





ASFA ELECTIONS: VOTER TURNOUT DOWN 33 PER CENT

Board Outsources Scrutiny

Concordia's Board of Governors Sends Leadership Review to External Committee

• JUSTIN GIOVANNETTI

Tempers flared at the Board of Governors' Feb. 17 meeting as two-dozen irritated faculty members openly challenged the sitting chair and heckled Concordia's interim president. The jeers were met with poorly veiled threats from long-sitting governors.

Despite the confrontational atmosphere, the Board succeeded in ignoring calls from across the university community for the resignation of many of its governors and struck an independence panel of three external experts to examine Concordia's leadership crisis.

"I am worried. Are we talking about governance or are we talking about power?" asked Charles Cavell, the former CEO of Quebecor World, as the proposal to create the external committee was questioned.

"External members are what got us into this mess," cried a faculty member from the gallery as many heads bobbed in support.

Shrugging off the jab from faculty, the 23 external members on Concordia's Board of 40 governors has been dodging intense criticism since the costly dismissal of President Judith Woodsworth on Dec. 22—the second dismissed president in just over three years.

Faculty and student leaders have said that the \$703,500 severance package given to Woodsworth less than half way through her first term was representative of a crisis gripping Concordia's upper administration.

With nearly \$10 million spent on severances and buyouts of senior administrators over the previous decade, the legitimacy of the Board's 23 external members was put into question as spending lost control.

As a result, all of Concordia's unions, student governments, and the Board's academic equal, the Senate, called for the resignation of certain Board members.

Despite the calls for resignation, the Feb. 17 meeting was about the proposed external committee.

Some faculty and governors present felt that the committee, formed under the supervision of the Board's handpicked interim president, Frederick Lowy, would not be critical of the crisis that rocked the university's upper administration.

"This Board, I don't believe has the right to delegate power, because



Concordia President Frederick Lowy was caught in a maelstrom at the Feb. 17 Board of Governors meeting. PHOTO ERIN SPARKS

that's bad governance," continued Cavell, a vice chair of the Board who has sat for 12-years.

"There are a number of issues where I am concerned about governance. I am concerned that we have committees that do important work where the balance [between campus and external members] isn't appropriate.

"We have union agreements, which award rights and privileges, which I think is bad governance.

"We are a well-run institution. I

listen with great appreciation to Fred [Lowy's] efforts to say, 'Let's work together,' because I can propose a number of changes in government that I think will remove inappropriate allocation of rights that don't represent the best interests of the institution."

The sharp string of comments from Cavell, after an hour of debate in the Board chamber, surprised many of the unionized faculty in attendance. With the anger clear on both sides, the debate ended and a

motion to create the committee passed.

The committee, whose members have yet to be announced, will likely include a former president from another university, an expert in university governance and a professor.

One of the men most blamed for the university's woes, Board Chair Peter Kruyt, was absent at the meeting, as he is on a three-month business trip to China. Kruyt has refused to step down, despite a widespread call for him to do so.

An unlikely defense of Kruyt came from Jean Freed, the representative for the Concordia University Part-Time Faculty Association. Freed countered the complaints by faculty against Kruyt and the Board by telling them that they were part of a "democratic process" that resulted in a coup against Woodsworth.

"It was crystal clear what was happening," said Freed, a non-voting member who can only speak for CUPFA. "I knew what was happening. We all knew what was happening.

"From my observation, the chair wasn't even the instigator. We all had a say on seeing Woodsworth go."

Freed's comments, while unexpected, reinforced the view that the lines of division running through the Board room were not clear and did not follow the faculty, student or community lines.

Sitting at the middle of the conflict was Lowy, appointed interim president in late January, who returned to a post he retired from in 2005.

"We do have a problem here," said Lowy, at the opening of the meeting. "Right now, there is a degree of concern and even anger in some quarters."

The interim president's remarks were delayed as the meeting's start in open session was pushed back by the unexpected influx of faculty. While Board meetings have an overflow room, where extra people can watch the broadcasted proceedings, provisional Chair Jonathan Wener was unable to convince the standing faculty and students to leave.

Seats were found and the chair relented, perhaps for the first time in the Board's history, allowing the extra bodies to remain.

"We will overcome the immediate crisis and we will come to see this, I hope, as an opportunity to explore change about how we govern ourselves, on the way we relate to each other and the way we foster learning, investigation and knowledge transfer," concluded Lowy.

Now that the Board has settled upon a means of examining its past behaviour, the interim president said he would concentrate on filling the gutted top ranks of the university, reassuring donors, rebuilding Concordia's battered reputation and meeting the demands of students.

Multinationals Against Muammar

Montrealers Gather to Protest Libyan Government Crackdown



Protesters from various ethnic backgrounds decried Libyan Dictator Muammar Gaddafi's brutal regime. PHOTO CHRISTOPHER CURTIS

• ADAM KOVAC

As citizens demand change in an ever-growing list of Middle Eastern countries, protesters rallying in Dorchester Square on Feb. 22 against Libya's embattled dictator Muammar Gaddafi proved that the desire for democracy is truly international.

Sporting Libyan flags and placards, protesters shouted chants decrying Gaddafi as a mass murderer and terrorist. The group included not just natives of that country, but of countries across the whole region as well as Canadians.

Shelly Fickler is a Canadian whose husband is from Libya. She came to the protest with her children, their faces painted with the red, black and green of the Libyan flag. She said there is a simple message she hopes her children take away from the protest.

"[I hope they learn that] our voices mean something [...] They stood up there in the face of severe personal damage," she said. "The least we can do is stand up here."

Fickler was not the only non-

"Gaddafi is killing children and [innocent people], I accuse the international community that does nothing."

—Nasim Foudel-Ladouras, Demonstrator

Libyan protester who expressed a feeling of solidarity. Nasim Foudel-Ladouras is an Algerian native who attended the rally. He expressed a bond that comes from both his shared religious and ethnic background with the Libyan protesters, as well as a desire to see democracy flourish in an area ruled mostly by despotic regimes.

"All Libyans are our brothers. They are Arab and Muslim like us," he said. "Gaddafi is killing children and [innocent people]. He's a crazy person. I don't accuse him, but I accuse the international community that does nothing [against] that."

While sending a message to those suffering overseas was a big reason many showed up at the rally, there was a desire to see action from the Canadian government. One man who was born in Libya and immigrated to Canada six years ago described the country as "hell," and insisted that Canada and other countries must play a role if Libya is to become a proper democracy. Prime Minister Stephen Harper has publicly condemned the Libyan government and introduced new sanctions above and beyond those declared by the United Nations.

"As a Canadian, we'd like to see [the government] liberate an unarmed population that's under attack," said Fickler. "At the very least, until the regime resigns, there should be sanctions. We should be pushing at the UN that there should be no-fly zones so they stop attacking unarmed people with helicopters and airplanes. I don't believe our ambassador [has left], so we should rescind him. Whatever political arsenal we have to impose our will on them, we should [use] it."

'The Frontrunner'

Administration and Student Union Open Up About Student Centre

• LAURA BEESTON

Months after the student centre referendum question was overwhelmingly rejected last November, the university's administration and the Concordia Student Union opened up to the student media on Feb. 22 to disclose a more detailed plan moving forward.

And that plan is, officially, for the Faubourg.

Acknowledging that "a lack of clarity and limitations of what could be said [about the Student Union Building]" hurt the November referendum, both parties said they are finally in a position to discuss the specifics of the SUB, and are ready to move forward on the Faubourg if students approve a plan to finance its purchase.

"[We're here to] reiterate our commitment to a partnership with the students," said acting VP Services Roger Côté, explaining the Faubourg is something being "seriously and actively" studied as the possible site for the future student centre.

"The university has a definite interest in that facility," he continued. "Between the various possibilities, this is one we would like to signal as being a very



The future home of our Student Union Building? The CSU and Concordia admin want your input. PHOTO RILEY SPARKS

prominent one. But that's something the students will have to accept."

While recognizing student concerns about the project—specifically a lack of clarity in the 2004 contract between the CSU

and the administration, as well as the potential loss of student space throughout the downtown campus as a result of centralization—CSU President Heather Lucas and VP External & Projects Adrien Severyns agreed that the

Faubourg "makes sense, [as] it's a part of Concordia and it's the most affordable and realistic option for us."

"What we want to see in the coming months is that the project incorporate the student body a

lot more," said Severyns, who said that members for a working group, called "the student space and student centre committee," will be appointed at the next CSU council meeting on March 9.

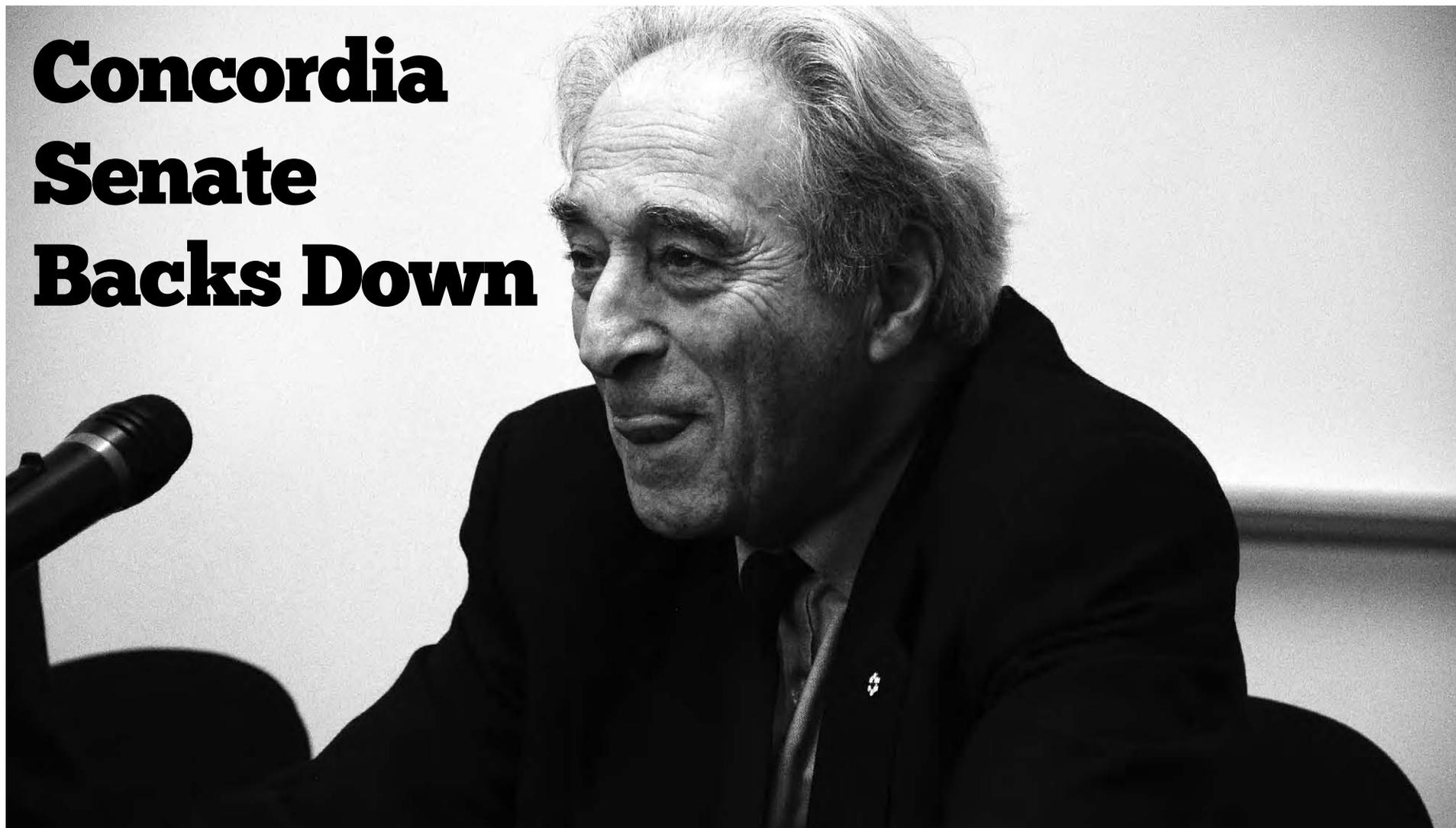
A working group of administrators and student councillors are also scheduled to meet in the coming weeks to update the renovation budget and operating costs, which weren't available as of press time.

"The numbers we presented [in November] were the generic ones, and we're now working towards clarifying them for this specific project," said Associate VP Facilities Management Peter Bolla, who added that renovations to the Faubourg are "still in the order of \$20 million."

With a reworked budget and a more developed idea of the location pending, and with students continuing to contribute approximately \$1.3 million in fee levies towards the student centre each year despite the failed November referendum, both the CSU and the administration seemed confident about the future of a project they can now discuss in the open.

"There has been a lot of work done, and I'm still optimistic we'll move forward on this soon," said Bolla.

Concordia Senate Backs Down



"I'm not recommending that an outside group of experts tell us how to run the university," President Lowy on why the committee to review Concordia's governance will not have binding powers. PHOTO ERIN SPARKS

Senate Softens Stance Against Board of Governors

• CHRISTOPHER CURTIS

Just weeks after demanding the resignation of the chair of the Board of Governors, the faculty and students on Concordia's Senate softened their tone on Feb. 19, agreeing to defer an investigation of the university's leadership crisis to a committee of experts.

In the wake of former Concordia President Judith Woodsworth's Dec. 22 dismissal, a wave of unrest swept through the university. Every major faculty and student union on campus ordered mass resignations at Concordia's Board of Governors for its role in the firing of a second university president in just over

three years.

In an unprecedented move, Senate unanimously expressed a loss of confidence in Concordia's Board and called for a series of reforms to the university's system of governance. At a Jan. 21 meeting, Senate recommended the formation of a commission—comprised of 10 Senators and 10 Board members—to appoint future Board members and review the university's governance crisis.

On Feb. 19, Senate agreed to outsource the investigation to a committee of three external experts in university governance. Concordia Interim President Frederick Lowy said a smaller committee

would be able to make recommendations quickly so that the university could begin the process of "moving on."

The Senate pushed for the committee to have at least one current or former professor on it, but its findings and recommendations will not be binding.

"I think this thing is a bit of an exercise," said Robert Sonin, who represents graduate students on Senate. "If we're going to have people who are going to do this investigation and ask things and make recommendations only to have this thing deposited to the Board of Governors and they thank us and that's it. I don't see the point of it."

Lowy repeatedly defended the idea of a non-binding committee, ultimately winning the approval of Senate.

"I'm not recommending that an outside group of experts tell us how to run the university," said Concordia President Frederick Lowy. "What I would welcome is to have a group of experts take a look at what we've done, take a look at what we could do to make governance better and give us some advice, which we could take or not take."

Ironically, most of the controversy over Woodsworth's dismissal surrounds the undue influence wielded by the Board's executive

committee—largely comprised of businessmen from outside the university.

While Senate took no further action against the Board on Friday, much of the tension exhibited by Senate at the Jan. 21 meeting remained. Senator David Douglas had strong words for Lowy, openly questioning where his loyalties lay.

"The Board decided not to meet with [Senate] and instead chose to designate [Lowy], which makes [Lowy] their de facto representative," said Douglas. "You were selected by the internal committee of the Board of Governors so I think there is some confusion as to who you're representing here."

FOR YOUR EYES ONLY: CONFIDENTIALITY AGREEMENTS DEBATED AT SENATE

• CHRISTOPHER CURTIS

A new Concordia regulation requires people attending certain thesis defenses at the university to sign a non-disclosure agreement.

The rule was approved by the Council for the School of Graduate Studies on Oct. 18 but became the object of controversy at a Feb. 19 Concordia Senate meeting.

"It seems to me that that's a very strange thing for a public university to be involved with," said professor David Douglas at the meeting. "It imposes a barrier between students and professors."

A number of thesis supervisors in Concordia's Engineering and

Computer Science departments are engaged in research funded by private companies. In most cases, these professors are under contractual obligation to keep the findings of their research confidential to prevent rival companies from gaining a competitive advantage. Students participating in this research are also bound to a non-disclosure agreement.

During the Feb. 19 Senate meeting, Douglas and a number of other senators criticized the university's partnership with private corporations for research projects.

"I think corporations have to realize that if they want their research to be private there are plenty of private think tanks they

can go to," said Douglas. "Let's not kid ourselves, [private corporations] are not doing us any favours. They are gaining access to cheap labour and the minds of the next generation."

Concordia Provost David Graham defended the confidentiality agreements as "just a fact of life."

"Students achieve great enrichment through close direct contact with industrial partners," he said. "These confidentiality agreements are just a reality of business."

Mourad Debbadi, director of the Concordia Institute for Information Systems Engineering, said the confidentiality agreements were necessary if students want to gain access to real-world experi-

ence.

