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# It's YOUR Concordia.

Four Pages on the Election • Current Affairs 4

ELECTIONS: YOUR CONCORDIA TAKES THE UNION

# Youth in Revolt



PHOTOS RILEY SPARKS



Scan this QR Code to see a video of the protest



## CEGEP Students Lead the Charge Against Tuition

• CHRISTOPHER CURTIS

Heavily armored riot police banged their shields and batons together in unison, yelling “move!” with every step forward.

Most of the crowd had already dispersed and many of the 120-or-so remaining were scanning alleyways and side streets for an escape route. A few dozen protesters, however, would not budge.

They stood within striking distance of the riot squad, undeterred by the ominous clash of batons against shields or by the two police helicopters fluttering loudly overhead. In the middle of the scrum, a street musician blared synth beats through an amplifier. It sounded like millions of electric circuits screaming, which only added to the intensity.

A deafening explosion rocked the crowd, sending it back about 10 feet. Seconds later two more stun grenades went off, disorienting and frightening the protesters. As if on cue, the riot squad began its charge. The few who couldn't flee fast enough were struck with punishing baton hits to the spine, leg or arm. One boy was trampled, beaten and handcuffed.

By now, the police had successfully pushed protesters off Sherbrooke Street and onto City Councillors Avenue in Montreal's usually sleepy financial district.

As the few remaining protesters cautiously backed up, one of the younger men turned to the fleeing

crowd and yelled “Why are you running? We outnumber them!”

Like almost everyone at the March 31 protest, he was a teenager. His face was still round with baby fat. He wore a ski jacket that hung awkwardly from his growing frame. He yelled with the urgency and brashness of an 18-year-old.

Although most of them are still a year or two away from university, CEGEP students have been leading the charge against tuition hikes. In six years, university tuition will rise by 75 per cent in Quebec. Factoring in ancillary fees, students will pay \$6,000 a year to attend university—nearly half of the \$13,000 the average Quebec student lives off each year.

While university students have lobbied their representatives for months, CEGEP students are approaching the issue with an almost frightening intensity.

On March 31, five CEGEP's from across the province went on a one-day strike. Thousands of these college students then took to Montreal's streets calling for a general strike and series of escalating pressure tactics.

“This is just the beginning,” said Arnaud Theurillat-Cloutier to the nearly 3,000 students at the protest. “We will block the streets and highways. We will paralyze Quebec if we have to.”

For hours the protesters rallied through Montreal, screaming, chanting and sometimes dancing with a combination of fury, opti-

mism and creativity. At one point the procession stopped so students could sit down on a particularly busy street, completely halting traffic for blocks—a demonstration of the very real power they wield.

The day culminated in a standoff with police outside the offices of the Conference of Rectors and Principals of Quebec Universities. CREPUQ came out in support of the tuition increases outlined in the Minister of Finance's 2011-2012 budget, a plan that will also increase user fees and cut public services.

The crowd outside of the glass tower was supporting a sit-in taking place in CREPUQ's offices. Within minutes, police began dispersing protesters with mace and the day erupted in violence, with at least one student being hospitalized and six arrested.

Just one week earlier, another protest organized by L'Association pour une solidarité syndicale étudiante ended with a fight between students and police.

That time, CEGEP students managed to infiltrate the Finance Minister's Montreal office through a fire escape. In what was a moment of sheer chaos, students clashed with building security and were even fought off by secretaries using binders. One student was taken to the hospital after having his head smashed through a glass door by a security guard.

Using mace, riot police managed to scatter the students back onto the streets but not before they unrolled

a giant banner directed at Minister of Finance Raymond Bachand. “Shove your tuition increases up your ass Bachand,” it read.

“The strikes and protests are just a starting point. We need to keep applying pressure on the Charest government,” said Cedric Audy. Audy, whose CEGEP did not join the strike, chose to skip class and bus into Montreal from Lennoxville to attend the rally. “If people are being excluded from a higher education, who is going to fill the void left by retiring baby boomers? Education is a right and we won't back down on this.”

Jessie Ducharme is studying social sciences at CEGEP de Saint-Jérôme, where 70 per cent of students voted in favour of the one-day strike.

“If we don't mobilize now we'll lose,” said Ducharme. “I honestly don't know if I'll be able to afford university at this rate. And I'm not alone. You hear people worrying about tuition costs in classrooms across Quebec. It's not just about us—this austerity budget is cutting away at the province's safety net. It's marginalizing the most marginalized.”

With more protests and longer strikes slated for the fall, the Service de Police de Ville Marie is looking to adapt to the rising tide of student activism sweeping through Quebec.

“We have to learn how to deal with these budget protests,” said SPVM spokesperson Dany Richer. “This won't be the last one.”

# HOW WE VOTED

Last week, a record number of Concordia undergrads came out to vote for a new student union. The following breaks down exactly what those numbers look like and who will be representing us next year.

GRAPHICS JULIA WOLFE

## KEY

Your  
Concordia

Action

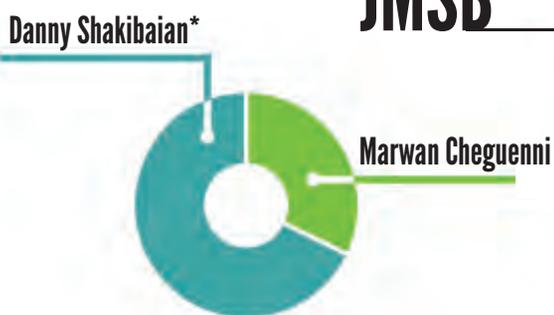
\* = Elected

## SENATE

### A&S



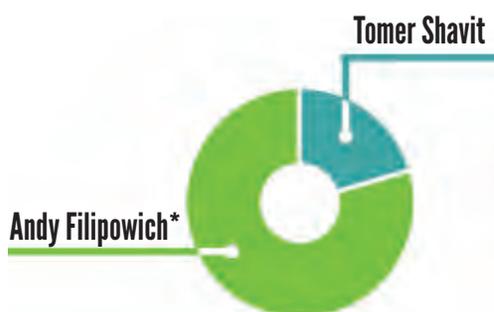
### JMSB



### ENCS



### FINE ARTS



## COUNCIL



## BoG



# Your New CSU

PHOTO ERIN SPARKS



## Meet YOUR Heads of Slate

• LAURA BEESTON

After one of the most competitive elections in recent Concordia Student Union history, the students have spoken—in record numbers—and *Your Concordia* will be the executive slate for the 2011-2012 academic year.

“We knew that we had a lot of support, but we didn’t realize how much,” said an exhausted-looking *Your Concordia* president-elect Lex Gill with a sleepy smile. “We’re still sort of in shock.”

The president-elect, whose slate won by just over 300 votes, explained that John Molson School of Business voters gave *Your Concordia* a scare during the ballot count.

“For a while [...] we pretty much felt like we were going to lose. There was massive, massive voter turnout in the MB building and the count went straight from *Your Concordia* to *Action* without a break,” explained Gill. “But then we got to the last boxes and they were from Loyola, and the votes were all for us. Everywhere but the MB building we were getting support, and it shows in the results.”

While all six JMSB seats went to councillors who ran on team *Action*, Gill is confident that, through dialogue and building strong relationships during their summer Council retreat, the new

Council will come to an understanding about the shared values of the student union. She said she is thankful that her councillors are independent and have divergent opinions—especially the ones that ran on her slate.

“When we talked to most of them this morning [announcing we won], they said ‘Great, now we’re going to give you a really hard time next year,’” explained

VP Advocacy and Outreach-elect Morgan Pudwell with a laugh.

“But this is exactly what we want,” said Gill. “This is part of the cultural shift that we think needs to happen at the CSU.”

Gill seemed delighted to finally come out and say what she believes *Your Concordia* stands for: the first progressive team to run the union since 2002.

“It’s like Concordia has come

full-circle,” she said. “There’s finally this space to build on the positive parts of our history on this campus.”

“There’s a difference between being progressive, working for a meaningful bottom-up democracy and fostering grassroots initiatives on campus, and lighting fire to cop cars,” she continued. “This is a distinction I think a lot of people need to make.”

“Being pro-student isn’t radical,” added Pudwell.

“We’re a student union—not a government or an extension of the administration and we’re here to fight for students’ rights,” nodded Gill. “Sometimes that means a polite disagreement with the administration or the government.”

One of the things the pair of *Your Concordia*-elects seemed most excited for was the possibility that this change will bring for the union.

“We’re all going into this with a really clear idea of what we want next year and what the union should look like. We have a lot of shared frustrations and a lot of shared hopes,” said Gill. “I think that the most exciting thing about next year is not even about being the president of the CSU, but the fact that I get to work with all these incredible people and that’s such a blessing. I think most of us feel that way. This is a team we actually really believe in.”

## TOTAL SEATS

\*

## EXECUTIVE



# ABUSED RULES?

## See the CSU Standing Regs

• COMPILED BY LAURA BEESTON

“My responsibility is to make sure that the electoral process runs smoothly and fairly, and to make sure that everyone follows the rules. [...] The following is a supplementary list of directives to set out the guidelines of this year’s nominations and campaigns policies. These directives are intended to clarify rules and regulations where the larger CSU Standing Regulations are vague. They provide clear guidelines for a fair and safe electoral process, but are by no means complete.”

— Oliver Cohen, Chief Electoral Officer, CSU Election 2011

### Section 4 – Campaigning Period

184: Campaign material may be distributed, posted, published, broadcast or otherwise disseminated **only during the election period.**

188: Candidates shall campaign in accordance with the rules of fair play. Breaking **the rules of fair play** include, but are not limited to, **breaching generally accepted community standards**, libel, slander, general, sabotage of the campaigns of other candidates, and misrepresentation of the facts.

### Section 6 – Procedures at the Polling station

205: The CEO shall establish such procedures as he or she deems necessary to ensure that:

(d) The **secrecy** of the vote is maintained

(e) **No campaign materials shall be within view of a polling station** from the beginning until the end of the polling period;

### Chapter V – Contestations

219. Every elector may contest a referendum or an election, or a part thereof relating to specific office(s), on the grounds that

c) that a corrupt electoral practice was used;

d) there have been violations of these regulations.

220. A contestation of an election or a referendum must be filed in writing with the Chief Electoral Officer not later than **7 days following the announcement of the results.** The Chief Electoral Officer shall issue a written decision within 5 days of receiving such a contestation.

Check out the full CSU General Elections Info Pack on *The Link’s* website

# The Rules of the Game

## Fair Play in the Concordia Student Union Elections



PHOTO PIERRE CHAUVIN

• LAURA BEESTON

During a trip down the Hall building escalators to investigate a barrage of texts, tip-offs and gossip on March 31, *The Link* was met by two members of opposing *Action* and *Your Concordia* slates—one handing out student papers, the other in campaign colours.

Though the designated campaigning period had officially ended, there they stood, soliciting students to vote. But were they breaking electoral rules?

“Distributing a free press is something you can do at any time of year. It’s not campaigning,” said *Your Concordia* Arts and Sciences Councillor-elect Michaela Manson at the time. “[These newspapers] aren’t up for a fee levy.”

The same question was then turned to Rasim Hafiz, the *Action* hopeful running for VP Services & Sustainability, who was still wearing a blue t-shirt.

“Have you voted?” he asked. “It’s the last day. Tomorrow we’ll be speaking about everything, all our team, but today’s our last day, which is why we’re encouraging people to vote.”

From March 29 to 31, the CSU election campaign intensified daily as Concordia students took to the polls. As time wore on, the call for contestations and complaints about broken rules and fair play amplified, but the de facto rulebook—the CSU election standing regulations and bylaws—offered little direction in terms of how to address and enforce a proper system of campaign decorum.

As written by Chief Electoral Officer Oliver Cohen in the package, these regulations “provide clear guidelines for a fair and safe electoral process, but are by no means complete.”

Unsurprisingly, gripes from both sides about things like poster night decorum, “pre-” and “post-” campaigning, and the use of promotional material were some of the many slights that arose on the 2011 electoral trail—as well as more serious charges of breaching procedures at polling stations, harass-

ment and defamation.

Though the bylaws read that, “Candidates shall campaign in accordance with the rules of fair play,” this ambiguous imperative begs the question: what are the generally accepted community standards of a fair election at Concordia?

### A Change in Directives

On March 30, the CEO issued both slates additional instructions regarding campaigning during the polling period, which is a violation under article 205 of the bylaws.

Though it states, “No campaign materials shall be within view of a polling station,” and, “that the secrecy of the vote is to be maintained,” allegations surfaced against the *Action* slate—that they continued to wear their campaign t-shirts and were soliciting votes in classrooms and near polling stations, sometimes keeping tallies on their t-shirts each time they got a student to the polling station.

In response, Cohen outlined that all candidates were not allowed to wear their campaign shirts during the polling days—regardless of whether or not they were inside out—and also limited the messages they were permitted to pass along to students as they canvassed them to vote.

“Candidates are only allowed to instruct students where they can vote. They may also say, ‘Go vote,’ but any other type of discussions concerning elections are forbidden,” he wrote.

“Sometimes the bylaws aren’t clear and people need clarification,” explained Cohen to *The Link* on Friday. “It was an issue that had to be dealt with.”

When *Your Concordia’s* president-elect Lex Gill approached Cohen with her concerns about *Action’s* “post campaigning,” the CEO allegedly told Gill that he had experienced difficulty both enforcing the bylaws and adequately responding to the rules being broken.

“There was a lot of, ‘I can’t tell any-

one what to do,’ but he’s the only one who actually can tell people what to do,” she said. “So you see that there’s this willingness to just break the rules, which is ridiculous.

