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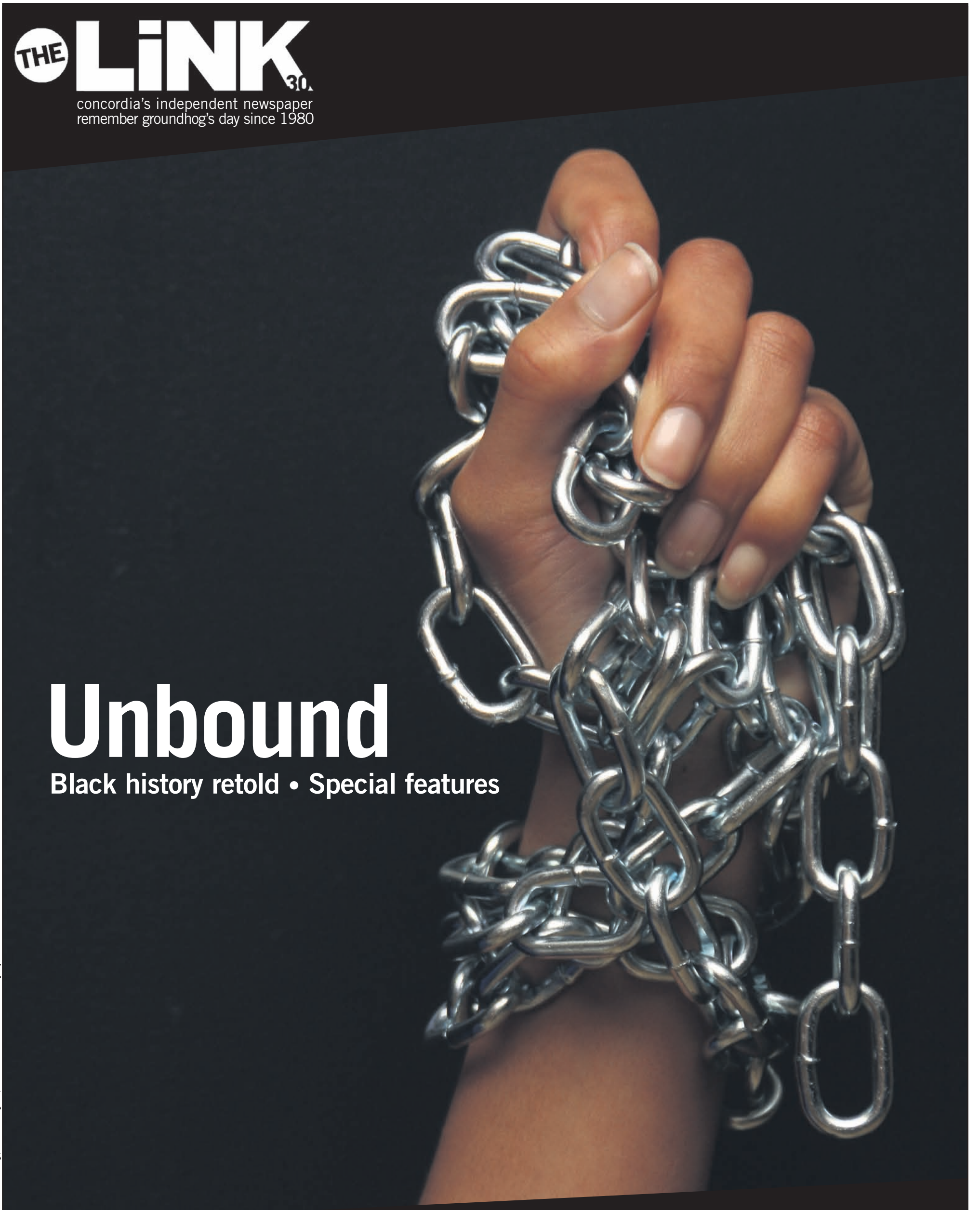

Unbound

Black history retold • Special features

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THE LINK
CONCORDIA'S INDEPENDENT NEWSPAPER

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

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

editor-in-chief **TERRINE FRIDAY**
news editor **JUSTIN GIOVANNETTI**
features editor **LAURA BEESTON**
fringe arts editor **MADELINE COLEMAN**
literary arts editor **CHRISTOPHER OLSON**
sports editor **CHRISTOPHER CURTIS**
opinions editor **DIEGO PELAEZ GAETZ**
copy editor **TOM LLEWELLIN**
student press liaison **OPEN**
interim photo editor **RILEY SPARKS**
graphics editor **VIVIEN LEUNG**
managing editor **CLARE RASPOPOW**
layout manager **MATHIEU BIARD**
webmaster **TRISTAN LAPOINTE**
business manager **RACHEL BOUCHER**
distribution **ROBERT DESMARAIS**
DAVID KAUFMANN
ad designer **ADAM NORRIS**

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THIS WEEK'S CONTRIBUTORS

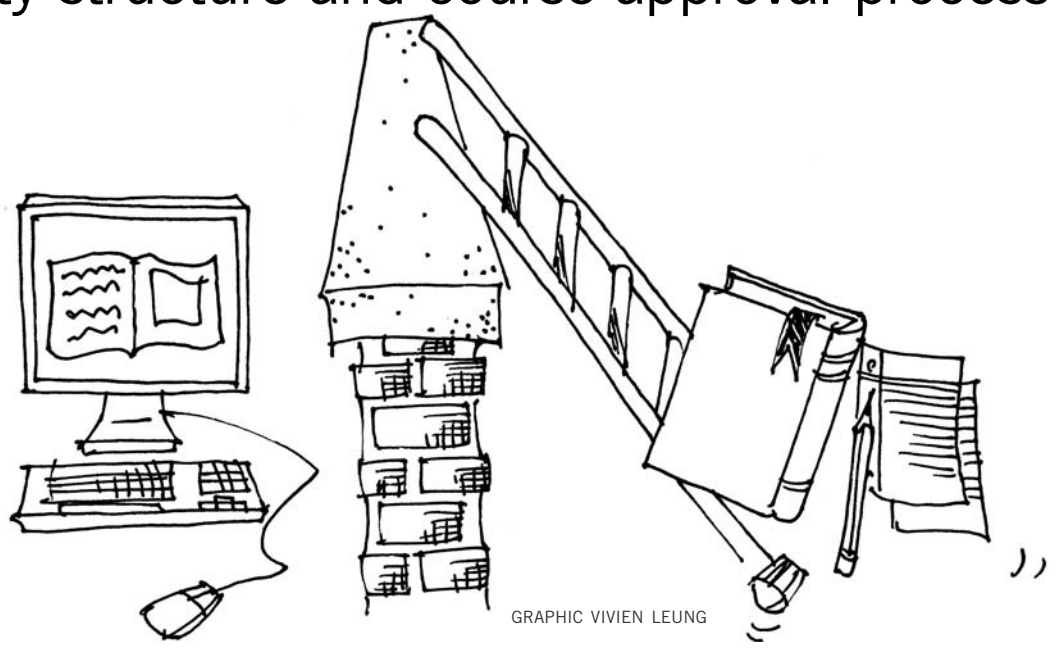
David Adelman, Andrew Brennan, Travis Dandro, Lesley de Marinis, Matthew Fiorentino, R. Brian Hastie, Clay Hemmerich, Kamila Hinkson, Les Honywill, Elsa Jabre, Arshad Khan, Jaime Klinger, Alex Kovac, Stephanie La Leggia, Brittany Levett, Eddie Majnemer, Alex Manley, Jessie Mathieson, Steven Myers, Hugo Pilon-Larose, Mae Price, Daryna Ruhklyadeva, Shawna Satz, Helen Savage, Jessica Vihvelin

cover by Riley Sparks

Provost eyes eConcordia reform

Unease with royalty structure and course approval process

• CLARE RASPOPOW



GRAPHIC VIVIEN LEUNG

Provost David Graham is in the process of reforming the relationship between Concordia and eConcordia. He and the university are negotiating an agreement with eConcordia, aiming to take full academic control of eConcordia's course development and the assignment of instructors and teaching assistants.

At the November Senate meeting, Graham delivered a presentation to the sitting members about concerns that had arisen around Concordia's online chapter. Highlighting difficulties ensuring consistent oversight of academic quality control and working conditions, Graham cited eConcordia's failure to attract non-Concordia students and inability to quell anxiety about the quality of online teaching as reasons for reform.

"The provost would like to see regular updating of eConcordia courses, but he can't initiate that," said Matthias Frisch, chair of the Philosophy department.

When eConcordia was created in 2002, it was as a federally incorporated company run at arm's length from the university but completely owned by the same organization as the school itself, the Concordia University Foundation.

The set-up was supposed to help the university integrate online teaching into the existing course structure, clear up intellectual property problems and simplify start-up funding.

eConcordia would contract directly with "course providers" (read: teachers) and pay them a royalty of $20 per registered student. Control of academic affairs would remain under the purview of the deans of individual faculties.

The concerns Graham listed in the Senate meeting, in addition to interfaculty tension about the money the "course providers" were earning, sparked negotiations in 2006 over academic control. The university reached a temporary two-year agreement with eConcordia in 2008. That same year, eConcordia reincorporated as a not-for-profit corporation.

Graham's new arrangement between Concordia and eConcordia will see royalties going to faculties instead of individual instructors and a greater degree of university control over eConcordia course material.

"The provost quite correctly and with very good reason thinks that eConcordia courses, like any other course, shouldn't be taught without any checking, verification and updating from year to year," said Frisch.

Currently, all major course changes or course introductions, eConcordia or otherwise, require a rigourous approval process that starts at the faculty level and goes through the Academic Planning Committee before being finally vetted by the Senate.

"After a course has been designed it's usually a two or two-and-a-half year process to get it approved, if you do it formally," said Alex Oster, Concordia Student Union VP Sustainability and a student representative on the Academic Planning Committee.

Many courses, however, are first tested as pilot or slot courses. A slot course is passed through faculties and the Senate to be given a trial run. Oster explained that a pilot course is given a one-year trial and no more than two slots; these courses are usually identified by the suffix "98" in the course code.

If the course garners enough interest and the professor is willing to put in the work, the course then goes through the full approval process.

Currently, approximately seven per cent of the courses offered by eConcordia are slot courses.

Neither the provost nor anyone in his office could be reached as of press time.

Student union mulls lawsuit to force referendum to leave the CFS

University registrar has certified 288-page petition, rejects 269 signatures

• JUSTIN GIOVANNETTI

After sending the signatures of 5,456 Concordia students to the Ottawa office of the Canadian Federation of Students on Oct. 19, the Concordia Student Union finally got a response in early January.

"They asked us to have the signatures verified by the university," said CSU President Amine Dabchy.

After finding only 269 ineligible signatures, the registrar certified the 288-page petition on Jan. 11.

The registrar's stamp of approval now clears the way for Concordia's undergraduate students to vote on whether they want to leave the CFS, a national student lobby group with members in every province (Concordia undergraduate students pay 41 cents per credit to the CFS).

According to Dabchy, the CFS responded to the registrar's certification with stall tactics.

"We got a letter from the CFS on Jan. 14. It says, 'please forward, at your earliest convenience, a copy of the petition that the registrar's office used, in order to undertake the verification process.' Which is BS, since we already gave them a copy of the petition," said Dabchy.

"We sent them a letter saying here is a date that we want for the referendum—the same day as the CSU general election—and they had to answer us by [Jan. 28]. We still haven't received a response," said Dabchy.

If the CSU does not receive a response from the CFS soon, Dabchy said that his administration is contemplating legal action against the national group. With the Concordia Graduate Students' Association and the Post-Graduate Students' Society of McGill also waiting on the CFS, the three student governments could coordinate their actions.

"We are going to have a referendum and I am confident that we will win. What I can't predict is how CFS will act. Only one school in the last three years has pulled out and the CFS did nothing. In 90 per cent of the cases, the CFS sued or didn't recognize their petition," said Dabchy. "There is legal precedent.

"Judges know the CFS and judges, especially those in Quebec, don't like it when an organization is oppressing its members."

Apart from the four Quebec student governments—the Dawson Student Union is also attempting to break away from the CFS—a further nine student governments across Canada are also running defederation campaigns.

The CFS is currently defending itself in Quebec Superior Court against a lawsuit from its Quebec component, who claims that the national group illegally retained $413,302.74 of student fees.

Glithero was worth the wait

Sustainability educator talks of need for change

• MAE PRICE

Lisa Glithero, an environmental educator who has spent her life working with youth across Canada on environmental issues, captured a small but engaged audience on Jan. 27 in Concordia's H-110.

A part of the Concordia Student Union's Speakers Series, the audience sat waiting for over 45 minutes due to technical difficulties all too typical at university events. Despite the delay, Glithero more than made up for any poor planning.

The subject of the talk was Students on Ice, a project that Glithero started in 1999, that gives high school and university students the opportunity to go to the Arctic and work with scientists, teachers and First Nations elders to learn more about the vast expanse of land known as the Canadian Arctic.

According to Glithero, the experience provides students with "a human face to climate change."

Armed with photos from her expeditions, Glithero captured the audience by recounting stories from her adventures, such as the time she and her group were evacuated a day early because the ice sheet on which they were camping was melting faster than expected.

"The challenges we face require a new conceptualization and young people bring that to the table," said Glithero, emphasizing the importance of engaging with students.

Glithero also noted "the important role that nature plays for youth transformation and the role that youth play for social transformation." She added that she wants to spark a change by exposing students to the "greatest classrooms on earth."

"While we understand the issues about sustainability and carrying capacity, we haven't yet lived it," said Glithero. By using "nature as a force of personal transformation," she hopes to convey some of these values to the youth she works with.

While noting the enormity of the problems we face, Glithero maintained a sense of optimism, which clearly came through in her lecture. When asked by an audience member how she maintains her positive attitude in the face of growing environmental concern, she responded with a twinkle in her eye: "When you work with young people that's what you get, a sense of optimism."

Lisa Glithero spoke to students in Concordia's H-110. PHOTOS RILEY SPARKS

The shift to a sustainable life starts with students

The student union's Green Month launches early

• ANDREW BRENNAN

At a guest lecture sponsored by the Concordia Student Union on Jan. 27, environmental educator Lisa Glithero reminded her student audience that cultural norms had yet to make the shift to sustainable living.

"We know [what we have to do], yet we don't live it," said Glithero, who founded the Education Youth Environment Sustainability project, a Canadian not-for-profit that re-evaluates the teaching of climate change.

February will be Green Month for the CSU, a time during which the student union hopes to make the sustainability shift happen by involving the student body in green initiatives.

"Events are the key focus," said Alex Oster, CSU VP Sustainability and Green Month organizer. The month will be divided into social events, workshops and a lecture series.

The lecture series—called the Sustainable Mashup Series—is the main event of Green Month, and aims to increase communication between the various academic disciplines involved in combating climate change. According to Oster, coordination has been greatly lacking in the environmental community.

"I think a lot of the problems [of climate change] are aided, in a sense, by the fact that the disciplines don't talk to each other," continued Oster. "With the series, we can foster some new discussions."

Glithero's lecture served as an appropriate kick-off before Green Month itself gets started.

Earnest students at Glithero's speech listened as the winner of the 2006 Yves Rocher Woman of the Earth Award spoke of her polar expeditions as an educational director of Students On Ice, which organizes for-credit study opportunities alongside teams of scientists for students at the planet's poles.

"We think of it as an international community of young people," said Glithero about the program. "We select candidates that will take what they learn home with them and then do something with it."

Despite her efforts, Glithero said she knows the shift towards sustainability isn't here yet and that it is up to everyone, including student unions as well as students, to make the cultural change.

"Nature's most empowering gift is the lessons it teaches," said Glithero. "We just need to create the experiences to learn."

Guide to CSU Green Month

Sustainability Mashups Series
Feb. 2 (7 p.m.) @ H-711

Vermicomposting at Loyola
Feb. 3 (3 p.m.) @ the Hive

Vermicomposting at SGW
Feb. 4 (3 p.m.) @ Greenhouse

Herb Help in the Greenhouse
Feb. 8 (1 p.m.) @ Greenhouse

R4 Workshop
Feb. 9 (3 p.m.) @ LB Atrium

Sustainability Mashups Series
Feb. 9 (7 p.m.) @ H-711

Outdoor Composting at Loyola
Feb. 10 (TBA) @ the Hive

DIY Mushrooms
Feb. 15 (2 p.m.) @ Greenhouse

Outdoor Compsting at SGW
Feb. 15 (3 p.m.) @ TBA

***Earthkeepers* screening**
Feb. 15 (7 p.m.) @ H-110

Sustainability Mashups Series
Feb. 16 (7 p.m.) @ H-711

The Vegan Iron Chef
Feb. 17 (2 p.m.) @ H-711

Clean up corrupt construction

Montrealers demand more from ongoing SQ investigation

• CHRISTOPHER CURTIS

On one of the year's coldest afternoons to date, protesters gathered outside Montreal's city hall on Jan. 30 to demand a public inquiry into irregularities in the province's distribution of government construction contracts.