Debbadi is also the vice president of the National Cyber Forensics Training Alliance, a cyber-crime fighting squad that partners Concordia with companies like Microsoft, Bell Canada, Rogers Communications and law enforcement agencies across Canada.

"We have access to internet service provider data that is sensitive," said Debbadi. "So it's necessary to maintain a level of confidentiality."

Still, Graham and Debbadi's claims were met with some level of skepticism from other senators.

"Who gets to decide what is secret?" asked Douglas. "Compa-

nies have very expansive agendas in what they consider private."

Robert Sonin and Rusdia Mehreen, who represent graduate students on Senate, also questioned the use of non-disclosure agreements as too common.

"My concern is that it's almost becoming normal for confidentiality to be applied," said Sonin. "Research should be open; confidentiality should only be used in extreme situations."

Although Senate had no say in the implementation of the new rule, professor William Lynch said that Senate would take the matter to the Planning Priorities Committee to ensure the School of Graduate Studies regulates the use of confidentiality agreements.

City Approves UdeM Expansion

Community Groups Rally Against Proposed UdeM Outremont Campus

• SIMON LIEM

A motion passed by Montreal's city council last week approving the construction of the controversial \$1 billion Outremont campus for the Université de Montréal has "terribly upset" community groups in Parc-Extension.

"We feel like we've been lied to," said Giuliana Fumagalli, a spokesperson for the Citizen's Committee of Parc-Extension.

Mary Deros, the city councillor for the Parc-Extension district, told Fumagalli and several other organizers that when the motion to approve the building of the campus came up, she would walk out on the vote. Deros instead voted in favour of the motion.

Deros said that in the days after making her promise, she reviewed more information on the project and some of the revised proposals. Deros then decided that the project was actually an "opportunity in our backyard."

She said that since the project will take place over 20 years and meetings are being arranged to allow communities to voice their grievances, she is confident that UdeM will be open to responding to citizens' concerns and that the new



A 2007 mockup of what the Université de Montréal's new campus would look like. Critics of the \$1 billion project are alleging it could drive up the demand for housing and the price of rent in Parc Ex. PHOTO NICOLAS MARCHILDON

campus can be mutually beneficial to Parc-Extension and UdeM.

The city council passed two motions related to the project on Feb. 22. One was to approve new zoning regulations for the large triangle of land sandwiched between Outremont and Parc-Extension. The area was formerly a train yard owned by Canadian Pacific. The other motion was to approve an agreement between the city and

UdeM to define the conditions of the project.

Parc-Extension community organizers wanted to delay the vote to do further "internal consultations" within the community to better inform people of what the project was.

In 2006, UdeM purchased the land for \$18 million to construct a new campus for the university. The estimated cost for preparing the construction site and building the

required infrastructure is \$120 million—\$60 million of which will be covered by the City of Montreal.

The site is within the Outremont district, but Parc-Extension residents are worried about the impact the campus may have on their neighbourhood.

Concerns include the gentrification that might come with the estimated 10,000 students who would be moving into the area and the

possibility of rising rent prices.

Marisa Celli, a press aide for the mayor's office of Villeray-Saint-Michel-Parc-Extension, said because the way Parc-Extension is "closed in on itself," community groups and even the mayor of the borough, Anie Samson, are worried that the construction of the new campus might make access to the neighbourhood even more difficult or turn Parc-Extension into a "traffic calming zone."

Celli added that so far the presentations on how the campus will be built have not yet addressed those concerns.

Richard Deschamps, a member of the Executive Committee in charge of infrastructure, will now organize "programme particulier d'urbanisme" meetings to discuss how development between the university and the surrounding neighbourhoods will go forward. The meetings will be open to all residents and council members so they may voice their grievances about how the new campus might affect them and offer solutions to problems.

Now that the motions have passed, UdeM still must await funding approval from the province before proceeding with construction.

Fresh Eyes on an Old House

Concordia Students Fight to Preserve a Historic Monument

• CELIA STE CROIX

You've probably seen that Heritage Minute spot on TV where Baldwin and Lafontaine fight for responsible government in the 1800s.

You know—responsible government, where our elected representatives run the country instead of it being run by the Queen. Lafontaine was also the guy who fought to ensure French Canadians had the right to vote, assemble freely and speak their own language in the House, a pretty big deal in our history.

So why is Lafontaine's mansion at 1395 Overdale Street falling to ruin?

Ashley Clarkson and Selina Antonucci want to know just that. What started out as an assignment for a Public History class has grown into a peaceful advocacy demonstration that took place outside the Mansion on Feb. 23. Their efforts have also brought about TV news coverage and a meeting with representatives from Montreal Mayor Gérald Tremblay's office.

"Right now the city is really indifferent about the building," Clarkson said at the demonstra-



Ashley Clarkson and Selina Antonucci stand outside Louis Hyppolyte Lafontaine's former mansion. PHOTO CELIA STE CROIX

tion. "They have made the owner preserve it; he's not allowed to demolish it, but they're not doing

anything with it, so we are hoping, with this petition and raising awareness, the city will show in-

terest in the building and hopefully restore it into maybe a museum for responsible government."

These two students are awakening an issue that people have been struggling to resolve for decades.

Architect Michael Fish has been fighting to protect heritage buildings in the downtown core for 30 years and he has watched the Lafontaine Mansion fall apart for decades.

"It's as if I'm in Virginia watching Mount Vernon [George Washington's House] burn slowly over a period of 30 years," Fish said, looking up at the house covered in graffiti, smashed windows and boarded up doors.

Anthropology teacher Anna Deaguayo, currently teaching at Dawson College, was part of Les Amis de la Maison Lafontaine in 2006. They were a group of Canadian Studies and History teachers that came together to draw attention to the situation surrounding the mansion. They also wanted to turn it into a centre for the interpretation of responsible government.

"It is one of the only buildings of that era," explained Deaguayo.

"The parliament buildings are gone, they are actually trying to preserve the base of those buildings by digging down because it's important—yet this, from the same time period, it's just being left. It's such a shame."

The owner of the building is said to not be interested in preserving it, and judging by the state of the house, that seems like a fair guess. The city has the power to expropriate the building and according to Deaguayo, the provincial and federal governments would then be willing to put money into it. But despite numerous petitions and efforts of grassroots organisations, the city has not moved to protect the building.

Land owner Robert Landau had no comment when *The Link* reached him at his Sherbrooke Street art gallery the day of the advocacy.

Clarkson and Antonucci will meet with representatives of Mayor Tremblay's office March 3 to present their petition and discuss the issue.

To sign their petition go to www.lhlafountainemansion.wbnod.com

Briefs

Lockout Over

The two-year lockout at the *Journal de Montréal* ended earlier this week. The union came to an agreement with the newspaper's management that sees only 62 of the 253 of the locked out employees return to work. A \$20 million compensation package will be divided among the remaining employees.

La Belle Reich

A Quebec tourist was arrested in Germany after being photographed in front of the Reichstag in Berlin giving the Nazi salute. Police arrived on the scene almost immediately after the man's girlfriend took the picture. The man faces a fine, but making the forbidden gesture is punishable with jail time.

Skiing Death

A 13-year-old died Saturday night after hitting a tree while skiing in Morin Heights, just northwest of Montreal. The teen lost control on an intermediate run around 7:00 p.m., and died an hour later in hospital. This was the hill's first death since 1992.

Robinson Home Honoured

The U.S. government is officially recognizing a Montreal home where pioneering baseball player Jackie Robinson lived early in his career. The U.S. ambassador to Canada, the mayor and Robinson's daughter will attend the ceremony where a commemorative plaque will be placed on the apartment.

Laval Drowning

After being pulled from the Rivière des Prairies, between Laval and Montreal, a man in his 50s was taken to hospital, but died shortly after he arrived. It is still unclear why he was in the water.

SQ to Investigate Sleeping Cops

Two SQ officers were caught sleeping in their cruiser by a passing motorist on Feb. 24 outside of Trois-Rivières. While filming the snoozing green jackets, the motorist was given a \$156 ticket by one of the waking officers for a parking violation. The officers are under investigation by the SQ and the motorist is contesting the ticket.

ASFA Votes 2011

New VP's Promise to Right Past Wrongs

PRESIDENT

ALEX GORDON
77.4%
662 VOTES

ABSTAIN
21.7%
186 VOTES

FINANCE

LAURA GOMEZ
43.8%
374 VOTES

PIER-LUC T. PELOQUIN
27.1%
232 VOTES

BEN PRUNTY 11.1% 95 VOTES
ABSTAIN 17.2% 147 VOTES

INT. AFFAIRES

SCHUBERT LAFOREST
39.6%
340 VOTES

TANYA-MICHELLE CONTENTE
38.3%
329 VOTES

ABSTAIN
21.2%
182 VOTES

SOCIAL AFFAIRS

COLMAN G. AUCOIN
72.2%
618 VOTES

ABSTAIN
26.6%
228 VOTES

EXTERNAL & SUSTAINABILITY

ASMA OMAR
69%
589 VOTES

ABSTAIN
30%
253 VOTES

ACADEMIC & LOYOLA AFFAIRS

CHRISTINA GENTILE
42.2%
375 VOTES

DIANA SITOIANU
39.4%
350 VOTES

ABSTAIN
17.5%
156 VOTES

• LAURA BEESTON
& CHRISTOPHER CURTIS

After a year that saw financial issues take centre stage at the council of the Arts and Science Federation of Associations, perhaps no position was as relevant to the 2011 Campaign as that of VP Finance.

Just after midnight on Feb. 18, Laura Gomez was declared VP Finance-elect. In the following days, Gomez began the process of transitioning into her new job, which she believes will be the key to eliminating many of the problems that dominated this year's ASFA Council meetings.

After meeting with current VP Finance Alexa Newman and President-elect Alex Gordon over the weekend, Gomez said she wants to be as prepared as possible to work out clubs budgets and Frosh spending.

"Everyone should take into ac-

count that there wasn't a proper transition from VP to VP last year, which made it hard for [Newman] to present clubs with her budget before it was expected," explained Gomez, referring to an Oct. 14 Council meeting in which member associations were presented with their budgets moments before they had to vote on them.

Another big issue that Gomez is taking into account is the unequal distribution of funds amongst MAs. Last November, the Math and Statistics Student Association voiced a concern that funds were disproportionately allocated and criticized ASFA for not ceding enough financial autonomy to MAs.

MASA eventually moved to incorporate as a separate legal entity from ASFA.

Gomez has already met with both MASSA and the Students of History At Concordia to discuss ASFA's financial future.

Her most pressing political platform, however, is putting ASFA's finances online. Part of the problem last year, she said, was that ASFA was unable to show where all the financial resources were going. She promised to keep open books and an open door.

Next Stop: Loyola

After running a campaign that involved her posters garnering global attention on the Internet, VP-elect for Academics and Loyola Christina Gentile is "really relieved" that the elections are over and that she can get going on her stacked mandate.

Following the upcoming meeting of the newly elected executives-to-be, Gentile's first order of business is to speak directly with the Dean of Arts and Science to discuss the more challenging aspects of her platform she wants to

bring to life—specifically setting up an ASFA office at the Loyola campus and the possibilities of a Concordia shuttle bus connecting to the Vendôme Metro.

Gentile also said she's waiting to see who ends up in the Concordia Student Union Loyola VP position, as she hopes there will be an interest to work collaboratively on the shuttle bus proposal and other Loyola initiatives. She also said she plans to contact the Société de transport de Montréal and Allego Concordia and "take it from there."

Refreshed and ready to take on her new position on ASFA, Gentile said she was excited to get started.

"I am extremely passionate about both my academic and Loyola platforms," she said. "I will do my best to make sure that the students' needs are met. I'm really looking forward to working with the students."

GRAPHIC CLÉMENT LIU

ASFA to Revamp Election Rules, Again

After 33 per cent Decrease in Voter Turnout, Political Parties Likely Making a Comeback

• JULIAN WARD

Another Arts and Sciences Federation of Associations election has come and gone, and less expected than the results were the effect that new electoral rules played on the election process and overall turnout.

New rules were put in place this year in response to last year's scandal-plagued election, which saw candidates in tears, calling lawyers to complain of bullying tactics from opposing sides.

The rules were changed this year so that candidates had to run individually and not in teams, as had been the practice in past elections. The thought was that if individuals had to campaign against one another it would cut out the bullying tactic of teaming up en masse against people as was seen last year.

The bullying was certainly cut out this year due to the rule change, but the election also saw a 33 per cent decline in voter turnout and not all of the positions had people running for

them.

"That's a significant decrease," says Nick Cuillerier, ASFA's chief electoral officer. He said that the rule change is "definitely attributable to the fact that there were less candidates running. We went from 28 candidates running last year to 12 this year.

"Despite the decrease in the actual total vote, if you look at the actual votes per candidate divided by the amount of candidates running, there's actually a 70 per cent increase. That is something noteworthy," he said.

Cuillerier doesn't believe that the rules will stay the same for next year.

"We're going to be looking at a system that includes both affiliations and a fair playing ground for individual candidates that will be revealed at next Thursday's ASFA council meeting," he said.

He also noted he was disappointed that no one ran for VP Communications and the third available Independent Councillor position. What's more, only three

of the seven executive positions were contested. Cuillerier suggested that ASFA create a policy whereby empty positions can be advertised so that students are more aware of opportunities to run.

Besides eliminating bullying tactics, Cuillerier noted that there were other positive changes seen in this year's election.

"[A major positive change was] moving the polling station at Loyola to just outside the library. That polling station was a huge success. It was the second most popular polling station on campus."

Another change that got positive feedback was the availability of the 150-word executive summaries on each of the candidates available at all polling stations.

"At Loyola, 70 per cent of voters looked at the executive summary. At SGW, 40 per cent looked at the executive summaries. That means a total of over 500 people actually looked at the executive summaries before voting," he said.



Nick Cuillerier admitted the elimination of political parties had a part to play in this year's election flop. PHOTO CHRISTOPHER CURTIS

The Director of ASFA

President-elect Speaks About Apathy, Accreditation and Allowances

• JUSTIN GIOVANNETTI

Alex Gordon, the president-elect of the Arts and Science Federation of Associations, is keeping mum about his plans for his time in office.

Running unopposed, a spiky coiffed Gordon was elected with 77.4 per cent of the 855 votes cast during the ASFA election, which ran from Feb. 15 to 17.

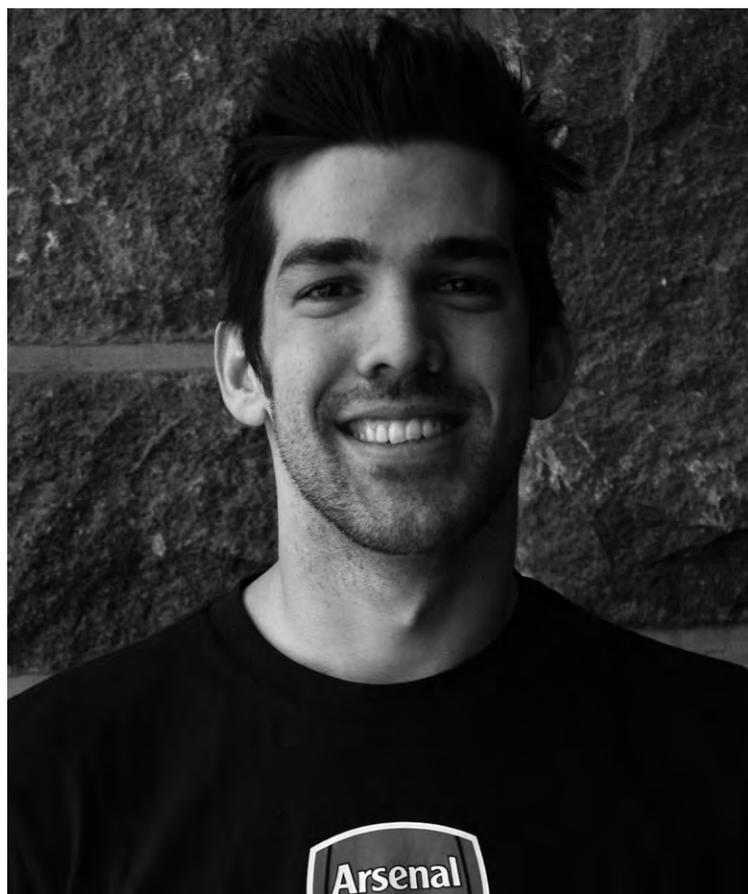
"You'll find out what my projects are," Gordon told *The Link* a week after his victory. "I'm not going to say it, I'm going to do it."

Having yet to convene the other five members of his executive—each ASFA VP is elected independently—Gordon wasn't ready to comment on what his administration's direction would be.