“You need to have a process that just doesn’t let these things happen. I think that clear hiring policies and outlining the specific sanctions that the CEO is able to administer would go a long way to ensuring none of this happens again.”

On June 1, the incoming president plans to get to the policy work she feels would “right a lot of the wrongs that [*Your Concordia*] experienced in this election,” and is not alone in her assertion that things need to change for the better.

“Overall, I think this election serves as a valuable lesson,” said *Action* presidential candidate Khalil Haddad.

“[*Action*] ran a clean and positive campaign from beginning to end, despite certain candidates, media outlets and ‘concerned students’ depicting us as violating electoral regulations, not being transparent and accusing us of highly unfounded allegations,” Haddad said. “We have not violated any electoral regulations throughout our campaign.”

“I would highly encourage the CEO for more comprehensive and detailed electoral regulations in the future,” he wrote to *The Link* via email. “I think it’s easier to point fingers than to look for solutions on how we can make the electoral process into a more friendly environment.”

Changing, updating and expanding on the rules to make the election process fairer—and doing it when it’s still fresh in everyone’s mind—is something Gill hopes will make the election experience less about the contestations, and more about the campaign content of the hopeful union slates.

“Even changing the little things, like securing fair poster space for fee-levy groups, could make the whole process better,” she said, adding that she hopes refined regulations will be put to a November referendum ballot.

# Record Turn Out CSU 2011 Voting Period

• LAURA BEESTON

A record number of undergraduate students came out to vote in the 2011 Concordia Student Union elections March 29, 30 and 31, and the polling stations were feeling it.

Voter turnout in the Hall building on the first day alone saw over 600 people cast a ballot, said Oliver Cohen, the CSU's Chief Electoral Officer.

By the time the polls closed on March 31, over 6,000 students had participated in the electoral process. Last year's numbers came in at less than five per cent.

Cohen said he was pleased with the turnout in the new polling

station at the John Molson School of Business building.

"This is the first time that [the JMSB] polling station has ever been 100 per cent active," said Cohen. "There are 10,000 JMSB students and they're obviously very active."

Political hopefuls also noticed a difference.

"We got a record turn out, and I think that's largely because students have found out what's going on [in the CSU] and we engaged them," said president-elect Lex Gill after the results. "If anything, the results of this election prove that you don't have to be alienated and your vote matters."

# Grad Students Vote Electoral Focus Shifts to the GSA

• SIMON LIEM

The Graduate Students Association is hoping to get more students involved in its upcoming elections, which begin on April 5 and run until April 7.

"[The GSA] is pretty important for international students, [but a] typical grad student is not focused on that type of thing," said Robert Sonin, who, having run unopposed, has already been acclaimed as president for next year.

Much of the election has already been decided, as many of the positions are uncontested. All of the Arts and Sciences councilor positions are also acclaimed.

The GSA provides a variety of services for

graduate students, including English and French language courses, art lessons and management of the GSA health plan. International students tend to take advantage of its services more than Canadian students, according to Sonin, though the GSA wants to make itself more prominent to everyone.

Turnout in last year's elections was close to nine per cent, or about 700 students. Doucet hopes this can be bumped up to closer to 16 per cent.

Tending to be a calm affair, Doucet does not see the GSA elections getting anywhere near as heated as the Concordia Student Union elections, which concluded with a *Your Concordia* victory last week. All graduate students at Concordia are eligible to vote.

# THE REFERENDUMS

• SIMON LIEM

Three groups appealed to the student body for more funding during last week's Concordia Student Union elections, but only one got what it was hoping for.

Queer Concordia garnered itself a \$0.02 per credit fee levy, while radio station CJLO and *The Void*, Concordia's bilingual arts and literary magazine, were both voted down.

"Obviously, we are incredibly disappointed," said Katie Seline, CJLO's station manager. "It's heartbreaking, [but] at the same time, it's a vote and we respect it."

Concordia's radio station was requesting a \$0.09 per credit increase in funding—a total of \$2.70 a year per student, given a full 12 credit course load—to explore, among other things, the possibility of switching to an FM signal. Currently, the station can be difficult to receive in certain parts of Montreal because of its low-power AM transmitter.

The defeat was unexpected, as both *Action* and *Your Concordia* lent vocal support to the fee levy. CJLO hoped that it would pass without issue, but over 56 per cent of students voted 'No' on the ballot.

The margins of the two other levy questions were even narrower. *The Void's* request for a two cent levy lost with just over 51 per cent voting 'No,' and Queer Concordia won its question by a mere 58 votes.

Michael Chaulk, a representative for *The Void*, was saddened by the results, but remains optimistic.

"[The new] issue has received

more submissions than we've ever received," said Chaulk. "We think we've increased our presence in the school and that will help [...] in the amount of support we get from students."

Chaulk and Seline both speculated that the record turnout might have actually hurt their campaigns, suggesting the normally apolitical students might not have been informed about what their money would be put towards.

Both *The Void* and CJLO say they will have to seek out different ways to fund their projects for next year.

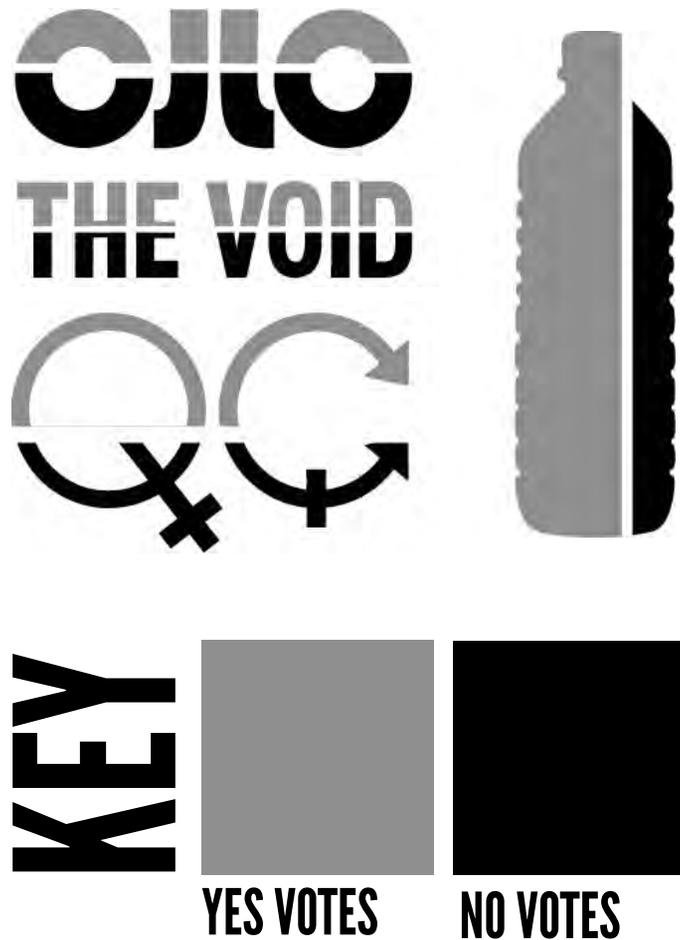
"We'll start to look for cheaper options so we can get out there," said Seline. "We'll have to become more reliant on advertising, which we wanted to avoid."

Queer Concordia, like *The Void*, was seeking a \$0.02 per credit increase. Joey Donnelly, a member of the collective, was pleased and relieved after winning.

"It was a struggle to get on the ballot," said Donnelly. "It was hard to get to the starting point, but once we got there, we were able to build up enough momentum and support."

The additional funding will most likely go to extend the 'Safer Sex' program to increase its accessibility around campus, according to Donnelly. Other than that, the group will consult its members before deciding on how exactly to use the money.

Donnelly also said Queer Concordia wants to become a service that everyone, not just queer students, can use.



*Students Withhold Funds  
From The Void and CJLO,  
Reward Queer Concordia*

# Union Votes for Strike Mandate

## Concordia's Trade Workers Seek Better Wages



PHOTO PIERRE CHAUVIN

• CHRISTOPHER CURTIS

After months of stalled negotiations with the university, the 62 trade workers at Concordia's Sir George Williams Campus voted unanimously in favour of a strike mandate on March 31.

The mandate gives them the option to strike if negotiations with Concordia's administration continue falling apart. But for now, the workers' representatives are still meeting with the university.

"We could strike at any moment," said Eddie Ginocchi, Vice-President of the United Steel Workers local 9538, which represents Concordia's trade workers. "We're going to keep talking to the university, but we're going to turn up the pressure tactics."

For weeks, the trade workers have been using their lunch hour to demonstrate outside of the six buildings they maintain and repair on a daily basis. Using placards, chants and even a Vuvuzela, the tradesmen are hoping to send a clear message to Concordia's administration.

"We're gonna get even louder this week," said Joe Luciano, the USW union representative for Concordia's trade workers. "I can assure you they will hear us."

The workers haven't had a cost of living or salary increase since May 2007. Since that time, their contracts have expired, their workload has increased dramatically and the consumer price index has jumped by seven per cent.

In 2009, Concordia's down-

town campus continued its decade-long expansion with the opening of the MB Building. Meanwhile, at Loyola, the Genomics building and PERFORM Centre are slated to open later this year. The addition of new infrastructure has increased demand for skilled labour at Concordia. But rather than make additional hires, Ginocchi said the university's labour pool has actually shrunk.

"Buildings [at Concordia] have sprouted up like mushrooms and there haven't been any new hires to ease the burden," he said.

"We've been running around like chickens with our heads cut off," said Luciano. "Before I can finish one project, I get a call that says they need me somewhere

else. We're working like dogs."

Since the summer, the university elected to bring a conciliator into negotiations with the USW, but Ginocchi remains frustrated with the process.

"You could call it a game of cat and mouse or a game of dog and cat, but either way it's not good," he said. "The offers we've been getting are insulting. [...] We're the most energy-efficient university in the province, our own administration tells us we're the hardest-working staff in any Quebec university. But we aren't paid like the hardest workers."

During the initial negotiation period with university administration, the USW conducted a study examining the salaries and benefits of skilled labour in Universities

across the province.

"When the administration compares us to other institutions, they include colleges and school boards," said Ginocchi. "I say let's compare an apple to an apple. And when you compare us to workers at other universities we're near the bottom [in terms of salary]."

In the event of a strike, crucial parts of the university's infrastructure would be left unattended—electricity, plumbing, and ventilation systems, to name a few—a prospect both the administration and the trade workers would like to avoid.

"We just want a fair deal. We want to feel respected," said Luciano. "We love working here, we love to help the students however we can."

# STUDENT UNION TICKET GIVEAWAY HITS ASFA HARD—IN THE WALLET

• JUSTIN GIOVANNETTI

The Concordia Student Union's decision to give away \$19,000 of tickets for Youth Action Montreal, a conference on April 28, has been described as a "slap in the face" by its partner.

"Just three days ago, the CSU brought me into their office and told me that they were going to sell their 1,000 tickets for free," said Arts and Science Federation of Associations President Aaron Green on March 31.

When the CSU and ASFA made bulk purchases of the tickets in January—1,000 for the student union and 500 for ASFA—they both pledged to sell the tickets for the same price for which they bought them: \$20.

"We had a mutual agreement and understanding that we were going to sell them for the same price. There was zero consultation about the move and that's unacceptable," said Green. "That's not the way the CSU should operate."

To finance the \$10,000 pur-

chase, ASFA took the money temporarily from its Special Projects Fund. The money was supposed to be returned to the fund—which was budgeted at \$31,576 at the start of the year—as the tickets were sold.

With the Arts and Science representatives unsure as to whether they can still sell the tickets, the fund may not be available to finance the academic year's final projects by the 27 member associations that make up ASFA.

While the CSU didn't return *The Link's* calls for comments, ASFA VP Finance Alexa Newman said the union was worried it wouldn't be able to sell all of its tickets.

"We haven't sold many tickets," said Newman, who confirmed that both ASFA and the CSU had only sold 50 tickets each.

"The event is a month away and with the election, with the New York Trip, with ASFA's Spring Ball, there are many more pressing events," said Newman. "That's the culture of students, that when it comes to purchasing tickets they make their purchases very last-minute."

According to Green, ASFA and the CSU hadn't even tried to sell the tickets yet.

"We were going to get out there after the election and table to sell these tickets," said Green. "That's what I wanted to do. But now how can I sell these tickets when they are giving them away for free next door?"

The two ASFA executives were most bothered by the evidence that the student union had made the decision to give away the tickets long before warning Newman and Green.

Upon leaving his meeting with CSU President Heather Lucas on March 29, Green noticed posters already up in the Hall building announcing that the tickets would be free.

"They knew that their decision was going to impact us, our member associations, our councillors and our students, but they never bothered to contact us," said Newman. "It's a matter of professional courtesy."

At the first Youth Action Mon-

trepreneurial conference in 2007, the two organizations gave away tickets for the event.

"They never called us to warn us, 'Hey, we were thinking about lowering the price.' In 2007 they sold out because they were free, no one paid for them," said Green. "When we went into this, we thought that with these three speakers, Kofi Annan, Stephen Lewis and David Suzuki, that we could sell the tickets for \$20. But \$20 is a lot of money for some students."

Nearly the entire planning process for Youth Action Montreal is in the hands of the student union's alumni.

Peter Schiefke, the president of Youth Action Montreal, was the CSU VP Student Life in 2005. He is joined by two former CSU presidents, Mohamed Shuriye and Amine Dabchy and former VP Stephanie Siriwardhana. Current CSU employees Georges Alexandar and Tay-Son Nguyen also sit on the Youth Action Montreal board of directors.

