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STRIKE pg 5

The Annual Women's Issue • Special Insert

Elections Spring a Leak

Purported Transcripts Mark Strange Turn in CSU DQs

• ADAM KOVAC

For the second year in a row, disqualifications have marred the Concordia Student Union general elections, but this year, they were just the beginning of the controversy.

Following the disqualifications of *A Better Concordia's* presidential candidate Schubert Laforest and VP Academic and Advocacy candidate Lucia Gallardo on Friday for allegedly not being registered Concordia students, *The Link* came into possession of documents alleged to be the most recent transcripts for the two candidates.

In the documents, all classes from the 2011-12 academic year have the code CAN-R in the letter grade column, which would indicate that the classes were not to be counted for credit for unclear reasons.

During an interview with *The Link*, Laforest and Gallardo said that there were factual errors with the transcripts, with Gallardo pointing out that the information under the category Immigration Status was false.

At 8:00 p.m. on Monday, Laforest posted an update on *A Better Concordia's* Facebook page to further explain the issue.

"Today, we learned that an outdated, inaccurate version of the private student records of Schubert Laforest and Lucia Gallardo were leaked. After consulting with the Birks Student Centre, the Dean of Students Office and the Registrar's Office, it was confirmed that this was a strictly illegal breach of privacy," the statement read.

"The origins of the private documents are currently being investigated by multiple parties. It was also indicated that the leak most likely came from a Faculty or Department member."

Laforest and Gallardo also made a request for temporary reinstatement in the campaign until the Judicial Board rules on their

status as students. They feel it would be detrimental to their chances of victory to not be allowed to campaign.

In regards to his and Gallardo's eligibility to run for office, Laforest would only say that their disqualification by the CEO had to do with their status as international students.

"In regards to specifics of the case, we decided we really don't want to comment too much on that until the hearing, just so that then you can get the full story [...] within the context of exactly what happened, with the proper documentation and evidence."

"On a more broad scale, it comes down to the fact that we are international students, and we are dependent on a lot of different factors coming from different offices within the university and government. We need multiple permits to be here," added Gallardo.

As of press time, a hearing has been scheduled for Laforest and Gallardo's appeal on the morning of March 13. On March 14, both candidates will appear at the scheduled CSU Council meeting as part of an application for temporary status as members of the CSU.

"When we realized that we wouldn't be getting facts within the timeline the CEO gave us, we applied for temporary membership in the CSU, so we could be eligible in that sense," said Laforest. "Depending on how things go [with the JB], we'll either leave it [on Council's agenda] or take it off."

Laforest currently holds the position of VP Internal of the Arts and Science Federation of Associations, a position he would be ineligible to hold if he is not a registered Concordia student.

Laforest admitted to having dropped his courses in the Fall semester due to immigration issues, and that he realizes this may have made his spot on the ASFA executive invalid.

"What ended up happening was [my classes] got dropped around



PHOTO CHRISTOPHER CURTIS

finals," he said. "Right now, I'm trying to fix this mess at the CSU. With regards to ASFA Council, it's something I'm going to have to bring to them and see what they want to do. I have a few things in mind—certain motions to introduce—but that's another case I'll be working after this [is settled]."

"I don't really know what to say," said ASFA President Alex Gordon when reached for comment on March 9. "In my mind he is a student. I don't see why he wouldn't be. He's been a student the whole semester and the whole year."

On March 9, *The Link* learned of the disqualifications when Chief Electoral Officer Ismail Holoubi confirmed in an email that Laforest and Gallardo "weren't eligible to run because they aren't registered students."

The CEO is obligated to check on the status of students who have submitted their nominations with the Office of the Dean of Students, who consults with the database of the registrar.

Laforest said that there had been indirect contact with the Dean of Students through other organizations, and that the office had confirmed the two were students.

The Dean of Students, Andrew Woodall, could not comment on the files of individual students, as per university policy.

Laforest said Holoubi had informed *A Better Concordia's* candidate for VP Clubs and Internal Nadine Atallah—who had been designated as the team's contact for the CEO—of the ineligibilities March 5.

On March 9, Melanie Hotchkiss, Laforest's opponent for the presidency, said that she had learned of the disqualification by reading an article on *The Link's* website that day.

She said she received an email from Holoubi later that afternoon informing her of the situation, though she said the email did not give a reason.

She was told the election ballots, rather than giving the students the option to vote for either

her or Laforest, would now feature her name alone and offer the options 'yes,' 'no' or 'abstain.'

"I was really surprised," said Hotchkiss. "I find it a bit concerning to know that the two of them weren't registered students. That means they decided to get nomination signatures knowing they weren't students and I think to an extent that shows a bit of a disregard for their team, because that puts their other candidates at a disadvantage."

On March 11, Hotchkiss' *Concordia Could Be* team sent out an email to campus media saying, "We want this election to be about candidates and platforms, not the Chief Electoral Officer. For too long CSU elections have been marred by controversy."

"Students deserve better, especially in the current context. Faith in our student union has slowly been deteriorating and we hope for a quick, fair, and honest resolution."

—with files from Julian Ward

We're Going Striking



General Assembly ushers in tidal wave of support for student strike.

PHOTO ERIN SPARKS

Strike Mandate Passes at General Assembly

• ADAM KOVAC

An overwhelming majority of attendees who showed up to Thursday's Concordia Student Union General Assembly voted for a one-week strike, starting March 15.

"It was definitely an interesting process, but I think that at the end of the day, the students spoke," said Concordia Student Union VP External Chad Walcott after the vote. Walcott gave a presentation before the vote and fielded questions from students.

The show-of-hands vote, which took place simultaneously in the Hall Building in room H-110 and in the seventh floor lounge, as well as in the Library Building lobby and in Loyola's The Hive, yielded 1,152 for a strike, with 557 against.

Discussion preceding the vote saw two changes made to the original question.

The first moved the date of the strike—which was originally set to begin on March 22—to a new date on March 15. The purpose of the change was to have it precede the presentation of the provincial budget, which had been moved to March 20.

The new dates, however, coincide with the last week of campaigning for the CSU general election, polling for which begins March 22.

The second motion passed was to ban the blocking of teachers and students who wish to enter classrooms. While the motion passed, Walcott stressed

that, due to a lack of resources, such a motion is nearly impossible to enforce.

"The motion does say that we're not allowed to block buildings," he said. "That's something that hasn't happened yet and that we never intended to do. We expect that Concordia students will be able to conduct themselves in a respectful manner."

Though discussion was generally respectful, there were a few occasions where things got heated, particularly when technical problems in broadcasting Walcott's opening statement delayed the beginning of discussion period.

"The issue that we had was that we weren't able to confirm the actual DSL connections until an hour or two before," said CSU VP Advocacy Morgan Pudwell. "We did try and continue, between [Instructional & Information Technology Services] and CUTV, to do a soundcheck, but unfortunately in some of the venues, we were relying on the university's wireless connection."

Bylawlessness and Ballots

The CSU circulated an email to undergraduate students following the GA, apologizing for the "difficult process" and feelings of "confusion and frustrations that many [students] felt throughout the meeting."

While calling for open lines of communication moving forward, the email was light on two details that concerned many of the students present at the GA: the by-

laws and the way the vote was conducted.

"We've heard a lot of questions around why no secret ballot," admitted Gill a few days after the GA. "First, [in] four separate rooms, there was no way to ensure the integrity of the ballot boxes. Second, what would the process look like to vote on amendments? There's a logistical question there."

Gill noted that a secret ballot could constitute a violation of the CSU bylaws, a legally binding document under the Quebec Companies Act that lay out specific times of the year in which a referendum could be held.

"The bylaws are very difficult to explain to someone who is just interacting and interfacing with the political context at Concordia for the first time," said Gill. "But [the CSU] is not just a bunch of random people making arbitrary decisions; there are rules."

Gill also added it "fundamentally doesn't work" to show up to a GA, put a ballot in a box and leave. "What happens if the question is changed halfway through? [...] There's also the question of losing quorum."

When asked about the possibility of an online vote, VP Advocacy Morgan Pudwell said that this option is something "the CSU has probably looked [into] least four or five different times," but security issues have limited its implementation.

"A couple of years ago the [Graduate Students' Association] tried online voting for elections

and they ended up having to annul the results because there were people going around with laptops [soliciting people to vote]," she explained.

Second Time's The Charm?

While the vote set out a strike of one week, it's unclear what will happen on March 23 once the mandate is over.

Students Cassie Smith, Anthony Garoufalis-Auger and CSU Councillor Irmak Bahar had co-endorsed a petition calling for another GA on that date, in which students would have voted on continuing the strike.

In the petition, they proposed a motion which would see the strike renewed immediately if passed, and would have mandated weekly GAs be held at which students would vote on whether or not the strike should continue.

However, while they had begun collecting signatures on March 9, and claimed to have 150 signatures, they have since decided to not continue with the petition.

"[CSU President Lex Gill] got in touch with us this morning, and told us that there are more departments and faculties having strike votes, including JMSB and ECS, and so we felt that given that participation, it made more sense [to have votes] at the faculty level, because it would offer greater participation and more autonomy," said Smith.

Minimum Agreements Again

Part of the agenda of the second petition included a proposal that the CSU adopt the tenets of a Minimum Agreement.

It states that signees refuse to negotiate with the government unilaterally, that the lobby groups not recommend government propositions to their members so they can decide for themselves whether to adopt them, and that signees not denounce actions taken by other signees.

The agreement is not endorsed by the Fédération étudiante universitaire du Québec, the union to which the CSU belongs, and the CSU Council had previously rejected signing the agreement during a meeting on Feb. 8.

"We feel this is something that needs to be reconsidered, and a GA is the most democratic and membership-based way to do that," said Smith on March 11.

The next day, however, she rescinded, saying, "We're still discussing how to move forward with the Minimum Agreement. There are a couple of other options we're looking at," including calling for another GA at a later date.

Gill expressed support for revisiting the issue, either through a GA or at Council.

"Right now, I think that the Minimum Agreement conversation is a separate conversation from what's on the table in terms of another GA either at the faculty level or CSU level," said Gill. "I think it's something worth revisiting at Council too."



The Many Shades of Strike

‘False Division’ on Campus

• LAURA BEESTON

At the controversial Concordia Student Union General Assembly on March 7, two things happened: a minority of undergraduate students voted to strike against increasing tuition fees, and an anti-strike movement was born.

One of the groups against the strike tactics—who call themselves Concordia Students Against a Strike—took to the Internet to spread their message and mobilize. The membership of their Facebook group ballooned from 160 members to 1,400 over the weekend.

Taylor Green is a second-year urban planning student and spokesperson for CSAS. He maintains the CSU didn’t do a good enough job representing the many political positions of Concordia students.

“More than half of our group don’t want tuition hikes—we can agree on that point—but the strike tactics [the CSU] are employing were never discussed. They just weren’t,” said Green.

The group also takes issue with the low quorum required to pass union decisions, the way the faculty association and departmental GAs have been run and with the kind of information that’s been distributed.

While Green admitted he did not attend or vote in the March 7 GA, he said the group is not currently calling for a referendum.

Right now, Green said, it’s about information and “mobilizing the apathetic.”

“Where are the posters that say, ‘Hey, anyone have an opposing view?’ They never encouraged it. And while I think some of the onus is on people like me that are now speaking up about this, [...] really the onus is on the CSU to make sure that there is some kind of involvement from all parties,” said Green, who admitted the Facebook group has become a “ridiculously huge open forum” for discussion.

Despite the differing opinions on how to mobilize as students moving forward, Green said he does believe that creative compromises can be reached on campus that will work for all parties.

He called the ideas of the CSAS moderate—maintaining that students’ right to go to class if they want to, or protest if they want to, ought to be respected.

Green also presented concrete “nine legal and completely plausible demonstration alternatives [to striking] that don’t involve the remainder of the student body, faculty or administration.” These included a hunger strike, sitting protest and vigils.

He has also begun circulating a document to faculty associations called the Hard Picket Address, which insists that students have the right to attend classes.

Other factions of the anti-strike camp have also sprung up on Twitter, calling for the picketing of the CSU offices and a public debate with the CSU, though no concrete actions have been carried out on campus.

One vocally opposed anti-strike member, using the Twitter handle @StriketheStrike, agreed to an interview with *The Link* over the weekend, but did not respond to a follow-up by press time.

Beyond Concordia and online mobilization, organizations of students against a strike have also been cropping up on other university campuses as well.

Most famously, the Mouvement des étudiants socialement responsables du Québec, allegedly led by students associated with the youth wing of the Liberal Party, has been vocal about their position and was generated a lot of press attention.

Claiming to represent “neutral students” and the “silent majority,” the MESRQ made a huge splash in the media last February, especially when spokesperson Arielle Grenier went on French television talk show *Tout le monde en parle*.

More recently, the group has been vocally upset about the proliferation of red felt squares at the gala for this year’s Jutra awards, the annual celebration of Quebecois cinema.

Dozens of artists, filmmakers and producers in attendance—

including the cast of the Best Foreign Film Oscar-nominated *Monsieur Lazhar*, which swept the awards show Saturday night with seven Jutras—wore the anti-tuition hike symbol to the black-tie event.

Another group, the Coalition étudiante pour l’association libre, also entered the fray earlier last week, looking to depoliticize student unions. CEPAL reportedly believes “a minority of students are holding [university] institutions hostage.”

At Concordia, at least so far, the issue isn’t just a question of black or white—or red or green.

“We should all be on the same side,” Green stressed, adding that the term ‘strike’ has falsely divided our campus. Green said he would like Concordia students to stop using the term ‘strike’ as well, because “it automatically polarizes people.”

“I personally don’t want to see anybody else not get the opportunity to go to school because of [the tuition increases], but I’m against the *strike*,” he said, adding that he believes blocking students from going to class is illegal.

“Listen, no one wants to see this tuition increase—we all have the same goal,” Green argued. “But we need to get serious. A strike is not serious.”

Green also said he was concerned the strike was pitting Concordia students against each

other.

“The fight is not supposed to be against Concordia, or against other students,” he said. “The fight is against the government. Let’s bring it to the government.”

Today, the objection of students to the tuition increase is coming to a head after many years and tactics.

