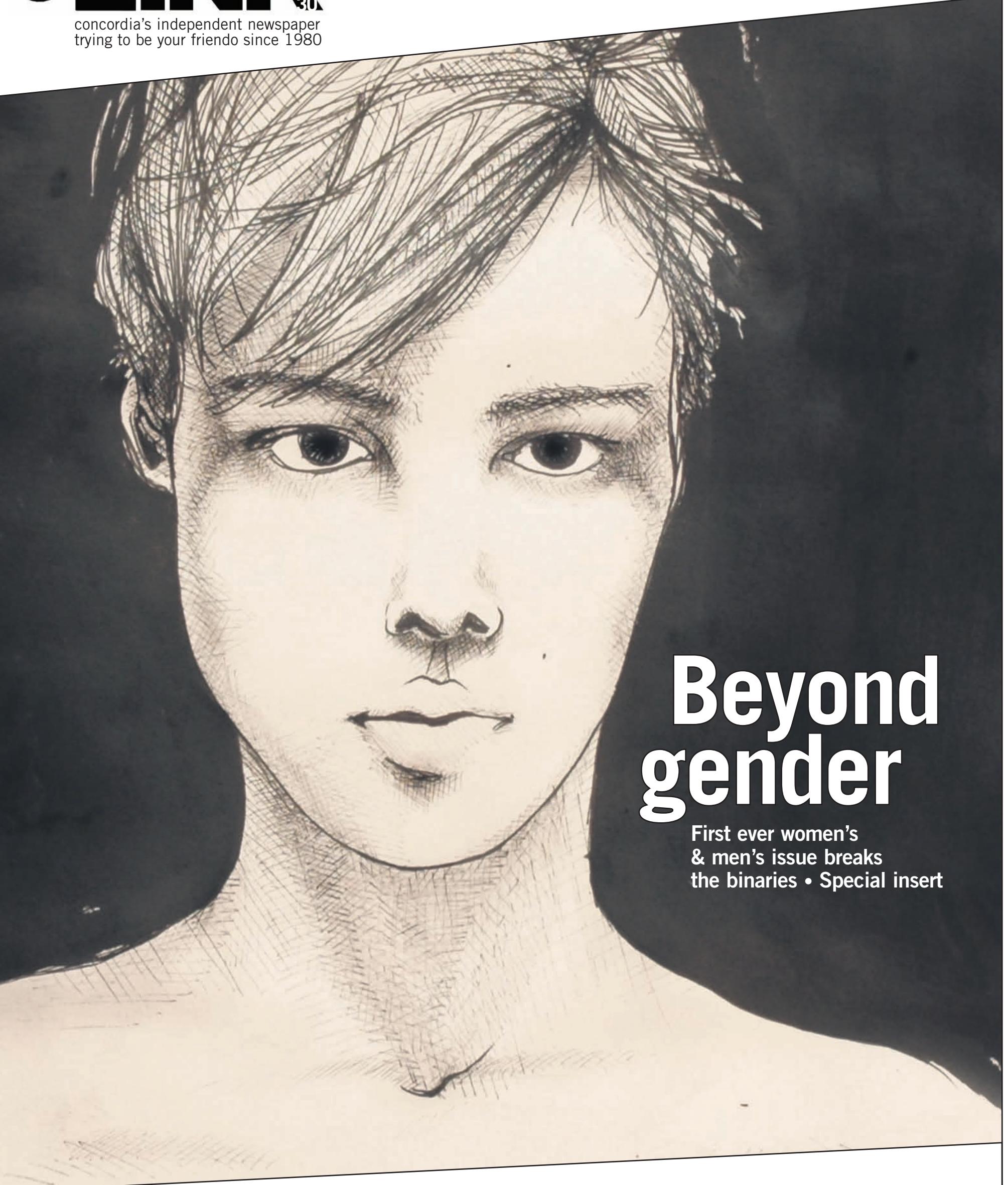


THE **LiNK**<sup>30</sup>

concordia's independent newspaper  
trying to be your friend since 1980



# Beyond gender

First ever women's  
& men's issue breaks  
the binaries • Special insert

10 years later, Art still Matters • Fringe arts 11

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#### THE LINK

CONCORDIA'S INDEPENDENT NEWSPAPER

Volume 30, Issue 24	editorial: (514) 848-2424 ext. 7405
Tuesday, March 2, 2010	arts: (514) 848-2424 ext. 5813
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*The Link* is published every Tuesday during the academic year by the Link Publication Society Inc. Content is independent of the University and student associations (ECA, CASA, ASFA, FASA, CSU). Editorial policy is set by an elected board as provided for in *The Link's* constitution. Any student is welcome to work on *The Link* and become a voting staff member. *The Link* is a member of Canadian University Press and Presse Universitaire Indépendante du Québec. Material appearing in *The Link* may not be reproduced without prior written permission from *The Link*. Letters to the editor are welcome. All letters 400 words or less will be printed, space permitting. Letters deadline is Friday at 4 p.m. *The Link* reserves the right to edit letters for clarity and length and refuse those deemed racist, sexist, homophobic, xenophobic, libellous, or otherwise contrary to *The Link's* statement of principles.

Board of Directors 2009-2010: Matthew Gore, Giuseppe Valente, Ellis Steinberg, Shawna Satz, Jonathan Metcalfe, Matthew Brett; non-voting members: Rachel Boucher, Terrine Friday. Typesetting by *The Link*. Printing by Transcontinental.

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# Regime change at TAs union

TRAC members remove executive in surprise move at general assembly



Students vote out the executive that approved a tentative agreement that contained a 30 per cent pay cut. PHOTO JUSTIN GIOVANNETTI

#### • JUSTIN GIOVANNETTI

When the members of the union of the Teaching and Research Assistants at Concordia sat down for their general assembly on Feb. 18, the only item on the agenda was "The status of the union."

TRAC president Bilal Abdil Kader had promised a month earlier that his beleaguered executive was going to talk to members about the progress of negotiations and explain away all problems.

It never happened.

Within five minutes of the assembly's start, Kader was out of a job, with the assembled members voting to scrap the agenda and elect a new executive for the local, which is a branch of the Public Service Alliance of Canada.

Kader did not take his removal easily, arguing that TRAC's bylaws stipulated advanced notice was necessary and that the meeting was a special general assembly, not a regular general assembly. General assembly chair Roddy Doucet rebuffed Kader on both points.

"Do whatever you want, we will contest this," said Kader as he left the room.

"Sour grapes," yelled a member in the general assembly.

Thomas Leonard, a master's student in public policy and public administration, was elected as TRAC's new president. His six vice presidents were elected from amongst the 75 members attending the general assembly.

Leonard became interested in TRAC when he attended a meeting in late January where members were first presented a tentative agreement recommended by the union and local executive.

Under the tentative agreement, members were facing a 30 per cent pay cut and the complete loss of guaranteed work hours. They rejected the agreement.

"Under no contract can you allow that much of a pay loss," said Leonard, about the \$10 per hour cut some students would suffer. "We are the lowest paid TAs in Quebec and amongst the lowest-paid in Canada—right

now, before the cut."

According to Leonard, the removal of the executive was "orchestrated" by TRAC members.

"The tipping point was two weeks before the general assembly when Bilal [Abdil Kader] couldn't book a room big enough. That's when we decided we needed to remove the executive. 'We can't wait anymore, if we wait he is going to screw something up,' so we began planning for an election," said Leonard.

On Feb. 22 the PSAC met with Concordia University to discuss the existing arbitration process. Under arbitration, the union and the university will meet in front of a judge who will decide who gets what.

"We want to get out of arbitration but we can't," said Leonard. "Once you are in arbitration both parties need to decide to drop out, the university won't agree."

An arbitration date was set for late April, but until that time Leonard would not rule out pressure tactics.

Under the tentative agreement

reached with the university, many TAs would be paid just above minimum wage: \$11.30 an hour.

"Every TA can give an A, if Concordia thinks we are just as good as a minimum wage worker," said Leonard. "Well we didn't know better, everyone gets an A."

One of the concessions Leonard secured going into arbitrations with Concordia was new negotiators from the PSAC.

"We didn't feel too confident with the previous negotiators from PSAC," said Leonard.

One of the legacies left by the PSAC's previous negotiators was a lack of information. According to Leonard, the negotiators did not even compile the different salaries of all the TAs at Concordia.

Despite his words at the general assembly, Kader said he had no problem with the new executive.

"The plan for [the election] was in March but the members decided to do it in February," said Kader. "It's just a routine transfer, a new team, nothing will change with the negotiations."

## Student union puts question to quit CFS on ballot

#### • TERRINE FRIDAY

In response to the million-dollar bill sent by fax from the Canadian Federation of Students' head office, Concordia Student Union President Amine Dabchy issued a presidential decree on Feb. 25 to leave what he calls an "oppressive" organization.

Dabchy said it was necessary to issue the decree because Council, the CSU's legislative body, could not meet in time, in part due to reading week. According to the CSU's bylaws, "a 25-day delay is required to issue a general public notice of a poll" for the general election.

"The decree allows the president

to use the same power as Council," Dabchy said. "Since we were short in time, and we didn't have a court date and CFS didn't answer us, we decided to go ahead and do the referendum anyways."

Dabchy said the CSU is "still waiting for [the CFS]" to recognize the CSU's right to hold a legal referendum and answer to the whopping million-dollar claim of outstanding dues.

The CFS, a national student lobby group to which Concordia undergraduate students pay 41 cents per credit, issued a legal memorandum on Feb. 10 which claimed undergraduate students owe them \$1,033,278.76—two-thirds of the CSU's yearly oper-

ating budget.

The memorandum, which was sent in the wake of the CSU's campaign to defederate from the CFS, is a scare tactic to keep the CSU roped into the organization for another 10 years, Dabchy said.

"We have proof of bad faith from the CFS: the million dollars that just showed up, the retroactivity of motion six, all of the letters that we sent them. So, all of that is working in our favour," he continued.

Motion six, which tightens conditions under which schools may leave the federation, was approved at the CFS's Annual General Meeting. Although it remains questionable whether the vote was

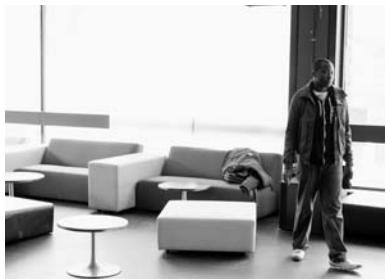
passed in accordance with the federation's bylaws, Dabchy's main concern is that the motion's requirements are being applied retroactively. The CFS's AGM was in November, one month after the CSU had already requested a referendum date after a petition drive which garnered signatures from 17.8 per cent of the student body.

The CSU plans to put the CFS defederation referendum question on their general election ballot this month. If the question passes, they will try to get the defederation recognized in court in spite of the CFS.

When asked how much the campaign to defederate would cost, Dabchy said it would be "cheaper than injunction."

# 'Loyola Renaissance'

Student union's Loyola VP talks about transformation over past year



(Clockwise from right) CSU VP Services & Loyola Prince Ralph Osei in the new CSU office. The newly refurbished G Lounge. Osei serving students coffee. The refurbished Hive. PHOTOS JUSTIN GIOVANNETTI

• JUSTIN GIOVANNETTI

Prince Ralph Osei, the Concordia Student Union's VP Services and Loyola, calls the campus' rejuvenation the "Loyola Renaissance" as he pours coffee for students on a cold morning by the new heated bus shelter on the windswept Loyola campus.

"Loyola was not seen as a priority. My vision was to change that to let the rest of the student body know that the CSU takes Loyola seriously," he said.

The list of unveilings at Loyola over the past year have been impressive—a new CSU office, a heated bus shelter, the Loyola Luncheon program, The Hive, a renovated G Lounge and the university's new Stinger Dome—but it remains to be seen if the hard work of one of the student union's most

charismatic VPs will stick.

"I have been at Concordia for five years now and four of those years were spent at this campus," said Osei, sitting in the newly-opened CSU office at Loyola. "There is potential here and it is high time that we utilize that potential to make students feel at home."

Thirty-six years after Loyola College and Sir George Williams University merged to form Concordia, tension still exists as students at the Loyola campus have complained for decades about being treated like second-class citizens within Concordia.

"Five thousand students are here at Loyola, that is bigger than two of the faculties at this university. While those faculties might have associations to represent them, Loyola does not. It is time that this campus has strong

representation," Osei continued.

The first priority for Osei in office was the re-establishment of the Loyola Luncheon, now a five-day-a-week free vegetarian meal served at The Hive. The study space was opened last year and is often used to host concerts and student events.

Ricardo Hernandez Torres, the Luncheon's coordinator, can be found on weekdays preparing the meal for the hundred-plus students on a standard stovetop.

"Everything is made from scratch," said Torres. To keep the Luncheon going, Osei said he hopes his successor at the student union invests in commercial-grade equipment for the Luncheon's kitchen.

"There is a fee levy for the [independently-operated] People's Potato downtown and students at Loyola, even though they are paying for the service, find it hard to go

downtown to enjoy the food," said Osei. "If a student is at Loyola for class during a weekday, they now have the opportunity to enjoy the Luncheon."

A café is slated to open in The Hive before the end of Osei's mandate, and several possible operators have already looked at the space. However, CSU VP Sustainability and Projects Alex Oster has expressed concerns over having corporate coffee chains as tenants.

To help direct the CSU's efforts at Loyola, Osei also saw that the CSU's own office would need an overhaul. Although the new space is spartan, located on the first floor of the SC building near the cafeteria, it is airy and inviting.

"When I first came into the CSU's office I felt depressed," said Osei. "With a psychology background I knew that the colours and

vibe of the room would affect every person who comes in."

The revamped office, with a bright colour scheme, was unveiled on Feb. 17.

Negotiations are currently underway to move an outpost of the Off-Campus Housing and Job Bank and the Student Advocate Program to Loyola.

Osei said he would soon call for the university to hold symbolic Senate and Board of Governors meetings at Loyola, all of which are currently held at the SGW campus downtown.

With the ground breaking for a \$65 million PERFORM Athletics Lab and a Genomics Centre expected at Loyola within the next 12 months and a new gym complex planned alongside the new Stinger Dome, the Loyola Renaissance may be sustained.

## Pact of Quebec leaders call for tuition hike

• JESSIE MATHIESON

A group of former Quebec political leaders, student leaders and business leaders are calling for an end to the province's tuition freeze.

Lucien Bouchard, former leader of the Bloc Québécois and Parti Québécois premier of the province, was one of the signatories and spokesmen for the Pact for the

Competitive Funding of Our Universities, released to the public on Feb. 23.

Although it was a PQ government that capped tuition fees in 1994, Bouchard is now asking for that cap to be removed.

"Quebec universities are dangerously under-funded compared with those in Canada and North America," Bouchard announced.

The operating budget for Quebec universities has fallen nearly \$500 million short of the rest of the average for Canadian universities each year. He and the other signatories have declared the 16-year-old provincial approach to secondary education a failure.

"These precarious finances have now reached a critical stage. If nothing is done, it's students themselves

who will suffer first," Bouchard continued.

They argued that lifting the freeze would allow universities to hire better professors and purchase the best training equipment.

It promises to keep Quebec's high rates of public funding for education while allowing tuition prices to rise competitively to accurately mirror the costs of

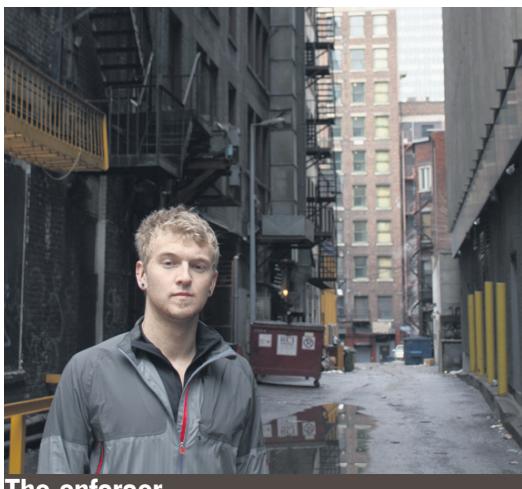
educating students.

The Pact calls for a re-examination of the situation every five years.

"It's a double-edged sword," said Concordia Student Union President Amine Dabch. "On the one hand they say that the Quebec system needs to change, they called it a failure, but we do not believe that the solution is asking students for more money."

**The president-elect**

ASFA president-elect Aaron Green faces a divided executive but vows to act as a bridge builder.

**The enforcer**

ASFA chief electoral officer Colby Briggs dealt with fractious candidates—he wouldn't do it again.

**Second, but empty-handed**

Despite coming second in many positions, no one from New Energy was elected. PHOTOS JUSTIN GIOVANNETTI

# Innovation wins ASFA election, ‘abstain’ comes close second

## Student apathy high as Innovation wins majority of ASFA executive seats

• JUSTIN GIOVANNETTI

At the end of voting on Feb. 18, Concordia's arts and science students elected Aaron Green as president of the Arts and Sciences Federation of Associations. His Innovation team went on to win four of the federation's six executive seats.

A shadow was cast over the results as only nine per cent of arts and science students voted, with nearly a third of those votes going towards abstentions.

“I didn’t really see it coming,” said president-elect Green about the election of the Stronger team’s Anna Goldfinch to VP Internal and Sarah Moore to VP Communications. “I thought it was going to be a split between Innovation and New Energy.”

A week after the results were delivered, Green was still hurt by the loss of VP Communications candidate Taylor Knott, who had been at his side throughout the election.

Along with Goldfinch and Moore, Innovation’s Alexa

Newman will sit as VP Finance and Chad Walcott was elected as VP External and Sustainability—despite gaining fewer votes than abstentions. Terry Seminara won VP Academic and Loyola Affairs and Allie McDonald will be VP Social.

“I was holding out hope that I would win, so I was disappointed,” said New Energy’s presidential candidate, Joel Suss. “Everybody came in second, basically. It was a shame none of us were elected.”

Despite the low turnout, both Suss and Green agreed that the election was clean.

“The election went really, really well in the end,” said Colby Briggs, ASFA’s chief electoral officer. “However, I wasn’t expecting the degree of political sinisterness out of some of the people who ran.”

“As I said in the nomination form, ‘You are students, running against other students, for a job that does not pay well, for the intent of helping others.’ But when I get a call from a candidate crying in the bathroom saying she was being followed, it makes me won-

der about politics at Concordia.”

Briggs wrote a series of reforms after the election that he will present to the ASFA Council at its next meeting. Included in the package will be a motion to get rid of all affiliations—“Nothing whatsoever, mob mentality rules,” said Briggs—and the introduction of a \$5 fee for all contestations. “Half the contestations were bunk,” added Briggs, who had to spend hours dealing with each of 50 filed during the election.

Green said he would support the end of affiliations in favour of greater individualism.

With nearly one-third of students choosing to abstain from voting on some of the open positions, Briggs was bothered but not surprised during the vote count.

“We had jokes at the count: ‘[I vote for] Abstain, she gives the best speeches.’ I know that there were a lot of protest votes,” said Briggs. “When you’re voting, you should take it seriously. I don’t think a lot of people did.”

Green had a different theory. He said he saw the faults in ASFA’s

electoral system, which allows loose affiliations but no group presentations by candidates.

“I think the abstentions just went to show that by running as individuals, people might only encounter one candidate [...] I think it was an issue of not connecting faces to names and voting for only the candidate they met,” said Green, a position Suss echoed.

Facing a divided executive, Green said that his first priority was team-building.

“We have to work together. We have to overcome differences on internal policy and how we stand on the Canadian Federation of Students,” said Green, who is strongly in favour of defederating from the CFS.

“Our mandate begins June 1 and that is fast approaching. One of my main focuses will be frosh. We need to give some thoughts to what has happened in the past, what can improve and how we can make this the best frosh ever,” said Green, who has scheduled the first meeting of his executive for March 6.

## Briefs

### FIFA and Concordia team up

The International Festival of Films on Art and Concordia have partnered to present the 28th annual film festival to raise arts and culture awareness. De Sève Cinema in the LB building will screen several films produced and directed by Concordia grad students from March 18 to 28.

### Greening the Plateau

The Plateau’s ruling party, Project Montreal, will be holding a forum in conjunction with Eco-Quartier Jeanne-Mance on March 3 to discuss how to create more public green spaces in the borough. Project Montreal made headlines in November when it announced it would require double the daily snowfall as last winter before it would remove snow on side streets, all in an attempt to reduce the borough’s carbon footprint and budget shortfall.

### U.K. bill could kill indie cafes’ wifi

The U.K.’s Digital Economy Bill, currently being debated in Parliament, requires that records be kept of all Internet activity, including the user’s identity and what is being accessed. Cafes and other small businesses will need to either accept responsibility for all traffic from their wireless networks or shut down their connections. Universities and libraries are also facing scrutiny.

### HPV vaccine approved for men

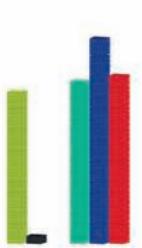
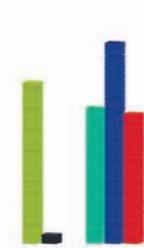
On Feb. 22, Health Canada approved men’s use of Gardasil, a human papillomavirus vaccine currently used by women. The vaccine not only protects males from warts and certain types of cancers, but also stops the virus from being transmitted. Rates of HPV among young people may be as high as 25 per cent.

### Students in Ottawa eat anywhere but Chartwells

University of Ottawa students demonstrated against Chartwells by organizing “Anything But Chartwells Day” on Feb. 22. The American food service company, the world’s largest, also controls food services at Concordia and McGill. Chartwells has faced charges of high prices, poor quality, employee mistreatment and opposition to employee unionization.