"At the beginning we asked our-

selves, 'Do all parties agree that these tickets will sell for \$20? We all said yes,'" said Green. "At a certain point Mohamed Shuriye approached the parties and said, 'Guys do you think the tickets are too expensive?' We all once again agreed, 'no.'"

With only a few weeks left before the conference, the ASFA executives are hoping for a quick resolution with the CSU.

In an email sent to CSU councillors on March 29, Councillor Michaela Manson proposed holding a special meeting this week to discuss purchasing ASFA's remaining tickets. The student union is projecting a \$70,000 surplus.

"Perhaps on the next Council meeting we could discuss the giveaway, but I think it should be resolved before then," said Green, who couldn't comment on the call for a special meeting.

"We already have students who are calling us and asking for a refund because they want a free ticket from the CSU," said Newman. "So we need a resolution and soon."

# Back to Earth



PHOTO SIMON LIEM

## Compost Montreal is 'A Different Kind of Business Model'

• SIMON LIEM

There is a company that values your trash.

Soon after Charlotte Cumberbirch signed up with Compost Montreal, the company thought that leaving a bucket of compost on her property was too risky. So they bought her a bike lock to secure the pail to a tree to make sure her kitchen scraps would not get nabbed.

Compost Montreal, a private business, offers a door-to-door composting service for residences and commercial outfits around the island. Every week it picks up rotten fruit, egg shells and leftovers from your doorstep.

When the bike lock story was mentioned to an employee of the company, Matthew Bruno, he remembered Cumberbirch by name.

"I think they're a pretty friendly group of people to deal with. I think if they were jerks, I would be less inclined [to do business with them]," laughed Cumberbirch.

"The human aspect of this business is the best," said Bruno. "It's a treat to work in a place like this."

Stephen McLeod started Compost Montreal in the summer of 2007. He began by towing a

garbage can behind his bicycle, collecting compostable materials from neighbours to bring to a city-run compost site. McLeod says he always had the intention of making money, but that he has to operate within a "grey area" between keeping true to his environmental ideals and running a successful business.

"I felt like I had to make a living and contribute positively to the world," said McLeod. "People have to show proof that you can make money doing positive things."

The company operates out of the top level of a rickety duplex in St. Henri. The apartment's warped floors are covered by a jumble of kitchen tables that serve as computer desks. The office is as much a workplace as it is a home, as employees often come to the kitchen to cook and make preserves together.

The company has about 10 employees, five of which are full-time. It has grown to serve around 1,000 homes and over 50 businesses on the island. The service costs \$5 a week per household and varies for commercial needs. At the end of a season, a bag of high quality compost is delivered for no extra cost to any customer that wants it.

"They give good service," said Haim Shoham, owner of Le Pan-

thère Verte, a chain of two restaurants that serve all organic vegan food. The company outsources Compost Montreal to put their composting into a larger compost system.

Composting seemed like a logical step to fulfill Shoham's ideals. Like Compost Montreal, he says that he started his restaurants with the intention of trying to create "A different kind of business model."

Though he feels they provide a necessary service, Shoham noted that "it's a bit on the expensive side for [small businesses]." Shoham wishes that the city would offer a similar service or subsidize businesses for their green practices. He thinks that would encourage more to get involved.

Municipalities have approached the company to help foster local composting programs. Montreal West councillor Elizabeth Ulin collaborated with Compost Montreal to start a community compost system for the town, which started on Earth Day last year.

According to Ulin, it was too expensive to implement a door-to-door system, so she sought out Compost Montreal's help. Now families can drop off their organic waste at any one of the 10 bins

around town.

"It has been terrific. We're pushing 200 families," said Ulin.

A Montreal West official estimated that it directed approximately 15 tonnes of waste away from landfills since the program began. The town hopes to expand the project to merchants, in addition to residences.

From its inception, Compost Montreal has also worked with the South West borough, using its composting site. Pierre Bochu, an official with the public works department, said that the rich organic material provided by Compost Montreal make for high quality, "agricultural grade" compost.

The company collects waste twice a week, usually filling up two truck beds with kitchen scraps from homes and businesses. Bruno estimates they haul about five tonnes per week, total. Surprisingly, a truck full of leftovers does not smell much different from a citrus-laden bag of trash, but it does get more rank as temperatures rise, said Bruno.

The site in the South West borough is well maintained, so it does not smell much either. What is noticeable about the site is the amount of heat coming out of the one story

hill of compost. As microbes break down organic material, they generate heat. A good pile of compost can get up to 60 degrees centigrade. In the winter, the mounds of dirt give off steam and ooze "compost juice," looking like tidy piles of giant horse droppings.

Compost Montreal is sustaining itself financially, but will have to find new ways to take on more customers. The current dumpsite can only take so much. The company has to find other locations if it wishes to expand much further.

Last year saw the company become formally incorporated by McLeod. Now, he has to follow stricter regulations to qualify for the necessary insurance. He feels that the regulations are "anti-entrepreneurial" and wishes that they could be eased for small businesses. The new requirements have cut into profits, said Bruno.

The priority for them is still to make sure composting is accessible to people in apartments in the middle of the city. This is what keeps their customers so satisfied.

"I respect their intentions," said Cumberbirch. "I don't see them as a business. I see them as having integrity and not wanting to profit from this."

# FROM THE EDITOR

## Meet *The Link* 2.0

You may have noticed some changes in this newspaper. Some sections have different names, the stories are a little longer and the editors have different titles.

While the changes might seem cosmetic for now, *The Link* is undergoing one of the largest transformations in its history.

Over the past year, the editors of the newspaper discovered that

their stories were being read increasingly online. While the 10,000 copies of *The Link* on the stands were still a favourite on campus, the enthusiasm of the newspaper's readers seemed to have gone digital, with more than 30,000 unique visitors eyeing the paper monthly.

We are now moving to serve those online eyes better.

Our editorial team has taken it

upon itself to do online what the web is best suited for: short stories over the course of the week that keep you in touch with your campus community and the thriving city around you.

Check out our website. The old sections that you know and love, News, Fringe Arts and Sports, have become digital.

The News section has now become a daily and will be Concor-

dia's source of breaking news. The Fringe Arts section is being transformed; it's less about Cinema Politica reviews and more about helping you plan out your night. Finally, Sports will now serve the Stingers junkies on campus with all the stats and summaries they can read.

Where does that leave the paper you are holding?

Dont' worry, *The Link's* print edition isn't going anywhere. In fact, it is only going to get better. The paper will now respond to what you read online and will make the best stories stronger. The paper's content will now be longer, more critical and add the voices you were missing online.

Did we mention that it's going to be better looking, too?

Welcome to the new *Link*.

## The Incoming Editor

### Looking Forward: Information is Power

A couple of weeks back, before any of this Concordia Student Union hoopla, *The Link* held its own elections and I ran for Editor-in-Chief.

Hi, my name is Laura Beeston. I started on Tuesday. What a week to be given the responsibilities of running a newspaper.

I came to this publication two years ago with great ambitions to be an arts writer, but stayed for the very real sense of community it offers. While I came with absolutely no desire to sit at the helm of this institution, I stayed on because *The Link's* mandate to engage with Concordia's unique campus and culture is far too exciting to find a real job, or get a real life.

To get people talking, listening, reading, thinking and acting is an empowering goal we set for ourselves each week. And—even if it kills us—it is truly an honour to work to inform and mediate a dialogue on campus and beyond.

A dedicated team of student volunteers and contributors are committed to creating this paper to keep you informed and engaged, and it's truly an inspiring time to work for an independent press.

Right now, in the middle of many crises, Concordia students have just participated in the democratic process in record numbers. People are arguably feeling the changes in the air, and I truly hope that the momentum carries. What will happen now? That is largely up to you, and how you choose to use your news.

Already we've seen Quebec students making waves, proving that we aren't apathetic or unconcerned with the state of the system.

With CEGEP students as young as 16-years-old already fighting—and being beaten by the police—for their belief in ac-

cessible education, this is a sign as clear as any that something big is on the horizon. And we are lucky to live—and report—in such politicized times.

Inheriting a world that is far more fucked up than those CSU elections last week, we need to work together, engage and inform each other as we move forward into 2012.

Information is power, and it starts with conversation. It also starts with you. *The Link* wants to be as accessible as possible—we want to tell your stories, hear your feedback and interact. Like we said last week, we need you.

You just spoke up in record numbers about how you wanted to be represented at this university. *The Link* truly wants to keep this engagement alive. This is your newspaper, after all, and we need you to form and inform us.

In order to get with the times and get out there, our media platform is also undergoing a major shift. This is a great opportunity to get involved with the ongoing information flow that is the student press. And it's never been easier.

I hope you take it.

Please comment on our website, write letters to the editor, pitch us your copy, tip us off, give us shit, come by our brainstorming or Friday afternoon workshops, and keep connecting with us and our community.

Student press starts with students, and we truly look forward to working with, and for you, Concordia.

—Laura Beeston

Editor-in-Chief, *The Link*, H649

editor@thelinknewspaper.ca

514-848-2424 x 7407

Twitter: @LauraBeeston

## The Outgoing Editor

### Year in Review: The Return of the Courageous Student

If the previous year could be summed up in one word, that word would be arrogance.

From an unrepresentative Board of Governors that went one dismissal too far, to a Concordia Student Union executive pushing forward with an ill-conceived student centre plan, the year was marked by overreach.

For the Board, the results were nearly catastrophic. The university's reputation was tarnished on the national stage and Judith Woodsworth left with nearly \$1 million of hush money, only to turn around and scuttle the Board's official position. The wreckage is still falling and Concordia's "crisis of governance" is unresolved.

By all accounts, Frederick Lowy, the interim president parachuted in to stabilize Concordia and put a fully functioning successor in place, is not up to the task. It's not his fault; in the six years he's been away from the president's office, his four successors have allowed the university's structure to grow out of control.

The winding and Byzantine diagram that describes which department head falls under which vice-president is so complex as to be rendered useless, requiring a degree simply to understand where authority really falls.

Expect Lowy to be incapable of fully wrestling the sprawling bureaucrats in the year he's been given. Also expect the heat to remain on the Board's chair, Peter Kruyt, as many of his faithful companions near two decades at the helm of the university.

In case you weren't aware, a governor is expected to walk away after six years. Kruyt and his friends clearly believe themselves to be exempt from the rules. The two presidents they have fired are keenly aware of that fact.

The meltdown of the *Fusion* slate, holding power at the CSU until June, was a much slower process than the Board's stumbling and was marked by a series of disregarded warnings and unheeded pleas for the union to correct itself.

Wracked by infighting and resignations, the student union stumbled along and was generally oblivious to the governance issues and campus life it was supposed to shape.

The student union was slow to react to a short opening where it could have pressured bottled water off campus. It failed. It largely avoided the tuition debate as the government openly positioned itself to mandate an increase. It blocked an attempt by CUTV to film Council meetings and only relented when the political pressure was too great.

CUTV's presence has revolutionized the coverage of Council meetings and has been an invaluable tool in keeping the student union's representatives honest. Their taping helped undermine the student centre campaign and expose corrupt electoral practices during last week's CSU election.

Faced with arrogance within the university and the CSU, students have taken it upon themselves to be assertive when necessary. Culture jams and sit-ins have returned to a campus that was devoid of them for far too long.

In the end, the ruling CSU dynasty, which can be traced back nine years to the wreckage of the immediate post-Netanyahu days when the university needed pro-student representatives out of the CSU, was brought to an end.

Over the four years I have served at *The Link*, the university and the union have both been changed in ways even I could have never guessed. The almighty Board was brought to its very knees, upending the balance of power, and the CSU's ruling dynasty has fallen in a once-in-a-generation upset.

Concordia's new balance of power has yet to assert itself, but it will find itself in a better place than it was four years ago. That's a legacy I'll be happy to retire with.

Justin Giovannetti,

—Outgoing Editor-in-Chief

QUEER PROM: A PAIR OF QUEENS

# Abandon Everything You Know

## Doldrums Makes Music To Escape To



• ASHLEY OPHEIM

Doldrums by definition refers to stagnation, a belt of baffling winds, or a dull state of depression. But Doldrums, the music project of Airick Woodhead, is none of these things. In fact, this misdirection seems to be a guiding force for the complexly layered songs he creates.

The name Doldrums came from Woodhead's favourite book as a child, *The Phantom Tollbooth*. "It's the place where nothing ever happens. I use music to kill that very feeling," he said. "This is music as escapism."

The structure of Doldrums' music seems rendered by a vast group of people. In some ways, it is, as Woodhead uses sounds from all over the musical landscape.

"People always tell me that my music sounds like an amalgamation of everything. I guess that's because I sample from all over the spectrum," said Woodhead, citing

mainstream R&B, classical music, future shock, bollywood, richwave and clip-clop as a few of his preferred sources.

For his first tour last year, Woodhead ventured through the United States' lush west coast, spontaneously improvising every show with random musicians, including one memorable artist who created music solely on his iPhone. Next, he found himself in Toronto, with a band of percussionists, sound effects and vocalists.

Woodhead recently returned from a journey through the heart of America that found him playing multiple shows between Montreal and the SXSW festival in Austin, Texas.

Now touching down again briefly in Montreal, Woodhead looks forward to collaborating with fellow tour-star Grimes.

"Touring with Grimes was pretty real. Between the two of us we played 20 shows at SXSW and the audiences were all like, rioting

and everybody's bleeding and there's shit on fire and... Oh, never mind. That was only for Odd Future," Woodhead said, referring to the up-and-coming Los Angeles-based rap collective. "Sick show."

Not unlike Odd Future, Woodhead just can't seem to sit still. Next month he is springing over to Singapore and then to Europe for the summer, something he never imagined happening.

Woodhead's sense of spontaneity also echoes in the way he creates his music.