The first announcement of the tuition increase was released on April 1, 2010, and was followed by a demonstration against the hikes that saw both students and unions take to the street approximately 12,000 people strong.

Concrete alternative funding models for post-secondary education were then issued to the Ministry of Education in November 2010 before a consultation meeting in Quebec City Dec. 6 that saw students walk out in protest following failed negotiations.

Student lobbyists at the time argued that the meeting’s purpose was to legitimize the increase and its scale.

Proponents of a direct boycott of classes contend that, while alternative actions to striking are valuable, they would be most effective in the context of a strike where students are free to devote time and energy to the cause. Groups like the Concordia Mob Squad have argued that striking is, historically, the only strategy that has led to gains for students.

WHAT'S NEXT

Loyola Campus Information Session
March 13, 4:00 p.m., Loyola Chapel

Urban Planning Second General Assembly
March 13, 5:00 p.m., Hall Building, seventh floor lounge
Info at info@concordiastudents.ca

John Molson School of Business Info Session
March 13, 8:30 p.m., MB Building, MB-1.210

John Molson School of Business Strike Vote
March 14, 9:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m., MB Building lobby

Communication Studies General Assembly
March 14, 12:00 p.m., CJ Building, CJ-1.114
Info at cg.concordia@gmail.com

Journalism General Assembly
March 14, 12:00 p.m., CJ Building, CJ-3.306
Info at jsa.concordia@gmail.com

Political Science General Assembly
March 14, 3:00 p.m., Hall Building, seventh floor lounge
Info at info@concordiastudents.ca

English Literature and Creative Writing GA
March 15, 1:00 p.m., Library Building, LB-646
Info at caseconcordia.ca

History General Assembly
March 15, 2:00 p.m., Library Building, LB-1014.1
Info at info@concordiastudents.ca

Engineering and Computer Science General Assembly
March 15th, 3:00 p.m., Hall Building, seventh floor lounge
Info at info@concordiastudents.ca

Faculty of Fine Arts General Assembly
March 16, 3:00 p.m., Hall Building, seventh floor lounge
Info at awakeconcordia.wordpress.com

Sociology and Anthropology General Assembly
March 20, 4:00 p.m., location TBA
Info at info@concordiastudents.ca

Women's Studies and Sexuality Studies GA
March 23, location TBA
Info at wssa.concordia@gmail.com

GA Updates

Campus Department Happenings
Keep Concordia Busy

• COMPILED BY JACOB ROBERTS,
DAVID MURPHY & LAURA BEE-
STON

For the last week, The Link has been following the General Assemblies of as many faculty associations as possible. For the full stories on the following, and daily updates, follow @linknewspaper on Twitter, and head to thelinknewspaper.ca online.

Urban Planning Meeting Messy

The Urban Planning General Assembly was a little messier than originally hoped for.

According to President Sam Carter-Shamai, people were speaking out of turn, clapping and booing, interrupting speakers, challenging the mediator—who was from the University of Winnipeg, not Concordia—and were generally acting inappropriately.

Carter-Shamai said he chose a moderator from outside the Concordia community because he believed it would be a more neutral solution and avoid any perceived conflicts of interest.

Overall, the UPA students voted in favour of the strike, with 59 votes for and 27 opposed. But since that vote, the president has been attacked with criticism.

"I'm trying to do this the best I can," said Carter-Shamai, who says after running the first GA, he's confident he can handle a second one much better.

WSSA Sends a Message to the Minister

The Women's Studies Student

Association was the first student association to hold a GA and vote to go on strike in protest of tuition increases. They have successfully boycotted classes for a full week.

Prior to the second vote, WSSA executives met with the Simone de Beauvoir Institute faculty to discuss plans moving forward.

It was a meeting WSSA External Executive Gabrielle Bouchard called "magical, wonderful and very, very feminist," that led to both student and faculty parties coming to an understanding of each other's "democratic and contractual realities."

Following the multi-stakeholder meeting, the Institute also sent Education Minister Line Beauchamp a video on International Women's Day, calling for a public debate on the social impacts on the hikes.

"The objective [...] would be to create a public space for debate on the present and future of post-secondary education," said SDBI Spokesperson Viviane Namaste in the video, "and specifically to consider how the hikes will affect women."

They said Beauchamp had an essential role to play in the education debate, and called for her to deliver her position in the public sphere.

The Ministry responded March 8 that they had received the institute's letter and would follow up.

Sociology and Anthropology

The Sociology and Anthropology Student Union held a general

assembly on March 6, ending with a majority vote to begin striking on March 12. The student association represents about 2,000 undergraduates.

Following presentations by the Concordia Student Union's Advocacy Centre, Graduate Students' Association VP External Holly Nazar and CSU Councillor Irmak Bahar, 127 students in attendance voted on the proposed strike mandate.

The motion passed, with 101 students voting in favour of an open-ended, one-week renewable strike. Twenty-three students voted against the mandate, and three abstained.

GUSS What? Another Strike!

Environment and geography students voted to maintain hard strike tactics for the next two days in its General Assembly on March 6.

Those tactics include blocking entry to classrooms, not handing any work in, and recommending alternative teaching methods outside of classrooms.

The GA lasted roughly four hours and the vote passed with 64 people for the vote, 32 against, and four abstaining.

The Geography Undergraduate Student Society represents 750 undergraduate students.

"I'm just really happy with the way the process went down. There were 100 people in the room, [it's] quite a contentious issue and there was no bickering back and forth. Everyone was really respectful," said GUSS President Andrew Roberts.

A GRADUATE DEGREE IN STRIKING

Graduate students at Concordia joined the strike movement against tuition hikes in Quebec this week.

At a Graduate Students' Association General Assembly last week, over 400 students voted almost unanimously to start striking on March 12 and to not let up until "until such time as the government of Quebec rescinds its proposed increases to the Quebec tuition rate and freezes out-of-province and international forfeitures."

"We're going to be boycotting all

graduate classes," said Concordia Board of Governors graduate student representative Erik Chevrier. "We're not going to be boycotting research [projects], because that could jeopardize people's funding."

Chevrier encouraged all graduate students to attend all future General Assemblies, which will be held weekly, to let their voices be heard, regardless of their opinion of the strike.

GSA members were originally set to vote on a strike mandate to begin on March 19, but the day before, their as-

sembly members of the Engineering and Computer Science Graduate Association, which represents almost half of all graduate students, voted in a separate assembly to start striking on March 12.

The GSA represents over 7,000 graduate students. Those who work as teaching or research assistants will continue performing those duties.

For the exact wording of the strike motion, visit the GSA's website at gsaconcordia.ca.



the asterisk

• JULIAN WARD

THIS WEEK IN PROTESTS



Tensions rise as protestors and police face off in the streets of downtown Montreal.

PHOTOS RILEY SPARKS

Several Rallies Result in Violence

• JACOB ROBERTS, PIERRE CHAUVIN & JULIAN WARD

March 7 and 8 were busy days for protesters, as the causes of tuition, police brutality, and women's rights were all represented in four different events within 24 hours. Some of the demonstrations, however, were marred by violence.

The skirmishes kicked off when an impromptu and lively student protest against tuition hikes worked its way through Montreal's busy downtown streets March 7—an event that would end with one student in the hospital, having permanently lost his right eye.

The protest started at Square Victoria where urban studies students from the Université du Québec à Montréal wrapped trees and other objects in the park in red fabric, a symbol of the student movement against tuition increases.

The confrontation began when students attempted to block the entrance of the Loto-Québec building, which also holds the offices for the Conference of Rectors and Principals of Quebec Universities. CREPUQ's offices were being protested due to the organization's support for the government's tuition hikes.

"[CREPUQ officials] are the first to waste public money in advertising and investing in real-estate firms," said Association pour une solidarité syndicale étudiante spokesperson Gabriel Nadeau-Dubois to radio station 98.5 FM.

Riot police quickly stepped in and removed the students.

"We were peacefully blocking the CREPUQ building. The police decided to clear up Sherbrooke St. with a violence hard to describe," said Nadeau-Dubois.

"It was really peaceful, except for when we were at Loto-Québec when the police set off flash-bombs," said Noémie Roy-Gibeault, a student at the protest.

Riot cops used tear gas to disperse the students, four of whom were injured, as well as one police officer.

The Coalition large de l'ASSÉ, an umbrella union that represents over 80,000 students, issued a statement reporting that CEGEP Saint-Jérôme student Francis Grenier had been hit by a stun grenade in the eye from point blank range and had to be rushed to the hospital.

On March 11, it was announced that Grenier would lose vision in that eye permanently. Nadeau-Dubois condemned the incident.

"For the second time in two weeks, the police violently repressed a student protest. The police have to respect the students' right to demonstrate."

The Service de police de la Ville de Montréal arrested five students in total.

After leaving the Loto-Québec building, around 600 students marched haphazardly through downtown with the police following behind.

"Going from Square-Victoria to Loto-Québec, I'm pretty sure, was probably planned, but the rest of it was improvised," said protester Jean-Luc Wyman-Grimard. "There was no real target; basically just moving around and students deciding together that they want to act."

After stopping for a few minutes in front of the Education Minister's office, the students came back to Place-des-Arts Metro and dispersed onto separate metro cars.

Later that night, riot cops near

Berri-UQAM forcefully broke up a vigil for Grenier.

"The [riot police] arrived and started shoving everybody," said a student protester who asked to be identified only as Max. He claimed there was no warning issued prior to the violence.

The SPVM said that two people were arrested at the vigil.

The next day, a follow-up vigil took to the streets along with protesters gathered for International Women's Day, anti-police brutality and Israeli Apartheid Week demonstrations—not to mention students demonstrating against tuition hikes.

"We're here today fighting tuition [hikes] and gathering for International Women's Day," said Audrey Pilon, a student at CEGEP du Vieux-Montréal.

"We combined the two together to support people that aren't able to go to university."

The unplanned protest worked its way peacefully from Concordia University to Berri-UQAM Metro station and into the east end of the city.

Protesters marched under the Jacques Cartier Bridge and went to the Hydro-Québec building that students had marched to the day before. A pile of roses was laid at the feet of police lined up at the entrance of the building before the group headed back toward downtown.

Later that night, another International Women's Day demonstration collided with several other protests all taking place in downtown Montreal.

The march left the Simone de Beauvoir Institute at 2:00 p.m., and was joined by another group of demonstrators by 6:00 p.m. at Norman Bethune Square in Concordia's downtown Sir George

Williams campus.

A crowd mostly made up of women took a stand for women's rights around the world despite the heavy rainfall, and joined up with hundreds of other protesters and marched down Ste. Catherine St. W.

"This International Women's Day, we recognize the struggles of Palestinian women in their fight against an entrenched system of discrimination and segregation," said Freda Guttman of Montreal-based diaspora activist collective Tadamon.

The International Women's Association led the march followed by students protesting tuition fee increases, Israeli Apartheid Week demonstrators and Pinay, a Filipino women's group protesting female workers' rights.

Because of the recent amount of strike activity over the last few days, and the violent clash between riot police and students the previous day, an atmosphere of tension hung in the air. The protest was surrounded at all times by riot police on horseback, accompanied by police in cars, on bicycles and on foot.

A helicopter hung in the sky carefully watching the progression of the protesters making their way to Philips Square at Union St. and Ste. Catherine St. W.

The protesters continued to block traffic while speakers from each group cheered their reasons for participating in the march.

"Whatever the weather forecast might attest, it is always a beautiful day to smash patriarchy, capitalism and oppression," said Amy Darwish from the Immigrant Workers Centre.

As Concordia begins its strike, expect more of the same in the next few weeks.

UPCOMING ACTIONS

MARCH 13:

International Demonstration for Accessible Education

12:30 p.m. - Graduate Students' Association office (2030 Mackay St.)

MARCH 14:

Quebec Public Interest Research Group Workshop: "Solidarity, Not Charity: Activism in Montreal"

1:00 p.m. QPIRG Concordia office (1500 de Maison-neuve Blvd. W., suite 204)

MARCH 15:

CSU JOINS THE STRIKE!

Classes Without Classes presents: Epistemology on Strike. Are epistemic intuitions informed by one's culture? Come and discuss these very interesting ideas with a feminist and critical race theory approach.

1:00 p.m. - Kafein (1429 Bishop St.)

International Day Against Police Brutality event
5:00 p.m. - Berri Square

MARCH 16:

Pre-GA Dance Par-tay!

12:30 p.m. - VA Garden

MARCH 22:

Province-wide Day of Action against tuition hikes

1:00 p.m. - Place du Canada, corner of Peel St. and de la Gauchetière St.

Sweet Caroline

Bourbonnière Elected ASFA Prez In Vote Do-Over

• COREY POOL

After a recount of the ballots cast on the morning of March 8, Caroline Bourbonnière has been elected as the Arts and Science Federation of Associations' new president.

"I am really honoured and privileged to have been chosen to serve the arts and science students next year, and I can't wait to get started with my new team," said Bourbonnière, whose 326 votes beat out runner-up Charlie Brenchley's 280.

"It was a tight race for a few positions, but I feel that all the candidates were qualified, so I'm happy either way."

An email from an ASFA Deputy Electoral Officer confirming the preliminary results cited an "extremely close" vote between two contesting positions being the reason for a recount.

According to current ASFA President Alex Gordon, the positions of VP Social had to be re-

counted as well. In a follow-up email, the winner was announced as Maddy Griffin with 268 votes, versus Terrence Adams' 262.

"In order for a recount to occur, the count has to be within a 50-vote differential," said Gordon.

There had been a mix-up when the preliminary results were sent, saying a recount would be needed for the position of VP Academic and Loyola, which was won by Eric Moses.

Moses had been penalized 50 votes by the ASFA Judicial Committee earlier in the campaigning period due to an error on his nomination paperwork. Gordon confirmed that no recount occurred for that position, however.

In order for quorum to be met, ASFA needed roughly 2.5 per cent of approximately 15,000 students to come out and vote—a number they had no trouble surpassing.

"We only needed roughly 375 people to make quorum, and we had over 500—maybe 600," said Gordon.



PHOTO JULIA JONES

In the interim, Bourbonnière plans to start building a better connection with her executives and working on a vision for next year.

"I want to create a strong bond with my executives and make sure that everyone knows what their portfolio is," said Bourbonnière. "I want to make sure that the core of ASFA is taken care of and maintained."