The protest came just two days after the Sûreté du Québec raided the offices of construction companies in Laval, Boucherville and Anjou to investigate whether collusion and intimidation tactics occurred in the awarding of municipal contracts.

"[In Quebec] there's $40 billion to be invested in public works over the next five years," said Amir Khadir, the spokesperson for upstart party Québec Solidaire and the Mercier representative in the National Assembly. "Fifteen to 30 per cent of that is corruption, which means that about $10 billion will be wasted if nothing is done."

With a megaphone in hand, Khadir addressed a crowd of about 60 in front of city hall. Other speakers included Vision Montreal's Louise Harel, Parti Québécois MNA Francois Gendron and Québec Solidaire leader Francoise David.

"Public trust is the foundation of democracy," said Harel. "It's essential to shed light on these allegations of corruption and collusion that appeared last fall between the municipal government and the construction industry."

Watching $10 billion siphoned by graft is too much for some.
PHOTO RILEY SPARKS

Though Montreal has a long-standing history of graft in the construction industry, the issue made headlines last fall when both Mayor Gérald Tremblay's Union Montreal and opposition leader Louise Harel's Vision Montreal were mired in corruption allegations. The city's auditor general found that Montreal overpaid for a water meter contract by up to $150 million. Meanwhile, Benoît Labonté, the former head of Vision Montreal, resigned from city hall amid accusations that he had solicited and received payments from Tony Accurso, a local businessman whose construction company has alleged links to the mafia.

Amidst October's blitzkrieg of scandals, the SQ announced the formation of a special task force to investigate links between the construction industry and organized crime. The task force, dubbed Opération Marteau, has a budget of over $13 million and includes a team of police, RCMP officers, crown prosecutors and civil servants.

"Opération Marteau is good but it isn't far reaching enough," said Khadir. "Even the police have admitted that. When the police involved in this investigation say it's time for a public inquiry then it's just common sense to have a public inquiry."

The protest was organized by Mouvement anti-corruption, a collective of Cégep du Vieux Montréal students founded by Xavier Daffe-Bordeleau last fall.

"We were just a few students at first," said Daffe-Bordeleau. "We saw a problem and decided to act against it. This is not about party politics. It's just a mobilization of concerned citizens."

An SQ spokesperson had no comment in regards to the demonstration or ongoing investigation.

TA local calls for a stop to arbitration

Negotiations will go on, warns union

• JUSTIN GIOVANNETTI

After rejecting the first tentative labour agreement presented to Concordia's teaching assistants, the union of Teaching and Research Assistants at Concordia announced Jan. 31 that all bargaining activity would stop until members could be briefed on recent developments.

"Moving forward with the current situation will take us nowhere, so we decided to halt all activities until we meet with our membership and discuss the issues," said Mohammad Sabr, the VP External of TRAC.

Despite the stop order, arbitration will continue. TRAC's parent union, the Public Service Alliance of Canada, said the Concordia local lacks the power to stop it.

"TRAC cannot just decide to pull out of the [arbitration] process. They don't technically own the process," said Jérôme Turcq, the PSAC's executive regional VP for Quebec. The decision to halt bargaining activity was made without consulting them.

"I tried to explain that to the [TRAC] executive and I'm not saying that they didn't understand, but they didn't agree. Whether they agree or not, the organization I represent still has a legal responsibility for the process."

On Jan. 14, Turcq met with the Concordia local's executive to explain the relationship they were supposed to have with PSAC. As a local of the PSAC, the Concordia group is bound to the union's bylaws and cannot enter bargaining alone.

"I am not sure the [TRAC] executive was totally happy with what I told them," said Turcq, who added that he had had no contact with the Concordia local since the meeting. He only learned of TRAC's press release when *The Link* contacted him for comment.

"We've had issues with the PSAC, mainly how they have managed the negotiations," said Sabr. "We were not happy with how they conducted them.

"They did not take our concerns as seriously as they should have and as a result, the tentative agreement they reached left people unsatisfied."

The rejected tentative agreement, which would have led to a 30 per cent pay cut for some TAs and a complete loss of guaranteed work hours, was supported by both the PSAC and TRAC before members voted overwhelmingly against it. The union is not releasing the voting numbers.

"We have supported TRAC throughout the process and we will continue to do that even though the tentative agreement, which had been agreed to by the local executive, was defeated. I don't know if they changed their minds," said Turcq. "Now that it has been defeated the process has to continue."

Now that TRAC and PSAC are engaged in arbitration with Concordia University, the process cannot be stopped and TRAC's membership status cannot be changed.

The meeting between the TAs and their union is now scheduled to take place within the next three weeks.

"We will show them everything, all the facts," said Sabr.

Briefs

Literary greats leave lasting legacy

J.D. Salinger, author of *The Cather in the Rye* and Howard Zinn, author of *A People's History of the United States*, died last week. Salinger gained renown as the voice of generations of adolescent angst with Holden Caulfield. Zinn was responsible for questioning America's history from the bottom-up. Both leave legacies that will be debated for the ages.

Shuttle bus stalls on freeway, or not

A shuttle bus heading to the Loyola campus stalled in the middle of traffic on Jan. 27. According to Transports Québec, the bus suffered from a malfunctioning tire as it travelled west down the Ville-Marie Expressway. It held up traffic until it was towed away at 7 p.m. Concordia denied the shuttle bus breakdown.

Habs' playoffs hopes humbled

Montreal hockey fans and bar owners unleashed a collective moan, as it was announced on Feb. 1 that Canadiens leading scorer Mike Cammalleri will be out for six to eight weeks due to a knee injury. As the latest in a season-long streak of injuries and mishaps, the loss all but ensures that the Canadiens will miss the playoffs.

Smoke shuts busy leg of metro

Commuters travelling on the blue and orange lines of the metro found service disrupted during rush hour on Feb. 1. Trains were stopped until 8:00 p.m., after smoke and sparks were spotted in multiple locations. Jean-Talon Station was evacuated, as well as the orange line stations to the north, including the three in Laval.

Democracy group suspends three

Three long-time managers of Rights and Democracy, an independent human rights organization, were suspended with pay following their publication of an open letter criticizing the partisanship of new Conservative-appointed board members. In the letter, the Tories are accused of promoting a "narrow neo-conservative" agenda in Middle East matters. The organization receives government funds but holds a non-partisan stance.

On this map of Montreal, the higher tax zone (the newly defined central business district) is light grey. The surface parking lots are dark grey.
GRAPHIC GINGER COONS

The higher tax rate

$19.80
per square metre.

The lower tax rate

$4
per square metre.

Surface parking lot tax comes into effect

Tax will improve downtown, says professor

• TOM LLEWELLIN

In its 2010 budget, the city of Montreal introduced a tax on parking lots in the city's core that could drastically change the look of downtown over the coming years.

"By making owners [of the lots] charge more, the city is discouraging surface parking," said Craig Townsend, a Concordia urban planning professor. "It raises the cost of driving, and encourages redevelopment of the land the lots sit on."

The tax is expected to add $20 million to city coffers, according to mayor Gérald Tremblay's spokesperson Darren Becker, who underlined that it was part of the city's strategy of "record investment" in non-automotive forms of transportation.

The parking tax was made possible by expanded powers of taxation recently granted to the city by the provincial government.

"A tax is the right way to go," Townsend said. "Surface parking is an inefficient use of the land: it doesn't support public transit and it creates dead areas."

There will be two different tax rates depending on the area and the type of parking. The highest rate will be levied in what the tax's drafters have dubbed the central business district and carries a rate of $19.80 per square metre—a $2 increase on the average price of parking. The surrounding downtown are will be charged roughly $4 per square metre.

Controversy has arisen because the tax's definition of the central business district does not conform with the city's official definition—leaving large areas of the central district's surface parking at the lower rate.

> "A tax is the right way to go. Surface parking is an inefficient use of the land: it doesn't support public transit and it creates dead areas."
>
> *—Craig Townsend, Concordia Urban Planning*

Concordia's Sir George Williams campus is considered part of the central business district by the city, but under the tax it will be eight blocks west of the higher tax area.

The northern part of Griffintown, home to much surface parking clustered around the end of the Bonaventure Expressway—slated for redevelopment as an urban village—will not be taxed at all.

The city has no immediate plans to enlarge or otherwise modify the tax area and is waiting to see if revenues meet expectations, Becker confirmed.

The $20 million of expected revenue will be earmarked for public transit, bike paths and other forms of non-car transportation. However, earmarks are merely strong suggestions and may be overridden by the city council.

"The tax should be put into the [Société de transport de Montréal]," Townsend said.

Under the city's transportation plan, surface lots are considered a problem.

"We drew up the boundaries based on an inventory we took of all the lots," Becker responded. Any variance from official plans occurred, he said, based on the inventory's results and was undertaken as an administrative decision.

According to the Société d'assurance automobile du Québec, the number of cars on the island of Montreal has been growing at more than three times the rate of population growth since 1999.

"If we want to discourage car use, we need to discourage parking," said Townsend.

Student union's budget in surplus

Expenses running at half of projection

• JUSTIN GIOVANNETTI

Despite having faced a drop in sponsorship money due to the global recession, tackling the costly renegotiation of the student health care plan, a new collective agreement for its employees and a campaign to leave the Canadian Federation of Students, the Concordia Student Union is still on track to post a surplus this year.

"This year's revenues have been difficult, but I have been tight with expenses and everything is under budget right now," said CSU VP Finance Sam Moyal. "It's about balance. On the one hand we are being conservative, but on the other hand we are here to spend money to give back to students."

In a revised budget released Jan. 18, only $1 million of the student union's $1.9 million budget has been spent. Revenues are expected to top $2 million by the end of the semester.

Sitting behind a desk topped by a computer, curios and a bill counter, Moyal has been the gatekeeper of the CSU's finances. The VP Finance, during his first semester in office, began an overhaul of the financial accounting system at Reggie's as the bar began to expand its services.

Despite the positive results, the budget still elicits uncertainty.

"I was advised by previous finance VPs that if you base yourself on the previous year's revenue then you should be okay because there is a tendency for enrolment to increase, but you never know," Moyal said. "There are still fees coming in for the winter but I don't know how much."

Despite turmoil in the global economy, the CSU Orientation still came in nearly $20,000 under budget.

"This year was not a great year in terms of raising money through sponsorships for orientation. Companies were not interested in spending money, even big companies like Mazda or [Blackberry maker] Research in Motion," said Moyal.

The previous CSU administration legacy was a legal budget bloated to three times its allotted size. In contrast, this year's current $70,000 legal budget ceiling has yet to be reached, despite the union having already tackled three large legal challenges.

"The large chunk of our legal fees come from beginning-of-the-year expenses, like the health plan contract," said CSU President Amine Dabchy. "The health plan contract took a whole summer of negotiation. It took us a lot of back and forth to get the best deal for students.

"We are not lucky," he continued. "The health contract comes up every five years. The collective agreement comes up every three years—and we are pulling out of the CFS, which happens once in a lifetime."

The risk of an expensive legal fight still looms, as the CSU prepares to bring the CFS to court to force a referendum on leaving the national student group.

Students fear being cut out of Senate committees

• CLARE RASPOPOW

Members of the Concordia Senate fear changes proposed to Senate committee mandates by the Academic Planning and Priorities Committee could dilute student and faculty influence, giving too much power to the university administration.

In the fall of last year, the provost put forward a series of suggested changes to the mandate of all standing Senate committees.

The changes would make the provost, the president, the vice-president of academic affairs and the vice-president research and graduate studies ex-officio voting members of all Senate committees.

The objections stem not from the administration's inclusion in the committee but their potential voting power. According to the changes the new voting members would not count towards quorum.

The APPC is in the process of drafting a response to the Senate's comments about it's recommendations.

Neither the provost nor any members of his office could be reached at press time.

The Montreal skyline may scream if geo-engineering is used to combat climate change. GRAPHIC DARYNA RUHKLYADEVA

Radical strategies

Gambling with geo-engineering avoids the real problem, warn researchers

• JESSICA VIHVELIN

Imagine the sun setting on Montreal, the sky behind the mountain illuminated with intense and lurid hues of golden yellows, oranges and crimson reds—not unlike Edvard Munch's famed painting *The Scream*.

It's said that Munch's work was inspired by the intensity of dusk skies in the aftermath of Krakatoa's 1883 eruption—one of the most violent in modern history. The residual sulphur in the atmosphere didn't just inspire awe and creativity, it also drastically cooled the planet, lowering global temperatures by just over one degree celsius.

If advocates of geo-engineering have their way, pumping sulphur into the stratosphere to combat global warming, vividly-hued future skies could become a reality.

In late 2009, McGill hosted the Lorne Trottier Symposium on Geo-engineering, where a group of climate scientists met to discuss many methods, including sowing sulphur, that could alter the climate and prevent or correct massive climate disruption.

Climate change research paints an increasingly detailed picture of an atmosphere in trouble, requiring imminent and drastic changes in legislation and global efforts in order to reduce carbon emissions.

As greenhouse gas emissions and global temperatures continue to rise, scientists have begun exploring geo-engineering as another avenue to save the planet. It represents a rapidly growing area of research—with or without global governments' commitment to emissions treaties.

Ideas on the table are weighted for their potential for cooling—and wreacking havoc on the Earth's ecosystems. Deliberately injecting sulphur dioxide into the stratosphere causes billowing cirrus clouds that reflect the sun's ultraviolet rays back into space. Dumping iron into the oceans fertilizes plankton so they can absorb carbon dioxide. Erecting massive mirrors increases the reflectivity of urban areas and reduces the urban heat island effect created by large expanses of pavement.

While governments drag their feet and fail to act, as seen in the latest Copenhagen agreements, some scientists propose that technological fixes might be a necessary and vital part of a future solution.

"We are completely overwhelming the natural carbon cycle in the biosphere," said David Keith, who spoke at the McGill conference. "And there's nothing intrinsically wrong or bad about climate change, unless we decide that we don't want to see alligators in the far north within my children's lifetime."

An associate professor from the University of Calgary's Earth Sciences department, Keith is the Canada Research Chair in Energy and the Environment and one of the more outspoken proponents of geo-engineering as part of a fix for dangerous levels of climate change.

The director of the university's Energy and Environmental Systems Group, Keith spoke of the nature of geo-engineering that makes it both a contentious and tempting prospect.

Put simply, Keith believes that injecting sulphur is a solution that "is fast, cheap and imperfect." For all of these reasons, he believes that geo-engineering needs to be researched extensively—the sooner, the better.

"I don't like to think about this, but it's a question of risk management. The decision not to do research could be bad news in a couple of decades when you do want to do this."

Geo-engineering, says Keith, is a backup plan that should not be relied on right now, but that should have the long-term research behind it just in case.

Keith recently confirmed that his current research is being funded by billionaire Microsoft founder Bill Gates, reported the *Calgary Herald*.

Besides the billionaire, there are others who share Keith's optimism for this technique. McGill professor of economics Chris Green said that there is simply no way we can replace our current fossil-fuel energy sources anytime soon. The question of using all possible alternative tactics instead is not a question, he said, but a given.

Another issue raised at the conference was how to collectively manage geo-engineering experiments as they affect climate on a global scale.

"Whose hands are on the thermostat?" asked Alan Robock, professor and director of the meteorology program at Rutgers University in New Jersey.

The issue is contentious, considering most geo-engineering tactics come with a high ecological price tag attached. Injecting substances into the stratosphere, for instance, can increase the risk of drought, already on the rise in large parts of the world.

"Even if you can alter global climate change, you can get large variations [of regional change]," said Robock. But however weary Robock is of the unintended effects and moral implications of geo-engineering, he isn't convinced that the potential dangers of technological tinkering should rule out research.

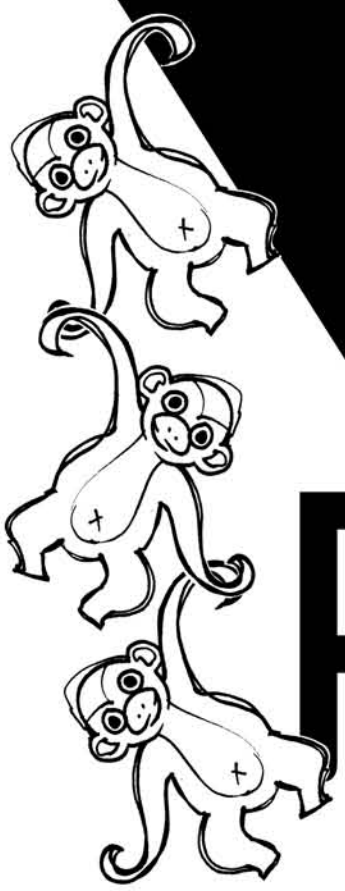
Nigel Roulet, a McGill professor in the department of geography and former director of the School of Environment, says he firmly believes this type of experimentation is "premature" and that it is essential to consider the root causes of climate change, rather than turning to technological fixes.

