occupy the school during a planned two-day bed in on Nov. 23 and 24. With a famously active and radical student body, the CEGEP was thrown into a five-day lockdown until last Thursday.

"The rumour was that we planned to use bike locks to keep the doors open after 5:00 p.m. on Nov. 22 and would hold a sit in at the school to force negotiations with an administration that completely refused to hold negotiations with us," said Mateo Solkin, a member of Vieux Montréal's student union mobilizing committee.

On Nov. 2, a general assembly of the Association générale des étudiants du Cégep du Vieux Montréal approved three days of bed ins and strikes on Nov. 23, Nov. 24 and Dec. 6 to protest looming tuition increases.

"In the past, the administration has always kept the third floor of the school—the main floor—open

to students," said Solkin. "That is the floor that has the student union room and where we can go to the bathroom, especially when you are striking in the winter and need heat. But this time, they decided that we wouldn't have access to the third floor."

Despite being locked out of their school, the students kept to their strike schedule.

In front of the college, the students built a makeshift camp with tarps, cardboard, pallets, warmers, stoves and a port-o-potty. Concerts, workshops, conferences and poetry readings were held during the two-day sit in. The event went off without incident.

"We were quite resourceful and we ended up having all of our activities outside," said Solkin. The 40 students who participated in the bed in were joined by 100 classmates for demonstrations in front of Hydro Quebec and at McGill.

When asked to comment on the CEGEP's reaction to the student bed in, Anne-Louise Savary, a spokesperson for the CEGEP du Vieux Montreal, said that "the administration won't comment further on this matter."

She pointed *The Link* to a press release issued during the weekend and declined to comment further.

In 2007, a similar event took

place as students organized a bed in to protest a cut in bursaries by the provincial government. The school then called in the Montreal riot police to expel the students from the building.

The CEGEP's principal and head of security later resigned due to negative media pressure.

"Out of paranoia that the 2007 event would happen again, they decided to have a complete lock out," said Solkin. "The administration told us, 'Oh no, this can't happen. We don't want a repeat of 2007; we really don't think we want to do this anymore. Mon'oncle a pu l'énergie pour vous surveiller.'"

In 2008, another bed in took place that ended peacefully.

On the morning of Nov. 20, the CEGEP gave the student union a 10-minute warning before it sent an e-mail to all students telling them that they were locked out.

"We saw it as a direct attack. They told us that they were going to get back to us about it; they didn't and they just decided to tell students to stay home."

Solkin said the main point of the bed in was to start a negotiation between the students and administration.

"We were just looking for common ground," said Solkin. "They gave us an ultimatum."

## Textbooks' Price Might Drop

• MEGAN DOLSKI

The price of textbooks could drop by 10 to 15 per cent overnight.

This isn't a scam, or a Black Friday special. A national student group is calling on the government to stop allowing distributors to add taxes to the textbooks they import.

At present, the Canadian Copyright Act allows non-Canadian book publishers to select an exclusive distributor to sell their books in Canada. The chosen distributor is then authorized to sell the book for its price in its native country in addition to the exchange rate, plus a 10 to 15 per cent tax.

If the select distributor does not charge anything higher than this amount, Canadian booksellers choosing to import books from an alternate source are considered to have violated the Copyright Act.

Campus bookstores are no exception to these regulations.

The Canadian Alliance of Student Associations and Campus Stores Canada are pushing for the government to either remove this 10 to 15 per cent tariff altogether, or to lower it to zero per cent. Doing so would significantly decrease the cost of textbooks.

"Students would see results as of next semester," said Wayne Amundson, executive director of Campus Stores Canada. "The re-

sults would be immediate, literally."

He said that with the U.S dollar and Canadian dollar so close, the inequity between prices is more visible than ever.

Concordia currently has several options available to students to help lower the cost of textbooks, such as the co-op bookstore, book rentals and a book exchange.

While helpful, the limited selection of books offered and awareness that these options exist make textbook prices an ongoing issue.

First-year exercise science student Vicky Barnes spent over \$400 on textbooks for her four classes this semester.

"They are just way too expensive," she said. "And when you get them second hand—they are only like \$30 cheaper."

Amundson claims modification or removal of this tariff would benefit both students and stores and cause no deficit to the government.

The distributors themselves would incur the only loss, as they are the beneficiaries of the money collected by the tax.

Amundson used the example of New Zealand to demonstrate the potential positive impact of removing the tariff. He explained the country was in a similar position to Canada and removed the tax—ever since, their domestic sales have increased.

# A Bottle Panel

## Experts from the Industry Weigh In on Water Bottles



Concordia's water infrastructure is based heavily on vending machines all over campus. Water fountains rarely break down. PHOTO JUSTIN GIOVANNETTI

# 21

billion dollar deficit in Canadian water infrastructure

# 378

litres of water a day used on average by Quebecers

# 80%

of water bottles wind up in landfills

# 2015

the year Concordia's contract with PepsiCo. expires

### • LAURA BEESTON

Water privatization was the topic on the table at a panel on Nov. 24, as insiders from the beverage industry, academics and environmental researchers were invited to debate both sides of banning water bottles on campus.

Drinking tap water from reusable, Concordia Student Union-issued mugs, panellists discussed Concordia's decision to extend the exclusive beverage contract with PepsiCo., the power of consumer choice and public water infrastructure—a debate that was the first of its kind at a Canadian university.

"None of the seven universities who banned water bottle sales on campus brought people from the industry to discuss the issues," said John Challinor, director of Corporate Affairs for Nestlé Waters Canada. "My concern [with banning the sale of water bottles on campus] is we're going down a path of environmental symbolism that will not be meaningful for environmental change."

Justin Sherman, president of Refreshments Canada, agreed with Challinor, putting the onus on consumer demand as the reason to keep the water bottles in

vending machines.

"There are a number of elements this issue [of water privatization] revolves around, such as the right and access to water, [...] but another element is choice: it is 100 per cent you're right not to buy it," he said. "It's a product of convenience."

On the other side of the debate was Tony Clarke, founder of the Polaris Institute, an anti-globalization Canadian think-tank based in Ottawa, and Joanna Eyquem, a freshwater scientist and Concordia lecturer who specializes in geomorphology and landform processes.

"In terms of the symbolism," said Ancham, "it is a statement if you have something available on tap that you're already paying for in taxes, and then you put it into a plastic package. We need to be thinking about this act, this choice [...] to be more sustainable, but to also think about how we use this important resource. We just don't need to package it."

Clarke also criticized private industry capitalizing on water, since it was recently declared a fundamental human right by the United Nations.

"We can all agree when we say that access to water is the essence of life, so do we allow the distri-

bution of a life source to be determined by market forces?" asked Clarke. "What we're doing, if we choose this path, is saying that those who have access live, and those who do not will not. Globally speaking, this is a critical problem. It extends far beyond exclusivity on campus."

But more locally, he argued, exclusivity contracts like Concordia's agreement with PepsiCo. actually circumvents customer choice.

"When we're talking about a university contracting one company exclusively, only one brand of product alone is sold. There's really not much choice there," he argued. "And what happens to choice when water fountains are pushed aside, are in disrepair, or are taken out of commission? This is happening [on] more campuses than not as a result of these contracts."

The bottled beverage side of the debate argued that the university's investment in water fountain infrastructure on campus has nothing to do with the contracts.

"Quite frankly, it's their decision to invest in it at the end of the day," said Challinor. "It's illogical to suggest money spent on bottled water is not being spent

on water infrastructure."

He added that it is actually the water bottle industries leading the way in contemporary water science.

"At one time, this was done by government, but over the last 25 years, this has changed. The government has not had the resources to allow for this to be done [...] so you see industry taking the lead," he said. "We spend \$3 billion a year on hydrogeology studies to support the renewal of water systems—it's a science that is necessary to map our water sheds across the country."

But a two-tiered system to manage and regulate water resources sets a dangerous precedent, argued Clarke.

"Yes there is a huge infrastructure debt that will stare us in the face over the next 15 years in regards to water services," he said. "But the question is how we're going to rebuild public infrastructure and how are those companies—who make quite a substantial profit from this resource—going to contribute to that?"

The panel discussion was recorded by Concordia University Television and should be up on their website at the end of the week.

# Briefs

## Fill the Buses

The Concordia Student Union announced plans on Monday to mobilize students against legislative meetings in Quebec City that will discuss tuition increases. The Get on the Bus campaign will gather students to travel to Quebec City on Dec. 6 to join in what is expected to be the largest student protest in the province since 2005. To register, go to [csu.qc.ca/getonthebus](http://csu.qc.ca/getonthebus).

## WikiLeaks Drops 250,000 Docs

United States Secretary of State Hillary Clinton lambasted WikiLeaks over the website's release of confidential diplomatic documents, saying her country "deeply regrets" the act. Over 250,000 documents are in the latest batch of secret and confidential documents, including 2,500 regarding U.S.-Canada relations, one of which accuses Canada of having an "inferiority complex."

## Non-Confidence Vote Fails

After a tight vote of 61 to 57, Jean Charest's Liberal government survived a Parti Québécois non-confidence motion last Wednesday in Quebec's National Assembly. Failure to call for a public inquiry into allegedly corrupt construction practices linked to political party financing was the PQ rationale for the failed motion.

## Water Fountain Upgrade

In response to student reaction after renewing an exclusive contract with PepsiCo. last month, the Concordia administration's promise to retrofit water infrastructure on campus to accommodate tap drinkers will begin next month. University spokesperson Chris Mota said a budget for this process should be ready by January, coinciding with a Concordia Student Union water bottle awareness campaign.

## Grey Attacks Suspensions

Civil rights lawyer Julius Grey has asked the Collège Bois de Boulogne to "suspend the suspension" of two students told to stay off campus after having distributed pamphlets publicizing a planned student strike in April. The students were off campus when they were distributing the pamphlets.

# 'We Cannot Win This Battle On Our Own'

## Algonquins of Barriere Lake Take On Feds, Again

• MEAGAN WOHLBERG

Just three and a half hours north of Parliament Hill is a small village where the Algonquin of Barriere Lake live.

The 59-acre reserve, situated within 10,000 square kilometres of traditional hunting grounds, is a cramped display of dirt roads and shacks. Many of the tattered wooden houses are missing windows and doorknobs, which have been replaced by cardboard and string. With 90 per cent of the 450 residents unemployed and on welfare, hunting and fishing are crucial for survival.

This could explain why the community has been so adamant about protecting their traditional land and way of life in the face of logging companies, hydroelectric dams and, now, the Indian Act.

In a rare move on Aug. 13, then-Minister of Indian and Northern Affairs Chuck Strahl invoked section 74 of the Indian Act to forcibly impose band elections on the community of Barriere Lake. Strahl said the move was necessary to address the leadership void in the community caused by internal divisions.

But Norman Matchewan, a youth spokesperson for the community, told a crowd at the second annual Indigenous Sovereignty Week in Montreal that abolishing their traditional governance structure would do more harm than good.

"Since this Indian Affairs council has been recognized, they have started dealing with forestry companies and signing away parts of our land to be clear-cut without the community's consent," he said. "They wanted democracy and accountability, Indian Affairs. And yet the band council they put in place can't even have a proper community meeting in the community."

Despite preventing the electoral officer from entering the community by blockading the highway from Ottawa, the Barriere Lake Algonquins could not stop the elections this summer. Polling took place 45 kilometers outside the community and, with only 10 mail-in ballots collected, the federal government declared a new chief and council.

With council consisting of four members, three of whom live off of the reserve, the elected chief Casey Ratt refused the position, saying he did not want to go against the community elders. If another resigns, it will go to a byelection.

"In our customs, it's the people that select their leaders," Matchewan said. "To me that's more democratic than what Indian Affairs is doing. They're just finding ways to fit their needs, fit their agenda."

According to Matchewan, that agenda is forestry.

"They've imposed this section 74 in order for logging to happen.



The government of Quebec makes \$100 million annually off hydroelectric dams in Barriere Lake, but residents of the Algonquin community don't see a penny of that revenue. PHOTO GIUNTINI JONATHAN

They don't want any strong customary leadership in place. They want puppet councils that they can work with to deal with the logging companies to clear-cut our lands."

Since the early 1990s, Algonquins at Barriere Lake have actively resisted clear-cutting by companies like multinational Abitibi-Bowater on their territory by blockading roads around their reserve.

Such conflict was expected to end after 1991, when the federal and provincial governments signed onto the Trilateral Agreement with the Algonquins. This UN-praised, groundbreaking agreement was an attempt to reconcile continued industrial logging with the environmental and cultural needs of the First Nations community.

To date, neither government has upheld any parts of the agreement, including the deal to share natural resource revenues generated off of the un-ceded Algonquin territory.

In 2006, the Quebec government promised to share \$1.5 million annually with the community, but has stalled on implementing this agreement despite recommendations by two former Quebec Cabinet Ministers: Quebec special representative John Ciaccia and Barriere Lake special representative Clifford Lincoln.

"Right now the government of Quebec is making over \$100 million a year off the territory and the community doesn't get anything," said Matchewan. "We continue to live in poverty in overcrowded homes with no electricity."

The Algonquins of Barriere Lake are one of the smallest and most

impoverished First Nations communities in Canada. Less than half of the homes on a 59-acre reserve are fit to live in, and despite being surrounded by hydroelectric dams, the community remains cut off from the grid.

The entire community runs off one generator, which Matchewan says costs the government millions and often breaks down in the winter.

Central to this animosity over the community's finances is the Quebec City consulting firm Lemieux Nolet, hired to manage the community's dire financial situation.

According to Martin Lukacs, a journalist and member of the Montreal-based Barriere Lake Solidarity group, the firm makes \$200,000 to \$400,000 a year to manage the money the community receives from the government.

"Barriere Lake was already one of the poorest communities in the country, and [now it is] also denied access to any of its own resources because these third party managers get paid [...] from the community's funds," Lukacs said. "So the community has no access to money."

Lukacs says that there are no real enforcement measures to ensure that third party managers like Lemieux Nolet actually bring communities out of deficit—a criticism also made by the Auditor General of Canada in 2004.