In light of the troubles that

ASFA had this year when it came to filling positions on council, Bourbonnière says she intends to work on team-building and making sure that everyone is serious about their positions.

"I'll have to speak with all my members, and we will have to spend some time together," said Bourbonnière. "If somebody feels that they don't want to remain part of the group I will ask that they make that clear before June. We

do not have any time to waste."

Bourbonnière's election puts an end to what was a controversial election season for ASFA, as the voting period, which lasted from March 5 to 7, was the second time students had gone to the polls.

The original voting period, from Feb. 15 to 17, was interrupted on the second day of voting, when the election was postponed due to the resignation of Chief Electoral Officer Christopher Webster.

PROVINCE FINES CONCORDIA \$2M OVER SEVERANCE PACKAGES

• RILEY SPARKS

On March 9, Quebec decided that enough was enough.

The provincial government is punishing Concordia for shelling out over \$3.1 million in severance packages to administrators between October 2009 and December of 2010.

"Concordia University has shown a lack of control and should face the consequences," Minister of Education Line Beauchamp said in the press release that announced the move.

Making an example of Concordia's massive spending on severance packages for retiring senior administrative staff, the provincial Ministry of Education will reduce the university's funding by \$2 million, starting April 1 of this year.

"What we're telling universities is this: 'You're managing money that comes mainly from taxes. You can't just run it like any other business,'" the Minister told the *Canadian Press*.

"Healthy management is synonymous with transparency and efficiency," she continued in a letter addressed to Peter Kruyt, chair of the university's Board of Gover-

nors, rebutting Kruyt's comment after a December 2011 Board meeting that "transparency does not equal good governance."

In the letter, Beauchamp explained that she was particularly concerned about a total of \$3.1 million given to former Concordia president Judith Woodsworth and five other departing administrators.

The university also paid \$1.3 million to Woodsworth's predecessor, Claude Lajeunesse.

"We take note of the Minister's decision and will act in accordance with our responsibilities," said university Interim President Frederick Lowy in a statement issued later in the afternoon of March 9. "I would like to assure our community that Concordia is committed to prudent fiscal management."

At a Board meeting March 12, Kruyt echoed those comments, but was adamant that "The letter from the minister does not really change the work we intend to do."

"It's unfortunate—her choice of language for us—particularly given the bigger picture of us as Quebec's healthiest and most financially responsible institution."

"This is not money well-spent,"

he added.

Concordia Student Union President Lex Gill agreed, calling the \$2 million fine "scandalous" and "embarrassing," though she felt the severances had been excessive.

"[Spending] \$2.4 million on five people over six months [amounts to] over 1,000 Quebec residents having their tuition paid and going to school for free for a year," Gill noted.

Still, she added, the government penalty does not address what she calls systemic financial mismanagement at both the university and in the provincial government.

"Is the \$2 million going to change anything? No. There should be an actual investigation," she said.

"It's a clear problem of mismanagement. They didn't intervene when it happened, they didn't intervene a year ago, or when Woodsworth got a \$700,000 severance package, or with Lajeunesse before that."

The university announced last week it would spend \$25,000 to hire two external auditors to examine the payouts. That audit is expected to be finished in June.



PHOTO TERRINE FRIDAY



Fine Arts students students played dead in the LB building while protesting tuition hikes on March 12.

PHOTO PIERRE CHAUVIN

The Future of Fraud Enforcement

• JACOB ROBERTS

On March 11, thousands of Canadian voters gathered in major cities across the country to protest the robocalls election scandal.

The Conservative Party has publicly denied allegations that they were involved with the incident, which came to light earlier this month, in which voters in numerous ridings across Canada were directed to the wrong polling locations during the most recent federal election, which took place May 2, 2011.

One of the speakers at the protest in Montreal, New Democratic Party Minister of Parliament Hoang Mai, spoke with *The Link* afterwards.

"Elections Canada has asked a committee for more information, to get more documents and the government has actually voted against this in committee. [But] they said they will support a motion," said Mai.

But the motion to allow investigators greater power to access information was passed unanimously in the House of Commons on Monday.

Put forward by the NDP, the motion is non-binding, but allows the Chief Electoral Officer the power to compel parties to give him documentary evidence, such as receipts.

A spokesperson for Elections Canada, who couldn't speak to the status of an ongoing investigation, said that the motion doesn't con-

cern only the robocalls scandal, but that it is a larger motion to help Elections Canada deal with cases of fraud in the future.

"We were pretty disappointed, it's the least I can say. There was an attack on democracy. That's new for Canada," said Mai. "Going to that point was really shocking. It really affected us as the Members of Parliament [...] because we know that it was an attack on democracy. That was really, really shocking."

The anonymous man allegedly responsible for the robocalls scandal, known only as "Pierre Poutine," was supposedly set to step forward on Monday, though as of press time no such person had done so.

Poutine had allegedly decided

to take responsibility after discovering his IP address had been traced by Matt Meier, CEO of RackNine, the Edmonton call centre responsible for sending out the robocalls.

RackNine also worked on the Conservative Party's national campaign, as well as the campaigns of at least nine Conservative Candidates.

Poutine's automated phone calls erroneously informed over 31,000 voters from 77 ridings that their polling stations had moved, making the calls to the biggest case of election fraud in Canadian history.

He covered his tracks by using a prepaid credit card to buy a prepaid cellphone, registered an account under a fake name and

address, then set up his cellphone under a different fake name and address: Pierre Poutine of Separatist Street, Joliette, QC.

Michael Sona, the campaign communications director who worked for Conservative MP Eve Adams—representative for Mississauga-Brampton, one of the 77 affected ridings—left his job after the robocalls story broke.

Sona told CTV News that he had no involvement.

However, a woman who identified herself as Sona's mother told *The Ottawa Citizen* that she considered the situation "a setup from day one."

"It's interesting that Matt Meier found the code when he's working for the Conservative party," she told *The Ottawa Citizen*.

BRIEFS

McGill to Daily: Leak Off

So far this year, McGill University has been occupied, policified and packetized. Now, they can add scandalized, in such a way that the administration has threatened legal action against *The McGill Daily*, Canada's oldest student newspaper, for printing material from McGill-leaks. On March 3 the anonymous online group released confidential documents from McGill's Development and Alumni Relations Department that exposed private information of corporate and alumni donors. The group stated on their website that more documents would be released throughout the coming weeks, but the website was taken down shortly after and there's been no communication from them since.

More MUNACA Mess

Just when you thought it was safe to be a unionized worker at McGill University... Three months after McGill reached a new labour agreement with the non-academic support staff union, 250 members of the group held a protest on the campus. The issue surrounds particular wording in the new collective agreement, with MUNACA claiming that the school added 40 people to a list of who would receive compensation via lump payments to their pension plan, rather than a salary increase.

Gettin' Serious About Syria

To mark the one-year anniversary of the start of the Syrian revolution, Syrians in Montreal and their supporters will hold a march from Norman Bethune Square to Place du Canada on March 17. A press release announcing the march stated that the peaceful uprising against Syrian President Assad has been met with "killing, kidnapping, arbitrary detention, torture and rape." The release calls on the international community to band together to defend civilians, ensure the delivery of humanitarian aid, for the U.N. to send in peacekeeping forces and that all countries recognize the Syrian National Council as the legitimate governing party of Syria.

Five For Fighting Homelessness

Concordia students and people from around Montreal are sleeping on the streets this week to raise awareness and money for the homeless. 5 Days for the Homeless has kicked off again at Concordia in an effort to shine a light on those who are so-often ignored on a daily basis. Participants agree to a strict regimen in order to come as close as possible to understanding what it's like to be homeless. Students are only allowed to eat donated food and drinks, they are not allowed to make money and are only allowed to possess a sleeping bag and pillow. Keep an eye on *The Link's* website for updates.



Theatre and dance students engaged in multiple forms of protest this past week, presenting ways of creative, non-violent protest.

PHOTOS ERIN SPARKS

Theatre and Development student Ned Zimmerman acted as mediator to reach the consensus for open session and was happy about the space for discussion created by his class.

"I think we had a really constructive session with [Professor] Kate [Bligh] despite that class was cancelled," said Zimmerman. "All of this has been driven by meetings that we've had as a group. We had 40 students from this class show up at a meeting last night, and 22-23 at a meeting Sunday night."

Alongside the more abstract activities, the Fine Arts Student Alliance and Concordia Student Union have helped coordinate and inform among these demonstrations, although for the most part these artistic protests have been put on by a smattering of autonomous groups of students.

As for FASA, they had an information table full of zines to

help students learn the numbers and engage in the issues. During the public reading of *Hippolytus*, Intermedia/Cyber Arts student Jeanne-Renée Lorrain operated a table nearby.

"This is a great way to spread a message, it's totally non-violent," she said of the theatre demonstration. "Every morning we try to have meetings with FASA before we go on strike, and we decided we should have an information desk [this morning] because a lot of people don't know if there's a strike, why there's a strike, when are the votes, so it's nice to have a place for people to stop by where people can ask basic questions."

And with Fine Arts classes currently held in most buildings on campus, a site to organize themselves is essential. Check the sidebar for upcoming artistic student demonstrations around the city, and thelinknewspaper.ca for regular updates.

"We're trying to present these issues and concerns that students are having are ones that are deeply rooted, that speak to concerns that seem to go unnoticed."

-Emily Schon,

Theatre & Development student

UPCOMING CREATIVE PROTESTS

DAILY:

Student-Led Movement Workshop

Come move your body at the dance warm-up! Wear red; this workshop will begin in a public space in place of technique class. Musicians welcome to come play.

9:00 a.m. - MB Building (1450 de Maisonneuve Blvd. W.)

MARCH 13:

Butoh-Style March

Spend some time thinking about strike politics one-hour slow walk around the city block of the EV & GM Buildings.

11:45 p.m. - EV Building (1515 Ste. Catherine St. W.)

MARCH 14:

Silent Red Book Group Reading

Put some fear into the hearts of the Concordia admin at this creative protest.

9:00 a.m. - Concordia Administration office, GM Building (1550 de Maisonneuve Blvd. W.)

MARCH 15:

Puppet March

Organized by theatre students. Wear red and bring puppets and signs.

11:00 a.m. - Hall Building (1455 de Maisonneuve Blvd. W.)

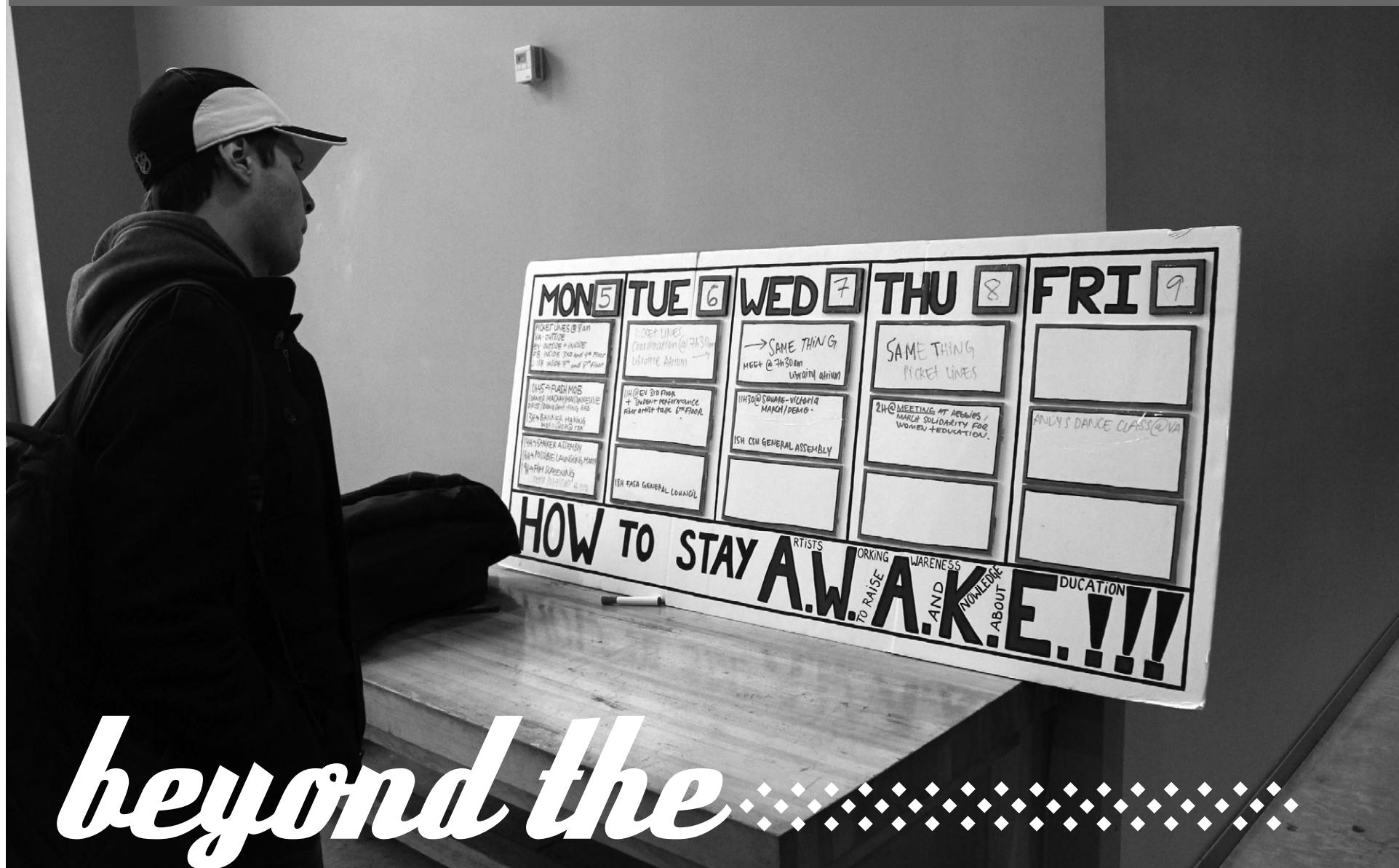
MARCH 16-17:

24-Hour Concert

"It's a gathering event. 175 artists on stage, openly against the hike. It's open to everybody, with voluntary contribution. We have the support of several cultural groups and artists," said UQAM music student David Therrien-Brondo.

