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THE LINK

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

editor-in-chief

JUSTIN GIOVANNETTI

news editor

CHRISTOPHER CURTIS

features editor

ADAM KOVAC

fringe arts editor

ASHLEY OPHEIM

literary arts editor

EMMA HEALEY

sports editor

ALEX DI PIETRO

opinions editor

CLAY HEMMERICH

copy editor

DIEGO PELAEZ GAETZ

student press liaison

OPEN

editorial: (514) 848-2424
ext. 7405

arts: (514) 848-2424 ext.

5813

ads: (514) 848-2424 ext.

8682

fax: (514) 848-4540

business: (514) 848-7406

photo editor

RILEY SPARKS

graphics editor

OPEN

managing editor

LAURA BEESTON

layout manager

JULIA WOLFE

online editor

OPEN

business manager

RACHEL BOUCHER

distribution

ROBERT DESMARAIS

ad designer

DAVID KAUFMANN

ADAM NORRIS

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THIS WEEK'S CONTRIBUTORS

Elaine Ball, John Batt, Mathieu Biard, Emily Kai Bock, Nick Bostick, Stefan Christoff, ginger coons, Faiz Imam, R. Brian Hestie, Mitra Katoili, Zoi Kilakos, Vivien Leung, Scott Nagao, Christopher Olson, Hugo Pilon-Larose, Gail Porat, Jamie Pimental, Clare Raspopow, Shawna Satz, Oz Veytsel-Demirtas, Natasha Young, Andrew Zoellner

cover by Oz Veytsel-Demirtas

Defederation denied

National lobby group won't recognize results of CSU March referendum



CSU President Prince Ralph Osei and delegations from two other Quebec student unions saw their referendums to leave the CFS rejected at the lobby group's annual general meeting. PHOTO JUSTIN GIOVANNETTI

• CHRISTOPHER CURTIS

The Concordia Student Union will have to lawyer-up.

On May 28, the CSU called for a motion to have their referendum to defederate from the Canadian Federation of Students recognized by the national lobby group at its annual general meeting in Ottawa.

CFS chairperson Katherine Giroux-Bougard shot the motion down immediately, ruling it out of order. CSU President Prince Ralph Osei then challenged the motion but was promptly defeated, temporarily ending another chapter in the nine month conflict between the CSU and CFS.

The next confrontation between both parties will likely take place in a courtroom.

"We won a referendum to defederate from the CFS," said Osei. "They won't recognize it. They prepped their members to vote against us at the general

assembly. So now we'll just have to lawyer-up and see what happens."

After 72 per cent of Concordia voters cast their ballots against continued membership in the CFS during the student union's general election in March, the CSU's legal council advised them to take their referendum results to the national lobby group's annual general meeting.

Osei, CSU VP External & Projects Adrien Severyns and a delegation of elected CSU executives made their way to Ottawa on May 25 to have Concordia's referendum results recognized by the CFS. After initially being turned aside, the CSU were given the floor at the meeting's final day of plenary. Their motion was called out of order because Giroux-Bougard alleged the CSU had over \$1,000,000 in unpaid membership fees.

"[Giroux-Bougard] basically told us we had to buy our freedom

from the CFS," said Osei.

In February the CFS sent the CSU a memorandum claiming the John Molson School of Business—along with the Engineering and Computer Science faculties—had not paid membership fees since 1998. The CSU responded by producing a fax from 1998 proving that neither of these faculties had voted to join the CFS and noting that the JMSB and Engineering faculty only became CFS members in 2007.

"We don't owe them any money, they have no evidence to back that claim up," said Severyns. "What happened at the assembly was undemocratic, plain and simple. But I can't say we didn't expect it."

Prior to the referendum, Osei said the issue of unpaid dues had not been mentioned as a requisite part of the referendum procedure.

"The CSU followed the referendum procedures correctly," said Osei.

The CSU abided by rules approved by the British Columbia Supreme Court after Vancouver-based Kwantlen College—now Kwantlen University—attempted to defederate in March 2008, eventually leading to a court showdown.

Two other Quebec student unions made their way to Ottawa along with Concordia with the hope of having their own defederation referendums recognized. McGill University's Post Graduate Student Society and Concordia's Graduate Student Association voted to part ways with the CFS in March and April, respectively.

The PGSS ended up leaving the general assembly empty after they tried and failed to pass a motion ratifying their withdrawal from the lobby group. Concordia's Graduate Student Association weren't allowed to attend the meeting.

The CFS could not be reached for comment.

50 cent raise on minimum wage

Still pays less than poverty line



Finance minister Raymond Bachand

• JUSTIN GIOVANNETTI

Quebec's minimum wage increased by 50 cents on May 1, as the province's 320,000 lowest paid workers will now make \$9.50 an hour.

Despite rising at nearly three times the rate of inflation since the wage was set at \$7.30 an hour in 2003, a 40-hour work week at the new minimum wage would still pay less than Canada's poverty line. Quebec's minimum wage is now the third highest in Canada.

"Students aren't too excited by the increase," said Jonathan Elston, the coordinator for the Concordia Student Union's Off-Campus Housing and Job Bank. "They get excited with the possibility of a job that pays \$16 an hour, but when they are working five hours a week at \$10 an hour, that's \$50."

"What can you do with \$50?"

Quebecers would need to earn at least \$11.09 an hour to earn a living wage above the poverty line, according to Statistics Canada. Despite not earning a living wage, a worker being paid the minimum wage in Quebec would still pay 28.53 per cent income tax.

British Columbia, the province with the highest cost of living in Canada, pays the lowest minimum wage. A worker in British Columbia is only paid \$6 an hour for their first 500 hours of work, after which they earn \$8 an hour. Ontario currently pays the highest minimum wage at \$10.25 an hour.

Montrealers unite against Israeli flotilla attack

Protesters across Canada call for end to Gaza blockade



Chadi Marouf addresses a crowd of hundreds at Montreal's Old Port. PHOTO FAIZ IMAM

• CHRISTOPHER CURTIS

Hundreds of Montrealers marched through the city's rainy streets on June 5 to protest the Israeli Navy's lethal attack on a Gaza-bound aid ship a week earlier.

"We are going to launch a bigger flotilla in the next few weeks," said protest organizer Laith Marouf, addressing the crowd on Sainte-Catherine Street through a megaphone. "[We'll launch] 50, 60, 100 ships. We'll break the siege of Gaza."

On May 31, while still in international waters, the Israeli Navy intercepted and boarded a ship carrying aid supplies and about 700 pro-Palestinian activists from various countries, including Canada, to the Gaza strip.

After clashing with the activists, Israeli naval commandos opened fire on the civilian group, killing at least nine. The navy was enforcing a blockade of Gaza, which has been in effect since 2007.

Marouf began his address to the crowd by announcing that the Israeli government had intercepted the Rachel Corrie—another aid ship bound for Gaza—just hours before the protest.

"The Israeli occupation says that this blockade is justified by security reasons," said Chadi Marouf of Palestinian and Jewish Unity Montreal. "I'll tell you what security is. The Israeli government has a list of items forbidden from entering Gaza. Let me read from this list: sage, cumin, cilantro, coriander, jam, vinegar, nut meg, food preservatives, seeds and nuts, potato chips, cement, iron, glucose and the list goes on. How does cilantro and cumin have anything to do with security? [The Israeli government] is trying to break the will of the people."

Protesters chanted and waved placards as they made their way from the corner of Ste-Catherine Street and Peel Street to Montreal's Old Port, where the

multi-ethnic crowd heard speeches from local activists, artists and trade union representatives. The march coincided with protests in Quebec City, Toronto, Ottawa, Calgary, Winnipeg, Vancouver and Victoria.

"It's an issue that touches everybody," said Marouf. "It's not about Palestine versus Israel, it's about what's right and what's wrong. What Israel is doing to the Palestinians is not strictly a punishment against [Palestine's governing party] Hamas. Women and children are being starved and forced to live in deplorable conditions."

Speaking on behalf of members of La confédération des syndicats nationaux—a confederation of trade union with over 200,000 members in Quebec—Gaetan Châteauneuf expressed his outrage at the blockade.

"The blockade must be lifted," said Châteauneuf. "We should be incensed that our government

supports a country that isolates and oppresses the Palestinian people."

The 54,000 members of the Canadian Union of Postal Workers also threw their support behind the June 5 protests.

Speakers then called for a boycott of Israeli products, economic sanctions against Israel and the safe return of those detained on the aid ship—including Concordia graduate Abbas Al Lawatti, who was on the flotilla blogging for *Gulf News*, a Dubai-based English daily.

"[Al Lawatti] was detained because like the majority of the activists on the ship, he refused to sign a letter of confession for illegally entering Israel," said Marouf, a friend of Al Lawatti's.

Although Marouf was enraged by Israel's actions he said he saw Saturday's protest as a turning point for public support of the Palestinian people.

"A day like today really gives you hope."

Turning it in

Concordia pilots anti-plagiarism software this summer

• LAURA BEESTON

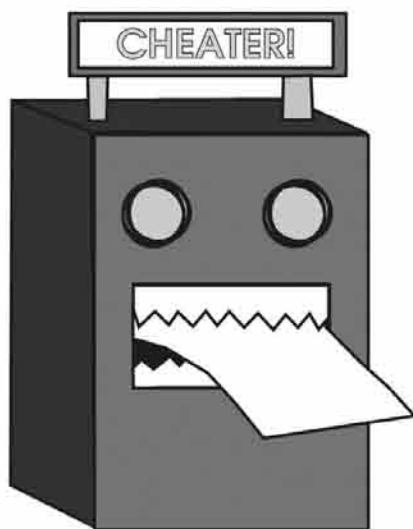
Quietly over the summer session, Concordia's Centre for Teaching and Learning Services has piloted an American-based anti-plagiarism software called Turnitin in the university's classrooms over the last three weeks.

Running until the end of August, a small sample of 11 Concordia classes will be experimenting with Turnitin, the self-described "global leader in originality checking and plagiarism prevention [...] that lets students check their own writing for improperly used content, inadvertent plagiarism or quotation errors."

Testing to see if the program is something that would interest the university to implement come fall, this trial invites students to upload their assignments onto the online service, where their work will be matched to over 125 million other student papers, 13 billion web pages and 90,000 academic journals, periodicals and books to verify original content and proper citation.

"This is a great tool for students to get feedback on their work," said John Bentley, the Program Coordinator and Instructional Developer from the Centre of Teaching and Learning Services, who has been involved in setting up the Turnitin program at Concordia since November 2009.

"What we think will be of benefit is allowing students to [see] if they have potentially used someone else's work and haven't provided a proper citation, but may not have known they have done that. [The program] actually starts teaching the students writing skills and the



Students will have to share personal information with the software provider.
GRAPHIC GINGER COONS

notion of [what it means to] synthesize information."

Though it is too soon to speculate about student reaction to this service, at least one of the trial classrooms have called attention to various concerns with the software, specifically citing the protection of personal and intellectual information.

An introduction to the Turnitin program, affixed to the last page of course outlines of classrooms involved in the trial, states that "students who use the text-matching software agree to providing and sharing certain personal information with the software provider. Students are advised that the university cannot guarantee the protection of personal information provided to a U.S software provider and subject to U.S laws."

Despite this warning, Bentley said he's confident with the security measures taken by Turnitin.

"They've really gone out of their way to protect students and the

work uploaded to the server, which is on Canadian soil. You can't just grab a document and repurpose it, it's all heavily encoded and encrypted," he said. "But like all of these things, they couldn't say to me that they can absolutely, 100 per cent guarantee that student information can't be accessed somehow. But they felt very, very confident that it's well guarded. I'm always a bit leery of speaking in absolutes, but it's pretty secure, from what they've explained to us."

Michael Thompson, the Regional Manager of Turnitin for Canadian clients, also stressed that both the intellectual and personal information of students is under lock and key.

"What it comes down to is that we don't hold a copyright, or any students' work as our own, or publish it, or put it out there on the web for anyone to see," he said.

In terms of personal information, Thompson added that the software doesn't require significant

personal information from students. All that is necessary is a name and an email address to communicate paper submissions. The database of papers is not searchable by name, ID or paper subject.

But if Concordia students prefer to opt out of the Turnitin process during the trial, they have the choice.

"It's not mandatory," said Bentley. "[Students] have the option of submitting assignments without the software in a more traditional manner [...] But if students do opt out the lecturers will suggest that there are a couple of other mechanisms in place [to ensure proper citation]."