"The groups' incomes depend on the community staying in the throes of deficit," Lukacs said. "It's self-reinforcing. So what it actually becomes is a blank cheque."

INAC says it now more closely

monitors the performance of third-party managers.

The latest tactic of the federal government, says Lukacs, has been the invocation of section 74 of the Indian Act with the intent to weaken internal governance and, thus, resistance to a Comprehensive Lands Claim Agreement.

This type of agreement is the standard negotiating policy used by the federal government in cases where no treaty is in place. It requires First Nations to extinguish the title to most of their land as a prerequisite for negotiating over rights to resources, land and self-governance.

"Land use is built into their governance systems," he said. "For that to be destroyed, they'd have a much weaker case in front of the courts in terms of demonstrating their title to the land."

To demonstrate title, you must be able to prove constant and exclusive use of the land before the assertion of crown sovereignty.

Apart from the ever-mounting legal challenge posed by the Comprehensive Land Claims, the Algonquins of Barriere Lake are concerned with preserving their traditional way of life, which includes their customary government.

"The elders are responsible for residing over our leadership selection [...] a process where candidates are selected in a community assembly that's approved by the people," said Matchewan. "It has always been important for my community to select its leaders under the customs because it's a community driven process—not in elections."

For the Algonquins, the land, language and customary governance system they have held onto for hundreds of years are interdependent.

"My community grew up connected to the land," said Matchewan. "It means our survival. Our language has survived for centuries through our continued connection to our territory."

"The main focus of the customary chief and council is protecting the land for future use, for the next generation. So they have a place where they can harvest."

Matchewan said that divisions have emerged in his community over the past two decades due to government interference.

"In 1996 there was a big division," he said. "INAC was supporting one group over the other. They managed to pull it off, to divide the community, which is a sad thing [...] Money gets thrown around to people. It could be money, it could be leadership, power."

But Lukacs says that this time, the federal government went too far with the use of section 74.

"What they inadvertently did was bring people in the community together," he said. "No one wanted to see [the] customary system abolished."

The community plans to take their resistance to Parliament on Dec. 13 with the demand that INAC respect their traditional government and the Trilateral Agreement. They are hoping that citizens from Montreal will join them in support.

"We're a small community," said Matchewan. "We cannot win this battle on our own."

## I'm Not Buying It

### Does 24 Hours Of Nothing Add Up To Something?

• ADAM KOVAC

Most activism is predicated on doing something. Taking to the streets in protest, starting petitions and letter writing campaigns, or simply calling your MP to lodge a complaint, are all actions undertaken every day in the name of a myriad of causes.

However, there is one day of the year when all you have to do to be an activist is—nothing. Since its inception, Buy Nothing Day has been about fighting corporatization by not pulling out your wallet.

Which raises the question: can doing nothing be just as effective as doing something?

#### Activism antics

The first iteration of Buy Nothing Day was held 18 years ago in Vancouver. Shortly thereafter, culture-jamming bible *Adbusters* adopted the concept and moved it to the busiest shopping day of the year—the day after American Thanksgiving. Since then, Buy Nothing Day has spread around the world, embraced by anti-consumerist activists everywhere.

At Concordia, the event was adopted by überculture, a collective who describe themselves on their website as a “group of artists, activists, pranksters, rogue economists, actors, trouble-makers, musicians, writers, culture jammers and creatives working for social change.” Jason Rousseau is one of their volunteers.

“Buy Nothing Day [as it exists now] was started by Adbusters as a reaction to Black Friday, which is basically the day where there is the most consumerism in the States,” he said. “überculture thinks along the same lines, so we thought it would be good to participate in that.”

Though many use BND as a silent protest against everything from unethical business practices to capitalism itself, überculture also uses it as an opportunity to strengthen their community via activities such as the Really Really Free Market, where people can show up and peruse stuff that other people have dropped off—with no price tags involved.

“I think in our society, we’re way too consumerist,” said Rousseau. “Everything has to be bought. It’s really rare that people get together as a community and just do things for each other. That’s why we do the Really Really Free Market.”



GRAPHIC MYRIAM ARSENAULT

Brahm Canzer is a marketing lecturer at Concordia’s John Molson School of Business. He noted that BND is not an event that exists in a vacuum. There is a growing sense of discontentment with the business practices of large corporations, which has culminated in various movements aimed at combating these monoliths.

“You’re getting a backlash in terms of things like bottled water,” he said. “Toronto recently passed a law saying you can’t sell single-serve plastic bottles.”

Concordia students recently fought against the renewal of an exclusivity agreement with PepsiCo., due in part to a desire to rid the campus of bottled water. Though the effort was unsuccessful, such activism has achieved results in the past. But can a single day of not purchasing do the same?

#### Symbolism of stinginess

If you’re hoping that BND is going to miraculously spur a revolution that overthrows the capitalist system and lead to the rising of the proletariat, you might want to set your sights a little lower.

“Behaviour takes a long time to establish itself [...] It’s very difficult to change it,” said Canzer. “You need a lot of effort, a lot more than what these promotional efforts are. [...] The bottom line is that I think shopping and buying behaviour, es-

pecially at this time of year, is pretty much determined by people’s history, comfort level and especially their economic situation, far more than any kind of movement like this.”

The victory claimed by BND’s proponents is not that of David bringing down Goliath, but rather a moral victory; the first step in a larger journey towards a more equitable world.

“If you got everyone in the world to buy nothing, for sure [there would be a major change], but that will probably never happen,” said Rousseau. “I think it’s more of a symbolic gesture, and to think about what else you can do.”

Robyn Maynard is an activist with the anti-capitalist group *Convergence des luttes anticapitalistes 2010*. She stressed that any efforts made by participating in Buy Nothing Day cannot compare to the sustained efforts that come from participating in grassroots activism.

“I’ve never participated,” she said. “I don’t have an objection, but if you want to look at what it takes to stop the basic functioning of capitalism, one day where people buy nothing isn’t enough. It takes so much more than that to do anti-capitalist organizing. I’m not opposed to it, but I think it’s a bit tokenistic if you see that specific act as being fighting capitalism in and of itself. I don’t think it can replace

struggle.”

When seen as a symbolic move, rather than a strategic one, the criticism that many have levied against BND—that it’s a feel-good measure meant to assuage the guilt of those taking part rather than make any lasting change—can fall flat. There is a more serious charge—that the day will alienate those it aims to help. Many of those who suffer the biggest brunt of globalization and corporatization lack the means to be considered consumers. Every day is Buy Nothing Day for them, and it isn’t by choice.

“In a way I find it sort of insulting to people who can’t buy anything at all,” acknowledged Rousseau. “But I guess it’s about what you personally can do to change [things].”

#### Thieving for a cause?

Up until a few years ago, there was a clear divide between the realm of business and the realm of activism. Even with the advent of the Internet, the two were fairly easy to tell apart. However, eventually corporations started co-opting the look and techniques that activism has adopted in the electronic age. It became hard to tell the difference between grassroots movements and artificial “Astroturf” causes, videos that went viral naturally and those that had the backing of a marketing team and plenty of

money. Within that framework, it’s not hard to imagine some enterprising marketing executive thinking of a way to co-opt Buy Nothing Day and turn it into a subversive advertising campaign. Canzer says that such thinking amounts to little but paranoia.

“All businesses are trying to communicate a value to whatever it is they’re selling. Except to say that you’re getting more value from the product I’m selling you than somebody else’s product, either because it’s cheaper or more eco-friendly or something like that [...] It would be counter-productive for a company to tell people not to buy. Even the tobacco industry doesn’t do that.”

Ten years ago, a group of Montreal-based anarchists decided that Buy Nothing Day didn’t go nearly far enough. Instead, they proposed Steal Something Day, which their manifesto said would “promote empowerment by urging us to engage in materially beneficial activities that act as an affront to bourgeois morality. Or something like that.”

“Ethical stealing is a reaction to companies that are abusive in the capitalist market,” said Rousseau, noting that “a lot of chain stores like Wal-Mart [...] have questionable business practices.” Rousseau added that while he thinks the idea is “kinda cool,” he can’t condone stealing from small or local businesses.

Maynard also sees some logic to the idea of Steal Something Day, comparing stealing from large companies to the very practices those companies engage in.

“If you’re looking at disrupting the ways that corporations work, what they’re doing is basically stealing the labour of poor people in the global [market] as well as here, so to actually be stealing from corporations is a bit more of a challenge. So I get the logic behind that,” she said.

#### Easy way in

Risking legal trouble might not be for the faint-hearted but well-meaning activist, though. Which is kind of the point of Buy Nothing Day—it’s a chance to dip your toes into involvement and test the water. Before you take to the streets, waving signs and marching, you can try doing something much easier: you can try doing nothing.



**THE QUEER ISSUE**



GRAPHICS JULIA WOLFE

# Queer Resource Map

thelinknewspaper.ca

november 30, 2010

**Counselling & Development**  
Loyola Campus, AC-103  
Tel: 514-848-2424 ex. 3545  
SGW Campus, H-440  
Tel: 514-848-2424 ex. 3555  
**a Queer Concordia**  
2020 Mackay St., Rm. P102  
queerconcordia@gmail.com

**The Gay and Lesbian Community Centre of Montreal**  
Resources and LGBTQIA social groups. The Open Book Library, a documentation centre on homosexuality in Canada.  
**e** 2075 Plessis St., Room 110  
ccglm.org

**Centre for Gender Advocacy**  
Support group with a focus on harm reduction, empowerment and self-determination.  
**b** 2110 Mackay St.  
Tel: 514-848-2424 ex. 7431  
e-mail: centre2110@gmail.com

**Gay Chamber of Commerce of Quebec**  
249-302, St. Jacques St., Lachine, QC H8R 1E2  
Tel: 514-522-1885  
**f** 1-888-595-8110  
ccgq.ca

**Centre de solidarité lesbienne**  
Lesbian Social and support organization that aims to provide community and friendship.  
**c** 4126 St. Denis. St., Ste. 301  
Tel: 514-526-2452  
solidaritelesbienne.qc.ca

**Head and Hands**  
Provides preventative and non-judgmental help to youth.  
**g** 5833 Sherbrooke St. W.  
Tel: 514-481-0277  
Hours: Mon. to Thurs.: 10:00 a.m. to 9:30 p.m. Fri.: 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. headandhands.ca

**Queerline**  
English-language support and referral line run by Queer McGill at McGill University  
**d** Hours: Mon. to Sat.: 8:00 p.m. to 11:00 p.m., Sept. to April  
Tel: 514-398-6822  
queermcgill.ca/ql/

**Project 10**  
Community organization that of support to LGBTQIA youth between the age of 14 to 25.  
**h** 2000 Northcliffe Ave., suite 218  
Tel: 514-989-4585  
E-mail: projet10@p10.qc.ca p10.qc.ca

## the Queer low

### PARTY/ DANCE

**The Link's Queer Issue Party**  
Share some conversation and drinks. Expand your mind with some slam poets and lecturers. Bring Your Own Orientation!  
\$: FREE **Place:** Burritoville **Date:** Friday, Dec. 3, 7:00 p.m. to 11:00 p.m.

### ART

**Peggy Faye Photography Vernissage**  
Solo exposition by Peggy Faye.  
\$: FREE **Place:** La Galerie l'Espace Contemporain (5175 Papineau Ave., corner Laurier Ave.) **Date:** Dec. 3, 5:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.

### HEALTH

**FREE Rapid HIV Testing Clinic**  
Don't assume, get tested. Head and Hands is hosting its first rapid HIV testing clinic on World AIDS day. Rapid testing allows people to get results in approximately 10 minutes. (Aged 12-25)  
\$: FREE **Place:** 5833 Sherbrooke St. W. **Date:** Dec. 1, 5:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.

### MUSIC

**Mad June**  
**Place:** Bar le Café Chaos (2031 St. Denis St.) **Date:** Dec. 10, 9:00 p.m.

### UP YOURS

DJs Laissez Faire, Don de Dieu, Salvation Army—Proceeds go to Project 10.  
\$: PWYC (Suggested donation: \$5) **Place:** Playhouse (5656 Ave. du Parc) **Date:** Dec. 3, 11:00 p.m. to 3:00 a.m.

### HOLIDAYS

**Tits the Season 2...Be Naughtier!**  
Jingle your balls and knock your stockings off with a show including holiday classics such as Mary's Boytoy, and Jingle Bell Cock. Fundraiser for ASTT(e)Q, Head and Hands. Dance party follows.  
\$: \$16/ \$14 with food donation **Place:** Café Cléopâtre (1230 St. Laurent Blvd.) **Date:** Dec. 9, 10 and 11, 8:30 p.m. to 3:00 a.m.

### SUPPORT THE QUEER COMMUNITY

**Meow Mix**  
nomorepotluck.org benefit, showcasing some rad DJs that'll make you dance your pants off.  
\$: \$10 cover **Place:** Sala Rossa, 4848 St. Laurent Blvd. **Date:** Dec. 4 and 5, 9:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m.





*"And then, a transformation occurs. Proof, that two bodies, total opposites, can become one—if we truly will it to be so. The paragon of potential. Everything is possible. This is where we came from. This is where we are going. Say yes."*

—**Johnston Newfield**

# Free To Be

We understand that every issue is unique as it pertains to our chosen identity, our gender, our spirituality and the ways in which we express ourselves.

We recognize that millions of people don't identify with the gender they were born into or the sexual roles society expects them to fill.

We know that imposing difference on people is wrong, but we also know that, after being labeled as being queer or gay or just "different," it can be empowering to now make and reclaim your own labels.

So who is a queer? What makes someone queer? What does queer even mean?

These are questions that came up when putting this issue together. Queer has been a highly contested term for ages and now, through different mediums of expression, light has been shed on what, exactly, it means—or, in some cases, doesn't mean.

Just as anyone is uncomfortable with being labeled, we were uncomfortable with labeling. In fact, we weren't even sure we wanted to put the word "Queer" on the cover. Perhaps we're all a little bit queer in one way or another, but this year we want to move away from the stringent labels and put our focus on those who have devoted their lives to celebrating their true selves.