## How you voted

■ New Energy ■ Innovation ■ Stronger ■ Abstain ■ Spoiled

**VP Social****VP Academic****VP Finance****VP Comms****VP Internal****President****VP External**

Abstentions	291
Spoiled	14
Dania Habib (Stronger)	311
Allie McDonald (Innovation)	392
Natasha Launi (New Energy)	322

Abstentions	309
Spoiled	17
Andrew Rankin (Stronger)	290
Teresa Seminara (Innovation)	385
Michaela Manson (New Energy)	314

Abstentions	370
Spoiled	13
Jacob Dobias (Stronger)	260
Alex Newman (Innovation)	440
Shahzad Dal (New Energy)	249

Abstentions	349
Spoiled	20
Sarah Moore (Stronger)	377
Taylor Knott (Innovation)	281
Marco DeGregorio (New Energy)	290

Abstentions	345
Spoiled	15
Anna Goldfinch (Stronger)	345
Elliot Kmec (Innovation)	242
Nicole Devlin (New Energy)	330

Abstentions	227
Spoiled	22
Charles Brenchley (Stronger)	281
David Adelman (Stronger)	301
Aaron Green (Innovation)	435
Joel Suss (New Energy)	365
Brittany Levett (New Energy)	241

# Frigo fee levy question on the ballot

Presidential decree required after rule error in student union Council



Objects in mirror might be greener than they appear. PHOTO ELSA JABRE

## • CLAY HEMMERICH

After Concordia Student Union President Amine Dabchy issued a presidential decree on Feb. 18, a question will appear on the student union's ballot in the March general election to increase Le Frigo Vert's fee levy by 12 cents per credit.

The fee levy increase—which would raise the student-run food store's total levy to 37 cents per credit—had previously been rejected by the CSU Council on Feb. 10, the second time in a year that the request had been denied.

After the second rejection, the Frigo gathered 762 student signatures for a petition to be presented at a special council meeting on Feb. 18.

During the Feb. 18 Council meeting, debate surrounded

Robert's Rules—the rulebook for council formalities and etiquette—when councillor Ethan Cox attempted to resurrect the 12-cent motion defeated on Feb. 10. CSU Chair Sohrab Mossaded did not allow Cox to reintroduce the failed motion, and as a result a different 11-cent motion was approved.

"I was notified through e-mail by Sohrab [Mossaded] that he made a mistake ruling against Le Frigo's 12-cent fee levy increase motion. It was only fair to change it," said Dabchy. "I called [Frigo collective member Amanda Dorter] and we changed the motion together."

However, after Dorter helped Dabchy craft the decree, she retracted her support.

"I did not want to accept [the presidential decree] because I did

not want to speak on behalf of the collective," said Dorter.

"This posed one more complication," said Frigo collective member Faiz Abhuan. "Our main goal was for the question to be presented to students. We wanted the question to be posed within the regular process."

Despite their opposition to the means by which their fee levy question arrived on the ballot, the Frigo is running a Yes campaign to ensure that the question passes.

CSU bylaws state that a presidential decree regarding a referendum question can only be revoked at a minimum 25 days before the CSU general election. Because time has lapsed before the three-day election starts on March 23, the Frigo's 12-cent fee levy question will be on the ballots.

# Montreal to host international citizens' summit

Over 1,000 delegates to contemplate economy, climate and international aid

## • JOEL BALSAM

The World Alliance for Citizen Participation—also known as CIVICUS—announced on Feb. 25 that Montreal will host the non-governmental organization's world assembly for the next three years.

Along with the Institut du Nouveau Monde, a non-partisan organization that encourages citizen participation in Quebec, CIVICUS will host civil society groups, including everything from faith-based organizations to philan-

thropic outfits, from 120 countries at the first assembly in August.

"We think that Montreal, Quebec and Canada have some of the more interesting models that can be shared with the rest of the world about how an economy can be managed, about how citizens can be engaged in shaping policy and about how civil society can have a significant role in the state of our societies," said Ingrid Srinath, CIVICUS' secretary general. This will be the second time in a decade that the South African NGO holds its assembly in

Canada, as Vancouver played host in 2001.

Former American president Jimmy Carter, Nobel laureate and Archbishop Desmond Tutu and director general of the World Trade Organization Pascal Lamy are lined up as keynote speakers for the four-day conference.

CIVICUS plans to include young people from around the globe in the world assembly by having a special youth assembly, which will take place just before the "elder" delegates arrive. A selected number of the young del-

# Tempers flare at final Sustainability Mashup

## • LAURA BEESTON

The atmosphere was intimate, heated.

Joe Schwarcz, director of McGill's Office of Science and Society, quickly cut through the question period in the middle of the Concordia Student Union's third and final Sustainability Mashup Feb. 16 and unhooked his microphone.

The 10 people in attendance of the CSU's Green Month event at the MB auditorium waited.

Schwarcz had just mentioned in his lecture how impossible it is for scientists to truly know the long-term effects of chemical compounds on human health and how scientists can detect less than 10 per cent of the infinite toxic combinations we are eating, drinking, breathing and buying.

"So are we better off believing in religion?" asked Paul Shrivastava, director of Concordia's David O'Brien Centre for Sustainable Enterprise.

"That's ridiculous. Absolutely not," was Schwarcz's curt reply. "That's the biggest quack out there, bigger than toxicology! Religion cannot be proven scientifically."

And there it was: an ideological battle between two distinguished professors, one from McGill and the other from Concordia.

As Schwarcz moved up the stairs towards the door, he said something over his shoulder to the extent of, "You have to desire being unenlightened."

Shrivastava crossed his legs calmly.

"Johnny Public" doesn't understand the chemistry behind exposure to trace chemicals, Schwarcz argued, but due to increasing life expectancy science

must be doing something right. He then headed out the door.

"Now that is just patent bullshit," Shrivastava said as he stood and looked directly at the attentive audience. "These are exactly the lines that corporations pitch."

"I don't believe that science is ever going to solve anything," Shrivastava admitted, explaining different ways to better understand and create sustainable solutions to, what he termed, our contemporary crisis society.

"We are living in the incipient moment of danger and opportunity," he continued excitedly. "Scientists, corporations and governments don't know what to do, so it's up to us to figure how to create our organizations differently."

"How can we rethink our lives, our social and economic systems?" he challenged the room, before opening the floor for another round of discussion.

"I want to tell you that this is not the time for us to look up to our leaders," said professor Satoshi Ikeda, a Canada Research Chair in political sociology, who happened to be in the audience and who had given a previous Mashups lecture presentation. "We have to make things happen from the bottom-up. Everyone has to become a leader."

There was never enough time in the Mashups series to solve every issue surrounding sustainability, but Alex Oster, CSU VP Sustainability and Services, hinted that the forum may be something that the student union would want to institutionalize.

For *The Link's* interview with Joe Schwarcz about his new book *Science, Sense and Nonsense*, turn to pg. 9.

tiveness of aid.

One of the major issues will be the growing network of boycott movements that target what they refer to as Israeli apartheid.

Owing to its roots in South Africa, the head of CIVICUS knows how powerful a boycott can be.

"South Africans connect with what's happening in Palestine in a way that few other people can," said Srinath. "Based on the [South African] experience, where [boycotts] certainly helped their struggle against apartheid, let's see if we can make it work here."

# Funny face

## Clowns Sans Frontières prove that laughter really is the best medicine

• SOPHIA LOFFREDA

To most children, a red nose brings to mind one of two things: Rudolph the red-nosed reindeer, or a runny nose courtesy of the common cold. But to those in orphanages, refugee camps, conflict zones and amid natural disasters, a red nose can mean so much more.

Clowns Sans Frontières is an organization that believes laughter is as essential for children in areas of conflict as any western medicine. The group has travelled to some of the world's poorest countries, where food and shelter are difficult to come by.

The non-profit's volunteers perform contemporary circus acts and hold workshops in hopes of relieving the suffering of those in difficult situations through laughter. For these children and their parents, a friendly face and a red nose mean a chance to forget about the realities of their daily lives, if only for a few hours.

CSF vice-president Vincent Potel said he carries his nose with him everywhere, and that it has become a large part of who he is.

When meeting for an interview in a tiny east-end café, Potel was easily identifiable by his T-shirt—a black shirt emblazoned with an orange-haired clown sporting a red nose of his own. The plastic red clown nose has become an international symbol of peace, said Potel, thanks to the work of social activists and professional clowns like Dr. Hunter Campbell "Patch" Adams.

Patch Adams, whose life

inspired the eponymous film starring Robin Williams, founded the Gesundheit! Institute in West Virginia in 1972 and ran it for 12 years as a free community hospital. He travelled around the world with a group of international performers and volunteers, donning red noses and bringing joy to those suffering from illness or poverty.

Since its founding in 1992, CSF has continued to fill his rather large rubber shoes, recognizing the simple yet powerful healing qualities of the red nose and the value of bringing smiles to unlikely places.

"You have a responsibility when you put on the red nose. You really are on a mission," said Potel. "You represent something that is very important for these kids and you don't want to break that magic."

CSF's volunteers do not heal through traditional medicine, but through their performances. Most are trained artists, musicians or circus performers. Potel briefly attended clown school, but considers himself more of a musician than a clown.

In 1998, during the infamous ice storm that tore through eastern Ontario and western Quebec—including Montreal—Potel and friends filled buses from the city's less affluent communities and gave free concerts while riding around Montreal. The project, called Le cabaret roulant, included CSF Canada's founder Jacques Thériault, a.k.a. "Jacko the Clown," and marked the beginning of Potel and Thériault's collaboration.

When asked how he makes the kids laugh, Potel downplayed his comedic talents.

"I don't really do much, I just pop up behind them, make a funny face, and they laugh!" he said, hardly able to contain his smile.

Not formally trained in the art of juggling or balloon-making, Potel is open to being laughed at. He claims the costume helps him play the part and that the kids he works with have an inspiring honesty about them.

"You have to emotionally get involved and make yourself very vulnerable if it's going to work," he said. "Kids especially know when you're faking. You accept that they will laugh at you and there is something very soothing about that. They are seeing these adults that usually discipline them, but instead they are acting silly and they don't make sense."

The most important thing for CSF is that the shows allow children to hold on to those moments of silliness, and Potel is passionate about the sustaining power of the performances.

"When living a tough daily scene, they tend to hold on to happy events," he said. "So we go and we create that. They get to laugh and play—every child has a right to that. I cannot stress that enough."

Potel added that when a crisis hits, laughter is often taken for granted and ranks low on the list of essentials. CSF has filled the void, working alongside organizations such as the Red Cross and Médecins du monde to amass the funding and resources necessary

to travel to countries in need. The three organizations held a joint event on Jan. 20 called L'union fait la force, where they raised over \$20,000 for relief efforts in Haiti.

CSF has sent three clowns to Port-au-Prince, Haiti. Due to the organization's limited funding, missions are usually kept to a small number of clowns and performances can only be organized in areas where camps have been established. The first group of clowns in Haiti are providing CSF with daily updates about the progress.

The organization has done work in Haiti before, performing in the impoverished neighbourhoods of Lakay and Lakou in 2002 and returning each year until funds ran out.

Finding funding for CSF's international projects is certainly a challenge. Although CSF sells T-shirts and red noses, donations help to cover the costs of transportation and supplies (trunks full of balloons, juggling material and other props).

Potel said that despite the difficulties of running a non-profit organization, volunteering continues to be one of his most rewarding experiences. He notices that when clowns come back from missions they are "changed and illuminated."

Part of the healing and restructuring process is hope, said Potel. As a word that gets thrown around a lot these days, hope is in short supply where it is most needed, he continued. CSF aims to ensure that

every child maintains a right to laughter.

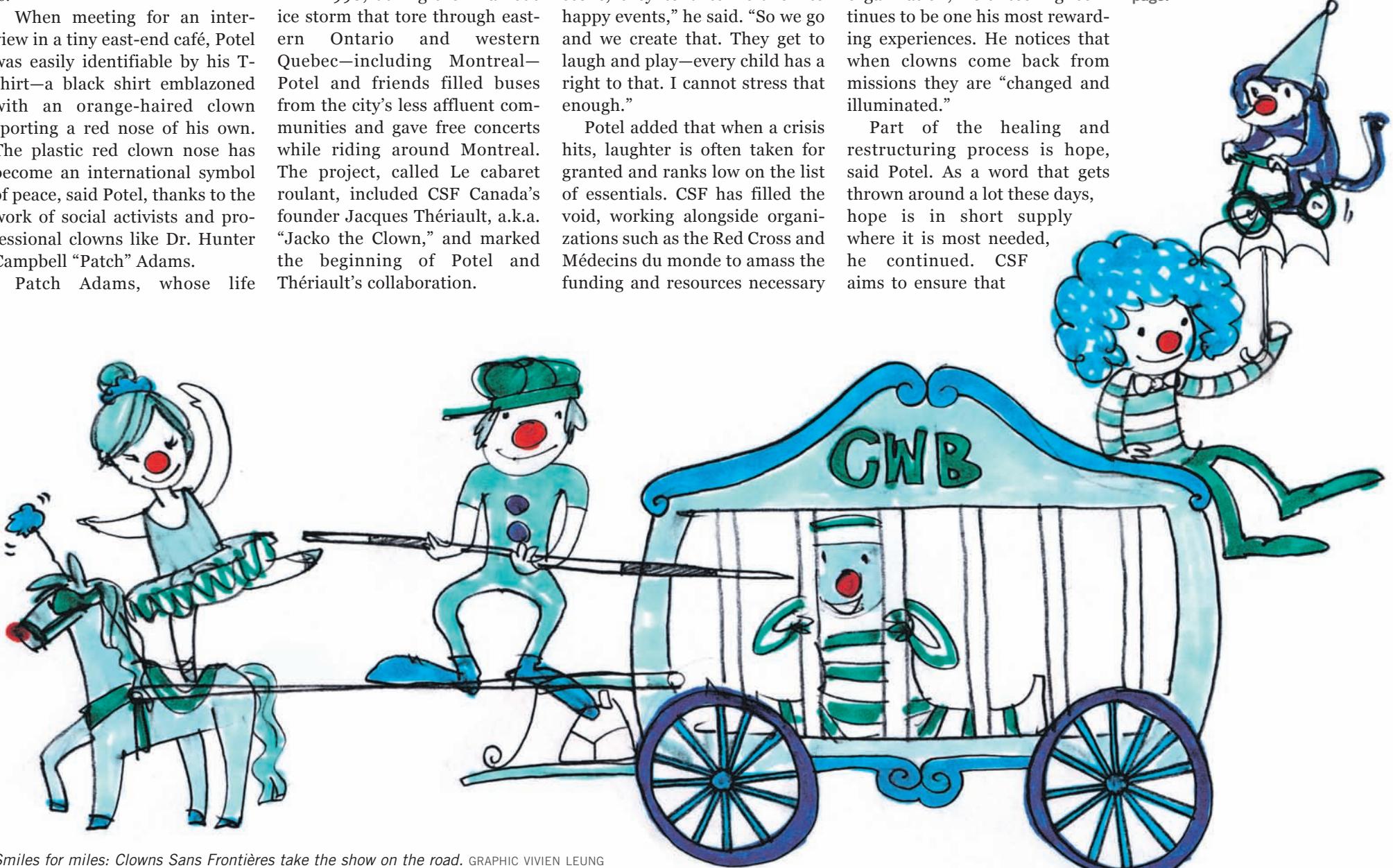
Since Feb. 16, Jacko the Clown, musician Bertrand Roy and magician Sébastien Louis-XVI have descended to Port-au Prince.

They have been performing for children and their parents and spreading smiles in the country's devastated capital. Jacko also asked Potel to join the group on Mission Haiti, but as a father of three and CSF's head fundraiser, Potel will remain in Montreal, raising money for the mission.

"When you do good, it always makes a difference," he said. "It comes back to you somehow and it can be in the oddest way, but it always does."

For ways to donate to Clowns Sans Frontières and for more information, visit [clownssansfrontieres.ca](http://clownssansfrontieres.ca).

CSF also offers buying their signature red noses in bulk, so those interested can give to family and friends. Videos and photos from Mission Haiti are posted regularly on the Clowns Sans Frontières-Canada Facebook page.



*Smiles for miles: Clowns Sans Frontières take the show on the road.* GRAPHIC VIVIEN LEUNG

# Science and sensibility

## Dr. Joe's crusade against quackery continues in new book

• CHRISTOPHER OLSON

There's a box of Kellogg's Corn Flakes on Dr. Joe Schwarcz's desk bearing his likeness, right beside a rubber duck wearing a stethoscope and a digital picture frame cycling through pictures of his family. I ask what he did to deserve such an honour, and Schwarcz, a McGill professor and a columnist for *The Gazette*, responds that it's a novelty item from a factory tour.

Maybe it's because I believe everything I read on a box, from "all-natural ingredients" to "a healthy part of a nutritious breakfast," but Schwarcz warns me not to take every claim at face value—even if it's his face on the cereal box.

As the director of McGill University's Office for Science and Society, whose stated goal is to bring science to the public, Schwarcz has already written 10 books that separate fact from fraud. But this is the first time he's given over an entire book to the subject.

"I've been getting more and more frustrated by the amount of nonsense that is out there," says Schwarcz, explaining the inspira-

tion behind his latest book, *Science, Sense and Nonsense*. In it he attempts to dispel 61 commonly accepted myths pertaining to food, medicine and chemistry—especially the myths propagated to make money.

"Charlatanism has always been with us," Schwarcz explains. "The web has really aided and abetted that, because it's so easy to set up a website that looks authentic, that looks scientific, and yet is total nonsense."

Even legitimate science shouldn't be immune to skepticism, he acknowledges.

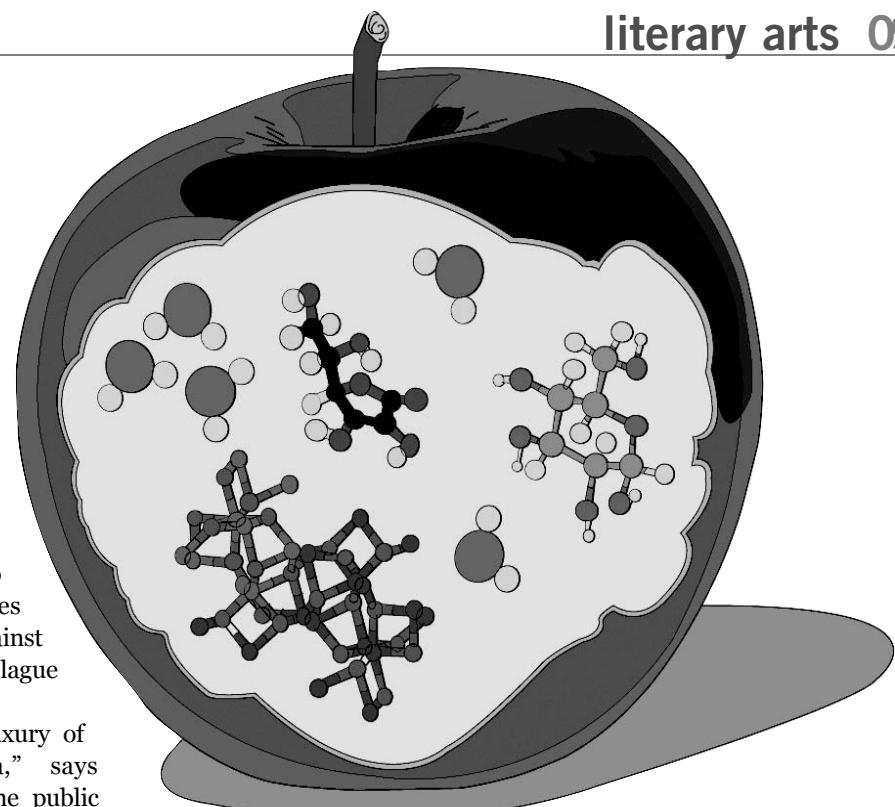
"What's life?" Schwarcz asks. "Life is the sum total of all the chemical reactions that are going on in our body all the time," he continues. "So of course it stands to reason that chemicals can be a problem. Or they can, of course, be good."

If you were to list all the chemical components of an apple, says Schwarcz, "it would be terrifying to people, because most of the names are multisyllabic, and they think that if they can't pronounce it, then it must be doing them harm."

Science may be to blame for rising cancer rates, he says, but that's because science is doing such a good job keeping us alive longer, so that age-related illnesses have a fighting chance against viruses and disease to plague our health.

"We now have the luxury of worrying about trivia," says Schwarcz, referring to the public backlash against the amounts of nail-polish remover and fire retardants that have been found in the human bloodstream. These numbers, he says, are statistically irrelevant. "Until quite recently, what did we worry about? We worried about dysentery and cholera and typhoid and polio. I mean, when I was in high school, polio was still a big issue. I had kids in my class who came down with polio."

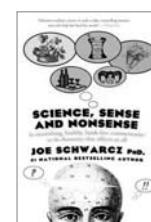
The anti-vaccination movement—whose primary spokesperson, actress Jenny McCarthy, contends that vaccines definitively cause autism—is proof that not all nonsense is motivated by selfishness, he argues.



GRAPHIC DARYNA RUKHLYADEVA

"There are two kinds of charlatans," says Schwarcz. "There are those charlatans who are in it for financial gain, who genuinely know that what they're saying is total bunk and it's all contrived to make money. And then there are those that are honestly self-delusional, who believe that they're right, and Jenny McCarthy belongs to that [group]."

It may be expecting too much to hope the public might brush up their knowledge of science, but it is possible to teach people how to scoop out a fraud, says Schwarcz. Some false claims should be obvious.



**Science, Sense and Nonsense**  
Dr. Joe Schwarcz  
Doubleday  
Canada  
246 pp  
\$22.00

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## The Johann Liberation Army



• CHRISTOPHER OLSON

In Ontario journalist Adam Thomlison's downtime, he self-publishes his fiction through 40 Watt Spotlight, a publishing house he founded to release his first book of short stories, *We Were Writers for Disastrous Love Affairs Magazine*.