"If we were to go down the road and think that geo-engineering was the magic bullet, then we wouldn't get to the nut of the problem," he argued.

According to Roulet, human activities have drastically altered the atmosphere, largely the result of dependency on fossil fuels, which are by definition a form of stored carbon, and changes in land use. Our addiction to oil, coal and meat in the post-industrial revolution is responsible for a large portion of the increases in carbon dioxide in the atmosphere.

Without addressing the fundamental causes of climate change, geo-engineering begins to look like a band-aid on a deep wound—even if that band-aid is potentially accompanied by awe-inspiring sunsets behind the mountain. Fundamentally, all proponents and opponents of geo-engineering have come to the same conclusion regarding the human activities that have caused us to explore these kinds of fixes in the first place.

And, as Keith contends, there would be nothing worse than if "the knowledge that this is possible makes the impact of climate change look less fearsome, resulting in a weaker commitment to combating [it]."



THE LiNK 30

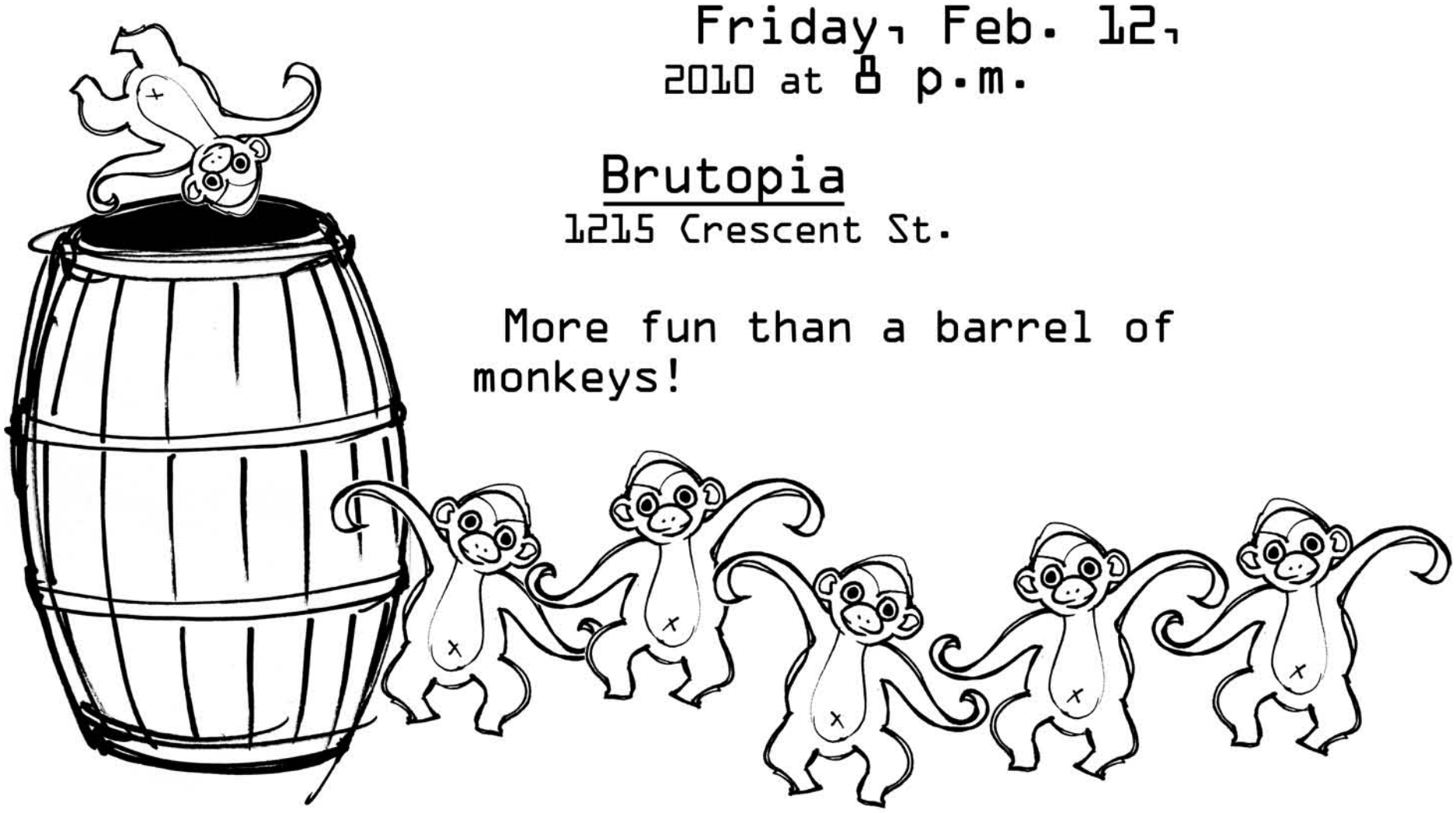
PARTY

WITH
THE LINK

Friday, Feb. 12,
2010 at 8 p.m.

Brutopia
1215 Crescent St.

More fun than a barrel of monkeys!



Too old to rock

Why your momma don't dance and your daddy don't rock n' roll

• ADAM KOVAC

The crowd pulsates, its intensity doubling with every power chord that blasts from the P.A. system. Limbs flail in hybrid punk-rock kung fu. The mosh pit is a pure distillation of rage and angst, a primal, visceral swirl of pathos. It's glorious in a vaguely psychopathic way. But you wouldn't catch me dead in one.

Like Riggs and Murtaugh in *Lethal Weapon 4*, I think it's fair to say, at age 24, I'm just plain too old for this shit.

When I go to concerts these days, I tend to be that guy at the back, hanging within safe distance of the bar. The days when it seemed vitally important to be as close to the stage as possible, or when smashing into other sweaty guys was the only dance move that mattered, are over. The music was incidental—a means to an end. There are shows where I could give an accurate play-by-play of the crowd surfing, but couldn't recall the set list. My wardrobe was exclusively purchased at the merch tables of concerts.

When I think back on this now, I inevitably ask myself two questions: what the hell was I thinking? And alternatively, when did I grow out of rock and roll?

Eternal (Sonic) Youth

There is no single reason why people lose interest in a scene, said Rob Dobrenski, a clinical psychologist based in New York City and the man behind ShrinkTalk.net.

"I think the connection with music and musicians can fade for many because we begin to get a sense of higher priorities: work, family, relationships, health, education, etc.," he said. "As we get older we start to recognize the age disparity between us and the artists, and I have to think at some, perhaps subconscious, level, that pushes us away."

But if this is truly the case, what's the deal with people who still worship increasingly wrinkled and decrepit animated corpses that pass for classic rock acts? (Mick and Keith, I'm looking at you).

According to Dobrenski, nostalgia is a powerful force.

"We still listen to music as we age, but at risk of painting with a broad brush, we tend to listen to those artists we connected with when we were younger," said Dobrenski. "Girls, drugs, sex, music, fans, money, booze, creative expression, freedom [are aspects of the rock lifestyle]. It's pure hedonism, at least on the surface."

Attempting to recapture the magic of youth, fantasizing about a lifestyle most of us may never actually live and envying rock stars are the things that draw us into the music, but why do some of us never outgrow it?

Phil Peters plays bass in four different bands, which isn't uncommon for musicians—four different bands means four different sources of free beer and rent money. What is perhaps unusual is that Peters isn't a pro; he's a 53-year-old IT recruiter.

"In terms of bandmates, I need people in a similar situation to myself," Peters explained. "They aren't looking to hit the road, more of a weekend warrior kind of thing."

Playing music since he was 15 and picking up bass for the simple reason that everyone else was playing guitar, Peters has been playing for some time. In his opinion, some people are just designed to play—for life—professional or not.

"In terms of my personality, I'm fairly obsessive-compulsive," he admitted. "The way it manifests itself [in me] is really in an idiot savant, Rain Man sort of thing. With music, facts about music, I retain it, I absorb it."

Perhaps it's persona that plays a role in how people grow with and maintain a commitment to the music. If I shed my punk rock T-shirts, am I shedding what made me me? Is defining yourself by how you earn your income and by your family status really any more "mature" than doing the same by your CD collection?

As those wise men in Blink 182 once noted, I guess this is growing up.

Never too old to rock out with your Viagra out

There are few people who have had the opportunity to observe a scene like Matt Collyer. For the past 15 years Collyer has owned and operated the Union Label Group, one of the biggest ska and punk labels in Montreal. Despite a career that has lasted for the better part of two decades, he still looks boyish, with a wide grin and almost comically large ears.

Perhaps it is this youthfulness that has allowed him to last as guitarist/singer for ska legends the Planet Smashers since the mid-'90s. He said he's seen the "scenes" come and go since the age of seven, when his brother stuck a firecracker up his Electric Light Orchestra album, and insisted he give a listen to the Sex Pistols.

"I definitely got an identity from the scene. [It was like] you were part of this secret underground thing. But after a while some people—even if they still like that kind of music—they just don't follow as closely. They might come out to the big shows, but that's it," he said. "Scenes move so fast these days, anyway. We've been chewing up the fads at a faster pace than it used to be. How long do you think the people in the indie rock scene will keep their beards?"

It's a matter of shifting priorities, and Collyer has seen it firsthand. Some people can maintain the ethos, practicing and attending rehearsals despite the responsibilities that come with getting old, and others gradually shift.

"Somewhere around late 20s, early 30s people have families, or they move out of town," he said with a slight shake of his head. "They get bogged down in the rat race. They stop having fun."

Few scenes demand commitment like the punk scene. It's pretty hard to be a weekend warrior punk, unless you pull an Andre Agassi and get a mohawk toupée, checking your nihilism at the door when you arrive at the office. But there is one man in Montreal who manages to bridge that gap between the mainstream and the underground—a man who Collyer described as "an institution."

That man is Paul Gott. A former professor in Concordia's journalism department, Gott currently produces the evening news at CBC's local Montreal station and, for the last 30 years, he has been tearing it up as the singer for local legends the Ripcordz. He says that bridging that divide isn't hard, as long as you're honest with yourself.

"I wear to work what I wear outside of work," Gott said. "I just didn't want to start wearing suits. The last time I wore one was my high school graduation."

It works for him, but most people simply aren't able to match that level of dedication. It's something that Gott realizes as well.

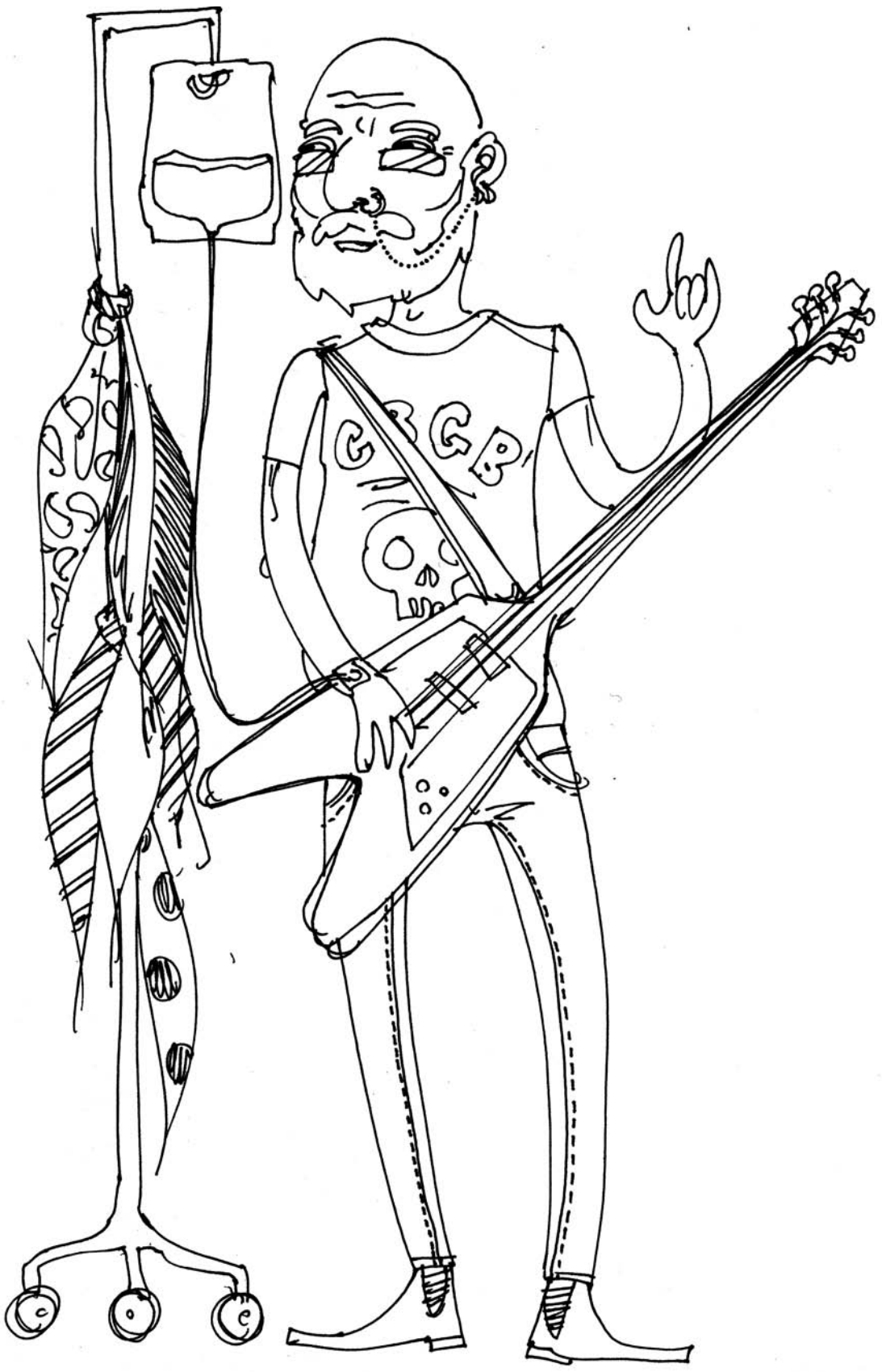
"I don't blame people for having to get out of the scene," he said. "For myself, I always just said that I never found anything else to do in life. I loved the people in the punk scene. I loved the energy—and I got free beer!"

All you need is love?

It's a long way to the top, and it's only rock n' roll, but I like it. It will always be a part of me, but it will never be all of me.

Maybe it's this simple: we bounce through this world looking for the meaning in the music. For some, rock n' roll is a fantasy. For others, it's a way of life.

The fact is, scenes and identities are too amorphous to be defined. T-shirts tear and get tossed out. Friends come and go. Sometimes tastes change, sometimes they don't. The one thing that can't be taken is a real appreciation for the music, and a recognition of what it means to us. The only sell-out is the guy who forgets this.