The president-elect confirmed that he would sit down with his cabinet by the end of the week to "get our heads straight" and sketch out the path for the representatives of Concordia's 15,500 Arts and Science students.

Expect ASFA to maintain the status quo next year, as only half of the candidates ran opposed and none of the executives-elect ran any original policy platforms, preferring instead to campaign with platitudes.

Despite his light policy agenda, Gordon said he had al-



"The fight's not over. This was only step one, winning the election." PHOTO CHRISTOPHER CURTIS

ready committed to his first duty at the Federation: ending the student indifference that marked an election with a 5.7 per cent turnout.

"The fight's not over. This was

only step one, winning the election," said Gordon. "It's an ever-growing office, the next immediate step is Member Associations. MA elections are this week and I want to get the right

people in there, people who want to do good and get involved because that's the foundation of ASFA, getting solid Member Associations."

ASFA's Council is composed of delegates from the 27 MAs who represent the programs of the faculty of Arts and Science.

"I'm going to try to create interest and seek those who are interested," Gordon said of the MA elections that will largely be held from March 1 to 4.

Gordon will be inheriting a Federation from outgoing President Aaron Green that has undergone a series of unresolved shakeups. The most serious of those challenges to ASFA was an attempt by the Mathematics and Statistics Students Association to seek accreditation.

MASA's announcement came after the small Math association felt that it was disproportionately punished for violating a financial rule earlier in the year. The punishment led to ASFA removing MASA's budget and putting it under a tight fiscal leash.

With accreditation, MASA would hold the same legal status as ASFA and could begin collecting money directly from its own students.

"If MAs want to get accredited, I don't necessarily see a problem with it, as long as they don't try to

leave ASFA or change what we do," said Gordon, who stressed the added weight of ASFA's collective voice.

The president-elect was not as friendly about the idea of accredited MAs collecting an independent fee levy.

"That's another can of worms," said Gordon, possibly setting up a fight in the new council with MAs seeking a more stable source of funding.

Gordon admitted that he might seek to "tweak" the budget, eliminating some of the inequality in the budgets given out the MAs. In November, an investigation by *The Link* found that some MAs were being given far more than the average of \$5.70 per student doled out by ASFA. One MA, the tiny Science College, received nearly \$40 per student, the most per student of any member association.

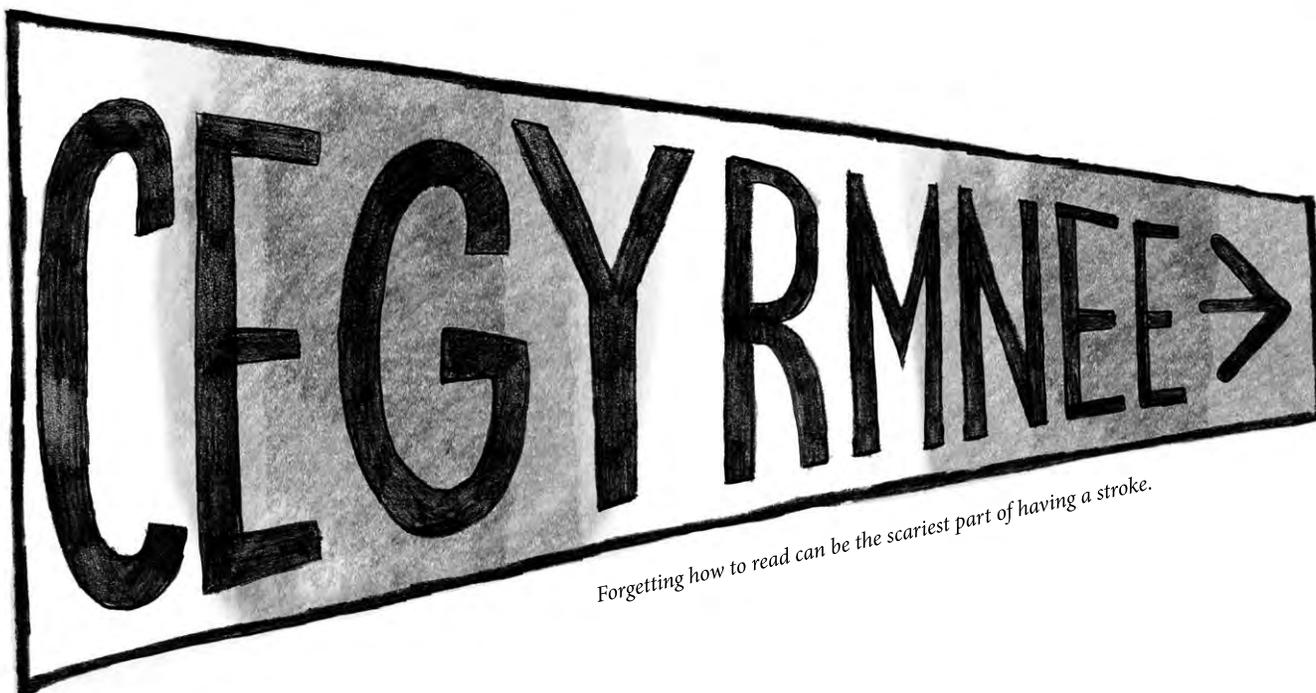
While the president-elect considered fighting tuition a "paramount issue," he was unsure about what role ASFA would play.

"I don't know how the needs of students and the mandates of all the student association, whether it be the Concordia Student Union or others, how in line they are," he said. "I want to wait until we can all get back together and make sure we are all on the same page."

PAIN IN THE MEMBRANE: GOT PAIN IN THE BRAIN

'Only a Stroke'

A Student's Journey From a Little Pain to a Life Regained



GRAPHIC CHRIS OLSON

• ALEX HILMI—*THE FULCRUM*
(UNIVERSITY OF OTTAWA)

OTTAWA, Ont. (CUP)—It all started with a headache.

It wasn't your typical drank-too-much-the-night-before headache. The night before had been spent working on an assignment in that all too familiar last-minute crunch. Still, a headache wasn't something to stress about—a few heavy doses of Advil and it should have been a thing of the past.

It persisted for several days. And it got worse, eventually taking on a mind of its own. When my vision started getting blurry, I figured it was time to look into this extraordinary headache. This, of course, meant a combination of Google and WebMD. After a self-diagnosis that I had a migraine, I made a trip to the pharmacy. A skinny man looked at me from across the counter as I described my symptoms.

"Yeah, that's a migraine alright. Is your other medication not working?" he asked. I was confused.

"What do you mean 'other medication?'"

He looked about as confused as I was.

"Well, you've had migraines before, right? You don't just get them." He then recommended I see a doctor—immediately.

With frustration starting to build, I made my way to the campus health clinic and waited until I saw

a doctor. His name was Dr. Engleheart; he was a patient man who listened to my symptoms with a trained ear, and then said the life-changing phrase.

"Alex, I do not want to alarm you, but you need to go to emergency right away and have a CAT scan. These symptoms can only be caused by a problem in the brain, and it could be an aneurysm."

Read it and weep

It was a split second after I heard these words that all my frustration from earlier turned into a chilling fear. My headache suddenly seemed to be screaming at me from inside my skull, as if my rapidly increasing heart rate was aggravating whatever ailed me. As the seriousness of the situation began to sink in on the cab ride to the hospital, I was struck with a disturbing new side-effect.

From one minute to the next, I forgot how to read—words became a blurred, incomprehensible mess. By the time I got to the hospital, I had gone from fear to panic. After going in a side door, I was told that I was not in emergency. Confused, scared and shaken up, I asked how to get there.

"Oh, it's easy," a hospital worker informed me. "Just follow the signs."

The walk from reception to the emergency room was the worst ex-

perience of this ordeal. Imagine stumbling aimlessly through a hospital. The side of your head feels like your brain is trying to break through your skull, while fear, panic and a host of other emotions burn through your mind—and, on top of everything, you can't even read the fucking signs telling you where to go. Eventually, I made it, and it only took about 15 minutes before I was lying on my back in a hospital gown having a CT scan.

Afterwards, the doctor came over with the head diagnostician, ominously wanting to speak with me. They matter-of-factly explained that they had seen a mass on the CT scan and they thought it might be a brain tumor. My headache seemed to subside upon hearing the news. The rushing in my ears went away, and I just nodded and asked for a few minutes alone.

I had brought my backpack with me, so I slid down the wall, pulled out my laptop, and put on music. It was soothing—something by Bonobo. My doctor came in again with a bag in her hand. She had brought me some food, and together we sat on the floor and ate sandwiches and drank chocolate milk. To this day, chocolate milk has become a sort of comfort food, reminding me of sitting on the floor digesting the possibility of having a brain tumor.

A stroke of luck?

One MRI later, the neurosurgeon came over to my bed. He sat down, and explained that brain tumors are fatal 90 per cent of the time. But then he told me I didn't need to worry about this, as I did not have one—I had only had a stroke.

It seems strange to say "only had a stroke"—especially when I was only 21 years old when this happened—but considering the odds of the other possibility, I can see why he phrased it like that.

I was taken to the Neurological Care Facility: Stroke Ward. If you have ever had a nightmare about being trapped in a place surrounded by sorrow, death and suffering and thought it was hell, it was probably the stroke ward. It was the single most depressing, traumatizing and mentally unnerving experience of my life, and I spent two weeks there.

I was a favourite of the nursing staff. They had become quite cynical working on this floor, and they told me that I was the youngest patient they had ever had—and also the only one they knew would walk out of there.

There was one night when my blood pressure skyrocketed and the headache came back, despite the morphine. They told me everything was fine, but they checked on me constantly and I got the impression

they feared I was about to take a turn for the worse.

Before I could fall asleep that night, I had to wrestle with the fact that I might not wake up. It's a difficult thing to do—at 3:00 a.m., full of painkillers and your family not by your side—to realize when you close your eyes you might never open them again. At that point, I had regrets, but nothing involving money or success. It was simply for not having been a better person, wishing I had made better decisions, or not having told the people I love that I love them one last time.

After a night like that, waking up in the morning was the greatest blessing in the world. When I was finally released, the nursing staff gathered to wish me well and I told them that I hoped I never saw them again.

Everything is different now. Everything is somehow better. It was an opportunity to grow up and begin living a life of restrictions, self-discipline and big-picture mentality. I love it. Weight loss, good health, a sense of maturity, realizing that my actions affect everyone around me, learning how to be less selfish and more selfless—all things I had wished for but had never been able to achieve on my own. These things, and a new lease on life, were given to me, to use at my own will.

The stroke happened last August, two weeks after my birthday,

WAR IS

PEACE

SLAVERY IS

FREEDOM

THE LINK IS

REALLY

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tuesdays. do it.

Afghanistan Special Issue



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Know Your War

A nation that is only 264 years old is home to a people that have been around for at least 3,000 years. A people with a history of war, conquests and invasions, the Pashtun had been living in the conflict-prone area that is now Afghanistan for millennia before Ahmad Shah Durrani unified Pashtun tribes and founded Afghanistan in 1747.

*DATA FROM THE CIA'S WORLD FACT BOOK . COMPILED BY JULIA JONES

Before 1747, the word "Afghan" was used as a synonym for Pashtun. As part of Afghanistan's nation-building project early in the twentieth century, the term increasingly began to mean "citizen of Afghanistan."

The Soviet-backed communist govern-

ment of the '70s and '80s and its ideology of unification only aggravated the ethnic conflicts in Afghanistan; the Pashtun/non-Pashtun animosity within the People's Democratic Party, then in power, was a leading factor in its dissolution.

The anti-Soviet resistance, very much

alike, was also ethnically based, and after the Soviets withdrew, the country became fragmented.

After the American invasion in 2001, the divide between the Taliban and its enemies also became a Pashtun/non-Pashtun dispute.

At this point, the Pashtuns want a stronger voice in the government, leading all other groups to believe they are being sidelined—which reinforces ideas such as that the Turkmens belong to Turkmenistan, the Uzbeks to Uzbekistan, and the Tajiks to Tajikistan.



PEOPLE RELIGION

Ethnicity

Pashtun 42%, Tajik 27%, Hazara 9%, Uzbek 9%, Aimak 4%, Turkmen 3%, Baloch 2%, other 4%.

Age

0-14 years: 43.6% (male 6,343,611/female 6,036,673)

15-64 years: 54% (male 7,864,422/female 7,470,617)

65 years and over: 2.4% (male 326,873/female 353,520) (2010 est.)

Language

Afghan Persian, or Dari 50%, Pashto 35%, Turkic languages (primarily Uzbek and Turkmen) 11%, 30 minor languages (primarily Balochi and Pashai) 4%.

Sunni Muslim 80%, Shia Muslim 19%, Other 1%

Whereas Afghanistan's Pashtun majority are Sunni Muslims, the Hazara are Shi'a, and the Nuristani have polytheistic influences in their cultural practices, despite being Muslim—differences used to legitimize warfare and ethnic persecution.



ECONOMY

Arable land: 12.13%, permanent crops: 0.21%, other: 87.66% (2005)

Natural gas, petroleum, coal, copper, chromite, talc, barites, sulfur, lead, zinc, iron ore, salt, precious and semiprecious stones

■ = arable land

GEOGRAPHY

Approximately the size of Texas, with a total area of 652,230 sq km, Afghanistan is bordered on the north by Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan and Tajikistan, on the northeast by China, on the southeast by Pakistan and on the west by Iran. Afghanistan is a mountainous country with the exception of the southwest. Most of the terrain is covered by valleys and snow-peaked mountains, such as the Hindu Kush Mountains, which split the country east to west. The land is not generally lush, and a dearth of water has been and continues to be one of Afghanistan's most pressing problems.

This rugged terrain, however, has not stopped invasions in Afghanistan.

Victory at Any Cost?

DESPITE 'OVERWHELMING' CORRUPTION IN AFGHANISTAN, CANADA FIGHTS ON

• JUSTIN GIOVANNETTI

The true scale of Afghanistan's corruption only became obvious in December when cables released by WikiLeaks depicted a state rotten to its very core, festering with bribery, extortion and embezzlement at every level of government.

Described in the interchangeable terms of overwhelming and monumental, the staggering scale of the corruption had opposition leaders in the House of Commons wondering aloud why Canada was supporting such a tainted government.

Despite the rhetoric, one expert believes that the corruption might not be such a bad thing.

"It's the cost of doing business," said Julian Schofield, a Concordia Political Science professor and expert on Afghanistan. "Half the things we call corrupt are things we don't like, which is why we call them corrupt."

Among the practices that have been criticized by western authorities as corrupt is hawala, a system of informal money transfers that occurs without government supervi-

sion. With hawala, money is transferred through verbal agreements and goods, not through currency exchanges like those found in western systems.

Afghanistan's mortgage industry, based on handwritten letters and families lending money to individuals, has also been criticised. As with hawala and much of Afghanistan's corruption, it occurs outside of government regulation.

At the top of the complaint list is a rich system of kickbacks where provincial governors demand payments from their citizens for being in their power.

"Some of those things are out-and-out extortion and other times it is payment for services where the institutions don't exist," said Schofield. "We call it corruption, but it's basically extra-institution behaviour."

The reason for this corruption is two-fold. Partly it has to do with a flood of money into the country after NATO's invasion in 2001; Kabul is now awash in billions of dollars of aid money and thousands of highly paid foreign experts, causing rents and prices to skyrocket.

This was accompanied by a complete failure of institution building, where the local government was left to build its own legitimacy and bureaucracy.

"We should either do it our way or not at all," said Schofield. "If we set up institutions and we don't police them, we will have massive corruption where people put money in Swiss bank accounts. If we enforce

"We can't wish away corruption."

—Julian Schofield,
Political Science professor

it, we will need to knock heads.

"That will involve making tough decisions about the drug trade and the structure of the family. But so far we haven't been willing to do those things, because that would mean we would be fighting the Afghan people. We [are] fighting the Taliban, and we don't really want to fight the Taliban, we want to fight al Qaeda."

Compared to previous conflicts like Korea, where western powers

adopted a colonial approach and dominated the construction of new institutions, Afghanistan saw little of the same attention—a problem made worse by the realities of a country that's been at war for nearly a century.

When asked about western institution building, Schofield was quick to respond.

"We haven't done anything," he laughed. "We gave them money for projects that were not built because our forces couldn't establish security. There isn't much institution building going on in Afghanistan."

Canada's top diplomat in Afghanistan was quoted in a leaked memo warning that the corruption of President Hamid Karzai's government "makes my blood boil." Foreign Affairs Minister Lawrence Cannon downplayed the comment, which caused diplomatic waves.

"Both the government of Afghanistan and the government of Canada agree that corruption is one of the major challenges facing Afghanistan. Our government raises concerns regarding issues of democracy, human rights, as well as the rule of law directly with the

Afghan authorities and we expect our ambassadors to do exactly that," Cannon said during a Question Period in early December.