His latest release is *The Johann Liberation Army: A Motionless Picture*, a film script designed purely for reading that uses suicide bombers as a metaphor for the disastrous effects of a couple's breakup.

The Link: What is a "motionless picture?"

Adam Thomlison: Well, the joke is that I wrote this little screenplay without intending to have it filmed. I wrote it because I enjoy reading screenplays and I think they're a valid medium just for reading. Stage plays have gotten that kind of respect for a lot longer—I mean, they've been around for a lot longer. Shakespeare is a great example. [He] wrote plays but more often they're read than they're staged.

**I have to say, I like the way your zine is presented.**

I tried to set it up as much like a tiny manuscript that would get passed around to film producers, like with the manila envelope, the small-sized paperclip to go with the small-sized paper. The format was part of the whole gag.

**Do you think it would defeat the purpose to actually produce it as a short film subject?**

I've been questioning that myself because the entire stated goal of *The Johann Liberation Army* is this is a screenplay that's not ever going to be a movie. But at the same time, to write it, I had to picture it as a movie. I knew very well that it wasn't going to be a film, and so I played with things—like I reference songs that would cost me millions to get the rights to [laughs], like Phil Collins and Stevie Wonder. I didn't

have to consider monetary issues with clearing song rights. I used that as a liberating aspect.

**Have you always gone the self-publishing route?**

There's a lot I enjoy about self-publishing and I think that I always will even if I do end up selling a book to a publishing house. The hands-on aspect is something I really like. I love design as much as I love writing and so I would miss not getting to design my books and do the covers. I have a couple of novels that I've finished that I'm currently shopping around to other publishers while I work on publishing other people's stuff through 40 Watt Spotlight.

**Your self-published book, *We Were Writers for Disastrous Love Affairs Magazine*, actually picked up some reviews. How did that happen?**

That's the strange thing, that as soon as I took something that I normally would have released in a hand-stapled zine format and bound it like a book, all of a sudden people were taking it seriously. In fact, two of the stories that are in there I had released as zines and, I mean, they did fine, but they didn't get anything beyond that. Put them into a book, and then it seems as if people know what to do with it. People know

how to review a book, they know what it is, they know what to look for. So the reviews came that way.

**You say in your bio that you were banned from Parliament Hill. Why?**

I was working at *Frank Magazine*, and we did this piece about the lack of security on Parliament Hill and how hypocritical that was compared to the talk of security that the government was putting out at the time and using it to justify a lot of shocking rights violations. So what we did was sort of an exposé on how lax security was, where we went in and went to all of the places that you're not allowed to go. And we went everywhere, absolutely everywhere we wanted to. We hung out in the prime minister's personal bathroom—like, all of it. And as a result [laughs] we were banned from Parliament shortly after the issue came out.

**Are you proud of yourself?**

I think that we did a great story, I know that we had a lot of fun. And you know, I think people really enjoyed the piece. And yeah, I'm quite proud [laughs] of having been banned from Parliament.

Copies of *The Johann Liberation Army* can be purchased online at [40wattspotlight.com](http://40wattspotlight.com).

# quick reads

## Jonesing for Amy



**What Boys Like  
and Other Stories**  
Amy Jones  
Biblioasis  
190 pp  
\$17.95

In her Metcalf-Rooke Award-winning collection of short stories, Amy Jones assembles a motley crew of outsiders who struggle with their often-mundane lives. Writing her stories in first, third and, impressively, second-person, Jones manages to dig deeper than the characters' rough exteriors to unearth their troubled pasts and hopes for the future.

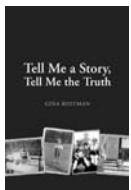
Jones' stories are short and rarely sweet: a self-conscious teenage girl's first attempt at binge drinking, a grown woman searching for her long-lost rebel sister and a man's futile attempt to hold onto his drifting lover. Her characters do nothing out of the ordinary. They are misfits, overshadowed by others and left alone to wrestle the chaotic realities of sex, money, love and loss in an unsympathetic world.

Jones manages to incorporate a sense of humour into every depressing tale and always stops just short of resolution. Her writing is quick and hard-boiled—she shrugs her shoulders at her characters' plights, as if to say, "Oh well, *c'est la vie*."

4/5

—Jaime Eisen

## Tell Me The Truth partly fictional



**Tell Me A Story,  
Tell Me The Truth  
Second Story  
Press**  
Gina Roitman  
170 pp  
\$17.95

Montreal author Gina Roitman's *Tell Me A Story, Tell Me The Truth* frames the often-heard Holocaust survivor story with a set of engaging and conflicting characters who try to grapple with their storied pasts, and Roitman largely succeeds in winning the reader over with her prose.

Roitman prefaces the collection by explaining that while the characters she created are at their core fictional, she borrowed certain aspects from her own life to make the novel more authentic.

The protagonist, the daughter of Holocaust survivors, is the star of the collection of stories, whom we follow as she copes with her Jewish identity—as it relates to a family heavily rooted in tradition—at different points in her life. Although the stories that Roitman explores have a flavour of familiarity to them, she manages to infuse her prose with enough twists that it makes for an interesting and surprising read.

3.5/5

—R. Brian Hastie

# Lit Writ

## My Stranger

• CLARE RASPOPOW

I rarely pay attention to what's going on around me while I'm walking. I know this is terrible and may account for the many bruised knees I've suffered and fervent apologies I've had to make, but it's a habit, even if a bad one, and I just haven't been able to break it. So I'm a little astonished when I spot him so far away in the distance. It's actually his low black wheelchair that I see at first, more so than him.

He's small. There's really no other word to describe his stature; his arms, his torso, his legs all verge on miniature. If he could walk he would probably stand no higher than the back of the chair he sits in now. But he can't walk and his wheelchair seems to make all the other classifications you would be tempted to give him—midget, little person—obsolete.

Staring at him as he advances down the sidewalk on the opposite side of Prince Arthur Street, I'm not looking at his body or the chair or his hands as they pump up and down on the wheels. While he is too far away to make out his facial features, I stare at his head. As he draws nearer I stare at his face, trying to make out his eyes. I know that if I can see his eyes that he can see mine, but I keep looking at his face, as I always do, half-hoping, half-fearing that he'll see me looking at him. I'm waiting nervously for the day when he stares back, when I'll see if he remembers me or not.

This man and I have a history; I know him... sort of.

It's odd how much you can know about a stranger without ever being properly introduced, how much you see when they don't know or don't care that you're looking. We collect little pieces of other peoples' lives just by virtue of being around to pick them up.

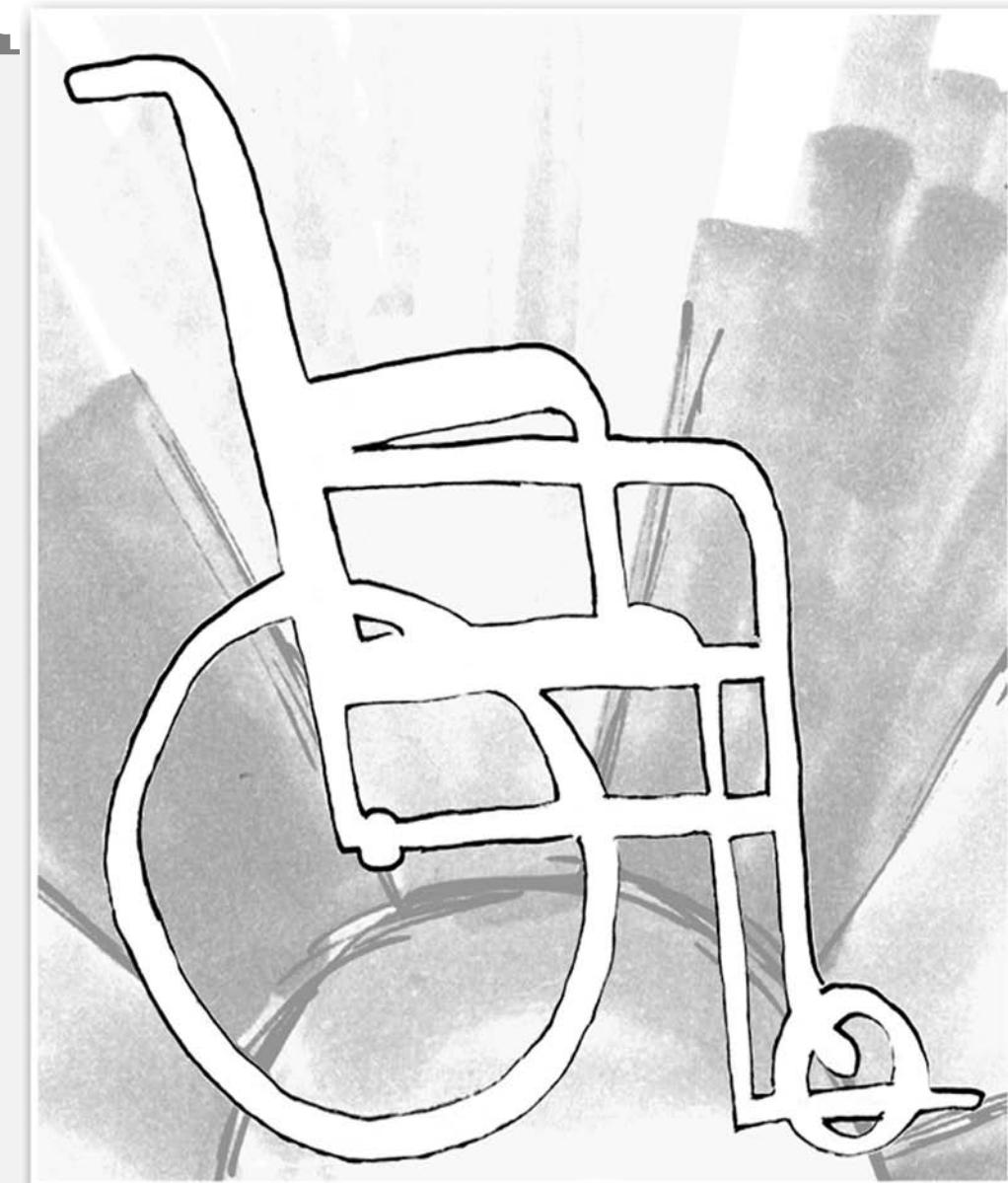
I know how he takes his coffee: cream and sugar.

When I first moved back to Montreal I worked as a barista at the Second Cup on the corner of Milton and Parc. He was a regular there. Almost every day he would come in to get his morning coffee. He'd place his order, the top of his bald head barely reaching over the ledge of the counter, and I would ring him through. After he paid I would walk around the counter with his coffee and head to the condiment bar. His arms were too short to reach to the back of the island where the sugar packets were stored. I'd put his cream and sugar in, stir it, put on the lid and the cardboard insulation sleeve and hand him his drink.

We must have spoken during this time, but for the life of me I can't remember a single word we said to one another. I worked in that coffee shop over three years ago, and only for a couple of months. Anything we may have said to each other is lost to me at this point.

I know where he lives: La Cité apartment block D.

It's the same apartment building my best friend lived in for over three years.



It's actually his low black wheelchair that I see at first, more so than him. GRAPHIC ALEX MANLEY

Needless to say, I was there a lot. I used to see him coming as I was going, or going as I was coming. Despite how often I haunted that building our run-ins were always at a distance. We never shared an elevator, never held the door for one another. I would stare at him across the space, wondering if he remembered our morning ritual or if I was just another face in his daily routine that had been replaced soon after I appeared.

I know where he works: the TD Canada Trust on St-Laurent.

I worked across the street at the Café République Restaurant for a year and a half. I can't say exactly what he does at the bank. He's not a teller and therefore pretty much out of my range of contact. He works in one of the grey cubicles off to the left when you walk in the automatic glass doors.

I contemplated asking one of the tellers what his name was—I had become friendly with most of them because of how often I came in—but I didn't want to seem like a stalker. Besides, "what's the name of the guy in the wheelchair?" just sounded wrong when it was about to cross my lips. I kept silent. I kept staring.

Now he's 20 feet in front of me and I can hear my heart beating in my ears. Because there's something I've been waiting years to tell him, something I want him to know about me.

When I worked at Second Cup, I worked the graveyard shift. I'd come in at 10 p.m. and leave at seven in the morning. It wasn't glamourous but the night shift paid better and I had a research job I did

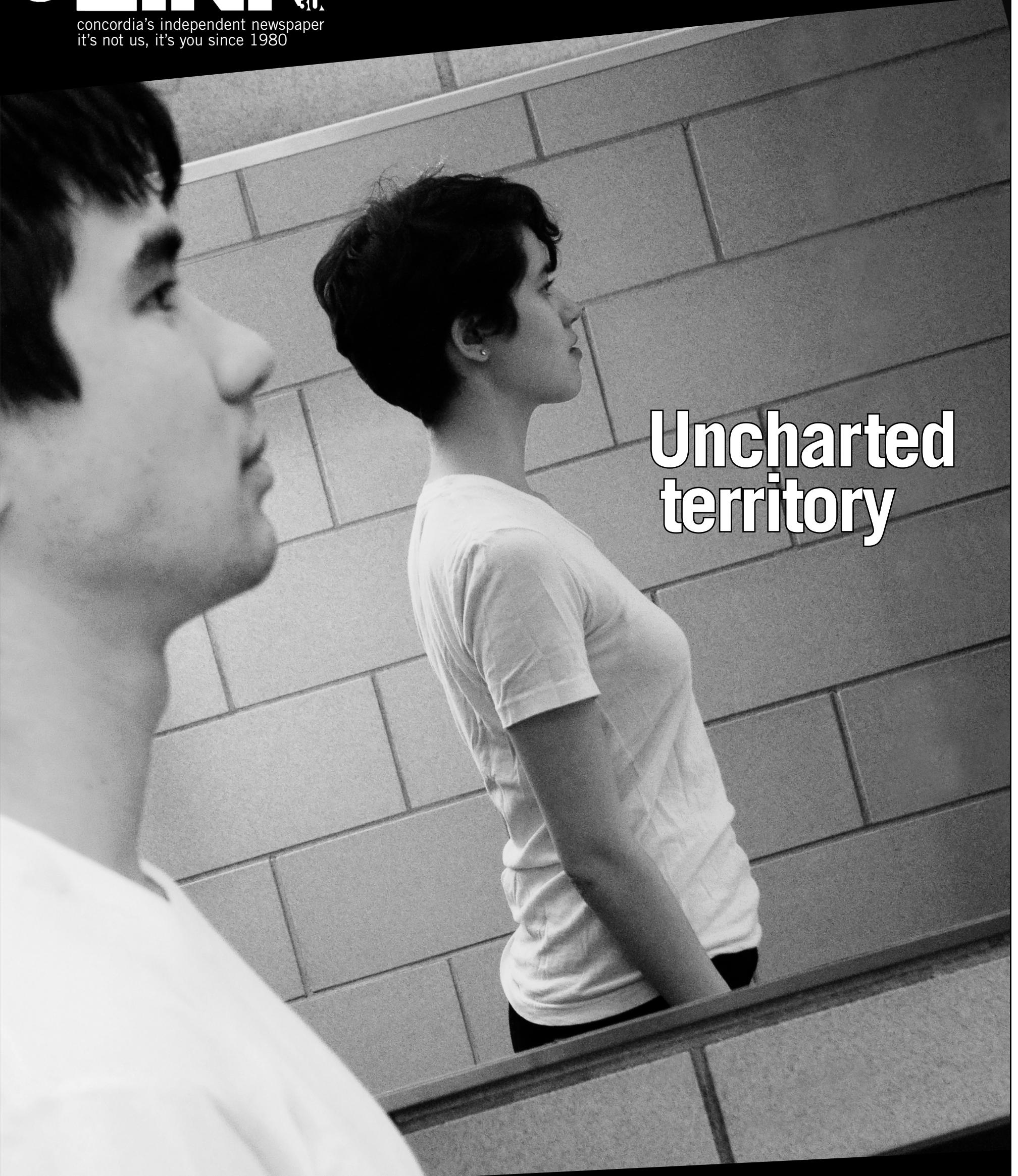
during the day. I worked most of my shift by myself. As it got later, the clientele got stranger.

First it was the partiers: the belligerent divas who insisted it was my job to call them a cab, the drunks who could barely get their orders out. Then it was the homeless people. I was happy to let them sit inside or doze on a chair while I did my cleaning as long as they didn't mind moving when I had to mop the area they sat. They didn't ask anything of me and I was happy to return the favour. When it got really late, the crazies would come out. Most of the time if you were lucky they would just stand or sit mumbling to themselves. On a bad night you could be in for harassment or death threats.

But early every morning, almost as soon as the sun rose my stranger would arrive in his chair smiling and friendly, there for his coffee, signalling the end of the night and a return to sanity. His was the first normal, happy face I would see most days and I came to welcome the sight of him. For the three months I worked that job he was the best part of my day.

Now when I see him all of this is on the tip of my tongue. I want to cross the street and tell him how much he used to mean to me, how much I appreciated his smile, his civility, his normality. But all I can do is stare as we come even with each other, and then move on.

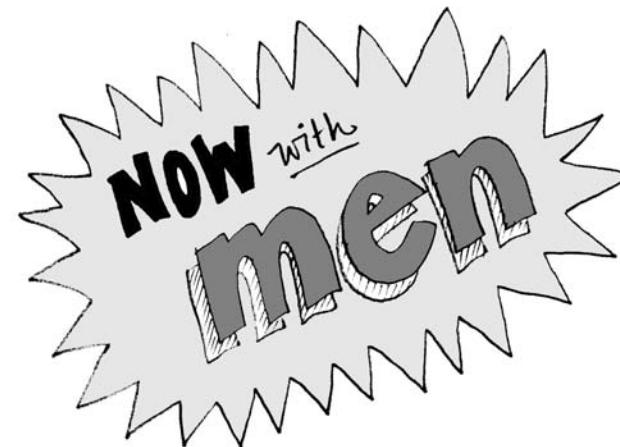
To submit your fiction or poetry to the Lit Writ column, e-mail them to lit@thelinknewspaper.ca.



**Uncharted  
territory**

**Women's & men's special issue**

# The women's issue...



After 30 years, *The Link's* Women's issue is trying something new.

Recognizing the bold journalism, activism and intellect behind each of *The Link's* International Women's Day special issues since 1981, we decided to explore uncharted territory and reframe the debate by directly engaging with the "male gaze" on feminism for the first time.

This was a contentious stride for a paper that has a mandate of being "the voice for the voiceless" and has a decades-long history of banishing male colleagues from women's issue production nights. We were conflicted\* about changing up the forum of solid feminist-beat reportage and exclusive *herstory* that was missing for so long.

But some nagging questions challenged us as we put our heads together over gender.

Was exclusively covering "women's" issues one time a year perpetuating stereotypes of both women and feminists by marginalizing their issues and removing them from the rest of the paper? And could folks who don't identify as feminists or women still identify with the content?

Or, is this special issue a sacred space for women—who continue to face gender-based oppression in many ways—to have editorial reign and an opportunity to voice issues and ideas that were previously silenced?

We don't expect this supplement is going to answer all the questions. We simply want to get a conversation started, to explore

the contradictions and ideological boundaries that may have left some groups out of the debate in previous years.

Besides, kicking a handful of men out of the office on production nights won't end the patriarchy—which is a raw deal for women and men alike.

In 2010, we think that this practice is old-school and exclusionary, and would like to invite you—whether you self-identify as women, men, or whatever else—to join the evolving discussion of gender as it explores issues beyond the "battle of the sexes."

The fight for equality against gender-based violence, stereotypes and discrimination is not over. We'd like to engage multiple standpoints on the issues of gender-discrimination. So are you

a feminist? A male-feminist? A pro-feminist? Anti-patriarchy? Masculinist? Humanist? Feminist-ish? Don't know? Does it matter? Would you admit it if we asked?

Welcome to the issues. Welcome to the issue. We hope to extend the breadth of feminist thought and to challenge its ideology to be more inclusive and far-reaching.

We at *The Link* don't believe that feminism exists in a vacuum.

—Laura Beeston & Christopher Curtis,  
Women's & Men's special issue  
coordinators

\*Laura actually had a nightmare that feminist trailblazers of yesteryear were reading *The Link* and wringing their hands.

## March 8

### The times keep up with us



• ARCHIVES COMPILED BY LAURA BEESTON & CLARE RASPOPOW

**March 8, 1857:** Women from the garment and textile industry in New York staged a demonstration protesting low wages, the 12-hour work day and increasing workloads. They called for improved working conditions and equal pay for all working women. Their march was dispersed by police, some of the women arrested, some trampled in the confusion.

Three years later in 1860, these women formed their own union and called again for their demands to be met.

**March 8, 1908:** Thousands of

women from the needle-trade industry demonstrated for the same demands, plus some new ones: legislation against child labour and for the right of women to vote.

**March 8, 1909:** The United States is the first country to declare a National Woman's Day.

**1910:** German labour leader Clara Zetkin proposed that March 8 be proclaimed International Women's Day in memory of those earlier struggles of women for better lives. The following year the very first International Women's Day was launched.

Over the next 60 years, March 8 was celebrated mostly in socialist countries, spread by word of mouth and the press.

**1967:** With the rebirth of the women's movement, the practice caught on in North America and became a widely celebrated day for most women's organizations and groups.

**1975:** International Women's Day was recognized officially by the United Nations and it became a

national holiday in many countries.

In 2010, the UN's International Women's Day theme is "Equal rights, equal opportunities: Progress for all." In Canada, the Status of Women Canada theme is "Strong Leadership. Strong Women. Strong World: Equality."

**March 9, 1978:** One day late, the Simone de Beauvoir Institute is opened, making Concordia the first Canadian university to have an institute and programme in women's studies.

#### International Women's Day in Montreal

**March 3:** Reggie's will be the site of Speed Dating in support of V-Day, a campaign to stop violence against women and girls. All the too-short-to-be-awkward moments start at 7:30 p.m. Tickets are \$10 and can be purchased in the Hall building's mezzanine.