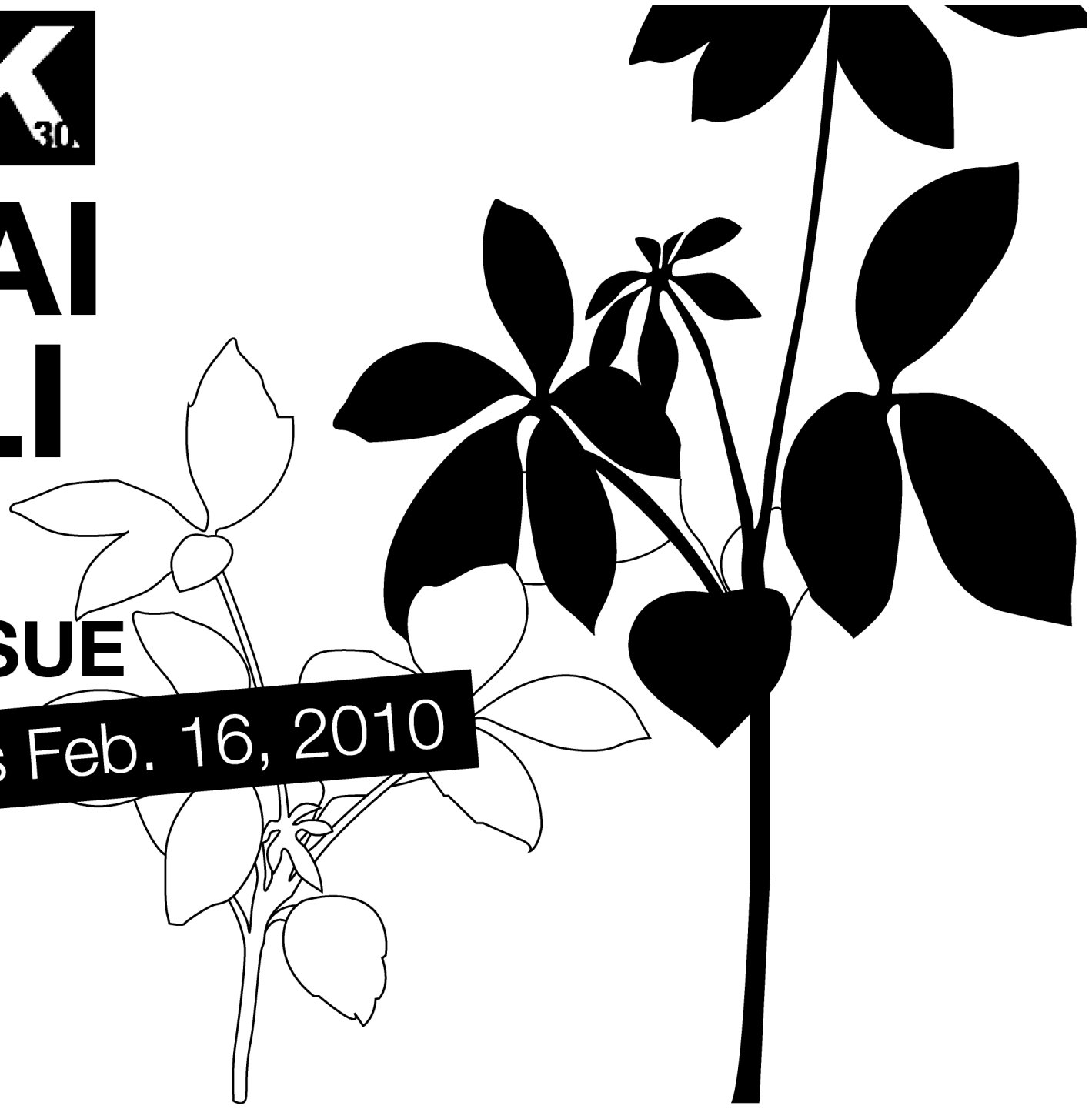
Who doesn't want to be the grand-daddy of rock n' roll? GRAPHIC VIVIEN LEUNG

THE LiNK 30.

SUSTAI NABILI TY

SPECIAL ISSUE

on newsstands Feb. 16, 2010



THE LiNK

2009-2010 General by-elections

General by-elections

Feb.19, 2010
4 p.m. H-649

The following people are eligible to run and vote:
Laura Beeston, Mathieu Biard, Madeline Coleman, Christopher Curtis, Travis Dandro, Terrine Friday, Justin Giovannetti, R. Brian Hastie, Clay Hemmerich, Les Honywill, Elsa Jabre, Tristan LaPointe, Vivien Leung, Tom Llewellin, Christopher Olson, Diego Pelaez Gaetz, Clare Raspopow, Shawna Satz, Riley Sparks

The following people need one more contribution to be eligible to run for a position or vote:
David Adelman, Esther Bernard, Adam Kovac, Stephanie La leggia, Ashley Opheim, Jonas Pietsch, Hugo Pilon-Larose.

The following positions will be open:

Photo Editor

Student Press Liaison

Applications for the positions must be posted one week before the election in *The Link* office, Hall building, room H-649. Applicants must have contributed to at least four (4) issues this semester as of Feb. 12 and must include a one-page letter of intent, as well as three (3) contribution samples.

For more information email: editor@thelinknewspaper.ca or call 514-848-2424 ext.7407.

Black.

Black History Month: Part I

Over the next three weeks, The Link *will examine the role of Black History Month in 2010.*

Haiti: The new colonialism

• TERRINE FRIDAY

Haiti was the first country in the world to abolish the slavery of peoples of African heritage and declare itself a republic.

That was in 1804.

More than 200 years later, Haiti is the poorest country in the western hemisphere, reeling from over four years of natural disasters and the effects of deforestation.

Then came Jan. 12, 2010. Shortly before 5 p.m., the country was hit by a 7.0 magnitude earthquake, which devastated capital city Port-au-Prince and its surroundings, turning Haiti's faulty infrastructure into rubble. Solid foundations need to be rebuilt literally and figuratively: not only does the country need new homes, but also a legitimate government for the sake of the country's political—and historical—legitimacy.

International headlines allude to Haiti's corruption, but with no context: upon Haiti's independence, was the country not left to the devices of colonial vestiges? Upon what conditions were intergovernmental relations with western powers imposed on Haiti? And are not most western governments inherently corrupt, the result of a Darwinian survival tactic to keep the most apt political party in office? And what about the loopy "developmental programs" that western Europe and North America encouraged post-colonial countries to adopt?

Over 20 years ago, Haiti bought into a new program created by the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund called the Structural Adjustment Program. The SAP, which was also adopted around the same time in other developing former European colonies like Jamaica and Guyana, was intended to boost Haiti's economy to compete on a global level and thus increase production and profit.

But the SAP, which reduced trade barriers with western countries and opened the country up to foreign investment and control, actually threw Haiti into severe debt, which totaled almost $2 billion in 2008—which is $250 per capita, a little more than the average Haitian family's yearly income. (In Canada, the debt per capita is close to $20,000 per capita while average family income is close to $65,000.)

Amidst cries of mercy for Haiti in the international community, the IMF cancelled $1.2 billion of the country's debt last June, leaving them $800 million in the red.

Haiti's political sphere is not out of reach of international strong-arms. Former Haitian president Jean-Bertrand Aristide was considered a "rebel" by the American government. He was forcibly removed from office in 2004—an operation in which the Canadian government was complicit—which not only undermined the Haitian government, but further bolstered foreign economic and social policies that crippled Haiti's development.

In his academic paper called "The Messiah Returned to Haiti, but It Didn't Help," distinguished American author Herbert Gold gives heed to the "kidnappings, murder, arson, riots, epidemics of disaster rolling in, ebbing briefly and then flooding again, characterize a society that has moved from persistent stubborn crises to chaos."

Gold goes on to say that the idea of the White Man's Burden is fading, but this concept is being replaced by a perception of Haitian ungodliness, that non-governmental organizations and missionaries feel they must "offer 'spiritual' aid" in order to save the people from themselves.

But Gold argues that Haiti needs long-term goals, not short-term solutions that will make volunteers feel better about themselves. "The saplings donated by compassionate Americans grow nicely for about eight hours. Then they are cut down for kindling. So hey, nice do-gooders! Provide oil for cooking; educate the peasants about the value of trees [...]. Contributing rice feeds the hungry today; it doesn't help Haiti grow its own for next year."

But no one's talking about it. No one's talking about the lack of sustainable aid for Haiti. No one's talking about the blatantly racist terms under which Haiti was reintroduced to western trade in the early 20th century. Haiti, through exploitation of its land and people for almost 200 years, provided France with free goods to trade with the United States and Great Britain.

The Monroe Doctrine, an American policy which sought to limit European intervention in the Americas, was adopted less than 20 years after Haiti gained independence. Tony Fraser, journalist for Trinidad and Tobago's *The Guardian*, called the Monroe Doctrine a ploy for Americans "to secure the American backyard and to make it known to the foreign powers they were not welcomed." Suddenly, without reasonable cause, Haiti was subject to American occupation, which undermined its independence and reinforced its economic and political dependence on foreign money.

Although Haiti fought for its colonial independence in 1804, the "little country that could" must now fight its way out of its neo-colonial shackles.

For more information, read "Harming Haiti" at thelinknewspaper.ca.

No one's talking about it. No one's talking about the lack of sustainable aid for Haiti. No one's talking about the blatantly racist terms under which Haiti was reintroduced to western trade in the early 20th century.

A Canadian history of slavery

'Slavery and abolition are important to Canadian history,' prof says

• LES HONYWILL

How much does Canada cover up its own history of slavery?

That's what McGill art historian Charmaine Nelson asked her audience at Concordia Monday evening as part of her lecture on slavery in Canada.

"If you go to the library, at Concordia or McGill, and you pick up a book that claims to be about transatlantic slavery, [...] most of the time there won't be one text in there, one chapter, that deals with Canada, and I want us to question that because we had slavery here," said Nelson, an associate professor of art history. "There is a retroactive erasure and a gap in the knowledge base in the grounding of slavery in Canada."

Nelson said that multiculturalism, an ideology that Canadians pride themselves on, shuts down dialogue about race and racism.

"It's difficult for people in Canada to talk about racism, people don't want to hear it, you get silenced often if you want to talk about your life in terms of racism here," Nelson said. "We're taught that we have this bi-cultural framework where legitimate Canadians are English and French white people, but everyone else is allowed to 'practice their culture' but not talk about racism. There's a way in which multiculturalism encourages us to use the term culture rather than race, which is problematic because they're not the same thing."

Nelson said Canadian scholarly writings published between the 1920s and the 1970s include little to no reference of slavery in Canada. Rather, she said, whenever black Canadians are included in a dialogue, it most often refers to black history.

"This is so false it's absurd," Nelson said. "Black Canadian history isn't only about black people. Things like slavery and abolition are important to Canadian history. In the [United] States, black cultures have been made part of American culture. Whereas in Canada we act like slavery didn't happen here so we can act like black presence isn't historical here. We act like all of the black people just showed up in the 1960s. We don't understand that there was a long presence here that parallels European presence."

Nelson also puts the blame on Canada's education system and its universities, which she says do not offer a degree in African-Canadian studies, so research on Canada's black history is limited to scholars who want to pursue the matter independently. Furthermore, she noted most Canadians who learn about Canada's relation to slavery only know about the Underground Railroad and Canada's role as "liberator," since it was the railroad's last stop.

As her research interests include western art, Nelson pointed out that Canadian artwork associated whiteness with civility. In contrast, black women—even 70 years after slavery was abolished in British colonies including Canada—were still portrayed in artwork as savages or inferiors.

"To the 19th or early 20th century viewer, the white female body was coded as the beautiful body and the black female body was strategically used compositionally to play the role of 'other,' as antithesis to the white body," Nelson said. "It was through slavery, and the colonial logic of race, that blacks were perceived as primitive, a sub-human category of beings, desperately in need of European civilization.

"Just last year our Prime Minister went to [the Pittsburgh G20 summit] and announced to the world that we have no colonial history in Canada. This is ridiculous. So we have to think about how this is something we can even utter when we had slavery here, not just of Africans but of indigenous populations. We had head taxes on Chinese men who built our railroads, the reservation system and the residential school system for First Nations people."

Nelson encouraged any students who wished to learn more on the subject to attend her class at McGill, Visual Culture of Slavery.

Lest we forget Canada's history of slavery. GRAPHIC VIVIEN LEUNG

Diary of a random black man

Out of my immediate family, I am the first to graduate from university. It was always my objective, because I wanted to make my mark.

Out of all the black kids that went to my elementary school, only three of us enrolled in university. I'm the only one that finished, though the other two are making good livings with good jobs. The larger majority of the kids I went to school with—to be honest, I can't account for them. Some of them got caught up with making quick money, and some decided to start working as early as they could.

As for young black youth getting caught up in illegal activity, it's not about race. A lot of the things that people attribute to race, I actually attribute to difficult socio-economic conditions. People aren't inherently bad; people try to attain things that their economic situations do not otherwise allow, whether it be food or clothes, and sometimes it just snowballs from there. But I digress.

In *The Measure of a Man*, Sidney Poitier said when he was a youth, he thought education was the key to eliminating some racial prejudices and making people accept one another. But then, as he got older, he realized there are some people who, no matter how much education or how much teaching they received, remained ignorant. When I read that, I saw a lot of my own perceptions magnified.

I remembered when I was 13 and this neighbourhood kid had gotten into a fight not too far from where I lived. The police came to my door and I tried to tell them it wasn't me, that I had only been out once during the day. The female cop, with a dismissive tone, said, "Well, then it was one time too many."

I remember going to that police station and they said they had pictures of me, that they had pictures of the boys from that neighbourhood and that we were "known" to police. Even though I was innocent, it was an experience I never wanted to have to deal with again.

I always thought, if I could show someone how intelligent I am, how articulate I am, they'll have no reason to hate me. And I realized from Sidney's statement that you can't let someone else's definition of who they think you are define who you are. Why should I accept someone else's definition of me?

I don't define myself as a black person; I define myself as a person. I think it's the world around me that reminds me that I'm black. I don't necessarily think a white person says, "Hey, I'm white." You base yourself on your surroundings, not the colour of your skin.

What I missed the most, what I would have appreciated most, is having someone who travelled the path before me who could have advised me. That's one of the difficulties of trying to get into a closed world; you don't have the resources or connections that could make life a little easier, to pave the way to help you make some of the right decisions without making some of the mistakes.

If you weren't born in Canada, or if you're from a lower socio-economic background, you don't have those connections to get you into the tight-knit corporate world. And this is apart from being black and needing to prove yourself. You're still missing some of the "ins" based on economic status, backed by colour and culture.

But overall, I see a generation of young black professionals who are ambitious. We don't have as many limitations today, especially where education is concerned. That being said, the limit of your ambition is where you'll eventually fall.

—Shandell Jack

Black History at Concordia

"Cultural Day," Feb. 2
Hall Building, 7th floor at 1 p.m.
Students are invited to taste the various foods and cultures of black diaspora.

"Black economics" discussion panel, Feb. 4
Hall building, 7th floor at 6 p.m.
A discussion surrounding black wealth, including education, fiscal prudence and income.

"BHM Movie Marathon," Feb. 8
Hall building, room 767 at 12 p.m.
Movies TBA

"Speaker Sol Guy," Feb. 11
Hall building, room H-110 at 4 p.m.
Music producer Sol Guy talks about his career and the black community.

"Black History Trivia," Feb. 12
Reggie's from 5 to 8 p.m.
Come test your black history IQ! Prizes in store...

"African Inventors Museum," Feb. 15 and 16
Hall building, 7th floor lounge, all day
A mobile museum that highlight black innovators and their contributions to all people.

"Rum and Roti," Feb. 17
The Hive at 8 p.m.
Two staples of Caribbean cuisine like no other.

"Comedy Night," Feb. 18
Hall building, room H-110 at 7 p.m.
Performers TBA

"Cupid's Redemption," Feb. 19
BHM at Con U closes with a second chance at love. Check cupidsredemption.com for more info.

For more info on Black History Month events at Concordia, visit csu.qc.ca.

Next week's issue of *The Link*:

- "Queering black history month"
- "Done with slavery in Montreal"
- "Who will save Obama?"
- "The Harlem Renaissance relived"
- "Diary of a random black guy": part two
- "Black Power: an Olympic flashback"

The book of nightmares

Lawrence Hill's *The Book of Negroes* an important read

• ARSHAD KHAN

Once in a while a book comes along that pulls the Ikea rug right from under your feet and lands you on your behind. Lawrence Hill's *The Book of Negroes* has just that effect—still has that effect. The recent recipient of CBC Radio's Canada Reads 2009 award, Hill takes us through the horrid world of slavery as seen through the eyes of the young, beautiful and adventurous midwife, Aminatha Diallo—Meena for short.

While in England helping abolitionists with their mission against the slave trade, Aminatha recalls the story of her life, how she was kidnapped from her village in West Africa at the age of 12 and sold into slavery. We see the world through the eyes of a woman who cannot fathom the extent of greed that drives white colonizers to such abhorrent lengths.

The actual Book of Negroes is an enormous document that lists the black men and women escaping slavery, poverty and hunger in the United States for promises of hope and freedom in Nova Scotia. It is a racist document, listing people's attributes like farm animals and categorizing them in relation to their usefulness to their masters.

According to Butch Lee and Red Rover, authors of the non-fiction book *Night Vision*, it was African slavery that gave North America its competitive edge over Europe. By reducing workers' wages to zero, America became very wealthy. *The Book of Negroes* is a piece of historical fiction that attests to Lee and Rover's claims.

What is striking about Aminatha's tale is her conviction and strong sense of identity at a time of great shame when the brutal and bloody legacy of North America is being established.

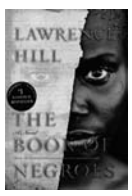
You feel anguish reading how Aminatha is dehumanized and brutalized by not just the European-American white slave owners, but by other Africans as well. Hill vividly captures the role of the collaborator in the suffering of the enslaved and the internalization of race supremacy by its victims.