On the course syllabus given to trial classes, alternative documentation for students who decline to use the software include: "a short reflection paper or report on the research methodology used, copies of multiple drafts, an annotated bibliography, photocopies of sources, an oral examination or written quiz directed at issues of originality, [and] other alternatives devised by the instructor and which meet with the approval of the Chair that are meant to attest to the authenticity of the written work."

Other Canadian universities using the Turnitin software, including McGill and Ryerson University, agree that the use of the system is voluntary.

"The number one thing we want to stress is that we don't want to use it as a punitive tool. It is simply a learning tool for students," said Bentley. "It's the pedagogical stuff that we're interested in, it's how it supports students in their learning, research and writing. Hopefully it will be a benefit."

Briefs

Copyright bill on Capital Hill

On June 2, Minister of Industry Tony Clement read Bill C-32 in Parliament. The bill, the third time the Conservatives have attempted to introduce more restrictive copyright laws to Canada, would bring a crack-down on pirated media in Canada. The bill would allow companies to seek compensation from users who illegally download and share digital material.

TRAC and Concordia still at impasse

The Teaching and Research Assistants Union and Concordia University have yet to resolve ongoing contract negotiations to set the pay of the university's TAs and RAs. According to TRAC VP Bargaining Robert Sonin, the University administration has agreed to meet with TRAC again to clarify any misconceptions.

No justice for Tiffany

The remains of Tiffany Morrison, a 25-year-old Kahnawake woman who was reported missing in 2006, were found in a wooded area on Montreal's South Shore on June 4. Though the cause of death has yet to be determined, police are launching a criminal investigation into the matter.

Con U bids Congress farewell

The 2010 Congress of the Humanities and Social Sciences wrapped up last week after hosting over 9,000 delegates and academics from May 28 to June 4. Highlights from the conference included a lecture on smart textiles and a pledge from various universities to further integrate indigenous students into classrooms across the country.

Bike all right

Considered to be the largest bike gathering in the world by attracting roughly 45,000 cyclists a year, the 11th annual Montreal Bike Fest wrapped up on Sunday. While Montreal's famed Tour de l'Île was the last of a series of events that kept cyclists busy all week long, the turnout was not nearly as high as expected due to rain.

PQ study finds use of French waning in Montreal

• HUGO PILON-LAROSE

According to a study the Parti Québécois published in April, the use of the English language could surpass French in Montreal as early as 2016. The PQ concludes that by 2016, the percentage of Montrealers speaking French as a first language will drop from 79 per cent in 2006 to 43 per cent.

"Statistics prove that in a bilingual situation, the preferred language will be English," said PQ MNA Pierre Curzi who co-authored the study. "On behalf of that reality, we have to debate if we want to preserve the French side of Montreal and if so, how can we do that?"

Formerly a major actor in

Quebec's French cinema, Curzi notably worked with Oscar-winning director Denys Arcand on films like *Les invasions barbares* and *Le déclin de l'empire américain*. Curzi began his career as a politician with the Parti Québécois in 2007.

"The Montreal [linguistic portrait] we published doesn't open up the war between Francophones and Anglophones," said Curzi, who is also the PQ's language critic. "This is not our purpose and of course, we want Concordia students to tell their opinion on the issue. I would be ready to discuss [it] with them."

In the all-French document *Le grand Montréal s'anglicise*, Curzi paints a drastic portrait of what Montreal could become in future

years, writing that by 2016, English-speakers could be in a majority position. This could be attributed to a number of reasons, he said, such as the intensification of immigrant populations who choose English universities and CEGEPs instead of French schools.

On that issue, Curzi said that Concordia and McGill should be more involved within Montreal's French population.

"[McGill and Concordia] should provide more French services," he said. "And [McGill and Concordia] should become social actors to improve anglophones' interest in the Québécois culture. In a province in which the only official language remains French it should be part of

their institutional mission.

"There is also the fact that French-speakers move to suburban cities and leave Montreal," Curzi continued. "This is a reality to be slow down. It is also proven that when a person chooses to study in English for its CEGEP or university degree, there is 50 per cent of chance he won't work in French after. But 90 per cent of people who choose French schools will continue using the language."

When asked if he thought the rising number of anglophones learning to speak French is compensating for the decline of Francophone Montrealers, Curzi said French is still in a dangerous position.

Death and ballots

Filipino vote marks end of a decade with 1,000 political killings



(Clockwise from left) A grassroots political poster hangs above a Payatas home. Thousands of tonnes of garbage are dumped on the towns surrounding Manila each year. More than half of the Philippines 94 million inhabitants live below the poverty line, millions of whom assemble their homes from the garbage found in their communities. PHOTOS STEFAN CHRISTOFF

• CHRISTOPHER CURTIS

Two armed men enter a crowded laneway. They make their way past a small concrete building to the sound of screams from women and children.

The first brandishes a pistol, extending it towards the crowd with his left arm, and a man who scans the building's rooftop through the sight of his assault rifle follows him closely.

The gunmen, both dressed in blue military garb, double back to the street and out of sight. Seconds later, screams echo through the laneway once more. While shots ring out at a distance, a few civilians barricade themselves inside a classroom and wait for the violence to let up.

This video footage was captured at a polling center in Lanao del Sur, Philippines during the country's 2010 elections. It's a real reminder of the rivalry between political factions vying

for municipal seats on local ballots.

During outgoing Filipino President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo's administration, violence has played a vital role in the political process. Amnesty International reports that as of May 7, at least five candidates and 16 campaign organizers were murdered during this year's campaign.

Since 2001, when Arroyo took office, there have been over 1,000 political killings in the Southeast Asian country. Politically motivated violence was just one of many challenges facing the Filipino people leading up to the polls on May 10.

In the past decade, five million people have fallen below the poverty line. The poor now make up over half of the country's 94 million citizens. While poverty ravages communities across the Philippines, the war between the U.S.-backed Arroyo government

and the New People's Army—a communist insurgent group that has been fighting the Filipino government since the late 1960s—continues to claim lives.

Political killings and military aid from Canada

Stefan Christoff, a Montreal-based activist, was part of the People's International Observers Mission, a watch group that spent most of May in the Philippines reporting on human rights abuses in an effort to curtail election-related violence.

Christoff, who also took part in the PIOM during the Philippines' 2007 mid-term elections, said that the gunfight in Lanao del Sur illustrates just how casual political violence has become in the Philippines.

"If the Armed Forces of the Philippines is carrying out politically motivated assassinations against progressive activists—which according to Amnesty

International is a fact—and there is no legal accountability, as few soldiers have ever been brought before a court of law to be held to account for the killings, then violence in a polling centre like in Lanao del Sur becomes normalized," he wrote in an email to *The Link*.

Since 1997, Canada's Military Training Assistance Program has provided the Filipino Army with support operations and staff training.

"[Providing training to the AFP] is against Canadian policy," said Christoff. "Our government's policy forbids the [Canadian] military from providing military aid to countries with human rights abuse records."

The army has not limited killings to progressive activists, added Christoff.

"Some priests won't leave their church," he said. "They have been labeled progressive and fear for their lives if they leave their

church. Some priests have even been killed in their own church... It's comparable to the situation in Latin America in the 1980s."

Christoff noticed the military at polling stations across the Philippines. Voters were often flanked by armed soldiers, which Christoff said disrupted the democratic process.

"The people of the Philippines know what the army is capable of," he said. "They see soldiers near the ballot boxes and they wonder, 'Is my vote really secret?' If they doubt the secrecy of their ballot then you can't really call it a true democracy."

During his time in the Philippines, Christoff also spoke to Ariel Delgado, a community health worker who said the military had occupied a daycare centre outside of Manila in 2009. Delgado said the army used the daycare to interrogate local activists and discourage people from voting for left-leaning political parties.



Children cycle through Payatas, one of the Philippines' most impoverished communities.

"The [army] also uses its conflict with the NPA to scare voters away from leftist or progressive parties," said Christoff. "The army would often spray paint NPA next to grassroots political posters," he said, adding that it effectively creates an artificial link between political parties and the insurgency. "It sent a pretty clear message to the voters when they did that."

The Filipino government's war with the insurgents has also contributed to political bloodshed in the months leading to the election. Executive Order 546, which President Arroyo issued in 2006, essentially allows for individuals to have private armies "for the suppression of insurgency and other serious threats to national security."

On Nov. 23, in the Maguindanao province, a gang of over 80 gunmen halted a convoy of opposition gubernatorial candidate Esmel Mangudadatu's supporters. The gunmen then forced the

supporters out of their vehicles and murdered them. Of the 57 victims—which included Mangudadatu's wife, sisters and 12 journalists—at least five women were raped before being killed while others were tortured and beheaded.

Along with members of his father's private army, the Maguindanao provincial governor's son was subsequently arrested and charged with the murders. According to Amnesty International, the governor's troops were just one of 117 private armies that operate within the Philippines.

The electric ballot

This year, the Philippines became the first Asian country to hold fully-automated elections, outsourcing the management of ballot counting to a multi-national corporation.

"The government outsourced the whole administration of the

electronic vote to a private corporation," said Christoff. Smartmatic, the Venezuela-based corporation that administered the vote, have since been criticized for providing minimal technical support along with their voting machines. In some cases, Smartmatic would only employ one technician for a polling station that served over 10,000 voters.

"There is a whole tradition of poll watching and civilian observers being at the different precincts as the votes are tallied," continued Christoff. "That whole [culture of] civilians participating in the count of the vote was usurped by the electronic process."

"We're talking about a country where millions of families don't have electricity," he said. "The gap between their knowledge of technology and the electronic voting system is huge."

The road ahead

Although he hasn't officially

been proclaimed president by a joint session of congress, Benigno Aquino is projected to win the Filipino presidency by a wide margin.

While power changes hands in Manila, the urban poor living on the outskirts of the Filipino capital are still among the world's most marginalized. Millions of families live without access to healthcare, education or clean drinking water, often subsiding on the scrap metal collected from the mountains of garbage that are dumped in their neighborhoods each year.

"The real test will be what he does about the political violence," said Christoff. "If he admits there have been at least 1,000 murders and takes steps to bring back activists that have been disappeared, it will go a long way towards earning the trust of the people."

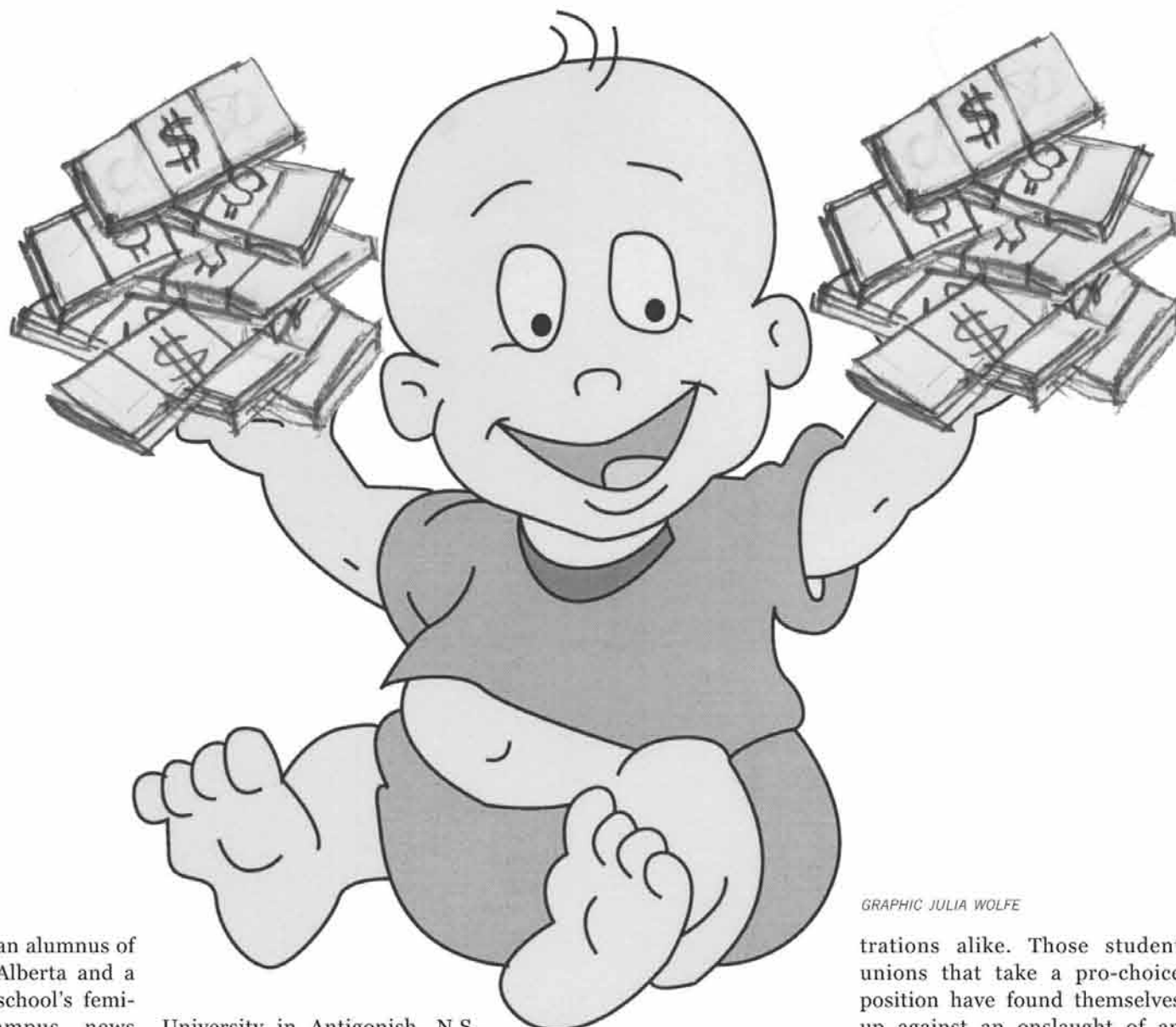
"But anything will be a welcome change from Arroyo."