"Music can happen all kinds of ways. There are no rules," he said. "If there is a formula, I guess it usually involves mimicking something very inspiring, combined with the insatiable need to express yourself."

"My music is 90 per cent stolen by nature, as I work with samples, but when electronic music is imbued with real character—something as recognizable as the tonality of the human voice—that's when it becomes a success. [That's

when it] can really communicate something."

As for the future, Woodhead is on a whole different sound-cloud.

"Actually, right now I'd like to make music that rejects style and is very simple: drums and vocals. There are more human reasons for liking music than subscribing to its style."

His music functions as a challenge to the listener to get the references he secretly sprinkles into the songs.

But perhaps it's all a game. Woodhead seems to be a bit of a prankster.

"I want to trick the listener into believing there is something happening when there is really nothing happening. Shit! I just gave it away!"

**Doldrums / Casa del Popolo / 4873 St. Laurent Blvd. / Tues., April 5 / 8 p.m. / with Capillary Action, Burls and The Elastic Fountains**

Stay up-to-date on Doldrums' quest for nirvana:



[endlessdoldrums.blogspot.com](http://endlessdoldrums.blogspot.com)

To see a video tour diary of Doldrums and Grimes:



[vimeo.com/arbutus](http://vimeo.com/arbutus)



# THE TRADING POST

## ARTX Students Want You to Leave Your Wallet at Home

PHOTO REBECCA MCFARLANE

• CAITLIN LEROUX

How much value do you place on your possessions? Does our current perception of monetary value make sense? Have we devalued things like human connection and basic survival tools?

The Trading Post, an exhibition that has been produced by Concordia's Fine Arts department's ARTX 399 class, aims to investigate questions like these. The exhibit invites its audience to trade goods or information for unique objects and artwork. The idea reflects back on our history of colonialism and the evolution of the value of currency that ensued.

The class worked closely on the project with their professor, Lorraine Oades, a well-known artistic figure in Montreal whose work has been included in exhibitions across Canada and internation-

ally. Oades assigned the collaborative, site-specific project.

The final exhibit has undergone many developments since the group started out. "We forget how we got there, we just know we did," said Rebecca McFarlane. Her work, entitled "How to Survive Death," focuses on the attainment of legacy through objects and art, "a survivalship through objects." She will be trading 100 sculptures of Styrofoam mountains that symbolize resilience from death.

The work of another student, Veronica Diniz, focuses on items that can be necessary for survival: clothing. Clothing has the ability to protect someone from hypothermia in the frigid wilderness, for example. These items have been deconstructed to counteract their usefulness. Diniz uses relatable items to really conceptualize the theme of her project.

Another piece, Sam Unger's project, entitled "Gaybourhood Watch Etc.," attempts to form a social network that can't be accessed on a bright laptop screen, or in a loud and sweaty bar. Unger's project focuses on the dynamic of trading information. "Gaybourhood Watch" is about face time, humanness, and assembling a group of people (queers and allies) who seek to connect with other individuals with similar objectives; to create safe places in neighborhoods and facilitate some good ol' fashioned hangouts.

The array of contemporary, integrated art pieces all feature different aesthetics, practices, and mediums, including performance, sculpture, audio and video. The challenge for students was finding a common ground to guide the curating of the exhibit. A semester's worth of conceptualization was

eventually narrowed down to the trading post theme, which is interpreted by the students in many different ways.

The exhibit is a fairly site-specific installation, because the students needed a space that could accommodate a variety of individual projects. While the space they settled on, a storefront on St. Zotique St., functions in this regard, the exhibit is not limited to the storefront. In some cases, the site acts merely as a starting point for affiliated satellite projects and events that will be dispersed around the city.

The ARTX 399 students pooled their talents from outside of the course's requirements to orchestrate fundraising events, design a website, write and distribute press releases, as well as facilitate the overall setup and exposure of the show. Advertisements for the event can be found

around campus, where the group cleverly placed price tag-shaped event information tickets on objects around the school, reiterating the idea of the fundamental significance of objects and information as elements of their trading post theme.

Many of the students will be sustaining their projects in further months. The vernissage will act as a launch date for certain projects, such as Unger's "Gaybourhood Watch."

The objective of the event is to trade everything—whether it be secret information, your favourite possession, or even simple conversation.

**The Trading Post / Projet Troc vernissage / 378 St. Zotique Est / April 8 / 7-11pm. Check out their website at [tradingpost2011.ca/](http://tradingpost2011.ca/)**

# HIVer Transitions Into Spring

## Fine Arts Students Shed Light on HIV/AIDS Awareness

• ALEX MCGILL

For many people, the winter is a season that symbolizes dormancy, hardship, and vast periods of cold and emptiness.

The global perception of HIV/AIDS by those not directly affected by the disease similarly occupies a vast white space, a huge unknowing, and the curators of HIVer want you to make that connection. The transition from winter to spring is also a time for rebirth, and for change. The aim of the exhibit is to bring new awareness out of hibernation.

The issue of HIV/AIDS is one that seems to have largely fallen out of the consciousness of today's youth since it was grabbing headlines in the late '80s. However, nearly 12 million people aged 15 to 24 are living with HIV/AIDS, making this an extremely important

issue and not one to be overlooked.

"This [event] has been my baby since September, early October of last year," said Emily Kirkman, event curator and graduate Art History student at Concordia. "We had to start planning, and then in January we put out a call for submissions and that went on until the end of February."

The exhibit is in connection with Concordia's special topics HIV/AIDS class, and this is the 17th time this particular exhibit has been held, with a different theme each year.

"This year we came up with the theme of *hiver* [winter] trying to express the bleakness, represented in the outlook of people living with HIV and AIDS," explained Kirkman. "I think people still think that it's taboo to talk about, so they avoid it. People think that they shouldn't talk about it, but I think

that they should, and that they need to."

The show incorporates a variety of art pieces from 11 artists. "It's a multimedia show right now," said Kirkman. "There will be projections, watercolour paintings, and there will be a performance at the vernissage."

Collectively, the works hope to re-establish and highlight the significance of the disease today. The vernissage is happening at the VAV gallery on April 7, but the works will be up on display until April 14. The event is sponsored by the Concordia Council on Student Life, QPIRG Concordia and the Fine Arts Students' Association.

**HIVer: Concordia's 17th Annual HIV/AIDS Exhibition vernissage / VAV Gallery / 1395 Rene Levesque / April 7 / 7:00 p.m.**



PHOTO SAM SLOTNICK

# The Prom You Always Wanted

Montreal Queer Prom 2011 Gives Prom a Second Chance



GRAPHIC ERIC BENT

• REBECCA HISCOTT

In the 1986 teen romance *Pretty in Pink*, Iona (Annie Potts) tells Andie (a young Molly Ringwald) that prom is the single most important event in a teenager's life—even though the experience is “the worst.”

Andie then makes the painful choice to attend her prom sans date, and is rewarded for it with the boyfriend she'd always

dreamed of.

Too many teen films from the '80s and '90s have told us that prom encapsulates all that is most romantic, dramatic and memorable from our adolescence. Even those of us who always felt a little bit different believed that we, too, could waltz into that ballroom (or spruced-up school gym) with the best-looking boy or girl on our arm.

Invariably, however, that fan-

tasy gave way to crushing disappointment: bad music, nauseating food, and worst of all, the prom-night breakup. Maybe you made the sane decision to stay home and boycott that most overblown of teenage traditions.

But Sherwin Sullivan Tjia knows your deep, dark secret: you really, really wanted to have the perfect prom. And next week, the Montreal Queer Prom 2011 promises just that. It's the “prom you always wanted.”

This past year Constance McMillen, an openly gay Mississippi teen, received overwhelming media support when her high school prom was cancelled because she wanted to bring her same-sex partner as a date.

Tjia, a Concordia alumnus who also organizes Slowdance Nights and Strip Spelling Bees in Montreal and Toronto, is no stranger to McMillen's struggle.

The Queer Prom is, above all, an opportunity for those who never fit in to reclaim this formative high school experience.

“When you live in a world like this one, which has a very fixed notion of what ‘normal’ is, it's

very exclusionary for a lot of people,” said Tjia. “Everyone needs a second chance to have a good prom.”

Featuring some prom night mainstays like a balloon archway, campy cover band, and cheesy photo booth, Tjia also promises more outrageous stunts that will go above and beyond the conventional prom-night experience.

The band, Ron's Fantasy, will be playing a host of sing-along favourites, Journey included. Keep on the lookout for a blood-soaked Carrie in the crowd, and nominate yourself or a friend for Prom Kink and Queer. But behave (or don't)—a naughty Dom teacher will be prowling the dance floor, making sure that hemlines hang well above the knee.

“In a way, this event is a prom making fun of proms,” Tjia added. “I wasn't sure if that was too ironic, but I like to make fun of things.”

But irony isn't Tjia's main objective. The Queer Prom aims to foster true connection and a sense of belonging in an age where ironic detachment has be-

come the epitome of cool.

“It's hard to be ironic when you're holding someone in your arms. When you're touching someone, irony doesn't exist,” said Tjia. “One of the things I don't want to happen when people come to my events is for everyone to be really cool or witty, because my feeling is it's best for people to be warm. But I understand that people need to be cool in this world. That's how people get ahead culturally, but that's not how we get ahead emotionally.”

Tjia hopes to make the Montreal Queer Prom an annual event, but that all depends on your attendance. So give prom a second chance. Just remember to bring an open mind, and maybe a corsage.

**Montreal Queer Prom 2011 / La Sala Rossa / 4848 St. Laurent Blvd. / Sat., April 9 / 8:30pm / \$15 advance, \$20 at the door**

**Tickets available at Cheap Thrills, Atom Heart, and Phonopolis.**

## Running With the Bull

Talking Disco-Inspired Chillwave With Toro Y Moi

• COLIN HARRIS

Toro Y Moi is a full-time job for Chaz Bundick, who dedicated himself to music after finishing a graphic design degree at the University of South Carolina. His chilled-out electronic demos made waves around the world, and he has since been sharing them on-stage. His second LP, *Underneath the Pine* expands chillwave further—and funkier.

“We're busy promoting the record,” said Bundick. “We've got Europe, then a short thing in Asia, then later Australia and Brazil. It's pretty crazy. It sounds cheesy, but how people react to music is universal. It's cool how similarly people react to it.”

Bundick tracked everything on the latest record himself, resorting to live instruments instead of samples and loops as building blocks, and there's a much different energy as a result.

Disco grooves and flower power swirl around the album. Bundick's layered falsetto is the only thing that keeps this record in the 21st century, basking in reverb like only indie bands today can.

“It's my new religion, I can't stop listening to that stuff,” said Bundick about the decidedly '70s sounds of funk, soul and R&B. “It

was just a matter of time before I got to play it.”

Last year's *Causers of This* cut-up and transformed that influence with effects patches, but here smooth bass and electric keyboard lines take a more literal reproduction of that funky music.

From the disco jam “New Beat” to the Procol Harum-style “Divina,” Toro Y Moi is all about the '70s ass-shaking—now done in high-waisted pants as vintage as the sound. *Underneath the Pine* brings disco into the mix in the best possible way.

“If I had a choice I'd always use live instruments. Effects can make [live instruments] sound electronic, but you can't really make electronic music sound live,” said Bundick. “It's really boring staring at a computer screen all day. With this record I really wanted to have fun.”

As far as writing and production goes, for now Bundick is keeping the fun to himself. He did all the work on the last two albums, and things will most likely stay that way for the foreseeable future.

“There's the pros and cons of working by yourself and with people,” said Bundick. “I'm into the idea, but right now I'm just doing my stuff.”



Nevertheless, playing with a band to flesh-out his self-recorded solo material gives this hip dance party live energy. With the writing for *Underneath the Pine* largely done between touring stints, new Toro Y Moi keeps things the way the crowd likes it: upbeat and big.

“It's written with the live show in mind,” said Bundick about the new record's sound—one much more designed for a band than *Causers of This* was.

“We're all long-time friends, so it feels like we've been a band for a long time. When I started getting exposure I wanted to get the band

together as soon as I could.”

Toro Y Moi and a handful of other American electronic musicians are usually given credit for pioneering the mid-tempo throwback dance-pop reverb fest known as ‘chillwave.’ It kept bloggers busy until all those triangles started showing up, but Bundick's continued success is evidence of how he stands out from artists with less depth.

“I want people to feel refreshed. I wouldn't say [the chillwave sound] is all my idea, it's more about being ahead of the crew,” said Bundick. “Making shit

that I enjoy is always first. If there's no passion it's not worth doing. If people go one way, I'll go the other way.”

Bundick's track record—two solid full-length records in just over 12 months—legitimizes the hype, especially in a microgenre where it's rare to make it past a trendy EP. Toro Y Moi is the real deal, and that's no bull.

**Toro Y Moi / La Sala Rossa / 4848 St. Laurent Blvd. / Fri., April 8 / 8:30 pm / with Braids & Adventure / \$13 advance, \$15 at the door.**

# Still Warm From the Prize

## Giller Prize-Winner Johanna Skibsrud Returns to ConU to Read



• ALEX MANLEY

If you were living under a rock back in November, or perhaps under a stack of term papers and library books, you might have missed out on Concordia alumna Johanna Skibsrud winning the 2010 Scotiabank Giller Prize for her novel *The Sentimentalists*.

Though she says she feels “only incredibly grateful for the experience,” the 2006 graduate of the MA creative writing program was, in the week or so following her big win, in the eye of a storm.

At the time, *The Sentimentalists*, which explores a woman’s relationship with her father and the way his service in the Vietnam War has affected him, was considered a relative long shot. Her win of the Giller—the most prestigious literary prize in Canada, and, with a \$50,000 purse, no wonder—catapulted her into the national conversation.