We spoke to Jillian Page, long-time copy editor for *The Gazette*, about her womanly transition. We spoke to Concordia visual artist Johnston Newfield about his self-exploratory artistic endeavours and the new term he's added to the LGBT-verse—TRANSformation. We spoke to students who are passionately involved in creating insight by studying societal views on body hair. We spoke to a LGBT Native Canadian about Two-spiritedness and Native sexuality.

Surely, identity, gender and sexuality issues have evolved, expanded, transformed and weaved their way into academia, politics and everyday life. However, there are still obstacles to be confronted and people to be heard. We hope you can hear them loud and clear in this issue.

We wanted to look at the issue from a point of view of transformation and we want our content to create and further the discussion. Awareness is the first step.

This issue is about sexuality, identity and gender. It is about rebelling against what is expected of you and following your heart to your true self.

We hope that 2011 will open up a new understanding about queer issues and we hope that you and the people you know continue to define yourselves through whatever means are available to you. You are free to be...you.

—*Ashley Opheim and Clay Hemmerich,*  
*Fringe Arts Editor and Opinions Editor*

# Jillian Page: A Liberated Woman

## Gazette Copy Editor Breaks Boundaries

• LAURA BEESTON

Jillian Page is a Male to Female Montreal trailblazer.

Actually, let's rephrase that: she's a fierce, female pioneer at this point.

A copy editor at *The Gazette* for nearly 40 years, Page's blog, Patent Pending, was the first of its kind in Montreal, when it came into being at the beginning of her transition, from Bill to Jill, in 2008.

Mapping her personal journey through the world of transgenderism with humour and style, while also addressing trans issues on a local, national and international level, Page has become a leading LGBT voice on the issues that matter.

### Have you always been sensitive to how journalists and the media report on gender issues?

I really only became aware of how newspapers were dealing with transgender issues about 10 years ago, as I was finding my way through the wide world of transgenderism. What I noticed immediately is that newspapers didn't know much about the subject or the terminology. They didn't know the difference between a drag queen, a cross-dresser and a transsexual, for example. And they didn't know how to deal with pronouns.

Newspapers have made some improvements in the last few years; there is more awareness. Unfortunately, they are not all up to speed. I see this mainly as the fault of copy editors, unfortunately, who don't take the time to educate themselves on this subject.

Yes, workplaces are largely genderless institutions. And, as a Theosophist, I believe that the spirit is also basically genderless, but capable of expressing itself in multi-gender fashions.

### Can you tell me about gender parity in the real world?

It is important to remember that the public views me as a woman, just one of 3.5 billion females on the planet. I am treated as a woman wherever I go: men hold doors open for me, men flirt with me, store clerks call me "madame," etc. Would I receive the same reception in public if people viewed me as a transgender person instead of as a woman? I'm not sure, but I doubt it.

Transgender people walk a more difficult path. We transitioners tend to ride off into the sunset and blend in, while transgender people tend to stand out. Transgender people often live dual lives—for example, as women on the weekend, as men during the workweek.

I lived that dual existence for a long time, and there came a point where I couldn't do it anymore. I felt like I was lying to everyone I knew, and to the world around me. I had to come out and be one person—or die. It really did get to that point: do or die.

### How did your blog originally emerge?

[My blog] came into being when the executive editor at the time, Andrew Phillips, asked me to write about my transition. I didn't feel that the blog should be all about me and I saw it as a golden opportunity to raise some trans awareness.

I wrote about [*L.A. Times* columnist] Christine Daniels in my first blog item, as she was an inspiration for me and many other transitioning people. Her coming-out column was syndicated to newspapers all over the world. It was a brave piece, and I was very impressed by the reception she received.

I felt if Christine could come out to the world and be accepted, there was nothing preventing me from doing the same. Again, my paper showed a lot of class in the way they handled the Daniels piece, and they showed me the same class when it was my turn, with only a few individual exceptions.

And, you know, there are always going to be a few people who refuse to accept the transitioning individual. That's life.

### You wrote in early posts about the "excruciating objectivity as a journalist." Objectivity is something we learn the first day of Journalism 101. What are your thoughts about it? I'm also wondering if there's anything you've also discovered about the subjective "self" in the business of journalism?

I am fortunate I can be both objective and subjective with my blog. The goal was to give my personal subjective views of my transition, as well as do some objective writing about transgenderism—but both always from an "everyday people" point of view. [...]

As I said in the first post of my blog: I am nothing special, just one of many transitioning people trying to find their way. I guess my blog is something of a rarity for the newspaper business, and I am honoured that people read it and take the time to comment.

The experiences shared by my readers are very important to this blog. Without their feedback, there would be no blog. I made that clear from the outset: this was also to be a forum for all trans people who wished to participate, and each person who participates is helping to raise trans awareness.

### How do you believe the media handles LGBT issues?

I think mainstream newspapers in Canada are treating LGBT issues with more respect now than ever before. Are they "queer-friendly?" Well, first, I doubt any mainstream papers would use the term "queer" unless it is in a direct quote. But I do think they are LGBT friendly. I am proud of the coverage my paper gives, particularly to the Gay Pride parade in Montreal.



GRAPHIC DAVID BARLOW-KRELINA

This year, we ran a big feature on some trans people, along with a sidebar on trans terminology and such.

### While having had a "male" perspective or standpoint on the issues, how have both types of gender insight influence how you view the world?

I'm not sure how much of a male perspective I ever had, because I was never much of a male. First and foremost, I have always been a very spiritual person. I have always viewed the world first through spiritual eyes. Some things don't change much when we transition.

However, I do have a more rounded view of the world now because I do have a better grasp on both the male and female experiences. Again, I apply this to my spirituality.

I had been warned before I transitioned that I would lose the "male privilege" I supposedly enjoyed. Not true. I haven't lost any so-called "privilege." Then again, I am well-established in a field that treats people equally. It might have been very different if I had transitioned at the age of 20 instead of at the age of 20-something-plus-a-few-decades.

And I have learned about emotions. I must admit that I had a very middle-path attitude before. I suppressed my emotions. Well, there is no suppressing emotion when you are taking high doses of estrogen. I am not afraid to cry any more.

### Can you comment about the strides society still needs towards LBQ and trans tolerance? What do you believe is the

### biggest misrepresentation out there today about the trans community?

I think that while the Internet has done a lot to further the cause of transgenderism, there are some negative things happening on the Net, too, which give bad, incorrect stereotypical images of trans people, such as "shemales."

Unfortunately, too many people think of "shemales" when they hear the word transgender. Or "chicks with dicks."

Then there is the "tranny" terminology used by so many trans people in reference to themselves. They don't understand that it is a defamatory and dehumanizing term, and it is hurting all trans people.

### Could you share some tips for people who—for whatever reason—aren't confident in themselves?

I AM a woman. I felt that I was a woman before I transitioned, but now it is official. The reality, though, is that I was a woman before—trapped in a not-so-male body. This is about liberation, and I am a liberated woman. [...] There is freedom to be myself in daily presentation. [...]

[In terms of] my advice to others: Just do it, if you feel you must. Put on a smile, and go out and embrace the world. That smile is really important. If you exude confidence, people will sense it and accept you, no matter your shape or size.

Check out Jill's blog, Patent Pending, at *The Gazette*. For the full transcript of this interview, go to [thelinknewspaper.ca](http://thelinknewspaper.ca)

# Two-Spirit

## A Look into Aboriginal Queer Issues



GRAPHIC JULIA WOLFE

### • ASHLEY OPHEIM

'Two-spirit' is a recently recovered term revisited by Aboriginal communities to draw together the cultural, sexual, spiritual and historical aspects of their identity. The term refers to Aboriginal individuals who identify with both—or neither—gender.

Historically, many Aboriginal tribes, rather than stigmatizing Two-spirited persons, looked to them as leaders and as beneficial to their tribe communities, since they held both masculine and feminine traits. Two-spirited persons could do both the work of men and of women and slip into, between, along and through gender roles.

Most Aboriginal tribes held intersexes, androgyny and feminine-males and masculine-females in high respect. In fact, to be a Two-spirit was considered a spiritual gift.

However, as a result of the residential school system in Canada, which sought to destroy Aboriginal culture, Two-spirited individuals now have to uncover, re-discover and re-appropriate the term into their identities and their culture.

### Re-Claiming history

In the past, feminine-males were referred to as "berdache" by early French explorers in North America, a term that implies a male prostitute and was widely considered offensive.

As homophobic European Christian influences increased within the Americas in the late 20th century, respect for same-sex love and androgynous persons greatly declined. Two-spirited people were often forced—either by government officials, Christian missionaries or their own community—to conform to gender roles as a result.

The residential school system was designed to strip Aboriginal youth of their language, spirituality and any other connections to their culture, community and family.

Gil Lerat, a counsellor from the Two-Spirited Youth Program in Vancouver, said that "the religious dogma

of the residential schools have erased a proud and rich history of Two-spirit people in most Aboriginal communities."

This, as Michelle Cameron, author of *Two-Spirited Aboriginal People: Continuing Cultural Appropriation by Non-Aboriginal Society*, points out, is an unacknowledged side-effect of the horrific abuse many Aboriginal children encountered in the residential school system, including the separation of male from female children or vice versa.

"Heterosexist and homophobic thought have permeated the teachings of some of our Elders due to the imposition of Christian values imposed on them in the residential schools," wrote Cameron. "Decolonizing our collective minds includes an honest acknowledgement of the way things were, and of the valued place two-spirited people should have in our communities."

Traditionally, Aboriginal sexuality is based on three—but up to six—different gender variants.

"Two-Spirited Aboriginals do not subscribe to or neatly fit into the Western dichotomies of human sexuality. We are either/or; we are neither/nor," wrote Cameron.

"Rather than dividing the world into female and male [...] we distinguish between what is animate and what is inanimate," Alex Wilson explained in her essay *NTacimowin Innan Nah: A Coming In Stories*. Wilson is a leading voice in Two-spirit issues, and comes from the Opaskwayak Cree Nation several hours north of Winnipeg.

Use of berdache was replaced with Two-spirit, a term originating in Winnipeg, Manitoba during the third annual intertribal Native American/First Nations gay and lesbian conference in 1990. The newer version of the term was meant as a self-descriptor for LGBT Aboriginal people.

It was chosen to distinguish Aboriginal people from non-Aboriginals, as well as liberate themselves from words like berdache and to reclaim a cultural queerness that was uniquely theirs.

### Keeping the term true to its context

"Because the term itself covers a wide range of understandings, there are a number of 'definitions' of what Two-spirited means. For example, originally the term was used to describe biracial people (people with both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal ancestry)," said Wilson.

"One misconception today is that it means someone is part male/part female," continued Wilson. "While some Two-spirit people may identify as transgendered or intersexed, I would say that this is a major misconception and also a big part of why many people who formerly identified as Two-spirit are no longer identifying that way."

Wilson said that an important thing to note is the presence of the word "two" in the hybrid word. "Because there is the 'two' in the term, people make the assumption that the two refers to male as one and female as the other, or vice versa," said Wilson. "In my view the 'two' refers to a range of possibilities, such as being in a doorway and being able to see both rooms because of perspective [which has nothing to do with gender]."

Typically, as Michelle Cameron pointed out in *Two-Spirited Aboriginal People*, Two-spirited Aboriginals have been oppressed by the act of being categorically grouped with terms such as bisexual or transsexual.

Cameron also mentioned that Two-spiritedness tends to "fall between the cracks in academic curriculum" and that university courses do not adequately cover the concept in LGBTQ content. This, in turn, adds to a lack of general knowledge in the queer and community at large, adding to the issue of non-Aboriginals incorrectly appropriating the term.

Cameron said that there is an emerging trend of non-Aboriginals to self-label as Two-spirited. This is problematic, she argues.

"The term Two-spirit has a specific cultural context," wrote Cameron, "and removing it from that context simply because one likes the

meaning of it is an act of colonization and must be resisted."

By many academics, to be a Two-spirit is considered a spiritual gift, but for Wilson, this is considered an idealized notion of the term in relation to one's identity.

"[Aboriginal queer issues have] been internalized by some Aboriginal people, so I think it can be dangerous to assert [romanticized ideals of Two-spiritness] because Aboriginal LGBT youth have the highest suicide rates, so it does not reflect the reality of most queer Aboriginal youth." Suicide rates for Aboriginal youth in Canada are currently five to seven times higher than for non-Aboriginal youth.

### Coming into oneself

"In Winnipeg, in the Aboriginal community, I would say that most people have heard the term and use it comfortably to refer to queer Aboriginal people," said Wilson. "In my home community, Opaswayak Cree Nation, I would estimate that many younger folks have heard the term and educated folks have heard the term and use it. In Saskatoon and in the academic community, I would say it really depends."

The term and its cultural importance is still an emerging phenomenon in most communities.

"Some First Nations are extremely homophobic," said Wilson. "In places where there are less Aboriginal people, for example Toronto, the understanding of Two-spirit is very romanticized and idealized. [The term] tends to be more academic."

Wilson began using the term in the '90s when it first came about. "I originally liked the term because to me it meant more than just LGBT—it had a spiritual and cultural component to it."

For the Two-spirited, it is about "coming into yourself" as opposed to just "coming out."

"Two-spirit identity is one that reflects Aboriginal peoples' process of 'coming in' to an empowered identity that integrates their sexuality, culture, gender and all other aspects of who they understand and know themselves to be," wrote Wilson.

However, although the term does reject Western values, it does not exist for that purpose. "It's more about recognizing and validating a Cree or Indigenous worldview," said Wilson.

The residential school system forced Aboriginal children "out" of their culture and personal identities. It is integral for terms like Two-spirit and other Aboriginal-specific terms be present in the everyday language of communities so there can be a "coming into oneself."

In order for this to happen, knowledge is key. In order for understanding to occur, Two-spirit individuals must continue to inform themselves and the world around them about sexuality issues that are unique to Aboriginal history, culture and identity.