"Some priests have even been killed in their own church... It's comparable to the situation in Latin America in the 1980s."

—Stefan Christoff,
Montreal based activist

A pro-life bribe or a bursary?

Student clubs across Canada offer money to mothers who choose to not abort



GRAPHIC: JULIA WOLFE

• NORA LORETO—(CUP)
RYERSON FREE PRESS
(RYERSON UNIVERSITY)

TORONTO (CUP)—Helping single mothers can give any organization positive press, as well as a great photo opportunity.

The pro-life movement—not normally associated with the struggle against the systemic barriers facing many low-income single parents—recently caught on to this. Single mothers can now benefit from bursaries offered by some pro-life groups at select universities.

But some are concerned that this is simply a way of “guilting” women into not having an abortion. These bursaries, usually ranging from \$400 to \$500, can amount to 10 per cent of one year’s average tuition fees at a Canadian university or a month’s rent.

Jaqueline Bergen is a student in critical disability studies at York University and the mother of a nine-year-old.

“[These bursaries are] sending out a message to young women who may consider having a child while being a student that you will be financially supported. [...] This is an illusion,” she wrote in an e-mail. “There are still very limited amounts of funding available for women or men who choose to parent while doing their education.”

Laura Collison, an alumnus of the University of Alberta and a volunteer for the school’s feminist-collective campus news radio show *Adamant Eve*, called these bursaries manipulative.

“I appreciate that they’re supporting women with education, but this is not a feminist act. It seems like they’re paying women to keep their pregnancies,” she said. “If these groups were really concerned about how women could afford university, they’d be involved in advocating for lower tuition, child-care [...] and a higher minimum wage.”

At Collison’s alma mater, the University of Alberta Campus Pro-Life Club offers the Dr. Charlotte Denman Lozier Bursary for Single Mothers, for women with “born or unborn children.” The club’s website advertises the award as being funded through club fundraising.

Similar awards are available at other schools.

Just below the University of Northern British Columbia’s Math & Physics Society Scholarship on its awards and bursaries website, one finds an award for single parents. Donated by the local Knights of Columbus, the Catholic men’s organization, the UNBC Students for Life Bursary has been given away for the past two years.

At St. Francis Xavier

University in Antigonish, N.S., the Students for Life Bursary is given annually to single parents with demonstrated need.

“If you’re opposed to abortion, you should be very [qualified for the award],” said Anne Cooke, an administrative assistant at St.FX’s financial aid department. “It encourages young mothers to carry their children to term,” she said, adding that the community there is very welcoming.

“It’s not trying to influence women or anyone about abortion—it’s just for people who’ve already made their decision,” she said.

Joyce Arthur, from the Abortion Rights Coalition of Canada, said that she has noticed an increase in the number of groups seeking funding and status from student unions for clubs that are specifically pro-life or anti-choice. While she thought providing money to help single parents was important, she questioned the motives of the groups.

This February, the University of Victoria senate rejected the proposal of Youth Protecting Youth, a pro-life group, for a similar bursary. Youth Protecting Youth has been engaged in a public fight against the University of Victoria Student Society for club recognition and funding from the stu-

“If these groups were really concerned about how women could afford university, they’d be involved in advocating for lower tuition, child-care [...] and a higher minimum wage.”

—Laura Collison,
University
of Alberta alumnus

dent union.

Through e-mail, Theresa Gilbert from the National Campus Life Network said that she was disappointed to hear that the Youth Protecting Youth bursary was denied.

“Many people and organizations claim to be pro-choice [...] However, when universities steadfastly refuse to offer any additional support to single mothers, it becomes very difficult for a woman to choose to raise her child, complete her education and manage the costs that are involved with both endeavours,” she said.

Abortion has proven to be a tough issue to take on for student unions and university adminis-

trations alike. Those student unions that take a pro-choice position have found themselves up against an onslaught of an organized pro-life movement. A year ago, the University of Calgary charged students from the local pro-life group with trespassing for demonstrating how abortion can be compared to the Holocaust and other genocides. Their charges were stayed in November 2009.

This is where controversy exists: on many campuses across Canada, student clubs have been popping up that are dedicated to only advocating for so-called “life issues”—no abortion, no euthanasia and no stem cell research. This poses a dilemma for those student unions that take pro-choice stands.

Bergen’s daughter was three when she started school again, and she continues to struggle to finish her master’s degree.

“I have had an extremely difficult time financially getting through school. I am always broke,” she said. “Tuition eats up about 25 to 30 per cent of my annual income. I have been mostly dependent on social assistance, which I am not that ashamed of.”

“It’s great if single mothers can graduate and have support to do that,” said Arthur. “It’s not great to make them feel guilty.”

Sense and censorship



Journalists leave a safe zone that is the corporate media in order to convey what needs to be said. PHOTO GAUL PORAT

Alternative media: telling the whole story

• ADAM KOVAC

When you talk or write for a living, at some point, somebody is going to want you to shut up. That's the problem with putting information out there: not everybody wants to know.

The urge to censor is universal, stemming from our desire to shape reality to fit our worldview, and it can take many forms. The urge to silence a voice can come from many directions: from the government, from advertisers, even from the public whom the media is trying to inform. To complicate matters, censorship doesn't just come from above.

Hunter S. Thompson noted in his book *Fear and Loathing on the Campaign Trail '72*, "any Washington political reporter who blows a Senator's chance for the vice-presidency might as well start looking for another beat to cover—because his name will be instant mud on Capital Hill." This analogy can be extended to every kind of coverage: if you don't play by the rules, you can kiss your access goodbye.

The result has been the rise of the alternative media: journalists who are not beholden to a profit line and aren't afraid of upsetting the status quo that ensure access. Going forward, it is vital to know how those taking the road less travelled are able to avoid the pitfalls of the mainstream in order to keep the information flowing.

Say it like you mean it

Matt Mills is the editorial director of Pink Toronto Press, the publisher of *Xtra*, a weekly newspaper oriented towards the LGBT community.

According to Mills, censorship is part of the game, no matter the publication. He admits that it's human nature to have biases, which influences how a story is written or whether it gets published. The trick, he said, is being aware of that fact so that it can be accounted for.

"I think [with] the notion of unbiased journalism, the reality is that every publication is an activist publication in its own way," he said. "Every piece of writing, no matter how balanced it professes to be, is informed with a viewpoint."

"In our organization, there is a great deal of latitude that writers and editors have in choosing and publishing stories. It's one of the reasons I work here and stay involved."

But that kind of latitude can be a mixed bag. On the one hand, you risk alienating readers by printing something they find disagreeable. On the other hand, a reputation for honest, thought-provoking journalism is the kind of reputation that can draw a wider audience.

This is the niche where independent media finds itself and the difference between it and the corporate media model is something Mills has experienced first-

hand, having worked for the *National Post*.

The gap between the two is especially noticeable when dealing with the queer community. Notably, *Xtra* has continued to cover the group Queers Against Israeli Apartheid, despite the fact that the group has been banned from Pride Week activities, though Pride advertises in *Xtra*.

"We're in a very unique position among gay media in that we don't tailor our editorial position to pander to the needs of advertisers," explained Mills. "In fact, our work is very strenuously anti-censorship."

This differs greatly, he said, from his experience at the *National Post*, not only in the tone directed at the LGBT community, but also in the way that editorial decisions were manifested among the staff. To explain the willingness of writers to toe the party line, Mills cites the competitive nature of journalism.

"At the time [when] the gay marriage debate began to heat up, there was a proliferation of jabs at [the] gay and lesbian [community] in the [newspaper]," he remembered. "I read the paper very closely and I would write to journalists who I thought had written about gays and lesbians in a manner that was unfair, or worse, uninformed. In several cases, I got responses from working journalists who wrote back to say 'Well

listen, I agree with you, but this is the editorial voice of the paper. This is what's expected, so this is the material that I write.'"

A cornerstone of democracy

In a democracy like ours, there are a wide and diverse variety of opinions on any given subject, which ensures that no matter what your stance is, you're going to anger somebody. According to Dru Oja Jay, writer, editor, solidarity activist, self-proclaimed libertarian socialist and co-founder of monthly newspaper *The Dominion*, that just means you have to be particular about who you're going to piss off.

"Every media outlet has its supporters and every supporter has certain topics that they're going to get mad about," he points out. "It's just a question of choosing which people those are going to be."

Often, for *The Dominion*, those are the people with the money—or as Jay calls them "the people with real power."

It can be tempting to watch what you say to avoid raising ire. Jay cites a recent case involving the Canadian mining industry as proof.

"One of the main examples [of the consequences] would be the case of *Noir Canada*, which is a book written about the Canadian mining industry and its less than stellar record abroad. [The mining companies] didn't like the

things said in it, so they sued them. The authors had to spend all their time and money fighting this. I think that has a chilling effect. Everyone who has something to say about the Canadian mining industry is going to think twice."

It takes courage for journalists to face these kinds of personal, professional and financial risks to break a story. Of course, the danger isn't just fiduciary—if a reporter upsets a source, it can be just as damaging to a career as a lawsuit. However, that's one of the freedoms that an alternative media source has over a mainstream publication. It's understood that toes are going to be stepped on, so getting canned isn't something that needs to be feared.

"I've lost access before," Jay acknowledged. "Generally, I see that as something to be proud of, as long as I'm confident that I told the truth. I generally decide that even if this loses me access next time, I'm going to go ahead with it, because it's more important to ask the pertinent question."

Mills says that he does what he does in order to arm the population with the information necessary to play its role.

"Free journalism is a fundamental cornerstone of democracy," he said earnestly. "You cannot have democracy without an educated and well informed population."



The Luyas spearhead The Rialto for a night of music and environmental support.
PHOTO NICK BOSTICK

The power of hope

Local indie darlings headline a show at the revitalised The Rialto

• R. BRIAN HASTIE

As the dust settles on the now-condemned Green Room on St. Laurent Boulevard after a recent fire, many in the city lament the loss of another mid-sized local venue.

However, as one building falls, a bright light appears in the horizon in the form of the Parc Avenue institution The Rialto. The venue, under new management, wishes to check out the room's viability as a live hall and local sweethearts The Luyas will test the waters tomorrow night, with openers Avec pas d'casque and The Hoof and The Heel.

The Luyas have had a busy 2010 so far. They played a gig at the Vancouver Olympics as well as shows in New York City—such as opening for Owen Pallett and playing one of the record release parties thrown by indie behemoths The National—and sporadic studio sessions have kept the quartet quite busy, as tomorrow night's show is yet another notch on the band's pretty fancy belt.

Vocalist/guitarist/moodswinger of The Luyas Jessie Stein is jazzed by the prospect of playing such a large venue. "I'm excited to be in a beautiful room and be with a bunch of people I know and don't know," said Stein.

Opening band Avec pas d'casque was handpicked for the gig for two reasons: first, they're Stein's favourite local band at the moment and they're a francophone band. "I don't think there's enough shows that have mixed linguistic bills. Our city is much bigger than it feels," explained Stein.