It also caught her publishers flatfooted.

Gaspereau Press, with whom Skibsrud has published three books, is a small operation by any-

one’s standards. Operating out of Kentville, N.S., the press focuses on creating elegant, detail-rich, hand-crafted books.

It’s a noble pursuit in an age increasingly unconcerned with the physical product of things—Skibsrud calls them “passionate about every aspect of the books they produce”—but it’s also very limiting: they can only produce about 1,000 copies a week. For a while, it looked as though no one would be able to actually buy a copy of the new Giller Prize winner.

However, Skibsrud wasn’t wor-

ried and her faith paid off. After initially vowing not to, Gaspereau ended up signing a deal with Douglas & McIntyre, a Vancouver-based press, to quickly produce a large paperback run of the book, which arrived in stores two weeks after the night of the gala.

“I trusted that my book was going to be made available to every reader that wanted a copy, which was what Gaspereau had promised. In retrospect, it’s amazing how quickly everything happened,” she said. “I am also glad that in the interim there was such a lively debate about the future of book publishing—I think that a lot of important conversations took place.”

One of those conversations was about e-books.

While people were initially unable to get their hands on a physical copy of *The Sentimentalists*, e-book retailer Kobo had signed a deal with Gaspereau prior to the win, and saw sales of the winning title jump as it became their top seller, beating out the recently-released memoirs of George W. Bush.

The move paid off. Kobo has since signed a deal to provide wireless e-readers to the 2011 Giller jurors—as publishers are being asked to submit digital versions of their books in addition to hard copies—and it also forced the Canadian literary community to think about the future of reading. Though unlike many of her peers, Skibsrud doesn’t fear e-readers.

“What’s important to me is that

writing be circulated—that it be read, discussed,” she said. “How that happens doesn’t concern me; I’m not interested in the business end of things. I see tremendous possibilities for digital media in terms of promoting and circulating literature and that’s exciting to me.”

As for the future of her literature in particular, Skibsrud admitted to having started work on a second novel, as well as a collection of short stories. It’s a devotion to writing she credits her time at Concordia with having helped her to develop.

“The Concordia program was an incredible experience for me. I received a tremendous amount of support from professors and peers. Most of all, the program allowed me the time—and the legitimacy—to devote myself to my writing. Time, I think, and hard work, is what’s most crucial to any writer’s development.”

Skibsrud will be reading from *The Sentimentalists* at the J.A. de Sève Cinema, 1400 de Maisonneuve Blvd. W., LB-125, on April 8 at 7:30 p.m.

As well, Skibsrud will be participating in a dialogic session with Professor Norman Cornett at Galerie Samuel Lallouz, 1434 Sherbrooke St. W., on April 9 from 12:00 p.m. to 2:00 p.m. Cost for students with valid student ID is \$20.

# Expozine Alternative Press Awards

## The Self-Published Get Their Due

• CHRISTOPHER OLSON

Literary honours, even among published authors, are hard to come by. For zinesters and the so-called self-published, awards are something of an impossibility. That is, unless they attend Expozine.

The annual Expozine Alternative Press Awards, which were held last Sunday in Montreal at Le Divan Orange, honoured the best and brightest who exhibited their works in the annual small press fair last November.

“There’s really nothing in Canada, and maybe nothing in North America, that actually recognizes or selects zines in that fashion,” said Louis Rastelli, an organizer of Expozine.

“In the beginning [we weren’t sure] if it would really fly, if people would take the awards seriously at all. But people put it on their résumés and people show up [to the awards] with their parents.”

*Nailbiter 2: An Anxiety Zine*, which is produced by the Ste. Em-

ilie Skillshare, took home the honour for Best Zine. The judges said the zine “sheds light on an important subject that is underrepresented by traditional media, the experiences of those living with anxiety.”

“Resources on anxiety and mental health issues are hard to find, especially in a way that doesn’t pathologize people,” said Kerri, a political science student and one of the zine’s collaborating authors.

The Ste. Emilie Skillshare is a group of artists and activists who run an art space with an anti-oppression-based mandate.

“We wanted to make a resource of different stories of people’s experiences with anxiety and through writing and art to be able to share amongst ourselves as a community of anxious people,” said Kerri.

Jeff Miller, whose association with zines goes back to at least 1996, when he began self-publishing issues of *Ghost Pine*, won the prize for Best Book, *Ghost Pine: All*



GRAPHIC DAVID BARLOW KRELINA

*Stories True*, a compilation of the best of his work from the past 15 years.

“A lot of the people I wrote about in the zine weren’t writers, but were some of the best storytellers I knew,” said Miller. “If I were only to write about my own experiences and my own stories, it would just feel so closed... My experience is such a strange braiding of various people’s stories.”

Compiling the book meant reading through everything in the *Ghost Pine* back catalogue, including many zines Miller hadn’t seen since their original release.

“In every story there’s a reference to something that at the time seemed so common, but reading it back later, somehow this offhand detail becomes an emblem of the time,” he said, referring to everything from street names, to old

friends, to the everyday intrusions of popular culture.

“It really places it in its time in a way that I never intended.”

For a full list of the winners and nominees, you can visit [expozine.ca](http://expozine.ca). Copies of *Nailbiter 2: An Anxiety Zine* can be purchased at the Ste. Emilie Skillshare (3942 Ste. Emilie St.) for \$10.

WRESTLING: STINGER WINS NATIONAL TITLE

HOCKEY

## Ex-Stingers Win Highest Honor



PHOTO ESTHER BERNARD

The Montreal Stars won the Clarkson Cup on March 27, earning themselves the highest honor in North American women's hockey by shutting out the Toronto Aeros in the final with a decisive 5-0 victory. Among those sharing the honor were ex-Concordia Stingers players Kelly Sudia, Donna Ringrose, Emilie Luck and Lisa-Marie Breton. Breton currently captains the Stars and also serves as the assistant coach for the Stingers women's hockey team. "It's certainly good for our program and another feather in their cap," said Stingers head coach Les Lawton. "It gives players an opportunity to play once their university careers are over."

## Lifestyle Proposal

• CHRISTOPHER HAMPSON

There is a debate—albeit a calm one—happening amongst the staff here at *The Link*. Before my arrival as Sports editor, the decision was made to create a new section titled Lifestyle for the next volume, and move sports news and stats online. The Lifestyle section would be made to include long-form feature sports articles.

This seems like a good idea in terms of practicality when keeping Stingers fans up to date on a daily basis, but the printed section would have to continue to be called Sports.

However, as the new editor of the still amorphous Lifestyle section, I am presented with an opportunity to provide new and interesting content pertaining to activities related to students and Montreal life.

I've realized something during

my time as a competitive and generally physically active person: it's not about the winning or even the taking part—it's about enjoying what you do.

But what is "it" exactly? The abbreviated answer is that "it" is everything—life, health, happiness, satisfaction... take your pick.

Not to deny that professional athletes and their weekend warrior counterparts' approach have their merits, but there is more than one type of personal best, and there is more than one type of triumph.

So to those who won't compromise on enjoyment, this is a call for feedback. What would you like to see in a Lifestyle section? What kind of content would you be interested in?

If you have questions, comments, suggestions, or would like to contribute, please email me at [lifestyle@thelinknewspaper.ca](mailto:lifestyle@thelinknewspaper.ca).

## TREMBLAY TAKES GOLD

• DAVID KAUFMANN

David Tremblay of the Concordia Stingers wrestling team has decorated his trophy room with his third straight CIS national title, all while helping Concordia get its first as a team since 1990.

On Feb. 26, Tremblay took down Gaston Tardif of the hosting Lakehead University in Thunder Bay, Ont., capturing the gold medal. This made him extremely proud to be a Stinger.

"To win it for the team, it was awesome to bring back a banner to the school because we've been trying for a few years and have always come a little short, but this year we finally got it," he said.

Tremblay's high success rate can be traced back to his high school days, when he won the nationals three times. By the time he graduated, he was already a top prospect in the country.

"Basically, when I was in grade

12, I was already a top recruit for all the big universities," he said.

Being an individual champion has come second nature to him. Since joining the team in January of 2009, coping with living the life of a wrestling success-story is something he and his family are no strangers to.

Tremblay first stepped onto the mat at L'Essor High School in Windsor, Ont., when his father convinced him to join. "I started wrestling there because my dad was the coach," he said. He has another family connection to the sport—his younger brother is also a high prospect in wrestling. "My little brother is going to be coming here, living with me, and going to Concordia," he added.

Before every tournament, Tremblay usually does a series of drills, which condition him to act with intent to successfully pin down his opponent. When he's fighting for the championship, he works hard

to stay focused.

"My goal is to try to stay relaxed, to enjoy the moment, to try and put on a good show, to try different techniques, and to try to look at the coach in the corner. All this is going through my head at once," he said.

While he is accustomed to grappling with higher-ranked players in Canada, he doesn't find his competition that stiff.

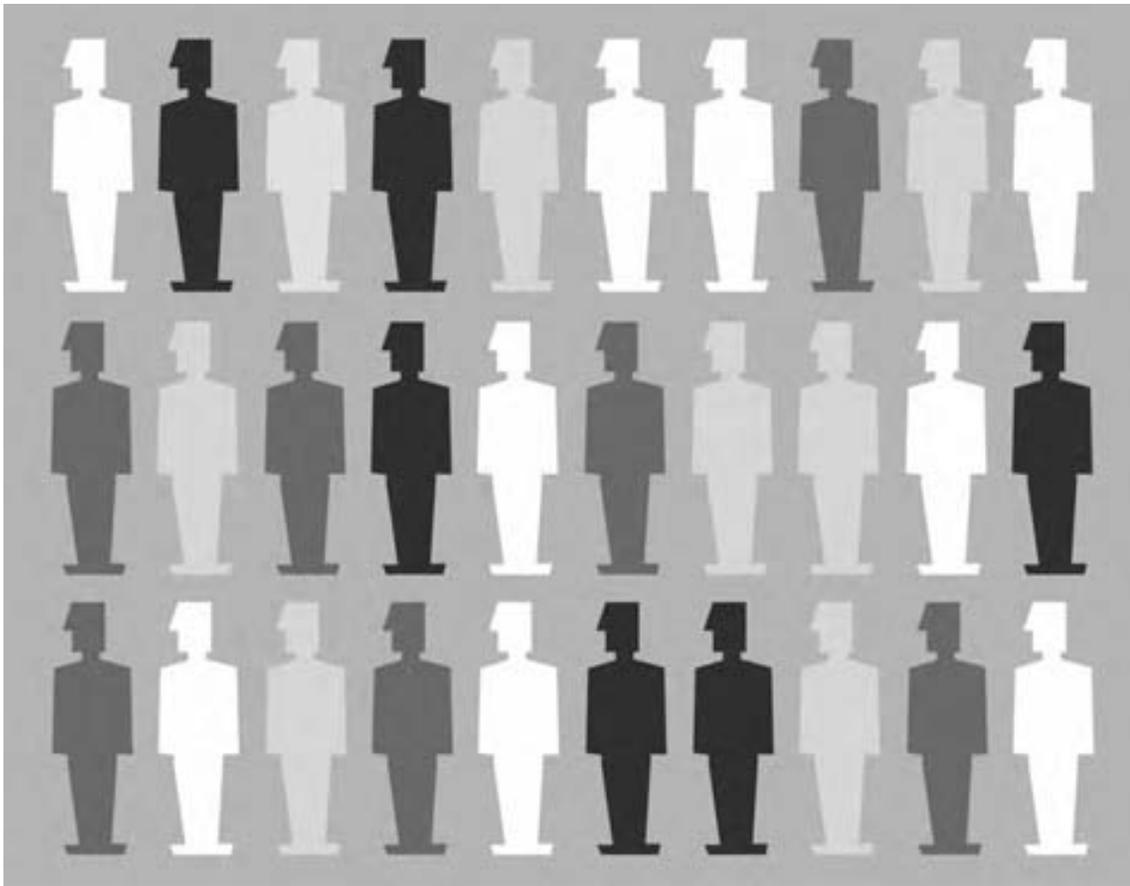
"Although a lot of the participants in the CIS are the top guys, I've just been wrestling a lot longer than some of them, and have more international experience," he noted.

When Tremblay isn't shooting for takedowns, he also enjoys the great outdoors, and hands-on work.

"If I could, I would do more camping. I also like working with my hands; I used to do a lot of construction," he said.

Currently, Tremblay is majoring in Leisure Science and plans on pursuing his talent in wrestling for the Stingers.

# The Slate System Is Flawed



GRAPHIC CLEMENT LIU

• CLAY HEMMERICH

This election season showcased the usual poster night protests and campaign complaints (pre- and post-), but all of these complaints are minor details considering that the whole slate system is flawed.

The problem doesn't lie in putting together an executive team. It stems from the councillors who have a lot of power. Council is where the real decision-making takes place. The council decides which referendum questions should be voted on. They decide on new CSU employees, and they keep the executive team in check.

Council members are a group of individuals who are leaders in their own rights, from too many different faculties to name. When people from different faculties come together, it's inevitable that heads will clash, but that's what keeps the spirit of democracy alive. So why are they being lumped into one package and branded with slate names?

All councillors should remain independent so the goals they aspire to accomplish on council are not limited to the goals of the executive slate.

Voters vote for slates largely based on their marketing strategies. In theory, the group with the best marketing campaign can win the elections. Furthermore,

voters tend to choose councillors according to the slate they like the best.