**March 6:** The "Women of Rock" festival will be hosted by rock group Triggered Response at L'Alizé (900 Ontario St. E.). Featuring groups that are either

fronted by, or the majority of members are, women, all profits from the event will be donated to S.O.S. Violence Conjugale, a 24-hour hotline for abused women looking for help and various Montreal women's shelters.

**March 7:** The Marche mondiale des femmes, in collaboration with the Fédération des femmes du Québec, is walking for International Women's Day starting at 1 p.m. at Phillips Square (McGill metro).

#### Concordia Student Union presents Women's Week

In solidarity with the Concordia Student Union's women's caucus, the Arts and Science Federation of Associations, Concordia Council on Student Life and Volunteers in Action, the CSU will be holding Women's Week activities from **March 8 to 12**.

Activities include self-defence workshops, a sexuality workshop, a reading by celebrated Canadian author Clair Holden Rothman and lectures by Nobel laureate Shirin

Ebadi and Michael Kaufman, co-founder of the White Ribbon Campaign. Screenings of *The Greatest Silence: Rape in the Congo* and *A League of Their Own* will be held in the seventh floor lounge of the Hall building.

Throughout the week, organizers will be tabling in the Mezz, providing information about domestic violence, and circulating a petition in conjunction with Amnesty Concordia as part of a campaign to make the United Nations more effective in realizing women's rights.

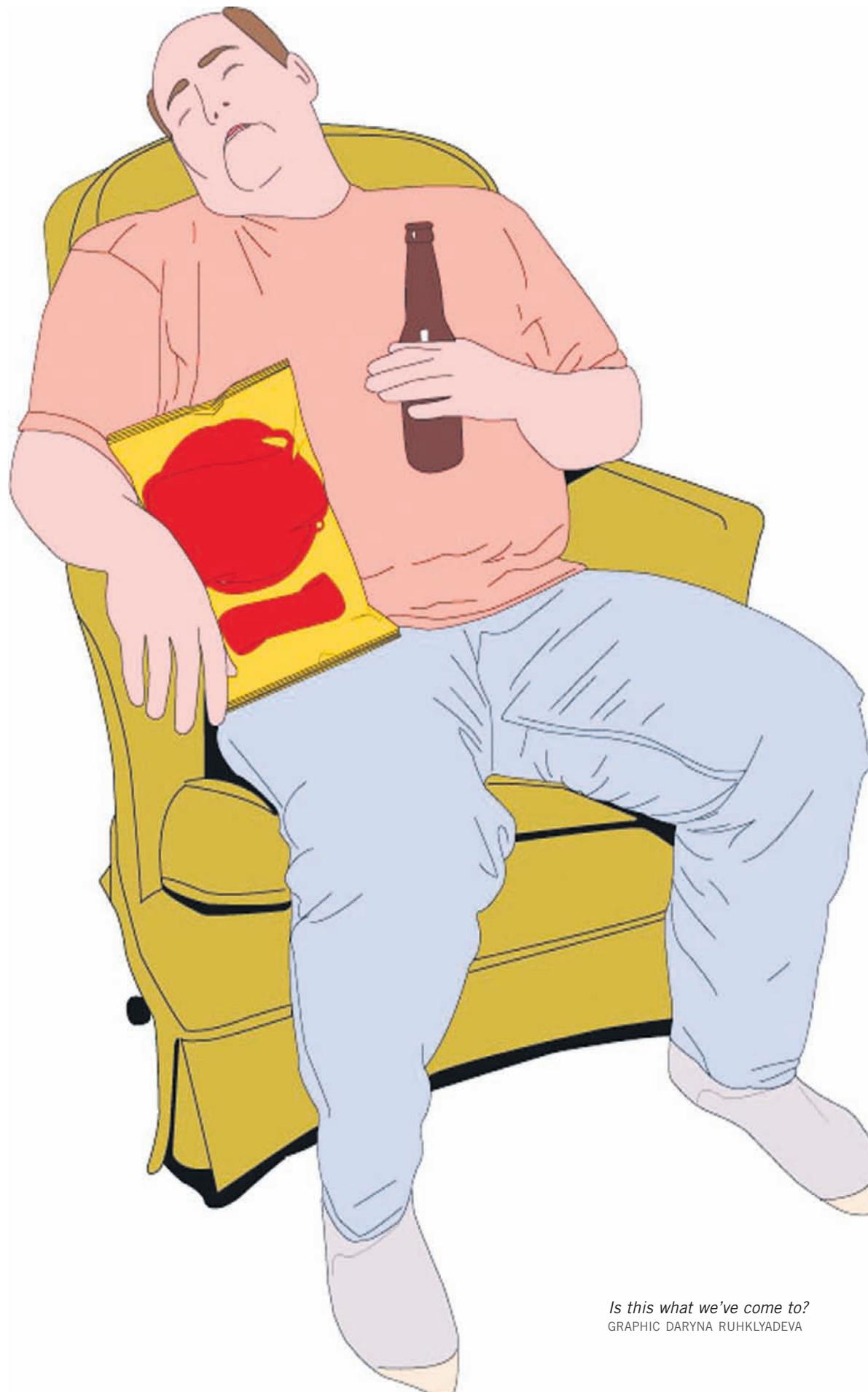
Bake sales will be held on both the Loyola and Sir George Williams campuses. Baked goods will be sold for \$1 to men and \$0.78 to women to highlight the continuing male/female wage disparity.

Following the week's activities, Concordia will mount a production of *The Vagina Monologues*.

For more info about the CSU's Women's Week activities, visit [csu.qc.ca](http://csu.qc.ca).

# I watch therefore I am

Putting the 'man boobs' in 'boob tube'



• CHRISTOPHER CURTIS

*Tonight on Everybody Loves Raymond, Ray tricks Debra into letting him play golf. Then on According to Jim, Cheryl cajoles Jim into attending a couples cooking class, which turns into a disaster, so she lets Jim pick out the next couple's activity: paintball!*

It's been played out, recycled, beaten to death and resurrected: the ugly, oafish, clod of a husband contends with his beautiful, smart (but somewhat shrill) wife every Tuesday at 7 p.m.

Major American television networks have banked on the sitcom archetype for decades. And while I'm sure *The Honeymooners* were fresh in 1956, the limits of male stupidity can only be pushed so far before becoming both unfunny and harmful.

Like most Canadians, I watch over 20 hours of television each week. If I didn't have to sleep at night, I would probably watch TV until my eyes bleed. Every now and again, a moment of clarity seeps through the flickering images and actually gets me thinking: are shows like *King of Queens* and *Everybody Loves Raymond* a statement on the philosophical condition of men in America (and by virtue of proximity, Canada)?

Almost every social theorist and their mother have published a study criticizing media representation of women, visual minorities

and homosexuals on television. And while their efforts are entirely justified, it's high time we turn our attention to media representation of men as well.

Your average man on TV follows a distinct character: he is inept as a husband/father, generally overweight and/or uneducated, works a menial job, is a fun-loving, beer drinking, somewhat

dishonest dude with just enough "aw-shucks" charm to get him out of trouble with the wife every week.

And somehow, unbeknownst to us all, this child-of-a-man has convinced a beautiful, intelligent woman to serve as his wife/surrogate mother, pick up after him and right his wrongs. How did he come to this?

men more than doubled women in reports of heavy drinking. Obesity rates among men are also much higher than their female counterparts in Canada. But perhaps the most alarming statistic about the state of men in this country is the rate at which we commit suicide, which is almost four times higher than women.

The figures present an argument that the male identity and its representation has reached a crisis point. Who are we, if we are not what is being shown on television? How can boys learn to become men, husbands, fathers and brothers when they're being bombarded with caricatures and parodies? Where do we learn what to aspire to? How can we break this cycle?

Women have rejected their representation in media for decades, having also endured unjust representation. I am not trying to take away from this argument, but merely posit that perhaps the stereotypes cut both ways.

As an aside, I like television as much as the next guy. I'm not saying we shouldn't enjoy countless hours of laughter and explosions, or try to impose draconian restrictions on other people's television viewing choices. However, we should be aware that binaries on the tube hugely normalize gender roles, their construction and their perpetuation. We should always be critical when evaluating what we see in media, lest we turn into a walking parody.

# Gender beyond genitals

## Drag queens: wolves in sheep's clothing or progressive gender benders?

• JORDAN CANNING (*THE LINK*, MARCH 9, 2004)

One Saturday night a few weeks ago, I was sitting in my room deciding what to wear out to a bar. Two dresses were hung on my closet door, makeup was scattered about and a pair of hot leather boots were just screaming to be worn. Mind you, none of these things belonged to me; they belonged to the man in my bathroom, who was busy shaving his legs.

Lately, I've been seeing a lot of men in dresses.

Since the night I saw my first drag show at Café Cléopatra more than a year ago, I've been fascinated with drag queens. So, in the name of knowledge, over the last few months I've tried to immerse myself in the Montreal drag community as much as any 21-year-old straight girl can. To my great relief and delight, I found myself welcomed with open, freshly-naired arms, and my enchantment with these gorgeous ladies has continued to deepen.

The Montreal drag scene has been around long before the '70s, but it was only after the Olympics in 1976—when the Village moved east of Berri Street—that drag clubs like Poodles, Entrepot and Sex Garage climbed up from the underground and into the spotlight. Many of these bars have long since closed and now just two clubs—Café Cléopatra and Chez Mado—make up the heart of drag nightlife.

After three interviews, I've learned that queens often have very different opinions about drag. Unlike transvestites—who will often dress in women's clothing on a daily basis—drag queens are performers and very rarely dress in drag offstage. This makes the gender pronouns a little tricky. In general, the rule is that if he is in drag, he is most definitely a she. Outside of drag, it depends on the queen. Mado of Chez Mado, much like Madonna or Cher, always goes by Mado whether she's dressed up or not.

Some of them see their drag persona more as a character they play, rather than an extension of their identity or an alternate personality. Sitting in her bright pink dressing room, Mado told me, "What I do is closer to theatre than real life. Mado is like a role in a play, and when I'm not dressed up, I hardly even think about her."

But Mado has been around for 16 years, and her role in the



*Drag blends the gender lines.* GRAPHIC VIVIEN LEUNG

Montreal drag scene goes much deeper than theatrics. She is well-known for her sharp wit and loud ideas.

"I use Mado for politics. She gives me an opportunity to be heard and an audience who listens. I'm not always politically correct, but because I'm in costume it somehow gives me permission to say out loud what everyone thinks."

For Fatima, a weekly hostess at Café Cléopatra, drag has been her passion of 10 years, but it's also a means of making money. In her opinion, people are getting used to seeing drag queens, which is why she will only dress in drag on stage.

"The more people see you do

[drag], the more they think it's easy—an everyday thing—and the less they are willing to pay you for it."

Of the queens I talked to, Gina is the newest to drag. She's only been doing it seriously for about two years, and is slowly starting to get regular gigs around Montreal. Perhaps Gina has yet to be disenchanted by the business and politics of drag, because she speaks about drag with a fervour and warmth that seemed to be missing in the other girls. Through drag, Gina feels that she is coming closer to her ideal, whole self:

"When I'm on stage, it's an ecstatic experience. And it's not only transcendent; I really feel like I'm in the presence of this

woman who's not of this Earth; it's a spiritual kind of presence. She's fully my other half. Without her, I was incomplete. So, we complete each other. The whole point of drag is kind of a reunion of opposites."

Broaching the subject of gender, I wanted to know if these men actually wanted to be women.

"When I first started this," says Mado, "I used to be asked all the time 'are you making fun of women? Do you have an identity crisis? Is it because you want to be a woman?' And I said, no, I'm just an actor doing a character called Mado. I don't care for someone's gender. We have to stop putting stickers on people—man, woman,

rich, poor. We're all just people."

Gina, likewise, doesn't want to physically be a woman.

"I believe that I was given this body by God for a reason. And it's the one I've got to work with. However, when I let myself be her that woman is not a physical woman. And in that regard, yes, I want to be her."

"There is a blend of [gendered] characteristics in an infinite number of proportions in any given person at any given time. Gender is far more loose than we like to think. And I think one of the reasons drag queens, and kings for that matter, are valuable is that they help remind people of that, and help them break out of the rigidity of the binaries."

So how do they feel about women, then?

Mado tells me that women are usually her best friends.

"I have more affinities with women. They are more creative, more open-minded and they don't take themselves so seriously. And they're usually the ones who are more comfortable and less prejudiced around queens."

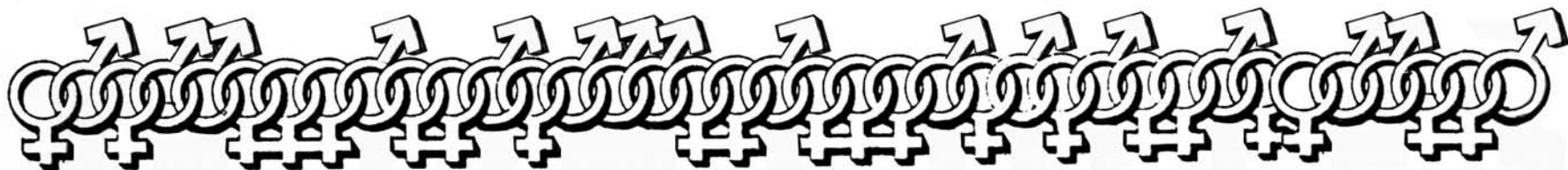
For Gina, this comfort women feel around drag queens goes even deeper.

I'm just an actor doing a character called Mado. I don't care for someone's gender. We have to stop putting stickers on people—man, woman, rich, poor. We're all just people

—Mado,  
drag queen about town

"I believe the fundamental energy [in life] is erotic energy, and women hold the key to that. For various reasons in this world, this energy is severely repressed. And women who have that energy are those that are most attracted to queens. I find that they're just looking for a chance to let it out, and queens give them that permission. There's a hyper-sensuality and they open a lot of that up and let it flow—I think that it's because they realize that it's safe."

No matter how you identify yourself, going out to a drag show is a great way to spend a night and is probably the closest thing you'll ever come to seeing Céline Dion, Madonna and Jennifer Lopez all perform together on one stage.



# Matriarchy or bust

Time for *The Link's* brand of feminism to become fully inclusive

• DAVE WEATHERALL & ALEX DOBROTA (*THE LINK*, MARCH 8, 2005)

Welcome back to 2005. It was a different time: there was a Bush in the White House, Stephen Harper hadn't yet seized power and "Change" meant more than just a political slogan. Until 2008, men were generally excluded from the Women's issue brainstorming process and were often banished from The Link office during its production. What follows is a letter of protest against this outdated tyrannical practice.

Each year around International Women's Day, *The Link* publishes an issue dedicated entirely to women. Only *The Link* does it with a twist. In the name of empowerment and progress, men are excluded from the final part of the production of this issue: those who do not self-identify as women are kicked out of the office at 6 p.m.

As socially progressive-minded men, we denounce this practice as reactionary and inefficient. Though it might momentarily empower the women taking part in this action, excluding men from production night once a year will not bring an end to the patriarchy that dominates mainstream journalism, which was one of the original goals of the initiative.

Men don't disrupt the production of a socially progressive newspaper. In fact, we greatly aid it. A quick overview of some of the stories we've contributed demonstrates that we place an

impetus on covering women's rights issues and abhor the violation of them.

Neither of us dispute the need for women-only space. Shelters for battered women and gyms where women can exercise away from the ogling eyes of men are good, clear examples where a male presence would disrupt the purpose of the space. But *The Link* is not one of these spaces. Making *The Link* a women-only space, even temporarily, not only diminishes the significance of where the concept is applied elsewhere, it drives a wedge between the men and women who work at the newspaper.

We're not alone in this vein of thinking. Feminist and cultural theorist Trinh T. Minh-ha says, "You cannot dismantle the master's house using the master's tools." This notion is applicable in *The Link* women's special issue policy: you cannot progress gender equality by creating further division.

As Concordia's independent student newspaper, *The Link* enjoys a healthy reputation as a socially progressive publication that, by its nature, either attracts socially progressive-minded men, or forces those who aren't to behave while they're in the office.

There is even a list of guidelines posted on the wall titled, "Tools for White Guys Who are Working for Social Change."

As men working for *The Link*, we are subject to the ethical guidelines laid down in our constitution with regards to sexism and we willingly abide by those rules. All, it would seem, for

naught, because in the eyes of the women at *The Link*, we are still instruments of oppression come 6 p.m. on the women's issue production night. If women who work at *The Link* feel oppressed, there exists mechanisms for dealing with this kind of problem that don't involve kicking all the men out. Grievance committees are an integral conflict resolution tool at *The Link* and women who feel oppressed by men at *The Link* should feel fully justified in employing it to combat sexism in the office.

But herein lies another problem. To our knowledge, no sexist complaints have been lodged in recent memory. No women have fingered any of the men at *The Link* during the year as oppressive. In fact, five of the last seven editors-in-chief have been women. Women occupy the majority of positions on masthead and have done so, more or less, for the past four years.

On the other hand, this year, men at *The Link* have encountered overtly sexist attitudes from members of *The Link* Publication Society. From story suggestions about what a world without men would be like, to the insinuation that if there were an international men's day, it would be a celebration of big cars and beer.

These are grossly stereotyped depictions that we believe do not represent us. In the absence of concrete examples of male oppression at the office, men who question why they are thrown out of the office at 6 p.m. are traditionally presented with two arguments. "Well, you know,

it's just different when there are only girls in the office," and that "it offers women who don't usually have a chance to do production to engage in it."

To the first argument, of course it is different. But if none of the men at *The Link* are oppressive, then it's just as oppression-free as before the men left. If the men are oppressive and have not been told about it, then the oppression returns the following production night and nothing has been permanently resolved. No sustainable, healthy model to be exported to mainstream journalism has been created. As socially progressive men, we want to be a part of creating that model and view the Women's issue as a prime opportunity to do so. By excluding us based on our sex we are denied this opportunity. The second argument, regarding production, is a non-issue. The production manager this year was a woman. After she left *The Link*, her position has been competently filled by our female editor-in-chief and four of the seven section editors are female and do their own production work. So there is ample opportunity for women to be involved in production without the need to kick all the men out.

Equally, the reality of being excluded from our jobs because of our sex would be easier to reconcile if it were not grossly hypocritical. *The Link* also prepares special issues like the Culture & Diversity and Queer issues that attempt to tackle social inequalities members of those communities face. The attitude of *The Link* when preparing these issues is

"For the master's tools will never dismantle the master's house. They may allow us temporarily to beat him at his own game, but they will never enable us to bring genuine change."

—Trinh T. Minh-ha,  
feminist and cultural theorist

inclusive. We don't kick all the non-visible minorities out of the office during production of the Culture & Diversity special issue and we don't kick all the straight people out of the office for the Queer issue, even though these two groups are vastly more marginalized in the professional world of journalism than women.

There's a reason the attitude towards the other special issues is adopted and it's because, with the goal of creating social change, everybody has to be included in the process. Ditto for women's rights.

To go back to Minh-ha, "For the master's tools will never dismantle the master's house. They may allow us temporarily to beat him at his own game, but they will never enable us to bring genuine change." The idea is that using gender as a basis for exclusion—in this case women excluding men to empower women—just further entrenches essentialist ideas about sex and gender. This is inappropriate and, we feel, tragically misguided.



## Are you a feminist?

"I consider myself a feminist—an anti-racist feminist. You can be an anti-racist but not a feminist, so in a way it's just a label, but I think feminism is important."

—Betty Fikre-Mariam, Women's Studies



"No, not really."  
"Can we take your picture?"  
"Uh, wait, can I change my answer?"

—Lloyd Sewell, shuttle bus driver



"That's a big question. There are a number of prejudices attached to this question. Everyone has their own definition of feminism. So I can't really say whether or not I am."

—Frederic Provost, mysterious-looking intellectual

"I am [considered] a feminist in my Sri Lankan culture. My dad and brothers argue with me all the time and it is difficult to push feminism onto them. I want to be successful in life but the boundaries they set for me, like, 'you can't be outside past this time,' limit my ability to be successful. In Canadian culture I am not [a feminist]. Canadian women have a lot of freedom."

—Solanga Aruldas, Biochemistry



"Definitely, yes. The actual definition of feminism, although people might see it differently, is the equality of men and women. And I firmly believe that women should have equal opportunities when it comes to job markets and opportunities. It's important for women to establish themselves in high profile jobs, in government and things of that nature."

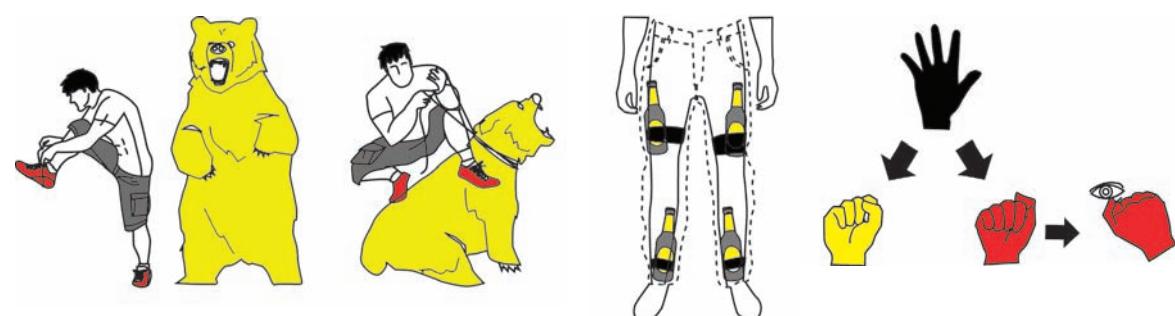
—Amanda D'Andrea, Political Science



# A guide to

## A collaborative effort on the part of

### Men



Survive a bear attack. You've been cornered by one or more black bears. It's man versus bear and you've gotta throw down. Distract the bear and strangle it with your shoelaces when it isn't looking. I saw it on *MacGyver* once and it worked out pretty well.