# Femme 'Stache

## New 'Zine Will Put Hair on Your Lady Chest

• JULIA JONES

Two Concordia Sexuality Studies students are throwing away the razor to express their own ideas on facial hair and launching 'Stache in January, a magazine studying how facial and body hair represent gender presentation, identity and sexuality.

Mitra Kaboli, co-creator of the 'zine, said the content will be based completely on submissions, anonymous or not, which they are accepting until Dec. 17.

"We are taking in anything that could be put into print form," said Kaboli.

Photos, comics, sketches, essays, fiction, prose, poetry or any kind of art that can be put into print form is fair game.

"So long as it relates to body hair—and more specifically, but not completely exclusively, facial hair," she added.

'Stache is meant to be a space

for discussing bigger issues of gender and sexuality by challenging one specific aspect of the two—facial hair.

"[It relates to] all these different ways of experiencing facial hair and body hair in one's sexuality, in one's presentation [and] in the way people relate to or talk to them," said Kate Killoran, the other force behind the project. "Something so small like a mustache can completely change your experience."

It was because of personal experience that both organizers endeavoured to start 'Stache.

"For me, this was the beginning of a discussion that I haven't even had with myself," said Killoran. "The reason why I wanted to do this was because I am queer and I'd go to parties and sometimes I'd put on a mustache and it would make me feel very different about myself and my sexuality."

The idea that body hair belongs in the masculine realm is one of the themes these girls want to talk about in 'Stache.

"We, in our society, view body and facial hair as a masculine thing—like

Movember is this hyper-masculine thing," said Killoran. "People who identify with femininity and things like that are told that they can't have that, but I don't think that's necessarily true. There is no reason why you can't be feminine and have body hair."

But the 'zine is not only about women redefining the mustache; it is also about people's freedom of choosing how to handle their body hair.

"When I see women who confidently rock their hair, I'm like, 'That's amazing, I wish I could do that,'" said Kaboli. "But I don't feel awesome with a mustache. Absolutely not. There is something ingrained in me that tells me I can't. And that's o.k., that's totally o.k. I own that."

With no prejudice, 'Stache is a place to talk about those feelings of insecurity, as well.

"Facial hair is not always an empowering experience for everyone, definitely not," she said.

So if you have a love-hate relationship with hair and want to get it off your chest, don't sit there with curlers in your hair. Join the dialogue.

Send questions, comments, concerns and submissions to [stachezine@gmail.com](mailto:stachezine@gmail.com)



GRAPHIC  
SEBASTIEN CADIEUX

## The UN Turns a Blind Eye on Queer Rights

• DIEGO PELAEZ GAETZ

The issue of confronting international homophobia is a tough one to get my head around. The first response is irrational anger.

Why did the UN refuse to stand up for the rights of LGBT citizens? Why was it even put up for a vote? Why even leave the possibility open that vicious, primate prejudices could result in the senseless murder of defenseless citizens across the globe?

It's easy to then paint the organization as a cowardly, ball-less, impotent bunch of political glad-handers who have callously turned their back on some of the most vulnerable populations worldwide.

Seeing the famous photo of two Iranian teenagers—suspected of being gay—publicly executed could easily bring out a vitriolic, stream-of-consciousness, tear-stained manifesto to the callousness of the larger world and the inevitability of a cannibalistic, apocalyptic end-game scenario for humankind.

But this, of course, is a rather juvenile instinct. I can't rant away senseless hatred—as hard as I may try. The UN is not an evil puppet organization for homophobic murderers.

"Primitive" perfectly describes the problems faced by a group such as the UN who are forcing unrecep-

tive countries to adopt measures that are in direct contradiction to institutionalized ideals. On the surface, these prejudices embody everything that is wrong with Western-centric nation building in the third world.

The UN is, after all, a democratic organization. Democracy, above all else, is to blame for LGBT persons being excluded from the UN's list of groups protected in an amendment to prevent arbitrary executions.

Of course, this view is oversimplified as well. But there is a kernel of truth to it. Democracy is now normatively neutral. Any positive values attributed to the idea have vanished in the face of the 50 per cent plus one doctrine. Any idea is only as "good" as the percentage of people that support it.

Politicians have not provided any sort of moral compass on most social issues—especially the ones that don't poll so well. They're happy enough to let the all-encompassing 50 per cent doctrine justify any sort of backwards implementation of policing the public—or, more precisely, a majority of the voting public, closer to 25 per cent of the population in most Western democracies—agree, or are convinced, are desirable.

Of course, the implications of this idea for LGBT identified people worldwide is certainly worrisome. In our own supposedly enlightened Western democracy, with all those

good, wholesome values that we cherish, allowing gay people to marry is still considered a "controversial issue."

Gay bashing is not exactly tolerated, but it's always around the corner. Most every idealized future or television show we are sold treats queer people as sort of a benign yet undesirable eccentricity. We accept them, but you probably don't want anyone thinking that you're gay (one of the easiest and most distasteful sitcom memes ever), and 'normal' people still have families and babies, or ultimately want families and babies.

Even the most visible religious leader in the Western world—Pope I-wish-John-Paul-was-alive Benedict—recently suggested that AIDS is only a significant problem in the gay community. And not just the gay community—the male, gay prostitute community.

You get the idea: if I identified as L, G, B or T, I wouldn't count on the magnanimity of the greater (voting) population to ensure my basic human rights were respected.

And I certainly couldn't count on the UN. They should have made the "unpopular" decision to unilaterally ensure that gay people aren't rounded up and killed in too many parts of the world.

But democracy has spoken. And we have to listen.

## Book Review: Krakow Melt



• ALEX MANLEY

Set in Poland in the late '90s, *Krakow Melt* is the story of Radek and Dorota, two counter-culture art snobs with a little bit of revolution in their blood, or in Radek's case, a little bit of revolution in his nail polish.

Wherever Radek goes, he is pegged as a gay man and harassed, threatened and attacked for being one. Ironic, then, that at a gay solidarity march, his supposed queer peers are the ones taking issue with Dorota's sexuality. The conversation goes like this:

"I know what you guys are up to," Tomek said, motioning to Dorota, "and there is concern that this is causing division in the community."

I hoped I had misunderstood his slant. He pulled me aside, away from Dorota.

"Your friend is straight," he continued. "Have you ever thought about how this makes some of us feel? And what do you think she's really after?"

This sort of bullshit is familiar to Radek, because it's pretty similar to the attitude he faces from the rest of society on a daily basis—even though he spends most of the story in a relationship with Dorota, since he is, in fact, bisexual.

Since that sort of discrimination originates from an unfamiliarity with differing lifestyles, it's hardly surprising that this unfamiliarity would lead to confused judgments. Daniel Allen Cox, the author, noted that this sort of mistaken discrimination was par for the course.

"I think the idea is to be resilient and comfortable in your sexuality, knowing that people are going to peg you however they want, and will often get it wrong no matter what you tell them," said Cox.

Cox, who is gay, admitted that his choice of a bi-gendered couple as protagonists was not purely politically motivated.

"My stories always hold me hostage and demand to be told," he said. "They break into my room at night with a gun."

Still, he "wanted to show that allies are important to any human rights movement."

"When I recently spoke at Columbia College Chicago for National Coming Out Day, I was blown away by the number of queer allies in the room and the warmth and love they channelled into an amazing force for change."

On the other hand, Cox remains wary about becoming self-satisfied with progress towards equality and acceptance. At the end of *Krakow Melt*, things are very much as in turmoil as they were at the beginning. For all its manic energy, in the grand scheme, little has changed.

"I think we have to monitor [our] attitudes especially closely when we feel we have reached a position of safety, because complacency has a tendency to blind people. And it's no time to be complacent."

# TRANSformation



ART JOHNSTON NEWFIELD FROM { YES }

## Johnston Newfield Discusses Art, Sexuality, Identity

• **ASHLEY OPHEIM**

The freedom to express, the freedom to know oneself and the freedom to communicate with and educate one another—this is what it's all about.

Section 2(b) of our Charter of Rights and Freedoms states that everyone has the right to the freedom of thought, belief, opinion and expression. This freedom promotes unique societal values, individual self-fulfillment, a means of attaining the truth and a balance of stability and change.

Johnston Newfield is a Montreal-based visual artist who explores themes of gender, identity, spirituality and TRANSformation. There is a cohesive entanglement of all these forces that play out in Johnston's hyper-visual world of symbolism and colour.

For Johnston, the act of creating artworks is a way to express emotions, desires and the subconscious mind in its purity—a way to open up a space for people to contemplate, discuss and ponder issues that emerge in Johnston's works.

The freedom to express is a freedom to TRANSform.

**The Link: When did you come out as trans? Could you talk about that process a bit?**

*Johnston Newfield:* Coming out as trans has been an incredibly revelatory and freeing process for me—it really has opened my eyes about myself and my work. But first, to explain a little, trans is an umbrella category that refers to many different groups of people. I personally identify more specifically as what is academically termed “transgendered,” in that I do not define myself as either a man or a woman. Realizing this, and coming to terms with this, has allowed me to become

more myself in a short period of time than I ever thought possible. This has also allowed my art to blossom. Knowing myself and accepting myself in this way has taken me in a great new direction with my work. That being said, it's still an ongoing process, my TRANSformation. Hopefully, it becomes fairly apparent in a lot of my pieces that this change is occurring.

**What makes your work characteristic of you?**

Right now, my work is heavily characterized by gender, identity and spirituality. Symbolism plays a heavy role in my work—I pathologically avoid the didactic.

**I notice you tend to use extremely bright and loud colours in your work—what is the artistic gesture behind this?**

Bright colours represent an array of memories and ideals to me, but especially the ideas of elation, pride and creation. In the alternate reality in which I imagine a lot of my work existing and taking place, these colours represent rebirth, the recreation of myself.

**Your works also feel very, very spiritual, almost cosmically enlightened. What is it about a higher power that intrigues you?**

Through my work, I have discovered my own personal spirituality. Gender, identity, and spirituality are also inseparably intertwined. To know myself, to accept and love myself, to try to show that to others, to lead by example, and love them all as well, this is what spirituality is all about for me. Art is my medium for doing this. As long as the act of creation continues to fascinate me in the way it does, art will always be

my spiritual expression.

**Is art a medium for self-exploration?**

I firmly believe in the transformative power of art and the chosen identity, of our innate ability to become something we once were not. Art is the vehicle. I don't really believe people can learn that much about art by simply looking at it; they have to be making art as well to really learn and benefit. In this way, I often learn more about myself, often in retrospect, from the process of art making and analyzing after completion than I do from anything else.

**“Sexuality is how you express your love to others—identity is how you express your love to yourself.”**

—*Johnston Newfield, artist*

**Tell me a bit about your aesthetic: Why you choose to do the things you do?**

My practice began in the tradition of print media, almost exclusively screen-printing, but has quickly moved beyond that. My philosophy surrounding art is much the same as my philosophy surrounding gender: no boundaries. If a piece needs to be 3D to work, then I'll make it 3D; if it needs a drawing, digitally altered, covered in paint, plastered to a piece of wood, with a projection over top of it, then that's what I'll do.

**How does that reflect notions of identity and sexuality?**

Identity is also a constantly changing and many-faceted reality.

Identity is not contained in one aspect of our bodies or our mind: it is a combination of different identifiers for people (gender, race, sexuality, age, class, size, heritage) and art provides a medium to express how people interact with their own fluid relationships with these factors. It can be all or none of these things at once. And it can certainly appear contradictory. But identity is not formed by a pre-prescribed reality; we make our own realities through our chosen identity.

**Are identity and sexuality separate ideals?**

Identity and sexuality are very different ideals in my mind. Sexuality is how you express your love to others—identity is how you express your love to yourself. Regardless of what gender or biological sex of people I choose to have sex with, my identity remains separate, unaffected. If I choose to be a woman, or like in my own personal case to not identify as any gender at all, I do this in awareness of but not ruled by my sexuality.

**Is it possible to separate yourself from your artworks?**

I feel a very strong tie to my artwork; it feels as real, as much a representation of myself as my own body. I do not think I could ever separate myself from my art, but if my physical body and my art were to be separated, I would choose to side with my art.

**What are your thoughts on gender roles?**

I believe that gender roles are inherently oppressive—as do many others—and I want others to know that they can act, dress, speak, fuck and do whatever and whoever they want, regardless of their biological sex organs.

# Our Identities Unfolded

## Drag Queen Bares All

• ANTONIO BAVARRO

While Business students have been pushing their pencils getting ready for finals a floor below, the final result of a three-month-long creation and rehearsal period came to fruition on stage in a virgin performance spectacle.

Concordia's Theatre and Development team presented WHO/NANI QUI, an "identity construction show," to sold-out audiences on the 7th floor of the John Molson School of Business building Nov. 22 to 28. It was the first official production in the MB building.

Exploring issues of gender, race, sexuality and other aspects of queer culture, students (myself included) danced up a storm alongside guest artists from le Collectif Moyo, a Congolese theatre, music and dance troupe.

We've been workshoping this specific English, French and Lingala creation since September of this year. After the emotionally challenging subject matter, it seems now that there is a performing art community within the often-cold feel of Concordia's SGW campus.

We share the hallway with the Contemporary Dance department, and use the whole 7th floor as a warm-up space, a box office, a cafe and a place to tell stories in the hallways. It has been an interesting experience as a performer in sharing

this new space with the audience and schoolmates alike.

The prolific director and part-time Concordia instructor, Rachael Van Fossen, solidified this multi-purpose student-space.

What was WHO/NANI QUI like? It had a bit of everything. Half of the cast talked of faking heterosexual orgasms, reenacted rapes and gay-bashings, danced the tango and lived an African village through song.

The other half of the cast joined the audience, sporting and performing through handmade puppets. The puppets served as comedic relief and provided a poignant look into the role of an audience

With fire regulations limiting our capacity to 60 people, the room was basically half cast and half audience. The set design was simple, clean and warm, with audience members surrounding it on both sides. As you can imagine, this staging forced both performers and spectators to interact in new ways—to reflect on how we see each other and ourselves. With a cast and crew with such varying and rich identities, you can imagine how intimate and powerful the piece felt.