The government has remained quiet on the issue of Afghan corruption, not willing to push an already unstable local government. American and other authorities have adopted a similar non-approach.

"We can't wish away corruption; the only thing we can do is cut off aid or provide close supervision," said Schofield, two options not currently being considered by the west.

"What's happening in Afghanistan is normal; it's always been like that. It's an adaptive way to survive," said Schofield.

"To change it will take a massive reeducation of the population and a very strong state apparatus to punish corruption, which means a police state like Egypt, South Korea or Japan, where people are punished for breaking the law."

With Canada and NATO tied up fighting a war in the South-West Asian country, the ongoing cost of bribery and extortion might seem acceptable compared to the price of ending it.

THE COST OF OUR 'JUST' WAR?

• DIEGO PELAEZ-GAETZ

We can't possibly leave, we're told.

In 2008, a government report said that leaving Afghanistan would cause "more harm than good," a claim recently backed-up by Liberal MP Bob Rae. We put up with it because it is the more honorable war in the Middle East, and we were justified in joining this war just as we were justified in staying out of Iraq.

With a seemingly bullet-proof Prime Minister gearing up for another election run (who is Ignatieff here for again?) and promising to keep troops in Afghanistan past the long-agreed-upon exit date, perhaps it's time to reflect on what exactly it is we are doing with the billions of dollars we are diverting

from our budget, and why it is that—even with gigabytes of information pointing to the opposite—we still cling to the notion that democratizing a country is as easy as killing tens of thousands of their citizens and destroying essential infrastructure.

This war is not Canada's war. As far back as 2007, 56 per cent of Canadians said that they wanted Canadian troops out of Afghanistan, according to a CBC poll. In a more recent poll, 52 per cent of Afghans said that they want NATO out as soon as possible.

We are still in Afghanistan, quite simply, because we have agreed to bear the brunt of the combat responsibilities of the over-extended American Army. We have agreed that, despite 2010 being a record year for civilian ca-

sualties in Afghanistan with nearly 3,000 killed, the best way to democratize the country is to train a sizeable military and hope that the person who ends up controlling this group has democratic aspirations.

This is also difficult to accomplish when the person currently in charge, Hamid Karzai, is closely linked to influential drug dealers, including his own brother. Canadian troops were told in 2007 to apprehend opium dealers and to destroy opium production facilities—as long as there was proof of a link to the Taliban.

Apparently, opium is only harmful in the hands of terrorists rather than government officials, and we're footing the bill to protect the chokehold on the market of some of the most prolific opium

producers in the world.

But the lack of protest in this country surrounding the Afghanistan war is more indicative of the general political apathy of our population than a general acceptance of the war. When barely half of the population can be bothered to vote, how many can be expected to protest a war that hardly affects them and appears to them mostly as a heroic recruitment ad for the military?

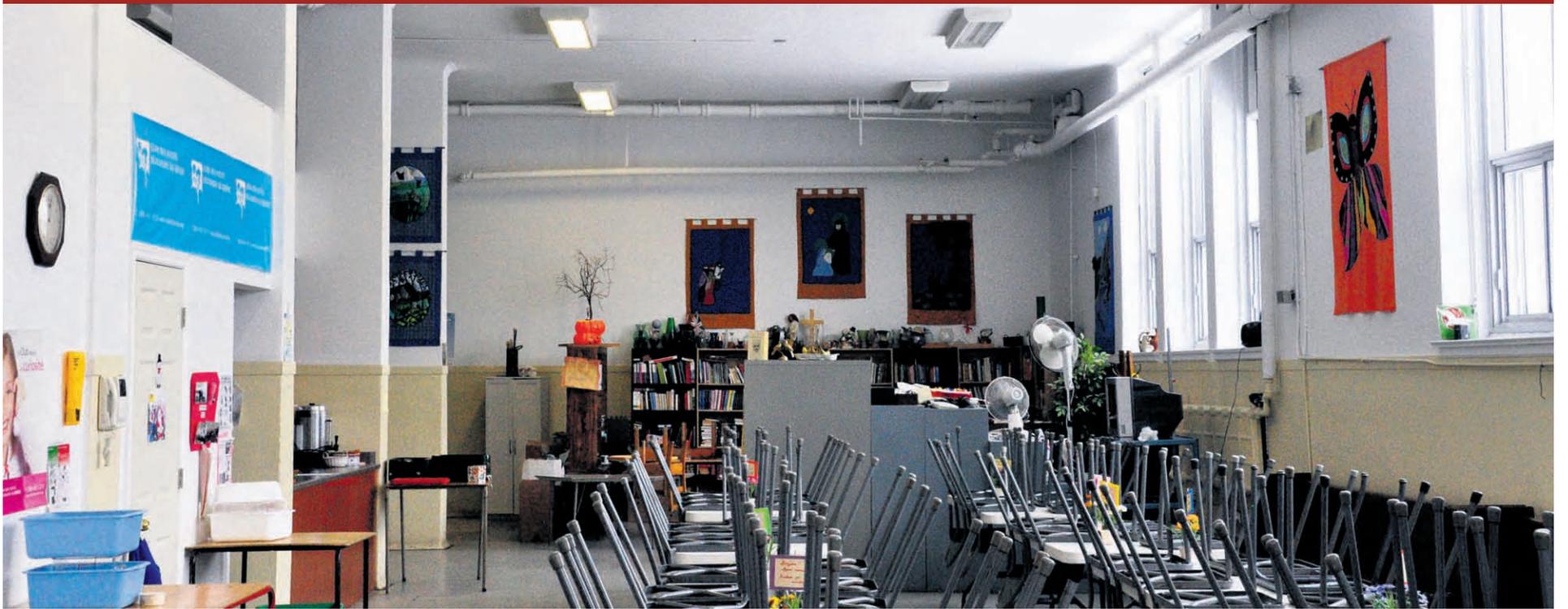
It's time we stopped infantilizing the third world. There's little evidence that leaving Afghanistan would be calamitous to anything except our political relationship (subservience?) with the Great War Machine to the south. And if the last few weeks have proven anything, it's that suppressed populations in the Middle East can

fight for democracy themselves without the help of indiscriminate bombing and carnage. The militaries of Egypt and Libya have been fighting their own governments rather than hiring NATO thugs (Canada has spent over \$40 million on mercenaries since the start of the war).

With a probable election looming, it's time for Canadians to realize that none of our political leaders have expressed a serious desire to withdraw from Afghanistan. Until we force our leaders to acknowledge the will of the people on this issue, expect us to remain in Afghanistan even beyond the new, tentative 2014 withdrawal of all troops, and expect our government to keep pushing the idea that democracy is a dish best served in a fiery inferno.



Almost Like Home



The Afghan Women's Centre of Montreal Helps New Canadians Settle In

• ADAM KOVAC

When the invasion of Afghanistan began in late 2001, there were two images repeatedly shown to the public to explain why war was necessary—planes crashing into the World Trade Centre and women forced to wear burqas, an oppressive black mark on the progress of feminism worldwide. It was taken as a given that all Afghan women were subjugated to men, lost in a culture that made them victims.

Whoever bought into that stereotype has clearly never met Makai Aref.

Aref is the founder and president of the Afghan Women's Centre of Montreal, a non-profit organization that she started in 2002. The centre is an extension of her life's work—prior to leaving Afghanistan in 1992, she had been the vice-president of the Afghan Women's Council, an interest group with a presence around the

country.

"The most important thing for our centre was just to open a door for women," she said. "They bring their stress from a past life in Afghanistan. They are unable to study or work or learn a language. Most of them are over 50 years old. They need to come see each other, exchange ideas and learn [...] They can talk their own language. If they go to another community, which they should, they understand only 10 per cent, and it's boring, they'll never go back."

Acting as more than a social club, the centre provides practical help to women who might get lost in the bureaucracies that could help them when they are in need.

"I have some professional people who give info sessions on health, family law, for many topics, we have contacts with many different organizations," said Aref.

It's a service that is much needed. When the war began,

Canada had a population of just over 25,000 Afghans. Since then, that figure has more than doubled. Many newcomers have trouble adjusting, especially women who have been exiled from mainstream Afghan society since the mujahedeen—religious guerillas who organized to fight off the Soviet invasion—seized power in 1992. The Women's Centre offers these women a place to make new friends and adjust to an alien way of life. It has even begun to offer financial opportunities.

"Besides our centre, I created a catering service," said Aref. "The catering service gives them more chances to cook and make money by themselves."

The idea of women being independent is important to Aref. She returned to Afghanistan in October, 2010 following the death of her husband to have a ceremony for him with his family. She noted that the country had not only changed drastically since she em-

igrated in 1992, but had undergone a large shift even from another visit she had made in 2006.

"I saw such a big change since the Taliban. [...] Women lost five years [of opportunity] because the Taliban stopped them," she said. "When I went in 2006, I saw 20-year-olds in the 10th grade. When I went last October, I saw more buildings and all people had 24-hour electricity."

"The media never [reports] the reality," she continued. "Unfortunately, they went to Kabul to find some poor women to take a picture. It's been a big change since the Taliban and mujahedeen."

Still, the legacy of women's oppression left by a decade of extremist rule can be hard to shake. Aref says that many of the women who come to her centre have a hard time opening up about what goes on in their homes. She is looking for somebody who will come by regularly to offer assistance to women with domestic

problems.

"The women have no door to come to solve their family problems," she said. "They are looking to find somebody who will understand their language, culture and traditions. If they go to some organization to open their hearts about their family problems, it's hard for them to explain. Many families have problems with violence. They keep it in their own heart, and [have nowhere to go]."

Aref has organized an event aimed at furthering the centre's ties to the community at large. On March 13, she hopes that more people will come by and learn about Afghan culture.

"We are organizing for International Women's Day. We will offer an Afghan buffet, as we just moved into our new offices, and people can come see us."

The Afghan Women's Centre is located at 610 Desmar-chais Ave.

Extending Our Longest War

Liberal MP Defends Canada's Decision to Remain in Afghanistan until 2014

• SIMON LIEM

For Canadians, June 2011 was supposed to mark the end of the war in Afghanistan.

However, in November of last year, the Harper government announced that after the withdrawal of combat troops from Afghanistan this summer, 950 Canadian troops would remain in country to help train police and military forces.

Liberal MP and Foreign Affairs critic Bob Rae has described his support for this decision as making a choice between “a bad thing and a worse thing.”

In a phone interview with *The Link*, Rae discussed the Canadian military's training mission and making peace in Afghanistan.

According to Rae, a full withdrawal without preparing the Afghan government to take over military duties would be a worse outcome than the Conservative gov-

ernment's plan.

“You need to build up the capacity of the state of Afghanistan [...] to be able to provide for the needs of its own people,” said Rae. “One of the needs that we need to work on, obviously, is training police and training security.”

On his website Rae wrote that if Canadians want to help build schools and support women's rights in Afghanistan, Canada's training mission is necessary.

Some have argued that this approach is the wrong one. Greg Mortenson, an American humanitarian, has built schools for girls in Taliban-controlled areas of Afghanistan and Pakistan. He claims two of the reasons for his success is that he only hires local workers to build the schools and he avoids any contact with foreign militaries. This method, which differs greatly from NATO's tactics, is why village elders and locals want to

protect these schools, according to Mortenson.

Rae agreed that this is a valid approach but “you need both” ways of operating, and disagreed with critics saying that the military presence makes development more difficult.

“We also need to build the education system, we need to build up the health care system. There's a whole range of things we need to do. One shouldn't be [...] saying ‘this precludes doing that’ or ‘we do this at the expense of all the others,’” he said.

Whether or not this is true, positive views of NATO forces have dropped significantly in the past year and violence has risen.

NATO officials expected that 2010, with the Obama administration's surge of 30,000 troops, would bring more violence to Afghanistan and worsen the security situation.

“I'm sure there will be many more casualties; there'll be an awful

lot of violence. That's, I'm afraid, the nature of the conflict,” said Mark Sedwill, the Senior Civilian Representative for NATO in Afghanistan, in an interview with BBC in early 2010.

The prediction turned out to be true. Reuter's reported that last year was the most violent for Afghanistan since the beginning of the war in 2001. UN figures showed a 20 per cent rise in civilian casualties from the previous year with 2,412 killed between January and October of last year.

“One of the reasons that I strongly advocate [that Canada move] away from a combat role is that I think fundamentally the responsibility for any engagements—whether they're military, police or security—have to belong to the people and institutions of Afghanistan,” said Rae.

Opinion polls of Afghan people suggest that this is what they want

as well. A BBC and ABC News opinion poll conducted in 2010 found that large majorities of Afghans were confident in the government's ability to provide security.

The same poll found that 36 per cent of people were confident in NATO's ability to provide security and 52 per cent thought that NATO should start leaving this summer or sooner.

Whatever the opinions of the Afghan people are, NATO and Canada, in some form or another, will likely be staying in Afghanistan until at least 2014.

Despite Rae's support for Canadian's training mission, he is leery of previous foreign attempts to create democratic institutions.

“There have been [...] historically many other interventions that have in the end failed because the gap between the people and the government simply became too large,” said Rae.

Reporting Afghanistan

War Veteran Draws Comparisons Between The Soviet Union and Canada

• SIMON LIEM

Shortly after Nikolai Lanine immigrated to Canada in 2000, he again found himself a citizen of a country that was waging war on a place he left over 12 years ago.

At 18-years-old, Lanine was drafted into the Soviet army. He served in Afghanistan for 16 months until the Soviets withdrew in February of 1989—just over nine years after the war began.

As Canada and NATO's war in Afghanistan progressed, the stories Lanine was reading and hearing started to sound familiar. The tone and language of the media and government rhetoric was not so different from what he had heard in the U.S.S.R.

The similarities shocked Lanine. He wanted to know if what he saw as parallels were really true. The Soviet war veteran began to study the coverage of the respective wars by Western and Soviet journalists. He did side-by-side comparisons with what was coming from Canadian and Western media. The results were startlingly similar and revealed how a country at war views itself.

Lanine now lives in Victoria, B.C., and works as a public health

nurse. He shared his media criticism with *The Link*.

The Link: Canada's stated objectives for its Afghanistan mission include security, humanitarian assistance and reconciliation. Can you compare those to Russia's objectives during the Soviet-Afghan war?

Nikolai Lanine: The Soviet Union and Canada's claimed objectives are similar, although there are some differences mainly due to the different international situations of the Cold War and today.

Canadians were told we're in Afghanistan because of “self-defence” and because “helping Afghanistan will protect Canada.” The U.S.S.R. claimed that by sending troops to Afghanistan it was preventing a “threat to the security of [the Soviet] southern borders” from Islamic fundamentalists.

The U.S.S.R. claimed it was protecting the security of Afghanistan itself from external interference from Pakistan and Iran. Currently, Canada/NATO claims that improving security in Afghanistan will prevent the country from becoming a safe haven for terrorists. The Taliban

is often portrayed as a foreign proxy force that is invading Afghanistan from Pakistan. This is similar to how the Soviet media described the situation in Afghanistan: U.S. and Pakistani-trained Islamists crossing into Afghanistan and threatened its security. The Soviet goal was “to prevent the establishment of... a terrorist regime and to protect the Afghan people from genocide,” and also to provide “aid in stabilizing the situation and the repulsion of possible external aggression.”

According to your research there are similarities between the Western media's coverage of the war and the Soviet media's coverage. Can you explain your comparison and say why you think a free press can come to resemble a state-controlled one?

Lanine: I was not comparing the freedom of the press. I focused on the framework and outcomes of media coverage. I was simply looking at what the media covered and how it covered it.

I looked at how much the media focused on positive stories of Soviet soldiers versus negative stories on insurgency, or how often and why the media was crit-

ical of the Soviet role in Afghanistan. What I found was that Soviet coverage of the last years of war was comparable to that of Canadian coverage in 2006-07. There are differences, of course: for example, the Soviets didn't report casualties in the beginning at all and even, at the height of the media's freedom, coverage of Soviet casualties was not as complete as Canadian coverage now.

Another example, Canadian media does mention Afghans killed by us, although rather superficially, while Soviets didn't mention them until the end of war. However, the overall framework of coverage is very similar: we are doing the right thing by fighting in Afghanistan for our own security and a better future for Afghans, with media focusing heavily on our military and reconstruction. [...]

The West justifiably ridiculed the Soviet media for not challenging the Soviet government, for presenting a one-sided picture of war and leaving out the narrative of Afghans. With few exceptions, I don't see Canadian media doing a much better job now.

In a previous interview you said that the Soviet Union got caught up in the “idea of [its] own goodness” and that you were surprised to see the same thing happening in Canada. Can you explain what you meant by that?