Another potential drawing point is that the entrance fee is a suggested donation of \$5, which will go towards The Coalition To Restore Coastal Louisiana, a non-profit advocacy group mandated to both pre-

serving and protecting the coastline in light of the recent British Petroleum oil platform leak in the Gulf of Mexico.

"Although it is totally BP's responsibility to pay for everything, they're [going] to find a way not to. The reality of the situation, sadly, is that BP is not going to pay for the clean-up," explains Stein. "Even though it's nobody's responsibility per se, I really believe in supporting the groups that do things at a grass-roots level [...] I just think that it's important to support people who feel compelled to try. The same thing in the arts, the same thing in activism. A lot of people want to do good things but don't have the resources to."

Stein can explain the *raison d'être* for the suggested donation. Instead of simply integrating it into the ticket price, "it's a choice to throw a couple of bucks in a different pocket, as opposed to giving all the money to the rock and roll bands, who definitely need it, don't get me wrong. I can speak for The Luyas and we're pretty broke," said Stein. "But [the point is that] it feels like a really cool cultural city event and I want it to be great for everyone who's there."

She continued to explain that perhaps it should be about more than simply a rock show. "Once it starts to feel like it's not just about the rock bands and the music and the art, [it will] be about something a little broader than just us, just performance, or community. It's about caring for each other and trying hard in the face of mass adversity and possible failure."

The Luyas play with The Hoof and The Heel and Ave pas d'casque June 9 at The Rialto (5723 Ave. du Parc) at 9 pm. \$5 at the door.

Vintage vixens

Ladies of vintage take on Mile-End studio project



Doyle and Emlaw bring the good old days back with a week of vintage mayhem. PHOTO ZOI KILAKOS

• NATASHA YOUNG

Vintage has become more than just a style for Brooke Doyle and Becky Emlaw. What many fashion-savvy people consider a hobby has become these ladies' livelihoods.

They call their pop-up shop, Vintage to Go, a "guerilla boutique." After amassing a carefully selected collection of vintage treasures in their studio space, Doyle and Emlaw will annex the OFF Interarts not-for-profit studio and storefront space on St. Laurent Boulevard in the Mile-End. This multi-purpose space is affordable and open to the arts community for hourly, daily, or weeklong rentals.

For the week of June 17, the ladies of Vintage to Go will be turning the studio into a boutique to purge their treasure-trove for the enjoyment of all of Montreal's vintage lovers.

Growing up in the early 1990s in the mid-western United States, shopping with friends at the local Salvation Army was a way to express her individuality in a small town. When she moved out to L.A., however, it became less of an art and more of a necessity. I was 21 and I couldn't afford to shop at designer boutiques, so I would go thrift shopping—not even vintage shopping, because when you go to vintage boutiques, there's usually a mark-up in price," she explains. "Then, when I came to Montreal—I moved here a couple of years ago—it was kind of cyclical; again, it was born out of necessity. I didn't have a job or a Visa, so I started selling things from

my personal collection I'd gotten in L.A., New York and Seoul."

Doyle has a few tricks up her sleeve when it comes to finding quality pieces now for both Vintage to Go and her Etsy shop, Sunday Adventure Club. Besides shopping at all the places you would expect (Value Village, the Salvation Army), Doyle says that another good resource is clothing swaps. "I've been to more clothing swaps here in Montreal than in any other city. That's a really good way to trade out either new items for vintage or vintage items you're sick of for other people's vintage."

Doyle adds that garage sales and yard sales also harness good finds. "You can find good [yard sales] just walking up and down side-streets pretty much any day in the summer. There seems to be this real entrepreneurial spirit, a great 'street tras' culture with people sitting out on the sidewalks selling their stuff."

An adept bargain-hunter, Doyle emphasizes the importance—and fun—of haggling when shopping for anything second-hand. "I love the art of bargaining, I really get a kick out of it. It's about knowing what something's worth," she says.

When it comes to determining the quality of an item, what it often boils down to is experience and developing a good eye. "The criteria that I use is mostly aesthetic: does it look good, and is it relevant to current trends?" she says. "Personal taste is always a big part, as well. Certain collectors will stick to a certain era or style, but I find

that my tastes are pretty broad, especially in terms of trying to find a wide variety of sizes—I think that's really important."

Of course, certain eras are known for certain styles, and a skilled vintage hunter knows which ones to look for. "For women's dresses, I love the 50s and the 80s. For men's shoes, I love the 40s and 50s. For secretary-style blouses—those are really big right now—those come from the 70s. It really depends on the article of clothing to determine which year is really special for that particular kind of item," she explains.

With mass-producers catching on to the vintage trend, even an adept collector can be fooled from time to time. "I think mass retailers are picking up on the trend of buying vintage and I think it's smart of them to reproduce items that aren't exact replicas but borrow from the aesthetic of that vintage look and feel," she says. "It's always hard when something becomes popular and is mass-produced, and you think, 'I can get that for \$3.99 at Value Village!' But by then, it's too late. If you're looking for a specific item, it'll take you years to find it. That's part of the art of it; if you just show up with \$20 in your pocket and a free day to shop around, you'll find some amazing stuff."

Seven Days of Vintage Sale happens from June 17 to June 23 at 5143/45 Blvd. Saint-Laurent. The opening party is on June 17 from 7 p.m. to 12 a.m. There will be a cash bar and music by Dj Mitzi and Dj Aaron Nathaniel Standen.



Free Jazz legends Globe Unity Orchestra will play their first Canadian performance at the Suoni Per Il Popolo Festival.



Freaky, psychedelic band Pocahaunted bring the pow wow to Montreal.

Wacky and weird

The Suoni Per Il Popolo Festival celebrates a decade of existence

• ASHLEY OPHEIM

Among the bigwigs of Montreal's summer music festivals—ahem, Montreal Jazz Festival—stands a small but significant festival that is as wacky and interesting as its name. The Suoni Per Il Popolo festival is gracing Montreal with its tenth year with an odd lineup of mysterious and obscure acts.

The festival takes place from June 6 to June 26. Suoni Per Il Popolo takes place at La Sala Rossa, Casa Del Popolo, Il Motore, and Club Soda, all relatively small venues that add to the overall intimacy between the musicians and the audience.

"The music we program [makes us stand out from other festivals], cause no one is programming this type of experimental, avant-garde music," said

Artistic Director Steve Guimond. "The festival kind of takes on its own life. Certain types of sounds are represented more each year. For instance, this year for some reason it's a lot of electronic music. Two years ago there tended to be a lot of freaky folk. But that just happens sort of organically."

As Guimond explained, "We are a corporate free festival, which is pretty rare these days. If you look at all the festivals around it's always the 'Something-Something' festival. We are the Suoni Per Il Popolo festival."

The festival does, however, accept support from the small St. Ambroise Brewery.

"That's always been the philosophy behind the festival," said Guimond. "It's about the music. It's not about selling a product."

The Suoni festival collaborates

with other small, local organizations dedicated to music such as Blue Skies Turn Black and the Pirates of the Lachine Canal. Local artists provide the visual ambiance to the venues. This all adds to the hotpot of local, independent Montrealers that the Suoni festival embraces as partners.

"Part of our philosophy has always been to build this sort of community," Guimond said. "It always comes down to the art and the artist and the music and friendships that emerge from that."

This is Guimond's fifth year with the festival. He attributes his vast musical taste to working at a community radio background that exposed him to "a lot of music for a lot of years."

If it's not in its lack of corporate sponsorship, the Suoni Per Il

Popolo festival stands apart in its programming. It is improbable that you would recognize more than three names on their lineup. "We only really program independent artists," explained Guimond.

This year the festival offers an array of music - a diversity that will draw people of all ages and tastes together. "The thing that's cool about the festival is that lots of different audiences come together. We've seen particularly at the free jazz shows we have people from 18 years old all the way up 70 years old," Guimond explained.

The free jazz shows—that is, improvised jazz—is something that, as Guimond said, is at the heart of the festival. The founders of the festival, who also founded the festival's venues Casa del Popolo and Sala Rossa, began the

festival as a platform for free jazz—a genre that nobody was presenting.

"The Montreal Jazz Festival stepped away from some of the free jazz artists. So it was a void that needed to be filled [because] there is a huge audience for that kind of music. In that sense, free jazz is kind of the back bone that [Suoni] branches out of," said Guimond.

What's happened with Suoni over the past 10 years? "Well, it's definitely evolved. We try and make the program stronger every year. I think it's just gotten better and more representative of different perspectives."

The Suoni Per Il Popolo begins on June 6 and ends June 26. For a full listing of shows visit their website casadelpopolo.com/suonperilpopolo.



Isis plays their last show ever at Club Lambi as part of the Suoni Per Il Popolo festival.

The beginning of an end for Isis

• R. BRIAN HASTIE

It's the final curtain call for Boston-bred and LA-based post-metal outfit Isis. After 13 years and five full-length releases—as well as a myriad number of EPs and live albums—the Ipecac Record recording artists' appearance at Club Soda on June 23 will be their last show ever.

In a posting on the band's official blog, the 5-piece band said that they had "done everything [they] wanted to do, said everything [they] wanted to say" and didn't wish to overstay their welcome, as well as noting the fact that Montreal was the site of their very first show in 1997.

Formed in Boston in 1997 and borrowing from an aesthetic largely created by bands such as Neurosis,

Godflesh and The Melvins, the band's catalog is full of songs that ebb and flow, writing lengthy masterpieces that are all crescendo and denouements, full of passages with impossibly slow tempos that interplay with lighter sections that utilize clean instrumentation.

Many consider the band's 2002 album *Oceanic* to be their definitive statement: an hour-long sonic jour-

ney that incorporates many memorable musical passages into a solid effort, though all five of the band's albums are all distinct and worth checking out.

Response from fans has largely been one of shock as well as acceptance. The response to the blog posting numbered in the hundreds as fans thanked guitarist/vocalist Aaron Turner and company for the

memories. The band's Club Soda appearances will have people travelling from as far away as Australia to be in attendance, as the band itself is planning a truly memorable evening.

Isis plays at Club Soda (1225 Blvd. Saint-Laurent) with Cave In on Wed. June 23. Show starts at 8 p.m. Tickets are \$20.

The
DOWN-LOWEvents listings
June 8 - July 3

MUSIC

Rah Rah, Young Galaxy, Jem and Distant Shores
Wednesday, June 9
Le Divan Orange
4234 St. Laurent Blvd.
8:30 p.m.
\$8

Cold Warps, Dirty Beaches and Omon Ra II
Thursday, June 10
Friendship Cove
215A Murray
8:30 p.m.
\$8

VISUAL ART

Les Heures
Tuesday, June 8 to Saturday, July 3
Galerie B-312
372 Sainte-Catherine St. O.
Open Monday - Saturday
Noon to 5 p.m.

Un labryrinthe urban tradimensionnel
Tuesday, June 8 to Monday, June 21
Eastern Bloc
7240 Clark St.
Open Tuesday to Saturday
Noon to 6 p.m.

ARTIST TALK

Approaching Stillness, Vida Simon and Tedi Tafel
Sunday, June 13
article30
262 Fairmount St. O.
3 p.m.
This exhibit looks at the summer solstice as a kind of enveloping metaphor to the works.

PHOTOGRAPHY

Young Healers: Volume IV: Frances Allen
Tuesday, June 29
Off The Hook Gallery
1021 Sainte-Catherine St. W.
7 p.m. to 11 p.m.

FILM

Montreal FRINGE: "How Coyote Was Swallowed by the Sandia Mountains"
Saturday, June 12
Espaces 4001 Space
4001 Berri St.
5:15 p.m.

—compiled by
Ashley Opheim

Arcade Fire fails
to bring the heat

Local band falls short of impressing fans

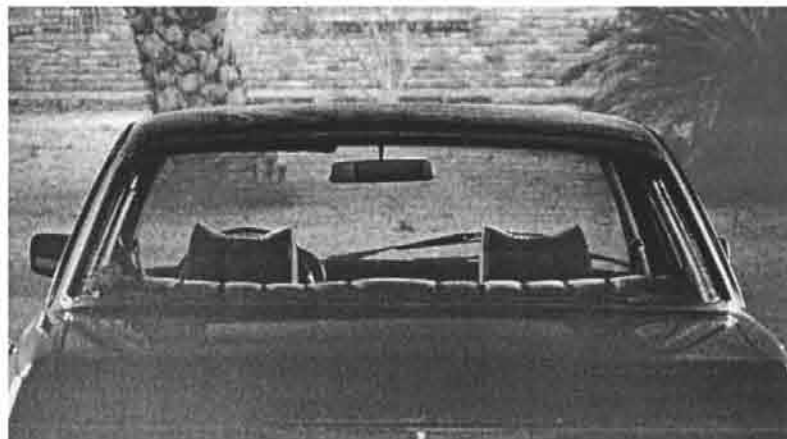
• NATASHA YOUNG

I fell in love with Arcade Fire with the release of their ground-breaking album *Funeral* and had my devotion reignited with *Neon Bible*. I don't believe there is much chance or much point in trying to accomplish what previous albums did. According to the interviews given upon the release of this new single, it seems the band agrees with me.