"This is an action aimed at raising awareness among the general public about the problems artists will face because of the hikes."

Eglise St. Jean (1355, René-Lévesque Blvd. W.) to L'Astral (305 Ste. Catherine St. W.)



PHOTOS PIERRE CHAUVIN

beyond the

PICKET

How Artists are Tackling the Tuition Issue

BY COLIN HARRIS

Activism can be visualized in bodies dressed in red, rippling waves of movement and free cookies. Because that's exactly what happened for an hour on the first floor the EV building; a small student performance inclined passers-by to stop and watch and inevitably take part in the strike debate.

Since their vote on March 2, Fine Arts students have been proving that there's much more to this strike than picket lines. Groups of students have been meeting regularly to coordinate demonstrations, coming together based on their desire to inform their fellow students about how big this issue really is.

The morphing red bodies in the EV building on Thursday were theatre and dance students performing techniques of Polish director Jerzy Grotowski, with Augusto Boal's image theatre—a form of performance where par-

ticipants dig into the relationship between audience and actor.

With students holding general assemblies around the clock, it's clear that a tuition hike is not the point of division: it's the implications of striking. And with this movement-based exercise, these students hope to shed some light on how complex and convoluted this issue really is.

"They start in the 'hunter position,' for a really long time, the purpose is to become aware of everything around you, a 360-degree visual feel of the space," said Veronica Baron, one of the facilitators informing passers-by on the goals of the performance.

"There are a series of movements they have planned, which represent issues or feelings or anything to do with the current strike, positive or negative."

"These issues are much more complicated than they're sometimes presented as," said Emily

Schon, who studies Theatre and Development at Concordia—a program that looks at theatre as a tool for social change. "We're trying to present these issues and concerns that students are having as ones that are deeply rooted, that speak to concerns that seem to go unnoticed."

It's that dialogue that is key here, as this issue becomes increasingly divisive among students that are vying for the same results with different opinions on how to get there.

You can feel it in the tense atmosphere on campus—VA and Hall building alike.

"Using a performative way of garnering attention shows what fine arts students can do while on strike, under pressure," said Theatre Performance student Tyson Houseman, who organized the workshop/performance. "It's how we can be constructive about this, and get the word out."

While Thursday's performance left much for the audience to piece together, the same hallway played host to a more forceful display two days earlier. Members of a first-year script analysis class, accompanied by other red-square-aficionados, held a hard picket line preventing their professor from getting into class.

Dressed in red and lining the corridor in front of the York amphitheatre, dozens of students read *Hippolytus* in unison, a text that is required reading for the course.

The standoff ended in a majority vote to cancel the class, which turned into an open session between students and their professor. The session allowed striking students to learn without crossing picket lines, becoming a consensus-led discussion between professor and students.

All the while, other students blocked access to the auditorium five floors below.

the IVORY COAST



The Insular and Versatile Turns of Bent by Elephants

• SAM ROSENBERG

Local chamber folk-jazz septet Bent by Elephants are magicians. Despite the fact that they're, well, seven people, pulling off a mini-orchestral sound playing folk-jazz—they do it while escaping the trap of being pretentious.

Vocalist Chelsey Walsh chatted with *The Link* over some chicken from Rotisserie Romados, talking music, travel, romance and eventually faith and existence in general. Needless to say, it got real deep real fast, much like the band's songs and live shows.

The Link: *Bent by Elephants are very textural and your lyrical narratives are pretty non-linear and experiential. Is this a product of all the travelling the band has done together?*

Chelsey Walsh: Personally, I've been transient my whole life. I'm from the States and have moved all around because my dad was always moving for work.

Part of me has stayed very transient because I feel the best time to gain clarity is when you're moving. There is a certain way of looking in on your life when you can step outside of where you live.

So is Montreal home?

The band definitely calls Montreal home. I think part of that is because we all nested here for a very fruitful period of time. The last six months on the road were healthy because we started actively seeing what we're putting out into the world; you become less of an insular critic.

When you're in it all the time you can't really see what you've created. It's the same as performance vs. writing and production. When you're performing, everything is fluid. You can make it a different song if you like. I think I really want to re-engage with that now that we're writing again, to write compositions that are more versatile.

Versatility seems like a big deal in BBE because you all play in other bands. Do you find the ideas of your bandmates change with their involvement in different projects?

Definitely. Paul [Van Dyk] and Luke [Fowlie] are our rhythm section and they play together in a jazz trio and understand music very harmonically. Our music is so textural because we'll discuss a chord forever and take a while to construct it. It can sometimes be exhausting but generally results in something really cool.

Then Ryan is in The Youjsh and does stuff for a bunch of different projects, sometimes pop and sometimes experimental stuff, so he always has great contributions too. It makes our band who we are, that we all have different interests.

What do you think of the 'husband and wife band' concept and its connotations? I know you and Luke aren't married, but you're together. Do you think that kind of

romantic element can influence sound?

To me, making art with somebody is a sort of romantic act anyways. You have to suspend certain preconceptions you have about that other person's abilities and you have to believe that person has a certain degree of magic in them and you have to agree on what you're doing together.

It makes sense to me that partners could make music together, but I don't think that gives them a leg up.

In a way you have to be able to negotiate even more shit, and you have to be able to draw the line and say, "This is the shit we have to deal with at home and this is the shit we have to deal with in rehearsal, let's not overlap that crap."

Bent by Elephants (w/ Corinna Rose & The Oh Wells) / March 17 / La Tour Prisme (550 Beaumont) / \$6.00



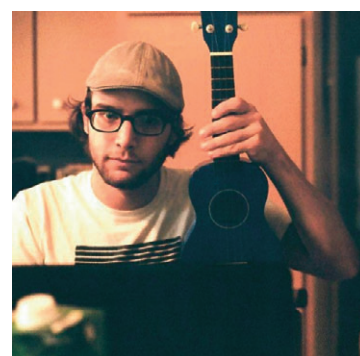
DAILY COVERAGE AT
THELINKNEWSPAPER.CA

FRINGE FOOD

While Montreal is often seen as a gourmet city—a place to drop one's Friday paycheck on all sorts of culinary delights—it is rarely recognized for its enduring hunger problem.



EXTREME SHOEGAZING



It's always a race for pro music writers and bloggers alike to pen the next micro-genre tagline, to the extent where the actual practice of listening can get a little sidelined. For Montreal-based band Carpet, they are content knowing who they are, bringing an innovative spin to the shoegaze table.

INVISIBLE MAN



L'homme invisible/The Invisible Man turns the work of beat poet Patrice Desbiens into a bilingual theatre piece with live music. Playing at Monument National (1192 St. Laurent Blvd.) until March 17.

THE WOMEN'S ISSUE

THE **LiNK**

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ALL ARTWORK BY ERIKA ALTOSAAR. PAGES 1, 2 , 3, 5, 11 AN 12 ORIGINALLY APPEARED IN *L'ANONYME* AND APPEAR COURTESY OF TRAPSHORT ARCHIVES.



THE LINK'S ANNUAL WOMEN'S ISSUE

First things first—we have made incredible gains. Let us not deny that; let us not forget that, or denigrate that. The women and men who have come before us have brought us to a good, solid place. In many ways, women and men in North America right now are exactly equal.

They enjoy the same rights before the law. They enjoy the same freedoms, the same options, the same gifts, the opportunities to pursue the same goals. But in many ways, they are not equal. Not yet.

We are in a complicated point in time, like the ‘negative peace’ that follows a war. Though the bulk of the fighting has stopped, the situation is still tense and permeated by injustices and the potential for violence. There remain opportunities for backsliding. There remain a myriad of seemingly infinite opportunities for improvement, whether significant or minor, whether tangible or ephemeral—which could be a good incentive for progress.

But we’re treating the situation like the battle is won, and the gender problem is solved. It isn’t. Whether you’re a woman, a man, or anything else, society has a lot to tell you about who you are allowed to be, where you are allowed to go, what you are

allowed to achieve, and what your body and your choices say about you.

Despite having gained the status of Person, the right to vote, the right to own businesses, inherit property, control their own money, the right to drive, the right to education, the right to equal pay for equal work, women are not equal to men.

It might fair to say that they may never be; that no amount of gender justice initiatives or awareness campaigns will erase the centuries—the millennia—when men’s physical strength and violence, and the structures they constructed, imbued with these traits, held sway. The past holds an incredible power over the present.

But there are ways to tell whether we in the present are treating women equally. And by most measurable standards, we are not.

Women are less present in the most powerful societal positions—in politics, in finance, in religion and in the media. Your favourite bands and rappers are men. Your favourite athletes are men. Your heroes are men, your famous quote books are filled with men.

It is easy to forget that this isn’t just ‘normal’ or ‘the way it is,’ and many people

come up with reasons to explain away gender inequalities like these. Women just want to focus on their families. Women don’t care about excelling. Women are evolutionarily designed not to seek power. Women this, and women that. But what do we really know about women?

Any time a dominant power group in a society is confronted by an inequality it is propagating, it tries to insist that it’s only natural. It will do everything it can to keep things the way they are. It will see being asked to be fair—no matter how politely—as a terrible injustice to itself. It will kick and scream.

But it must be dragged, kicking and screaming, into the future. It must be forced to relinquish its grip on the past. And with time, it will realize that the future holds a prospective of progress for all, that it is enriched by the contributions of humans it once thought lesser.

It is in this spirit that *The Link* continues to publish a special Women’s Issue every year—as a means of checking the pulse of gender relations, and devoting a space to a group of people who make up half of our numbers—more than half at universities—but who are not yet recognized.

—*Julia Jones & Alex Manley,*
Women’s Issue Coordinators.

OBJECTS OF OUR AFFECTION

WALKING WOMBS AND THE MEDICAL MEDIATION OF CHILDBIRTH

• JULIA JONES & EMMA CRAIG

We've all heard the story. Woman gets pregnant and becomes an irrational, moody animal capable of biting the head off of her own husband. Husband runs around to satisfy her whimsical wishes and cravings, as she puts on weight and takes interest in interior design.

One day her water breaks and the couple rushes to the hospital, trying not to forget the quirky exercises their hippie parenting instructor has taught them. At the hospital, husband loses it, wishes his college days had never ended.

Woman screams, maybe even crushes her husband's hand. Woman asks for drugs. Nurse gives her drugs. Baby is born.

This narrative has carved its place in Western society's culture. It's accepted as the normal succession of events that culminate in human birth. We banalize women's pregnancy experience; we dismiss their feelings as hormone-level fluctuation and treat them like children—scared children.

Considering that pregnant women go through a lot from the moment they find out they're expecting until, well, the rest of their existences as mothers, it's only reasonable that those around them try to give them some sort of comfort.

But being ushered around in a wheelchair, being fed large portions of fatty, industrialized food and being felt sorry for doesn't help.

Wherever this comfort might come from—partners, family, or caregivers—and despite the good intentions, these actions are often rooted in a male perception of the world, in which bearing a child is not a normal part of life.

Little do they know that they are only contributing to a matter much bigger and worse than one woman's pain—the oppression of women by shrinking their woman-

hood down to the size of their uterus.

A Cure for Pain

For one of Quebec's pioneers in midwifery, Jeen Kirwen, childbirth is still feared in our society; it is considered dangerous and a risk.

"It's not like when women get pregnant they think, 'Oh good, I'm going to have a natural birth, I'm going to breastfeed, and everything will be fine,'" she said.

"It's more like, 'Oh my god, hope everything goes well, I hope my baby is fine and that the birth isn't horrible. Most of the thoughts right away are very negative.'"

What most expectant mothers aren't told is that fear itself can be a factor in how enjoyable their experience is, and can even alter their pain levels.

"Some people don't have pain, some people do, and it depends on your endorphins and your ability to just let go," said Kirwen.

"Women who end up being delighted with their birth are those who can tell themselves to let go, and accept the fact that their body knows what to do. These women have way less pain during childbirth, because they're not resisting something horrible. They're going with something wonderful."

But wonderful things are not necessarily painless. Pain can also release hormones into the woman's bloodstream that will bring her to a higher level of awareness.

These hormones, namely oxytocin, prolactin and endorphin, travel from mother to baby, engaging them in a crucial period of hormone-induced love and bonding.

This period is crucial because babies are altricial beings—they depend on adults for nourishment, growth and care.

"That moment, mother and baby meet each other on the same state. This is where commitment for life is born with parents,"

said Kirwen.

This doesn't happen, however, when women are sedated or have a caesarian birth. "The woman is no longer in touch with her pain—you need the contractions to bring the oxytocin to your body," explained Kirwen.

Stéphanie St-Amant, a semiotics doctoral candidate at Université du Québec à Montréal who's writing her thesis on the process of childbirth, said most women are not aware of the effects of drugs administered to them.

Artificial oxytocin and epidurals are readily available for women who request them, but unfortunately, most women are not aware that the oxytocin being administered to them is not exactly the same as what they produce naturally, and a much larger dose is required to mimic the natural production.

The effect of an epidural is even worse for the mother. Although it numbs the pain, it also slows the natural process and often even stops contractions. At this point, even more oxytocin is administered to induce contractions, creating a vicious cycle of drug intervention, and the narcotics numb both the mother and the baby.

"Women who have epidural might just want to go to sleep. They're not in an exalted state," said Kirwen.

This practice can actually bring complications to the birth process as the babies are numb too and might descend incorrectly, risking getting stuck in the pelvis and requiring the use of a forceps.

Not explaining the implications of their choices to women is evidence of a practice that looks at women as big, pink, tender wombs, and not much else.

A Womb of One's Own

Hélène Vadeboncoeur is another pioneer in Quebec midwifery, as well as a research

and midwifery professor at Université du Québec à Trois-Rivières and at Université de Montréal.

She said that during childbirth, women are treated as if they were "only a uterus."

The baby is seen as a product, and nothing else is important.

"Sometimes people come into the room and they don't even introduce themselves, and instead of talking to the woman they talk about her, in front of her, as if she were not there," said Vadeboncoeur. "Some women feel like an object, not a human being."

The impact of this objectification is so deep that some women are traumatized by their birthing or caesarian experience—so much so, that as of the mid-'90s childbirth was included on the list of experiences that can cause post-traumatic stress disorder.