Lanine: Like Canadians today, Soviets believed that they went to Afghanistan out of good intentions to help Afghans to get rid of an oppressive regime and Islamic fundamentalists and to provide Afghans with a better future. Once we believe this self-created narrative, we start seeing war through the prism of self-righteousness, and our actions as unquestionably good. We see ourselves as a positive force doing the right thing and making big sacrifices for the benefit of others—Afghans. We collectively fall in love with this righteous self-image, celebrate ourselves and don't stop to examine our actions.

When Soviets were talking about the cost of war, it usually implied losses by Soviet and Afghan troops. The focus of the Soviet media and public were on the Soviet blood and sacrifices, not Afghan ones. These attitudes are not that different in Canada today.



TIMELINE

1919: Afghanistan regains independence from Britain.

1933: At the age of 19, Mohammed Zahir Shah becomes king and rules Afghanistan for the next 40 years.

1953: General Mohammed Daud becomes prime minister. Tries to introduce liberal social reforms and reaches out to the U.S.S.R. for assistance.

1963: Daud is forced to resign

1973: Daud seizes control in a coup while Shah is in Italy for medical treatment. Afghanistan is declared a republic.

1978: Leftist People's Democratic Party stages a coup. Daud is overthrown and executed. Simultaneously, conservative Islamic leaders opposed to social changes begin an armed revolt in countryside.

Dec. 25, 1979: At the request of leader Hafizullah Amin, Soviet forces enter Kabul to help defend against the loosely aligned resistance, called the Mujahideen.

Dec. 27, 1979: Soviet troops dressed in Afghani uniforms occupy major government, military and media buildings in Kabul. Kabul's communications hub is destroyed, paralyzing Afghan military command. 15 minutes later, Soviet troops assault Tajbed Palace and kill President Hafizullah Amin.

1980: Over 100,000 Soviet troops flood into Afghanistan.

1984: Osama bin Laden leaves Saudi Arabia and establishes Maktab al-Khadamat, which funnels money, arms and Muslim fighters from around the Arabic world into the Afghan war through Pakistan.

1985: Mujahideen consolidate in the mountains of Peshwar in neighboring Pakistan.

1988: Under Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev, the U.S.S.R., U.S. and Pak-

istan sign peace accords and Soviet troops begin to withdraw.

Aug. 1988: Leaders of the Egyptian Islamic Jihad, Abudullah Azzam and Osama bin Laden meet and agree to form the beginnings of al-Qaeda. Membership requirements include listening ability, manners, obedience and making a pledge to follow one's superiors.

1991: The Mujahideen continue to fight Soviet-installed president Najibullah. The U.S. and U.S.S.R. agree to end military aid to both sides.

1992: Najibullah is overthrown.

1996: Rival factions contest the presidency. Ethnic Pashtun-dominated Taliban seize control of Kabul. Extreme Sharia law is introduced.

1998: U.S. intelligence accuses Osama bin Laden of bombing their embassies in Africa. U.S. launches missile strikes at suspected bases of bin Laden.

1999: Sanctions are imposed by the U.N. in an attempt to force the extradition of bin Laden for trial.

Sept. 11, 2001: Nineteen al-Qaeda members hijack four commercial airliners which are used in coordinated attacks on the World Trade Centre in New York City, the Pentagon just outside of Washington, D.C. and the final plane crashed in rural Pennsylvania. 2,977 casualties, 6,000 injuries.

Oct. 7, 2001: United States launches Operation Enduring Freedom along with British Armed Forces and the Northern Alliance of Afghan factions.

Nov. 9, 2001: After extensive bombing by U.S. forces, Northern Alliance forces seize Mazari Sharif, an important religious site and transportation hub, and days later march into Kabul.

Dec. 7, 2001: Taliban give up last stronghold in Kandahar.

Dec. 22, 2001: Hamid Karzai,

an ethnic Pashtun, is sworn in as head of 30-member interim power-sharing government.

Jan.-Feb, 2002: The first contingent of regular Canadian troops arrives as part of International Security Assistance Force.

Oct.-Nov. 2004: Karzai wins presidential elections with 55 per cent of the vote.

Sept. 2005: The first parliamentary and provincial elections in more than 30 years occur.

Mar. 2007: Operation Achilles is launched in the largest offensive to date against Taliban in the south.

Aug. 2007: Opium production, a main source of income for rural farmers, soars to a record high, the U.N. reports.

Sept. 2008: President Bush sends another 4,500 US troops to Afghanistan.

Oct. 2008: Germany extends Afghanistan mission to 2009 and boosts troop numbers from 1,000 to 4,500.

Feb. 2009: The U.S. announces a troop increase of 17,000. 20 other NATO countries pledge to increase their military commitments as well.

Mar. 2009: President Barack Obama calls Afghanistan an "increasingly perilous situation." He calls for a new strategy and announces that 4,000 U.S. personnel will train the Afghan army and police.

Sept. 2009: A leaked report from commander of the U.S. forces Gen. Stanley McChrystal states that, "the war against the Taliban could be lost within 12 months unless there is a significant increase in troop numbers."

Oct. 2009: Hamid Karzai is declared winner of August presidential election and is sworn in for his second term in November.

Dec. 2009: Barack Obama increases U.S. troop numbers by 30,000, bringing the total to 100,000.

April 2010: Karzai accuses U.N. and EU foreign administrators of interference in the previous year's elections, citing a plot to create a puppet government.

July 2010: Wikileaks publishes thousands of classified documents relating to the war in Afghanistan.

Mar. 2010: Prime Minister Stephen Harper, in a meeting with U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, rules out an extension of Canadian troops in Afghanistan past 2011.

Nov. 2010: Prime Minister Harper announces the extension of Canadian involvement in Afghanistan, pledging to keep up to 1,000 military personnel in a non-combat role.

COMPILED BY CHRIS HAMPSON

This is What War Looks Like



The bedroom of Sgt. Thomas Gilbert, who was killed by an IED in Fallujah in 2006. PHOTO ASHLEY GILBERTSON

Photojournalist Examines the Real Costs of Afghanistan and Iraq

• CHRISTOPHER CURTIS

For most of the families that lose a loved one to war, one of the only physical memories that remains is an empty bedroom. In that space, these people were not just soldiers; they were brothers, sisters, sons and daughters. Thousands of miles from where they died, the fallen left behind a monument to the lives they lived and the people they were.

For over three years, photojournalist Ashley Gilbertson has stepped into empty rooms in North America and Europe to commemorate the lives of those who died fighting in Iraq and Afghanistan. And while Gilbertson's previous work brought him to the front lines of conflicts in Afghanistan, Iraq and Papua New Guinea, he says he has never felt closer to war than when he stands in the bedroom of a dead veteran.

"This is what war looks like," said Gilbertson of his project,

called Bedrooms of the Fallen. "When we declare war—whether it's an invasion, whether it's a war of liberation or whatever you want to call it—people die. And, unfortunately, that's often overlooked."

Journalists embedded within platoons in Iraq and Afghanistan are bound by strict censorship policies. Since photographing the dead is forbidden, Gilbertson says the wars are easily and intentionally dehumanized.

"It's difficult for a country to be at war if the war is personalized," he said. "That's what these photos do; they personalize the war. People aren't engaging anymore when you say that Private Jones was killed while fighting in Kandahar. It's a guy in his uniform, in a foreign country—it's very hard to relate to. When people look at Bedrooms of the Fallen, they realize that it's someone's child that died and all of a sudden it becomes very real. This is what the end of war truly looks

like. I don't think that's possible with standard war photography."

After experiencing the horrors of armed conflict for over a decade, Gilbertson wanted to address what he had learned about war. In 2007, Gilbertson spent a month visiting a veterans' cemetery in Washington D.C. Towards the end of his stay, Gilbertson's wife Joanna turned to him and suggested he start photographing the bedrooms of dead soldiers.

"It was perfect," he said. "It addresses the absence, it addresses the grief, it addresses that deep longing to see this person again but it also gives you an idea of who they were."

Later that year, Gilbertson travelled to the home of Thomas Gilbert, a 24-year-old Marine killed in Fallujah in 2006. After meeting the Gilbert family on four separate occasions, Gilbertson finally entered Gilbert's room, which remained unchanged from when he was alive.

"I was floored by being in that

space," said Gilbertson. "His family was still very fragile and it took a long time for them to trust me and for me to feel comfortable."

Using the white pages, veterans' memorial websites and Facebook, Gilbertson began reaching out to more of the families of slain soldiers. Each time, he would spend hours or days with these families, learning about their grief and the life they mourn.

"I feel like I can't photograph this person's room without some understanding of who this person was and what he or she meant to the family," said Gilbertson. "It's been amazing and awful. To give you an idea, some of these families keep the rooms intact for seven years. You learn what these people loved, what their most intimate space was like. Then you realize they died 5,000 miles from where you're standing and that news came back to this space, to this family. It never gets

routine—it's devastating every time."

For the families Gilbertson visits, there is no escaping the thought of their dead relatives. The fallen live on through memories which can be both haunting and joyful. Gilbertson's project, which he is turning into a book of photography, helps preserve these memories, but also serves as a stark reminder of the void created by war.

"For these people, the first thing they think of when they wake up everyday is their child, who is dead. They are reminded of this throughout their day every time they look at a playground or some street sign or a McDonald's the family used to get drive-thru meals at," said Gilbertson. "And the last thing they think of before they go to sleep is that dead child. That's war."

To learn more about Gilbertson's project, visit bedroomsofthefallen.com





Parlovr will channel their inner Foo Fighters at this weekend's Passovah Cover Band Party at Il Motore.

PHOTO ALEX CAIRNCROSS

Parlovr, Not a Fighter

• DAN HAWIE (*THE SILHOUETTE*, MCMASTER UNIVERSITY)

HAMILTON, Ont. (CUP)—Parlovr's frame of mind is a bit of a head-scratcher. If you mispronounce the band's name as, say, "Parlover" instead of the correct "Parlour," the band members will gladly yield to your mishap.

And if you probe into the Montreal trio's sound of self-described "sloppy pop," they'll modestly quip that owning practically no gear is the influence driving it.

Yet, there's something infectious about the quirky outlook of this group—a certain sleight-of-hand to the way they operate, if you will.

On the surface, the do-it-yourself mingling of keyboard, a two-piece drum kit, a gutted and rewired guitar and spastic yelps may sound like the result of a drunken stumble to the local pawnshop, but since forming in 2006, the band has amassed a great deal of critical praise for manipulating these elements into a larger-than-life sound of their

own.

While the trend of multi-member-meets-multi-instrument has come to shape most acts coming out of Montreal's music scene in recent years, Parlovr has made a distinct mark into the city's well-etched sonic landscape, and their mark has been well recognized.

Their self-titled debut LP in 2008 made enough waves to earn the band a spot on Dine Alone Records' bulked-up roster, and with the recent EP *Hell/Heaven/Big/Love* under their belts, they've found themselves trekking across Canada, parts of Europe and even venturing as far as mainland China in a short period of time.

"Those overseas tours were just... well, I don't want to say dumb luck but, Jesus, it was out of the blue. If you read about a band going to somewhere like China, you have to ask, 'What the fuck did they do to get that?'" explained guitarist and vocalist Louis Jackson.

"There's definitely an exclamation point beside the band,"

he continued. "And I guess we've progressed really well since our first album to the point where things have been really busy as of late."

While cooped up in the studio with keyboardist Alex Cooper tracking vocals nearby, Jackson couldn't help but highlight his enthusiasm over working on the band's sophomore release.

"Things are sounding crazy right now," he said. "We've taken a few months off to record these glorious messes that we've had going for the past year—I mean 'messes' because we've gone in with this outlook of not worrying too much about how we play or how tight things sound, and instead just getting the groove going. That's what the sloppiness is about, and it can be really rewarding."

With drummer Jeremy MacCuish contributing with what Jackson considers a very necessary soulful backbeat to the band, Parlovr has treated their current studio time as a chance to tamper with as many instruments and genres as they see fit.

"We're really trying to put together an R&B, rock 'n' roll, kooky party album that plays into those throwback pop gems done by many bands in a light-hearted way," said Jackson. "It sounds twisted, but there's a definite musical theme to the songs."

"So we've taken advantage of the huge amount of studio instruments by making lots of noise," he continued. "I listened to all of the songs last night for the first time and it just sounded like a crazy mess. As of now, we sound like a 40-member band."

No doubt the band's "big sound" reputation has become an immediate tag for most critics, but they've also garnered attention as being innovators in the ever-burgeoning Montreal orchestral pop sound. Jackson, however, is quick to pin the band's influences on a wider range of genres.

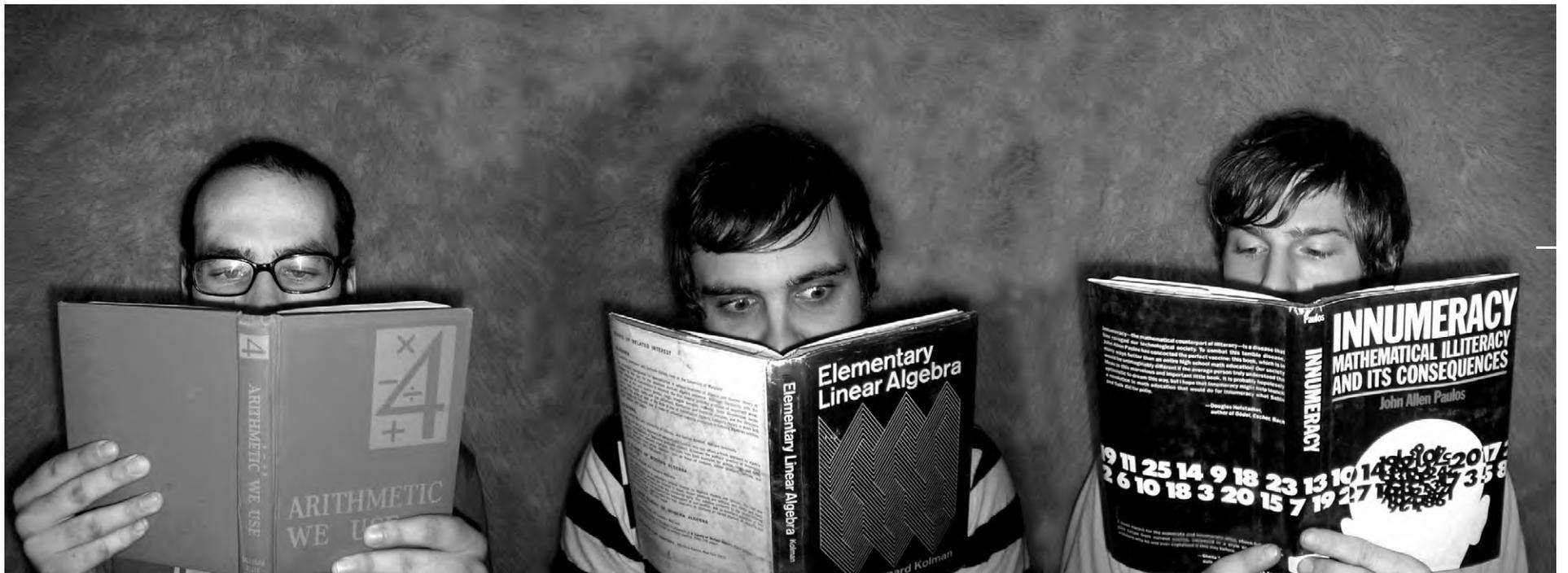
"We definitely understand what it means to be considered rockin' and raw in terms of the Montreal sound. And bands like The Dears have beautifully pioneered the orchestral thing, but

my musical upbringing has always been based more on grunge, hip-hop and pop gems from the '90s," he explained. "Plus, we're obsessed with The Beatles' catalogue."

The band's emphasis in the coming months will be focused on tinkering with their much-anticipated summer release, and aside from Jackson's priorities of "getting a haircut and restringing the guitar," the band plans to stay the proverbial, yet often rewarding, course.

"We plan to tour like crazy once the album's out," Jackson said. "But for now, we want to continue to not set our hopes too high, and instead just work hard as hell in the studio and hopefully surprise ourselves. Of course, we're still going to have fun along the way."

Passovah Cover Band Party / Parlovr with Reversing Falls (covering the Foo Fighters), Play Guitar (covering the Talking Heads) and more. Fri. March 4 / Il Motore / 179 Jean Talon St. W./ PWYC



Math Pop for the Masses

Tero Melos Find Their Voice Through Upbeat Experiments

• COLIN HARRIS

These days it seems like pop music has become an increasingly effortless affair.

But it doesn't have to be that way.

Sacramento's Tera Melos started out playing schizophrenic math rock, a genre named after the careful counting required for its polyrhythmic sound. Recently the band has brought their love of unorthodox phrasing and time signature-jumping to a pop context with last fall's *Patagonian Rats*, and the release of their cassette-only EP *Zoo Weather* last week.