The book's account of collusion amongst the British, Americans and then the Canadians is extremely revealing as it is made clear that economic and political interests took clear precedence. There were thousands of so-called "loyalists" to the British cause—the slaves who gave up their lives in order to fight for the British against the Americans in exchange for liberty and freedom. *The Book of Negroes* documents the plight of these people as they go from one situation of desperation in America to another situation of poverty and subjugation in Nova Scotia.

The book brings to light the many sacrifices that were made in order to achieve the gains we've made as people of colour or minorities. The struggle of the slaves parallels the lives of those who still remain without status or citizenship.

At times the book reads like a horror story. The movie rights to *The Book of Negroes* have been optioned by Toronto filmmakers Clement Virgo and Damon D'Oliveira. Whether it will be a horror film or a drama remains to be seen.

GRAPHIC VIVIEN LEUNG



The Book of Negroes
Lawrence Hill
Harper Collins
384 pp
$19.85

Lit Writ

Fritter

• ALEX MANLEY

You know as you're eating it that it's shit, pure shit, of course. You knew just from the look of it.

You've lived in this city, lived off this city, long enough, but you know for real as soon as you bite into the fries. The heat, kills your taste buds, so you don't notice they're nothing but sticks of waxy salt anyway, falling apart, soggily, burnily crumbling. What's that term, piping hot?

The same process takes place on your fingers as you shovel them into your oven-mouth. Pipe, pipe, pipe. Potatoes conserve heat so well, you know. Little heat traps. Bursting, exploding heat bombs.

The bun is wet, too, from the dog's sweat. Funny how they sweat, rolling around between the rungs—roll, roll—producing oceans of salty meat juice, running down the ramp. And then there's the onion shavings, the melting plastic cheese—like an art installation.

Of course you insist on mayonnaise each time. Mayonnaise. What a thing it is. Never can tell whether it's disgusting or delicious. It's all about how much you think about it. If you don't think, it's fine. It's slightly salty and it's tasty and it's fine. If you start going over it in your mind, all the millions of Wal-Mart, Costco, Super C tubs large enough to fit a newborn in, all the seven-year-old half-empties in the fridge doors of dead people, old people from Agincourt, Richmond Hill, sequestered in their Ontario towns, slowly dying librarians.

You're thinking about your grandmother, of course. You read just a little bit too much of that Stephen King book in Chapters once: *Dreamcatcher*. With the mayonnaise-bacon-raw sandwiches and all the shit, the actual shit. And the alien ass-weasels. Mayonnaise. Embalmed in it. You swallow anyway.

Before you know it you're on your last bite already, hands slick with grease and a slight sheen of shame. You let the morsel linger in your hand, trying not to crush it with your thumb-pressure, staring at it longingly, wishing it would reptile-tail itself back to fulness, wishing you had enough pocket change for another. But you don't and the thought of spending a dollar or two, of using their grubby, grey little dwarf ATM tucked in the dirty corner over there sickens you in a strange, bone-marrow place in your psyche. Not that you're cheap.

The machine seems unrightably wrong. How many friends of friends of yours have had their bank accounts emptied by scam set-ups like this one? All the tech geek hack wizardry used for wrong. Here again. Intrinsically bad. Geeks were not supposed to be criminals. That was all wrong, all against the flow of things.

You look down at your hands. It's gone. You ate it without realizing. That's the worst. Like listening to your favourite song while you're thinking about something else; oh, it's gone. Don't even remember hearing it.

Alright, well, that's that. Shove through the door and go. You need to get home without falling over; at least to get home without the shit you just ate all falling out of you, ungloved hands on the rain-covered ice, your new jean-knees getting soaked, the night's alcohol roiling through you, a burn on your throat, and then it's all rivulets in the gutter, everything wet, everything dark, everything gross and disgusting and impossibly impossible.

GRAPHIC ALEX MANLEY

To submit your fiction or poetry to the Lit Writ column, e-mail them to lit@thelinknewspaper.ca.

The terrible day that J.D. Salinger died

GRAPHIC ALEX MANLEY

Raise high the roof beam, carpenters.
Like Ares comes the bridegroom, taller far than a tall man.

—Sappho, Fragment LP 111

• MATTHEW FIORENTINO

Dear _____,

How are you? I am fine. Regarding that Cornish hen biting the dust—it was certainly a goddamn peculiar way to start the weekend. Not that he was some spring chicken, mind you, but you can begin to see where I'm coming from. I imagine that he's up in heaven right now listening to 10,000 Chinese nuns chanting Buddhist vows. Old Holden Caulfield leaves this world through the backdoor of sin and enters the Holy Kingdom by means of crashing through the skylight. Now there's a thought that makes me howl.

I am flattered that you would ask me to write a few words about the situation, though there's a nagging suspicion in the back of my mind that I've been deceived into white-washing your fence for you, so to speak.

I love to write and I assure you I write regularly (I'm quite Catholic about that). I write for myself, for my own pleasure. It is my rather subversive opinion that a writer's feelings of obscurity are the second most valuable property on loan to him during his working years. But I suppose the situation has struck a sympathetic chord within my breast and so I humorously give you permission to read my thoughts on it.

I don't mean to make it sound like such a Jesus Christ sacrifice on my part or anything—and I don't feel like getting into it if you really want to know the truth—but I cringe at the thought of this letter losing itself in the deluge of jejune narcissism worse than *Catcher in the Rye* itself that has been written by various newspaper figures in the wake of his death. I imagine that's what Somerset Maugham used to talk about. If am to be the ale then they are at least the cakes, not to mention the gin and bitters.

As all the good picaresque adjectives have already been taken in describing Salinger's life, at best I can try to limn the nooks and crannies of his work with what meagre insights I have available to me. I can already hear that crazy bastard Zooey Glass applauding madly from the bathroom. Are you familiar with Jacob Boehme's *Signature of all Things* (the eyes being a mirror of the soul, etc.)? Or the Basho poem "Along this road goes no one, this autumn eve"? They make for droll companions but I feel they are the key to beginning to understand his work.

In any case, I bet all this Vedantic insight must be a terrible bore for you. I would continue on but I am tired and already I can see through my window that a roselight is beginning to bloom on the horizon like a circlet of flowers. See: (((((()))))). Morning. The ghost of electricity is beginning to move through the city. And don't you know—listen to me, now—don't you know that we're ghosts too?

Ah, buddy.

Anyways, I guess this letter is really just about a bunch of unhappy Andover grads that have been waiting decades for the blue-striped unicorn of the literary world to croak so they can finally get their grubby hands on his unpublished stories and find out if those precocious Glass kids didn't accidentally psychoanalyze each other to death with a bunch of Jungian crap while they were waiting.

I'd hate to be the editor that comes into work some morning only to find 15 of this guy's goddamn posthumous manuscripts sitting on his desk.

Who knows, maybe it'll be you.

With much invisible ink,
Mr. F

quick reads

Superhero suffragettes

The Supergirls
Mike Madrid
Exterminating Angel Press
334 pp
$16.95

Mike Madrid's love for the fierce females that have been prominently featured in some of his favourite comic books inspired him to write an intertwining history of feminism and comic literature in *The Supergirls: Fashion, Feminism, Fantasy and the History of Comic Book Heroines.* He traces the birth of these heroines from the 1930s—when Phantom Lady and other women led double lives to fight crime—to modern times, chronicling women like Manhunter: working mother by day, crime fighter by night. Madrid explores the relationship between the prevailing ideologies of the last eight decades and the heroines that were born as a result.

The beauty of *The Supergirls* is that anyone who is remotely interested in comic books, feminism, or history in general can take something from it. Madrid breaks the chronological rhythm of the book to examine some heroines in depth, which may confuse readers who are unfamiliar with the history of graphic novels. But overall, *The Supergirls* is an interesting read for anyone who has ever been fascinated by fabulous women who kick ass. And who hasn't?

4.5/5
—Kamila Hinkson

Historical snuff

Tragic Links
Cathy Beveridge
Ronsdale Press
181 pp
$10.95

As soon as someone commits to using time travel as a literary device, any appreciation for historical accuracy typically goes out the window. Rather than learn what Napoleon Bonaparte was really like, it's too tempting to use time travel as an excuse to see him rush down a water slide or navigate a modern construction yard like Mr. Magoo.

But there's something far more perverse about time travelers who fail to intervene in historical tragedies while on fact finding missions, patiently observing as the horror repeats itself.

Tragic Links is the fourth in a series of young adult novels exploring Canadian disasters. This time around, it's the 1907 Quebec City bridge collapse—following a brief sojourn to the Montreal of the 1920s. The time traveller? Cathy Beveridge, a young girl with the ability to see "time creases," which is about as good an excuse as any to feed an addiction to historical snuff.

You can bet your better half that Cathy has some familial connection to the 1907 bridge collapse, and that the connection will stir up some serious second-guessing about the wisdom of intervening in history. Would it really be a time travel story if it weren't a tad predictable?

3/5
—Christopher Olson

"You just gotta want to do it" to succeed as a promoter, says Noah Bick (second from right), "and bother people, bother people, bother people." PHOTO BRITTANY LEVETT

Forget about your day job

Music promoters Passovah celebrate two years in the studio and in the wings

• EDDIE MAJNEMER

Few people end up working at their dream job. Even fewer start their career there. One of the lucky ones is 18-year-old wunderkind Noah Bick, director and one quarter of music promotion and production company Passovah.

This week Bick and Passovah co-founders Tyler Crawford, David Mitchell and Nick Shulman celebrate the company's second anniversary with—what else?—a show at Il Motore.

The idea for the company was hatched in late 2007 while Bick was interning at Pop Montreal under the tutelage of Pop creative director Dan Seligman. What began as a few successful loft shows turned into a company with a Semitic name which, Bick said, doesn't really mean anything.

"[We chose it so that] if we ever did a hip-hop show, we could call it Mad Gelt," he laughed.

Passovah's beginnings weren't all too glamorous—"Until I got a car, I'd leave my own shows early to catch the last metro," Bick admitted—but they soon started putting on about four shows a month.

Bick said they saw a "gap that needed filling" in the Montreal music scene, one which they aimed to fill by working with bands who had yet to rack up a significant fan base. Bands like Women, Parlovr and The Luyas all worked with Passovah early in their careers, and didn't stop after others started to take notice.

"[It's great to] watch a band go from playing for their friends to playing for fans," said Bick, who said they took the leap into managing bands with Montreal bands The Lovely Feathers and, more recently, Cotton Mouth.

It was only a matter of time, Bick said, before the process slowly switched from Passovah contacting bands to bands contacting Passovah.

"It sounds cliché," Bick admitted, "[but] once the ball got rolling, things just kind of kept happening for us. It's pretty rad.

"You just gotta want to do it," he concluded, "and bother people, bother people, bother people."

Passovah's 2nd Year Anniversary Party, featuring The Luyas and Shapes and Sizes, goes down Feb. 6 at 9 p.m. at Il Motore (179 Jean-Talon St. W.). Tickets are $8.

Hochelagart

Pioneer east end gallery provides a rare meeting space for neighbourhood artists

Louis Bouvier's "Art Checkers" series is on display at L'art passe à l'Est as part of the show Le grand dessin canadien. *The show is on display until Feb. 14.* PHOTO LAURA BEESTON

• LAURA BEESTON

Under the looming shadow of the Olympic Stadium, past loitering teens smoking outside Joliette metro, beyond the rented rowhouses and poutine joints, something is growing in Hochelaga-Maisonneuve.

The southeast neighbourhood of Montreal, traditionally misunderstood as the "French ghetto" by Anglos and art fags alike, is foreign territory for those who naively believe the Montreal creative landscape meets its eastern boundaries somewhere around Papineau Street.

But it's here in *Hochelag*, as it's known to locals, that the work of up-and-coming francophone artists and students is happening in huge ways. The moving and shaking finds a home at L'art passe à l'Est, one of the neighbourhood's sole galleries and current home to a collective show dubbed *Le grand dessin canadien*.

Featuring the work of Université du Québec à Montréal alumni and artists from Quebec City, this show exclusively celebrates the medium of drawing.

"There are a lot of places to create art and a lot of artists in the neighbourhood, but the problem is that there are not so many spaces to regroup—it's very split up. *C'est, comme, dommage un peu*," said Louis Bouvier, who began showing his work at the gallery three years ago as an UQAM student and whose series, "Art Checkers," is currently on display. "When we get together out here, people see or hear about our stuff. We can unite to possibly do another collective and it will grow bigger and better—we can try to make Hochelaga-Maisonneuve *à rénover, tsé*?"

> "Young people here want to make things move. They're not just living here, going to work and going home—they're creating places and moments of social and cultural exchange."
>
> —*Remi Cosnier, artist in* Le grand dessin canadien

Created in 1999 by UQAM's visual arts student association, the gallery was intended to offer students space outside of the university to show their stuff during the semester. L'art moved to a permanent, full-time site in 2007.

"Young people here want to make things move," said Remi Cosnier, another artist exhibiting work in *Le grand dessin*. "They're not just living here, going to work and going home—they're creating places and moments of social and cultural exchange. There's an identity coming out of this; there's a community born in these gallery walls."

The advantage of not having a pre-existing scene is that things are kept pretty real, Cosnier added. "[L'art passe à l'Est is] a positive place to show. It's not a fake or pretentious place. It's not like going into galleries and being a snob about art. It's *libre*."

Bouvier added that he believes Hochelaga-Maisonneuve has struck the balance between being underground and well-known. It just depends if you're from the neighbourhood.

"You think that something big is going to happen here, but you're not sure yet," he said. "I don't think there's any secret about [the art scene], since the people that live here know it and we're a community. With this space, anyone can come and see what we're doing. *Plus on est fou, plus on rit*, you know?"

***Le grand dessin canadien* runs until Feb. 14 at L'art passe à l'Est (3843 Ste-Catherine St. E.). For more information on the gallery, visit lartpassealest.com.**

Chris d'Eon lived in a monastery in northern India after college, where a Tibetan musician taught him to play the dranyen (the lefthand instrument at right). PHOTO ELSA JABRE

Meditate on this

Chris d'Eon takes dance music to the ashram

• LESLEY DE MARINIS

When I showed up at a crowded coffee shop to meet Chris d'Eon, I wondered how we would recognize each other. Turns out d'Eon isn't hard to miss.

With hair hanging below his shoulders and clad in a white linen tunic, d'Eon has a way of standing out in a crowd. So, too, does his music, a surprising multi-genre experience blending techno house beats with folkier, Middle Eastern acoustics.

Halifax native d'Eon, who performs under his last name only, has a passion for music that started at an early age. When he was four years old, his parents bought him some synthesizers and a sequencer. He soon started mixing together his own tracks.

"I would record loops, like a drum pattern, and then I could record a bass line and then I would sequence them," said d'Eon, now 24. "When I was a little kid I was really into making dance music."

D'Eon's musical interests expanded when he started college and began studying Iranian, Arabic and Turkish music. This interest took him to northern India, where he lived in a monastery and studied with a Tibetan musician who taught him to play the dranyen, or Tibetan lute.

Sometimes this influence on his musical experimentation even comes as a surprise to d'Eon himself.

"It's all sort of subconscious," he said. "Like, it ends up being that I want to make, say, a house tune and it turns into something with Turkish lyrics and I'm like, 'Oh shit, how did that get in there?'"

D'Eon, who has been in Montreal for just over a year, has already released three cassette tapes. He released the two most recent on his own label, Numbers Station Recordings, which he founded with Zach Fairbrother and Matt Wilson, his co-members in local band Omon Ra II.

D'Eon explained that he was aiming for a less experimental, poppier sound on his latest cassette, *ÆON,* released in late 2009.

"I have this internal fantasy of wanting to sing pop music," he said. "I think it's because I'm in my mid-20s now, and we were all born in the '80s, and that was our childhood. And so I think that a lot of people releasing music now are sort of really into '80s R&B, like Paula Abdul and Janet Jackson. All that stuff is great!"

When asked if he had any interests outside of music, D'Eon shook his head.

"I'm not really good at being a regular member of society," he admitted, "and when you're a musician you sort of have more license to be a fucking weirdo."

> "It's all sort of subconscious. Like, it ends up being that I want to make, say, a house tune and it turns into something with Turkish lyrics and I'm like, 'Oh shit, how did that get in there?'"
>
> —*Chris d'Eon*

Chris d'Eon plays with Freelove Fenner and Play Guitar at the latter's LP release on Feb. 3 at 8 p.m. It all goes down at Casa del Popolo (4873 St-Laurent Blvd.). Cover is $6 or free if you buy a Play Guitar LP.

These lips were made for talking

McGill's production of *The Vagina Monologues* lets the pussy out of the bag

Michelle Dellamora mouths off in this year's production of The Vagina Monologues. *The play shows this week at McGill.* PHOTO JAMIE KLINGER

• HELEN SAVAGE

Pussy, poontang, beaver, cunt—you've heard all the names. But after watching McGill's upcoming production of the provocative and envelope-pushing play *The Vagina Monologues*, you'll never think about female genitalia in the same way again.