Change a flat tire with your bare hands.

Barbecue or provide commentary on a man's barbecuing as he barbecues.

*"Yeah that's lookin' good, buddy. Those are just gonna fall right off the bone. Wait, don't flip it yet, don't flip it yet!"*

Log roll (not the sex move but the actual act of balancing on a floating log).

Start a camp fire without gasoline.

Start a camp fire with gasoline.

Make an entrance. Just kick down the door.

Bullshit about car mechanics. *"Yeah, the steering column is done, the transmission's been leaking prestone for*

*ages so at this point I'm thinking of just gutting the Plymouth and starting from scratch."*

Build a birdhouse for your mother.

Lie. Negotiate. Barter. Brag.

Open a beer with your teeth.

Sneak liquor into a sporting event, even if liquor is already provided. (See diagram)

Know the proper usage of "that's what she said."

Orient yourself without a compass. Just look directly into the sun. It always faces west.

Get out of a speeding ticket. *"Listen friendo, you can give me a lecture and no ticket or give me a ticket and no lecture. But you can't have both, partner." You'll either get a hefty fine, or that cop will turn in his badge and dedicate the rest of his life to building you a proper shrine.*

Break up with a woman on her birthday.

Drink a man under the table.

Punch, kick, jab. Fight.

Make a witty threat and follow it up by denying you make threats.

End a phone conversation decisively.

*Not "Okay. Thanks for your time. You take care now." It's gotta be cool and stern. "Just get to the bottom of it" —click.*

Hunt a bird with a spear.

Cruise a friend's recently-divorced mother.

Shave with a buck knife.

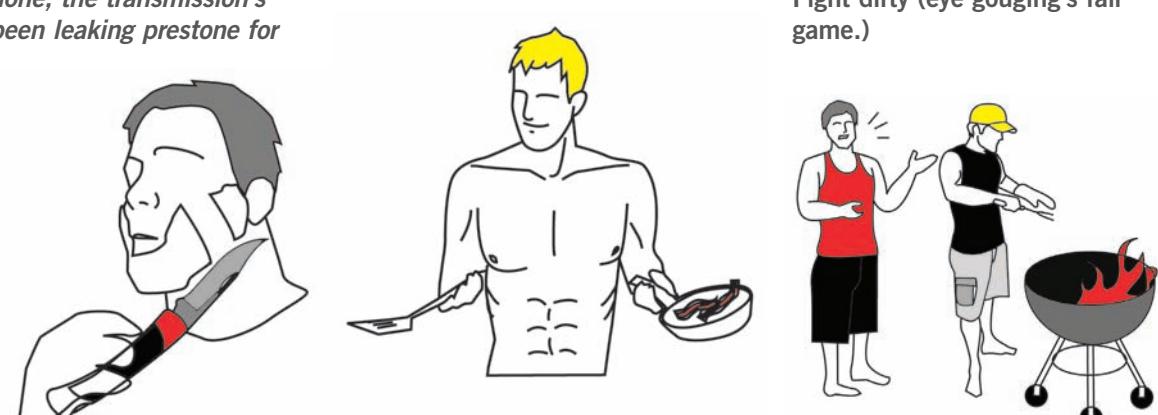
Deliver a baby in the backseat of a car.

Fry bacon shirtless without flinching.

Recognize a diesel engine by listening to it idle.

Make a toast. "To our wives and our girlfriends, may they never meet each other."

Fight dirty (eye gouging's fair game.)



# no gender

part of stereotypes everywhere

## Women



**Have it all.**  
*Everything. Have your husband, children, stimulating career, satisfying sex life, time for exercise and home-cooked meals. And the kitchen sink! You can do it if you sacrifice.*

**Regularly shave your legs and armpits.** Wince through a Brazilian.

**Rock red lipstick.** With bangs. And fake glasses. With Uggs and a Canada Goose jacket.

**Cougar your way into your son's parties,** Mrs. Robinson.

**Learn 77 ways to satisfy your man in 77 days.**

**Host family gatherings.** Stuff turkeys. Make dessert.

**Be a slave to fashion.** Follow trends. Judge others by what they wear. After all, the clothes make the woman, right?

**Break balls.** Emasculate the enemy. Or... just have a contrary opinion.

**Flirt your way out of a speeding ticket.** [Undo the top button of your blouse] "Listen friendo,



**don't you think we could come to an agreement?"**

**Know how to strut in high heels** (heel, toe, butt pop, repeat.)

**Keep a clean house.** This is, of course, your top priority.

**Primp.**

**Poop roses.** Deny farting. Burp silently.

**End your sentences with,** like, an upwards inflection?

**Pretend that boys are smarter than you.** That's hot.

**Provide your significant other with a list of friends he can no longer see.**

**Insist on "quality time"** with your mate. Even if you hate it, he hates it more.

**Max out multiple credit cards** and expect that marrying rich will solve the problem.

**Gossip and back-stab.** Pull hair.

**Make out with a woman at the party to get the man.**



**Pillow fight.** In lingerie. With your female roommates. While giggling. By an open window.

**Go to the bathroom in groups.** (You know why...)

**Fake bake.** Dye your hair blonde. Bleach your teeth.

**Bust or bust:** get under that knife.

**Burn your bra** while you're in university. Then get over it.

**Give birth and host a dinner party** all in the same weekend.

**Anti-age away every wrinkle,** crow's foot and laugh line until your wallet screams for mercy.

**Not going to win that argument?** Cue the waterworks. It works every time...

**Be pure in everything you do from 9 to 5.** Past 6 p.m. you're a whore in the bedroom.

**Apply makeup while driving.**

**Expect a diamond.**



## Are you a feminist?

"Are you starting some kind of list? Yes, I am a feminist. It has entirely to do with the way I was brought up. I don't really study the issue, I rarely have conversations about the issue, but just in the way I am familiar with the issue, I identify with it."



—Alex "The Feminist" Westcott, Prospective Student

"I am a supporter of equal treatment of people, so yes, I am a feminist."

—Andrew Peters, Linguistics

"That's a loaded question, let me have a beer first. I'm a person-ist, can we say that?"

—Erin Jasiura, Art History

"I would say so. I'm for the rights of all: people, animals, the environment. Especially a group as historically oppressed as women. In terms of modern movements, I think women should be allowed to express themselves and use their body and their mind and do what they want to represent who they are."



—Lucas Solowey, Sociology

"I don't really identify with any particular part of feminism because when you label it, it splits things up. I'm really about unity in feminism."



—Elvira Parent, Communications and Cultural Studies

"I'm not as dedicated as I should be, but yeah. I am a feminist."



—Kelsi O'Sullivan, UBC student

# No baby, no cry

## So I don't want kids, what of it?

• CLARE RASPOPOW

A lot of people don't understand when I tell them that I don't want to get married and most definitely don't want to have children. The reaction I elicit is similar to the one I get when I tell a religious person that I'm an atheist; a tilt of their heads and a deluge of questions ranging from redundant to downright offensive.

First come the artless rephrasings. I don't want kids? Really? I don't want children of my own? Not now, of course, but in the future? Seriously, never?

One question reworded, asked and re-asked, on the chance that I might trip up, that when you conjugate the verb "to want" in a particular way my answer will change.

Then come the "probing" and absolutely inappropriate questions.

Do I hate my parents? Have I

been given such a poor model of matrimony and child rearing that I just can't stomach the thought of getting married and having children of my own?

No. My parents are lovely, loving, supportive people. I'm convinced my childhood was probably happier than most.

Do I think that motherhood is a trap and a waste of time?

No. I think raising children is a perfectly good thing to do, if you are so inclined.

Am I just saying things I don't mean because I think it makes me sound hard and modern?

Question after question comes in an effort to find the terrible "Why," the thing that happened to me or the deep dark reason that children just aren't for me. The rules of politeness are forgotten in the search for my defect. When the questions dry up, when it's been established that I was never abused or neglected, and my answer hasn't changed, there's a

sense in the conversation that we've reached some impasse. I get the look, the look that says, "What's wrong with you?"

Even some of my friends can't understand my viewpoint.

They tell me that if I had children, I would love them. But bringing a life into the world that you're expected to raise and nurture for at least 18 years—on the probability that when it gets here you'll change your mind—seems foolhardy and a dangerous gamble.

They tell me that when I'm old and no longer able to have children, I'll regret not having had a baby when I could have. The spectres of childless aunts or uncles who mourn the fact that they were never parents are usually brought up as evidence of this fact. I tell them that if their family members don't feel fulfilled because they were never parents then they should have adopted. You don't have to birth a child to raise a kid.



*Not everyone's ideal "happily ever after."* GRAPHIC ALEX MANLEY

The conversation goes back and forth: them confused and unable to understand why I wouldn't want kids, and me a little offended by the assumption that I'm somehow broken because I'm unable to say that I do.

The truth is, I can't tell you why I don't want to have children, but I know that I don't.

I believe that not everyone should be a parent, the world is

full of examples of this: neglectful parents, people who blame their children for ruining their dreams, damaged people who damage kids. The worst thing anyone could do is bring an unwanted life into the world because it seemed like the thing to do at the time.

Babies aren't for everyone, and the most responsible thing I can do is admit that fact. I'm sure I'll make a wonderful aunt.

## Baby blues

### Pop culture's unhealthy obsession with motherhood

• R. BRIAN HASTIE

The fixation on motherhood in pop culture and media is one that is wrought with terrible messages for people who pay attention to weekly trash mags you can find at the supermarket.

Where women once bred for utility and family, some now breed for vanity and TV deals.

Most recently, Nadya "Octomom" Suleman, Kate Gosselin and the Duggar family have become household names for multiplying and marketing what women have been doing since the beginning of time: having babies.

#### The more the merrier

Suleman is an unemployed single mother who was artificially inseminated and gave birth to eight children last year. She now has 14 children. Her outlandish behaviour has placed her on magazine covers, celebrity news programs, major network news broadcasts and even landed her a spot on *The View* in an attempt to parlay her children into book deals and television shows.

The case of Jon and Kate Gosselin—of *Jon & Kate Plus 8* fame—was a much blogged about and trash rag-cover affair last year as the couple engaged in a media war of words after decid-

ing to divorce.

Their eight children were used as a point of contention by both parents, with Kate's ability to raise them as a single mother placed under scrutiny by various media outlets. Judged and criticized, while simultaneously courting the media during her "makeover," Kate Gosselin and her divorce were captured by an ever-intrusive army of camera-waving lunatics—and TLC—looking to document her family life for major bucks.

Publicly denouncing the use of contraception, the Duggar Family from reality TV show *19 kids and counting* stand by the Psalms in believing that "children are a heritage of the Lord."

From Tontitown, Ark., the Duggars are the kings of super-size families in the states, famous for The Duggar Family Orchestra and their reality show, which will wrap its fourth season on TLC and the Discovery Channel this March. All of their kids have names that start with J.

#### Baby mama bodies

The fixation on women and fertility doesn't end the second the children are born, as pressure on famous women to get back to their pre-pregnancy birth body has turned into a veritable cottage industry of diet endorsements,

tips, tricks, guilt and shame doled out via the media.

Naturally, in a society where celebrities are held on a pedestal to be dissected and admired, their own health tips on "how I lost the baby weight" are projected onto the average new mother, who may feel an obligation to hit the gym as soon as possible in order to lose the breasts, weight and bellies that are paradoxically celebrated while the woman is pregnant.

Weekly tabloid magazines devote much ink (as well as cover space) to women who can race back down to an acceptable size at break-neck speed and chastise those who cannot.

The image given by celebrities makes it seem as though bearing children has suddenly become a "fashionable" activity that all can partake in—and hopefully get a reality show deal from. Placing famous mothers on a soapbox often undermines the fact that having a child is a lifelong commitment, a huge re-organization of priorities and a lifestyle change.

The discrepancy between a manufactured representation of breeders versus the realities of parenting is harmful to real mothers and motherhood in general, creating unrealistic expectations for women who want to have children the healthy way.



GRAPHIC VIVIEN LEUNG

# The baby and the breadwinner

## Stay-at-home dads band together, form a community

• JOEL BALSAM

Joking together and shooting the shit, 50 men of varying economic, religious and political backgrounds gathered for a weekend last October to pound back brews and talk sports... and family.

These men came together for the annual At-Home Dad's Convention, a jam-packed weekend in Omaha, Neb., that has been gaining steam for the last 14 years.

Vancouver resident and freelance documentary filmmaker Cameron Phillips attended last year's convention. He, like many others since the economic recession, became an at-home dad when he lost his job.

"My first thought was that I'm a failure, and I'm letting down my family," said Phillips. "Society sees moms as [being] the best nurturers and dads as the ones who bring home the bacon, but there's more to life than just bringing home the paycheck."

Phillips explained some of the struggles men face when raising their kids during the day while their wives are working, most of which have to do with social stigmas. The media often portrays fathers in a bad light, he said. From Homer Simpson to Mr. Mom, fathers usually get a bad rep (even Montreal songwriter Jon Lajoie makes fun of stay-at-home dads).

The dads at the conference discussed how attitudes towards

fathering men need to change for gender equality to progress. Some men said they had been accused of making a pass at female parents when they were just trying to start a conversation. Other men said they fear touching someone else's child since they're worried of being labelled a sexual predator.

Philip Andrew, *homme*-maker extraordinaire and co-coordinator of the At-Home Dad's Convention, said that the myriad issues of masculinity and fatherhood attract men from all over Canada and the United States to the event.

In Nebraska, Andrew explained, nearly every church has a group for mom's but there are none for the fathers, leaving men marginalized.

"The one thing we can do to combat this is having things like the convention where guys know they are part of a community," he said.

Creating a positive community of at-home dads with "guy field trips" and going to the bar together is a part of the convention, but, more importantly, the weekend focuses on seminars and workshops dealing with topics ranging from attention deficit hyperactive disorder in children to the stresses and stigmas of being a stay-at-home dad. They've even managed to include a workshop for "quick and easy hairstyling," which is as practical as it sounds: learning how to do your daughter's hair.

"If your wife leaves for work and



GRAPHIC KATIE BRIOUX

you have a daughter or two daughters [there's potential for trouble]," said Andrew. "How many men know how to braid hair?"

While the convention has been a success, Andrew said he hopes more support groups for at-home dads will pop up around the world.

"We try to give guys resources to start a group," he said.

Andrew plans to branch out

into Canada, where the number of fathers who stay at home with their children has grown considerably since the second wave of the women's movement. According to Statistics Canada, 10 per cent of families in 2008 had a stay-at-home father, up from one per cent in 1976.

Phillips, inspired to take part in the pro-poppa parenting process,

is starting a business from home called Bettermen Solutions to provide resources and knowledge for fathers who want to start an at-home dad community across Canada.

"What I hear most from at-home dads is how much they love what they are doing," said Phillips. "They come to realize the lovely day-to-day moments they have with their children that you don't get back [once they're older]. I can remember the first time [my three-year-old son] told me he loved me or when he put his little arms around my neck and gave me a big kiss."

Phillips also considers at-home dads "the other half of the feminist movement."

"If a woman wants to have a family but wants to smash through the glass ceiling, she needs a partner at home with the kids if they want to have a parent at home," he said. "They are sort of hand-in-hand."

But a stay-at-home dad dynamic isn't just good for the working mom, the dads agreed.

"It can't help but open your heart to be around children all day long," said Phillips. "Being an involved dad is good for your kids, but it's also good for dad."

For more info about support for at-home dads, check out [athomedadconvention.com](http://athomedadconvention.com). Next year's At-Home Dad's Convention will take place on Oct. 2.

# Love in the age of H1N1

## GFE/BFE, consumerism and monogamy

• DAVID ADELMAN

In the modern age of speed-dating, Facebook "poking" and Internet pornography, the concept of finding a soul mate seems increasingly disposable.

Constant partying, working overtime and extra-curricular activities may make it difficult to find the time to date and build solid relationships, even though serial monogamy is valued as a norm in our culture. But contemporary, competing ideologies—about relationships, consumerism, sex and services—seem to be changing for men and women.

### The consumer love index

Dr. Yael Glick, a Concordia sociology professor, believes emotional relationships have

become a commodity in our fast-paced world.

Glick thinks women and men are afraid of relationships because they fear opening up to someone else, or becoming emotionally vulnerable.

"People are starved for real connections with others," she said. "They jump from one relationship to another before any real connection is made."

The reason for this, she posits, is that our consumer-driven society has led us to believe that the value in bonding is mainly economic, with people not wanting to take the time to build relationships.

"I think people are petrified of losing control [...] but there is an apparent sense of control when you buy something," Glick said.

"We need to wake up from this fantasy. [...] Money can't buy you love. [But when you buy something, or someone] the monetary exchange means the transaction has been terminated, with no obligations and no need to stick around."

Francis Ho, professor of sociology at Vanier College, begs to differ. He explained that society is too focused on long-term financial commitments, which plays into isolationism.

"Human beings are basically social animals," Ho said. "Establishing relationships, and ultimately finding one's mate, has always been our prime activity, if not purpose, in life."

Ho said one should indulge a little bit in finding their life partner since, "before you know it, it's

retirement time!" Ho added that he doesn't understand why people would want to skip dating, if a long-term partner is the ultimate goal.

### The Girlfriend Experience

The Girlfriend/Boyfriend Experience has literally converted emotional relationships into a commodity. A recent trend in the sex work industry, the Girlfriend/Boyfriend Experience allows for clients to develop a more intimate and personal relationship with those they pay for pleasure.

Émilie Laliberté, general coordinator of Chez Stella—a Montreal organization providing sex-workers supplies and tools to work in safety and with dignity—explained how more escorts are answering to

the GFE/BFE demand by increasing their services.

"Ten years ago, a GFE was an independent escort that businessmen would seek for private companionship to accompany him on business ventures," said Laliberté. "The experience would be intimate—involving kissing, massaging and cuddling—making her client feel more like a lover and learning intimate information about their life."

"It doesn't mean the escort will spend hours with the client," she continued, "but people want to feel special."

The girlfriend/boyfriend fantasy is about making a connection, even if temporary, Laliberté concluded. "[It] makes people feel like they're needed for a short period of time."

# The repackaged revolution

## Women's studies reframed



*The Simone de Beauvoir Institute withstands the trends of time.* GRAPHIC VIVIEN LEUNG

### • LAURA BEESTON

Across Canadian universities, a debate is raging over the recent trend of renaming women's studies institutions and courses to include gender and sexuality in their title.

With hopes to expand women's studies by framing it as more accessible, inclusive and enticing to enrolling students, Vancouver's Simon Fraser University announced on CBC's *The Current* Jan. 12 that it is the first institution in Canada to change its department's name—from the department of women's studies to the department of gender, sexuality and women's studies.

"We really want to look at the intersections," maintained Catherine Murray, director of the program at SFU. "By broadening our name we're signalling a historical interest in feminism expanding its horizons to attract new students [...] and more men to the program."

Both an issue of budgetary pressure to get bodies in classrooms and a move for more inclusive women's studies spaces, the announcement has prompted feminist voices from coast to coast to question the goals of the programs in universities and predict what types of changes a new name may bring to the field.

Many, including women's studies professor and advisory board member Renée Bondy of the University of Windsor—a school with over 180 students majoring in women's studies—believe that "women" is an important signifier

in the programs, as it connects academia to a community.

"Can we rally a larger population around the word gender?" she asked hesitantly. "I don't know."

Weighing in on the place of feminism in the university and the merits of its pedagogy in the classroom, Concordia University Gender and Journalism professor Linda Kay, a fellow of the Simone de Beauvoir Institute, speculated that the change might have to do more with the association than enrolment.

"I recognize that universities are consolidating and phasing out certain programs, [...] but I would hesitate to say that it's really all about this issue," she said. "I see this in my classes: women today are very hesitant to identify with feminism at all because there's this dirty-word connotation [...] and I'm kind of shocked. This was the sort of stigma of the '60s and '70s, but now, 40 years later, there is still this view of it."

Kay suggested that perhaps choosing to use the word "gender" over "women" is a "very cosmetic kind of change to make it more palatable," but finds it unfortunate nonetheless.

"Honestly, the battle [for women's equality] isn't over," she said with a sigh. "It's this institution that has helped women so much [...] but now, I guess, women don't feel that there's a need for women's studies per se, so they talk about gender studies."

### What's in a name?

Concordia's Simone de Beauvoir Institute—a women's

studies space that put the university on the map when it was established on March 9, 1978—has seen its share of semantic conflict in years gone by, but has managed to survive both budgetary pressure to cut programs and conflicting opinion about its namesake.

For example, in the original Dec. 20, 1977 submission written by the Women's College Committee to the Senate—proposing what would eventually become the SDBI—the language was clear from the onset that the word "Institute" be a mandatory part of the program.

"The women's institute would prefer not to be confused with either CEGEP levels of education or religious colleges," read the submission.

According to the Concordia archives, once Simone de Beauvoir approved the use of her name for the institute in February 1978, ballots were sent out to 36 founding members of the Institute. Asking them to choose between Simone de Beauvoir, Thérèse Casgrain, Emily Carr, Nellie McClung, Idola St. Jean and Minerva, 18 voted for Beauvoir out of the 33 ballots returned.

Disagreement surrounding the use of Simone de Beauvoir's name was particularly due to the fact that she wasn't French Canadian. This decision prompted the Fédération des femmes du Québec to publicly demonstrate and advocate their cause in the pages of *Le Devoir*.

Four months later, the Board of Governors approved the name despite the highly-publicized con-

troversy. That September, the SDBI opened its doors with 27 students majoring in women's studies programs and 100 students in total enrolled at the Institute. At this time, the student population included two male students and two male staff members.

### Cosmetic changes

Traditionally, women's studies programs across the country have been sites of progressive, pedagogical discussion and debate, evolving with the times to resonate with larger social and political attitudes taking place outside of a university context.