Doctors and nurses should not to be demonized, though. Most of the time, they're just doing their job. They also don't want to see mother or baby suffer, and they want to make sure that no one is in danger. It's their training.

It's also women themselves who want to pass off the responsibilities to people who are authorities on the subject. "Most people in our society, when they get pregnant they want to be taken in hand," said Kirwen.

"They want to be told, 'You do this, you do that, and you'll be fine.' They don't want to learn how to deal with their pregnancy and they don't want to have to worry about pain."

The business side of the medical practice could be a major driving force behind retaining this authority. The revenue generated through childbirths is steep, and pharmaceutical companies come out on top.

"If women give birth without any help, no one is making any money. They love to say that women need them, and their sur-



gical process, and it works,” St-Amant noted.

Where We Came From

Childbirth was not always done in a hospital setting, or even by doctors. Prior to the seventeenth century, childbirth was a social event left in the hands of women, with the mother surrounded by lay midwives and family.

Through the 17th and 18th centuries, however, midwives were gradually cut out with the growth of the medical profession—another patriarchal institution that maintained power and status over women.

Through force and persuasion of the church and governments, women and families were told that other women were incapable of providing sufficient service to a mother in labour, and that the process must be directed by a doctor.

As a result, the process of giving birth is no longer directly in the woman’s hands, but has been standardized through medicine by men and the medical institution.

This lack of control and power over one’s own biology is a frequent theme in women’s struggle to equality and rights.

Rivka Cymbalist, doula and director of Montreal Birth Companions, pointed out that no one, doctor nor mother, truly has control over a birth, as it is such a spontaneous and fluctuating process.

However, more often than not

the presence of doctors and nurses, paired with the foreign hospital environment, leads to the woman accepting choices she usually would not. Sometimes, they are not even offered the choice.

“If you go into the hospital wanting to have a natural birth and then they insist that you lie down and get on the monitor, then certainly there is way more risk that you’re going to have to request or accept other interventions. That’s the problem with a hospital birth—that snowballing effect of interventions,” said Cymbalist.

The struggle between a mother’s intuition and the medical machinery and apparatus is a central issue. In the fight to make birth a timed, decent and controlled practice, it seems that a woman’s urges and intuition have fallen to the wayside.

Often, women feeling contractions and urges to push will be told not to push, as nurses and doctors refer to machines and drug doses to determine the best timing.

The thought of giving birth entirely on their own is likely terrifying for most women; but as mammals it is a capability that women possess. Once in a hospital, however, that capability is ignored in favour of the male-dominated sphere of science and practice.

“Normal contractions are not viewed as effective by the everyday nurse,” commented St-Amant.

This often results in pushing at the wrong time for women, and drawing out the birth as a much longer and sometimes more painful process.

Even the common position that a woman is placed into is not the most effective. By lying a woman on her back, with legs in stirrups, the doctor is just making it easy for himself. Women prefer a variety of positions, but squatting or kneeling on hands and knees is generally the most effective for a woman.

By laying a woman on her back, “you are compressing the main oxygen provision for the fetus. It is anatomically absurd,” said St-Amant.

The difference between those who gave birth naturally and those who gave birth through a medical process is remarkable.

“Women are describing their birth experience like ‘powerful’ and ‘empowering’. They feel pain, but after that they take a lot of power in their life. They feel strong, beautiful, and competent,” said St-Amant. “Why are women deprived of that experience?”

Breaking Away From the Pack

A woman’s biological capabilities and reproductive capacities have a history of being controlled. Reproduction becomes male-dominated as patriarchal institutions set standards for women’s reproductive activities.

In Quebec, even in the 1950s and 1960s, women were bombarded with pressure to repro-

duce constantly. A woman was told that her place was in the home, and her occupation was producing children. If she wasn’t at home taking care of kids or pregnant, there was a level of guilt instilled.

“Quebecers have been used to this sort of authority over families, so women aren’t used to making their own decisions, and only now we’re seeing a turning point,” said Kiwen.

Education is that starting point to understanding and collaborating. Women and mothers need to be provided with further education and accessible information concerning childbirth and their options for giving birth.

Women can only exercise their right to choose alternative birth plans if dialogues and communication are opened up between practices such as midwives and the public. If the Ministry of Health devises a budget for communication, these avenues to talk about alternative practices will appear.

There is a new generation of mothers as well, a generation defined by their inward focus and critical analysis of the services and products available.

If the new mothers begin questioning the standardized hospital practice of childbirth and are simultaneously given access to information and communication paths to discover alternative birthing methods, the rigid system just might start to adjust.

These women will begin the

demand more from their government and health services upon realizing that the birth process is not entirely pain and loss of control, as we have been led to believe.

Whether a woman decides she prefers hospitalized birth, or decides to do a completely natural home birth, the paradigm needs to be shifted a bit. Before the demands for alternatives and information begin, the fear that’s already been instilled in so many women must also be cracked.

“In a sense, I don’t want to blame just the hospital, [and] ‘the bad old doctors.’ Women are afraid, and they go in [to the hospital] and they don’t like pain because we as a culture don’t like pain,” explained Cymbalist.

The communication necessary to witness change must involve a new framework for how we communicate childbirth and how we see representations of it.

The screaming, crying, sweaty mother we see in movies will not make women eager to try more natural processes—it will make them want drugs as soon as possible.

Women need to be aware of their options before they can make an informed decision about their own birth process.

Through this, control can be placed back into the woman’s hands and she can direct her own body and biological experiences, and childbirth can stop being viewed as a medical condition to moderate and standardize.

NO QUEER GIRLS ARE



Resisting Femme Invisibility

• JEANNETTE YOUNG

Most people don't think *femme* when they hear the word *dyke*. Femininity is often read as an indicator of a woman's presumed heterosexuality—and most people don't know just how queer femininity can be.

But there are many ways of being femme.

Femme is a term used by many feminine-identified queer people—including lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, genderqueer, and other queer folks of any gender—though not all feminine-presenting queer people self-identify as femme.

Femmes come from diverse and equally valuable backgrounds, and we all experience gender and sexuality in different ways—and each of us has our own definition of what it means to be a femme. Even as I use the word “we,” I recognize that I cannot speak for all femmes.

We are all faced with differ-

ent experiences of marginalization and have our own strategies of resistance. Because I am a feminine woman, most people, queer or straight, can't tell that I'm a lesbian at first glance. Simply by being a femme dyke, I challenge the belief that all feminine women are heterosexual and that all dykes are unfeminine.

Am I Queer Enough for You Yet?

Femmes are fierce. We're loud. We have to be. We use our voices to make ourselves visible.

What cannot be silenced is the fact that femme women have a visible history in the butch/femme lesbian bar culture of the 1940s and '50s—a time when these identities were highly valued in the lesbian community.

This changed in the 1960s and '70s when butch and femme lesbians were stigmatized by predominantly white, middle-class lesbian feminists who thought that these identi-

ties were heteronormative and oppressive.

Even as the androgynous lesbian style of the 1970s—albeit revised somewhat—remains a dominant signifier of queer women's identities today, butches and femmes from the 1980s onwards have resisted erasure by re-articulating and redefining our identities on our own terms.

Femmes have also theorized our own feminist understandings of femininity. We know that the construct of “femininity” is often exclusionary because it has been defined according to certain standards of white, heterosexual, middle-class, able, and cisgendered (non-trans) female bodies of a certain size and shape.

For some queer people who don't fit into these categories, identifying as femme allows us to access, reclaim, and redefine femininity on our own terms—in ways that are incredibly empowering.

Facets of Femme

Leah Lakshmi Piepzna-Samarasinha, a self-identified queer, disabled, femme of colour writer, performer and cultural activist, makes clear that it is the inclusiveness of femme that makes it empowering for queer people to identify with. Self-identifying as femme allows many queer people to take on femininity—to feel beautiful—in ways not granted to us by dominant culture.

Erika, a self-identified queer/bisexual, black/mixed femme woman, has a political take on femme identity that is grounded in her personal experience. For her, femme is “an intentional taking up of the seedy underbelly of femininity.”

“It's an over-the-top, rule-breaking, twisted femininity that pushes back against both the worship and subsequent attempts at naturalization of masculinity and androgyny and the valorizing of one very specific and narrow brand of

QUEERER THAN OTHERS



white-hetero-cisgender-femininity,” she said.

“Femme means my feminism and my femininity walk hand in hand,” said Bevin Branlandingham, a self-identified queer, fat, femme writer and performer.

“Femme means I look how I want to look and not how someone tells me I should look to be perceived as queer,” she added, “and not how someone tells me I should look because I am a woman.”

For me, a self-identified femme lesbian who is also multiracial, identifying as femme has allowed me to take back ownership of my femininity—to embody a femininity that is empowering to me.

Being femme makes me feel beautiful.

What We’re Up Against

Nevertheless, as femme women, we are often invisible to other queer people.

Our femininities are often marginalized and delegit-

imized. We are often seen as heteronormative, apolitical, less radical, and less queer in a community where being visible and valued depends on being masculine or androgynous.

This femmephobia in queer communities—this devaluation and stigmatization of queer femininity—is a form of misogyny that is rooted in dominant patriarchal culture. It’s a form of sexism that intersects with cissexist, heterosexist, racist, classist, ableist, and sizeist views of femininity, women, and what it means to be queer.

The accusation that femme women “pass as straight” undermines our own self-definitions of our femme identities, our empowered embracing of our femininities, and our blatant disruption of the normative constructs of what it means to be feminine and a woman.

The experiences of femmes are complex, as we each have our own multiple identities.

This is well understood by

Erika.

“In my experience, queer people in anglo Montreal value white, androgynous bodies. As such, many of my experiences in the queer community are of being tokenized, fetishized, or ignored,” she said.

“As a femme who’s also a cis-woman, though, I am more readily read and accepted as femme in the queer community than other femmes who aren’t [cisgendered].”

It is evident that there is still a need for feminist engagement and social justice work in queer communities and in society at large in order to address the multiple oppressions experienced by queer femme women and other marginalized groups.

Coming Together

It is the feeling of invisibility and marginalization from queer communities that brings many femmes to resist and to make ourselves visible.

The desire to connect with other femmes and to have conversations about our experiences is a driving force in organizing femme-centred community events.

Creating a space where femme/inine-identified queer people of all genders can come together to share insights, resources, and experiences is important in building solidarity among femmes. With a strong femme community we can mark our presence as an integral part of the Montreal queer community.

For me, finding a community of feminine-identified queer people has made me feel, well, *visible*.

Young is involved in organizing femme events in Montreal. To receive information about upcoming events, contact montrealqueerfemmes@gmail.com or join the Fems Montreal Femmes Facebook group.

SOMETHING YOU'RE NOT



PERFORMING FEMININITY IN THE WORKPLACE

• OLIVER LEON

I am no longer read as a woman. I have a deep enough voice and enough body hair that it is never in question any longer. I look dudely, and nobody questions my gender. I absolutely cannot go into women's bathrooms or locker rooms anymore. As a female-to-male transsexual, this is quite the relief.

Yet, while I head into the smelly men's bathrooms to pee, my identification cards say 'F.' Worse—it will cost me hundreds of dollars and hours on operating tables before I can get my sex designation changed to male.

This summer, I took the decision to not come out as trans at the summer camp where I worked. I didn't necessarily present myself as female, but nor did I exactly present as male. I didn't think I would be safe if I was out. So I didn't use my name—I used a gender-neutral, different version of my birth name. Basically, everyone thought that I was a lesbian, which was... flattering.

One of my worst campers, in a fury, called me a "dyke" at one point.

I wanted to laugh because she got my identity wrong.

This is not to negate the pain that others can feel when that word is used to hurt, but for someone who has never identified as a lesbian in his life, I was happy to cradle that word in my arms and keep it safe from doing any real harm.

Frequently, I heard from my straight cisgender co-workers that they didn't know how we, the queerer people, handled the questions and insults.

Mostly, it's because we had to. Pretending to be a woman-ish queer-thing, coping with homesick loneliness, and surviving the wrong name and pronouns kept me busy enough.

Passing is a peculiar thing. You can feel the outline of the mask on your face and feel through your façade—gender as performance, as it were. I overheard campers arguing about my pronouns or gender presentation sometimes.

I had hairy legs and short hair but a high voice and was okay with nail polish. A distinctly non-heteronormative person. I even had a kid who

refused to trust me until I gave her a definite answer on my gender. It killed something inside me every time I had to answer, "I'm a girl."

If you've been reading my column, you know that I have never identified as female. It felt like I was blatantly lying to my campers, but I feared for my physical safety. Plus, why would I want to work in an extremely isolated, potentially hostile environment as an open transsexual?

By the end of the summer, maybe because the camp was so small, all of the staff knew that I was trans. Someone even asked me if it hurt to get all the wrong pronouns and name all the time. She said that if she identified as male and got female pronouns all the time, she would find it incredibly rude.

She's right, but I underwent that ordeal willingly. I wasn't confident enough in myself to come out as trans to every single camper. I'm still not. I shouldn't have to be.

I spent the summer purposely trying to look dyke-y. I wore cut-offs, band tees, and plaid. I had a jean vest that I sewed patches on—I pretended it was armor to keep me safe.

I was convinced that it made me look butch but my friend told me afterward that it was at least a size too big.

So I bound my chest, as always, and threw a t-shirt on whenever I had to swim. I wore swim trunks and hoped desperately that, if on my period, I wouldn't bleed.

That didn't happen, thank goodness. I'm four-and-a-half months on testosterone now and my period has finally stopped. The only people who perceive me as female now are my birth family—I'm still trying to challenge that.

I encounter kids from camp on the metro sometimes and it's awkward—I can never decide if I should tell them that I am not a girl. Do they need to know who I really am? Or should I just leave who I was in their memory—the butchy queer camp counselor with the hairy legs who wrote poetry and juggled?

Two weeks ago, I bumped into a camper at the psychologist's office. He called me my camp nickname and I said to him, "Remember all of those rumors at camp that I was a transsexual? Well, they're true."



THE PORN IDENTITY

HOW MODERN SMUT IS SHAPING OUR MINDS—AND BODIES



• MARIANA VORONOVSKA

Everyone needs to get off.

Whether it's once in a blue moon, or every hour on the hour, human beings have urges. For many, the best way to satisfy them is to watch pornography.