Their new singles that were leaked onto the Internet include the album's namesake track "The Suburbs" and the rock-driven, painfully repetitive "Month of May." Unfortunately, these songs don't come close to the brilliant debut album that fans all over the world fell in love with.

It is, of course, important to experiment and to try new things, to move in different stylistic directions, but with the redundant simplicity of "The Suburbs" and "Month of May," it doesn't seem like experimentation was really the goal.

"The Suburbs" has a typically catchy pop sound with its



Arcade Fire's third album drops this summer.

astoundingly repetitive arrangement. The strings we all know and love are in there somewhere, but they aren't nearly as impressive as tracks on previous records, and throughout the songs they are either nonexistent or go unnoticed beneath the tedious piano, guitar and bass tracks. There isn't a build-up or climax to be found, another aural artifact for which the group is highly regarded, nor is there deviation from the basic music arrangement.

Upon hearing the first minute

of the song "Month of May", which opens with the lyrics "Month of May, month of May / gonna make a record in the month of May," I thought it was a spoof recorded to promote the new album. As the song continued on, though, with the dreary, distorted hammering of power chords, I realized it was indeed a full-length song and that it was intended for the album. The lyrics on this track are hackneyed in a manner that seems entirely uncharacteristic of Arcade Fire.

One cannot help but notice a

steep difference in this new effort, which pales in comparison to previous releases whose lyrics were impassioned and contained poignant, inspired imagery.

"The Suburbs" is enjoyable albeit redundant and, at some points, monotonous with its musical arrangements (which is, again, extremely unlike them), but I'm still having a hard time believing that "Month of May" is sincerely meant as a follow-up to their last two outstanding efforts.

Admittedly, their singles are almost never the best songs on the album, as is true with many bands. It is also often futile to try to single out one or two tracks off of their albums as each song typically has something unique to offer, and they tend to function to their fullest potential when the album is heard in its entirety. However, all of the band's singles thus far have been quite adequate gauges of the quality and mood of the rest of the album. So, if these singles are any indication, I'm curious—though not so optimistic—as to how the rest of the album will come out.

spins

Wintersleep
New Inheritors
OneFourSeven

New Inheritors, Wintersleep's fourth album, is unsure of what it aspires to be. Where they were once revered for their ability to marry folk rock with atmospheric post-rock, they are now stared at quizzically with what is essentially a pedestrian indie rock record. Gone are the sonic highs and lows of the first three records. It's like listening to an entirely new, entirely inferior band. Their fanbase is bound to be torn between the first three albums and this new mutation. "Black Camera," with its straightforward rocking attitude and forgettable verse/chorus riffs, showcases a band at a crossroads: singer/guitarist Paul Murphy brings up his vocal register amidst completely forgettable music. Much of what made Wintersleep great was their ability to surprise musically, but all this album manages to do is underwhelm.



4/10

Brian Hastie

Shortwave Sunshine
The Breakers

Major

New York City could be one of the hardest places to get noticed when you're part of an up-and-coming garage band, so kudos to new act Shortwave Sunshine for launching their first album this month. Does producing an album in the Big Apple guarantee a hit? NO. The seven-track CD entitled *The Breakers* starts with a couple of endearing could-be-featured-on-a-hit-teen-series songs with upbeat piano, shaker and synth combinations. The acoustic folk-rock is dressed with jazzy woodwind and brass harmonies, a good indication the band has promise. However, this doesn't sufficiently overshadow the sappy, simplistic lyrics. The ballads feel like a karaoke performance written by a teenager. With a few good summer tracks and more forgettable flops, it definitely sounds like a first album from a young band.



4/10

Andrea Zoellner

Blue Hawaii
Blooming Summer

Arbutus

Local lovebirds Blue Hawaii tackle soft-hearted and feathered emotions on their first album *Blooming Summer*. This album is ideal for hot, lazy days at home drinking water out of mason jars and checking the moisture content of your balcony garden plants' soil. "Dream Electrixra" offers itself as a juicy dance-worthy track about finding true love. *Blooming Summer* could be described as electronica glazed with a shoe-gaze sound, pallid and ethereally discoed. With songs such as "Lilac," "Castle of Clouds," and "Sparkle Market," Blue Hawaii offers the music world something sweet and magically unapologetic. Swoon-worthy vocals soar high and dry over patient beats, creating a hesitant but persistent urge for the album to explode in pastel colors everywhere. Daydream to this album, make love while listening to it, but most importantly, dance to it in your underwear alone in your living room.



8/10

Ashley Opheim

Danko Jones
Below The Belt

Aquarius

After 2008's disappointing *Never Too Loud*, many had written off the Mango Kid and his two musical cohorts as an overly ambitious band who tried cramming too many musical stylings into their songs. They forgot that a good hook and some decent licks are all you need for rocking times. Jones' brand of throwback garage rock got lost in the songwriting cycle, instead churning out an overtly commercial and well-polished record. If *Never Too Loud* was its version of the Ramones' *End Of The Century*, then *Below The Belt* is its *Subterranean Jungle*. This album is successful in cutting back the bells, whistles, sound effects and stylistic changes that cluttered up the previous album's sonic palette, and instead remains focused on getting back to the rock. "I Think Bad Thoughts" and first single "Full Of Regret" are definite stand-outs from a true return to form. Don't call it a comeback; just call it business as usual.



9/10

Brian Hastie

Can't stop, won't stop

Sean Nicholas Savage conquers and represents Montreal at the North by Northeast Festival

• JOHN BATT

Two weeks ago, somewhere between the Greater Toronto area and Montreal, a high-priority freight train whizzed from Lower to Upper Canada carrying some unexpected cargo.

As the train rushed towards Montreal, local songwriter Sean Nicholas Savage sat between two containers on a small plank, dodging CN Rail officials and writing his new album, *Mutual Feelings of Respect and Admiration* due out on Arbutus Records this summer.

Two weeks later the record is on the verge of being finished.

"[The album was] a fresh idea and it [had] to be made," said Savage. "I believe in synchronicity [...] it's time to let everyone know."

Know what, exactly? Well, we'll just have to wait until the album's release.

Savage has been heralded as one of the more prolific musicians in the city. Savage will play on the Pop Montreal roster at the North by Northeast festival in Toronto. Since his arrival from Edmonton in 2008, Savage has released four records, including his last effort *Movin' Up in Society*, released in April. Where most musicians would take a much-needed break from the studio, Savage just can't seem to stop producing.

"I wanted to make a practical album," said Savage. "I want people to use it to have a good time."

His music certainly allows for that, and, more often than not, one has the opportunity to drift

"I wanted to make a practical album. I want people to use it to have a good time."

—Sean Nicholas Savage,
Montreal songwriter



Sean Nicholas Savage prepares to release a new album and take on a European audience. GRAPHIC EMILY KAI BOCK

off into his excitingly dreamy world, and walk around in it for a while.

Savage's music has evolved dramatically over the years. His once minimalist approach and playful, Love-Me-Do lyrical styles have been traded in for lush instrumentation and mature themes, leading him into a dark, mahogany-kind of coun-

try-pop (not to be confused with pop-country) that made his last effort his most serious to date.

For this summer's record, Savage will be collaborating with label-mate, fellow Edmonton native and long-time friend David Carriere of Montreal's sugar-wave band Silly Kissers. After being recorded by

Sebastian Cowan, founder of Arbutus Records, the album and it is now being handed over to Carriere to be remixed in its entirety. The result is sure to be nothing less than promisingly uplifting.

Later this summer, Savage heads off to Europe where he has dates planned for Amsterdam and Berlin with more in the

works. As he prepares to leave, his fans eagerly anticipate the manner in which these impending stories will find their way into his work.

Sean Nicholas Savage will be performing a free show Friday, June 18 for Fringe Pop at Parc-des-Ameriques (Corner of Saint-Laurent Blvd. and Rachel) at 9:30 p.m.

A literary first aid kit

Palimpsest magazine mixing up the magazine format with multimedia

• CHRISTOPHER OLSON

When one thinks of a magazine, images of glossy pages and celebrity profiles glutting the aisles next to the check-out line at a drug-store fill the mind.

In a dying print culture, magazines like *GQ* and *Wired* have attempted to make their mags more multimedia—with barcodes that can be scanned by cell phones to have stories sent to your inbox or holographic displays of Robert Downey Jr. or the Enterprise appearing in your laptop's built-in webcam.

While the powerhouses of the

magazine industry are looking to new technologies, it takes a braver sort to look to the Romans for inspiration.

Palimpsest, which takes its inspiration from Latin scrolls that could be scraped off and used again, leaving faint traces of the original compositions that graced their pages, is redefining the look and feel of what it means to be a magazine.

"The more we developed *Palimpsest* conceptually, the more we realized it was bound to be something very untraditional," said co-founder Tess Edmonson, a Concordia liberal arts student.

Like a literary first aid kit, *Palimpsest* is a box that springs open with a range of art objects, from written prose, cassette tapes of music, CDs containing short film subjects, textiles and scrolls. "I think, to a certain extent, it's a tribute to paper fetishism and print fetishism," said Edmonson.

"The impetus for us to create [*Palimpsest*] was to have a platform for multimedia and for new media art. We just want to explore the relations between these different formats and what that means."

The launch party for issue two of the magazine, whose theme is

"medicine," will feature video screenings, including a mish-mash presentation of long-forgotten webcam video scoured from the Internet, as well as broadsheets on display and video projections.

There'll also be musical performances from experimental artists Chris D'eon and Geidi Primes, also known as Grimes.

"I love magazines so much," said Edmonson, "but it's kind of a masochist industry to attempt to enter, because there's so much good happening with it right now, but very little of that is being produced in Canada."

Although unconventional, *Palimpsest* has a precedent in *Aspen*, a magazine published in Colorado from 1965 to 1972, and like *Palimpsest* took the form of a box of goods.

"We're a palimpsest to this other magazine that used to exist and doesn't anymore," said Edmonson. "If you try to erase something and write overtop that history, despite whatever you do, it's still going to be there."

The launch of issue two of *Palimpsest* will take place Friday June 11 at 4 p.m. at OFF Interarts (5143 St-Laurent Blvd.)

Designing poetry

Four Minutes To Midnight takes your words and makes them art

• EMMA HEALEY

What do the words “radical typographic experimentation” mean to you?

Nothing? Then you need to get yourself a copy of *Four Minutes To Midnight* (23:56).

The Montreal zine, created by designer and sometimes-Concordia-teacher Kevin Yuen Kit Lo and his creative partner John W. Stuart, is a compilation of poetry and art that wants to be more than just a typical anthology.

For example: there have been 10 issues of 23:56 so far, and while much of the material was generated through open calls for submissions, a large section of issue 11 will feature only the work of Montreal artist Sophie Jodoin and American beat poet F. A. Nettelbeck.

Nettelbeck is an often-overlooked member of the original Beat poets. He has published 20 books of poetry and used to head the now-defunct poetry magazine *This Is Important*, which published work by writers like William S. Burroughs and Allan Ginsberg in the '80s and '90s.

“We had featured him in the last two issues and thought that he was a really important and sort of marginalized character,” said Lo. “I met him online, I sent him some copies and he had a really positive response. He jokingly asked when I was going to do a book for him and I thought, hey, you know, why not? We have the ability to do it and he allows us to do what we

want to do with his work. He thinks it works with what he's doing.”

The concern that writers might not be okay with what the magazine will do with—or to—their work is one that the editors of most other literary magazines don't usually face. But, as it says on the zine's website, 23:56 is not just a literary magazine; it's “a space for radical typographic experimentation, blurring the line between form and content.”

Lo explained: “A lot of the stuff we've done has been experimental typography, experimental poetry, really bridging the gap between text and image. That's where my main interest is. [Nettelbeck]’s been comfortable with us fucking with his words.” He smiled. “Or, um, I hope he is.”

However, the magazine's experimental approach hasn't scared contributors away. “Most of the writers that have worked with us, that's generally the agreement we have with them,” said Lo. “People send us stuff and they realize that we're going to mess around with it in different ways.”