As for me, well, I'm a pretty well-known killer performer and drag queen, Connie Lingua. I've been tranny-ing it up for the past eight years back home in Alberta and now in Montreal. I can tell you that I definitely am not your average gender illusionist...or so I thought. Within the



show, I was confronted with an experience that made me view my identity in a new way.

When we are confronted with our other selves, we realize that everyone considers themselves an other, but the important thing is to talk to each other and really talk about what matters: each other.

Whatever Connie Wants became the title of my vignette, as Connie and Antonio danced a Tango around issues of gender roles and taboos, with some varying emotional effects upon myself and the person playing me, her and I.

I've been performing onstage in drag and out of drag, and every night it is different and engaging. This has been the most rewarding and chal-

lenging theatre piece I have ever dealt with. Connie will never be the same.

During this stage of my life, I don't really know what to do with my drag super-heroine. Balancing school, a theatre career and a drag queen's professional social life is much more difficult and even more dramatic than you think. But I look at Connie onstage, I see how people follow her and crave her to be that embodiment of the female divine. How much we all crave to be that strong, vivacious vixen whose attitude can raise a man to his feet and also knock him to his knees.

I guess Connie Lingua will always be a part of me, and I'm ok with that now.

## How to Build a Fire

### Queer Performance Artists Ensure All Stories Get Told

• CLAY HEMMERICH

Montreal and Brooklyn Queer performers are connecting and collaborating to go "beyond thinking outside the box," as Jordan Arsenaault, a Montreal-based drag star and workshop host, puts it.

Arsenaault, along with Brooklyn-based creative production alliance Boxcutter, and Montreal artists Laura MacDonald, Antonio Bavarro and Andrea Joy Rideout are organizing a series of free, community-based performance workshops open to the general public on Jan. 7 and 8 called How to Build a Fire: A Queer Sans Fin Convergence.

Bavarro, co-organizer of the event, said that free child care and special attention to those who may not feel included in the art making of the Concordia student community will be offered.

"Community-based art is a casual term for a performance art that is concerned with social and ethical motivations," said Arsenaault, who is hosting an interactive workshop called Fear Drag.

"We're rallying together to make sure that, as queers, we are getting together to talk about what performance means to us and what stories we need to perform," said

Bavarro. "The basis of performance is storytelling, and we have some really vital and important stories within the queer community that, unfortunately, don't often get told."

According to Bavarro, Queer art is often misconstrued because the queer community is still viewed as a white-male-centric environment is an indication of which stories are being told. There's more to it than that. Queer stories are boundless.

"Queer art-making is often related to cabaret, entertainment-style performance that starts after 10 p.m. and takes place at a bar," said Arsenaault. "There is something to be said that isn't situated in the context of entertainment. There is a very rich history [of performance art] that is often overlooked because [performance artists] don't usually have the resources to put a lot of money to planning a show that might not be commercially viable."

The risk and preparation of a theatre performance is a heavy burden even for those who have the time and money for it. Creating performance art is, at first-sight, intimidating. However, once one is exposed to the many mediums of theatre, the earth becomes a stage.

"[Performance art] doesn't have to be huge scale operations like Operas and productions a la Places des Arts," said Bavarro. "There are different avenues available for people to explore theatre."

Arsenaault said his workshop is "extremely outside the tradition of typical theatre where you have to trick yourself, as a spectator, to believing what's happening onstage is real. There is no need to create an illusionistic state, but you can if you want to."

He explained how different variations of queer art exist outside of the typical theatre setting: "Anything from family trauma, to food addiction, to sex addiction, to loneliness can be examined as a spectator and as a performer without having to make up a story, memorize lines and have props," said Arsenaault.

As an example of how performance-art can be created without a typical stage, Arsenaault reflected on Jessica MacCormick's 2005 performance art piece, *Hold My Hand*, which involved her going to a town where she didn't know anyone, placing an advertisement in the newspaper that asked someone to hold her hand on a bench and then seeing what the ad would prompt.

MacCormick said in her blog that the act was an "undocumented 'performance of self' [that] highlighted the awkwardness of social contact and physical communication while challenging notions of authentic interaction."

Arsenaault explained that many Queer theorists lump Queer culture and art as a performance of sexual otherness. Those who define themselves as queer are defined by their sexual identity from people outside their community. To Bavarro and Arsenaault, being queer isn't just about sexual orientation, there's more to it than that.

"A need to identify ourselves is imposed by hetero-normative norms like family, gender and wealth," said Arsenaault.

According to Bavarro, performance is the easiest and most fun way of getting people to be able to access stories that reflect on the true image of the queer community.

"I think the queer community can have a connection and a sense of togetherness in its performance base," said Bavarro. "[The event's aim is to] make sure that all queer stories get told."

## A Very Fringe Holiday

### A Corporate Free Gift Giving Guide

• ASHLEY OPHEIM

Hopefully we have reached a time in human consciousness where we understand that Christmas, as it exists in most households, is a big, corporate scam.

I'm surprised that the illusion of Christmas didn't die when we found out that Santa Claus didn't exist. I remember catching my dad hauling up presents from down stairs as

I snuck down to hopefully catch a glimpse of Santa chowing down on some cookies and some 2% milk.

I ran upstairs and had the strangest experience. My childhood was over; my naïve, imaginative youth was destroyed.

I feel a similar way towards the holidays this year, but in a different sense—in a sort of “why do I give into Christmas every year?” or “I can't afford to do this anymore” type of

way.

I come from a family where gift-giving is a, well, given every year. Not that I don't like giving—don't get me wrong—but perhaps it's more the concept of giving into the corporate nightmare of buying gifts and adding to the preposterous economy of places like Wal-Mart, Home Outfitters, Future Shop, Toys 'R Us or Zellers.

I'm not advocating a boycott of holiday spirit; however, if you're going to do it, do it right.

Here is a handy little list where you can participate in gift-giving, support local artists and give the person you love the unique, hand-made gift they deserve.



GRAPHIC ALEX MANLEY

#### 1 CEASE Holiday Flea Market

CEASE pledges to put together this affordable and local arts and crafts event. With 18 Montreal-based artists with their prints, illustrations, photographs, winter accessories, jewelry, notebooks, and even baby clothes. Dec. 4 and 5  
The Dep[art]ment (48 Notre Dame St. W. #101)

#### 2 Boutique Punkt

Find that unique item that will make a great gift in this truly punkt market—be it a strange teddy bear, jewelry or a second-hand book. Nov. 26 to Dec. 26, 11:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.  
Vernissage  
Nov. 26, 5:00 p.m.  
Boutique Punkt (5333 Casgrain Ave. 205 A)

#### 3 Smart Design Mart

Taking place in a 20,000 sq. ft. space, this art fair will be the place to take a break from the hectic environment that can be holiday shopping malls and downtown crowd anxiety. You'll find things you can't even imagine. Dec. 3 to Dec. 5  
(160 St-Viateur St. E., 2nd floor)

#### 4 Tibetan Bazaar

If you are looking for something more exotic than the vintage/hipster norm, try out the Annual Tibetan Bazaar and dive into colorful clothing, jewelry, Buddhist literature, and traditional arts and craft. The bazaar will also count on performances and Himalayan cuisine samples. Nov. 26 and 27  
Santa Cruz Church Hall (60 Rachel St. W.)

#### 5 (Silver) Photography Print Sale

Photo400 students have gathered a toppling pile of disjointed, limited-edition photo-based prints. The group of student photographers will fill the walls of L'Envers with a wide array of sizes and styles of photographs. This is a great opportunity to get inexpensive original prints. They'll even gift-wrap your purchases for you. Dec. 4, 8:00 p.m. to 12:00 a.m.  
L'Envers (185 Van Horne Ave.)  
Proceeds from the event go towards (SILVER) publication, set to be launched at the end of the school year.

COMPILED BY JULIA JONES

#### 6 Old Skool Crafts Holiday Bazaars

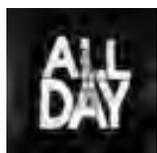
Support local artisans at this bazaar, which will have items ranging from cupcakes to soap, from vintage clothing to hand-made toys. Over 40 artists and crafters from Montreal and Quebec will be offering their work for your buying pleasure. Nov. 27 and 28, 11:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. Dec. 11 and 12, 11:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.  
St.Michael's Church (105 St.Viateur St.)  
Donations will be accepted for “A Meal in a Can,” a project by Dans la rue.



## spins

### Girl Talk *All Day*

Illegal Art



Gregg Gillis, a.k.a. Girl Talk, has been around since 2002, but most people were probably introduced to his mash-up havoc-wreaking by 2006's *Night Ripper* or 2008's *Feed the Animals*.

In any case, he's not exactly new news; by now, Girl Talk's grace period is long gone. He can't get a free pass on the strength of the pure psychic joy his mash-ups produce anymore. There are other mashup artists out there—and in fact, *All Day* seems to owe a certain debt to the nearly-as-popular Super Mash Bros' oeuvre, as Gillis has shifted away from the

A.D.H.D. sonic aesthetic of his older work, letting his mixes ride a little longer this time.

Opening track “Oh No,” for instance, backs Ludacris' “Move” with Black Sabbath's “War Pigs” for nearly two full minutes. It suggests a greater confidence in his choices, and, to be frank, the album is full of memorable musical marriages that'll put a smile on your face and a spring in your step.

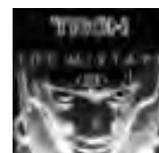
It may not be new anymore, but *All Day* proves that Girl Talk has much more than novelty appeal. Give it a couple of spins; play it all day. You'll see.

8.4/10

—Alex Manley

### Cadence Weapon *Tron Legacy*

Upper Class Recordings



If you're wondering why Canadian hip-hop heavyweight Cadence Weapon was out of the scene for so long, don't ask and don't fret because he's back with a new mixtape, *Tron Legacy*.

He admitted that this mix was supposed to come out in the summer “so you could be bingin it in your Jeep, but now you'll be banging it in your sled.” But just because it came out in the winter doesn't mean it ain't hot. This is Edmonton's Poet Laureate's new shit. It has a little something for everyone; his verse rumbles through samples of Arcade Fire's “The

Suburbs” and Gucci Wayne's “Lemonade.” Buck 65 shows up in track five to rep his Canadian brother in the bouncy, club-worthy track “Always Strapped.” He also has some Indie in the mix, with the Silly Kissers' David Carriere riffing on “Flower Girl.” Tron shows glimpses of his dark, eclectic style that had him on the Polaris Prize nomination list for best Canadian album in 2006, but the whole thing is a little sunnier than his usual dirty, electronic rap. And whatever you do, don't call Cadence Weapon a hipster, because he will fuck you up. He dedicates a whole song to erasing his label; “I may be hip as shit, but I ain't no hipster bitch.”

7.5/10

—Clay Hemmerich

# Instinctual Intellects

## Vernissage Explores the Nature of Circular Expression



SHAWNA MCLEOD, CONFETTI DISCO 1, 2010, ACRYLIQUE, ET HUILE SUR PANNEAU, 20" x 20" (50cm x 50cm)

• ASHLEY OPHEIM

Galerie PUSH will play host to an exhibition curated by Kyle Beal. The basis: circles.

*Out Thinking in Circles, in Circles Thinking Out* will feature multi-disciplinary works that specifically integrate the circle or the circular as the dominant element of the work. The vernissage ventures to twist traditional connotations such as time, unity or the universe to loopy “spiritual rings and meanings found at the periphery.” The featured works “orbit a space from the horizon to the belly button.”

In addition to curating the event, Beal has written an accompanying text to contextualize the exhibition. He sat down and discussed circles coming upon circle closing on circles encompassing curved lines upon continuation with *The Link*.

**The Link: Tell me a bit about the inspiration behind this show. How did the idea come to you?**

Kyle Beal: You see something—you see something else. Perhaps you make a connection between the two. Ultimately, something has to stick in your brain. [It has to] perplex you a bit so [that] you want to look at it, keep approaching it—maybe not to solve it. It offers a kind of resistance. Plus there is the question of what is going to happen when this is beside that, and across from that other thing.

**What did you look for when choosing works for the event?**

What I was looking for was a formal use of the circle or the circular, in a direct sort of way. But my sense is that, in the works in this show anyways, the simplicity

of basic forms acts as a ground from which things can get complicated; a deceit in the apparent simplicity.

**Where did the title of the show come from?**

The title came from an idea of thinking or speaking or walking in circles, the indirect approach, and wanting to complicate the matter a little more. To make the title loop back on itself.

**How long have you been dealing with circular ideals?**

I think that is the nature of problem solving. Things are seldom a straight line.

**What is it about a circle?**

They are so common as to be nearly invisible.

**“From the horizon to the belly button.” Linking the human body with the larger world?**

The thought basically was that we all get caught navel-gazing on occasion, a retreat to our interior—the mind. While on the other hand the horizon is a kind of unknown, impossible to reach. If you have ever been to the middle of the ocean or middle of the prairie, then you know you’re simply surrounded by the horizon.

So you are correct—it was a way of linking the world of the mind with the physical world.

Galerie PUSH (372 Ste. Catherine St. W. Suite 425) will host a vernissage for *Out Thinking in Circles, in Circles Thinking Out* on Thursday, Dec. 2. The event will run from 6:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. The exhibition can be viewed after the vernissage during gallery hours.

## Montreal Improv Explore Spontaneity for a Clock’s Full Rotation

• CHRISTOPHER OLSON

If anything was missing from director/writer Paul Haggis’ inspirational 2004 film *Crash*, which features an ensemble cast of characters exploring race relations in America, it was improvisation. At least according to Montreal acting coach Kirsten Rasmussen.

*The Accident*, premiering this Thursday at the Montreal Improv, tells the story of six individuals whose lives are inexplicably interwoven after a fateful accident.

What the titular accident is, and what relationships exists between the characters—like parent and offspring, or mistress and gimp—is up to the audience to decide on whatever night

it’s performed.