Finding a way to stand out amidst the wish-wash of indie bands floating around on the Internet requires innovation.

"Since we started the band it's been a goal to have releases in as many fun formats as we can," said bassist Nate Latona. "Since a lot of people don't have cassettes now it's more of a conversation piece."

The retro flavour to their release notwithstanding, Tera Melos has made a concession to the present technological reality, pairing their cassettes with a download card.

Latona explained that while the band goes to great lengths to be unique, *Zoo Weather* finds them employing their technical ability to cover sonic ground in new ways.

"Writing the last batch of songs was a big step out of the comfort zone for us, even though to the listener they may seem simpler," said Latona. "It's not as



much about technicality. It's still in there, but I think we try to use it more tastefully... I don't think technical ability alone is worthy of praise."

The group has been known in the past for blistering technical ability with a high-energy live show, including flips and cartwheels from members. Now, however, their math rock and acrobatics have taken a back seat to a refined arrangement and a newfound affinity for vocals.

"You have to be able to write a progression that hits somebody in the right place, to get it stuck in their head," said Latona. "I'm not into doing anything fake. We've toured with bands that do that, night by night, it's the same show. We're one of those bands that feeds off the audience; if the audience is dwindling or sitting there with their arms folded, we may

not be that into it."

Zoo Weather isn't the musical free-for-all their untitled debut was—now the band chooses not to pack their songs with the most possible notes per second. If their modus operandi as a unit has shifted, it's perhaps in part due to the individual roles of the bandmembers taking on slightly different shapes.

"I was playing at first with three other guys going crazy with their parts; I had to hold things down," said Latona. "Playing with [new drummer] John [Clardy] I feel more like my job is to serve the song. If there is a chorus with three notes, I'm comfortable smashing on those if it creates an effect for the other guys to work around."

Clardy replaced former drummer Vince Rogers on the kit before the writing sessions for

Patagonian Rats. While the member switch contributed to the band's new sound, the two original band-mates were itching to make things a bit catchier, too.

"It was really refreshing because Nick and I already had in mind to make this record not all-over-the-place technical," said Latona. "[John]'s drumming is really rooted in rock while Vince is really rooted in jazz, so to have somebody come in who plays with a groove really made us realize how to take this in a different direction."

Now Tera Melos have something like the best of both worlds, and will continue counselling their marriage of math rock and pop

music. As for what listeners will get out of it, Latona just hopes they can form their own opinion on their art.

"I always want our music to represent the idea that there's more out there than what you're being told is cool," said Latona. "It's easy to talk about Battles because they're doing something cool, so the same ten websites are going to essentially say the same thing about that band."

"When it comes to us, I want people to understand that we are trying to do something that we feel is original. We certainly have musical influences but we never set out to echo them. It inspires us to do something on our own."

Tera Melos with Marnie Stern / Mon. March 7 / Il Motore (179 Jean-Talon St. W.) / \$12 adv \$14 door



• ASHLEY OPHEIM

Turquoise sonic and padded melodies like e-mails like moss gardens like death petals make you feel when you don't care.

We dance when everyone is looking at something else and time doesn't pass and nothing feels like everything.

You decide on organic rainbows for a potential note and fog as a setting.

You hide in distortion and touch soft textures to you the ceiling of your skin.

You throw me into jargoned blossom drone and glittered badlands in suburban slums with cocteau twins and vapor girls with L.A. hair and siouxsie siouxsie siouxsie is everywhere, here.

Went to a big museum with the dream all over and hungover, silky eyes and there were thousands of things to look and gawk pigeon.

You hid a white rabbit under your faux fur jacket.

You were thinking about pink vinyl and prisms.

I was only interested in headphones and the hole in the back of your wing.



ART MATTERS

Ready For Its 11th Year?

GRAPHIC OLIVIA MEW

• ASHLEY OPHEIM

Today marks the official first day of the Art Matters Festival 2011. Now in its 11th year, the festival runs for a mere three weeks and involves the work of more than 200 Concordia students.

What makes this festival unique to the Montreal community is that students are at the core of Art Matters' vision, planning, and actualization. This year there are 16 student-curated events.

The Receptacle, happening tonight at Eastern Bloc, is a one-night event that explores "an insatiable consumer culture." Sound and video installations will interact with and bounce off of metal

walls.

"I'm really interested in the idea of public art and public space," said Allison Smith, curator of the show. "The idea of the trash container itself used as a display space for art came from viewing a construction site. This was a huge space—I wanted to transform and re-purpose the space."

The show parallels itself with sustainability and the idea of trash. The event takes place both outdoors and inside a re-purposed warehouse space. The works themselves play with themes of sustainability, public art and space and the fragility of nature.

We've Been Here Before, which happens this Saturday at the Belgo,

explores questions of space and its relations to and with nostalgia. The event uses dance, video, installation, painting and drawing to explore the process of familiarization.

The Opening Party is one of the most anticipated events of the festival, according to Stephanie Bokenfohr, special events coordinator to the festival.

"The Art Matters opening party is known to be the funnest event of the year for Fine Arts students," said Bokenfohr.

"We see it more like a gift to give back to the festival participants, which is well over 200 including all the artists and curators," she said.

The event will feature local acts Pat Jordache, Grimes, and DJ's Wilcox and Promise, Doldums from Toronto, Cousins from Nova Scotia, and party-monster Andrew W.K. spinning the night away with a live, DJ set.

"We wanted to give [students] some of the most exciting stuff that is happening in our community right now. All of the talent is from Concordia or supports the Concordia community," said Bokenfohr.

The evening will also feature visuals from BOCA Gallery, the first ever-online gallery for digital paintings and drawings. The BOCA collective is composed of former and current Concordia students, including past organizers of the Art

Matters festival.

"The projections will add depth to the space and work hand in hand with the music," said Bokenfohr. "There will be fun to be had."

***The Receptacle* / Tues. March 1 / Eastern Bloc (7240 Clark St.) / 6:00 to 9:00 p.m.**

***We've Been Here Before* / Sat. March 5 / Studio 303 (Belgo Building, 372 Saint-Catherine St. W.) / 7:00 to 9:00 p.m.**

***Opening Party* / Fri. March 4 / Espace Reunion (6600 Hutchinson St.) / 9:00 p.m. / \$5**

Trans Art Matters

If Not Here, Then Where?

• LAURA BEESTON

Religious symbolism, art space and the curating process in Concordia's student-led Art Matters Festival are some core questions at the centre of recent speculation following a decision to deny local Trans artist Johnston Newfield's installation "Embark" into the exhibition *Enter the Foam & Achieve Second Sight*.

Hearing no word from the festival after dropping off his application in January, Newfield sought out the curators and was told that including "Embark" in the exhibit would have changed the atmosphere of their show too much due to the iconography it featured.

A "politically-charged reconstruction of spirituality and identity," Newfield's multi-media piece incorporates installation, looped sound and projection of drawings and symbols—including the Merkaba, an icon commonly recognized as akin to the Star of David, but predates its use in Judaism as a "divine light vehicle" to unite with higher realms of existence.

"This piece is about me coming out as being Trans and how being Trans has inspired a search for re-imagining spirituality—specifically that gender is a spiritual experience," explained Newfield, whose mother is a priest. "This perception was very clear in my artist's statement, but I was told that it was the symbol [that was problematic]."

The exhibition he pitched to, *Enter the Foam & Achieve Second*

Sight, curated by Jerome Nadeau and Patryk Stasieczek, deals with space "[that is] of the mind, abstraction revealing dimensions composed of altered states of holographic being. These pockets of infinite perception are projected outward. As art, they evoke intimate tensions of existence that are external/external."

For Newfield, declining "Embark" for this direction exposes a trend in the art world that embraces "the curator as artist"—something Newfield believes is to the detriment of alternative and evocative artwork that could go against the predetermined themes.

Repeatedly explaining that they have "no intention to throw stones" at the Art Matters Festival or the students who work hard to make it happen each year, Newfield told *The Link* they feel that the curatorial powers and the process that decides what gets accepted into each show should perhaps be challenged and re-examined.

"This [process] is really problematic, since it's giving curators total power to select and filter art based on its decided theme, not based on the art's own merit, or if it explores something different," said Newfield. "To me it seemed like a lack of interest in creating an alternate space to the theme for queer and trans narratives."

But co-curators of *Enter the Foam & Achieve Second Sight* and the Art Matters Production team disagrees.

"We just didn't choose John-

ston's work and that's just how it went. [...] This is not censorship," said Patryk Stasieczek, who was selected to organize the exhibit from over 85 curator applicants, and said he went through a "totally transparent, totally anonymous" curation process—which filtered through 400 artist applicants over a two-day jury.

"Works get selected based on how well it rests within the whole, as per [the decisions of the] curatorial team or curator," Stasieczek explained. "Our role is to find cohesion between all the pieces, [...] and because of the type of show we wanted to create, that narrative, that interplay, that tension between each work is an important factor. The work is selected if it fits."

Enter the Foam & Achieve Second Sight is also going to be collaborating with three other shows and vernissages throughout its stint at the Eastern Bloc gallery space, which Stasieczek said involves 80 hour weeks and is a huge collaborative process.

"We've been putting in a lot of work to make it something that will actively engage the many, many participants, and to have a dialogue with the shows we're sharing the space with," he explained. "There's a lot of considerations that we've made for the process and activity of facilitating a dialogue between all the works."

Stasieczek explained that he doesn't believe that suppressing artists is an issue anymore, as "there are too many other outlets for expression."



"EMBARK" JOHNSTON NEWFIELD

For "Embark," these other channels came via a proposal by Radical Queer Semaine—a 10-day, bilingual queer community-building program of dialogue, activism, workshops and art—to host the installation, and the collective asked Newfield to participate in a reactionary multimedia art event, teasingly entitled "Art Natters," on March 10.

Finding a space for the art after all, Newfield believes that things worked out better in the end.

"This whole process has been an interesting experience and I just want the ideas to continue to be discussed," said Newfield, who hopes the minor controversy

opens up questions of censorship and curatorial power in the Concordia art world and beyond. "I think it's good that someone is taking it up and asking the questions."

***Enter the Foam & Achieve Second Sight* / March 1 - 19 / Eastern Bloc (7240 Clark St.) / 6 - 9 p.m.**

Vernissage / March 1 / 6:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.

***Art Natters* / March 10 - 20 / Mise au Jeu (90 de la Gauchetiere St. E.)**

Vernissage / March 10 / 10:00 p.m.

2011 Announcement of the Polls

General Election

March 18, 2011 4:00 p.m. H649

All of *The Link's* editorial positions will be open.

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

COORDINATING EDITOR

MANAGING EDITOR

NEWS EDITOR

ASSISTANT NEWS EDITOR

FRINGE ARTS EDITOR

SPORTS EDITOR

CURRENT AFFAIRS EDITOR

CULTURE EDITOR

LIFESTYLE EDITOR

OPINIONS EDITOR

CREATIVE DIRECTOR

PHOTO EDITOR

GRAPHICS EDITOR

COPY EDITOR

COMMUNITY EDITOR

Applications for the positions must be posted one week before the election in *The Link* office, Hall building, room H-649. Applicants must have contributed to at least four (4) issues during volume 31 and must include a one-page letter of intent, as well as three (3) contribution samples.

For more information email editor@thelinknewspaper.ca



THE LiNK
It's Good For You

Out of Focus?

Photography Workshop at *The Link*

Friday, H-649 4:00 p.m.



SMORGASBORD GAMES: RAP LYRICS, POETRY, MOVIE SCRIPTS ALL GET PLAY IN THIS WEEK'S LIT SECTION

Deciphered Poetry

Jay-Z's New Tome Brings the Layperson Into Rap's Inner Circle, Analyzes His Own Lyrics in *Decoded*

• ALEX MANLEY

Rare is the person who hasn't, by now, at least heard of Shawn Carter, alias Jay-Z, let alone downloaded a song or two to bump from their speaker system of choice, be it auto or iPod, when in need of a good aural pick-me-up.

Even if Jay was the biggest name in the rap biz five years ago or so, by now he's a cultural icon that's stepped out of the genre's boundaries entirely. He's a cuddly teddybear of a self-made multimillionaire, married to everyone's favourite R&B songstress. He's been on a magazine cover with Warren Buffett. He's been interviewed on Charlie Rose, for crying out loud. Your grandmother probably knows who he is by now.

All this to say that Jay might seem a bit of an odd person to feature in a Literary Arts section dedicated primarily to covering contemporary Canadian poetry & fiction of the, shall we say, underground variety.

And yet here he is with a career retrospective to match any artist's greatest hits album—a book. And not just any book; a book whose supposed *raison d'être* is for Jay to explain his own lyrics. A New York Times bestselling tome of a black man who grew up in the projects, offering some critical exegesis on his poetry about his past as a drug dealer. It's a strange animal.

Decoded is a brick of a thing, a coffee-table book's coffee-table book. The hefty, solid feel of it extends, unfortunately, to the price tag; it'll set you back 40 dollars if you're so inclined, but on the flip side, the book is so layered and dense, so thick with detail and description—on top of being a serious visual delight—that it's hard not to see the point. This is vintage Jay, as elegant as it is informative, a sort of Maybach of books.

The advance buzz on *Decoded* touted it as a chance for Jay to break down the lyrics of some of his favourite songs, to clue the listener in on his slang usage, his cultural references, his narratives of varying degrees of fictitiousness, and so forth. At this, Jay is a bit hit-or-miss.

Some of his explanations feel like they only merit inclusion in a much more detailed pass-through, and some feel frankly clarified to a degree that begins to seem overdone. Nevertheless, Jay shines a lot of light on a lot of interesting facts, both about his life and about his creative process. It's strangely endearing to see a 40-something rap icon bragging about his lyrical skills not on a hot track, but in straightforward prose, saying things like, "I use 'sense' or 'since' six times in the preceding nine lines, alternating between them, a technical flourish that works as its own commentary" about 2003's "Moment of Clarity."

There's an interesting selection of songs here—a lot of fan-favourites and a lot of chart toppers, but Jay balances them out with a not insignificant number of unreleased & rare tracks, as well as a few tracks by other artists he was featured on.

If you're a Jay fan, chances are he left off at least half of your favourite songs, but his curveball choices are worth their inclusion just to see what he sees as his own songs most worth explaining. A track like "Minority Report," for instance, which is about Hurricane Katrina, is a tiny blip on his back catalogue, but its presence allows him to spend time exploring his oft-overlooked political consciousness. As it happens, the book is only really 40 per cent about the lyrics; the remaining 60 per cent finds Jay waxing philosophical about race, class, art, history and his own life story.

That balance—a sort of bait

and switch tactic wherein the hype about *Decoded* was all about the lyrics, but the meat of it is about Jay's meditations on being black in America—is hardly new for the rapper, who famously claimed to have "dumbed down / to double [his] dollars" on 2003's "Moment of Clarity," and admits in *Decoded* to sprinkling his albums with dumb, poppy singles to boost sales while still delivering deeper, more thoughtful and more emotionally complex songs.

It's a toss-up as to which aspect of the book is more interesting. Jay's thoughts on the subjects he tackles are surprising in their lucidity, complexity, and insightfulness. The narrative voice he uses is a strange sort of hybrid tone that blends a scholarly diction with a willingness to use the slang that pervades his lyrics.

One of the issues facing books written by celebrities always seems to be whether the book would stand on its own merits; would it, if written by a nobody, still be worth reading?

In this case, it's hard to say no; while the book has its drawbacks—the steep price, the at times iffy quality of the lyrical explanations—it remains a compelling document, and the very fact that a book that sets out to discuss things like alliteration, internal rhyme schemes, and percussive rhythms suggests that, with a better P.R. department working for it, poetry can still be a subject the masses will slap down their hard-earned cash for.



Jay-Z
Decoded
Spiegel & Grau
336pp
\$40.00



Decoded is packed with arresting visuals like this Jean-Michel Basquiat painting, (above) on top of featuring Jay's lyrics (below) and breakdowns thereof (bottom left).

PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENT

This is a public service announcement / Sponsored by Just Blaze and the good folks at Roc-A-Fella Records / [Just Blaze] Fellow Americans, it is with the utmost pride and sincerity that I present this recording, as a living testament and recollection of history in the making during our generation.¹ / [Jay-Z] Allow me to re-introduce myself / My name is Hov, OH, H-to-the-O-V / I used to move snowflakes by the O-Z / I guess even back then you can call me / CEO of the R-O-C,² Hov! / Fresh out the fryin pan into the fire / I be the music biz number one supplier / Flyer³ than a piece of paper bearin my name / Got the hottest chick in the game wearin my chain, that's right / Hov, OH—not D.O.C.⁴ / But similar to them letters, 'No One Can Do It Better' / I check cheddar like a food inspector⁵ / My homey Strict told me, "Dude finish your breakfast"⁶ / So that's what I'ma do, take you back to the dude / with the Lexus, fast-forward the jewels and the necklace / Let me tell you dudes what I do to protect this⁷ / I shoot at you actors like movie directors [laughing] / This ain't a movie dog (oh shit) / [Just Blaze] Now before I finish, let me just say I did not come here to show out, did not come here to impress you. Because to tell you the truth when I leave here I'm GONE!