However fringe it may have seemed during the 20th century, in this digital era porn is recognized as a ubiquitous product being used by an unprecedented number of people globally.

The porn industry, largely based in the San Fernando Valley in California, is a force to be reckoned with, its tastemakers even swaying technological advances in other economies, tipping the next-generation movie technology face-off between HD-DVD and Blu-Ray in favour of the eventual victor in the earlier part of the 2000s.

Although most of us have stopped worrying about the possibility of eternal damnation when it comes to masturbating, there remain some troubling issues surrounding porn consumption—and, although they won't give you hairy palms or turn you blind, they can still have an effect on the bodies of viewers.

Constructing Desire

In today's increasingly sexual and secular society, porn has become a rather average and unsurprising commodity used by just about anybody. Like many pharmacy aisles filled with thousands of different hygiene products, today a few quick Google searches will turn up porn tailored to just about any taste.

There are definite positives to this, of course—some of these niches in the industry have specialized content that's tailored to women, feminists and other groups whose experiences or identities are marginalized by mainstream porn.

Still, despite the emergence of specialty vendors who market their porn as 'for women,' the reality is that the of majority of viewers are still subject to the influence of the mainstream pornographic industry, with all the harsh, unfriendly, demeaning tropes and ideals it maintains.

The porn industry exists because there is a huge demand for it. It logically follows that in order to satisfy the demands of consumers, a style of content that users want to watch—and pay for—stands to be created.

Thus, the desires of the viewers—in theory—are what supposedly fuel the whole business in the first place. But what of the actual content itself? Does seeing or being presented with a particular kind of experience on a regular basis influence what we ultimately feel is desirable?

Are some of our desires constructed or learned from porn? And if so, which parts, and to what extent? The answer to the former question is undoubtedly yes, but the latter is considerably more challenging to address.

Big Trouble Down Under

Porn has had several noticeable effects on general behavioural trends in the past, including the practice of breast enlargement and varying inclinations for what is considered appropriate hairiness in the pubic area.

A recent and perhaps more troubling example is from Australia, where labiaplasty has been becoming increasingly popular at a faster rate than other cosmetic surgeries.

The porn industry is not entirely at fault. The realities that led to many porn practices were born out of religious or moral Puritanism when it came to sexual attitudes. These led to the legislation censoring unrestricted soft porn magazines, which are al-

lowed to show frontal nudity but only "discrete genital detail."

Brad Boxall, an editor for Australian magazine *The Picture* for seven years and later publisher of *Australian Picture* and *People* magazines wrote on the topic for ABC in 2009. He stated that "the only acceptable vagina as far as the Classification Board is concerned is one that's neat and tidy in their eyes."

"They basically consider the labia minora too offensive."

This means that the labia minora cannot be protruding or at all visible, because this is considered 'obscene' and is therefore illegal.

To avoid being fined, magazines pervasively airbrush this part of the body out during the final stages of editing.

These discriminatory nuances eventually end up in the hands of consumers—who begin comparing themselves to an extremely narrow and unrepresentative standard.

It's a short leap from there to the plastic surgeon's office in the long, continuous chain of an idea—that female vaginas are somehow dangerous—becoming more and more concrete at every level, and ending with the literal cutting up of a woman's body.

Industry Insides

That's not the only violence that's being propagated, however.

Industry trends show that violent porn has become commonplace compared to a decade ago and that the average age for initial exposure to pornographic material is much younger than before—estimated to be about 11 years old for boys.

At such an age, it's inevitable that the content will create and influence desires. Gail Dines, who published *Pornland: How*

Porn Has Hijacked Our Sexuality last year, is vehemently opposed to the medium altogether.

"The more porn sexualizes violence against women, the more it normalizes and legitimizes sexually abusive behaviour. Men learn about sex from porn, and in porn nothing is too painful or degrading for women," she said in an interview with British newspaper *The Guardian*.

She claims that the porn industry's motives have become conflated with profit, and that directors have no qualms about going to extremes to garner attention.

But whether or not smut stands to become a public health issue is still to be determined. The degree to which images affect people's actual lives, however, is well known.

Lessons from experimental social psychology and advertising have shown that we prefer things that are familiar, that preferences are malleable like emotions, and that extreme idealizations—like those present in mass media—tend to affect our self-conceptions negatively, especially during puberty.

In some aspects, this seems to be another manifestation of the old chicken-or-the-egg problem, particularly when trying to tease apart the concepts of porn (fantasy) and sex (reality).

Although many are prone to think that our desires are idealized in porn, what seems to happen, in fact, is that porn becomes realized as we try to live out or imitate what we perceive as desirable.

A complete overhaul of such profitable field is unlikely, no matter how negatively it may be affecting its viewers and their partners. The best thing we can do is to keep the vulnerability and malleability of our desires in mind if we're going to be consumers—not products—of the porn industry.





FAILING THE TEST

ALISON BECHDEL AND THE CULT OF THE FILMIC MAN

• ALEX MANLEY

There's this recurring motif to conversations about films that they don't actually matter and what goes on in a movie isn't important—it's just a movie. It's not real life. If you don't like it, watch other movies. Vote with your dollars.

But what do you do when all the candidates take the same tack?

Unfortunately, that's more or less the case when it comes to women in film. It may be cliché by now in our post-equality society to point out the excesses of women being portrayed as sex objects à la Megan Fox working on her car in *Transformers*. Most movies, of course, don't stoop to that level of obvious objectification.

But, as with many other aspects of gender relations, though the nature of the interactions on the surface of the subject may have changed, the underlying dynamic—of inequality, of male dominance and female submission—remains firmly entrenched.

To those who would suggest that this is just paranoid feminism knee-jerking to the remains of an ethos that died out in the 20th century, I present a compelling counter-argu-

ment: the Bechdel Test.

The brainchild of American author Alison Bechdel, writer of *Fun Home* and *Dykes to Watch Out For*, the test asks of films a few simple questions. Are there at least two female characters? Do they talk to each other at any point on-screen? And do they talk about something other than a male character?

It's an ingenious test because, with three simple questions, you can deduce whether any attention has been paid to women by the filmmakers at all.

If there are fewer than two female characters, then the film doesn't interest itself with women, period.

If there are at least two female characters, but they never talk, then likely there isn't much by way of female dialogue, and the female characters serve primarily just to support, antagonize or flesh out the male characters.

And if there are two female characters, and they talk, but they only talk about a male character, then they are likely still incredibly two-dimensional, given their prizing of the male character to the exclusion of their own lives or interests.

Ultimately, if a movie fails the

Bechdel Test, it's a movie about men, where women are supporting characters at best. So how do Hollywood films fare?

Not well, unfortunately.

If we consider a pass on a test as a 60, Hollywood is still failing, by a fair margin. Currently, 52 per cent of films graded by users are passing the test. There's a degree of subjectivity to it, of course, and there's the caveat that things are improving. Female representation has spiked over the past decade. We're approaching a passing grade.

It's incredibly encouraging—and films like last year's *Bridesmaids* prove that movies can put women front and centre and succeed both critically and commercially.

Nevertheless, it would be disingenuous to suggest that, if movies here and there are giving women a fair shake, and 50-or-so per cent of movies pass a test that looks for the barest minimum of female representation, that they have achieved filmic equality.

At this year's Academy Awards, for instance, only two of the ten Best Film nominees passed the Bechdel Test. Meanwhile, after last year's first-ever Best Director win by a woman, the nominees were all men

this year.

Movies are still by men, about men, and as a result, largely for men. If we were to posit a gender-flipped version of the Bechdel Test—Are there at least two male characters, do they talk to each other, and do they talk about something other than a female? —you can bet more than 52 per cent would pass.

In fact, it would surprise me to find a single movie that wouldn't. Maybe a movie that takes place on a distant alien planet, with no genders—and no gender inequality. But until we live on a planet that looks more like that one, let's call a spade a spade: for all the accusations of Hollywood's liberal bias, it's still failing the test.

And let's be clear, a film can pass the Bechdel Test and still give women short shrift. But it's a good measuring stick. If 80 or 90 per cent of movies were passing, we at least would be seeing women in films—women's stories, women's struggles, women's narrative arcs, women's triumphs and failures.

Right now, more often than not, women in movie theatres are still spectators—whether they're in the seats or on the screen.



INVISIBLE ON CAMPUS

RAPE SURVIVORS AND SEXUAL ASSAULT CENTRES

• ELYSHA DEL GIUSTO-ENOS

Nearly a quarter of female university students will have experienced a sexual assault by the time they graduate.

That's a shocking, horrifying statistic and coupled with Concordia's culture of social awareness and responsibility, it makes the oversight of these statistics even more unsettling than when they're ignored in mainstream society.

"It's pretty clear that universities are a place where a lot of sketchy stuff goes down," said Maya Rolbin-Ghanie, a 2110 Centre for Gender Advocacy campaigner. "The anti-sexual assault campaigns that I've seen are generally pretty flawed and target the victim as someone who needs to change their behavior."

The 2110 has been working since the fall of 2011 to found a sexual assault centre on campus. The university's position is that there aren't enough resources for it and that health services offers sufficient aid to assault survivors.

"We don't have one because if someone comes in after being sexually assaulted then we refer [them elsewhere]," said Julie Gagné, the

manager of Clinical Services at Concordia. "We would never turn someone away, but by law it has to be done at certain places so the [perpetrator] can't deny it in court."

If they want the rape exam, the university sends students to the CLSC Faubourg or Montreal General Hospital, where they can also book a counseling appointment—but due to demand, they could wait over a month to speak to someone.

For advocates of a sexual assault centre on campus, health services just isn't specialized enough to address the needs of survivors in a timely and sensitive way.

"An actual sexual assault centre with people trained to deal with sexual assault, non-consensual sex—and that would cover things like rape kits—[is needed]," said Rolbin-Ghanie. "But also to help people navigate the legal system and their legal options on top of medical ones."

Rolbin-Ghanie added that advocacy is another reason to have a specialized centre, because the stigma surrounding assaults keeps victims invisible. The idea that the survivors brought the assault on

themselves is a prominent part of most anti-assault campaigns.

The status of this misconception became obvious last year when a Toronto police officer giving a campus safety information session said that if women wanted to stay safe "they should avoid dressing like sluts."

This statement is seen as being responsible for the controversial "slut walk" demonstrations that sprung up across North America following his remarks.

This same caricature of sexual assault is echoed at Concordia. The university's security webpage advises that, to prevent assaults, women should avoid dimly lit areas and not consume alcohol to the point that they can't "react quickly to any situation."

"They address people that might be assaulted but they don't address people who assault," Rolbin-Ghanie said. "A society where that is the primary message in the campaigns is just an indication that we still have values that are kind of sick."

According to a Canadian study, one in five male college students surveyed said that forced intercourse was alright "if he spent

money on her," "if he is stoned or drunk," or "if they had been dating for a long time."

Concordia's approach to outsourcing sexual assault cases is reinforced by the idea that a special centre for survivors on campus would be counterproductive.

"Most of the time people would not join a group in their own environment," Gagné said, "because they would see people they see everyday within the building. Usually support groups are on the outside so people don't know each other."

The 2110 has the goal of collecting 5,000 signatures for their cause to both raise the profile of the issue and put pressure on the administration. On March 5, the signature-collecting campaign was taken to the Hall Building and volunteers talked to several hundred students.

"The vast majority of people are willing to sign [the petition]," Rolbin-Ghanie said. "And most students are quite shocked that there's not a sexual assault centre, most of them just assume there is."

—with files from Catlin Spencer

A SELECTION OF POEMS

BY ALI PINKNEY

JEAN JACKET BOY

Most nights.

I alternate between wanting you to whisper the lyrics of *Blue Moon* in my ear, or to talk about the pornos we could film together.

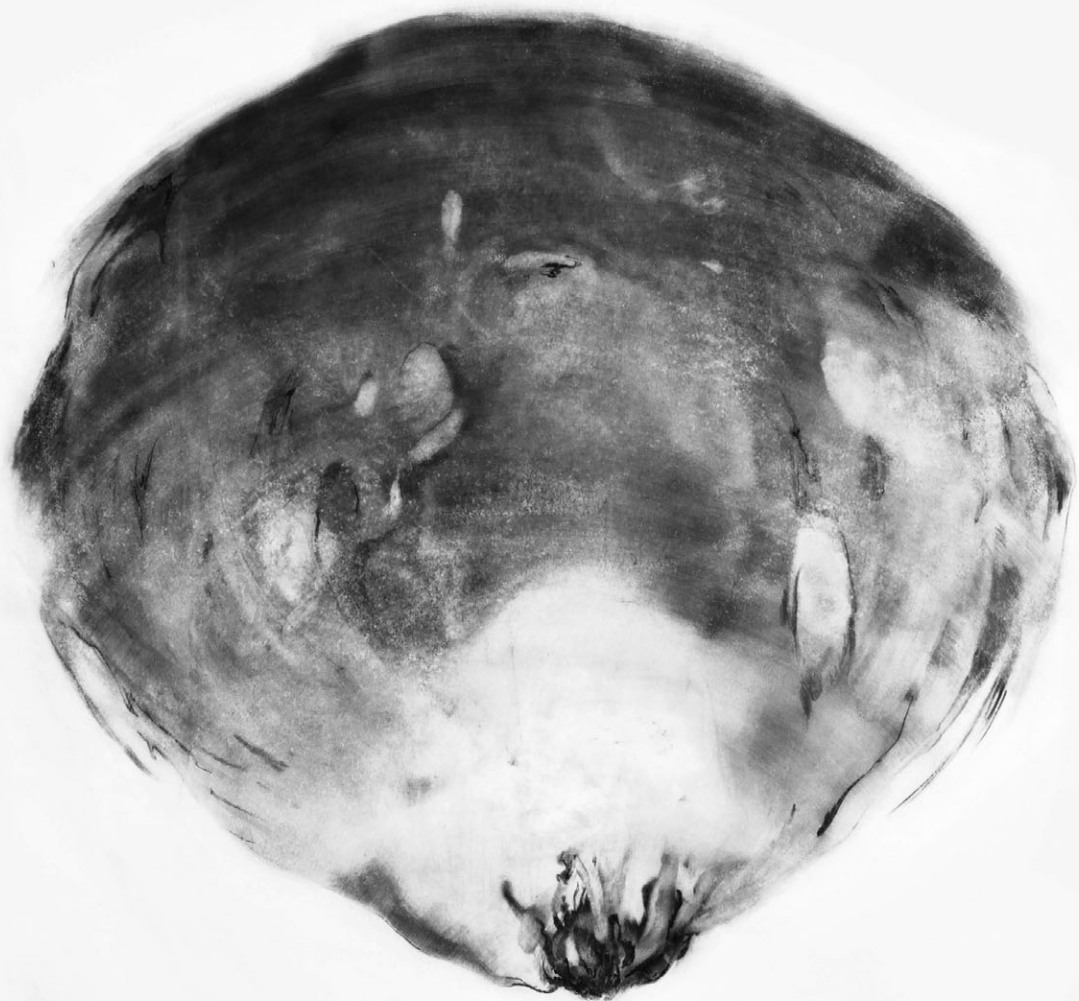
Chew up my food for me, spit it in my mouth.