“With improv it’s about trying to get as much from the suggestions as possible so that the audience feels like it’s their show that night,” said Rasmussen, the show’s director. “No one’s going to ever see Thursday’s *The Accident* again in their lives,” even if it’s scheduled to be performed again on Friday and Saturday.

“It’s basically just a three-act structure, so the actors know that by the third scene they need to be gearing towards some kind of ending, and it’s up to the performers to remember everything that they’ve created that evening and to tie all the knots together.”

The actors, all pupils of the Montreal Improv acting school

where Rasmussen teaches, had only three weeks to prepare, but when there’s no lines to memorize, you can hardly impose expectations of what time brings an improv group.

**“[You learn to] just think on your feet and be spontaneous and then that becomes the high of it.”**

—Kristen Rasmussen, Director of *The Accident*

“[You learn to] just think on your feet and be spontaneous and then that becomes the high of it,

that I don’t know what I’m going to do so I’m just going to react to whatever’s happening in the moment,” said Rasmussen.

Sometimes that means reacting to an audience member’s cell phone playing Cee Lo Green’s “Fuck You” during a gripping emotional scene.

“Our theatre is on St. Laurent [Boulevard], so often during our shows an ambulance will drive by, and then during the show you just have to incorporate that,” she said—a luxury not possessed by Hamlet or King Lear.

Rasmussen, who currently stars in the Montreal Improv’s *Honey and Dick’s Guide to Successful Living*, fled to the improv scene after a brief love affair with

scripted fair.

“I was just kind of looking for something that was a little more spontaneous, a little more immediate, because I was doing Shakespeare in acting school and I would look at the audience and it was all old people. Then I would go to improv on the weekends and there [were] all these young people there,” she said. “I was drawn to it as a medium of theatre that young people enjoy.”

*The Accident* opens Dec. 2 at 9:30 p.m. at the Montreal Improv (3713 St. Laurent #202). Admission is \$7. *Honey and Dick’s Guide to Successful Living* returns Dec. 18 at 8:00 p.m. Admission is \$8. For these and other shows, visit [montrealimprov.com](http://montrealimprov.com).



## Layered Take

### Josip Novakovich's *Three Deaths* Slices Up Grim Reaping

• ISADORA ARREDONDO

Death is inescapable and inexplicable. At any given point death may brusquely interrupt our lives, and this is exactly what author Josip Novakovich contemplates in his new book *Three Deaths*.

Novakovich was born in Croatia and moved to the U.S. at the age of 20. He has been teaching and writing fiction for most of his life, receiving many awards along the way. Today, he is a professor at Concordia and continues to thrive as a novelist.

Some say one should not judge a book by its cover. But after merely glancing at this slim, unpretentious, yet surprisingly dark book, it is difficult not to be drawn in by it. The title and the topic allude to Leo Tolstoy's short story by the same name, but the combination of different narratives and style render it Novakovich's own.

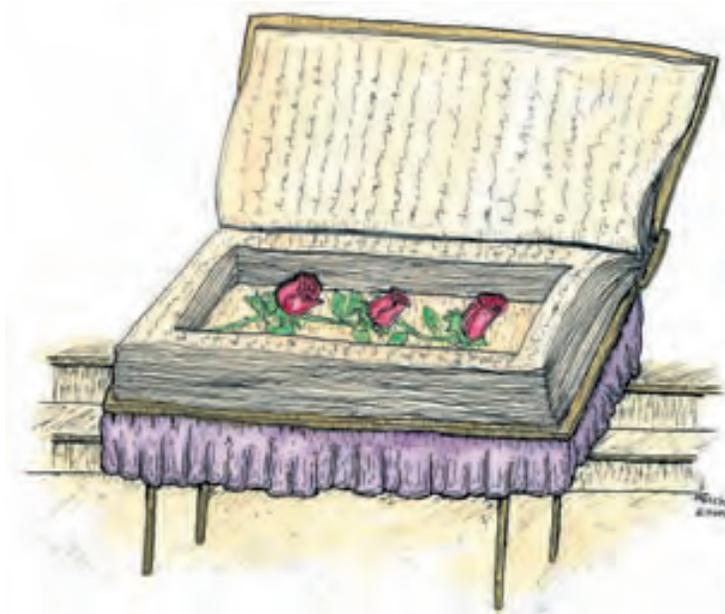
The book is comprised of three segments: a short story, a classic tale and a personal essay.

The short story situates us in an enigmatic social terrain: the 1950s Socialist Republic of Croatia. The American government provides a toddler with a shot to

combat measles, which turns out to be fatal. In focusing on this incident, the story not only interrogates all the bureaucratic malpractices that resulted in innocent deaths, but it also carefully explores a series of anxieties woven around spiritual delusion and patriotism that were prevalent in such an uncertain cultural climate.

The classic tale recounts a child's experience with his father's death. The narrative leads the reader through the mind of the child, exploring the confusion and fear that death inflicts upon families. However, the social landscape—this segment is also set in Croatia—also serves to accentuate the feeling of isolation and spiritual impotence that resulted from generations exposed to war and political tension. As the child deals with his father's death, the world outside him seems no more forgiving or secure than the force that took his father.

Finally, the personal essay, which threads the two previous stories together, is a retrospective narrative that deals with the collision of generations and the tran-



GRAPHIC MITCH DIXON

sition of cultural values. Now situated between the United States and Croatia, a family deals with a weakening mother whose condition has been critical for years. Her relationship with her children, as well as with her granddaughter, illustrate how relationships may turn complicated once other, generationally shifted values enter the picture. At the same time, it examines the cultural rupture that people experience when they can no longer associate with what they once knew as home.

Although *Three Deaths* concentrates primarily on the death of three characters, each story brings forward a set of complex social dynamics associated with

war, religion, politics, culture and family relationships.

Novakovich's style is both accessible and distinctive. In under 90 pages, he alternates between narratives but keeps a cohesive and solid structure. He is able to offer the reader an entertaining, thought-provoking perspective on the complexity surrounding people's stories—and the inevitable end to those stories.



***Three Deaths***  
Josip Novakovich  
Snare Books  
88pp  
\$12.00

## Sentimentalists Fools

### Skibsrud's Giller-Winning Debut More Than Meets the Eye

• ALEX MANLEY

Much like winning a shootout against the fastest gun in the Old West, winning the Scotiabank Giller Prize is a bit of a risky move. It can put a bit of a target on your back; all of a sudden, every hack out there who fancies himself a big shot is gunning for you.

In light of that, it's important not to be too hard on Johanna Skibsrud's *The Sentimentalists*. There will be some—many, even—who will criticize the book for what it isn't, rather than what it is. They will come expecting the best Canadian book of the past year and all the pomp and circumstance they associate with that idea and find a small, quiet story set in small, quiet places instead. They will clamour for their money back. Don't let them sway you.

*The Sentimentalists* was first released by Gaspereau Press in the

fall of 2009, and recently re-released as a mass-market paperback by Douglas & McIntyre in the wake of Skibsrud's unexpected win. The story is about a 30-year-old Canadian woman and her search for meaning as her father—a wisecracking, crossword-puzzle-solving, alcoholic Vietnam vet—slowly dies of lung cancer in the fictional town of Casablanca, Ont.

To be clear, this book is not for the faint of art. The work it most reminded me of, style-wise, was James Joyce's *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*. Like *Portrait*, much of the narrative is set in memory, and the text is filled with reams of vague philosophical sentences that many readers will find hard to parse on the first try, with passages like, "I think now that that's really the most—the best—we can do: answer the questions that pose themselves to us,

and describe, if only to ourselves, the things that we have loved, and believed in, and the actions that we have or would have liked to have taken, and will take now, and do take, over and over again, in the quiet parts of our minds."

Nevertheless, there is a story worth telling here that Skibsrud has told in a rather skillful way, managing to avoid the *primum movens* of the drama essentially right up until the book's epilogue. The story up until then, worth-



***The Sentimentalists***  
Johanna Skibsrud  
Douglas & McIntyre Press  
216pp  
\$19.95

while and moving to begin with, takes on a whole new appearance as the reader has to re-interpret its emotional significance in light of new, heart-rending information.

If you like your books to be blockbusters, or if the promise of Vietnam war scenes entices you, perhaps you'd be better off skipping *The Sentimentalists*—ditto if you have trouble controlling your expectations around award-winning fiction.

But if you're willing to take the novel for what it is—a deeply touching account of the effects of personal tragedy on family, and the incomprehensible ways sadness weaves its way into our lives—you should be able to get along quite nicely with *The Sentimentalists*.

GRAPHIC MITCH DIXON



## Lit Events

Pascal Girouard  
Launches *Bigfoot*

Hilarious/tragic/  
touching/YouTubular  
new graphic novel gets  
read from/signed at  
Drawn & Quarterly

Dec. 2  
7:00 p.m. onwards  
Drawn & Quarterly  
Bookstore  
211 Bernard St. W.  
Free admission

The Atwater Poetry  
Project

Featuring readings by  
Zoe Whittall and David  
O'Meara; coordinated  
by Katia Grubisic

Dec. 2  
7:00 p.m. onwards  
Atwater Library  
1200 Atwater Ave.  
Free admission

## lit Writ

SHIT HAIR  
POEM (also  
album review of  
halfaxa by  
grimes)

• GUILLAUME  
MORISSETTE

the library smells like  
duck tape; I have shit hair,  
which explains the hoodie.

there's no facebook  
emoticon to express 'had sex  
all weekend.'

what is art? it's every-  
thing this question is not.

I saw grimes play halfaxa  
live and it felt like her heart  
was filling her entire chest.

listening to halfaxa by  
grimes I visualize a generic  
urban metropolis that  
feels like every city; wet  
cement that says 'cobra cock,'  
artificial trees made from  
unpopular memoirs or short  
story collections.

a crowd of strangers  
wondering why their beds  
feel like large planes of in-  
difference

and push-up bras with  
flower motifs on them,  
a metaphor that is lost on  
me.

a mailbox is broken and  
disgusting and I want the  
mailbox to heal but the  
mailbox can't heal.

there's no facebook  
emoticon to express 'the city  
feels like an alien complex

whose primary architect  
was some kind of intro-  
verted videogame level de-  
signer.'

the vocal track on halfaxa  
by grimes is

the loneliness that makes  
the buildings vibrate.

I have shit hair and  
there's no facebook emoti-  
con to express 'I wish my  
hair was less shit

and that my primary con-  
cern was that there's no  
facebook emoticon to ex-  
press 'had sex all weekend.'



# Montreal, Stuff'd + Mounted

Gail Scott's *The Obituary* Exalts the City, Challenges the Reader

• JENNY LEIGH DANCER

Everything is alive in *The Obituary*, moving and shuffling and existing in the space Gail Scott creates. The novel, however, is not for everyone.

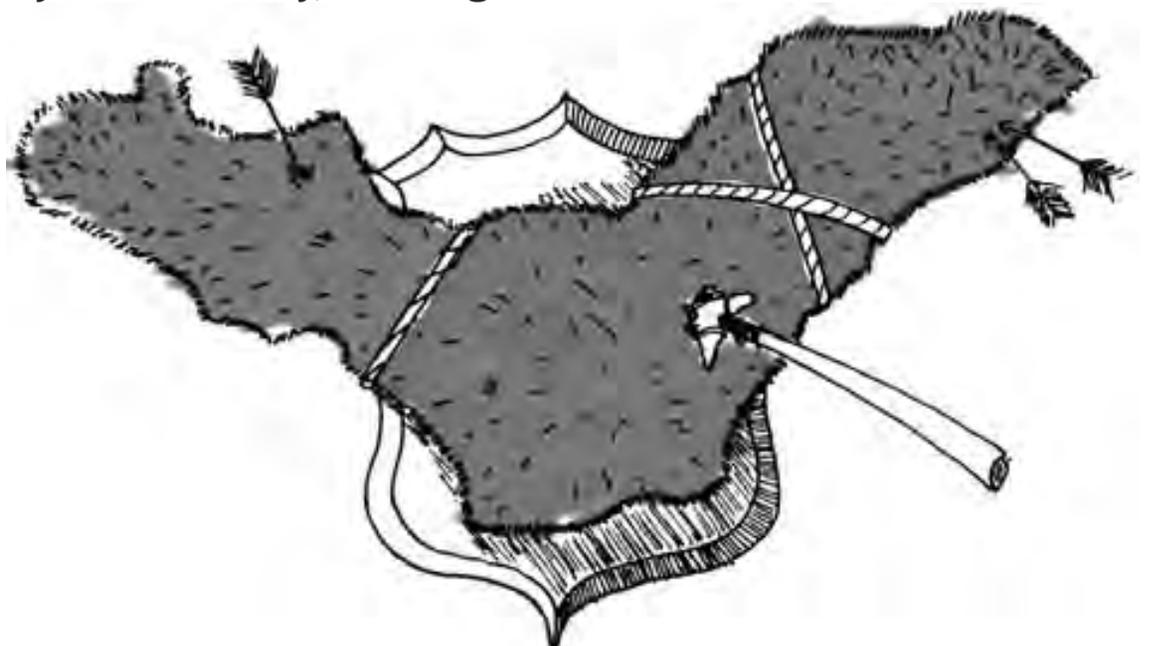
*The Obituary* is Gail Scott's sixth novel. Scott is also a translator, and her translation of Michael Delisle's *The Sailor's Disquiet* saw her nominated for a Governor General award in 2001.

*The Obituary*, her first work since 2004, feels like it could use a translation of its own. It follows narrator Rosine, a historian, through Montreal, delving into the intimate details of speech, character and location to a degree that often threatens to leave the uncareful reader behind entirely.

Someone unfamiliar with the Montreal cityscape will have a hard time getting around in *The Obituary*. Places and their inhabitants are described with such care that it seems as though they are extensions of the city designed to encourage affection, as if to draw readers into the locations by using the individuals. Gail Scott allows readers to accompany her characters in a study of what it is to be in Montreal.