Here's the thing: the *Your Concordia* executive only won by just over five per cent of the vote, but the real significance of their win stems from the real-estate they banked on council. Out of 30 elected councillors with voting rights, only nine candidates from *Action* got seats.

The average Arts and Science councillor for *Your Concordia* received about 1304 votes, whereas *Action's* received about 986. That's 24 per cent more—a huge margin. Last year, the Fusion executive slate won the elections and their councillors held 26 out of 30 seats. The year before that, Vision's councillors held 18 out of 27 seats. The winning slate has held over 90 per cent of the Arts and Science councillor seats two years in a row.

If a council hopeful doesn't want to join a slate, their chances of getting elected are slim. This year, all three independent councillors—those who didn't want to side with a slate—failed to get voted in. This suggests that, essentially, anyone who wants to sit on council pretty much has to pick a team.

Council hopefuls will naturally gravitate towards the slate whose political stance best suits their own. This results in a system that forces students to vote for coun-

cillors on the basis of their slate, when they should be voting for the people who fit the criteria of what they think is important.

For instance, if Marvin Coleby ran independently, maybe the fact that he is the President of the Caribbean Students' Association would have been more visible, and the Caribbean students that wanted to be represented more effectively on council would have voted for him.

This is just one example, but Concordia has a very active student body that deserves the most effective representation.

The slate and voting system demonstrates year after year that it creates a council that's slanted towards the political motives of the executive slate when it should be more moderate.

This concentration of power isn't democratic. How is there going to be real discourse on issues if everyone thinks the same? And though there is reason to believe that the student body may be under-represented through council, this is no fault of the slates themselves. This is the fault of the system that slates are operating under.

A council member's platform points shouldn't be lost in the rubble of brand image. Ideas of a better future should be their ad copy, and true peer-to-peer interaction should be their buzz marketing.

# Le grand méchant loup est un photographe

• PIERRE CHAUVIN

Tôt mercredi matin, *The Link* fut informé que des membres de l'équipe *Action* se tenaient près des stations de vote, dans le bâtiment MB. L'article 207 du règlement de l'Union des étudiants et étudiantes de Concordia (CSU) stipule que le secret du vote doit être maintenu et qu'aucun matériel de campagne ne doit être visible depuis les stations de vote, et ce durant toute la durée du vote.

Or les candidats de l'équipe *Action* portaient leurs t-shirts bleus, les mêmes utilisés durant leur campagne, mais à l'envers. De plus, ils demandaient aux étudiants à proximité des stations de vote pour qui ceux-ci avaient voté et inscrivaient sur leur t-shirt une barre pour chaque vote.

Pour clarifier la situation, *The Link* a immédiatement envoyé un photographe, moi-même, et plusieurs reporters sur les lieux. Nous avons pu constater que les candidats Leslie Reifer et Tanya Ng incitaient bien les étudiants à voter, exhibant toujours leurs t-shirts bleus.

Après avoir pris quelques photos, j'ai décidé de retourner aux bureaux du *Link* lorsqu'un étudiant courant vers moi m'a pris en photo, d'un peu trop près à mon goût, puis est reparti à toute vitesse par les escaliers. Deux mètres plus loin, la même chose s'est produite, avec un autre étudiant. Lorsque j'ai essayé d'obtenir des explications auprès du deuxième étudiant, celui-ci est aussitôt parti en courant.

Arrivé au rez-de chaussé du MB, j'aperçois un attroupelement autour du CEO, Oliver Cohen. Les candidats d'*Action* me pointent alors du doigt en criant que je les harcèle en prenant des photos d'eux. Leslie Reifer, d'un ton assez arrogant, exige qu'aucune photo de lui ne soit publiée, ni sur le site Web du *Link*, ni dans la version imprimée, expliquant que nous avons besoin de son autorisation. Pour couronner le tout, Cohen me dit que je dois me tenir à l'écart de l'équipe *Action* jusqu'à la fin des élections.

Après cette avalanche d'inepties, d'accusations et de mauvaise foi, quelques clarifications s'imposent. Tout d'abord, étant accrédité par *The Link*, je suis membre de la presse universitaire, et c'est mon travail de prendre des photos sur les sujets couverts par *The Link*, donc sur la vie politique à Concordia. Deuxièmement, prendre un maximum de dix photos en une demi-heure ne correspond pas à la définition du harcèlement, surtout quand les photos ont expressément été prises de loin. Par contre, envoyer des gens m'intimider y correspond parfaitement.

La réaction de Cohen mérite également qu'on s'y attarde. Son rôle est de s'assurer de la régularité des élections (sans commentaire); il a donc autorité sur les deux équipes. Pour autant que je sache, *The Link* est bien un journal et fait donc partie de la presse. La réaction de Cohen démontre au mieux une totale ignorance, au pire une volonté de tenir à l'écart la presse du processus électoral. Enfin, il serait peut-être bon d'informer Reifer qu'il était dans un lieu public et qu'il était officiellement candidat pour le CSU, donnant ainsi le droit aux journalistes de publier sa photo.

Pour conclure, j'aimerais dire à tous ceux qui ont pris un malin plaisir à intimider, menacer ou attaquer les représentants des médias à Concordia ces dernières semaines que jamais la presse ne s'écrasera ou ne renoncera devant les ambitions politiques de certains étudiants en mal d'action.

# It's Been Done Once, It Can Be Done Again

## Building on Quebec's Inspiring Student Movement



PHOTO RILEY SPARKS

• STEFAN CHRISTOFF

Quebec's student movement is on the move, once again. With thousands taking to the streets in Montreal opposing university tuition hikes and an estimated 50,000 students throughout Quebec joining a one-day strike initiated by L'association pour une solidarité syndicale étudiante—students are mobilizing.

Recent protests for accessible education in Quebec build on past successful, student-driven challenges to the Liberal government of Jean Charest. ASSÉ led a historic student strike in 2005, challenging Charest's move to slash \$103 million in student bursary funding in Quebec.

Tens of thousands took to the streets rejecting government cuts to education. Direct actions hit the offices of Quebec government ministers, building momentum for an 'unlimited' strike that eventually saw 170,000 students walking-out.

After months of protesting, the grassroots student strike built major political momentum that eventually forced the government to reinstate the full \$103 million in cuts. Quebec's student movement had pulled off a stunning political victory.

Today's protests challenge government moves to hike tuition in Quebec at a time of economic crisis—\$325 per student, per year over five years, starting in 2012. Current protests build on political gains won in past campaigns of Quebec's student movement. Political action, such as the 2005 strike, is directly responsible for Quebec's relatively low tuition fees as compared to the rest of Canada.

Moves to execute major hikes in post-secondary education fees will make university less accessible for the majority. Certainly, these increases will expand the growing in-

come gap in Quebec society, as access to education is key to social mobility and any efforts to create economic equality in societies around the world.

It is incredible to consider the ruthless austerity economics in boosting tuition fees. They are expected to nearly double by 2017 under the current plan, in a province where the earning gap between the wealthy and the poor is at a 30-year high, according to a widely-referenced 2010 study by the Institut de recherche et d'informations socio-économiques.

The comparatively low tuition fees in Quebec that the Conférence des recteurs et des principaux des universités du Québec is lobbying so hard to raise are also linked to militant student protests in the 1990s.

A series of major actions, including mass student protests across Quebec in 1996 and thousands striking at Concordia University in the fall of 1999, led to another incredible victory for Quebec's grassroots student movement—a near decade-long freeze on tuition fees in Quebec. Indeed, history presents a strong and clear challenge to any cynical claims that student participation in demonstrations or strike actions will not produce concrete gains for all students.

It is the grassroots determination to fight ongoing and often corporate-driven government attempts to unilaterally revoke the right to accessible education, on the streets and via direct action, that can lead to an accessible and community orientated student life in Quebec.

Within the current student protests, and especially highlighted throughout the 2005 student strike in Quebec, were strong voices for free post-secondary and university education. Calls were made based on multiple successful examples of free public universities across Eu-

rope, in Mexico and throughout the world.

As for claims that free public university education is impossible for governments to sustain, certainly this is a complex question. Nevertheless, a clear place to start securing federal funding in Canada today—and boosting public spending on education—is cancelling the absurd Conservative government move to spend multiple billions on military fighter jets.

Given the recent Concordia Student Union elections and the pro-student and social justice platform that won a majority vote, Concordia students are in an excellent place to join and participate in the current fight against tuition hikes in Quebec.

ASSÉ today represents 45,000 students in Quebec and is currently mobilizing toward mass protests for the fall of 2011. This is a mobilization that the CSU can directly support and join, and a mobilization that will likely decide the fate of the accessibility of post-secondary education in Quebec for the future.

Quebec's 2011 student activism will have a major influence on university communities across Canada, a political battle that is certainly being eyed closely by increasingly corporate-minded university administrations coast to coast.

By the same token, Quebec's mobilization has the potential to inspire students across Canada to take action and join the fight against a growing shift toward an American-style post-secondary system that moves university education out of the reach for the majority of students.

Beyond the campus, the key to contextualizing the grassroots power of Quebec's student movement—and the sustained ability for student-driven protests to secure victories for accessible education



PHOTO ERIN SPARKS

over the past decade—are the organic links between student activism and broader social justice organisms in Quebec society.

Unions in Quebec, for instance, are joining the fight against the 2011 austerity budget. They are not only challenging rising education fees, but also obligatory health-care fees for Quebec residents introduced in 2010 and sustained in 2011, fixed to increase annually toward a \$200-per-year flat tax by 2012. Students will also find immediate allies in trade union federations like Confédération des syndicats nationaux as they take to the streets next fall.

Certainly, the struggle over accessible education in Quebec over the next year points to key themes in a world of growing economic disparity. This is a fight for access to education on the streets in Montreal and throughout Quebec, but also

across the globe.

This is a struggle against austerity economics that view our communities and our society in terms of a market economy. This is a fight for the dignity of all people to have the right to accessible education. This is a fight for the construction of viable social movements, and for a society driven by the principles of social justice, not corroded capitalist economics.

Stefan Christoff is a Montreal-based community activist, musician and writer. You can follow him on Twitter @spirodon. For more information on l'Association pour une Solidarité Syndicale Étudiante (ASSÉ) visit [www.asse-solidarite.qc.ca](http://www.asse-solidarite.qc.ca).

# Cameras Offer Security

## A crime-solving tool shouldn't be an enemy

• CHRISTOPHER OLSON

On February 11 of this year, between the hours of 6:00 p.m. and 8:00 p.m., my laptop was stolen from the JavaU inside Concordia's Hall building.

After making frantic inquiries to both the police and Concordia security, I discovered that, partly due to the fact there were no cameras on location to record the theft, my chances of recovering it were slim to none. There were no cameras, I was told, because the owners of JavaU have refused Concordia's Security Department's requests to install them. Several times.

I can't speak to their specific reasoning, be it personal or political, but it was immediately evident to me that not only would my chances of getting my property back have been much higher had there been a security camera, but also that the down-sides JavaU supposedly feared would have been entirely non-existent.

Like the seemingly inevitable outcome of human enslavement resulting from advances in artificial intelligence, people harbour a deep distrust of security cameras, as if their very existence brings us one step closer to a dystopian nightmare.

But as long as they remain in the public and not private sphere, what's the harm?

Far from curtailing our democratic freedoms, security cameras are a vital tool for ensuring democracy.

Had security cameras captured the vandals who, on March 22, damaged two Concordia University Television monitors in the Hall building, then the \$4,000 in damages that will have to be paid by Concordia students could have been charged to the vandals themselves. What's more, security camera footage would have put to rest idle speculation about the identity of the cul-

prits, and put an end to the fog of mistrust during an election period already rampant with accusations of misconduct.

Security cameras would have also come in handy during these elections had they been able to capture the culprits who, on March 27th, in a supposed smear campaign against the *Action* slate, papered the Hall building with posters decrying the slate as a bunch of "corporate whores," casting suspicions—appropriately or not—on the opposing *Your Concordia* slate.