This agreement is a key part of “the Fugue,” a long poem that Lo, Stuart and various other contributors have been working on since the magazine's inception. “It's a kind of collaborative typographic epic poem,” said Lo. “We take a lot of different voices and smash them together and try to make a song out of it.”

All the text in “the Fugue” comes from contributors, who post lines on the com-

ments page of the magazine's call for submissions, in a kind of web 2.0 version of the Surrealists' Exquisite Corpse game. Lo takes the words and turns them into a visual poem, which then ends up in the zine.

While “the Fugue” can be both linguistically and visually chaotic, he's quick to point out that there's nothing haphazard about it.

“Online, a lot of the time, there's this idea of just amassing content [...] the idea is ‘let's see what kind of keywords we can pull out of the crazy interwebs and pull it all together and it's going to be meaningful.’ And it's not. I think having an editorial approach is really important.”

Giving direction to a project that aspires to be a dialogue, a poem, a piece of art, and a representation of a coherent editorial point of view all at once has been a complex task for Lo. Creating visual poetry out of other people's lines might seem like a daunting task, but he says he finds it inspiring.

“The form actually gives me a great way to write without having to write. I get to edit words from all these brilliant contributors, and then still express some sort of meaning that I want to express, and add to it through its visual form, through its composition and structure.”

That kind of attitude is what separates 23:56 from other literary arts magazines. Instead of just pairing pieces of art up with poems, the zine erases all distinctions between the two. “Radical typographic



Sophie Jodoin is a contributor to *Four Minutes to Midnight*.

experimentation,” as it turns out, means exactly what it sounds like—fucking with words.

The 11th issue of *Four Minutes To Midnight* will be released in July. For more details go to www.lokidesign.net. For the full transcript of Emma Healey's interview with Kevin Lo, visit *The Link's* website: www.thelinknewspaper.ca

Soulgazers



• CHRISTOPHER OLSON

The Soulgazers writing collective threw caution to the wind with their latest issue. Like an illustrated game of broken telephone, each writer took the inspiration for his or her work from an illustration someone else had written in response to the previous writer's response to the previous illustration, with the image ending up somewhere very different from where it started.

“The Thousand Words issue” garnered the Soulgazers a nod for Best Zine at last year's Expozine in Montreal. But will they be repeating the experiment?

Anna Leventhal, CKUT contributor and editor of *The Art of Trespassing*, spoke to *The Link* about *Soulgazers*.

The Link: Why did the Soulgazers put together a zine?

Anna Leventhal: We spend a year workshoping stories together and then, as a way of marking the passage of a year, we make a zine just to show what we've all been working on.

[The Thousand Words issue] was kind of a slightly different project and that one sort of happened because Jeff [Miller] and Shaun and I were the only three who were around, and we were just kind of like, “Oh, we should make something for Expozine!” So we did this collaborative thing, where one person wrote a story and then we found an illustrator, and then the next person wrote a story based on the illustration.

Will future issues of Soulgazers take on this collaborative approach?

Well, I don't know if the next issue of *Soulgazers* will, but I really, really like that format. I love doing a story based on an image, and then having that story illustrated, and you just get so many different interpretations. It's based on a drawing game that I really like. I don't know if it has a real name.

I always just called it “the best game ever,” and that's what my friends call it as well, where you write a sentence and somebody has to illustrate the sentence, and then somebody has to summarize the drawing, and then it just keeps going. I've played it on many a diner placemat. So this has just been kind of an extension of that.

I was wondering how you feel about making zines compared to working with a publisher, like you did with *The Art of Trespassing*.

It's basically just a lot slower [working with a publisher]. It took about a year for [*The Art of Trespassing*] to come out, whereas with a zine you can sort of whip it out in a weekend. I mean, literally, you go to the print shop, you make a bunch of copies, you spend an evening with your friends stapling, and then it's done. Even with a small press you don't have that sort of freedom.

How does getting writing critiques from close friends differ from other writing workshops you've taken?

All writing comes from your experience in your community, so showing things to members of that community just makes sense. I took a fiction work-

shop from McGill, [and] I don't know if this is other people's experience in class, but, when you submit a story to a bunch of people, some people's critiques are going to be right on, and some people are going to say things and you're going to be like, “whose story were you reading?” I had one guy read something that I wrote and say something like, “Oh, this character is clearly a mouthpiece for your radical communist agenda.” And I was like, “Oh? Okay. I didn't really think that I was trying to be a mouthpiece for a radical communist agenda.”

What other projects do you have on the backburner?

I have another writing project called *The Society for the Preservation of Anachronistic Gesture*. It's not exactly a writing project; it's [part] writing, [part] performance, and [part] archival. It has a bunch of different forms. It's about creating an archive of gestures. Right now it's all on paper, but eventually we're going to have a website where we have a bunch of collected gestures, and we'll invite people to add more.

You can purchase copies of *Soulgazers* at *Depanneur Le Pick Up* (7302 Waverly St.)

Of leaps and bounds

The Olympic Park becomes prime real estate for parkour



Concordia student Jules Desmarais is part of a parkour group that meets three times a week at Olympic Park. PHOTOS OZ VEYSEL-DEMIRTAS

• JAMIE PIMENTEL

At first glance, parkour may seem like simply an adrenaline junkie's fix for random sprints, gravity-defying leaps and a lust for imminent danger. The *l'art du déplacement*, as the physical discipline is known in its native France, is actually an elaborate exercise of body displacement with the goal of getting from point A to B as quickly as possible.

"Parkour is just basically using your body and your environment as efficiently as possible to get around," explained Jules Desmarais, a fiber arts student at Concordia and member of the *Communauté du parkour au Québec*. "Every day is different, every day is an adventure. I guess it's the feeling of freedom I get when I do it."

Desmarais is part of a Montreal-based group, that holds practices on Mondays,

Wednesdays, and Saturdays at the Olympic Park. There are no fees and people of all abilities are welcome to participate.

Those who are acquainted with the sport often equate it with a sense of freedom, and ultimately, a lifestyle.

"The sport it could be most compared to would probably be a martial art. A non-competitive form [that is], which means you get to know yourself through your practise and better yourself," said Desmarais.

George Hébert, a naval officer from the late 1800s, is credited with pioneering the discipline after noticing the advanced physical abilities of indigenous people in Africa and their strict reliance on nature to develop their skills.

As parkour owes most of its jargon to its French origins, practitioners call themselves *traceurs*, meaning "to trace or draw a line" in French and refers to the path

used within one's environment. The word is also slang for "to go fast," as speed and efficiency define the practice.

Some of the terms used in parkour are: *Saut de fond* or drop, *planche* or muscle-up, *roulade* or roll, and *passe muraille* or wall hop/run. Although knowledge of the terminology is not necessary, it does increase one's understanding of a discipline as broad in scope as parkour, if not to feel a sense of appropriation with other *traceurs*.

Parkour emphasizes camaraderie, benevolence, assistance, honor, and honesty, which are ideologies found within the natural method's moral tenets. It is a minimalistic discipline, requiring no equipment other than shoes and the environment. There is a sense of unity between oneself and nature, according to participants, and *traceurs* stress the importance of non-competitive-

ness, believing that rivalry strips away the essence of self-development.

"The parkour community is a very friendly brotherhood where everyone is eager to help one another," stated Steven Leblanc, an aspiring kinesiologist and instructor at PKQC. "When you start doing parkour, your vision of the environment changes—it's about you and your body."

Inspired by Luc Besson's 2001 film, *Yamikasi—Les samouraïs des temps modernes*, Leblanc began practising parkour eight years ago and has been teaching it for the last two.

"People used to come to me for advice but I didn't know how to explain it to them, so I had to theorize the movements in order to better explain," he said.

Silex Kit, a female instructor at PKQC, was also inspired by Besson's feature.

"I saw *Yamikasi* and did some

research on the web and found a group that practised this sport in Montreal," said Kit. "I was looking for a fun way to keep in shape and I wanted to try something new."

Movies like *Yamikasi* show that parkour can become more than just a hobby and well-known stuntman David Belle is living proof of that.

Although the training is arduous, "it's very simple," said Kit. "You do it when and where you want to. You don't realize that you're working hard because you're having fun."

Coinciding with Hébert's philosophy and motto "*être fort pour être utile*," which means "be strong to be useful," the lifestyle aspect of parkour is integral to the practice.

"You can run about the city and improvise with what you see, but always look before you leap," said Desmarais.

Starting fresh

Concordia student proves his value with Impact Academy



Hussein Awada was discovered by the Lebanese national team at age 10. PHOTO OZ VEYSEL-DEMIRTAS

• ALEX DI PIETRO

When Concordia student Hussein Awada left his home country of Lebanon for Montreal last December, he had at least two objectives in mind: finishing school and playing professional soccer. Within a month of his arrival, Awada was on his way to accomplishing both.

Awada, who had been playing in the Lebanese Premier League with club Al Mabarra, notified the university that he was looking for a team and was then referred to the Montreal Impact Academy.

The Academy is the reserve side for the Montreal Impact and is currently in its inaugural season as a Canadian Soccer League team. While many of the players in the squad are still in their teens, head coach Philippe Eullaffroy knew 20-year-old

Awada had the talent to make it after watching him during a team practice in January.

"He came out of nowhere," said Eullaffroy. "He said he was studying at Concordia and wanted to know where he could play high-level soccer and they sent him here. So we thank Concordia University for giving us the opportunity to see the talent of this student."

Awada grew up in Baalbeck, Lebanon, located roughly 86 kilometres away from Beirut. National-team recruiters discovered Awada while he played youth soccer for Hoda Al Resaly at the tender age of 10. He spent five seasons with the fourth-division club and Awada said the team's head coach Abbas Al Outa played a major role in making Awada a successful player.

Between the ages of 11 and 17,

Awada was travelling three to five times a week from Baalbeck to the capital for national-team training.

While Awada recently took part in the 2008 U19 Asian Football Confederation championship, he claimed he gained a lot of experience and responsibility with the national team when he participated in the 2004 U14 AFC championship in Qatar.

The midfielder/forward had a successful stint with second-division team Al Nahda Club at 16, which garnered him a lot of attention from division one teams. Soon enough Awada transferred to Al Mabarra—a Lebanese Premier League club based in Beirut—for the 2008-09 campaign.

At 18, Awada said he learned to live independently and began thinking about his future while

alone in Beirut. He said that though his career as a footballer had been taking off, the possibility of a war prompted him to seek a better life in Canada.

"Before coming to Montreal, I scored a goal for my team in Lebanon and my teammates wanted me to stay with them. But at the same time, I had to think about my future," Awada said. "As you know, you can't tell when the war will start and end in Lebanon."

Montreal was an obvious destination for Awada as many of his family members live in the city. However, his mother Wafaa Wehbe and father Melhem Awada are still in Lebanon.

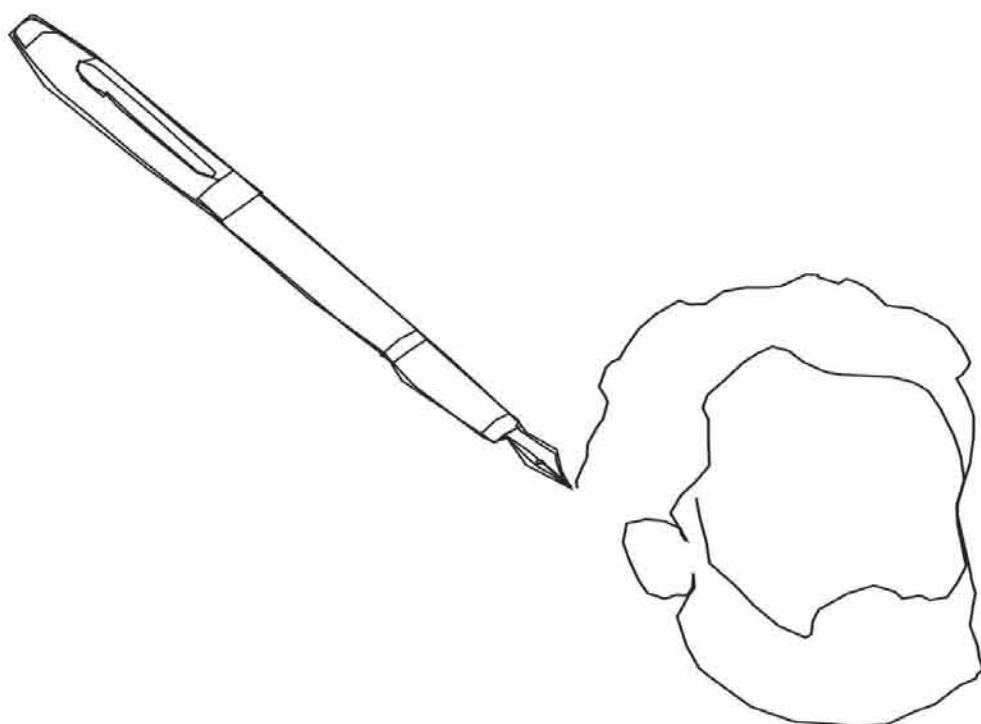
As the soccer season starts in the fall back home, Awada said he is just getting used to the weather and starting the season in the summer. He is presently

taking a few English-as-a-second language-courses to help break the language barrier and is confident his English will improve with time.