For someone who hails from another town, however, the places remain largely inaccessible; streets, bars, areas of housing; these are all unrecognizable, and the proper names, normally the only tangible items which might allow such readers a place to rest, are often disguised to dizzying degrees. (St. Joseph Blvd., for instance, is referred to as Dada-Jesus.)

The characters in the novel, even those who are fleeting and merely seen during a bus ride by "R," as Rosine identifies herself, are brought



Montreal taxidermy GRAPHIC ALEX MANLEY

to life with such exact detail that they prove to be vivid and welcome additions to the text. Occasionally, however, it is a little confusing as to which character is being followed, or whether or not it is the narrator speaking. Clues like the inclusion of "X" and the use of terms like "Dear Reader" provide some guidance, but Scott hardly takes readers by the hand. This is not necessarily to be frowned upon, though.

A man whose pants keep falling down; a woman standing at a street corner waiting for the lights whose chocolate lab persistently nuzzles her; some woman in a bar who sits "...two stools down yelling meeting someone HARD. Especially if over 39! Were we not all eternally that? I.e., bedding down with Good Vibrations."

These characters are just a few in an elaborate portrait of Montreal life. Never is a character flat, stock or expected, and in some ways, those details become the most

pressing and fascinating information. The presence of those who are not quite there, but linger on in the memories and desires of the characters, is also felt poignantly.

However brilliant the characters may prove, certain linguistic choices certainly seemed questionable. For instance, the substitution of a plus sign for the word "and," the repeated use of the word *Face* in italics, dropping the "e" in "the" so it's "th" instead form a constant barrage of textual speed bumps that may irritate the average reader.

Essentially, *The Obituary* is a book about alienation. There is clearly an ideal readership who would likely enjoy the novel immensely, but those readers may be few, and only Montrealers. The language is inventive, and at times one gets the sense of reading a vast poem, but perhaps one that stretches so far out ahead that readers will find it difficult to keep track of what has just happened.

*The Obituary* is certainly not for the reader who wishes to be easily entertained, nor for someone who is particularly attached to the grammar conventions they have come to know and love. If one is at all attached to simplicity or transparency of language in novels to illustrate characters and setting as well as other story elements, *The Obituary* may feel alienating. If one is not a native to Montreal, if one cannot speak French... the book seems to push those readers away.

In the words of one of Gail Scott's characters from *The Obituary*, at times the language chosen to communicate the story felt "...fricative to point of unfathomable."



*The Obituary*  
Gail Scott  
Coach House  
Books  
220pp  
\$19.95

# The Mid-Life Crisis of Duddy Kravitz?

• ADAM KOVAC

In 2001, while giving a talk on the art of film, Spike Lee described a very curious phenomenon of American cinema—the Magical Negro. This character is a black man who comes out of nowhere to help the white protagonist recognize and overcome his flaws/weaknesses/obstacles, and is usually implied to have magical powers. He also has the power to appear only in movies that are craptacular (Cough, *The Legend of Bagger Vance*, cough, cough).

There's a very similar, yet much more specific, character at work in David Homel's novel, *Midway*—the Montreal Jew with a feeling of ennui. This character has popped up continually since the 1950s, due largely to legendary author Mordecai Richler. In many ways, these characters are all the bastard chil-

dren that Duddy Kravitz never got to have. You can practically picture him avoiding them, at his office, making deals.

In the case of *Midway*, the mildly morose protagonist is Benjamin Allan, a doting son to his elderly, cantankerous, somewhat stereotypical father. He's also the father of a TV-addicted son, and husband to a distant wife (although so little effort is put into fleshing her out that it's hard to tell if she's troubled or just a horrible person).

Benjamin has recently gained minor fame among his peers due to an academic paper/prose poem he wrote about an obscure mental disorder from the 19th century called dromomania, whose sufferers enter a fugue state and wander great distances. Simultaneously, he's drawn to an employee at his school who also dabbles in creating hideous paintings, while also being drawn

into the web of a nefarious psychiatrist who uses his patients to gather materials for the dolls he creates.

The book becomes somewhat confusing and melodramatic towards the middle, as Benjamin deals with his midlife crisis. Except for Ben and his dad, most of the characters seem less like people than shadows or caricatures. The more I think about it, the more I think that this might have been intentional. What is a midlife crisis other than a period of raging narcissism, wherein everybody else is nothing but a supporting character in your personal self-realization movie? Still, it's hard to get engaged in a novel where every personality remains the same, page after page, motivations unexplained, while the main character drones on and on about "what it all means."

*Midway* is not a failure as a book. The relationship between

Benjamin and his father offers a few genuine laughs as the *alter kacker* disregards all social norms and rambles at length about sex, religion and growing old. If you've met as many old Jewish men as I have, you will recognize this guy. If only all the other interactions had been this well-thought out, *Midway* would have been the first coming-of-age story for the postponed adulthood set.

As it is, it's a fine, if occasionally irritating, story about being a secular Yid in the post-God world.



*Midway*  
David Homel  
Cormorant  
Books  
320pp  
\$21.00

BASKETBALL



The men's basketball team posted back-to-back victories on the weekend, including a close 72-68 home-opening win at the Loyola Gym Friday night. PHOTO ESTHER BERNARD

see story, pg. 24

## Standings

### MEN'S BASKETBALL

	GP	W	L	PF	PA	PTS	Win %	Last 10	Streak
Laval	3	3	0	270	216	6	1.000	3-0	Won 3
Concordia	4	3	1	316	297	6	0.750	3-1	Won 3
McGill	4	3	1	287	262	6	0.750	3-1	Won 1
UQAM	5	2	3	375	356	4	0.400	2-3	Lost 1
Bishop's	6	0	6	369	486	0	0.000	0-6	Lost 6

### WOMEN'S BASKETBALL

	GP	W	L	PF	PA	PTS	Win %	Last 10	Streak
McGill	4	4	0	279	232	8	1.000	4-0	Won 4
UQAM	5	3	2	339	362	6	0.600	3-2	Lost 1
Concordia	4	2	2	293	261	4	0.500	2-2	Won 1
Laval	3	1	2	193	199	2	0.333	1-2	Lost 1
Bishop's	6	1	5	368	418	2	0.167	1-5	Lost 2

## Scoreboard



### WOMEN'S BASKETBALL

W 79-69 v Bishop's sat

L 57-61 v McGill fri

### MEN'S BASKETBALL

W 74-65 v Bishop's sat

W 72-68 v McGill fri

### WOMEN'S HOCKEY

W 3-2 v Ottawa sat

### MEN'S HOCKEY

L 4-7 v Lakehead sat

L 2-11 v Lakehead fri

# Four Late Free Throws Save Stingers

## Victory Over Redmen First of Back-to-Back Wins For Men's Basketball

• DIEGO PELAEZ-GAETZ

**Concordia 72**

**McGill 68**

Stingers newcomer Kyle Desmarais calmly made four clutch free throws in the final minute to put away the rival McGill Redmen in an exciting 72-68 victory on Nov. 26 at the Loyola Gym.

The beginning of the fourth quarter looked ominous for the home team after the Redmen jumped out to a seven-point lead on a three-point play by 6'8 centre Greg Gause. The Stingers were struggling from the field, but star forward Evens Laroche and Desmarais willed themselves to the line over and over again. They finished with 20 and 13 points, respectively.

Desmarais finally put ConU ahead with two free throws off a strong drive, before getting a steal and drawing another foul in the closing seconds.

"The team does meditation, so we practise ways of calming yourself down," said Desmarais on blocking out the moment and finishing a perfect 4-4 down the stretch.

The Stingers needed every bit of their peace of mind in this game, as

McGill took a five-point lead at the end of the first quarter, on the strength of guard Simon Bibeau's back-to-back threes.

Bibeau finished with 24 points in a losing cause, although he missed a crucial free throw in the final minute that may have given McGill one last gasp.

Despite the early lead, the Redmen couldn't get any distance between themselves and the aggressive, athletic Stingers. A 10-2 run highlighted by a couple threes by Decee Krah got the home team right back in business, and a steal and slam dunk by Desmarais brought members of the near-capacity home crowd to their feet.

Krah connected on 5 of 8 from downtown, including a clutch shot with a hand in his face in the final period, and the senior leader finished with 18 points and four assists.

"Every game has got to be a war," said Stingers head coach John Dore of the lessons to be taken from the close win. "Every game has got to be tough. We play each of these teams four times."

The win shows that the Stingers are a much different squad than the one that missed the playoffs last year. A big part of the difference is the man who made the final four free throws. After a season waiting to become eligible to play



Saturday's game was less stressful for the Stingers, as they won 74-65 over Bishop's. PHOTO ESTHER BERNARD

and practising with the team, Desmarais has stepped right in and become a key player for the Stingers along with veterans Laroche, Krah and James Clark.

"[Desmarais'] maturity on the court, his experience helps settle us down on the court," said Dore.

Desmarais acknowledged that he has already become comfortable as one of the go-to guys on the team.

"It seems like when the game's on the line, I usually try to be the guy to get to the free-throw line," said Desmarais. "I wouldn't rather [have] anyone on the line but me."

The team has the extra motivation of perhaps not having lived up to the standards expected of Concordia's storied program, particularly on the heels of the very successful Damian Buckley-era.

"We want to prove that we're

still the cream of the crop of the Quebec league," said Desmarais. "We definitely have last year [on our minds] every time we step [onto] the court this year."

Before going on a month-long break, the Stingers will play in their last regular-season game this Saturday versus the Laval Rouge et Or at the Loyola Gym. Tip-off is slated for 6:00 p.m.

# Failure From the Line

## Women's Basketball Team Misses 10 Free Throws in Loss to McGill

• DIEGO PELAEZ-GAETZ

**McGill 61**

**Concordia 57**

A furious rally down the stretch couldn't close the gap for Concordia's women's basketball team in a 61-57 loss to the McGill Martlets in the Stingers' home opener Friday night.

"We were tight, and we missed some shots, and then we got tighter," said Stingers coach Keith Pruden. "I mean, I understand that the girls were tight. I was nervous, it's the first home game [and we're playing] McGill. They really wanted to do well, and they screwed up."

The outcome looked like it would be considerably more one-sided at the start of the fourth quarter, as forward Anneth Him-Lazarenko's layup put the visitors up by 13. The Stingers had trouble handling Lazarenko on the block all night, as she finished with 27 points and 11 rebounds.

Despite the deep hole, ConU refused to give in. Led by five quick points from forward An-



The Stingers couldn't hold off the Martlets, despite winning the fourth quarter. PHOTO ESTHER BERNARD

dreanne Gregoire-Boudreau, the Stingers quickly closed the gap to 59-55 with a chance to get within two as senior leader Kendra Carrie stepped to the foul line.

"Down the stretch, we made some errors, and Concordia did a

great job of attacking us," said McGill coach Ryan Thorne. "They're quick, so they used what their strength was."

Unfortunately, Carrie missed both free throws, and the Stingers would never get closer

in the last few minutes. Carrie finished with 10 points, five rebounds and four assists.

Free throws were a problem all night for the Stingers, as they finished only five of 15 from the line as a team.

"We missed 10 free throws," said coach Pruden. "I just asked them, 'What's that got to do with the referees? What's that got to do [with] McGill? What's that got to do with anybody except you?'"

The loss was a tough learning experience early in the season for the Stingers, but they are still confident that the resilience they showed down the stretch will pay dividends later in the season.

"I was pleased with the effort in the last two minutes," said Pruden. "It showed some character."

Consistency will be the key word in the upcoming weeks for the women's hoops squad. With a tough schedule ahead, they will need to show the intensity that appeared at the end of their matchup with McGill to remain in the play-off conversation.

"We have to do a better job of executing offensively and defensively, otherwise we're going to be up and down all year," said Pruden. "We want to avoid that."

The Stingers rebounded with a 76-69 win at Bishop's, and will have a chance to build on that victory when they host the struggling Laval Rouge et Or this Saturday at 8:00 p.m.

## WikiLeaks Unleashes 'Cablegate'

Largest Release of Secret U.S. Documents in History

• NADIM KOBEISSI

After almost a weekend of international political nailbiting, the quarter-million-document "Cablegate" dump has finally been published, bringing to the surface a plethora of nauseating international political realities.

On one side of the planet, U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton advocated a secret intelligence campaign to spy on U.N. diplomats and Bulgarian officials, asking them to sneakily obtain fingerprints, credit card numbers, iris scans and encryption keys.

On the other, Saudi King Fahd bin Abdul Aziz implored the United States to attack Iran, also advising the U.S. to implant chips in Guantanamo detainees "like horses." The U.S.'s panic seems to have been justified, as it now faces a political disaster that closely resembles a September 11th of diplomacy.

However, those gut-wrenching truths are only the beginning. After suffering from an hours-long cyberattack, WikiLeaks has only recently released its own Cablegate website, which is still being updated to offer all 251,287 cables in an organized, accessible format. In what may be a taunting gesture on WikiLeaks's behalf, one of the three Cablegate servers is actually located within the United States.

Sense-forsaking political realities aside, the leak also documents a variety of colorful descriptions that U.S. government officials em-

ployed when discussing their international counterparts. Russia's Prime Minister Vladimir Putin is dubbed "Batman" with President Dmitry Medvedev as his "Robin," Italian President Silvio Berlusconi is described as "feckless, vain and ineffective," German Foreign Minister Guido Westerwelle is called "arrogant" and "vain," while Afghan president Hamid Karzai is summarized as "an extremely weak man who did not listen to facts but was instead easily swayed by anyone who came to report even the most bizarre stories or plots against him."

WikiLeaks released a statement on its Cablegate website that the "document release reveals the contradictions between the U.S.'s public persona and what it says behind closed doors. [It] shows that if citizens in a democracy want their governments to reflect their wishes, they should ask to see what's going on behind the scenes."

The leak also provides valuable evidence on many recent political issues, backing, for instance, rumors of China being behind the January 2010 attack on Google. China had previously repeatedly denied the cyberattack, calling any claims to it "groundless."