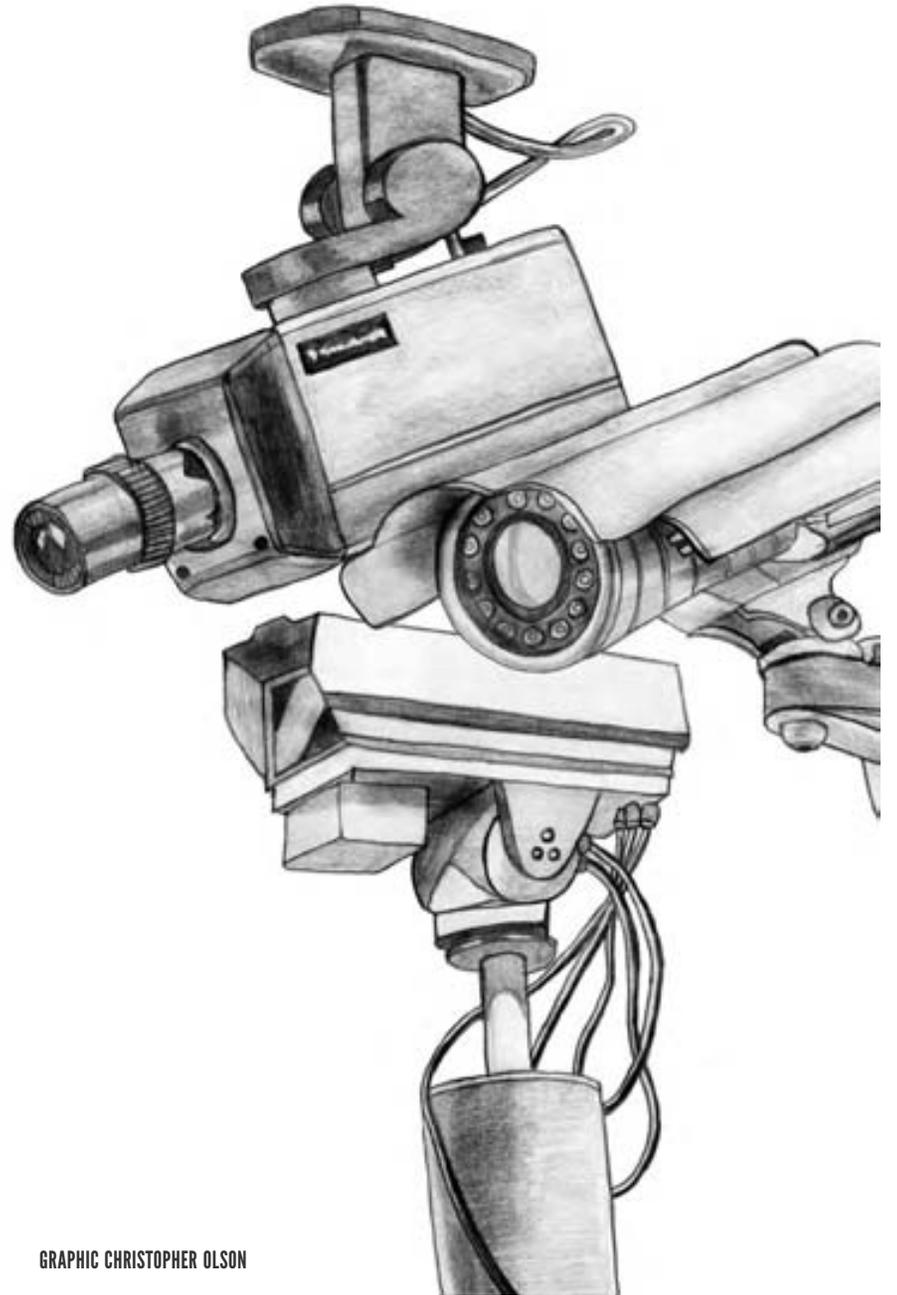
The truth is that even with all the cameras Concordia currently has on campus, there aren't enough eyes to review all of the footage as it happens, and so that footage is reviewed only with good cause or reason, and none of it is kept indefinitely.

Security cameras, like all tools used in law enforcement, aren't without their flaws.

With 4,200,000 security cameras currently in use in the United Kingdom—forming the largest network of closed-circuit cameras in the world—serious questions have been raised about their effectiveness in solving crimes, which is a valid concern. But the downsides, if any, are limited to the cost of installation and upkeep, not the curtailing of our freedoms.

After my laptop was stolen, I left my information with the JavaU barista as she closed shop. The next day I arrived bright and early for more news, only to get let down again. Before I left, I noticed that the piece of paper on which I had provided all of my contact information had already been updated with the information of another person whose property had been stolen.

How long will it take for security cameras to be seen as an asset, and not as an enemy?



GRAPHIC CHRISTOPHER OLSON

## Nah'msayin?

### Flush Fuss

I'm sorry, but automatic toilets are sexist.

Men, I get it why you love them. I'm sure that the only thing more awesome than peeing standing up is jumping aside right after to the sound of a flushing toilet. Hands-free the whole way through! It sounds amazing, it really does.

Unfortunately, not all of us were blessed with this superpower. And for females who stand up to clean themselves, the toilet's flush the moment you stand is a terrible waste of water and, frankly, annoying.

This is Canada, and I think we all expect gender-equal bathrooms. Automatic toilets are

stupid, man-favouring tools that only serve to further entrench the toxic, patriarchal roots of our society.

They need to go, now.

I have no sympathy for anyone who would be sad to see these robot lavatories disappear. Honestly, how lazy can you be? I'm sure we can all manage to flush. And for those who cry germs, wash your hands after. You should really be doing that anyway, you sick fuck.

—Julia Wolfe,  
Managing Editor



GRAPHIC VIVIEN LEUNG



Letters@thelinknewspaper.ca

## Election Analysis

If voter turnout is the litmus test for political activity in a society, the Concordia Student Union election would fail to prove that. Yes, we are politically charged and we love to engage in activism and such. However, we tend to be absent when it comes to the basest form of political activity, and the reasons are plentiful.

We do not know what the CSU is, have paper deadlines and exams to think about, are apathetic, dislike political drama at university level, the CSU does not cater to the “real” issues that most of us are involved in, and so on and so forth.

Whatever the reasons, students must be reminded that the CSU is operated with funds that they (the students) have contributed to from their tuition, therefore the sense of ownership needs to be implanted in their heads. Lex Gill and team hit the nail on the head with a platform that told us this is OUR Concordia.

My post-election analysis: *Action* was without a doubt the more efficient and better-funded group, who most speculate had taken on the consultation services of CSU Teflon Don, Amine Dabchy. The team itself was not shabbily constructed, with most members already having some type of political career. One would have assumed this was going to be a slam-dunk for the business-as-usual *Action* folks, but, thankfully, there was hope.

Enter Lex Gill and the *Your Concordia* team—a bunch of guys who’ve been on the anti-CSU, anti-BoG, anti-bottled water, anti-tuition fee increase, anti-many things circuit this past year. Every campaign they partook in evidently positioned them with regards to the March election, and with all the attention they had garnered, they proved to be a formidable force.

Plan-wise, both parties seemed to have the same message, so it was obvious we were not going to vote on ideas. My vote came down to whom I thought had a genuine reason for running. No popularity contests, no candy, no gimmicks. It also came down to not voting for a reincarnation of “*Fusion*” because, last I remember, change is a fundamental component of democracy (including democracy within the student setting).

I voted *Your Concordia*, despite my displeasure with the Morgan Pudwell ‘Lieberman-esque’ move. Within the council section, my criteria included voting for all independent candidates followed by selecting an equal number of men and women from both sides of the aisle (preferably those with cool names). My belief is that council must be balanced in order to have an effective CSU.

Overall, a bland election with a great outcome.

—Ayanda Keith Dube,  
Political Science & Economics

## That Wasn't News

As I am no longer an editor for *The Concordian*, and therefore do not represent the newspaper or its views, I feel as though I can finally express certain issues I’ve had with *The Link*’s reporting this year.

*The Link* is a valuable news source for students. I have the utmost respect for most of your masthead, especially [former *The Link* news editor] Christopher Curtis, who has been nothing but courteous to me all year.

That being said, I believe in these past few weeks *The Link* has tried to pass things off as news that actually lacked an informational basis, focusing instead on the opinions of your editorial team. Nothing illustrates this more than your elections report card, an article that appeared in the news section and used a completely fabricated rating system to indicate your own perception of the campaigning. Rather than simply informing students about the campaign, I felt as though *The Link* did its best to lead readers in one voting direction with content that often belonged in the opinions section.

Also, I was sort of mystified by the paper’s recent decision to drag in perceived conflicts of interest at *The Concordian* as a method of taking the heat off yourselves. The article “On Biases and Conflicts of Interest,” which was by no means a news article, did a valid job of defending the paper’s journalistic integrity and value, and listed the measures you had taken to try and avoid conflicts. And yet you still felt the need to slag your competition (falsely in one case, since [former *The Concordian* Editor-in-Chief] Sarah Deshaies never wrote about ASFA while a councillor) when we had no part in calling into question your paper’s integrity. Were you mad about us reporting on the protest of *The Link*? Because Curtis himself said that if someone was protesting *The Concordian*, *The Link* would have done the same thing.

Despite the fact that, for example, we knew of the potential conflict of interest that existed due to the relationship between CSU councillor Lex Gill and Justin Giovannetti for many months, even while Giovannetti quoted Gill as a source of information once in an article, *The Concordian* has never published something in print exposing *The Link*’s ‘dirty laundry.’

I hope next year *The Link* chooses to report news as news, and opinions as opinions, and that *The Concordian*’s name remains largely absent from your pages.

—Evan LePage,  
Former news editor, *The Concordian*

## Erroneous

I have a big problem with your content last week. I once respected all of you, but I take it all back. Last week in the article “Most Dangerous Object in the Office: The Death

Board [Vol. 31, Iss. 31, Spoof Issue],” *The Link* wrote, “[...] find zen through a nosegrind kickflip.”

Now, I would find zen through a kickflip nosegrind, or a nosegrind nollie flip out, but a nosegrind kickflip does not exist.

Is this a factual error? Or is this *The Link*’s twisted way of denying peace to the student body and saying there’s no such thing as zen?

Shame on *The Link* and their cryptic reporting. I demand a correction.

—Clay Hemmerich,  
Former *The Link* Opinions Editor

## Praise for the CEO

There seems to be one thing that all those involved in this year’s Concordia Student Union elections, including candidates and student press, can agree on: the Chief Electoral Officer, Oliver Cohen, has not been doing a satisfactory job. The reality is, in fact, the opposite. It is incredibly saddening that nobody is able to recognize his professionalism, diligence and dedication.

Candidates on both sides are outraged at Oliver’s lack of action in favour of their party, with each alleging the other has broken electoral rules. However, no accusations have been clearly substantiated enough to merit action by the CEO. Oliver’s main function is to oversee the smooth functioning of the election, not to be bogged down by the shit-throwing and dirty political tactics that inevitably come with CSU elections. Nor is his job to deal with every petty and insignificant complaint raised by unreasonable student politicians. The CSU judicial board will ultimately be consulted if any of the allegations are worthy of sanctions.

Oliver has also been targeted by the student media for not being accessible enough. Considering that he was unfairly blasted in a *The Concordian* op-ed for being supposedly missing-in-action after giving them an interview, Oliver is totally justified in being wary of the media because of their constant predilection for sensationalizing the un-sensational.

Oliver is apolitical, fair and completely independent. In short, he is everything that one would hope for in a CEO. His job is incredibly difficult. This year’s elections have been the most contentious and contested in recent memory. Inundated with countless contestations—often ones that are silly and useless—the CEO also has to deal with a student media that is obsessed with lampooning him. Bashed from all sides, Oliver has done remarkably well in his capacities as CEO considering the circumstances.

It is sad that Oliver will be stepping down from his position as he is graduating this semester. Concordia will lose a CEO with integrity. I hope that the next CEO that is appointed can live up to the lofty precedent he has set.

—Joel Suss,  
Arts and Science Councillor

## Incomplete

I found *The Link*’s coverage of the recommended dismissal of Queen’s University rector Nick Day, as a result of his anti-Israel statements, to be curiously incomplete. [Editor’s Note: this article was taken from the Canadian University Press newswire.]

This is a not an issue of “academic freedom” or attempts to censor or muzzle “free speech,” as construed by the graduate students and as essentially depicted in the article. Rather, it was reflective of the fact that Day used his official capacity as rector to condemn Liberal leader Michael Ignatieff as being “complicit in supporting the Israeli genocide against the Palestinian people,” and in doing so, purported to speak on behalf of the student body.

While Andrew Stevens, member of Queen’s Solidarity for Palestinian Human Rights and former organizer of Israeli Apartheid Week, painted this as an issue of “academic debate,” Day crossed the boundaries, exerting “his personal and individual rights [and views] as a citizen” to abuse his position as student representative.

Day, like everyone else, is entitled to his political opinion and is entitled to make it public. However, as *National Post* journalist Ron Prosnor emphasizes, “Academics [...] are supposedly society’s guardians of knowledge, objectivity and informed debate.”

Let us engage in that debate. Freedom of speech is a valued objective. But don’t impose or claim that your views represent that of the general student body.

—Marian Pinsky,  
MA Sociology

## Prayer Space

The article “Praying in the Hallways,” published in Vol. 31, Iss. 28 of *The Link* on March 29, 2011 really did not sit well with me.

The notion of Muslim students being denied praying got me irritated, because as a Muslim who practices Islam and tries to pray five times a day, this is outrageous.

The question one would normally ask is, “Why doesn’t the university offer a praying space to them?” Concordia does exactly that, though: on the 7th floor of the Hall building, in a space that can hold up to 100 individuals. Okay, so what seems to be the problem? As I continued reading the article, this what I found:

Firstly, making the trek four or five times each day for 10 minutes of prayer adds up to at least two hours of work per week. Okay, but there is a flaw in this logic.

A research student, whether doing their Masters or a PhD, is an employee of the school. The daily schedule for an employee in most companies is from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Only Duhur (noon) and Asr (afternoon) praying times fall into this time period, and really, you’re spending a maximum of an

hour doing those prayers. In any company, you are entitled to have an hour of break during the day.

Secondly, it takes so much time that the professors are not happy. What? Are you serious? What professor would check in on whether his/her students are in the lab or not? This is research—you can come and leave whenever you want, as long as you are keeping up with your deadlines.

Thirdly, the problem is one of distance. To that I say a resounding, “No!” and “Not true!” With the tunnel linking the EV to the Hall building, distances are shorter and safer than ever. First off, when there is snow/ice piled up on the streets, it would sometimes be considered life threatening to walk out on the streets. Secondly, there are no traffic lights that you have to stop at. As an estimate, in my case, it takes me about seven minutes to reach the prayer space, coming all the way down from the 10th floor of the EV building.

Moreover, speaking from an Islamic point of view, the more suffering one endures to go pray Jam’aa (in a group) the more rewards he/she will get—so it is necessary to go all the way to the Hall building and even farther for collecting those rewards.

I know that this might shock the Muslim brothers who are advocates for the prayer space in the EV building, but from the depths of my heart, I say this is not a righteous cause.

Finally, I’d like to thank Concordia University, the CSU, and the MSA for the present Muslim prayer space, and for letting us exercise our religious beliefs so freely.