Perhaps the continually self-reflexive and subjective nature of women's studies is a reason this discipline has been characterized as a radical, boundary-pushing discipline since "The Nature of Woman" was taught for the first time in the Sir George Williams University philosophy department in 1970.

A recent example of another change—and continued point of contention among feminists—is the very spelling of the word "woman," which was modified by certain groups to *womyn* in the mid-'80s in order to provide a representative word that didn't contain "man" within it. Across the country, course material, textbooks and institutional names also changed along with the trend.

In September 1985, the SDBI also offered its first course in lesbian studies, but the curriculum committee at the time quickly removed the word "lesbian" from its title and changed it to "Female

"Women today are very hesitant to identify with feminism at all because there's this dirty-word connotation."

—Linda Kay,  
fellow of the Simone  
de Beauvoir Institute

# Breaking up with feminism

## Women of colour not on equal ground

• SANA SAEED, THE MCGILL DAILY

Influenced by '70s empowerment classics, the Spice Girls and my own experience as a veiled teenager vacillating between homogenous and diverse ethnic communities, the word "woman" became a defining characteristic of my identity during my middle and high school years.

While unaware of all the word's connotations, I knew from a very young age that to be a woman is beyond breasts, Aunt Flo's and unmentionable monologues.

Struggle is inherent to every woman's life, regardless of her appearance, her location, her age, her past. I believed that to be a woman was not only to experience this struggle, but also to realize it, to embrace it, to never succumb.

The realization of the struggles inherent to womanhood helped me better formulate a worldview that would eventually bring me to peace with several things that had haunted my thoughts for years.

Vanity, glass ceilings, career, ambition, opinions, unorthodox choices, language and unattainable expectations had all carved out comfortable abodes in my head and I felt constantly forced to deal with issues that arose from their sometimes-unwanted and sometimes-desired presence.

When I picked up my first piece of feminist literature at the age of 16, it was your basic introductory work, providing a detailed discussion and analysis of various forms of ideological and academic feminism—ranging from radical to ecological.

An activist fetish, first-year depression and general intellectual curiosity led me to take a feminist theory class during my first undergraduate semester. This gently coaxed me into really exploring the McGill feminist landscape. It was angry, fun, filled with ambiguities. I liked it. It terrified me at times, overwhelmed me, but it was something.

But alas, somewhere along the way, the relationship went sour. The passion left. The tensions had always been there, but were ignored for the sake of solidarity.

Though always aware of my womanhood, I had never been as sensitive to my ethnic and religious identity as much as I was forced to be upon entering university. New ideas regarding power relations, history, politics, gender and ethnicity were thrust into my adorable 18-year-old face. I embarked on a spiritual and cultural rejuvenation of sorts that came with age and paying tuition. I re-explored my Islamic

identity, beyond the date of my parents' migration to North America.

As my awareness of racism and the pervasive nature of ethnic power dynamics increased, the paradox involved in maintaining a capital-F feminist self also increased and I became increasingly uncomfortable associating with mainstream strands of feminism—including the ever-dominant radical branch—and how they would treat ethnic identities.

Generally speaking, feminism, as a socio-political and intellectual movement, has been dominated by white women, along with a select few transgendered individuals and white homosexual men.

Think that's a gross exaggeration? Send a letter.

Overwhelmingly, "white" history, experience, meanings and implications defined, created and have sustained what we understand feminism to be today, specifically the liberal and radical strands. There has been little input in the initial and primary construction of feminist discourse by those outside the aforementioned groups.

You might argue that several types of feminism today have evolved into more inclusive movements that take into consideration that "women of colour" have different experiences than white women as women—but that's precisely

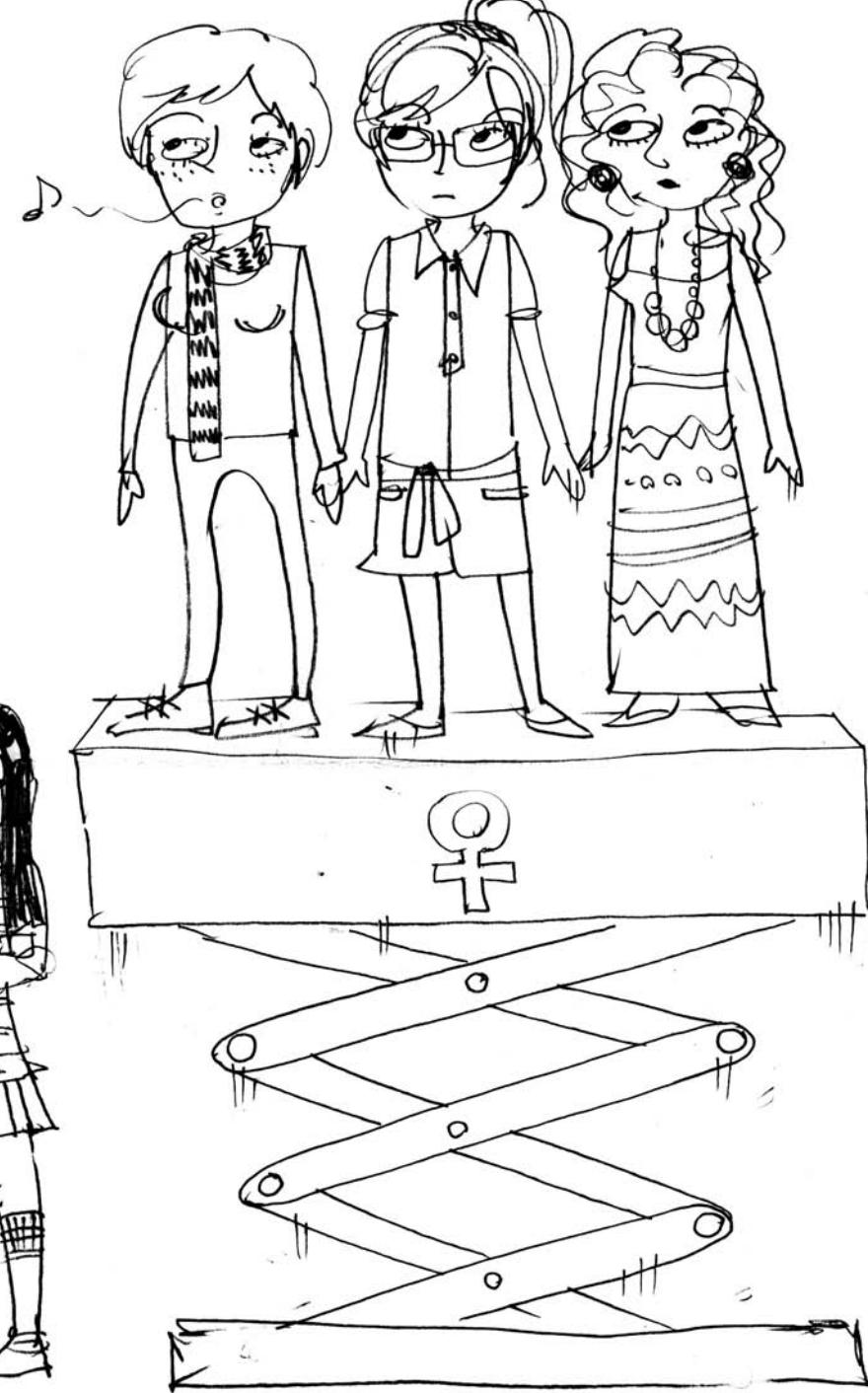
where the problem lies: women of colour.

"Women of colour" beautifully illustrates the exact problem I discovered with feminism, as a woman who did not fit a mainstream criteria for simply being identified as a woman.

As a "woman of colour," I am not just a woman. I am a woman with a little something extra; there is a difference struck between women like me and white women. There is no woman. There are no women. There are two groups: women and "women of colour." This tidily translates into the "us" and "them" categorization.

Because this distinction is made and has been proudly appropriated by "women of colour" without much criticism, this presumption that the white woman's identity is a sort of "foundational" identity for all women is prevalent within a feminism that was created and has been sustained on a very white—and North American—experience and history, which has created the framework which decades of feminist theory and thought have been constructed.

This paradigm was most aptly demonstrated when non-white feminists began to critique the very real ethnic power imbalances that existed in the discourse during the sixties and seventies. "Ethnicity," including



GRAPHIC VIVIEN LEUNG

faith and culture, was more or less fitted into the existing framework: the framework that was built on white women's experience with and understanding of patriarchy.

There has been no real attempt in academia to rethink the intellectual and historical foundations of the movement.

So, is the white woman palette upon which the "colours" of all other women can be found and mixed, used interchangeably to create a beautiful "inclusive" portrait of something which is—in many respects—ugly? If we are all equal, why are some "of colour" while others have the privilege of a much shorter identity label?

I strongly believe that much of the feminist analysis on sex, sexual identities, capitalism, beauty and gender deconstruction is a powerful tool for building ideas that require our consideration if we want to change our status-quo condition. I am not, however, foolish enough to believe in the universal applicability of these North American ideas.

There is a void within mainstream feminist discourse that has marginalized the women whom it has allegedly sought to empower and "save." Feminism is still very much a white woman's movement and discipline; it has tokenized women it sees as "of colour" in its attempt to be more inclusive and

universal. This is not progress. This is not equality. This is a kinder racism: unintentional, and really a part of an institutionalized mentality and epistemic history, but racism nevertheless.

Feminism's return to relevance requires a complete reconsideration and questioning of the foundation it was built upon, one sustained by the white woman's narrative on patriarchy. This reevaluation could potentially lead toward a more holistic feminist practice—hopefully re-branded as something for all men, women and everyone beyond—that is based on an understanding that the experiences of all women with patriarchy vary. More than lip-service recognition of this fact is required to transform feminism.

There should be no saving involved. There should be no brackets. There should not be two categories of women, if it is women about whom we speak. There should be realization, an embrace and a battle. There should be real inclusion of cultures and ideas. Nothing fitted neatly into the existing crevices and cracks.

And there should be just women. Period.

Sana Saeed writes in *The McGill Daily* each week. Embrace her at aristoleslackey@mcgilldaily.com

# White male for hire

## Academics discuss reverse discrimination

• TERRINE FRIDAY

When the Royal Canadian Mounted Police caught flak in 1996 for deciding not to hire any more white males, spokesperson Gilles Moreau came quickly to the force's defence.

"You cannot call it discrimination," he had said. "In my knowledge of United Nations declarations, you can have employment equity policies to make up for past discrimination."

The RCMP is just one of many public and private-sector Canadian bodies that practice affirmative action, referred to officially as employment equity and also known as "positive discrimination." The programs actively target individuals for recruitment based on the "protected characteristics" of gender, race, (dis)ability, and First Nations or Inuit status.

According to Barry Cooper, a University of Calgary political science professor and author of *Bureaucrats in Uniform: The Politicization and Decline of the*

*Royal Canadian Mounted Police*, a report for the Fraser Institute, a conservative Vancouver-based think tank, highlighting difference based on physical characteristics in lieu of merit is troublesome.

"This is, of course, a problem with all employment equity hiring," Cooper wrote in the 2006 report. "It harms the alleged beneficiaries by removing the element of pride and self-respect in order to promote what are seen by senior administrators as the interests of the 'disadvantaged.'

Dean DiSpalatro, political science professor at Concordia, called employment equity "a band-aid solution, a feel-good policy that satisfies the politically-correct impulse and gives an appearance of genuine change."

DiSpalatro argued that artificially injecting under-represented people into any workforce, despite their performance, could hurt any company.

"Let's just get the best players," he said. "We should look at merit and suitability to any job as the key determining factor, and then,

if minorities are not filling the ranks as much as they should be, we should ask, 'Why is this the case?'

"I would argue that affirmative action, and this emphasis on difference, is completely against the spirit of Martin Luther King, Jr.'s most famous utterance: you should judge someone by the content of their character rather than their skin colour," he continued. "We should be looking at the someone's performance, not their visible exterior."

Minimal employment equity guarantees were first introduced in Canada in the 1960s along with then-prime minister John Diefenbaker's Canadian Bill Of Rights. In 1978, the Canadian government implemented the Affirmative Action Program, a pilot project which encouraged the active engagement in private and public sectors of Aboriginals, blacks, persons with disabilities and women. In 1985, employment equity programs made up part of the guaranteed equality rights that had been newly added to the

Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

However, DiSpalatro said, nothing much has changed in the past 40 years in terms of employment equity. In order to bring the share of disadvantaged groups in key sectors closer to their weight in terms of population, he said, the best solution is to target the real issues: assessing the needs of marginalized communities and re-evaluating a dysfunctional education system.

"Of course it will take longer; results won't be evident in one year," he explained. "This is a longer process because you're talking about going right to the root of the problem by going into neighbourhoods, improving [the education system] and access to resources. The results of these actions don't show up in a week or two weeks."

"[Employment equity] is simply the appearance of results," he continued, "but you have no real results at all."

Fo Niemi, co-founder and executive director of the Centre for Research Action on Race

Relations, said it's naïve to assume that all Canadians are afforded the same employment opportunities regardless of ethnicity, ability or gender.

"When we think about employment equity, we only think about hiring," Niemi said. "We don't look at the records of promotion and access to management positions, which affects women as well."

"Especially in the francophone sector [...], anyone with an Arabic-sounding name, or an African non-Christian name, [has] a lot of problems getting even an answer to their job application. So, there's still obstacles."

Even though rigid quotas for hiring minorities are not accepted in Canada, he said, objective-setting—a measure that effectively imposes soft quotas—is encouraged.

"Whoever in this country applies a rigid quota system and hires incompetent people just to meet the numbers, that's reverse discrimination and we'd be the first to blast it," he concluded.

## La reine de RDI

### Anne-Marie Dussault opens up about women in broadcasting

• HUGO PILON-LAROSE

"This is a question of equilibrium," asserted Radio-Canada journalist Anne-Marie Dussault when asked about the role of women in broadcasting. "Four out of five anchors at Radio-Canada today are women because of past pioneers."

Though it took decades for women to break into print and broadcast journalism in Quebec, notable female professionals—including Radio-Canada journalist Judith Jasmin—opened doors for women in the field.

Dussault considers Jasmin a trailblazer that inspires her everyday work and is pleased that female icons now lead the profession.

Since establishing herself 31 years ago, Dussault has become a pillar at Radio-Canada. Every day, she anchors the noon newscast and presents the *24 heures en 60 minutes* news show.

She's proud to be the only woman in Montreal leading two live shows on weekdays, and no matter how much time and energy it takes for her to do her job, one thing is clear: she wants to live on this beat for a long time to come.

Though Dussault's career has grown alongside many social changes, she explained the balance she had to strike between media and the men in her life.

"It was not easy to raise a child with this career," she explained candidly. "Working as a journalist means that you have atypical days at work—but most of the time you have to be in the newsroom from [early] in the morning until late at night. The only way to survive is to have help at home."

Married to Marc Laurendeau, who also works at Radio-Canada, Dussault claims it was easier for her to be a full-time journalist and to have a family since her partner completely understands her busy schedule and she was able to have a nanny at home.

While her son was in elementary and high school, Dussault balanced motherhood with working on radio, television and directing award-winning documentaries.

"Very soon when I had my son, my husband and I realized it was not possible for us to have two careers and to raise our family [properly]," she said. "We needed help at home, and because of it things were so much easier."

She said she believes that, with

help, it is possible for every woman to have a career and also be a great mom, if they decide they want children.

How Radio-Canada producers decide to hire women remains a mystery to Dussault, but she was adamant that she isn't working in television news simply because of her gender; the main quality you need to survive in today's news world, she said, is a passion for hard news.

Currently, there are more female students studying journalism than their male counterparts at universities across the country.

According to Linda Kay, undergraduate program director and professor in Concordia's journalism department, more women are applying to study journalism today and make up roughly 60 per cent of the classroom.

It was practically the inverse statistic just a few years ago.

Dussault believes that Radio-Canada makes an effort to include more female journalists hosting news shows, and that equal representative co-hosting is common in the Montreal era.

Popular radio morning shows from private stations such as Rythme FM and Rock Détente, to



GRAPHIC VIVIEN LEUNG

the public CBC radio one have both male and female anchors.

Only CJAD, dedicated to news talk, totally excludes women from its morning schedule, while the francophone Radio One has a show hosted by René Homier-Roy since 2004.

The situation is quite different

on television, where Radio-Canada and TVA have female anchors dominating major morning shows, such as Pénélope McQuade on the TVA's *Salut bonjour weekend*.

"Women are taking their place in broadcast journalism and I think the public appreciates it," said Dussault. "That's why we are here."



Robin Wattie: "It is interesting to explore how varied sexuality is in terms of culture, the different practices, taboos and labels." GRAPHIC ROBIN WATTIE

## Sex and baggage

An interview with *The Link's* women's & men's special issue cover artist

• RACHEL LAU

Robin Wattie started sketching the day she learned to hold a crayon. However, after dropping out of her second year in illustration and design at Dawson College, Wattie stopped drawing for about five years. The program, she said, was not intellectually challenging or stimulating. Instead, it drained her entirely of her love for the arts.

Wattie, now 26, has rediscovered her passion. She is studying painting, drawing and anthropology at Concordia. Having only dabbled in painting until her arrival at the university, Wattie admits that "there is always a lot to learn no matter how accomplished one is, or one might think they are in any case."

**The Link:** Elaborate on the sexual nature of your artworks. What intrigues you about this subject matter?

Robin Wattie: The sexual content in my recent work stems from a box of Polaroids the father of my ex-boyfriend had "found." That box was filled with Polaroids of his [friend's] sexual relations with his lovers. These photos are quite beautiful in

their rawness and colour.

I guess what intrigues me most about sexuality is the way we try to understand it and how we all possess our own experiences. It is interesting to explore how varied sexuality is in terms of culture, the different practices, taboos and labels. Those Polaroids have opened a lot of windows for me to explore. I am using [them] as a stepping stone to eventually delve into my own sexuality, provided I have the courage. More importantly if I can mentally and emotionally handle rummaging through baggage that I have so carefully stored...really far away...way deep down. [laughs]

**In quite a few of your works you do not draw faces. Why is that?**

Oh, there are a lot of reasons, some of which I haven't fully developed to properly articulate. But mostly it is because I do not want the viewer to enter the pieces through the face. By having no faces the viewer can more easily assume the figures as their own. I want them to react to the content specifically. If it makes them uncomfortable, if they don't understand, if it angers them, if they enjoy it, I want them to focus on why. I want them to relate it to their own experiences and their

own sexuality. I think if they were to have faces, it would distract the viewer from fully relating to the physicality of the subject matter. They might even relate the face to something else entirely.

**You do not use a great deal of colour. Is this of particular importance to you when depicting these sexual scenes?**

The limited palette is a conscious choice because I want to create a feeling or mood more than an accurate depiction of whatever the content may be in my drawings or paintings. I have always been drawn to not just the colours I use, but any colour in an image that gives you a sense of feeling—or rather, that makes you feel something, that takes you away or enhances your present state. For me it is warmth, bitterness, desolation, hurt, softness...oh, I can go on. But intellectually one might say that my limited palette is also founded on my continual learning about colours. I only really started to use colours when I started at Concordia.

Robin Wattie's work is on display in the Art Matters drawing exhibition *On the Line*, showing at Artefacto (661 Rose de Lima St.) until March 19.

Read the full interview at [thelinknewspaper.ca/blog](http://thelinknewspaper.ca/blog)

## Fêting esthetics

Concordia's Art Matters festival turns 10, brings the party



Art Matters co-producers Jeremy Dabrowski, Nathea Vinson, Patrick Lloyd Brennan and Judith Mignault at the festival's Nuit Blanche event, Nouille Blanche, on Feb. 27. PHOTO RILEY SPARKS

### • MADELINE COLEMAN

Art Matters is awfully precocious for a 10-year-old. This year's incarnation of the art festival brings the work of almost 200 artists into professional galleries all over the city—and it's all the work of Concordia students, from start to finish.

"What Art Matters does and has done time and time again has really forced people to pull it all together and act and be professional," explained festival co-producer and fine arts student Jeremy Dabrowski. "You're getting put into a setting that is a professional setting. You have to put on that suit, so to speak, and go to work and actually ask something of somebody."

The festival was just a small, enthusiastic fish in a big art sea when it was founded by fine arts students in 2000. In the beginning, every department of the fine arts faculty kicked in a few dollars to show work in small venues like cafés. Since then, said co-producer Patrick Lloyd Brennan, it's grown to become something "really special and really important." Art Matters is now the biggest student-run art festival in Canada, encompassing almost three weeks of exhibitions and performances.

Brennan admitted that, cooped up in the basement office that serves as Art Matters headquarters, it can be hard to envision the sprawling art party to come.

"It's hard to see how widespread this festival is, how far Art Matters reaches out into the community," he said. "You see the

results in the actual festival and even the media coverage. But before that it's hard to gauge what kind of effect we're having on students beyond the fine arts building."

Inside that building, though, Brennan and Dabrowski think the festival comes with a big payoff: show curators learn the fine art of balancing their vision with that of the artists, and artists get to see their work in what is, for many, their first public exhibition. In other words, students finally get to walk the walk.

"[At first] you'll hear people paraphrasing things they heard in class, but you'll see that develop because you'll see them put their own interests and own opinions in it," said Dabrowski of the festival learning curve. "[As an art student] you're so steeped in all the theory and rhetoric, all the vocabulary. Then people start to become more comfortable, more colloquial."

"I think Art Matters can prepare student artists for—I hate saying it—the real art world," said Brennan, adding, "although at this point I do feel we're part of the real art world."

Art Matters kicks off with an opening party on March 5 at 8:30 p.m. at Theatre Plaza St-Hubert (6506 St-Hubert St.), featuring performances by The Lovely Feathers, Tonstartssbandht, Garçons and The Peelies. Cover is \$5.

The festival runs until March 19. For full schedule, visit [artmattersfestival.com](http://artmattersfestival.com).