As for the Academy, Awada has already shown a lot of promise by leading the team in goals and hopes to make the Impact's first team. He is also aware that there is the possibility of playing for the Stingers if that doesn't happen.

"If I don't do it and the university team calls me to play with them, or whatever the situation is, I'll make a decision. But I can't leave football," he said.

Awada said it has been difficult juggling school with playing for a team that practises every day and plays many of its away games outside Quebec, but plans to pursue studies in finance after completing his ESL courses.



GRAPHIC GINGER COONS

To draw or not to draw

Everybody Draw Muhammad Day, held on May 20, spawned a clash of ideals. The day was initiated by the censorship of an episode of American television show, *South Park* titled “201” for depicting the prophet Muhammad—an act that is blasphemous to Islam. Radical Muslims reacted by sending death threats to the creators of *South Park* and those that felt their freedom of speech was threatened reacted by drawing a plethora of pictures. With the extreme reactions on both sides of the debate, should we have a day dedicated to drawing the Muslim prophet Muhammad?

• ELAINE BALL

On May 17, I received an email calling for secular groups nationwide to join in solidarity with the University of Illinois, University of Wisconsin, and Northwestern University to participate in Everybody Draw Muhammad Day on May 20.

This was in response to death threats received by *South Park* creators Trey Parker and Matt Stone for depicting the Muslim prophet Muhammad speaking. According to an interpretation of the Qur’an, people of the Muslim faith are not allowed to portray the prophet Muhammad in any way.

But, who is to say everyone isn’t allowed to draw the prophet?

My colleagues and I at Secular Humanism, Inquiry and Free Thought partook in a Draw Muhammad Campaign by drawing stick figures insinuating its identity as Muhammad, but with no real resemblance. The idea was to sway dialogue away from the actual drawing Muhammad and promote freedom of expression.

The SHIFT team had this conversation during our weekly meetings and most of our members agreed that there should be an “Everybody Draw Muhammad Day” because people all over the

world should not be afraid to exercise their rights to free speech when radical Muslims threaten death.

“We should show them that we are not afraid of them,” was the general response I heard.

I think, however, that we should not play their games. We should draw Muhammad on other days, all throughout the year. If everyone draws Muhammad on this one day, then great, no radical Muslims will kill us on that day, but what about other days?

The fact remains, however, that a few radical Muslims sending death threats is not indicative of the entire Muslim population. Take the reaction of the Muslim Student Association at the University of Wisconsin-Madison as an example. They drew boxing gloves on the chalk stick figures and wrote “Ali” next to the label “Muhammad.” That’s far from a death threat! It’s clever and amusing.

We can have these dialogues throughout our school years, drawing attention to our groups, making it clear that we aren’t “afraid” of anything, while offering information and education to our campus communities. Why burn bridges of communication and understanding instead of building each other up?

• DIEGO PELAEZ GAETZ

I claim no religious affiliations whatsoever. Much like John Lennon, I imagine a utopia where outdated religious ideologies don’t hold sway over serious decision-making.

So it is not from a place of being offended that I can say that I abhor Draw Muhammad Day and cartoonists who think they are crusaders for free speech because they present a (usually stereotypical) depiction of an Arab guy by the name of Muhammad. The notion that cartoon doodling can be equated with real religious activism is what offends me.

Just to be clear, I also don’t think people should be subject to death threats for depicting an image of Muhammad. I do enjoy *South Park*, and empathize with the creators, who were the subject of death threats after depicting Muhammad in their 200th episode. I’m pretty sure their depiction of Muhammad wasn’t included to create international controversy, and for it to be received as such is puzzling—not just from the Muslim community, but from the mainstream media as well. Especially since *South Park* had already ran an episode featuring Muhammad in 2001 with very little public response.

But we can’t forget where the draw-Muhammad controversy originated; in 2005 a notoriously anti-immigrant newspaper in Denmark tried to stir up some interest in their publication with a

series of cartoons depicting the prophet. In a scarce media market, reactionary devout Muslims are an easy target for creating controversy, which is why pretty much every major media outlet played up the story for weeks.

Though the paper claimed that the cartoons were with the intention of “adding to the discourse,” the reality is that they were an overtly antagonistic gesture to the Muslim community in Denmark without any real artistic merit.

It’s hard to believe that Draw Muhammad Day was intended with the wellbeing of Muslim communities around the world at heart. Yes, I understand the noble notion of showing radical Muslim groups that we are “not afraid of them,” but that’s easy enough to say from the comfort of your computer desk.

The reality is that Draw Muhammad Day does nothing at all for people suffering under oppressive Islamic dictatorships except exacerbate the antagonistic relationship between the western and Islamic world. This kind of combative discourse only helps extremists on both sides of the debate to drum up resentment and find reason for armed conflict.

One final point: if you want to draw Muhammad, feel free. Draw him in compromising positions, going to work, dressed up as a police officer—have at it. Just don’t waste my time with a faux-radical “day,” which is basically a Western-centric circle-jerk.

Pushing the right buttons

Is technology replacing human intimacy?

• MITRA KABOLI

I am in a dry spell of Saharan proportions. I hate my life because I am not getting laid and it is making me an angry bitch. With all the time that I spend not having sex and not having sex with myself either, because it is getting boring, I cruise the Internet and think about different ways to hydrate the desert in my laced underwear.

My over-sexed partner in crime, Scott Nagao and I stumbled upon realdoll.com, a website that sells sex dolls that at first glance you'd swear were human beings. They have special features like an actual spine that mimics the flexibility of a real person.

I was shocked.

"Holy fucking shit, I am not sure if that is a real person or not," I told Scott.

"I know, right?" he exclaimed in agreement.

I think intimacy is a two-way street. You and I could be real intimate if you want, but the guy living in his mother's basement who is making sweet love to his Real Doll can't.

That is when I got a bit freaked out. My initial concern was that I am not nor will I ever be as hot as that doll. I wondered, will real women become less attractive as sex partners because we are competing with life-sized Barbies? The thought of even less sex in my life gave me understandable panic.

I think the more pressing issue is not my sex life, but rather the rapidly changing climate of technology: to what extent will we distance ourselves from humanity? Can real human intimacy ever be replaced? And when I say real human intimacy, I mean the kind between you and I. Speaking of you and I, if you wanna give me a call and grab a drink or something I am cool with that. Yes, I just used *The Link* as a dating/hook-up service, what of it? Please don't judge me.

I think intimacy is a two-way street. You and I could be real intimate if you want, but the guy living in his mother's basement who is making sweet love to his Real Doll can't. Intimacy requires a reciprocity that a Real Doll cannot provide—at least not yet. Being intimate with a doll will never satisfy our human need for love, care and social interaction.

But things are changing. The question should be asked: are we living in a culture where we are so integrated with our technology that we need less human to human interactions to survive?

I warm up to the idea of being intimate with technology when I think about all the ways it has helped me get off: sex toys, porn, cyber sex, webcams and genetically modified zucchinis. All of this is exciting. Some of these things I consider to be masturbatory aides. The others, like webcams and cyber sex actually create avenues of communication with other people when you are unable to be with them.

Real Dolls are awesome because you can

create your ideal woman, have it delivered to your door and then do whatever you please with her. But when reading the testimonials, it is clear that many of the purchasers are not viewing their doll as a masturbation aide. These dolls are regarded as real people and as \$7,000 companions.

Now, I am not being fair to the kinds of people who order Real Dolls. I am sure that not all of them live in their mother's basements. Still, in reading the testimonials, I am led to believe that most of these purchasers are total creeps. The lonely people that buy these dolls for comfort only seem to increase their antisocial behaviour. This doll is not a real person and no matter how much you love it, it will never love you back, at least not yet.

The men who live with these dolls, seem to be pleased, even happy—but they have only avoided dealing with the real issue. They are living in a world of fantasy, one that they have made an artificial reality. They don't have to put any effort in maintaining their relationship because, let's face it, relationships are hard work. Their doll can be the delusional female ideal that they want it to be.

I can see the appeal. But at the end of the day, I think most of us want a warm body that will hug us back, who can move along with the rhythm of our love making and who will let out a resonating moan when your load gets blown on his/her face. Who knows, maybe I am just pissed off because socially awkward losers are getting pussy, meanwhile I am turning into a self-loathing masochist. Let's face it, I am a total catch. Call me?

• SCOTT NAGAO

In the spirit of Mitra's full disclosure of her sexual frustration, I masturbate to porn all the time even when I'm having sex on a daily basis. I don't use the Internet to meet any human partners in real life. Does that mean that all my online sexual escapades are purely self-indulgent? Probably. But are they non-social? Not really.

Rather than just toughing it out until I get to see my lovely girlfriend, I opt for porn at two in the morning—something of fantasy, something artificial, something in the virtual world to quell my seemingly insatiable libido. Now is this so bad?

Vicariously living out fantasy situations with words, pictures and other objects has not seemed to stop the progress of human history thus far—raise your hand if you have ever made out with a pillow or danced with a broom.

Consider porn. Although many of us sometimes forget this, porn isn't just some magic offspring of the Internet. It's the love child of millions of real people who got drunk, needed some cash or simply wanted to get naked in front of a camera. In this case, technology made it extraordinarily easy for humans to share sexual content with other humans. When we get off to this stuff, we may be physically distanced from the humans who made it, but we're still receiving that human pleasure.

So does your sexual partner need to be another real biological human? In those moments of lust, I can call my computer, my erotic books or even my own hand part-

ners in the act. I mean, I never think of myself as fucking my laptop, my book, or my hand, but I am aware that they are playing a role in the experience. The pleasure is not as much about the objects I use, as it is what's being presented or imagined. It's about everything that contributes to the sexual experience.

I'm not so sexy, funny, or loaded with pheromones that my girlfriend wants to fuck my brains out five times a day and I don't have a *Bladerunner*-level sex android to try and convince her to have a three-way with me. It doesn't really matter anyway, because she expresses the same fear, envy and distaste for competition with Real Dolls and androids as Mitra. This isn't an unjustified fear. We all already get blasted with images of hot plastic bodies each day.

If this is how she feels about an inanimate doll, how am I supposed to feel when she wants to use the massive vibrator with the clit tickler that glows in the dark and probably squeezes out frozen yogurt instead of cum? That vibrator is based on human bodies, is focused solely on the genitals, is usually exaggerated in size and has a motor. Have you ever heard of fuck machines? Machines where people attach things like dildos to household appliance or small motor vehicle engine to make a machine that will not just vibrate, but fuck at 3,600 r.p.m.?

So, can we answer Mitra's question? Does technology compete with real humans for sex and love? I would say yes and no. What matters is how humans understand technology, how we use it and why we use it.