1. This is Just Blaze's voice, although he recorded it in a way that made it sound older, like a political speech from the Black Power era captured on a distant tape recorder.

2. A simple double entendre of "Roc-A-Fella," our company, which we call the Roc, and "rock," common slang for crack because of the way the coke crystallizes when you cook it. I drop the "frying pan" into the next line to keep the comparison going. In the line after that I complete the connection between selling rock and selling the Roc, supplying the streets and supplying the music biz. Both take ruthlessness. In fact, the music industry is the fire to the crack game's frying pan.

3. The flier/flyer homonym also carries the momentum of the fire/supplier rhyme for one more line.

4. The D.O.C.'s "No One Can Do It Better" was an early classic the West Coast's golden age.

5. This line combines two separate pieces of slang—"check" means to collect, "cheddar" means money—to create a third piece of new slang—"a food inspector"—that only makes sense if you decode the first two phrases. "Check cheddar" is an alliteration that adds force to the image.

6. My friend Strict uses the phrase "finish your breakfast" as a way of saying that you need to finish your job up strong.

7. In these four lines I use five different variations on "do" and "dude" (plus "jewels," whose hard "j" sounds almost like a "d" to create a percussive rhythm within the beat.

WOMEN'S HOCKEY: A HARD LOSS FOR THE STINGERS

HOCKEY



File Photo

PHOTO ESTER BERNARD

REBOUNDS ABOUND

Stingers Goalie Struggled with Bouncing Pucks

•DAVID KAUFMANN

Concordia 2

McGill 4

Bad luck and a stingy Université de Montréal Carabin goaltender stood in the way of the Concordias womens hockey team's chances of advancing to the next round. The Montreal Carabins cruised to a 4-2 victory at the Ed Meagher Arena.

"We didn't take advantage of the chances that we had, but I was proud of the way we played," said Stingers head coach Les Lawton.

The team hit bad luck midway through the first when the officials credited a goal to UdeM forward Cassandra Dupuis that appeared to hit the post. Moments later, UdeM defender Josée-Ann Deschênes found the back of the net with a pass from Chantal Lampron to go up 2-0.

"We got off to a little bit of a slow start but I think we played well the second half of the game, and ran into a goalie who played very well against us," Lawton

said.

The Stingers stepped up their game but came up empty handed as Rachel Ouellette, the Montreal goalie, stopped all of the 17 shots from Concordia in the first two periods. Yet the opposition continued to get their lucky bounces. This was true as Dupuis scored off of a rebound from Stingers goaltender Audrey Doyon-Lessard.

"The last few minutes were a little more difficult, but that's what you have to expect when you're playing a team facing elimination."

—Isabelle Leclaire,
Carabin Women's Hockey Coach

"The last few minutes were a little more difficult, but that's what you have to expect when you're playing a team facing

elimination," said Carabins head coach Isabelle Leclaire. "It's always the hardest game to play."

The opposition put the final nail in Concordia's coffin with another goal from Deschênes.

The Stingers proved they weren't going down without a fight when right-winger Jaymee Shell finally bested Ouellette on a breakaway. Seconds later it was defenseman Veronica Lang's turn to deke one past her, but that was as close as Concordia would come.

Despite being eliminated from playoff contention, Lawton saw that his team made a lot of progress over the years—they have finished the season one point shy of second place. With this kind of progress, he says the team will be a great contender next season.

"We're moving this program forward, and we'll be better next year," said Lawton.

His players shared his views on the season.

"We've come a long way over the years, and this season we really made something out of it," said Lang.

Scoreboard

Men's Basketball

W 86-83 @ McGill sat 19

W 89-85 v Bishops sat 26

Women's Basketball

L 77-56 @ McGill sat 19

W 52-46 v Bishops sat 26

Men's Hockey

L 5-2 @ UQTR wed 16

W 5-3 v UQTR sat 19

L 5-3 @ UQTR sun 20

Women's Hockey

L 2-1 SO v Carleton fri 18

L 5-2 @ McGill sat 19

L 4-1 @ Montreal wed 23



Banking on Cavities

Teeth Cleaning Turned Cash-Grab

• MEGAN DOLSKI

I hate going to the dentist. Even if it's just for a simple cleaning. The poking, the prodding, the little water spritzer and its air sucking partner-in-crime—I just think the whole experience is awful.

I recently had my teeth cleaned in Arizona over reading week. As usual, I left my appointment with a bad taste in my mouth, but this time it wasn't caused by that putrid tasting grainy toothpaste they always use. This time around, my feeling of malaise tasted like a scam.

The first red flag went off as I walked into the office through heavy mahogany doors that led me to a room complete with two leather reclining chairs and a plush tapestry-patterned couch. In the middle of the room was an intricately engraved wooden coffee table covered with copies of the current issue of over twenty magazines and a lovely bouquet of freshly cut flowers. It was a change of scenery compared to the dated IKEA furniture and crumpled edition of yesterday's *The Gazette* that I'm used to.

"Welcome, how are y'all today?" perked up the overly peppy receptionist from the granite-topped desk across the room. After a few seconds of small talk, I handed over my insurance card. The receptionist then passed me a clipboard with a list of papers to fill out.

I returned to the couch, and began filling out my basic coordinates and insurance info. Next, I found myself trudging through a checklist of about a hundred ailments I may have suffered from over the course of my life; including getting a rash, headache or having menstrual cramps.

While the forms are normal when receiving American health-care, these were more excessive than anything I've ever encountered.

Now that my entire medical history—just shy of a list of every single tummy ache I've ever had—was laid out on the paper in front of me, I was able to the sign my life away to the practitioner I was about to see, god forbid I choke on a loose piece of plaque.

I handed the papers back to the receptionist who began entering my information into the computer. My wait time was, by shocking coincidence, the exact same amount of time it took for



GRAPHIC MIRIAM BROOKMAN

the fax machine to spew out a confirmation from my insurance company proving that my coverage was legitimate.

Finally, a hygienist clad in royal blue scrubs stepped outside of the stone archway and led me to the back. After x-rays and a run-through of the normal cleaning procedures, she took out a fancy looking "laser cavity-detecting device" that she scanned over my teeth.

"So... Anything?" I asked.

"Well, you don't have any cavities," she said. "But, you could potentially develop cavities on some of your teeth." She then explained that the dentist would come have a look and determine what treatment was necessary.

Within a few minutes, the dentist was examining my teeth, and

my x-rays. He then asked me if I would be interested in getting braces, again.

"Are you kidding?!?" I spat out. [Note: I had braces for two years, and still fit into both of my retainers. I'm not one to toot my own horn—but my teeth are pretty damn straight.]

"Well, your teeth may shift as you get older, so getting the treatment again could prevent this," he said rubbing my arm.

"No thanks," I said. "I'll risk it."

He then proceeded to tell me that I had done a fantastic job brushing and that my teeth looked very good.

"I would like you to come in again as soon as possible so we can take care of six areas of concern," he said.

"Wait, what?" I asked what he was concerned about.

"Well—this isn't your fault—but the surface of your teeth isn't completely flat. This means that you have grooves in your teeth which could allow for a decay to potentially develop."

I sat dumbfounded as I realized that this man had seriously just tried to convince me that since my teeth are not a plane surface that I should get fillings in six of them to prevent cavities.

After I made it clear that I didn't think this preventative treatment was necessary, the dentist said, "Well honey, let's call in Mom."

Mom? I'm 19 years old. I am considered an adult in the states and have full responsibility of everything I do.

The dentist then resumed rubbing my arm and told my mother that if I were his daughter he would insist that I have braces, get the six fillings and also have my wisdom teeth removed—but assured her that I did an excellent job of taking care of my teeth.

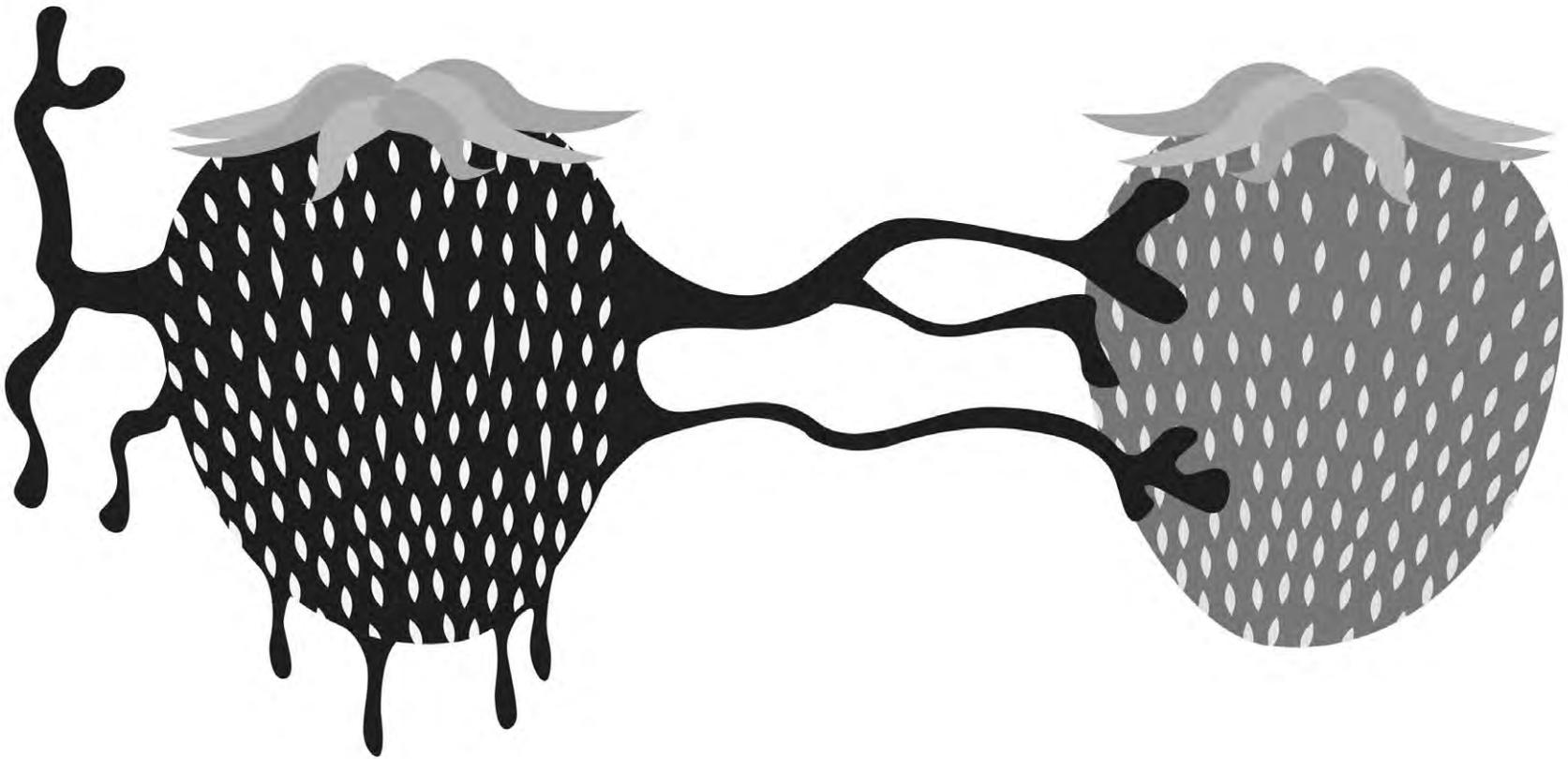
It was condescending and it was sleazy. The six fillings would cost me over a thousand dollars.

I'll take my own vacation to Barbados, instead of paying for yours, thanks.

Maybe it's the Canadian in me, but I don't think I should walk out of a teeth-cleaning feeling as though I've just avoided an attempted robbery. I went to the dentist for a basic health service and left feeling as though I'd just contributed to someone's third Lexus.

GM Foods: Not the Solution

No Evidence that Quick-Fix Science is the Answer to Global Hunger



Genetically modified food may present new risks to our health and Earth that far outweigh any potential short-term benefits. GRAPHIC CLÉMENT LIU

• ALEXANDER OSTER

In *The Link's* last issue, Christopher Hampson described current concerns of population growth, degradation of arable land, and food insecurity as problems to which innovative, science-based solutions are needed, specifically championing genetically modified food. While providing food security to a global population expected to peak at 9 billion in 2045 is a noble and necessary aim, reliance on corporate controlled, poorly researched and improperly understood genetic modification of our agricultural output is not the right course.

The physical-scientific concerns surrounding GM food include the random location placement and lack of control over a selected gene that affects how all of a plant's original genes interact, the multiple functions of every single gene, the possibility of consumers developing novel allergens and the difficulty in protecting surrounding non-GM crops from contamination via pollination.

Further, the peer-reviewed scientific record on human-health impacts of GM food consumption is almost non-existent. The studies that do exist using animal testing—since animals are often force-fed GM foods because they refuse to eat it—or human trials show the development of intestinal lesions—specifically, a gene

transfer from digested GM food to human gut bacteria.

In a comprehensive study on the future of food bio-technology in Canada, the Royal Society of Canada stated that the “expression of a new gene and its products [...] will be accompanied by a range of collateral changes in expression of other genes,” concluding this could lead to the development of new toxins, amongst other harmful substances.

Scientists issued similar warnings from the U.S. Food and Drug Administration, though these were not made public until a lawsuit was filed against the FDA. These documents revealed that, “the predominant view [amongst FDA scientists] was that genetic engineering entails distinct risks and that its products cannot be regarded as safe unless they have been confirmed to be so through appropriate feeding studies.”

Moreover, the FDA's GM food policy was not drafted by its scientists, but overseen by Deputy Commissioner for Policy Michael Taylor—an attorney who, prior to his appointment, was employed by Monsanto, helping them draft pro bio-tech legislation to lobby for. He later left his post in the civil service to return to Monsanto as vice-president for Public Policy.

That aside, GM food represents an attempt at a silver-bullet solution to large, interconnected problems, which, if adopted, may

ensure that it is the symptoms, but not the root causes, of soil depletion and food insecurity that are dealt with.

Blind faith in chemical manipulation and corporate guidance of human progress are two of the reasons that our food system is in such dire shape in the first place. A closer look at the problems themselves offers insight into possible courses of action.

Our expanding population does not grow in equal distribution geographically or economically; most population gains since 1960 (a trend which will hold until mid-century) have been in the global south, and accompanied by a massive migration towards urban centers. However, high-income countries consumption of global resources per-capita, and in real terms, remains disproportionately high. Examples and evidence of this inequality are visible in carbon emissions, energy consumption, water use, obesity, etc.

The largest quadrant of our population is in the low-middle income bracket (4 billion people making \$996 to \$3,945 per year) and alongside their lowest income earners (1 billion at less than \$996 per year) are the fastest growing, youngest, least literate, and most likely to suffer from food insecurity.

In terms of environmental impacts, this growing density will be a great tool of resource efficiency (energy, water, etc.), if principles

of ecological urbanism can be adopted and implemented.

As larger segments of our population continue using the 20th century Western model of “development,” an added stress will also be on an increased demand for animal-based protein, as there is a wealth of evidence pointing to the disastrous ecological consequences and inefficiencies of current animal protein production.

One calorie of animal protein requires 40 calories of grain, and according to the USDA, “at present, the U.S. livestock population consumes more than 7 times as much grain as is consumed directly by the entire American population [and] the amount of grains fed to U.S. livestock is sufficient to feed about 840 million people who follow a plant-based diet.”

The second constraining parameter Mr. Hampson mentioned was soil degradation/depletion. I couldn't agree more. This is an issue that has unfortunately been disregarded due to a public environmental discourse that measures all ecological problems in CO₂ emissions.

Currently, human agricultural activity occupies 38 per cent of the Earth's non-ice surface. The growth of broad-acre, monoculture agriculture as well as deforestation and contamination due to fossil fuel extraction and mining are all depleting topsoil, or leaving it exposed to erosion and deserti-

fication.

Rather than relying on the possibility of a techno-chemical snap cure, we should encourage inquiry into a modality of solutions, with an emphasis on those that are slow, biologically and socially diverse, equitable and break divides between urban and rural.