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# The beautiful and damned

Pop culture takes a look in the mirror in Art Matters show

• CHRISTOPHER OLSON

Concordia student Jerome Nadeau is searching for someone: someone named Jerome Nadeau.

"We all go through a phase in our life where we try to find out who we really are," said Nadeau. His methodology of self-discovery did not include yoga or Oprah, but Google.

Typing his name into the search engine, Nadeau turned up a litany of strangers who, aside from sharing the same name, bore little or no resemblance to one another.

Of course, people do this everyday, but Nadeau decided to turn his idle curiosity—or perhaps narcissism—into found art. The Concordia photography student's full-sized prints of the other Jerome Nadeaus will be on display at the PUSH Gallery starting this week as part of an exhibit called *Generation Why*.

"Our generation is the first generation to grow up with heavy Internet culture and so much communication technology," said exhibit curator Katherine Lewis, a Concordia art history undergraduate. "I see around me the way that people are regurgitating pop culture so frequently and fragmenting it and reusing it."

"Degradation and Delay" is a video installation piece by Jean-Marc Perin, Paul Frigon and Philippe Leonard featuring clips taken from the film *Die Hard*, intercut with sound taken from news broadcasts discussing the events of 9/11 and other

tragedies—a mix of fantasy violence and real-world chaos.

Irene Lepiesza's "Still Not Listening" consists of plaster casts of cell phones and baby monitors displayed in a transparent Plexiglass pillar.

"Much of our daily conversations happen over electronic devices while running errands or through a limited number of abbreviated words," Lepiesza, a Concordia studio arts major, explained. "We are communicating, but not really listening."

Thea Govorcin makes her offering to daytime talk show deity Oprah Winfrey with an oil on canvas portrait of the reigning TV hostess, and Sadaf H. takes Nadeau's narcissism one step further with a video installation piece retracing her journey through cyberspace in glorious real-time, from the blogs she visits and the YouTube clips she watches to her private e-mail messages. Katherine Pansera's ode to hedonism, "Tall Boys," features two ingredients: urethane rubber casts of beer bottles and real, edible pretzels.

"I wouldn't say that I'm being critical of pop culture," said curator Lewis. "I'm more interested in the way it affects our generation's lives. It affirms our culture, but there's also the possibility that it's damaged us too."

*Generation Why* runs from March 4 to 13 at PUSH Gallery (5264 St-Laurent Blvd.). The vernissage will take place at the gallery March 4 at 8 p.m.



The eyes are the closed-circuit camera to the soul. Concordia artist Thea Govorcin's portrait of Oprah Winfrey, at PUSH Gallery this week.

## Moving in the right direction

All-female dance company strikes back at conjugal violence

• MEGAN DOLSKI

What's a girl to do if she wants luxurious lashes, a clear complexion and luscious lips? Simple: all she has to do is make them up. A little Maybelline here, some Cover Girl there and any girl can be a whole new woman.

But this same makeup can also hide everything from bruises to insecurities.

All-female dance company Divinity hopes to harness this transformative might in their first full-length production, *The Power of Lipstick*. All proceeds from the show will go to the West Island Women's Shelter, a haven for those escaping conjugal violence.

"The bottom line is there is power in it," said Divinity's founder and choreographer Sonia

Balazovjeh. "Women use makeup as a tool."

With this production, Divinity delves deeply into a subject all the dancers are familiar with: the lives of women. The show will combine dance, video, audio voice-overs and an all-female soundtrack.

While some of the show's pieces are light-hearted and comical, others dive into more disturbing territory, such as control and abuse. In addition to financially supporting the shelter, the company hopes to both raise awareness and break the silence surrounding conjugal violence.

Balazovjeh feels that although many women are trapped in violent relationships, the issue is rarely discussed.

"I think women are embarrassed," she explained. "If you are



Divinity's dance production, *The Power of Lipstick*, tackles the taboo around conjugal violence. PHOTO RILEY SPARKS

a victim you think it's because you've done something wrong, and women don't talk about it."

Even before *The Power of Lipstick* takes the stage this week, Divinity has encouraged people to

open up and talk about the problem. Various members of the community who are survivors of conjugal violence have come out and voluntarily shared their stories with the company's dancers.

Divinity dancer Dawn Patulli said their testimony has been inspirational, especially because the dance company's primary goal is to give a voice to marginalized members of the community.

"The fact that they are brave and courageous enough to come forth and share their stories is really something special," she said.

*The Power of Lipstick* will be performed March 6 at 8 p.m. at the Salle Marie-Gérin-Lajoie at the Université du Québec à Montréal (405 Ste-Catherine St. E.). Tickets are \$35.

# The DOWN-LOW

## Event listings March 2-8

### ART MATTERS VERNISSEAGES

*Drawing the Line in Painting*  
 Tuesday, March 2 at 7 p.m.  
 VAV Gallery  
 1395 René-Lévesque Blvd. W.

*Cent Titres*  
 One-night show  
 Thursday, March 4 at 8 p.m.  
 PUSH Gallery  
 5264 St-Laurent Blvd.

*Magic and Science*  
 Saturday, March 6 at 7 p.m.  
 Galerie Yergeau  
 2060 Joly Ave.

See [artmattersfestival.com](http://artmattersfestival.com) for full show listings.

### MUSIC

Matt Perri + the Living Sluts  
 with Oxen Talk and Jasper Baydala  
 Wednesday, March 3 at 9 p.m.  
 Bar St-Laurent II  
 5550 St-Laurent Blvd.  
 Tickets: \$5

### MULTIMEDIA

Carnivale L'Étranger  
 Variety show featuring dancers,  
 singers, toy theatre, a trashy clown  
 and more.  
 Thursday, March 4 at 10 p.m.  
 Interstice  
 242 Young St.  
 Tickets: \$5

Radical Queer Semaine 2010  
 A week of workshops, performances,  
 debates, parties, film screenings  
 and a game of Capture the Fag—all  
 with, yes, a radical queer bent.  
 Opening night Friday, March 5  
 Until March 14  
 Mise au Jeu  
 90 de la Gauchetière St. E., second  
 floor  
 See [radicalqueersemaine.org](http://radicalqueersemaine.org) for  
 more information.

### LECTURE

First of three-part series “The Sciences, the Arts and the Human Condition” with a focus on the research and artwork of neuroscientist Dr. Ivar Mendez.  
 Saturday, March 6 at 1 p.m.  
 Galerie Samuel Lallouz  
 1434 Sherbrooke St. W.  
 Tickets: \$60 for students, for all  
 three sessions  
 Email [reception@galeriesamuellal- louz.com](mailto:reception@galeriesamuellal- louz.com) for more information.

— compiled by  
 Madeline Coleman



*Yuki Isami says her performance *Branches et racines* is a “summary of [her] history of living in Montreal.”* PHOTO ELSA JABRE

# Travelling on a song

## Japanese musician Yuki Isami digs her roots

### • MAUDE ABOUCHE

Yuki Isami is building a bridge to Japan with only a handful of instruments.

This week she performs *Branches et racines*, a cross-cultural production that melds rising sun and the fleur-de-lys.

“It’s the connection of Japanese people and Québécois people, a summary of my history of living in Montreal. Since I came here, I see my culture from the outside,” explained the Japanese multi-instrumentalist. “We made a program that connects all the world and all generations as well, but the centre is Japanese culture. It’s the roots, and it opens into worldwide com-

posers and music.”

Isami, who plays both western flute and traditional Japanese instruments, created the production in collaboration with Quebec composer Maxime McKinley. Drawing from the repertoires of composers Olivier Messiaen and Gilles Tremblay, Japanese instruments such as the shinobue, shamisen and koto will share the stage with piano and guitar.

“Here [in North America] we express ourselves, and it’s normal. In Japan, you have to guess what people are feeling,” said Isami on the cultural divide between the two societies. “We say that silence is beautiful. I think that’s why Japanese culture is so flashy. Because of this social culture and

ambiguous attitude, when Japanese people express themselves, it explodes.”

*Branches et racines* is not merely a concert. Isami said video, lighting and staging will all work with the music to create an all-round experience that will suck the audience into a different world. And Isami not only hopes to offer the audience a taste of Japan, but of contemporary music as well.

“There are a lot of contemporary music groups in Montreal, but every time, the public is the same. I want to give people who have never listened to contemporary music before an opportunity to listen to it.”

The program has been in the

making for more than a year, a lengthy period considering the performance will take place on a single night, with no plans for other dates. But it’s obviously a labour of love.

“It’s like cooking,” Isami said, drawing a parallel between her art and another one of her passions. “You spend so much time cooking, and then you open the oven, you wonder if it will be any good. It’s like cake! I put so much good energy and love into this, and I think that everyone will feel it, so I’m sure that this cake will be very good.”

Isami performs *Branches et racines* at La Sala Rossa (4848 St-Laurent Blvd.) on Mar. 3 at 8 p.m.

# spins

### Bobo from monkeyhowl.com *Self-titled EP*

Independent



This album would probably have done better as the soundtrack of a failed ‘90s movie featuring an animatronic gorilla learning, living, loving—the kind of crap that Brendan Fraser might have starred in. As a single, it’s singularly unimpressive. This release is nothing but gimmicky sampled bird song, rudimentary chord progressions and some asshole talking in rhymes over the track. This smacks of a bunch of guys who got together in their basement, got too high or drunk and walked away with “genius.” I’m sure when they get together with their friends they put this album on

and sit there and watch with expectant faces as everyone present has to listen. There’s no need to listen to these “songs,” to go to their website or pay money for this schlock.

1/10  
 —Clare Raspopow

### Silly Kissers *Precious Necklace*

Arbutus Records



There should be a place in everyone’s heart for Silly Kissers’ new dance-tastic album *Precious Necklace*—that is to say, if you are open to your playful side. The local band’s third album boasts a more refined sound, yet maintains the gushy electro goodness of their prior releases. Lead singers Jane Penny and Bobby Lamont lend contagious lyrics and provide a pleasing

symmetry of masculine and feminine vibes over the synth wizardry. Call it an ‘80s flashback, but Silly Kissers have never been more relevant. If title track “Precious Necklace” is a crystal ball into their future sound, expect big things from this band.

8/10  
 —Ashley Opheim

### Blacklisted *No One Deserves To Be Here More Than Me*

Deathwish Inc.



Philly hardcore unit Blacklisted have undertaken a long and strange journey over the past eight years. The band crisscrossed North America, playing to dozens in the continent’s worst shitholes. Thankfully, however, these growing pains have turned

a rather formulaic band into a strange hybrid of raw rock n’ roll and hardcore edge.

The shift in tone that began on 2008’s *Heavier Than Heaven, Lonelier Than God* comes to full fruition here. The band has learned to turn their bursts of primal hardcore into a set of elastic compositions that shift in speed and tone, slowing things down and exploring real gosh darn melodies. The title track is a shining example of this: two minutes and 40 seconds of fuzzed-out guitars, stomptastic drums and gruff, pleading vocals that would make David Yow happy. Stand-out track “Skeletons” follows a similar pattern, a three-minute romp with a propulsive drum-beat and clean vocals. Call it an evolution of rockcore proportions.

8/10  
 —R. Brian Hastie

# Game over

Stingers' Cinderella run comes to an end



Stingers head coach Kevin Figsby rallies his troops one last time. PHOTO ESTHER BERNARD

• DAVID KAUFMANN

The Stingers' mid-season Cinderella story ended in a 4-2 playoff eliminator loss Feb. 21 against the Université du Québec à Trois-Rivières Patriotes.

The loss comes just days after the Stingers forced a third game in the best of three series against their Patriotes rivals, defeating them 2-1 at the Ed Meagher Arena.

Concordia was looking to face arch-rivals McGill Redmen in the second round of the playoffs—a lofty goal for a team that had been written off before the new year.

The team had their share of tribulations to contend with this year, after starting the season without eight starting players from last year's rosters. Michael Baslyk, Nicolas Lafontaine, Simon Pierre Sauvé and Nicolas Daoust were all lost as a result of ineligibility or turning pro.

The Stingers were also plagued with injuries throughout the campaign. Both defenceman Michael Blundon and right-winger Nicolas Sciangula sat out for five games with concussions. Goaltender Maxime Joyal missed eight games and veteran centre Charles-Antoine

Messier missed 10.

With this kind of luck, it's a wonder Concordia managed to get out of the gate after a 0-8 start, much less rack up some major accomplishments.

"The game against Plattsburgh State University [was definitely a high point]," said Stingers head coach Kevin Figsby. "We haven't played them in about 15 years. We got that game back on."

Hosting the Swedish national junior team, one of the top-ranked in the world, for six days in November also ranked highly, he said.

From then until the end of December, the Stingers went 4-4 to close out the semester.

But come the holidays, they were given another golden opportunity as they participated in a tournament in Germany where they played against professional teams.

Although reality hit hard with a 12-3 loss to McGill upon their return, the playoffs seemed more of a possibility.

During the break, the Stingers bolstered their lineup with prospects from the junior teams all over Canada. Among the new faces were left-winger Aléxandre Monahan and defenceman Nicholas Goyens from the Quebec Major Junior Hockey League. They also

obtained right-winger Peter James Corsi from the Central Hockey League, as well as left-winger Daniel Michalsky from the East Coast Hockey League and centre George Lovatsis from the Ontario Hockey League.

All of a sudden the Stingers were turning early season blowouts into victories, obtaining points in eight of their last 12 games. During this run, an injury to goalie Joyal forced the team to rally behind former fifth-stringer Mike "Rudy" Shrider, who had a brilliant run, winning a pair of starts after riding the bench for three seasons.

When Joyal came back, he was nothing short of stellar himself.

"Max Joyal played as well as I've seen a goalie play for this level," Figsby said of his goaltending. "I can say it was an easy game for me, but guys played well in front of me, and I could see the puck pretty much all night," Joyal said after stopping 46 shots in game two of their three-game series against UQTR.

His goaltending along with the new additions to the team were enough to drive Concordia all the way to a playoff berth. When they finally played, they struggled

against the Patriotes in game one but fought to the bitter end in game two.

Patriotes assistant coach Jean-François Brunelle praised the Stingers' resolve. "I think they have a good style to play against us. They're doing well on the fore-check, they're doing well in the neutral zone and they made us shoot from the outside of the slot," he said.

Unfortunately their mid-season run was halted in game three as a few second-period goals from the Patriotes crushed the Stingers' hopes of advancing to the next round.

Overall, Figsby wasn't too upset with the outcome of the season.

"It's been a year that's been a tremendous learning experience," Figsby said. "So whenever our season finishes, I'm going to look back at the start of the season and the adversity that this team has faced [...] and evaluate from the adversity to the success rate."

While he was happy his players overcame adversaries on the ice, Figsby was also proud of his team's success rate off the ice.

"We have 14 players that are around the 3.0-plus GPA and that's absolutely phenomenal for our program," he said.

**Vélo  
boulot  
dodo**

Get greased up for the bike season

• TRISTAN LAPointe

Do you remember what it was like to ride your bike a month ago? The January warm snap aside, I'm willing to bet your pre-commute preparations lasted longer than your actual ride over the past few months. Wool, Gore-Tex, seal skin and layer after stinky base layer were slipped on and strapped tight just to leave the house.

When you actually did get on the streets they were covered with bullshit—slush, snow, and at best a fine layer of grit coated everything, including you and your bike.

The most enjoyable parts of riding were sucked away too. How we have all missed actually leaning into corners instead of gingerly tiptoeing around them. Or riding a bike that doesn't sound like it's making popcorn every time you turn the pedals. Rejoice all, it's almost over.

This time of year winter cyclists have a lot to look forward to. As the temperatures climb, the roads get dryer and become more easily navigable. The equipment required for a 20-minute jaunt to school diminishes. And the technical outerwear that made you stick out like a sore thumb at every class, party and bar you went to this year is slowly moving south from your body, and soon you'll cast it off like an old snake skin. Sure the mail/weed couriers and their imitators will still look like paramilitary spacemen, but casual cycling will soon make its yearly come back. Riding will again be a "normal" thing to do.

While we're all looking forward to it, some will say that spring has its downsides. The first thing you lose in the summer is a motorist's respect. Nobody wants to be the asshole who ran over a cyclist in the winter, but now that streets are clear and driving is easier people are going to get dumber. Expect stupid driving to peak with the mercury, just like violence!

The bike lanes will once again be filled with fair weather cyclists sporting their de rigueur kit of noise-cancelling headphones and rusty 10-speeds. If you plan to share the de Maisonneuve Boulevard path with these people, get a bell, or better yet a fucking klaxon.

If you're a real alt guy or girl and the change of seasons has you down, take heart, you've got one last chance at riding-for-credibility. This Saturday, Montreal's messengers are hosting the billionth annual ice race. Show up at the corner of St-Antoine Street West and St-Ferdinand Street at noon on March 6 for the action. There's a small admission fee that gives you a chance at multiple fabulous prizes, and two race classes for people with studded or non-studded tires will divide the competition. Come out, celebrate spring and get cold and wet one last time!

# FREE CLASSIFIEDS



## for sale

Nissan Sentra GXE 2003

115,000 km

Price \$3,900 (negotiable)

Part of a moving sale. Also selling: colour printer

Click on following link for pictures & full details:

[movingsale.stansi.com/home](http://movingsale.stansi.com/home)

I have a double size mattress in good condition for \$40, providing a piece of eiderdown quilt for free.

I don't offer delivery, so pick it up by yourself.

## books for sale

*Nutrition Now*, textbook by Judith E. Brown and Student Interactive Guide. Excellent condition, no markings, no wear. (Never used—dropped class)

ConU bookstore: \$150.95

My price: \$65 for both

*Physics for Scientists and Engineers* (Phys 204), selling for \$65, like new.

A new TOEFL textbook, comes with 2 CDs.

My price: \$30

*Schizophrenia the facts*  
ConU bookstore: \$20

My price: \$10

## roommates wanted

Looking for two roommates to share a beautifully spacious 5 1/2 renovated three years ago. Situated on Beaudry Street between Rene Leveque and Saint Catherine. Perfect location close to restaurants, shops, nightlife yet remarkably quiet street, one minute to metro, 10 minutes walk to Berri-Uqam central metro station, Bus Station, Bibliothèque National, Quartier Latin, Park Lafontaine, Old Port etc. Spacious bathroom and kitchen, lots of windows, terrace on front and back, wooden floors, two living rooms and two bedrooms. Rent is flexible and includes electricity (heating), water, internet. To share with a mature 22-year-old student of UQAM (History,

Culture, Society, Political Science and Spanish) studious but outgoing, loves to cook (mostly vegetarian), travel, do yoga and meditation, meet people from all over the world, parle français, se habla Espanol!

Two bedrooms available now one cozy and private bedroom for \$450 and another more spacious room for \$550, (both are non smoking, no pets, fully furnished and all inclusive, (note must be willing to stay till end of August minimum)

Any questions please write and/or to arrange a visit! Please also let me know which room you are interested in and when and for how long would like to take it for!

I am moving out beginning of March, I am therefore searching for somebody who will take over my lease which is

ending on the April 31. But you have the possibility to renew the lease!

You will be living with three roommates, two girls and one guy. The girls are from Ontario and the guy is from China and are studying at Concordia and McGill. They are very nice and respectful roommates.

Five little ladies looking for a spacious and affordable 5 1/2 apartment within the McGill Ghetto/Plateau area for May 1. Maximum rent is \$600.

These are samples from the Off-Campus Housing and Job Bank. For a complete listing of classifieds, visit [hojo.csu.qc.ca](http://hojo.csu.qc.ca).

FOR MORE INFORMATION PLEASE VISIT:  
**HOJO.CSU.QC.CA**



**2009-2010**

General elections

## General elections March 26, 2010 4 p.m. H-649

### The following people are eligible to run and vote:

David Adelman, Laura Beeston, Esther Bernard, Mathieu Biard, Madeline Coleman, Christopher Curtis, Travis Dandro, Terrine Friday, Justin Giovannetti, R. Brian Hastie, Clay Hemmerich, Les Honywill, Elsa Jabre, Adam Kovac, Stephanie La Leggia, Tristan LaPointe, Vivien Leung, Tom Llewellyn, Alex Manley, Christopher Olson, Ashley Opheim, Diego Pelaez Gaetz, Hugo Pilon-Larose, Clare Raspopow, Shawna Satz, Riley Sparks.

### The following people need one more contribution to be eligible to run and vote:

Alex DiPietro, Britanny Levett, Tania Mohsen, Daryna Ruhklyadeva

### The following people need two more contributions to be eligible to run and vote:

Maude Abouche, Oksana Cueva, Megan Dolski, Chris Hanna, Emma Healey, Kamila Hinkson, Sarah Long, Jaime Mathieson, Helen Savage, Jesara Sinclair, Julia Wolfe, Natasha Young, Hiba Zayadeen

### The following people need three more contributions to be eligible to vote:

Jacques Balayla, Joel Balsam, Patrizia Bayer, Marie-Eve Bourque, Michael Bramadat-Willcock, Andrew Brennan, Caroline Chan, Lesley De Marinis, Derrick Eason, Jaime Eisen, Arshad Khan, Jaime Klinger, Rachel Lau, Gabby Leon, Simon Liem, Eddie Majnemer, Mae Price, Rebecca Rosen, Sana Saeed, Amy Smith, Mireille Tarcha, Cathrine Vallieres, Robin Wattie.

### All editorial positions will be open:

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 March 19 and must include a one-page letter of intent, as well as three (3) contribution samples.

For more information email: [editor@thelinknewspaper.ca](mailto:editor@thelinknewspaper.ca) or call 514-848-2424 ext.7407.

# Size doesn't matter ...but apartheid does

The sixth annual Israeli Apartheid Week is back again in Montreal, and will be featuring events on three campuses in the city from March 4 to 11.