Iran in particular seems to be a candid target in the diplomatic cables. One cable reveals how French president Nicholas Sarkozy called Iran a "fascist state," clamoring for "the next steps." Another cable warns of a

possible upcoming war with Iran, stating that "without progress in the next few months, we risk nuclear proliferation in the Middle East, war prompted by an Israeli strike, or both."

A third cable details how Iran concealed plans for a secret nuclear reactor, complaining that "contact with Iran over 'possible military dimensions' of the nuclear program was at an 'absolute stalemate.'" A fourth communiqué shows how Iran exploited the Red Crescent to facilitate the entrance of armed agents into Lebanon in 2008.

The international political panic is rising, and has tipped into ugly, embarrassing insanity in Australia, where their government has banned WikiLeaks, imposing heavy fines on those that even link to the website.

The US, who just yesterday seized a domain name and replaced it with an IP-tracking website, had its New York representative Peter T. King urge Hillary Clinton to designate WikiLeaks as a Foreign Terrorist Organization, saying that it "presents a clear and present danger to the national security of the United States."

The U.S.'s reaction, however, is two-faced: While the superpower has repeatedly decried WikiLeaks as causing deadly danger to innocent individuals, recently-published letters between Julian Assange and the U.S. government show that government officials

have also repeatedly refused to cooperate with Assange in order to "privately nominate any specific instances where it considers the publication of information would put individual persons at significant risk of harm that has not already been addressed."

This WikiLeaks seems to be the one to develop the most gradually as of yet, but it also seems to be the most damning. WikiLeaks released a graph that demonstrates both the broad number of categories and the sheer size of the leak, implying that it will take weeks to analyze its contents entirely.

External Political Relations, Internal Governmental Affairs and Human Rights occupy the busiest end of the spectrum, with the leak ranging far into other topics such as personal computers, science grants and military capabilities.

In the minds of diplomats that survive solely on the secrecy of their true dealings, the line between truth and panic is thin; whether it is too thin for their tightrope artistry is finally being revealed.



Scan this code with your smartphone and it will take you to Nadim's blog.

**The international political panic is rising, and has tipped into ugly, embarrassing insanity in Australia, where the Australian government has banned WikiLeaks, imposing heavy fines on those that even link to the website.**

## Last-Ditch Effort



John Kroes



Dear Melissa,

Men's ejaculate taste varies based on the diet, right? Does the same apply to women's fluid?

—*Aftertaste*

Dear Aftertaste,

Diet affects taste pretty similarly in both men and women, but it's not as simple as eating an apple and having your partner taste it an hour later (although some people have claimed to have done so).

It's usually a more subtle change, and in some cases not even that noticeable. This is because your taste isn't only dependent on what you eat but also your body and health (cleanliness, infections, etc.).

A very small percentage of semen is actually sperm (only 2-5%) and about 65-75% of semen is made up of nutrients that help protect the sperm. These nutrients include amino acids, citrate, enzymes, flavins, fructose, proteins, citric acid, zinc and several others that aren't worth trying to pronounce. The main point is that many of these things are derived from the food we eat and therefore can affect how we taste.

Taste can also be incredibly subjective, so it's hard to say what would help you taste good, but accordingly to popular consensus, these are thing you should avoid:

1. Cigarettes, alcohol, drugs and coffee are known to make cum taste pretty bad.
2. Red meat and dairy products contribute to the saltiness of semen.
3. Garlic, onion, veggies from the cabbage family, broccoli and asparagus.

And things you should go for:

1. Fruits such as lemon, pineapple, apples, cranberries, melons and grapes are high in natural sugars so they sweeten the taste.
2. Most veggies (the more natural the foods, the better). Parsley, wheatgrass and celery are mentioned a lot.
3. Lots and lots of water!

As always, it's a little more complicated for women. Food does affect how we taste, but we have other major contributors—like our menstrual cycle.

In terms of diet, a woman's taste is affected by the same foods/habits as men, so the above list applies to them too. Pineapple and citrus-based juices come highly recommended to be sweeter between the legs.

Another big factor in how a woman tastes is her cleaning habits. No, I don't mean that not showering will result in a terrible tasting vagina. I'd hope that's fairly obvious. What I mean is that cleaning too much can be just as bad. Basically, the interior of the vagina tries to maintain a very specific pH level in order to keep itself clean, usually around 4.5 making it acidic. This is your body's way of self-cleaning so to speak. Yes, much like those fancy new ovens.

However, trying to clean inside your vagina through douching, for example, can upset this pH balance. This indirectly leads to a bad taste because upset pH level can equal a bacterial infection. Nobody can expect a bacterial infection to taste good (or smell good for that matter). So basically using soaps with lower pH levels and not being too vigorous with vaginal cleanings can help not only your taste but also your vagina's overall health.

The problem is that all this taste business involves a lot of speculation. So, I'd propose a sort of science project: drink pineapple juice every day for a month and then give your partner a taste test! It's kind of like the Pepsi Challenge, but less kid friendly. Plus, many people have claimed to notice a change!

It's worth noting that many of the habits that will apparently make you taste better also just lead to overall better health. So it seems like, ultimately, that may be the key.

When you think about it, oral sex is a pretty easy thing to get insecure about. Personally, I find it even more intimate than penetration if only because the act of being tasted puts us in such a vulnerable position. Therefore insecurity is understandable, but you shouldn't let it get in the way of your sex life. So next time someone's down there, remember that the way we all smell and taste is often said to be a natural aphrodisiac meant to attract our partners.

—*Melissa Fuller*

## Little Mosque in the City



The left dome is the mosque, the right dome is the newly constructed SAT nightclub.  
PHOTO JULIA JONES

• **MOODY JONES**

Everybody knows honesty is the way to a reader's heart; so to be honest, when I noticed that the Society for Arts and Technology nightclub's new dome renovations resembled—too closely for it to be a coincidence—the neighbouring Al-Ummah Mosque's design, my first reaction was to ignite disapproval among Montrealers against the club's revamped exterior.

I was bothered with the SAT's design, as it undermines the doctrine of religious buildings in the area (including a Catholic church in the same vicinity), so I decided to speak with the mosque's Sheikh, Saez Fawaz, last Friday to hear what he had to say about the situation (Friday Mosque for Muslims is like Sunday Church for Christians).

I arrived at the mosque I had been to before, but for the first time I was nervous, knowing I would speak to a man in his position. Honestly, I'm definitely not one of the best practising Muslims out there.

As I sat down, the Sheikh began telling the crowded room of worshippers the history of the mosque. In 1995, the city urged the Muslim community to move its place of worship away from St. Laurent Boulevard. The leader of the Mosque requested help from his followers to find a new spot to continue praising their creator.

Arif, a regular follower, managed to save the people \$550,000 on space costs and successfully establish Al-Ummah Mosque on 2070 Clark St. in Downtown Montreal. That spot is now the downtown believers' new Mecca.

Once we were done, I could tell from the Sheikh's eyes that he was a bit confused as to why I was approaching him. I didn't blame him. Not only does a purple polo shirt, red jacket, lime green G-shock watch and a curly head of hair prove to be a terrible combination, but it's not respectable attire for prayer, either.

I introduced myself to the Sheikh, told him my objectives and I asked him his opinion about the SAT's renovations. He said that he did not care for comparing the structural design of each building and that he was proud of the SAT for being able to

raise finances to get closer to their goals.

When I asked about the nightlife situation, Sheikh Fawaz said he felt indifferent because the partying never takes place during prayer time. The partying starts after the last prayer and ends before the first one. Also, the Dome's new astrological concept has proven to be a positive revamp, as it will help aid the research and development of open-source software, broadband-network IP and digital production tools related to telepresence, immersive environments, video and sound.

For the past two years, the city centre has gone through heavy construction. One area in particular that is experiencing the biggest upgrade is the Place des Arts area along with the "dirty" areas around it. Parts of Ste. Catherine Street are planned to be exclusive for pedestrians, and many businesses that poorly reflect the city's culture have been flattened while others have been raised.

Unfortunately, Al-Ummah Mosque may be neglected in the construction process. There is a serious need for community members to become involved in their surroundings, like Arif himself.

It was an enlightening quest preparing for this squabble. It's not everyday that I get to talk to followers from a church, strip club, mosque and the Sheikhs that lead them. Where else will you see a church, a mosque and a science and technology centre that doubles as a club by night? Where else will you have a prayer, a drinker, a bum, a stripper and a scientist all living in perfect harmony?

I was wrong for thinking twice that Montreal may have let me down. After this, I have never been more in love with the city.



Scan this code with your smartphone and it will take you to Moody's blog.

editorial cartoon



GRAPHIC MITCH DIXON

editorial

A Dire State

Last week, for the second time in less than a year, a clear majority of Concordia students voted no.

No to real estate decisions made without student input. No to speeding up the process on a long term, potentially volatile and unprecedented commercial contract. No to increasing fees to fund a \$50 million stab at student space.

For a moment in time, student space was the conversation on campus. It was the selling point of the Yes ad campaign that someone in an audience compared to Obama. It was then used, guerrilla-style, to mercilessly undo the Yes campaign, undermining the established political procedure in the process.

People complained about how space was manipulated on both sides of the issue. Social media space was abuzz beyond the hallways and the student press. People were talking and like we said last week, it was wonderful.

Promised that student space could be whatever we wanted it to be, we discussed it at length: room for clubs and associations to work and grow, choices beyond Chartwells and PepsiCo., more of our own posters in hallways that have reached retail saturation point, rooms to book without bureaucracy, leases for student groups...and the list goes on.

Culminating in the dying days of crazy campaigning, the abstract ideal began to take on a surprising shape. Numbers were crunched, questions were asked and the definition of student space suddenly changed when we learned our destination was Le Faubourg.

We voted accordingly—equating student space with Le Faubourg food court is as symbolic as it gets, I guess.

After a referendum period unlike any other, it is a privilege to mark yet another crossroad in the storied history of student space at Concordia, when students are now asking themselves, where do we go from here? Has history been made, or is it going to repeat itself?

Last week, our campus was talking about student space, agreeing that it's reached a dire state. We asked ourselves not only who controls it, but who it should serve in a university setting. We saw, in both campaigns, that the idea of space is completely open. The Yes Campaign put up flashy posters and K'nex domes in official space. The No committees held talks, were walking billboards and dominated social media.

Is a student centre, which is promised in an agreement that exists between the Concordia Student Union and the university administration, really the answer to our space case? Did you know students already had a student centre in the past? Three of them? What happened to them? Why?

There are still more questions than answers, even if this referendum has been put to bed and we implore you to keep talking about the issues. Make good on another unsung campaign last week and actually ask why.

Talk to the CSU and your faculty associations and brainstorm about how students should be moving forward.

Think about what you want from this contract, or if you even want it period, and what you want from the student space you are already paying millions of dollars for. Or write a letter to *The Link*, write an opinions piece or contribute to our first ever Space special issue, slated to hit stands Jan. 25.

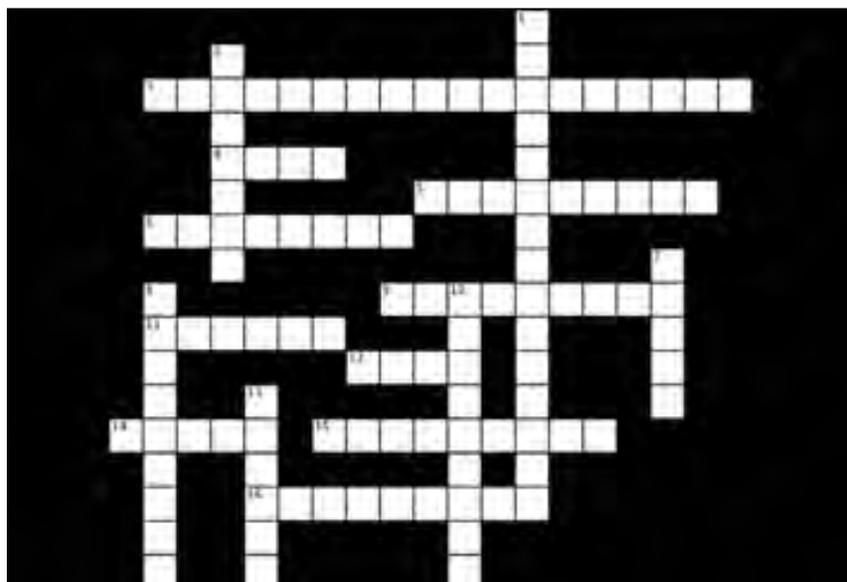
The bottom line is we have \$7 million of student money to be put towards a student centre, to create the student space we want on campus.

Student space is what we make it.

—Laura Beeston,  
Managing Editor

Quik-X

“Famous Dogs”  
• CHRISTOPHER OLSON



Across

- 3. The first episode of *The Simpsons* ever—a Christmas special, no less—involved the backstory of the family dog.
- 4. Not as famous as Garfield, but where would Garfield be without his canine foil?
- 5. One of the world's greatest composers. Oh, and a dog, I guess.
- 6. It's big and it's red.
- 9. The dog in this classic story taught kids an important lesson about death, and also how to perform euthanasia.
- 11. My god, is there a sport this dog can't fucking master? He's

five for five!

- 12. The Scarecrow gets a brain, the Tin Man a heart, and the Lion some courage... But what does Dorothy's dog get?
- 14. The only real dog on this list, and the only one that's been in space, and is Russian.
- 16. I still think the phrase “snacks” in this Hanna-Barbera cartoon was a euphemism for cannabis.

Down

- 1. Seriously, how many hobos go from town to town helping people solve their problems, and are dogs? False advertising!

- 2. Once a classic comic strip character, now he shills for life insurance between Macy's Thanksgiving Day parades.
- 7. In my opinion, the only likable character on *Family Guy*.
- 8. Unfunny comic strip that's run for a half a century and was voiced by Owen Wilson in its unfunny film counterpart. Requires no more explanation.
- 10. All this time I thought this Warner Bros. cartoon character was voiced by Senator Joseph Lieberman.
- 13. “There's a problem at the old well? And North Korea just fired missiles at South Korea?”

issue 15 crossword solutions



**the LINK**  
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