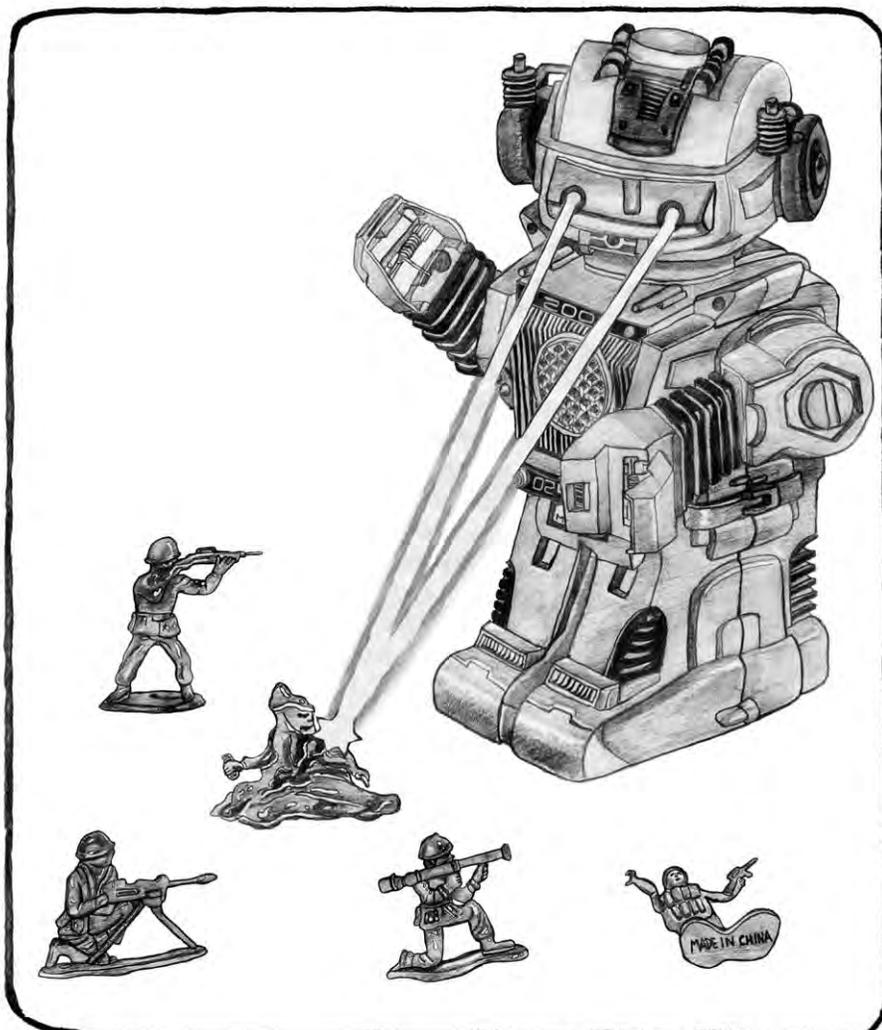
Some of these, for your Googling pleasure, include urban agriculture, agro-forestry, higher percentage of plant-based diet, bio-mimicry, permaculture, local-organic food, nutritional education, focus on maternal health and family planning, female literacy and empowerment programs—as there is a direct correlation between female literacy and declining birth-rate—and a renewed vigor for local community-based determination of needs.

The rush to expand the proportion of genetically modified food is underscored by a greedy, quick-fix philosophy which conflates the absence of evidence with evidence of absence. GM food is not a long-term solution for hunger, poverty, land soil degradation, or Earth's human carrying capacity, and in fact presents new risks that far outweigh any potential short-term benefits.

Alexander Oster is a former Concordia Student Union Executive, acting as VP Sustainability from 2009-2010, and is a current member of the Concordia Food Systems Project.

Tremendous Tales

by Christopher Olson



With the obedience chip in place, we should be able to expect full compliance.



Dear Melissa,

I totally know how to use a condom. You just put it on and you're good to go, right?

Okay, so I made that question up. But with good reason! Over the past week, three people have asked me questions about condoms that I thought were general knowledge.

Apparently using condoms properly isn't as obvious as I thought, and this has me worried.

To be fair, my idea of "general knowledge" might be skewed by the countless hours I spend Googling safer sex information, but I know that the majority of people have never even read the directions on the back of a condom wrapper.

By talking to the aforementioned three people, I've come to realize that even those who claim to be an "expert" on condom use are often missing some of the basics.

Far too many women I've spoken to justify their lack of condom knowledge by saying, "Well, that's the guy's job." I'm not even going to begin trying to analyze the problems with a statement like that. So I'll just say this: by that logic, the guy might as well say, "Well, that's the girl's job!" if you happen to get pregnant. (Guys—before you run and show your girlfriend that I said this—note the sarcasm.)

If both partners are educated on the matter, it will double the chances of avoiding any kind of mistake. So ladies, carry condoms and learn how to use them if you haven't already.

Here are some basic dos and don'ts for everyone that missed out on Condom 101. Always check the expiry date and pinch the tip of your condom to leave room for semen.

Don't keep condoms in a wallet, because it will weaken them. Don't double up condoms because it equates to double the friction, which results in double the chances of your condoms tearing and fucking you over. And no, you can't use a condom twice—because of spillage and higher chances of tearing. Besides, condoms are cheap (sometimes free) and it's just gross to reuse them anyways.

Don't use flavoured condoms other than for oral sex, because the flavouring can cause yeast infections if used during penetration. Lastly, your plumber would appreciate if you refrain from flushing your used condoms down the toilet. Instead, wrap it up and put it in the garbage.

Condoms help protect against pregnancy and STIs, and they have a really high success rate when used properly. It's been proven that the majority of times that condoms aren't effective it isn't because the condom itself failed, but rather the people using it didn't use it properly or consistently.

So despite good intentions, using a condom might not mean you're actually safe. In my experience, high school sex education in our province isn't the most reliable and consistent source of information, so it's really worth taking the time to seek answers to questions you may have.

—Melissa Fuller



Send questions to sexpancakes.thelink@gmail.com and check out "Sex & Pancakes" on Facebook.

Nah'msayin?

I Don't Wanna Pay For It

Action movies have a time-honoured tradition of having a climactic sequence where the hero(s) rampage through a bunch of anonymous henchmen, snapping necks and filling them with enough lead to build a dozen "Made in China" toys.

Quite frankly, I think the hero is fucking us all over—because those henchmen are often dirty police officers.

Think about it. You've got the pensions and other payments that will be owed to the families. Bad guys need love too, so you've got a lot of grieving widows and junior henchmen to compensate.

Next, the training costs that go into replacing dozens of cops. Filling those bloody shoes ain't cheap. Hell, even crooked cops make the occasional



GRAPHIC VIVIEN LEUNG

just arrest—maybe a slap on the wrist would have been a better punishment for taking a bribe than, say, being dismembered by Jason Statham.

Finally, you've got the expense of those public funerals that cops get. Those horse chariots don't rent themselves, not to mention the cost of all the blanks for an endless series of 21 gun salutes.

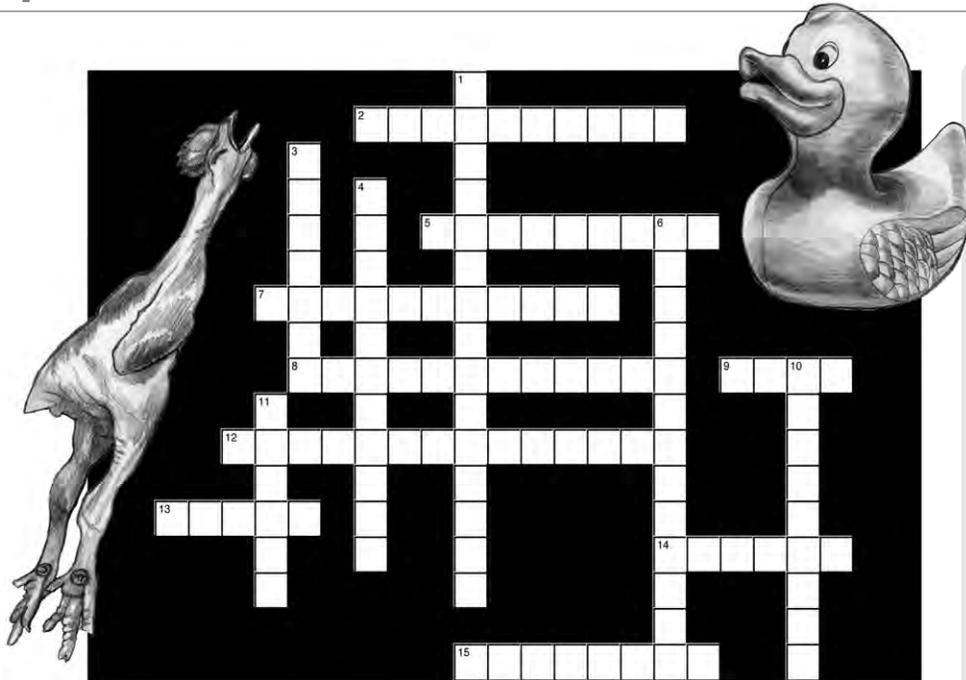
So thanks a lot, Seagal/Van Damme/Willis, etc... Way to screw the taxpayer. Maybe next time, you could just write a letter to the editor and file a complaint like the rest of us?

—Adam Kovac

Quik-X

“Famous Fowl”

• CHRISTOPHER OLSON



Across

- Along with The Village People’s “In the Navy” and the music video for Cher’s “If I Could Turn Back Time,” the Navy has never had more inadequate representation than this cartoon duck, who shares the uniform but forgot to put on pants. (2 words)
- According to legendary animator Chuck Jones, “Bugs [Bunny] is who we want to be, [this cartoon duck] is who we are.” (2 words)
- The first hockey team to be founded as a tie-in to a film. Apparently briefly naming a new kind of McDonald’s hamburger just wouldn’t cut it anymore. (2 words)
- Donald Duck meets the Dark Knight—his mild-mannered secret identity is Drake Mallard, in accordance with the naming conventions of cartoon waterfowl. (2 words)
- A New Zealand bird that’s not to be confused with a fruit that has a thin hairy skin... I repeat, not to be confused with a delicious side dish. Wait, let’s start over.

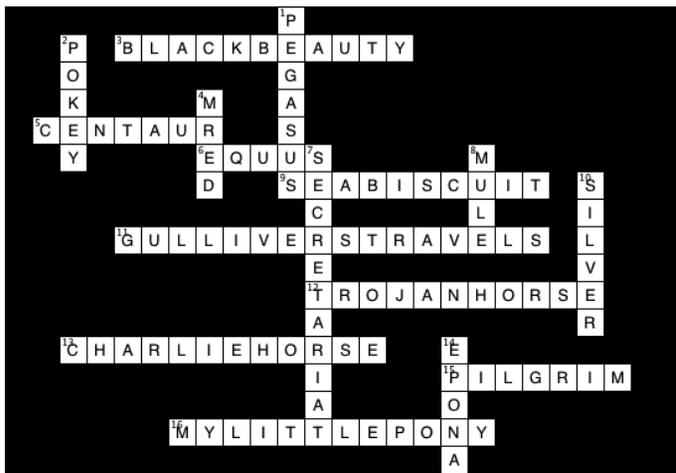
- “I say, I say, I say I have a debilitating stutter. Didn’t you hear me, boy, I say, boy?” (2 words)
- This insurance company’s mascot is a waterfowl voiced by Gilbert Gottfried. Not to be confused with Iago from Disney’s *Aladdin*, who’s a member of the genus *Psittaci-formes*, and technically not a fowl... or do you not care about the classification of endothermic tetrapod vertebrates?
- Years after the death of Sylvester the cat, this canary would continue to get up from their perch, claiming to have “saw” their old friend. But it was only a shadow... of the past.
- Not to be confused with one of Donald Duck’s nephews, this oversized infant is a little dense. By which I mean really fucking stupid.

- When the first season of *Sesame Street* was released on DVD, they had to add a parental guidance warning. I guess featuring a bird loaded with growth amphetamines as a main character will do that. (2 words)
- The collective pen name for the authors of various fairy tales and nursery rhymes. She was the “Alan Smithee” of her times. (2 words)
- Also known by the name of Henny Penny, this fable about a fowl obsessed with the world coming to an end cleared up the 2012 hysteria before anyone even gave a shit about Mayans. (2 words)
- Peanuts* comic strip character who speaks in squiggles. Not to be confused with the enormously popular music festival. Hippies like to debate which one came first.
- When George Lucas made a live-action film about this anthropomorphic duck from another planet, people began to question whether or not *Star Wars* was just a fluke. Made his most recent appearance in *Marvel Zombies #5*.

Down

- Unfunny conservative comic strip duck. To illustrate how unfunny it is, his name is loosely based on America’s 13th president, Millard Fillmore. (2 words)

issue 22 crossword solutions



THE LINK

CONCORDIA’S INDEPENDENT NEWSPAPER

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editorial

The Board Wins

In the two months following former President Judith Woodsworth’s Dec. 22 firing, a movement for change swept through Concordia. Every major union and association representing the university’s 50,000 students, faculty and staff called for a dramatic overhaul of the university’s Board of Governors, which had dismissed two university presidents in the span of three years.

For a moment, there was a genuine feeling that things were going to be different, and that the Board would be cornered into enforcing the will of its constituents. This widely held hope for change was crushed at the Feb. 17 Board meeting.

Facing calls for the resignations of 16 Board members that had overstayed their term limits and an unprecedented demand for democratic reform to the university’s highest governing body, the Board did not budge.

No one has resigned, no real dialogue has been opened and the chair of the Board, Peter Kruyt, is in China. He won’t be back until the school year is up.

Instead of taking action, the Board suggested a committee of three experts from outside Concordia make recommendations as to how the university’s governance should change—which is funny, as we were under the impression there were already a few strongly-worded recommendations kicking around.

So rather than listen to the 50,000 people it governs, the Board will defer to three experts. And what’s more, the Board is under no obligation to enforce any recommendation brought forth by the experts.

Concordia Interim President Frederick Lowy, who was handpicked by the Board, did a poor job of justifying this to the university’s Senate.

“I’m not recommending that an outside group of experts tell us how to run the university,” he said at Senate’s Feb. 19 meeting.

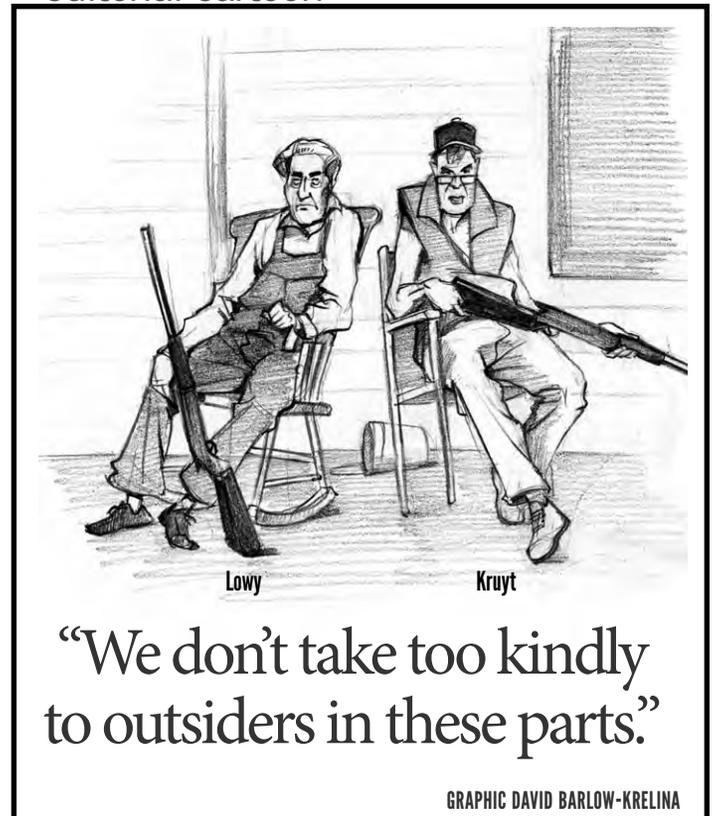
Well President Lowy, what do you call the Board of Governors? Twenty-three of the Board’s 40 members are selected from outside the university. These 23 members disproportionately represent the country’s business elite and they are largely responsible for the predicament we now find ourselves in.

Perhaps the irony of Lowy’s statement was lost on Senate because they more or less abandoned their fight for reform. While the tension between Senate and Board still remains, the optimism and outrage are gone. The fight is over. And, as usual, the people who decided to play by the rules lost.

Unless students and teachers decide to start sitting-in, walking-out or forming some kind of human chain to prevent the Board from meeting, the chips will always be stacked against democracy.

—Christopher Curtis,
News Editor

editorial cartoon



GRAPHIC DAVID BARLOW-KRELINA

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