—Mohamad Ali Itani,  
Masters Engineering and Computer Science

## Misquoted

I would like it to be on record that I was misquoted in the article “Praying in the Hallways” (Vol. 31, Iss. 28). In future, I would appreciate if your journalists would be more courteous and contact me prior to publishing such 3rd party statements.

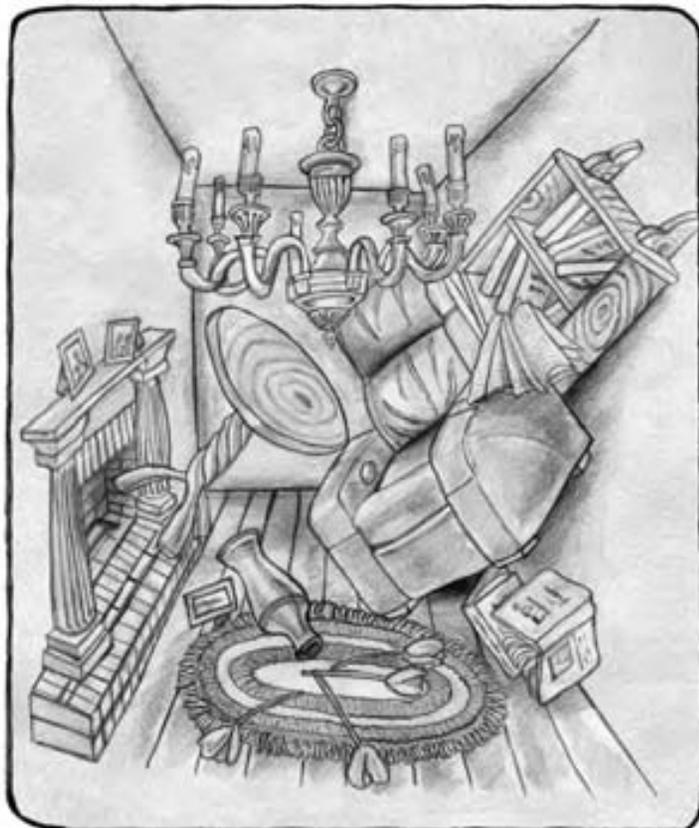
—Robin A. L. Drew, PhD, ing.  
Dean and Professor, Faculty of Engineering and Computer Science  
Concordia University

### The Link’s letters and opinions policy:

The deadline for letters is 4 p.m. on Friday before the issue prints. *The Link* reserves the right to verify your identity via telephone or email. We reserve the right to refuse letters that are libellous, sexist, homophobic, racist or xenophobic. The limit is 400 words. If your letter is longer, it won’t appear in the paper. Please include your full name, weekend phone number, student ID number and program of study. The comments in the letters and opinions section do not necessarily reflect those of the editorial board.

TIRED OF READING

**Tremendous Tales**  
by Christopher Olson



“The good news is that the universe isn’t expanding.  
The bad news: we’re pretty sure it’s shrinking.”



MARLEE MACMILLAN



Dear Melissa,  
Every time I have sex it hurts. It makes it really hard for me to orgasm and makes my boyfriend feel bad every time we have sex. What could be wrong with me?  
—Bad Sex

Dear Bad Sex,  
First off, all of you out there need to start being more specific with your questions! I can't answer a question like this without knowing whether you're a man or a woman, in a heterosexual relationship, etc. I don't want to make assumptions, so details matter!

Luckily I was able to clear this up—and “Bad Sex” is in fact, a woman.

That being said, there could be many different reasons why sex is painful for you. So, I'll do a bit of an overview to help you figure out a course of action.

The most likely reason sex is hurting you is that you're too dry. Some girls have trouble producing their own lubrication (or getting wet), which is nothing to be worried about, but something to be aware of. Since you've come to expect sex to hurt, you may also not be as excited to get to it, which might be making it harder for you to get wet. Try using lube next time, which I'd recommend even if you think you do produce enough of your own natural lubrication, because it can do no harm, but likely will do lots of good.

You should also try to spend a little extra time on foreplay, if you don't already. It isn't always given the credit it deserves, but foreplay is a really helpful step in preparing your body for sex.

Another possibility is an infection, like a yeast infection or urinary tract infection, or an STI. You may have noticed other symptoms, but even if you haven't, these are still possibilities.

Your vagina could also actually be too tight. This could be from not being sexually active for very long, the size of your partner, or even from waiting a while between periods of sexual activity. If you think this might be the case, I'd suggest using lube, and having your boyfriend spend more time fingering you to loosen you up a bit more.

If none of the above proves to be the culprit, then it could be vaginismus. Vaginismus is a condition in which involuntary muscle spasms in the vagina make sex extremely painful, and in some cases, impossible. It's hard to say how common it is, because a lot of women don't realize their problems are because of this condition, but I will say that at least three people I know personally have suffered from it and used therapy to cope, so I don't think it's extremely rare.

Vaginismus usually has an emotional trigger, and while it varies depending on the person, it is often the result of a traumatic experience, or the anticipation of pain, which becomes reinforced through the pain experienced when sex is attempted. Recovery usually involves identifying and confronting the underlying issue.

Regardless of what you may suspect to be the problem, the best thing to do is see a doctor and have a pelvic examination. We can speculate all we want, but until a doctor checks you out, there isn't much I can say with certainty.

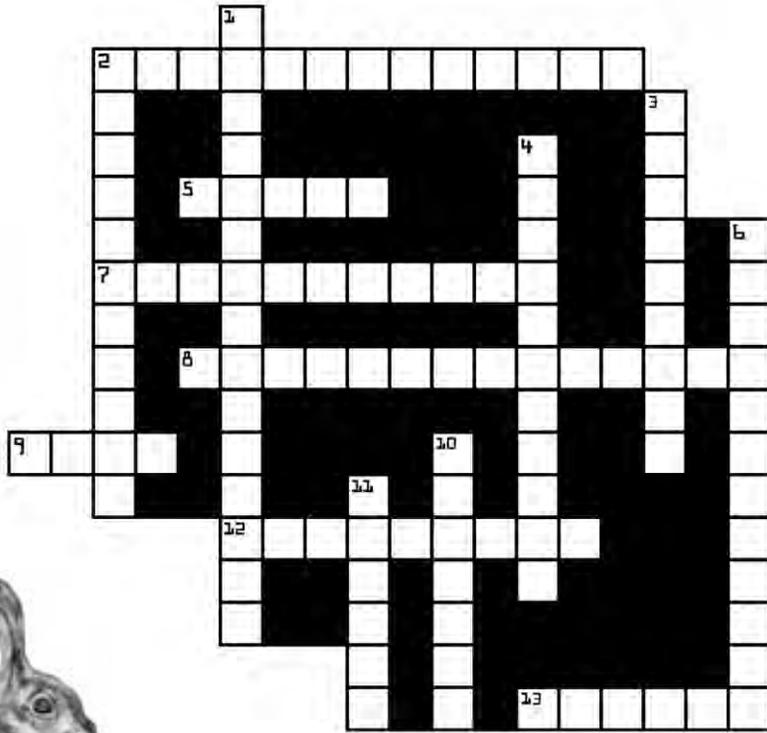
—Melissa Fuller

Get checked out at Concordia Health Services. You can phone 514-848-2424 x3565, or go online at [healthconcordia.ca](http://healthconcordia.ca). They have locations at both campuses. Send your dirty little secret sex-related questions or qualms to [sexpancakes.thelink@gmail.com](mailto:sexpancakes.thelink@gmail.com)

# Quik-X

• CHRISTOPHER OLSON

## “Famous Rabbits”



### Across

2. Taking its name from a hill in the north of Hampshire, England, this novel and TV series of the same name takes political intrigue and heroic fantasy and adds a dash of rabbits. (2 words)
5. Only in a Japanese video game could you have a wizened old rabbit as your wingman during your space adventures.
7. Many live-action films nowadays contain a mix of animation as well as real-life footage, but a blend of live-action and animation was both a groundbreaking technological innovation and kind of a major plot point in this crime comedy. (2 words)
8. There are a lot of bunnies working as corporate spokesmen, don't you think? This one sells

- batteries. (2 words)
9. “Silly rabbit, this cereal brand is for kids. And I'm pretty sure the sugar content would overload your fragile rabbit heart.”
12. Originally devised using generic cartoon character algorithms (read: model sheet), he's now the most recognizable cartoon rabbit in the world. (2 words)
13. Claiming to see a six-foot, three-and-one-half-inch tall invisible rabbit at all times would normally be a sure sign of a mental disorder. But if that person happens to be national treasure James Stewart, it merely underlines what a charismatic and likable person he is.

### Down

1. This rabbit that yearned to be real saw all of his toy friends incinerated in a fiery blaze after his owner developed Scarlet Fever.

- It's basically like *Toy Story 3*, if *Toy Story 3* had gone all the way instead of sissying out. (2 words)
2. Without this rabbit there'd be Alice, but no *Alice in Wonderland*. (2 words)
3. Because the sight of Bugs Bunny in a hula skirt wasn't uncomfortably arousing enough on its own, Warner Bros. decided to do the furry community a solid by introducing this sexy female bunny in *Space Jam*. (2 words)
4. “In accordance with the secularization of our beloved religious institutions, the death and resurrection of our Lord and Saviour will now be replaced with... are you fucking kidding me?” (2 words)
6. Hugh Hefner has up to 20 “rabbits” a night, if you know what I mean. He's a dirty old man with money, basically. (2 words)
10. One of James Bond villain Blofeld's sexy henchmen in 1971's *Diamonds Are Forever*, or the adorable bunny rabbit character in Disney's *Bambi*. Your choice.
11. Before he invented Mickey Mouse, Walt Disney created “\_\_\_\_\_ the Lucky Rabbit,” ostensibly lucky because, well, he still has all of his feet.

## issue 28 crossword solutions



In Vol.31 Iss.28 of *The Link*, in “2011 English Awards Wrap-Up” article, Concordia Annual 10-Minute Play Contest winner Dylan Sargent was incorrectly referred to as Patrick Sergeant. *The Link* regrets the error.

## Problematic Policies

Politics is a messy game, and this was certainly demonstrated during the final week of this year's Concordia Student Union election. A lot of the issues, though, could easily have been prevented had solid policies and practices been in effect.

Your *Concordia* candidates were upset with *Action* members for wearing their blue campaign shirts inside out during the voting period when candidates are prohibited from campaigning. Last year, the Chief Electoral Officer sent out a directive prohibiting members from wearing campaign shirts, inside out or otherwise, during the voting period. Why this wasn't the directive from the beginning of this election remains unclear, but it was finally put into effect on the last day of voting. By then, however, it was meaningless. Slates were still allowed to wear shirts that matched their campaign colour, so long as they did not contain campaign material.

Either have an explicit and effective bylaw or don't. There's no point in banning inside-out campaign shirts while allowing plain shirts of the same colour.

Tightening or eliminating election rules like this is a vital step to ensuring a fairer election process. It also ensures that when the rules are broken, significant consequences will be felt. A simple “talking-to,” as was often seen this year, is simply not effective.

There also appeared to be a lack of training for the polling clerks who manned the booths, as several voters came forward to say they'd been handed multiple ballot cards for certain races. Though the CEO wrote such mishaps off as rare occurrences, the fact remains that in some of the closer races such “mishaps” could have changed the outcome.

Many clerks also did not seem to know anything about election policies. When I went to vote, they couldn't tell me how I was supposed to mark the ballot, whether it had to be a check mark or a completely shaded circle, or if that even mattered. This sort of instruction could easily have been written on the ballots.

Worse, I was not asked to present my student ID when voting. What was stopping me from assuming the identity of non-voters to help stuff the ballot box? Nothing, apparently. Polling clerks need to be made fully aware of election procedures and the seriousness of their job.

When it comes to elections at Concordia, no position is as vital as the CEO, a title held by Oliver Cohen for the past three years. Whoever replaces him next year needs to have a better rapport with media outlets. Cohen had been next to impossible for *The Link* and others to reach, which has often left us in the dark regarding the intricacies of this election.

While being difficult to reach is understandable given that he's only one person, the students have a right to know what is happening in their democracy and Cohen was often a barrier to that. So, either someone needs to be hired to deal with media requests, or the CEO has to understand that communicating with the media is a part of the job.

Whether these improvements happen or not is up to you, the students. The only way these flaws can be fixed is if they're voted on in a referendum. Your *Concordia* are well aware of the problems with the electoral system and have promised to change them, but November's referendum is far away and students may forget.

Let *Your Concordia* know today how you feel about CSU elections, so the next one doesn't have to be as messy.

—Julian Ward  
Assistant News Editor



CONCORDIA'S INDEPENDENT NEWSPAPER

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Contributors: Ester Bernard, Stefan Cristoff, Christopher Curtis, Melissa Fuller, Justin Giovannetti, Clay Hemmerich, Rebecca Hiscott, Elsa Jabre, Caitlin LeRoux, Simon Liem, Rebecca McFarlane, Marlee Macmillan, Christopher Olson, Ashley Opheim, Diego Pelaez Gaetz, Sam Slotnick, Riley Sparks

Cover By:  
Erin Sparks

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Concordia University  
Hall Building, Room H-649  
1455 de Maisonneuve Blvd. W.  
Montreal, Quebec H3G 1M8

editor: (514) 848-2424 x. 7405  
arts: (514) 848-2424 x. 5813  
ads: (514) 848-2424 x. 8682  
fax: (514) 848-4540  
business: (514) 848-7406

editor-in-chief <b>LAURA BEESTON</b>	PIERRE CHAUVIN
news editor <b>ADAM KOVAC</b>	photo editor <b>ERIN SPARKS</b>
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