"I can't stop saying the word vagina," laughed *Monologues* actress Elizabeth Plank. "I don't know if people are ready for that, but a big part of the play is accepting the word and getting rid of the stigma surrounding it."

The Vagina Monologues, an award-winning play by Eve Ensler celebrating female strength and sexuality, has been performed annually in cities and university campuses around the world since 1998. Its ubiquity is linked to the fact that it inspired the founding of V-Day, a global non-profit organization dedicated to promoting women's rights and combating violence against women and girls.

V-Day McGill is part of the V-Day College Campaign, which involves more than 2,000 schools worldwide helping to raise awareness and funds for women's charities.

Monologues is V-Day McGill's main fundraising event, with proceeds this year benefitting the Native Women's Shelter of Montreal, Head & Hands, the Sexual Health Care Network of Quebec and Women in the Democratic Republic of Congo. The latter is the subject of this year's spotlight monologue, addressing the atrocities committed against women and girls in the war-torn African nation.

As well as raising money and awareness for worthwhile causes, the play's organizers and performers hope the show will help the audience too, by leaving them feeling as empowered and uninhibited about female sexuality as the *Monologues* cast does.

"We don't always talk about things openly because we don't think it's right to or maybe we're embarrassed," admitted actress Darshana Dhunnoo. "But talking about them has been really therapeutic. I realized we all go through these experiences and it makes you feel liberated knowing that you're not alone."

> "These stories are about human rights, not just women's rights."
>
> —*Jessica Kostuck, director of McGill's* The Vagina Monologues

Director Jessica Kostuck said she felt that what makes the play so moving is that women can relate to all of the monologues, even if they haven't experienced every issue firsthand. And while the play focuses on female issues and empowerment, men are more than welcome.

"Men shouldn't feel scared or shy about coming to the show," said Kostuck. "We're not setting up to enlighten them or change them, it's just sharing stories. And these stories are about human rights, not just women's rights."

***The Vagina Monologues* runs Feb. 5 to 7 at 7:30 p.m. in room 132 of McGill University's Leacock Building (855 Sherbrooke St. W.). Tickets are $15 general admission, $12 for students and seniors. For more information see vday.mcgill.ca.**

Speaking the same language

New project aims to find out how *têtes carrées* fit into the city's geometry

Anglo artists should feel at home in Montreal. GRAPHIC VIVIEN LEUNG

• MADELINE COLEMAN

Forget succeeding in Montreal if your first language ain't French. Any good Anglo with their head square on their shoulders and even a scrape of ambition knows to follow the money—and that money is in Toronto.

Not so, says Louis Rastelli. The co-founder of Archive Montreal says the group behind Expozine and Distroboto is out to prove that Montreal wants its Anglo inhabitants just as bad as they want to find a way to stay.

This week the non-profit organization launches the inaugural edition of Making It Montreal, a research project and website that will shine the spotlight on English-speaking artists who choose to make Montreal their home and investigate how they did it.

"In the '90s one of the myths [about Montreal]—and thank god it's over now—was that people would yell at you if they heard you speaking English," says Rastelli. "Part of what we want to show with this project is that there are anglophones that come here and they're not going to erode culture. They're here and they're part of the community."

Making It Montreal kicks off with a show and roundtable discussion at Le Divan Orange to be followed by the launch of a website, which Archive Montreal hopes will become home to discussion and debate about making it in Montreal *en anglais*.

Rastelli points out that Montreal's underground arts scene has always had an inclusive approach to language.

"There was a lot of freaking out [about the 1995 referendum]," he admits, "but I think when it comes to the alternative or independent music and publishing scene, whether it's English or French, it's not that big a community anywhere so people kind of collaborate."

StatsCan's 2006 figures report that about 18 per cent of Montrealers speak English at home, compared to 70 per cent who speak French.

There's power in numbers, but maybe not in the way you might expect. One of the bands playing at Making It Montreal's launch, Lake of Stew, became the poster children for linguistic cross-pollination when they were almost banned from playing at a St-Jean Baptiste Day celebration last summer.

"There was a tiny bunch of people who got this controversy going by resenting an English band playing at the celebration," Rastelli explains, "but that tiny bunch of people elicited this wave of people from the francophone community who said, 'Hey, let's not go back to those days!' There was this huge visceral response not to go there again.

"It showed that francophones are starting to think of anglophone Montrealers as a unique part of their community," he continued. "They're realizing more and more that it isn't the same as Toronto or American culture. It has its own identity."

Making it Montreal launches Feb. 4 at 8:30 p.m. at Le Divan Orange (4234 St-Laurent Blvd.). The night begins with a roundtable discussion, followed by performances from Lake of Stew and Tony Ezzy. Free.

The website launches Feb. 4 at makingitmontreal.org.

spins

Corinne Bailey Rae
The Sea
Good Groove/ Virgin

Reemerging after a period of mourning for the 2008 death of her husband, Rae shows herself to be nothing if not full of life. Her latest album will intensify any activity you might be doing. If you listen to her while driving, Rae makes you want to cruise through the streets. If she's playing on your iPod while shopping, she makes you just want to go on a splurge. She makes chain-smoking seem healthy. "Diving for Hearts" and "Paris Nights/New York Mornings" just make you want to get up on a table and boogie the day away.

This intensity expresses that nothing in life can be controlled. "The sea, the majestic sea, breaks everything, crushes everything, cleans everything, takes everything, from me," she sings on the titular track, her voice embodying the duality of creation and destruction. As I listened to this album, I could literally feel the particles inside my body moving to the beat.

8/10
—David Adelman

Rob Zombie
Hellbilly Deluxe II
Roadrunner

There are worse things to get in the mail than a chain letter. You could, for example, receive Rob Zombie's newest musical abortion. You could place it into the CD tray and hit play, and then walk back five minutes later and stop it. You could repeat this process over and over a few times, fighting your way through the album. And then you could cry yourself to sleep.

While shlockmeisters Gwar continue to pump out good records, if only as an excuse to tour, ringmaster-cum-mediocre-filmmaker Zombie has given up his relevance and fallen on back on retreads of both his later White Zombie work as well as his solo output. Calling one's album a direct sequel to an earlier work is rarely a successful gimmick (the most recent exception being Raekwon's *Only Built 4 Cuban Linx 2*) and this is a prime example of uninspired musicianship rearing its ugly, tired head.

Don't do as this reviewer (who may or may not also call himself "Brian, Don't") did and listen to the album. Cherish anything Zombie-related pre-2002. Forget about his filmmaking endeavours. Sometimes, living in the past is better than suffering through the present.

-3/10 (yes, -3)
—R. Brian Hastie

Hawksley Workman
Meat
Isadora Records

As a virgin to the music of this Canadian multi-instrumentalist, I was a little taken aback by *Meat*. It was love at first sound with "Song for Sarah Jane," as I couldn't help but be reminded of The Pogues "Love You 'Till the End". Unfortunately, I felt like I may have rushed into this relationship; I quickly found myself being utterly confused by tracks like "Baby Mosquito" and "The Government will Protect the Mighty" (though I admit the latter's title is pretty good). After some time of really trying to figure out whether or not I enjoyed *Meat*, which Workman is releasing in tandem with online record *Milk*, I've come to realize that to label this album would be a crime. The songs can range from wearing-your-sunglasses-at-night attitude with "(We Ain't No) Vampire Bats" to happy-go-lucky sha-la-las in "French Girl in LA." My personal favourite is "The Ground We Stand On," which is no doubt destined to one day grace an indie movie's soundtrack.

6.5/10
—Stephanie La Leggia

The DOWN-LOW

Event listings Feb. 2-8

MUSIC

Beaubien magazine Issue 3 Launch Party
Performances by Flow Child, Sean Nicholas Savage and more.
Friday, Feb. 5 at 9 p.m.
550 Beaumont St., room #555
Tickets: $6, with free magazine

Kalmunity presents Fabrice Koffy and King Arthur Sound
Tuesday, Feb. 2 at 8 p.m.
Le Consulat
1442 Bleury St., second floor
Tickets: $7

Land of Talk at Friday Nocturnes
Friday, Feb. 5 at 5 p.m.
Musée d'art contemporain
185 Ste-Catherine St. E.
Tickets: $8 general admission, $4 for students

Chuck Ragan
with Tim Barry, The Cavaliers and Dave Hause
Friday, Feb. 5 at 9:30 p.m.
Quai des Brumes
4481 St-Denis St.

VISUAL ART

Cash and Carry
Graduating Concordia photo students put on a show, complete with a silent auction for their work.
Until Thursday, Feb. 11 at 8 p.m.
Final bids for auction Feb. 11, 6 p.m. to 8 p.m.
VAV Gallery
1395 René-Lévesque Blvd. W.

Transmogrification
Artist Tyler Rauman, known for his band posters, exhibits otherworldly works.
Vernissage Friday, Feb. 5 at 7 p.m.
On display until Feb. 28
Galerie Monastiraki
5478 St-Laurent Blvd.

FILM

Midnight Movie Madness
Performances by Ms. Lady Swamp Pussy and more bookend a screening of *The Adventures of Buckaroo Banzai!*
Saturday, Feb. 6 at 8 p.m.
Movie starts at 10 p.m.
Friendship Cove
215A Murray St.
Tickets: pay-what-you-can

LECTURE

Nicole Brossard discusses her book *Fences in Breathing* with Prof. Norman Cornett.
Saturday, Feb, 6 at 1 p.m.
Galerie Samuel Lallouz
1434 Sherbrooke St. W.
Tickets: $20

— compiled by Madeline Coleman

Hundreds turn out for Crashed Ice qualifiers

11 Montreal area hopefuls headed to Quebec City

• JESSIE MATHIESON

Loaded up with hockey gear, a long line of athletes waited outside McGill's McConnell Arena Sunday night in hopes that they would soon be hurtling down an obstacle-filled slope at breakneck speed.

Red Bull Crashed Ice is a downhill skating race that takes place each March in Quebec City.

Ice Cross Downhill (the sport's official name) was born in Sweden in 2000. It combines boardercross, hockey and downhill skiing to produce a thrilling and crash-filled competition.

For the first time ever, the decade old sporting event is being formally recognized as something worthy of a world championship. The Munich race wrapped up Jan. 16, and now all eyes are on Quebec City for the final round and the crowning of women's and men's 2010 Ice Cross Downhill world champions.

A series of semi-finals running until March 20 will decide which Canadian speed skaters will make it to Quebec to compete in the race.

Montreal is the fourth of 11 cities across Canada to host a qualifying round. Two hundred men and 20 women from the greater Montreal area demonstrated their skills on the flat hockey rink Sunday night. Each skater was timed to see who could fall to the ground, recover, jump an obstacle, make a U-turn and arrive at the finish line in the shortest time.

Women raced two by two in a single heat. Only one Montrealer, Jenny-Isabelle Dubé, will move on to the women's world championship round.

The male competitors performed the same course in two heats, with the fastest 10 moving forward to compete in the main event. Jean-Guy Chouinard had the best time, completing the course in just 11.66 seconds. Yohan Perreault, Martin Nadeau, Johnathan Robert, David Dufour, Louis-Philippe Dumoulin, Dominik Ménard, Jean-Philippe Faubert, Robin Beauchemin and Louis Roy are the other qualifiers in this round.

The stakes rise drastically at the main event. Competitors dressed in full hockey gear bomb downhill four at a time on an icy track complete with sharp corners, gaps, jumps and ice steps before finally coming to a halt at a padded crash wall at the end.

Each athlete must maintain agility and speed throughout the race and are forbidden from intentionally interfering with other racers for safety reasons.

This is Quebec's fifth year creating the 575-metre long, four-metre wide track that runs through the heart of Old Quebec, beginning at the Château Frontenac and ending at the banks of the St. Lawrence River.

In 2007, Kevin Olson of Pincher Creek Alberta won both Red Bull races in Quebec City and Helsinki, Finland. "It's a great honour," he told Red Bull Canada. "Any skater would like to represent the country in this particular sport."

GRAPHIC BY VIVIEN LEUNG

Doing things the right way

Concordia wrestling coach drills technique to perfection

• ELLA REBALSKI

Victor Zilberman's record speaks for itself. The Concordia wrestling coach has trained Olympians, world champions and Canadian Interuniversity Sport gold-winning teams.

In December, he was named Sport Québec's 2009 Coach of the Year. In 2008, he was added to the Canadian Wrestling Hall of Fame, an honour he had turned down many times before. He is also the head coach at Montreal Wrestling Club in Côte-des-Neiges.

Unlike other high-level coaches, Zilberman takes a completely holistic approach to his training regime. He runs a program that is unlike any other in Canada, not only because it combines cross-training in swimming, basketball and soccer with wrestling, but also because he maintains a style at practices that is completely individualized. He will tell each wrestler what to do, and everyone in the room will be working on something different.

And it doesn't stop there. In addition to teaching his athletes how to exercise physically, he also brings articles to practice and goes over them with the whole team. Articles range in subjects from nutrition to business to Dolly Parton's musical career. He takes what he considers to be an important message from them and passes it on to his students. Often, wrestlers will be given a subject to take home and write about. After a tournament, they might be told to write about their own performance.

To observe a practice at the Montreal Wrestling Club is to observe a small city at work. There are all levels of activity going on, as 12-year-old kids work with the lighter athletes doing repetitive techniques until their limbs get sluggish. Men as old as 60 are working with university students, teaching them "how it was in my day." Olympians are in the room, as well as mixed martial arts fighters and Stinger athletes.

Little goes on without Zilberman's approval. He keeps tabs on who works well with whom, what people need to work on, and who's coming in with injuries. You practice injured at MWC, but rather than running yourself into the ground, you get a workout tailored specifically to your needs. Only those who have been with him for a long time are allowed to structure their own workouts, and no one is above the consistent cry of "What are you doing? Not like that!"

Zilberman sometimes gets on the floor with the unwashed masses to demonstrate a move. He is known for his particular techniques, and anyone starting at the bottom at MWC can expect to spend the majority of their time doing the same moves over and over ... and over again. As Zilberman says, it's "not just about doing things, but doing them well."

Zilberman began wrestling as a child in Moldova, then a part of the Soviet Union (it's rumoured to be the source of his toughest coaching methods). He was a Soviet Champion, and later placed 3rd at the Junior World Championships wrestling for Israel. He continued wrestling when he came to Canada and eventually started coaching for Lakehead University in Thunder Bay, Ont., where he met his wife. They moved to Montreal and he got a job as the province's first provincial wrestling coach. He won Quebec's first medal at the national championships in 1976, and has now been involved with wrestling for over 50 years.

> In addition to teaching his athletes how to exercise physically, he also brings articles to practice and goes over them with the whole team. Articles range in subjects from nutrition to business to Dolly Parton's musical career.

"It's a lifetime," he said. "Some people don't live that long!"

Many wrestling careers don't live that long either. What's disheartening, he said, is seeing talented, promising athletes up and quit after years of commitment.

"It's frustrating when you can't get people to the next level," Zilberman said. "It's frustrating when you have no control. You put so much time in, and they just quit."

For Zilberman's loyal students, however, their hard work pays dividends. During my visit, the students—including two world champions and two CIS champs—were all working as hard as they could, partly in fear of their all-powerful coach sitting in the corner, and partly because of the ethic that he has instilled in them to work hard and do well. It doesn't matter whether you've won a medal or just a match, when you come back to practice you are put right back to work.

Stingers have fun playing with themselves

Concordia baseball manager fosters a fun, humorous environment at practice

• STEVEN MYERS

"Was the Stinger Dome really a gift for the baseball team?"

This was the question a brand new, wide-eyed Stingers recruit asked during the team's indoor winter practice last weekend. This impressionable student may have been deceived, perhaps a friendly jest from veteran teammates.

Excited barroom banter is what keeps this team loose.

Baseball manager Howard Schwartz, who has guided the Stingers since the team's inception in 1995, has had plenty of time to develop his own recipe for success.

"Every player has a different personality," Schwartz said. "Everyone has certain idiosyncrasies and quirks. What it comes down to for me is whether a player has what it takes to be on a winning team and contribute."

In the Book of Schwartz, humour is definitely one of these elements and it appears to be contagious.

All-Canadian player Marco Masciotra walked past Schwartz during Saturday's practice inside the Stinger Dome. He was 15 minutes late. The standout shortstop revealed a $10 bill. It was a mock bribe. Schwartz loved the offer.

Above: Manager Howard Schwartz having a laugh with his players. Below: A good old fashioned game of pitch and catch. PHOTOS BRITANNY LEVETT

"Marco money," Schwartz said loudly. "Come and see me later."