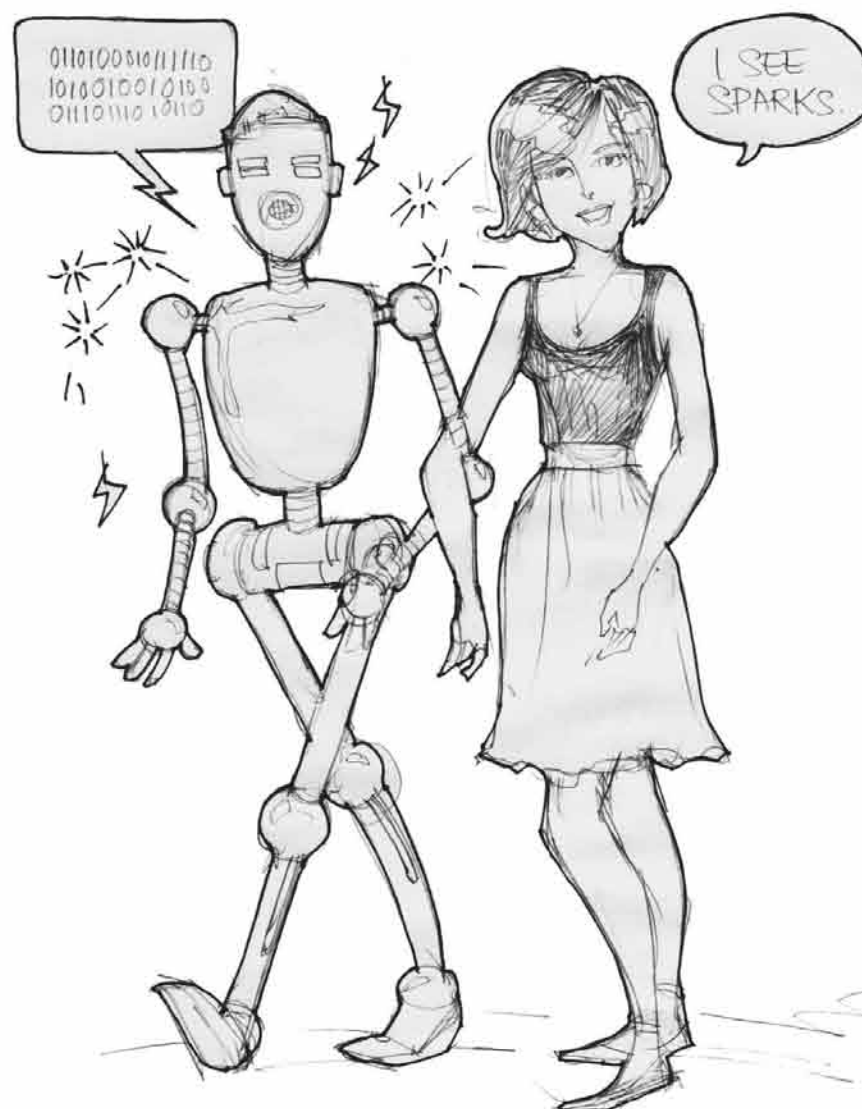
If this is how she feels about an inanimate doll, how am I supposed to feel when she wants to use the massive vibrator with the clit tickler that glows in the dark?

Sure, I'll feel a slight sense of inadequacy with my body and my skill next to the glow in the dark yogurt beast, but should I worry about my partner actually choosing these machines over me, her human companion? If I need to, then I should probably be less worried about being replaced by technology than about why I am sticking with a girl who is entirely satisfied with a toy.

I don't feel like I do though, and maybe it's because I've invested so much time into analyzing the role technology plays in my life that I tend to view it as a natural part of my society, my life and even my body.

Even when my girlfriend chooses to use toys during sex that make me feel like a dwarf, she's still wanting my body pressed against her, still pulling my head against her chest and still crying out my name when she reaches that apex of orgasm. Hell, I want to say it's even flattering. It's like telling me, "you're what I'm thinking about when spasming from a super awesome yogurt squirting vibrating dildo induced orgasm."

What more can a guy ask for?

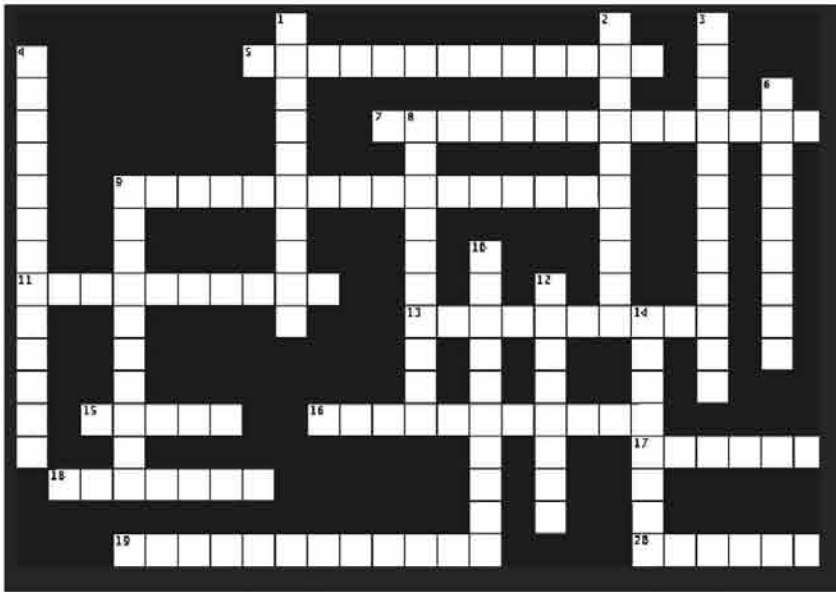


crswrdpzzlol

THE "FESTIVAL" EDITION • R. BRIAN "FUN GUY" HASTIE

Across

5. The most successful *American Idol* winner can also bring it in a live setting. Sadly, I've watched enough YouTube performances to know that first-hand.
7. This member of Miracle may be pushing 70 but he still sounds damn good. Hell, his 1976 single "Quiet Storm" even became the very definition of a radio genre of smooth R&B hits.
9. This June festival's name is derived from the Italian language and translates to "Sounds for the people."
11. Sarah McLachlan resurrected this festival and then killed it off a decade later.
13. This comedian, alias Raaaaaaandy (I counted out all eight A's just to make sure), is going to bring the ruckus to Metropolis this July.
15. This festival, dedicated to the "promotion of electronic music and digital arts," always manages to astound. Oh, and also gets people dancing too.
16. Ipecac Records artists who have remixed the Beastie Boys and Against Me. Yeah, that's right.
17. Blue, green, red. They've got all forms of ratitude covered. Now, if only Rovers would stop writing so much for other artists... Cold, anyone?
18. Hipsters unite! Montreal's answer to various U.S. festivals comes around for yet another year of indie rock and paying lip service to various other forms of music we all pretend to be into.
19. We like our melodic hardcore homegrown, thank you very much. We all have to make sure this band doesn't get into any "Watch out, it's a crisis!" situations.
20. This 20 year-old festival



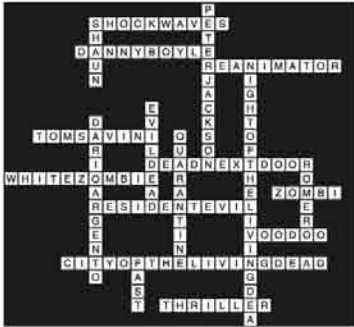
gives total control (as well as profit) over to the artists, who are chosen by lottery.

Down

1. This 1927 filmic masterpiece is going to be screened at Place Des Arts complete with a live orchestral score. It also has an extra half-hour of recently unearthed footage. Should be hilarious.
2. Quebec rap duo with a decidedly sovereigntist slant.
3. Festival celebrating French culture through a myriad number of artistic performances.
4. The most comedic of all festivals running this summer. It aims for belly laughs and the odd crass remark. We're looking at you, Jim Norton.
6. Will be driving up to Montreal in late July in his Dragula, most likely. If only he'd stop making movies, then the world would be a better place.
8. One of the festivals this year will be running a tribute to this jazz legend, who loved the colour blue

- as well as all things cool.
9. Thurston Moore better show up with a giant inflatable version of himself. That's all I've got to say about this clue.
10. Noise mavens who once counted Andrew WK in their ranks. Think Throbbing Gristle but with more feedback.
12. Cut your hair and listen to this band in a live setting outdoors.
14. Montreal band known for both its name as well as its music, with two full-length releases under their belts. Their love of all forms of No Wave knows no bounds.

issue 30 solutionz



heartaches anonymous

Dear Heartaches,
Before I get to my question, I'm just going to put it out there that I'm no prude: I've dated men, I've dated women, and I consider myself a sexually and romantically free spirit. With that said, this summer has dealt up some interesting romantic prospects I'm not sure I know how to handle.
Specifically, I've had a couple—a man and a woman who have been dating for some time now—pursue me as a third-party to join in their summer lovin'.
Now, part of me is flattered, right? This could be a great experience. But another part of me is wondering if getting involved in a non-monoga-

mous/monogamous relationship is really such a bright idea. Is three always a crowd? How should I go about this one?
—The Third Party

Dear Third Party,
Basking in the beauty of being a free spirit in a city that embraces it is pretty much the authentic Montreal experience. Summers here provide the perfect setting for new love, accumulating notches on bed posts, and general debauchery, so my knee-jerk response would be YES, go for it!
Judging by the description of your sexual inclinations, you've been to a lot of places and that'd be your general

response also, but do you really wanna go there? If your gut feeling says no, maybe you should get in on the real motive of their invitation to a ménage à trois.
Is this couple going through a mid-relationship crisis and using you as their flint for a new spark? Are you going to turn into their therapist when all you've signed up for is a transient tryst and maybe a game of naked twister? Maybe they're creepy axe murders looking to expand their skin collection. Or maybe they're just looking for some summer lovin' just like you. All I'm saying is watch your own ass before getting some ass, because you don't really want your story to end up being a 'based-on-a-true-story' horror flick.

editorial Disconnected understanding

Last week, 9,000 academics and delegates flocked to Concordia for the 2010 Congress of the Humanities and Social Sciences, taking our downtown campus by scholarly storm. They attended over 1,500 events with an aim of "sharing groundbreaking research and examining the important social and cultural issues of the day," according to Concordia's humanities and social sciences website.

Speakers came from far and wide from May 28 to June 4 to discuss seemingly disparate topics and revel in their accumulated knowledge, transforming Quartier Concordia into a hub of academics who were free to think deeply, network with other researchers and listen to themselves speak about their deep thoughts and research.

Hosting this conference, which is one of the largest in North America, was a proud moment for our school, and took over two years of paid full-time work to plan. It also required over 200 volunteers to pull off.

With major eyes and minds congregating on our campus, the administration wants us all to swell with Concordia pride—because damn it, we look really, really good in the public eye.

The university certainly outdid itself to look the part of a world-class institution of learning. For the first time in many of our undergraduate careers, de Maisonneuve Boulevard was completely free of construction, allowing delegates to cross the street without obstruction or constant fear of being hit by cars, Norman Bethune was greened and hooked up with an additional statue, and the Hall Building got a fancy new sticker on the front door complete with Article 26 from the Universal Declaration of Human Rights advocating free education.

It's that last one that really got us.

These beautifying measures, in association with all the winning and dining of academics, ensured that those who attended the events remember Concordia as one of the best and brightest schools in town—but what happens now?

For many of us average-Joe-or-Jill Concordians who weren't aware of the conference, there will not be any informative tents or helpful volunteers to show us around in the fall. The shine of the fresh floors and walls will wear off, the escalators in the Hall building will stop working again—assuming they got them to work any better for Congress, which would be an act of divine intervention—and, for the many international students who won't be returning to our school because of hikes in tuition, having Article 26 slapped on the side of the Hall building is a slap in the face.

This university has pushed through some of the highest tuition hikes in Quebec in the past year—in some cases doubling tuition without so much as warning the affected students—which clearly violates the spirit of the Article on the door.

I wish we could say with confidence what Concordia has learned from this event, besides the fine art of self-adulation. The millions of dollars dropped into the Quartier Concordia project, the new buildings and the hundreds of thousands spent for a new logo only show how flash supercedes substance at this school.

So what came from all this academic schmoozing? A promise made to better integrate aboriginals into Canada's school system, which is one of the few things that should be applauded, and a lot of other talk.

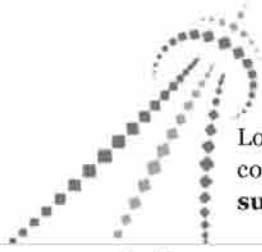
While congress claimed that "the important social and cultural issues of the day" would be discussed, media highlights from the conference praised research about smart clothes, the he-cession, middle-aged angst, the restorative properties of a ramble in the woods and soul-searching about the future of the social sciences.

In the future, a meeting of 9,000 of the smartest people we can find should lead to more than this. At what point does academia turn into action?

—Laura Beeston & Justin Giovannetti,
Production Manager & Editor-in-Chief

The Summer Down-Low

june



4-5

Look out for *The Link's* coverage of the **G-20 summit** in Toronto.

Suoni Per Popolo is twenty days of wonderful music mayhem.



6-26



8-28

Fantasia comes to Montreal to dazzle audiences and put emerging talent on the map for twenty days of silver screen magic.



1-11

Get some fresh air and take in the art madness that is **The Festival International Montréal en Arts**.

july

august



5-15

Les jeux de la rue. Community outreach group **Rap Jeunesse** and local youths host a series of athletic competitions for inner city children.

THE **LiNK**

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See you August 24