THE MOST CHARMING BOY IN THE WORLD

most girls, i don't know if you know this,
don't love sex.
they like it—
but they don't love it.
other girls don't love sex as much as you do.
do you know why you're so fun to have sex with?
it's because you love it so much.

THE MOST CHARMING BOY IN THE WORLD, PT.2

don't worry, honey,
to me
it's the same as if
i ejaculated into
a Kleenex,
or something.



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STINGERS STUTTER ON BIG STAGE

First Quarter Decides National Fate For Concordia

• DAVID MURPHY

Game One: Agony

STINGERS: 82

X-MEN: 98

Concordia's national championship dreams were crushed minutes into the CIS men's basketball quarter finals as the St. Francis Xavier X-Men, ranked sixth in the tournament, outplayed the Stingers, ranked third, right from the tip-off.

The game finished 98-82 at the Halifax Metro Centre in Nova Scotia on Friday.

Concordia just couldn't keep hold of the ball and were cold when shooting it, while X-Men MVP guard Terry Thomas took advantage of their misplays and scored a game-high 39 points.

"He's only second year, but he's a fantastic athlete," said coach John Dore of Thomas' play.

The Stingers were outrun and outgunned early in the game as St. Francis Xavier screamed to a 17-point lead after the first. The tone

was set by Concordia coming out flat on offense and a failing to keep up to the X-Men's tempo.

"We didn't stop them in the first five minutes, after that we outscored them," said Dore. "I think we were outworked, they were faster up and down the court, they were more intense and we were outplayed."

"When you give up 23 points in three minutes, it's hard to come back from that."

St. Francis Xavier used their two all-stars, guard Terry Thomas and forward Jeremy Dunn, to send a message to the Stingers with two massive dunks in the first and second quarter.

The Stingers did muster a half-hearted comeback late in the first but started the second like they did in the previous quarter, by turning over the ball and missing shots early and often.

The lead was cut slightly to 18 going into recess and slimmed even more early in the third to a 15-point deficit, but the same themes came to haunt the Stingers during the quarter and the X-men

went back up by 21.

Stingers James Clark and Zach Brisebois, who put up 10 and 12 points respectively, tried to force a comeback in the third but Terry put a stop to that, forcing more turnovers and hitting almost every shot attempted.

Game Two: Better, But Not Best

STINGERS: 84

RAMS: 80

Ryerson University kicked the Concordia Stingers out of the consolation competition Saturday after the St. Francis Xavier beating, ultimately ending an extraordinary season with a disappointing tournament.

The Stingers led for most of the game, but lost concentration in the third quarter and couldn't keep up with the Rams, ending in an 84-80 defeat.

"It was a disappointing end to a good season, not a great season," said coach John Dore after the game. "All the mistakes we've made during the year manifested themselves today."

"We were embarrassed yesterday, today was more about pride than anything else," he said.

The Stingers restored that pride early on, emulating the X-Men's start against them the day before by rushing to a 13-2 start.

Concordia were hitting their shots at the beginning, another thing they were well short of against the X-Men. And when Evens Laroche wasn't hitting threes, James Clarke was there to rebound hard and put it away.

But the Rams woke up halfway through the first, and decided to get to work.

Ryerson's power forward Bjorn Michaelsen set the team alight with strong drives down low and consistent shooting from the outside, sending the Rams on a 15-5 run.

Going into the second quarter with an uncomfortable four-point lead, the pressure from Ryerson didn't stop. The Stingers started turning the ball over, and the Rams started running at Concordia, coming even to them at one point in the quarter.

Strong play in the paint, however, kept Concordia in the game and at the break they held the four-point lead.

That lead was kept for the majority of the third quarter, but with four minutes left to go the Rams took advantage of the Stingers' lackluster play. They went on a 14-0 run.

Ryerson even had a five-point trip down the quarter when Luke Staniscia of the Rams laid a basket up, but got a foul on the play. He missed, but the rebound went to Ryerson, and guard Ola Adegboruwa did the same thing as Staniscia in getting the foul and going to the line—but he sunk the extra point.

"We have lapses, we don't raise our level of intensity, we just keep going up and down," said forward James Clark, the Stingers' game MVP with 22 points.

In the final quarter both teams came out hard but defensive lapses killed the Stingers.

"Their guard penetration hurt us," said Dore, adding that it was the same problems yesterday, and



(From left to right) X-Men surround a Stingers guard, Evens Laroche goes up hard for a layup, Morgan Tajfel rushes down the court on a fast-break.

PHOTOS NICK PEARCE



lTina Mpondani goes up for a field

PHOTO JOSH SCHAEFER

throughout the year, that cost them the game on Saturday.

Ultimately Michaelson, who ended up with 25 points, and Aaron Best were an unstoppable force for the Rams.

Reflections

Although Coach Dore admits the team was undone by the energetic display of St. Francis Xavier the first day of the tournament, he still would have gone in with the same strategy.

“I think we were well prepared going in,” he said. “We just have to be able to compete, there’s nothing else to do differently but to compete, and we just didn’t do it.”

The team didn’t live up to its standards, but Dore said glowing things about his “family” of players’ performance this past year.

“We’ve been together six to seven days a week since August. We travel together, eat together, we’re like a family,” said Dore. “They have to study too—it’s not an easy going for them.”

Now the focus is on the off-season and Dore said he’s already been scouting for new talent—even

though a significant amount of the team, 11 of 13 players, will be returning for next year.

The two graduating players are Deecee Krah and James Clark.

“[It’s] never a good feeling to lose,” said Clark, who’s graduating with a degree in sociology. “Personally I’m happy I ended my career on a high, but collectively the way we played, I’m disappointed.”

Clark, however, didn’t have to suffer alone. He was amongst a large entourage of friends and family that travelled down to voice their Stingers’ spirit. Media communications officer Catherine Grace said the support was exceptional.

“They had drums, thunder sticks and everything. We called them the best sixth man in Halifax,” she said of the approximately 45 people that travelled on a bus from Montreal to Halifax.

“They never stopped, no matter what. They were in it with all their hearts—it was fun, a lot of team spirit was seen.”

— with files from
Catherine Grace

Women Season Ends in Semi-Finals

• ANDREW MAGGIO

STINGERS: 60

COUGARS: 73

The Concordia Stingers women’s basketball team was unable to pull off an upset against the number-one seed Regina Cougars and fell 73-60 in the semi-final game of the Canadian Interuniversity Sport Western Regionals in Saskatoon Friday night.

The loss signals an end to a promising, yet disappointing season.

“We were nervous, and it showed early,” said Stingers head coach Keith Pruden on the CIS website. “Credit Regina, they are a very good team and played well, we had a lot of good looks but we just couldn’t capitalize. I was very happy with the effort we put in tonight.”

Stingers MVP Kaylah Barrett had a huge night, scoring 34 points while adding nine rebounds, accounting for more than half the team’s scoring. Her

excellent performance was not enough to carry the Stingers past outstanding play from the Regina squad, however, or match the powerful trio of Joanna Zalesiak, Michelle Clark and Lindsey Ledingham.

Anne-Marie Prophete was the only other Stinger to crack double-digits in scoring, putting up 11 points coming off the bench.

“Once we found out we were playing the number one ranked team in the country, Regina, we knew we had our work cut out for us,” said Barrett, who was also named the Quebec Conference’s season MVP.

“Both teams played hard but Regina came out with the win. We kept the first place team to 13 points, which is amazing for a team that was not ranked. We put up a good effort and can only grow from this experience.”

The Cougars got out to a 16-8 lead by the end of the first quarter and never looked back as the Stingers struggled to keep up, shooting only 26 per cent from

the floor and only 18 per cent from three-point range.

The Stingers scored 23 points in the fourth quarter in an effort to mount a comeback, but it was too little, too late, as Regina held on to move to the regional finals against Brock University on Saturday night.

Despite the early exit, the Stingers are optimistic looking to the future.

“These regional’s were a good experience for the Stingers, we have to keep in mind that we are a young team overall,” said veteran forward Andreanne Gregoire Boudreau. “This tournament gave the girls a taste of what is expected out of us to succeed beyond the RSEQ.”

“Regional’s were quite the experience, especially going in as the underdogs against the number one ranked team,” said guard Ashley Clarke. “This may be the end for this year but we now know what to work on over the summer and how much work needs to be put in order to win a championship.”



PHOTOS AMANDA LAPRADE

mand to watch live games will increase.

“I hope that in 10 years there are more opportunities for women’s players to compete in professional and in a semi-pro environments within Canada,” she said, adding it would provide young girls role models to look up to and try to emulate.

According to Montopoli, however, the CSA’s statistics already show that young girls and women are increasingly getting into soccer.

Approximately 35,000 women are registered in a soccer league in Canada, making up 42 per cent of all registered members, men or women, in Canada.

But Concordia coach Sanchez is skeptical as to whether there’ll be more opportunities on the horizon for these upcoming women to get paid to play at the domestic level.

“I don’t know if that will ever be the case. A league like that would

have to be financially viable, and I don’t see any indication that it would be,” said Sanchez.

Unfortunately, he’s got a point. The WPS, which counts five teams between New York City, Boston, Philadelphia and Atlanta, suspended its 2012 season this past January due to internal legal disputes, a reality that’s put arguably the biggest Canadian soccer star, Christine Sinclair, out of a job.

Uneven Playing Field

Even with financial and marketing restrictions, women are still facing an uphill battle to get people to notice the game. Up until last year, the Canadian women’s national team was in a legal spat with the CSA over pay compensation compared to the men’s team, whose pay would not be divulged.

And more gender inequalities in the game are seen on a much higher level. One only has to look

at the Fédération Internationale de Football Association, soccer’s top governing body, and their executive board—25 members, all of whom are men.

Men are also dominating coaching positions, according to Eskenazi. Although she thinks it’s not necessarily a bad thing that men coach women, she’d like to see more women coaching, too.

“Unfortunately there is still a lack of qualified women leading the development of the game.”

“There still aren’t enough women who want to commit to making a transition from playing to coaching once they decide to hang up their boots,” said Eskenazi, who doubles up as an assistant coach for Concordia’s women’s team.

The CSA are coming to the rescue when it comes to a lot of these problems, however. It has a mandate to have at least three women on its board of directors. It’s bring-

ing women’s games to smaller towns in Canada, like the up-and-coming friendly match against China in Moncton, NB to expose more people to the game.

They’ve also won the bid for the 2015 Women’s World Cup—something Montopoli thinks is going to give Canadian women’s soccer a bigger boost.

“In 2015, it will be the largest women’s event of any kind,” he said. “To have that in our country, with everyone participating, the game can’t help but grow.”

The future is largely unwritten for women trying to break into a male-dominated domestic league scene, but if Canada’s positive numbers have any indication, there’s no telling what will happen a decade from now.

“I never thought, 10 years ago, that we’d have 20 or 30,000 people in the stands,” said Sanchez. “Maybe we’ll get there eventually.”

25,427

people came to the last Women’s Olympic Qualifiers, a record

35,000

women are registered in a soccer league in Canada, making up

42

per cent of all registered members

PHOTOS AMANDA LAPRADE

(Another) TWO MILLION DOLLAR STORY

GRAPHIC PAKU DAUST CLOUTIER

Fine From Ministry Must Be Paid By The Board

• LAURA BEESTON

It's extremely important that everyone in the Concordia community know that the incompetence of our Board of Governors, the highest body in power at our school, has screwed students and faculty over once again, this time to the tune of two million dollars.

Well, the \$2 million actually came from the provincial government on Friday, handed down in fine form by the embattled Minister of Education Line Beauchamp because our off-camera upper ranks have been running the university "like any other business" and doling out too many golden parachutes and handshakes.

But you knew our BoG was bad. We've been telling you this for years. There's even a book that was published in 2001 called *Concordia, Inc.* that pretty much spelt it out for everyone.

Concordia being called out, as many have noted, has been a long time coming.

So, in the wake of our embarrassing crisis of governance and notorious "culture of contempt" thrust into the glaring spotlight of national attention once more, the question on everyone's mind is: why now?

It was December, 2010 that Judith Woodsworth's ultimate \$970,885.90-for-seven-months-of-work departure broke the proverbial camel's back, so why weren't we fined then?

Where was the Ministry for former president Claude Lajeunesse's \$1.3 million parting package, or the exodus of big admin players Michael Di Grappa (enjoy him, McGill) and Kathy Assayag?

What about the rest of the \$10

million that walked out the door over the last decade?

Perhaps most critically, where has the Ministry been as Concordia University—along with all the other universities in this province—began building this administrative army of bad decision-makers to begin with?

It's worth noting that, currently, there are 28 members of Concordia University's bloated bureaucracy netting \$7 million a year total in salaries and lavish perks. At this juncture, it needs to be said: this is an insane per annum for people whose relative competence has been proven questionable at best, and megalomaniacal at worst.

Our administrative money bleed also sees sitting-Interim President Frederick Lowy—whose job, as OpenFile Montreal described perfectly, is to "keep his head down and maintain order until a new president is found"—earning a staggering \$350,000 a year on top of a \$16,000+ expense account and \$1.4 million interest-free loan.

This is all still public money.

Don't get me wrong, Lowy is a very pleasant 78-year-old man, but no one honestly gets the impression he's earning his keep, let alone working to better our corrupted system.