The players split into separate stations: one for batters and the other for pitchers and catchers.

Starting pitcher Emmanuel Hamel-Carey, also known fondly as Manu, sports shoulder-length braids and wears his Stingers cap with a tilt. He struck up an impromptu initiation ceremony with an unfamiliar face trying to impress Schwartz and at the same time endured the friendly barbs of his new teammates.

"He's got muscles. He's even wearing an Expos shirt," Manu taunted. The Stingers' star southpaw put hopeful Braden Simpson into a headlock. Simpson is a left-hander like Manu and dreamed of contributing to a pitching staff in need. He was not alone. His battery mate Marty Chambers, from John Abbott College, was also trying out for the Stingers.

Players came ready for a serious workout both on and off the field. Hamel-Carey snuck away from stretching exercises to discuss the world of baseball hats.

"It's all about colours," Manu explained. "Colours are associated with different attributes like attitude. The Expos were blue because they were compassionate and professional about everything. The Phillies are red because they're aggressive and hard going. It's something I do, associate colours with the character of a team.

"What you wear defines what you are," Manu continued. "[The Stingers] have black and burgundy hats [which] corresponds more to an aggressor-type hat. At nationals last year, we changed our hats around. We threw [the hat idea] at Howie. Everybody had a say in it and we won the championship. We're not complaining."

Schwartz encourages any Concordia students interested in playing baseball to join the team for Saturday practices throughout the winter, every Saturday from 12 to 3 p.m. Contact Howard Schwartz at 514-944-2294 or email baseball@alcor.concordia.ca.

McGill hands Con U another beating

McGill puts a wrench in men's hockey team playoff run

• STEVEN MYERS

Concordia 0
McGill 11

The Concordia Stingers men's hockey team returned home early Sunday morning in high spirits after defeating Ottawa 2-0, putting them in contention for the upcoming playoffs. Unfortunately, the team had no time to rest before facing their next opponents.

The McGill Redmen waited at Ed Meagher arena Sunday afternoon for an opportunity to move into first place in the OUA Eastern Division.

After a sloppy start, the Redmen scored back-to-back goals midway through the first period and then tacked on a power play goal to extend their early lead, 3-0.

Concordia won the face-off to open the second period, but succumbed to an explosive McGill offence. Francis Verreault-Paul scored on a rebound 23 seconds into the period.

Less than a minute later, Simon Marcotte-Légaré outmaneuvered Stingers goalie Maxime Joyal with a wrap around goal. The Redmen went on to score seven times in the period and added another in the final period to win 11-0.

McGill's Andrew Wright led the way with a hat trick and an assist. Leonard Verrilli added two goals and an assist, and CIS leading scorer Francis Verreault-Paul scored one goal and dished out three assists.

McGill converted on three out of eight power play opportunities while the Stingers were shut out on special teams.

Redmen goalie Hubert Morin recorded the shutout with 33 saves.

"We're a good team," said McGill head coach Jim Webster. "When we're skating like we were skating tonight, it's hard to beat us."

The Stingers fell to 7-18 while McGill improved to 19-5 and claimed sole possession of first place in the OUA East.

Stingers head coach Kevin Figsby refused to make excuses for his team, but recognized fatigue as a definite factor.

"Last night's win was a major victory for us," Figsby said. "After an emotional high like that, you expect a low, but you expect a couple of days in between. You don't expect to come back against a team fighting for first place.

(Clockwise from left) Con U defenceman Jesse Goodsell smashes Ben Gazdic into the glass. McGill forward Maxime Langelier Parent pots a breakaway goal. Alexandre Picard-Hooper attempts a wrap around. PHOTOS RILEY SPARKS

"There was a little motivation on McGill's part to take over first place and a little de-motivation on our part after last night's big win," he continued.

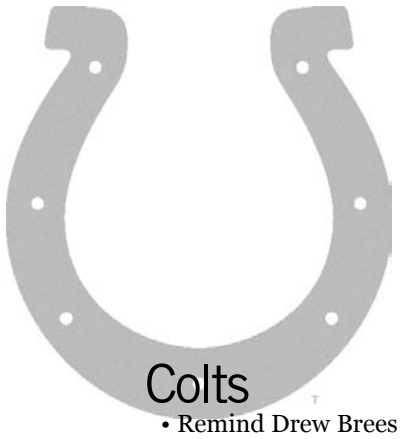
Figsby is nonetheless ready to turn the page and focus on the Stingers' "next major hurdle," a face-off with the neck-and-neck Royal Military College team.

Although McGill dealt Concordia a heavy blow, Figsby said his team will be ready for the Stingers-Redmen season closer.

"[This game] is something we won't forget," he said. "McGill is coming back here to end the season. We'll have a week off between games. We'll be fresh for that one."

The Stingers continue their playoff hunt this Wednesday against UQTR, the first of four games at home. The Stingers close out the regular season against the McGill Redmen on Feb. 12.

Super Bowl keys to victory



Saints

• Ask if it would be possible for another Manning to step in and play; maybe Archie, possibly Eli.

• Try convincing the Colts to play a different game, maybe bridge. I hear Manning is so so at bridge.

• Wait 'til the end of the game, gain possession of the ball and yell "next touchdown wins!"

• Convince Peyton Manning it's really the year 2000 so he will choke horribly.

• Replace Peyton Manning with a Cylon agent facsimile programmed to play like the Peyton Manning of the year 2000.

Colts

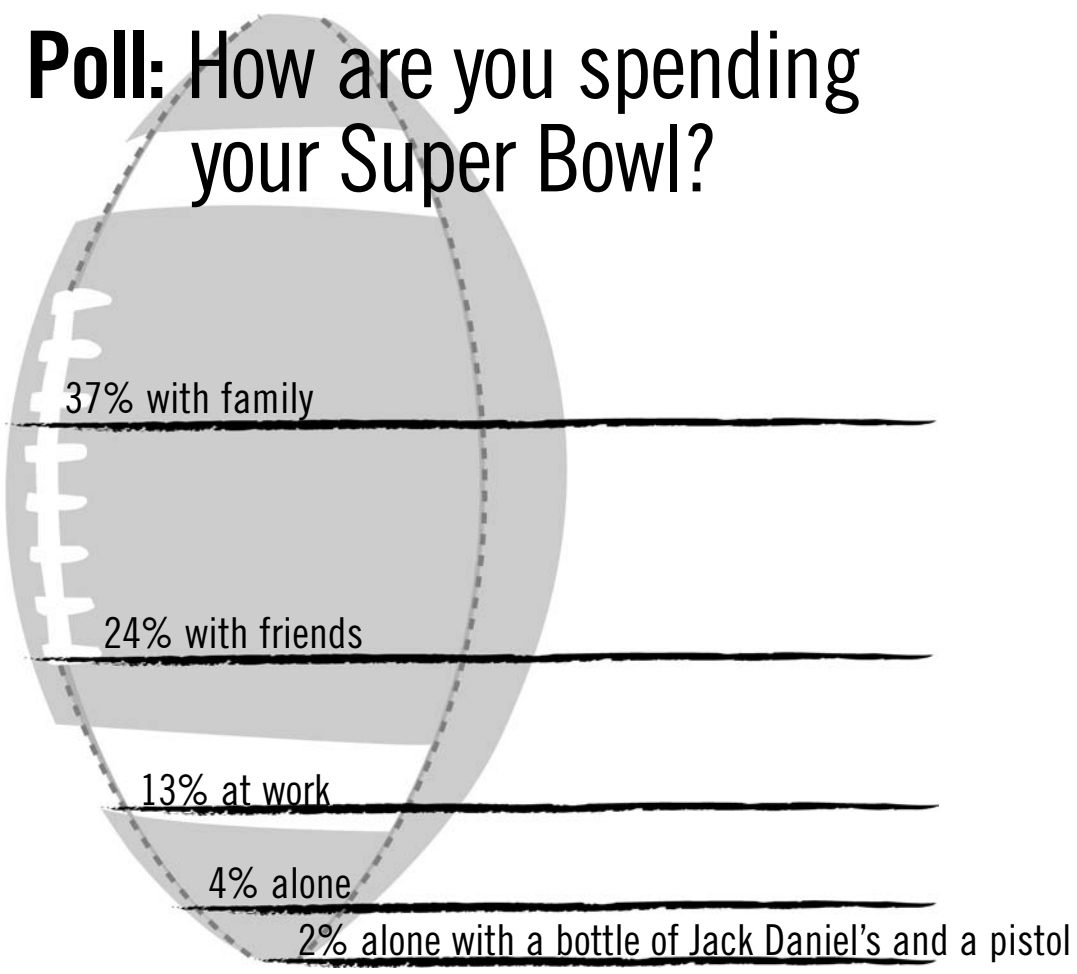
• Remind Drew Brees that the hopes and dreams of a crushed city rest entirely on his shoulders.

• Score more points than the Saints.

• Shower running back Reggie Bush with praise and watch him under perform for the better part of four seasons.

• Have Peyton Manning date one of the Kardashian sisters to level Kardashian-related karma.

Poll: How are you spending your Super Bowl?



GRAPHIC VIVIEN LEUNG

10 signs the recession might be affecting the Super Bowl

1. Losing team offered government bailout
2. Halftime performance by The Who replaced by Superdogs Dog Show.
3. Super Bowl MVP to be offered 10 p.m. slot on NBC
4. All Pepsi commercials replaced with debt-consolidation ads
5. Third quarter brought to you by Slap Chop
6. National anthem to be sung by Coolio
7. Cocaine no longer post game drug of choice; replaced with the more cost effective crystal meth
8. In an effort to boost ratings for CBS' *CSI: Miami*, all video replay challenges to be reviewed by Horatio Kane
9. Super Bowl trophy replaced with 1,000,000 shares in Chrysler
10. New Orleans Saints officially change team name to New Orleans "Cash 4 Gold" Saints

Obnoxious friend no longer invited to Super Bowl party

Last year was really the last straw

• CHRISTOPHER CURTIS

Kevin,

You're not invited to my Super Bowl party. It's not because I don't like you. And it's not because of the time you told my cousin you were from the future so you could make out with her (actually, I thought that was quite amusing). This year you aren't invited because you're basically an asshole to watch sports with.

Remember how drunk you got last year? Of course you don't, why would you? Let me just refresh your memory. You hit on my mom in front of my dad, and it wasn't in a joking context; I've never heard such gratuitous use of the word "boner" before. Then, as if hitting on my mother wasn't enough, you started crying and told us about when your mother would dress you as a girl. I'm really sorry about that, by the way, but there's a time and a place, buddy.

Please don't take this the wrong way. It's not personal well, it's a little personal. But don't let that ruin Super Bowl Sunday for you. Godspeed and good luck finding another party, Kevin.

scoreboard

	Home	Away	Record
Men's Hockey	UQTR 4 Ottawa 0 Concordia 0	Concordia 2 Concordia 2 McGill 11	7-17
Women's Basketball	Laval 95 McGill 69	Concordia 87 Concordia 73	4-7
Men's Basketball	Laval 80 McGill 65	Bishop's 64 Concordia 67	3-8
Women's Hockey	Carleton 2	Concordia 0	1-14

schedule

	Who	When
Men's Hockey	vs. UQTR vs. Ottawa vs. Carleton	Wednesday, 8 p.m. Friday, 7:30 p.m. Saturday, 2 p.m.
Women's Basketball	vs. McGill vs. Laval	Friday, 8 p.m. Saturday, 6 p.m.
Men's Basketball	vs. McGill vs. Laval	Friday, 6 p.m. Saturday, 4 p.m.
Women's Hockey	vs. Ottawa vs. Carleton	Saturday, 5:30 p.m. Sunday, 3 p.m.

Concordia keeps playoff hopes alive

Men's basketball team beats McGill to snap a six game winning streak

• LES HONYWILL

Concordia 67
McGill 65

Evens Laroche's jump shot with 0.1 seconds remaining sealed a 67-65 Concordia victory over the McGill Redmen and closed out the latest chapter in the Concordia-McGill rivalry in dramatic fashion.

The win snapped Concordia's six-game losing streak and kept their playoff hopes alive.

"[The losing streak] was a gorilla on my back, so it's great to get over that," said Stingers head coach John Dore. "As a team we dominated defensively, and I think the team deserves a lot of credit for that. It's a lot more fun when you win than lose, and it's a lot more fun when you play together than play as individuals."

Stingers forward James Clark said the team's win came at the right time.

"We were down, and as competitors and basketball players no one wants to lose," Clark said. "We weren't too high-spirited, and so this win will for sure help us."

The Stingers played a strong second quarter, outscoring their cross-town opponents 19-2, and rode the commanding 15-point halftime lead to victory, despite being outscored in every other frame.

"We dug a hole in the second quarter, and when you fall behind by 15 points it's hard to come back," said Redmen head coach Craig Norman. "I was proud of the guys. I thought we made a great run and put ourselves in a position to win that game, but Concordia came up with bigger plays than us down the stretch. Evens Laroche took over the game on the last three possessions and that was that."

McGill overcame the deficit with four minutes remaining in the fourth and moved into the lead soon afterwards. Concordia rallied to tie the game. With 11 seconds remaining, Deecee Krah grabbed a defensive rebound and moved up the court. With the deafening crowd at Tomlinson Hall urging the Redmen defence on, Krah passed the ball to Laroche who promptly silenced the McGill fans with the winning shot.

"I thought we showed a lot of character when we came back," Dore said. "The guys deserve a lot of credit; we worked hard for this one."

Norman said that, given his team's recent success in close games, it was only a matter of time before they ended up on the wrong end.

"The second quarter we dug ourselves a hole," added McGill guard Matt Thornhill. "We weren't playing as hard, weren't talking and we couldn't get the ball to drop."

While the loss does not jeopardize McGill's playoff aspirations, Thornhill said the importance of the game cannot be underestimated.

"This game was really important," he continued. "That would have put us above .500 and would have put Concordia out of the playoffs. Now they have a chance to get back in and we have to work that much harder to get ready for the playoffs."

The Redmen will get a shot at revenge when they play Concordia at Loyola Campus Friday.

Stingers centre Taylor Garner (left) and guard Evens Laroche (right) swarm a McGill attacker. PHOTO RILEY SPARKS

Stingers bounce back

Women's basketball team improves to 4-7

• CHRISTOPHER CURTIS

Concordia 73
McGill 69

After dropping three straight games, Concordia's women's basketball team rebounded Saturday handing their McGill Martlet hosts a 73-69 loss.

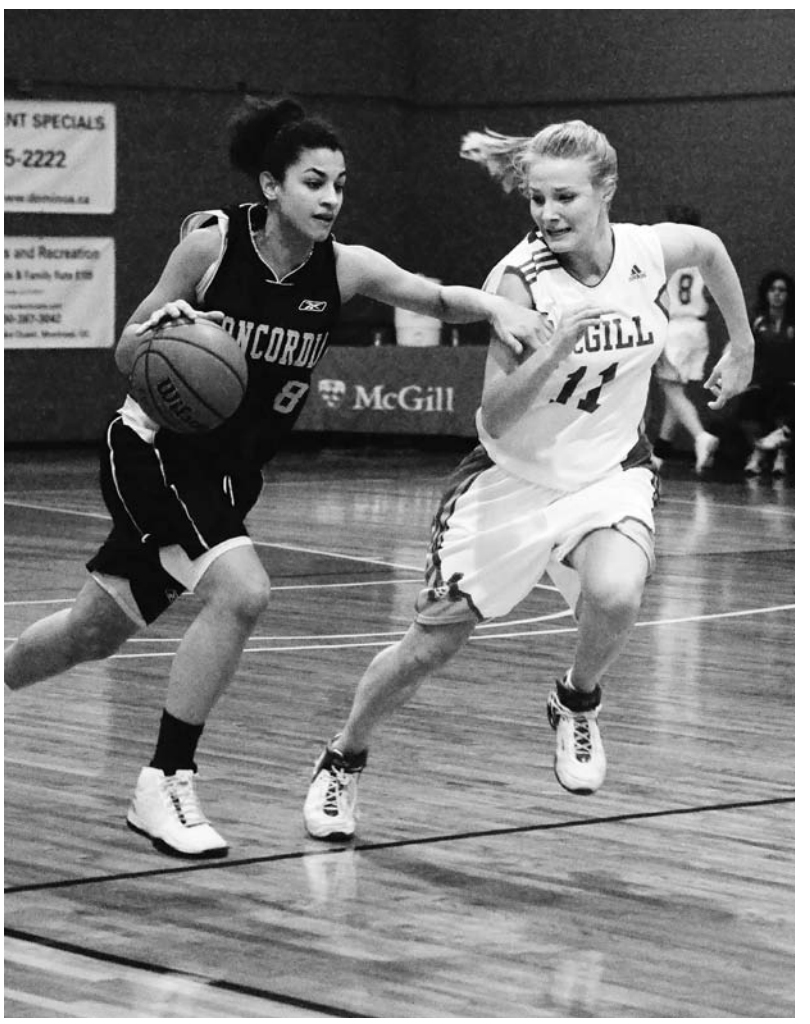
Highlighted by Stinger Kristin Portwine's 24-point performance, the win puts Concordia in a two-way tie for fourth place in the Canadian Interuniversity Sport's Quebec division.