• AARON LAKOFF

Every year for the last six years, many cities (43 cities participated last year) around the world join together to coordinate this week, which focuses on the growing campaign of boycotts, divestments and sanctions against the state of Israel. And this year, like every year in the past, pro-Israel apologists respond with campaigns which range from outright offensive to bizarre and puzzling.

Critics have accused Israeli Apartheid Week of trying to shut down dialogue and debate on the Israel/Palestine issue, when in fact IAW is striving to create more spaces for these issues to be discussed in a serious and scholarly manner on campuses. What is interesting is that critics of IAW often avoid taking the debate head-on. Rather, the response is often either to try to ban IAW from campuses altogether or to create distraction games.

Last week, pro-Israel groups at Canadian universities launched a campaign called *Size Doesn't Matter*. Craftily timed to coincide with the launch of IAW on campuses, *Size Doesn't Matter* boasts a flashy website which tries to deflect attention away from the uglier sides of the debate (occupation, the siege on Gaza, Palestinian refugees) while trying to re-brand Israel as a happy-go-lucky, innovative and sexy country.

*Size Doesn't Matter* represents an evolution, albeit a miniature one, in pro-Israel distraction campaigns over the years, which have also taken the form of "Islamofascism Week" at York University and "Israeli Culture Fests" held in Montreal. I suppose that when you don't have many winning arguments to contest why Israel isn't an apartheid state, it's much easier to talk about falafel, techno music and pretty girls in bikinis on the Tel Aviv beach. I mean, everyone loves those things, right?

And then there's the more extreme responses to IAW, such as the ones that are put forward by so-called "human rights"

groups like B'nai Brith. On Feb. 25, they issued a press release applauding members of the Ontario legislature who had put forward a motion to condemn IAW. What's more, the organization is calling for an "outright ban on 'Israeli Apartheid Week'" for the second year in a row. With more and more universities starting IAWs every year, they are evidently failing miserably.

This year, IAW is taking place in the context of a right-wing government in Israel which has continued to expand illegal settlements in the West Bank, despite American President Barack Obama's empty talk of a freeze on new settlement construction. It's taking place in the context of the 1.5 million Gazans who, still reeling from last year's brutal massacre, can't even import basic construction supplies to rebuild their shattered homes. More importantly, IAW is happening in the context of a tireless campaign of censorship and muzzling from pro-Israel activists, but it is coming out on top.

IAW and the boycott, divestment and sanctions campaigns against Israeli apartheid are threatening to some because they are working. For one, it is a non-violent campaign aimed at social justice for everyone in the Middle East and if Israel's supporters want non-violent solutions to the problem, then surely BDS is what they've been looking for.

In the five years since the call was issued by Palestinian civil society, there have been major victories as well. Last week, a group of over 500 Montreal-based artists issued a declaration in support of the BDS campaign. Large labour unions and student federations in Quebec and Canada have also pledged their support. Last year, Hampshire College in Massachusetts became the first educational institution in North America to cut its ties to Israel, and just recently, students at Carleton University in Ottawa launched a campaign to push their campus to do the same. Indeed, this is a movement which is gaining momentum.



A Palestinian child runs in front of a wall separating the Palestinian population from Israeli settlements.

Finally, there is the old, tired claim that initiatives such as IAW are anti-Semitic and promote hatred against Jews. For years pro-Israel groups have been fishing this argument out of the trash, dusting it off and trying to repackage it. It is a large claim with little substance and negates the fact that BDS is a social justice movement supported by thousands of Jews around the world.

It is often said that you can measure the strength of a social movement by the reactive

impulses of its opponents. The fact that IAW is back for another year at Concordia and across Canada, despite the outright attempts to censor it, is in itself a major victory. To the state of Israel and its supporters, size may not matter, but IAW is gaining steam, and they will soon have a lot of questions to answer.

Aaron Lakoff is a communications student at Concordia and a member of Not in Our Name, an anti-Zionist Jewish group on campus.

The fact that Israeli Apartheid Week is back for another year at Concordia and across Canada, despite the outright attempts to censor it, is in itself a major victory.

 Letters@thelinknewspaper.ca

## Frigo integral part of campus

I think Le Frigo Vert is not only a grocery store but a site of organizing, community building and information dissemination on campus. I think it's essential to support these kinds of places that act to link students to broader communities in ways that are well-thought-out and energized. I know that as a student over the past three and a half years, I have felt this role being filled by Le Frigo, from programming like their Anti-Colonial Thanksgiving to enjoying a volunteer experience there shortly after I began studying at Concordia.

Further, I think it's important for students to be able to access the products they sell at reasonable prices, as well as to be exposed to a local, conscientious grocery store. Also in supporting projects like the Jardins de Resistance which allows people to sign up for baskets of produce during the harvest season, they promote direct links between consumers and farmers.

I really feel that student life, as well as lives of non-students who access Le Frigo, is enriched by their hard work and dedication. I feel that a fee levy increase is a great way to support their ongoing work and ensure that people continue to have access to the products of their work, and to the store itself, and I am so glad their referendum question was approved!

—Kinneret Sheetreet,  
Women's Studies

## More support for Frigo Vert

I want to voice my support for Le Frigo Vert's fee levy increase in the upcoming Concordia Student Union elections.

Even though I'm usually against any kind of student-suggested fee increase, because I think it's nonsense to claim to want a tuition freeze while voting fee increases, I can't be against this one. Actually I think with this fee increase, supporting Le Frigo Vert will make Concordia more accessible to students with low income.

The math is simple: great cheap food in bulk + education = sustained student.

I think we should go further and provide Le Frigo with a real location to accommodate its needs. Students who use the service are often crammed in the silly ultra-tiny room they currently have. It's the CSU's role to make sure that initiatives like the Frigo's don't die, considering our school is located in an environment where rent is expensive and space is a scarce resource.

I use the Frigo every week to get cheap, quality vegan food and for me it's a strong anti-oppression building block on which Concordia can count for its development.

—Mathieu Dumais-Savard,  
Engineering

## No more slimy paninis

In light of recent criticisms of Le Frigo Vert, I'd

like to say that I shop there all the time, it's great and it needs our support.

One of the great things about Concordia, as opposed to say, McGill (I'm an alumnus) is that you won't be forced by hunger to pay \$7 for a sad, slimy "grilled vegetable" panini made by employees who are paid minimum wage by a corporation that also makes prison food. This is partly because Concordia is in a way better part of town snack-wise, but also because Concordia students have worked for a long time to provide affordable, healthy food to one another by founding The People's Potato and Le Frigo Vert, not to mention that unsung free lunch at Loyola campus.

Having good food to eat is an important part of being a healthy and successful student, and we all know that many users of food banks are students. The Frigo keeps students healthy and out of food banks by providing affordable organic foods right on campus. It's a service we should be proud of, and it's a service we should continue to stand behind.

—Holly Nazar,  
Media Studies

## Historic issue(s)

In the long and distinguished history of *The Link* newspaper, the Feb. 16 issue is one of the most significant ever written. Some of the articles have implications not only for the future of student politics, but national and international policies as well.

In regards to the lead story by editor-in-chief Terrine Friday and news editor Justin Giovannetti concerning an enormous amount of money claimed by a student federation against our student body, this appears to be a deeply offensive and crude form of blackmail envisioned in a last-minute attempt to stop the massive and near universal movement to get out of this intolerable organization. If any evidence was needed for the reason to immediately quit this charade, they provided it themselves.

However, caution must be exercised in this regard as it could provide a field day for lawyers on both sides to get massive amounts of student money. I suggest, since Concordia has one of the finest legal minds in North America, that Professor Maître Marcel Danis be informally consulted on the possibility of countersuing this organization in order to bankrupt them so we can gracefully exit.

Secondly, our student politicians did several inexcusable actions, as pointed out by Mr. Giovannetti, in regards to the council only approving half of the reform package. To refuse an open question period when this gang was elected in part to demonstrate transparency (as opposed to the previous administration) does not bode well at all.

More importantly, the reforms involving making recall and impeachment easier should have been welcomed, not nixed. If the previous executive had been impeached like they so richly deserved, we would probably not be in the mess involving the blackmail attempt mentioned above. It is a serious void for our nation that we do not have recall at the provincial and federal

level to remove so many of the scoundrels that do so little except gorge at the public trough.

The article by features editor Laura Beeston concerning the most abhorrent surveillance is a reminder of how fragile our so-called democracy really is. The right to privacy is the most sacred right in a truly democratic state as all other rights flow from that most fundamental and basic one.

The editorial by opinions editor Diego Pelaez Gaetz should be required reading for any human being with a conscience.

Finally the articles on the Olympics were also extremely informative but we must remember that whatever the cost, the Olympics are the finest aspect of humanity as it demonstrates to the universe that it is possible for all the nations of the world to compete in a friendly and cordial manner without slaughtering and butchering each other as world history so aptly shows we are all too capable of.

—David Sommer Rovins,  
Independent Student

## Frigo provides alternative model

How useful would an organization that provides organic, fair-trade and bulk fruits, vegetables and grains at non-profit prices be? Or one that sells items from local and individual producers in the city and partners with a local organic farm? What about a community organization with an active volunteer-base, a tremendous diversity in clientele, and an open-access student space?

What if this organization already existed on campus?

It does: Le Frigo Vert. It is a different model of providing services altogether. It shuns traditional power structures, is politically active and above all promotes food accessibility and security. Its presence highlights the perverse condition in our society that eating a normal healthy diet is restrictively expensive while food that is killing us remains dirt cheap.

On Feb. 10, the Frigo, located on campus for over 15 years, approached the Concordia Student Union's Council to ask to have a simple fee levy question placed on the upcoming referendum.

From the outset, however, it seemed as though the Frigo was forced into a defensive position. An institution that is well-known and tremendously valued by its members faced an adversarial, covert and frivolous opposition. The Council had members who were supportive and clearly stated the values they believed the Frigo provided. Those opposed to the initiative aired their opposition only behind closed doors and without giving reason, at least in a public setting. Indeed, pleas to hear why exactly the measure was opposed went unanswered: those against it had the political privilege of not having to publicly produce a reason to defeat the motion.

At an emergency Council meeting scheduled the following week to confront the very same issue, a motion to—once again—go into closed



by Diego Pelaez Gaetz GRAPHIC VIVIEN LEUNG

session failed by a tie: the vote and debate had to be public. That hair-split decision did the trick: the air was taken out of the opposition and they could no longer hide their lack of a credible argument and the motion, voted on publicly for the first time, passed unanimously with two notable abstentions.

It is striking to think that only the veil of secrecy stood in the way of the motion getting to the greater student body. Relegating issues such as these—in which the employees', producers' and the customer base's livelihoods play a key role—to closed doors and with questionable reasoning threatens all fee levy organizations.

—Takeo Kushi,  
Finance

## Is Frigo really worth it?

Again Le Frigo Vert wants (more of) our money! I cannot understand the mentality of "Le Frigo Vert." They steal our money, feed themselves like CEOs with wages nearly double what they should be relative to the work done and now are bitching for more, all in the name of "social justice."

What a justice. Le Frigo Vert's Dotor says they make below the poverty line, at \$14 per hour. Forty hours at \$14 is \$560 a week. A normal job is 2000 hours a year—\$30,000. Poverty line? Presumably they are working few hours and thus not making much money. The problem is obviously there are too many employees working too few hours. Saying they are students and thus can't afford the time is certainly correct, but such "poverty" is part of

student life.

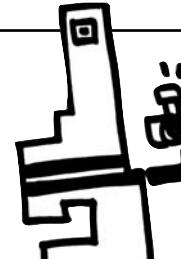
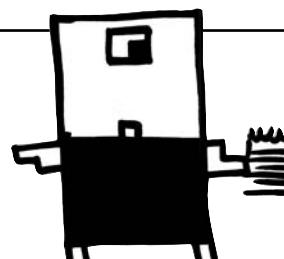
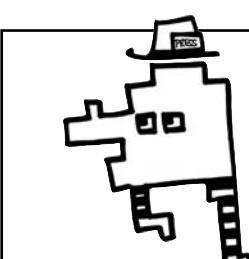
The Concordia Student Union's "Sustainability" VP demonstrates a classic ignorance of the meaning of the word "sustainable," noting that the Frigo is a "beacon of a social economy." Yes! Yes, it is such a beacon! But for those of us who study history, we can clearly see the results of social economies, which have been tried many times. The Soviet Union! Mao's China! Fidel's Cuba, the Khmer Rouge, Ceausescu's Romania, Honecker's "Democratic Republic" of Germany, Mengistu's Ethiopia. And of course, the "Democratic People's Republic" of North Korea, as is well-known, is neither democratic nor a republic, and the influence of the people not directly related to Kim Jong-Il is quite evidently very low. The only common thread between all of these "social economies" is crippling poverty, starvation, political repression and state-sponsored murder of anyone who doesn't like it. Thankfully, none of these economies have been sustainable, and all of them have, or will, collapse, peacefully or chaotically.

The Frigo declares they want to use "democracy" to increase their funding. What a disgusting use of the word. True democracy in regards to the Frigo's funding is the clients of the Frigo paying the Frigo. The most powerful democratic tool we possess in our society is our wallets. Stealing money from students who do not use the Frigo, nor have any interest in doing so, is quite evidently grossly undemocratic.

—James Augustynski,  
Mechanical Engineering

Be outspoken.  
Write us.  
Be a weird robot.

[letters@thelinknewspaper.ca](mailto:letters@thelinknewspaper.ca)



# pzzlol

## CrSwrd

**Across**

1. This decapod has a thick exoskeleton and loves to just snap your nose with its claws. Watch yourself.

4. Migratory fish, comes in sockeye, chum and chinook. They might fly right into your backyard if you don't pay attention.

8. Booty, as it were. Sunken doublets of untold origin!

10. Apparently there are dozens of these atmosphere-changing explosive weapons. (Two words)

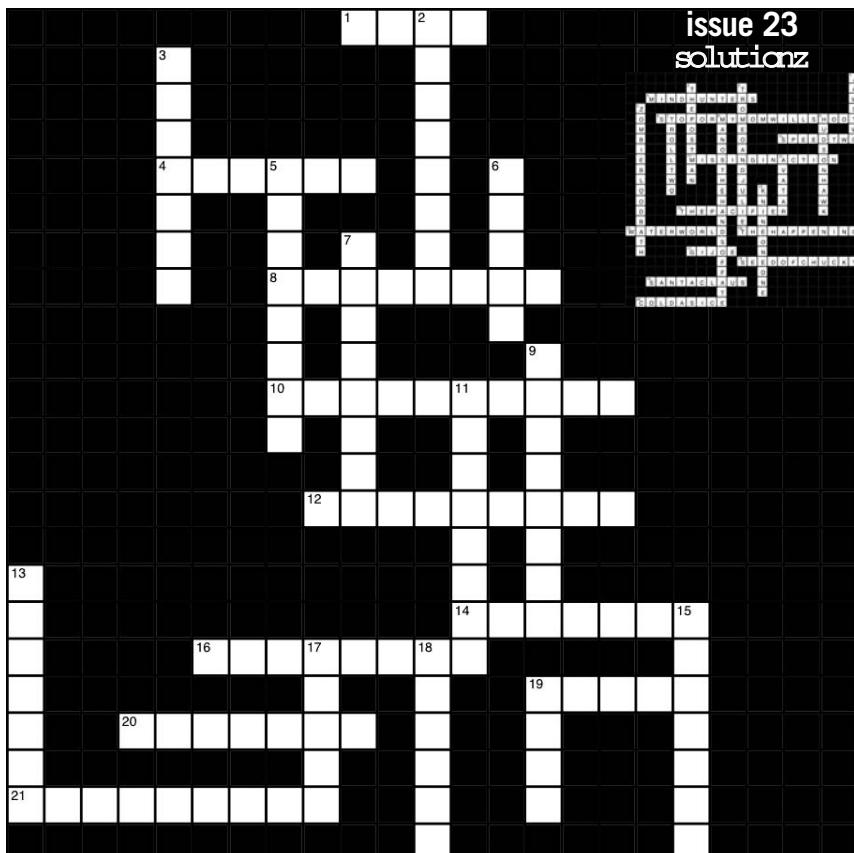
12. These free-swimming blobs are actually living creatures that can be found in every ocean. They're beautiful... but deadly.

14. Ocean-living algae. Sometimes can be coloured red, brown and green and some forms of this plant are also edible.

16. A type of fish that can inflate rapidly, filling their various stomachs with water and/or air in order to scare off predators. Delectable yet deadly when consumed by humans... just ask Homer Simpson.

19. Underwater polyps that live in colonies and multiply by spawning. Also really nice to look at, especially in reef formations.

20. The most famous Atlantean of all-time, if you don't count Namor



and Poseidon.

21. The Triton, the Red October, and the U-96 are but three of the most famous of these fantastical machines.

**Down**

2. Mythical underwater city where I tend to spend two weeks a year.

3. Beet-red crustacean that is cooked while still alive for "optimal taste." Its shrill death cries still haunt me. Also a hard animal to eat—such a mess.

5. This type of rectangle-shaped myliobatidae can weigh up to 5,000 pounds. (Two words)

6. Inspired Peter Benchley to pen a tale of doom and gloom. They're not all bad, y'know.

7. The male of this species carries the children around in a pouch after the female hands off the eggs. They

look like badass S's with snouts.

9. The most famous of all kaiju sleeps in the ocean, near the coast of Japan.

11. Creatures that resemble small lobsters and are mostly found in streams and other small freshwater locations.

13. Eight-limbed freak that threatened Captain Nemo and the crew of the Nautilus.

15. Ecco used sonar to figure out where the giant machine underwater lay.

17. These giant mammals come in killer, sperm, pilot and bowhead varieties.

18. Can come packed in a frozen ring shape. The name of this water-dweller is derived from the Norse word that means "to shrivel up."

19. Goldfish and koi are two types of this sort of oily freshwater fish.

## heartaches anonymous

*Dear Heartaches Anonymous,  
I am currently seeing several  
different women at the same  
time. Yes, I know, I'm an ass-  
hole, etc. Truth be told, it's  
becoming a bit of a burden. It  
seems I cannot avoid having  
marks left on me by one girl for  
the next one to see, and I don't  
know how many excuses for a  
hickey I have in me (I've  
already used "my dog did it"  
and "I was attacked by a vam-  
pire"). Is there any way to mini-  
mize these marks, or at least  
justify them to the next girl I  
want to sleep with?*

**—All Marked Up**

Dearest Marked Up,  
Are these girls teething or what? How come you're getting hickeys all the time? I would assume you've already asked them to keep their suck holes off your neck, so my only advice to you at this point is: stop using Axe. Chicks love that shit.

But seriously, there's nothing wrong with dating multiple ladies—if you're open about it. And you don't sound like you're being too

open, dear Marked Up. It's one thing if a woman knows she's not your one and only and sleeps with you anyway. Then if she has a problem with it, that's her cross to bear. That isn't what's happening here and you know you're not doing them any favours. Why all this secrecy, ol' Lothario? Is it because you know the ladies won't keep hooking up with you, or is it more because there's a part of you that doesn't even

agree with such practices?

I could be reading too much into this. Coming clean to your lady friends would certainly solve one problem—however, you could take off the scarf and let those hickeys breathe.

Love advice your best friend is too nice to give. Send your queries on sex, dating and a total lack of romance to [heartachesanonymous@gmail.com](mailto:heartachesanonymous@gmail.com).

## editorial

### Whose space?

Imagine lying on a soft bed of grass during your first days of the fall semester and the last days of summer, and in the winter, enjoying a cup of hot chocolate on the downtown campus without getting run over by a car; an oasis in a concrete jungle. The unfortunate lack of public space that plagues us in the present does not have to remain so limited.

The Quartier Concordia project, as conceived, intends to change Sir George Williams' reputation as the "concrete campus." The most visible part is the revamp of Norman Bethune Square with larger sidewalks and homeless-proof benches.

However, the real hurdle is the greening of Mackay Street, an integral part of the project with an uncertain future.

Last year, both Concordia and the City of Montreal were on board to turn the thoroughfare from Sherbrooke Street to de Maisonneuve Boulevard into a block-long stretch of grass with a stage for warm-weather concerts.

All efforts were put on hold because merchants in the area believed eliminating 40 paid on-street parking spots would be detrimental to their bottom line.

According to merchants such as Robert Landau of Landau Fine Art, these parking spots hold a significant importance to their fiscal well-being and cannot be sacrificed to give Concordia (and Montreal) a new splash of green in a sea of concrete. Many shop owners have threatened to take their businesses elsewhere if the greening of Mackay takes place.

We don't blame business owners for doing what they think is right in an economy monopolized by and saturated with big business. It is only natural to react in a combative way when a situation that's just fine takes a severe change.

Inevitably, their businesses will see a decline if there are a bunch of construction pylons lined up on the front door, but their complaints are a misguided attempt to protect their home turf when it should be, and technically is, a space for everyone.

Most establishments on the street are Concordia's and the ones that aren't receive a major portion of their foot traffic from students.

As for the lost parking spots, according to a recent Agence métropolitaine de transport study, two-thirds of people on the island of Montreal now travel by public transit. Trends suggest this will increase, especially among students.

Montreal has much prior success with creating pedestrian-friendly areas.

The stretch of Ste-Catherine Street that runs through the Latin Quarter and the Gay Village is closed off during the snow-free months, and has been a huge success. Prince Arthur Street is permanently pedestrian-only from St-Laurent Boulevard to St-Louis Square, and enjoys enviable levels of foot traffic and commerce.

Store owners need to relax their combative stance and weigh the possibilities of a green space instead of blindly railing against this issue. There are 30,000-plus Concordia students who not only pour money into the university and the businesses surrounding it, but who also deserve to have a place where they're going to be comfortable before or after a hard day's work.

All in all, Concordia just wants a little bit of green, public space for students to gather—the Norman Bethune development is still a grey and dreary slab of concrete. The greening of Mackay would do wonders for the well-being of the Concordia community.

—Clay Hemmerich,  
Student Press Liaison