The Stingers share fourth place with McGill, who will face off with Con U this Friday.

Standings in the Quebec division are air tight this season, with second place UQAM just two points ahead of Concordia, McGill and Bishop's.

With games against UQAM and Bishop's forthcoming, the Stingers can make a run for the playoffs if they win three of their next five games.

Con U welcomes the Martlets to a rematch this Friday at Loyola Campus. Tipoff is at 8 p.m.



(Left to right) Anne-Marie Prophete charges up court. Stinger Jill Verhesen takes it to the hoop. PHOTO RILEY SPARKS

Letters @thelinknewspaper.ca

More reasons to donate to Haiti

First and foremost, the Concordia Student Union would like to take this opportunity to thank you for your efforts and involvement in various Haiti relief campaigns taking place all over campus. Your input, big or small, is greatly appreciated and we would like to share some ideas with you.

To this day, the campaigning is going very well, greater than what we had anticipated and this is all because of your contribution.

The CSU, in collaboration with many organizations such as Ralliement Étudiant Haiti-Canada, has been partaking in a variety of events, besides from our collection and drop-off bins available on campus; we collected the cover charge for Reggie's Thirsty Thursdays and hosted Bollywood night at The Hive with the Arts and Science Federation of Associations where all proceeds went to the relief fund.

Alongside individual donations, our two-week-long drive got us a remarkable $11,000, and still counting—which will be doubled! Yes, you heard us right! The federal government will be matching every dollar from personal donations.

However, we want to point out that the money collected from fundraising and donations will be passing by the Dean of Students office. No member of the CSU will claim these as personal donations. Effective procedures are currently underway and we are taking steps to ensure the total fairness of the doubling procedures.

Coming up in the following weeks are Green Month and Black History Month, both reflecting on the openness and progressive stance of the entire Concordia community and the CSU. We encourage you to take part in numerous social events, workshops, and invite you to visit some of the CSU speaker series that will be ongoing throughout the month.

—Amine Dabchy, CSU President

Prorogation and Police Brutality

Two significant political news and opinions stories appeared in *The Link* last week, prorogation and police brutality [Vol. 30, Iss. 20]. The prorogation rally was entirely for show and had no substance. If the politicians were serious, they would have asked the governor general to deny Mr. Harper's request to close parliament as an abuse of power to avoid inquiry into his possible war crimes. His contempt of parliament and his refusal to hand over documents demanded by the people's representatives is unacceptable.

The governor general is also not without blame in this obscene episode. She questioned Mr. Harper for many hours the first time he used this stunt in order to avoid losing his job. This time she rubber-stamped it in the hope against hope Harper will reappoint her.

This is a very pathetic time in Canadian history. The opposition is at its weakest. The Liberal élite picked a leader who had been 30 years outside the country and did not permit the members of the party to have an election. The New Democratic Party that never misses a chance to state they are the moral party of Canada immediately supported the Conservatives with the same energy they had opposed them the moment the Liberals stated they would bring the government down.

As for police brutality, Montreal police have a well deserved international reputation for violence that continues without any political interference from the Liberals or the Parti Québécois, which also at this moment in history are incredibly incompetent. That there is not one individual in the National Assembly with the moral decency to address this unbelievably long-standing problem is one of the reasons politicians are universally held in such contempt by the general public.

—David Sommer Rovins, Independent Student

Policy and reform in the CSU

In response to the article "Student Union readies reform package" [Jan. 26, Vol. 30, Iss. 20], the Democracy and Governance Committee of the Concordia Student Union would like to express a sincere thank you to *The Link* for acknowledging the committee's efforts. The article invoked a positive response expressed by members of the Concordia community to the CSU.

However, the article highlights the expectation of a policy reform package to be presented to Council on Feb. 10. Policy reform of the CSU has been a continuous process of revision that has been presented on a step-by-step process since its inception. Though recommendations will be presented at the upcoming Council meeting, note that they will not necessarily be motioned in way of a package deal.

The committee would like to rectify the view that the policy reform campaign promise is outstanding as the research and outcomes of the committee are presented by the Custodial Committee, approved by Council, and have been ratified by students in the latest by-election in November 2009. Specific contributions by the committee can also be found in the CSU's Council minutes posted online (gov.csu.qc.ca).

Hoping that a continual look-in of the CSU's governing documents will be up kept for years to come, we encourage students to contact their representatives to share their ideas of reform for the betterment of their union experience.

—CSU Democracy and Governance Committee

Sustainable Alternatives

Want to buy local but don't know where to go? Interested in cooperative car-sharing and alternative banking? Want to promote social justice through community initiatives? If so, join an interactive panel on Social Economy and Sustainable Alternatives! As part of the CSU's Green Month, the Global Futures Transition Research Group on Social Economy is hosting a panel on social economy initiatives and viable alternatives. The corporate economy is inherently unsustainable, and social economy provides great alternatives which are socially beneficial, ecologically sustainable, and financially self-sufficient. Come meet representatives from organizations promoting alternatives in the topics of food, clothing, transport, finance, and employment. Join an engaging discussion to learn how you can integrate such changes in your own lives. You will not leave unchanged. Meet Monday, Feb. 8 at 4:30 p.m. in the Hall building at the 7th floor lounge. For more information, contact socialeconomyresearchgroup@gmail.com.

—Marian Pinsky, Sociology

DON'T LIKE WHAT YOU READ?
SEND US A LETTER.

send your letters and opinions to
letters@thelinknewspaper.ca

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

heartaches anonymous

send your relationship queries to
heartachesanonymous@gmail.com

Are you lonely of heart?
Tortured of conscience?
Frustrated of genital?

Dear Heartaches,
Yesterday when arriving home after a long day at work, my opposite-gendered roommate grabbed my hand and said that we should watch porn together. What' a poor straight boy to do?
—A proof is a proof

Dearest Proof,

So the moment you stepped in the door, your lady housemate grabbed you by the paw and asked if you could share something beyond the hydro bill. Perhaps it came at a particularly tender roommate moment, after you two had shared a laugh over the eating habits one of your other rent-splitters ("Can you believe all he has in the fridge is pickled eggs? We should watch porn together!"). Perhaps you were just trying to relax on the couch when you found lady housemate wrapping her clammy fingers around yours.

I don't care how she brought it up. What I want to know is: what did you say?

There's a special kind of way to watch porn platonically, and it doesn't involve a lot of attentiveness. Could it be that your opposite-gendered roommate (OGR) just wants you to join her in making snarky comments about the hot/heavy? Was she grabbing your hand because she's the kind of person who likes to make physical contact when she suggests something devious? (Dramas about primary school-age girls are full of this kind of handholding.) If this is the case, I say, hey, why not? It's also possible that she just wants to watch something kind of sexy together, but not necessarily GET sexy.

However, you seem concerned. If you're worried this is a sign that your roommate wants to become your bedmate, well, as I've said before on Heartaches Anonymous, it does happen and it ain't all good. I say lay low and politely decline her invitation. Sounds lovely, but no thanks. I think I will go over here and become aroused by myself.

But wait, you say! I kind of maybe sort of do want to watch porn with my roommate, and if it ends in mutual masturbation, well, so be it! Well I say it's your life, bro. Just proceed with caution. Happy wanking!

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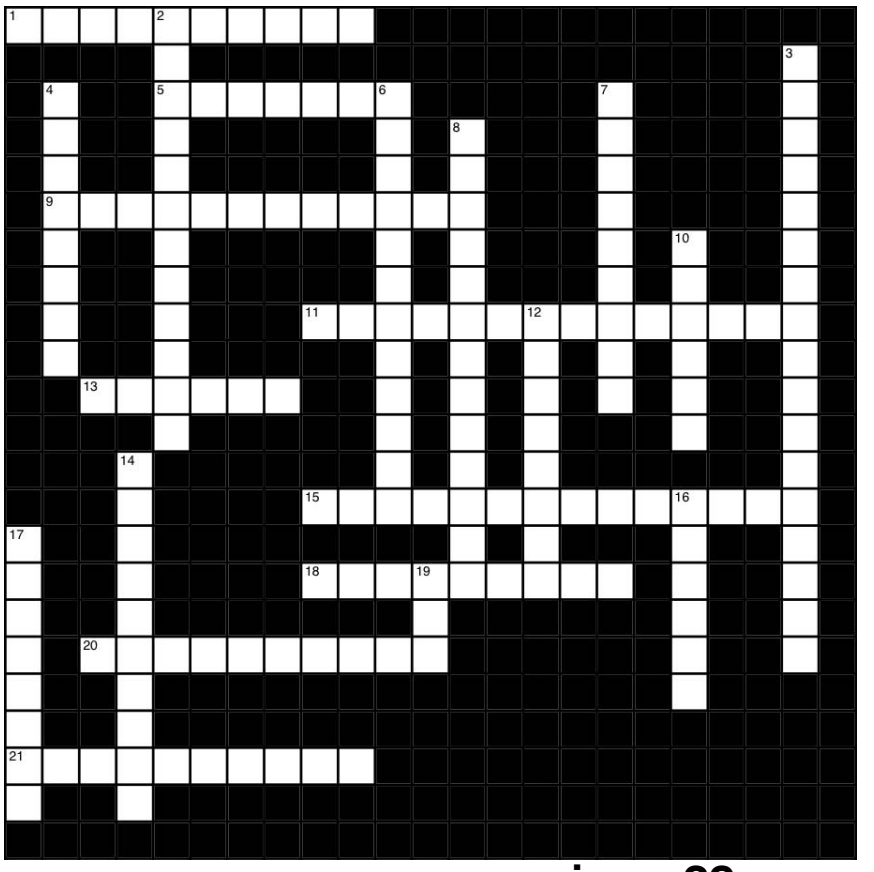
pzzlol crswrd

THE "YO, 1980 WAS A SEXY YEAR" EDITION

• R. BRIAN "THE COMPUTER AGE RULES!" HASTIE



Across

1. The first of two province-wide campaigns to gain partial independence from Canada occurs on May 20. The voters reject this and Canada keeps its biggest province in check.

5. The war of words in-between the United States and the Soviet Union continues strong at the dawn of this new decade. (2 words)

9. Zimbabwe elects this narrow-minded man for the first time. He still hasn't left power, and his despotic tendencies continue. (2 words)

11. The mass exodus of Cubans to Florida starts in April of this year. The majority of Cubans arrive in May and June of that year. The Brian de Palma version of Scarface depicts this event in the introduction of the film. (2 words)

13. The Pope's visit to this South American country causes the death of six people as they are trampled to death. I'm sure there's a joke to be made here, but I'm unsure what it is, so I'm gonna let it lie until it hits me.

15. The 13th edition of these events takes place in Lake Placid, New York. Liechtenstein wins a Gold medal! The Miracle on Ice occurs! No one boycotts these shits. (2 words)

18. Apparently for this iconic singer, love will tear you apart, and then make a noose so that you may off yourself. (2 words)

20. The visionary behind Montreal-penned "Give Peace A Chance" gets gunned down by Mark Henry Chapman. (2 words)

21. This U.S.-launched probe confirms the existence of one of Saturn's moons, Janus. (2 words)

Down

2. The first one of its kind takes place in Tbilisi, Georgia. The Soviet Union fears the arrival of Chuck Berry. (2 words)

3. One of the best sequels in cinematic history is released. There's just something cathartic about familiar revelations that gets the blood going, even when your own father has an aptitude for wearing a black mask around. (3 words)

4. The man behind the Marathon Of Hope trek begins his voyage in St John's, Newfoundland. (2 words)

6. Cowboy becomes American president. World remains unshocked at such an absolutely stupid move. *Star Wars*, anyone? (2 words)

7. The second of two television-inclined brothers is born. Some might say he was inferior... I mean, we all can't act in *The Wonder Years*, right? (2 words)

8. Beloved Canadian prime minister returns to office, continues to beat down all who oppose him with his laser eyes. (2 words)

10. The November airing of the "Who Shot J.R.?" episode of this prime-time soap opera draws record numbers of viewers.

12. Former AC/DC singer dies after a long night of drinking. *Back In Black* is recorded partly as an homage to him. (2 words)

14. The animal behind the stool for such hits as "Stairway to Heaven" and "Dazed and Confused" dies. His son continues to rock with terrible '80s arena rockers, sadly. (2 words)

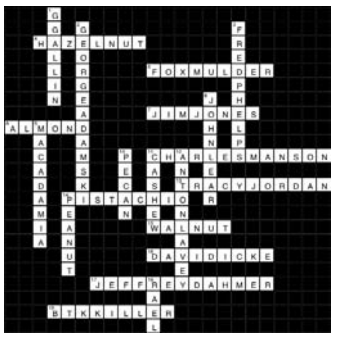
16. Iconic videogame character is unleashed upon the world. Hide your pellets, Blinky, Pinky, Inky and Clyde.

17. A U.S.-wide rising of temperatures claims 1,700-related deaths.

19. Larry King's home network is born. Some speculate that King himself is the father, though others contend that it was the unholy marriage between near-complete journalistic objectivity and the chance to clutter a TV screen to the nth degree.

issue 20

solutionz



Read it and weep

BY TRAVIS DANDRO

editorial

Disaster capitalists descend on Haiti

It's been over 20 days since a 7.0 magnitude earthquake rocked Haiti. Over 170,000 bodies have been found. Fifty-two aftershocks of over 4.0 have been recorded. Over $2 billion has been pledged to help the poorest country in the Western Hemisphere recover from the most recent of many natural disasters that has ravaged its citizens.

We've long since moved past the initial response phase. Only 10 days after the quake, both the UN and the Haitian government declared they were "leaving that emergency phase behind," and were focusing on recovery efforts. With that announcement, the dark spectre of disaster capitalism stepped into frame.

We all know the song and dance, the players and the scenes. Act I: Disaster strikes. Cue outpouring of sympathy. For sympathy, see: money. The initial shock fades. The world forgets to remember. Act II: Rebuilding.

Sadly, most people don't stay to watch the second act. It's the one where the construction industry moves in; where only a handful of the contracts are given to small local businesses that suffered during the disaster and most, especially the large ones, are given to powerful multi-nationals. After Hurricane Katrina, only 26 per cent of the contracts went to small businesses, less than 10 per cent to disadvantaged businesses. Only 30 per cent of the contracts went to businesses, large or small, from either Alabama, Louisiana or Mississippi, the three states most affected.

Haiti, we're told, will be different. This time the power has been given to the people in need. Hillary Clinton proclaimed that western nations would be partners, not patrons. Accountability and oversight will be the name of the game. But how often are these initial promises forgotten in the long term?

Haiti isn't known for the independence, integrity or effectiveness of its government. In a situation as desperate as the one facing Haitians right now, do we expect them to resist the pressures of profit driven companies? Will giving them the ability to sign the cheques mean that we're holding disaster capitalism at bay?

The answer: probably not. Putting the pen in Haiti's hands doesn't make them immune to influence and political power. The president that knows the politician that knows the CEO will continue to organize things to everyone's liking behind closed doors. Contracts will still be granted without a competitive bidding process. Palms will be greased. Coffers will be filled. That's what happens when millions of dollars are at stake and no one is looking.

The solution to this problem isn't a complex political arrangement that prevents corruption, it's complete transparency throughout the entire process and the world remembering to pay attention. It's the relationships between the people putting out bids and getting the contracts being a matter of public record and having a public that cares.

Recent estimates put the cost of rebuilding at about $10 billion over the next 10 years. That's what it will take to replace (see: install) the necessary infrastructure, to clear the rubble and to get the people in the area rocked by these earthquakes back on their feet. We're talking bare minimum.

If the world makes Haiti a real priority, follows the bidding process and pays attention during what's sure to be a long and arduous rebuilding, then the money that has flowed into Haiti from philanthropic nations and the countless telethons and relief drives that sprang up in the wake of the tragedy will probably be used to the benefit of the Haitian people.

But if we do what we usually do—stay for the first act and quietly leave once the lights come on during the second—then all of the political oversight committees and public sabre rattling in the world won't stop the money going to Haiti from being used on a splashy short-term boondoggle that makes some rich contractor even richer.

—Clare Raspopow,
Managing editor