And if \$2 million is what Beauchamp thinks will do the trick, well, she's dreaming.

While there's some twisted justice that the total lack of respect and responsibility from our BoG is being called out in public, we need to ask how and why the Ministry of Education—also paid for through public funds—allowed our internal structures of governance to become this way.

Clearly, their bureaucracy has

also failed in its duties over the last decade as well.

What else is strange about this whole thing is the \$2 million. Why such an arbitrary number? Isn't there perhaps a more constructive way to make an example of our university, such as direct oversight?

If they don't want universities run "like any other business" how do they believe it ought to be run? Where are the directives, and what do these so-called "strategic targets" Beauchamp speaks of in her upcoming budget actually look like?

Your guess is as good as mine.

It's sad, but at this point Concordia would probably be willing to take the freaking Liberal party's advice on how to run things in Montreal—the BoG clearly requires that much direction upstairs, judging by their actions over the last decade.

But it's not like the decisions of the people running this place weren't a cry for help, either: we hired a costly External Governance Review Committee to (correctly) diagnose our issues, for example, and then let the Board selectively administer the changes they saw fit and ignore the rest—solving nothing and allowing those in power to continue their business-as-usual.

A year before, they also wrongly fired, went to court, and had to re-hire two internal auditors who lifted the lid off of Woodsworth's monetary misspendings—which many claim are the reason she was expensively fired in the first place.

After quietly giving them a severance package, the Board is currently making a sweet contract with new external auditors to review the millions of dollars golden-parachuting out our door.

Mismanagement, non-disclo-

sure and disorganization have plagued our university for a decade and will continue if the power structure does not dramatically change.

Does Beauchamp actually think the \$2 million will hurt a board of multi-millionaire captains of industry that are finally on the dying days of their time here? (Remember, the Board decided they would be "phased-out" instead of outright fired, despite having broken their own bylaws and standing regulations.)

These people are untouchable; they don't give interviews or explanations for their actions and they certainly don't seem to give a damn about what's best for Concordia.

This \$2 million is a slap on the wrist. Money won't make any meaningful difference, and the Board and Ministry know it.

Montreal media blogger and *The Gazette* editor Steve Faguy also made an interesting argument on Twitter following the \$2 million announcement that Beauchamp's decision actually legitimizes the increasingly-bitter fight of students against the impending tuition fee hikes.

Students have been arguing, lobbying and mobilizing—for years—to change the broken internal education system in Quebec.

That the two levels of school and provincial government have the audacity to tell us to "pay our fair share" while they do not earn or spend from the public purse wisely is arrogance to the first degree, and yet the broken bureaucracy angle of this tuition debate is largely missing from the mainstream media's grand narratives of the student movement's grievances.

The Gazette actually thought a

badly-organized Concordia Student Union General Assembly was the bigger story last week, as evidenced by their Saturday editorial.

But the reason all this should make you angry, dear student or faculty, is because *you* are the one who will likely be paying for the Ministry's fine.

If Beauchamp or the Ministry wants to make one iota of a difference at Concordia by making us an example, and really stick it to the bad decisions being made, punishing students and taxpayers is the worst way to do it.

Our administration and Board of Governors are undeniably the ones that screwed up over the last few years, so they should be the ones held responsible for their own blatant mismanagement.

The rest of the Concordia community had zero influence or control over their decisions, and we have already paid for their mistakes and contempt for far too long.

If you feel passionate or disempowered, call on our administration and the Ministry of Education to ensure that it's not us who take another hit and that the \$2 million be paid for by the Board and Concordia administration.

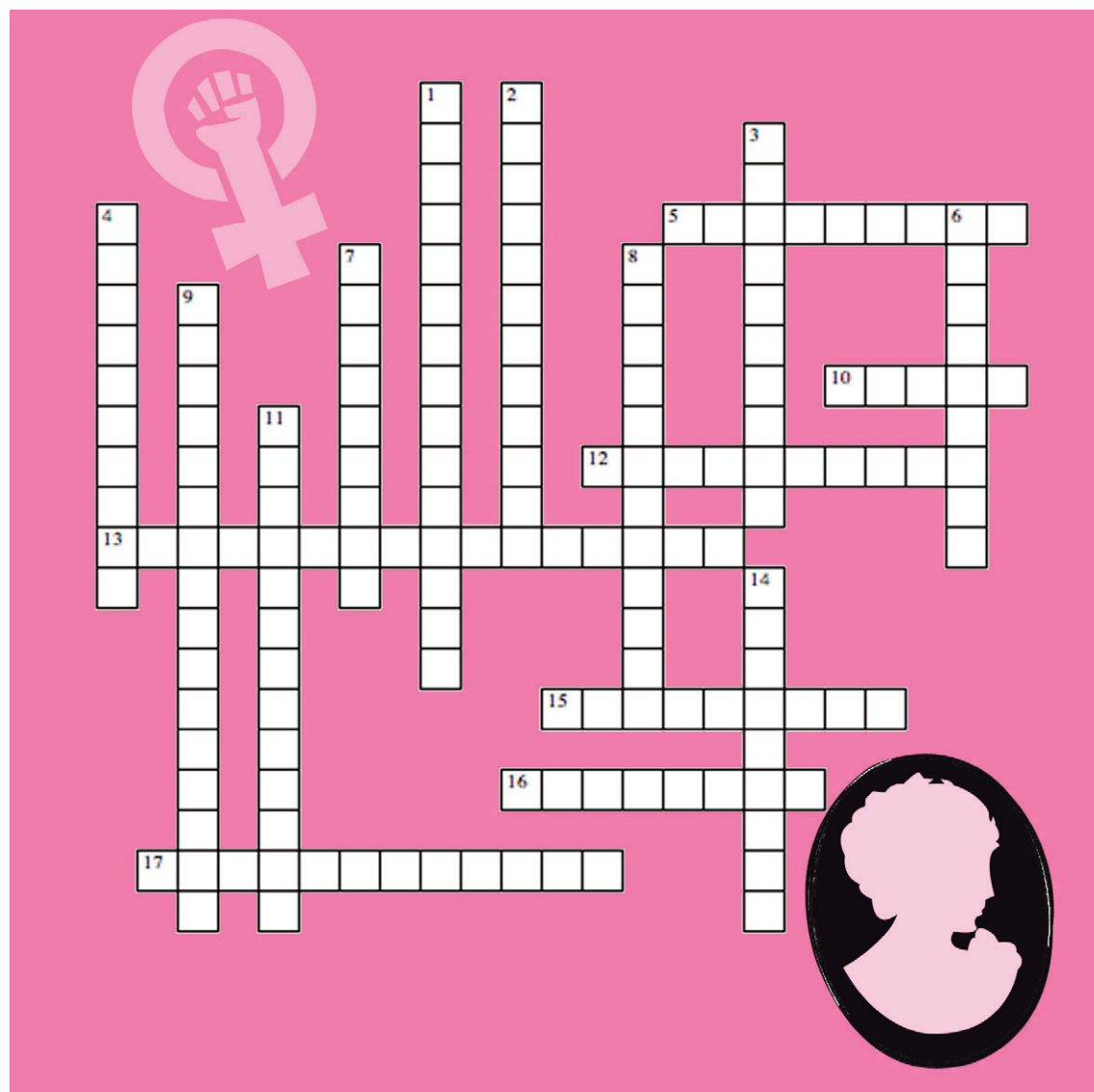
Hell, demand that their perks be automatically pulled from next year's budget. And tell them to finally fire the BoG Chair Peter Kruyt, whose name at this point is synonymous with "contempt" anyways.

The Board can be reached through danielle.tessier@concordia.ca and the Ministry's regional Montreal office is 514-873-0620.

It's someone else's turn to take a cut at Concordia.

Anything else would be criminal.

International Women's Day



BY CHRISTOPHER TAN

ACROSS

5. The guide for Lewis and Clark, this Native-American woman is immortalized on the U.S. dollar coin (Yes, those exist).

10. Though the Chinese warrior in this Disney film is based on the life of a real woman who took her father's place in the army, I doubt there were any wisecracking dragons involved.

12. Though she was not the first woman to win a Nobel Prize, this chemist was the first person to win two Nobel prizes—one in chemistry and the other in physics. (2 words)

13. Books like *Jane Eyre* and *Wuthering Heights* were first published under male pseudonyms because of the inequality that this trio of writers faced from the literary community at the time. (3 words)

15. This civil rights hero was arrested for not giving up her seat to a white passenger—a crime, in her day. (2 words)

16. These 1920s girls weren't afraid to do what they pleased, even when it challenged what was socially and sexually acceptable at the time.

17. This woman was the first deaf and blind person to ever earn a Bachelor of Arts degree. (2 words)

DOWN

1. Originating in WWII propaganda, this hardworking woman went on to become a symbol for feminism and female economic power. You go, girl. (3 words)

2. This woman made Indian history in 1980 when she became the first to be elected prime minister. Though they share the same surname, she has no relation to the Mahatma. (2 words)

3. This French designer is the creator of one of the most prominent luxury brands on the planet. In 2010, it netted nearly €2 billion in revenue. (2 words)

4. From Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*, this character is one of his most developed. She both exemplifies and challenges antifeminist traditions. (3 words)

6. Queen of England in the Middle Ages, this daughter of Henry VIII never took a husband, famously claiming that she was married to England.

7. This English author recently donated \$160 million to charity—not bad consid-

ering that early on in her career, her publisher told her that writing children's books didn't pay well and she should get a day job. (3 words)

8. The name for these late-19th- and early-20th-century women comes not from the woes of inequality, but from the word 'vote' in Latin.

9. The first female prime minister of England, Meryl Streep's portrayal of this woman in *The Iron Lady* earned her an Oscar a few weeks ago. (2 words)

11. The staggering amount of sexism found throughout art history drives these activists, well, ape-shit. (2 words)

14. Though this tomb raider has always been a strong female lead, it's nice to see that her latest incarnation finally reflects this—rather than having her depicted once again as having big guns and even bigger boobs, but an eternally-too-small tank top. (2 words)



Searching for a Free Spot

Where the hell do I have sex with my girlfriend? Both of us live at home. My parents don't know I'm gay and her family situation is complicated. We don't drive, so cars are out. We've had some sex in private places in public, but it's often really risky. And winter is cold in Montreal!

—Vagina Vagrant

Living at home can definitely create some difficult situations when it comes to sex and that need for privacy probably isn't going to go away anytime soon.

My first thought when I read this was that there are actually a lot of "private" public places at Concordia. You're probably at least a little tired of taking a risk every time you have sex, but desperate times call for desperate measures...

Places some readers and I recommend include upper-floor washrooms in the EV, MB and Library Buildings, or SP and CJ at Loyola.

They're less likely to be in use, and are usually cleaner since they're used less. Some of them are even fully lockable from the inside without a key.

Upper stairwells in these buildings are also great since most of them have pretty reliable elevator service, leaving the stairs rarely used and easy to tell when someone is coming up or down them because of echoing.

And you just can't beat the view from the 11th floor of the EV emergency stairwell!

There are also several unlocked boardrooms on one of the upper levels of the MB building—I haven't scouted the spots, but I've been told that they're between the 11th-13th floors (they might be locked soon after this goes to print though).

If you're more of a Loyola dweller, the "secret" tunnel between CJ and SP is guaranteed to be deserted most days after 7:00 p.m. You'll find it near the CJ Building exit closest to the SP Building.

I also want to mention that I looked into potential consequences, and while I'm still awaiting more info (check out next week's S&P!) the general response was that if security finds students engaging in sex-

ual activity on campus their protocol is to file a statement and submit it to the Office of Rights and Responsibilities.

Good news: there's nothing currently stated in the Code of Conduct about consensual sexual activity on campus, but I'm going to go ahead and say that stumbling upon people having sex can be just as awkward as getting caught, so it wouldn't surprise me if all parties just want to move on with their day.

And if not, you could always try talking your way out of it—or running!

Aside from campus, consider a bad movie. If you can pick one that's on the verge of being out of theatres and was never really in high demand to begin with, even better. It's also been a little while since you sent this question, and the weather is warming up so if you have summer spots you might be good to head to them already.

If you really don't want to get public, try sneaking around at home if there are times where all family members are out working or in school. Maybe add a lock to your bedroom door, if you don't already have one, for extra peace of mind. If this makes you especially nervous as a permanent solution, maybe consider this option only for special occasions if you really want to do it on a bed.

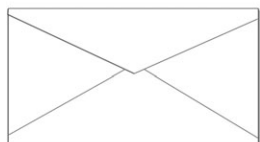
You can also consider a cheap hotel for special occasions. The cheapest in Montreal are around \$50 a night. While it sucks because it comes at a cost, it could be an option for when you really need a nice private night.

I think your situation is one that a lot of people can relate to, and I wish I had more helpful advice, but unfortunately this is a problem that can't be fully solved until one or both of you are able to move out, so you may just need to search for a situation you can both accept in the meantime.

Good luck!

—Melissa Fuller

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



LETTERS@THELINKNEWSPAPER.CA

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Editors Note: Due to budgetary constraints, all CSU endorsement letters will be published online only as of next week.

All of A Better Concordia

I'm writing to say that *A Better Concordia* is the most suited team to represent the Concordia Student Union next year.

I have had a chance to get to know every single individual person on *A Better Concordia* and I can tell you with great confidence that all of them are fantastic individuals.

They are hard-working and 100 per cent dedicated to giving everything they have to represent the values and opinions of the Concordia student body. They all have a lot of experience in representing students and all have a clear and concise plan for what they want to do next year to make sure that the students see a—n improved Concordia.

They are open-minded and willing to listen to what the students of Concordia have to say. *A Better Concordia* is the best option for Concordia.

—Nick Santella
BSc Economics

Museb for Internal

I fully endorse Museb Abu-Thuraia for VP Internal and Clubs. Museb possess great communication skills, has extensive experience working with individuals and groups of individuals and has served the Concordia community for some time.

If you want the diversity and interest of the Concordia community to be represented, vote Museb Abu Thuraia for VP Internal and Clubs.

—Annum Khokhar
BA Political Science and Religion

From an Ex-Politico

Museb Abu-Thuraia is one of the kindest, most devoted and determined people that I have ever met. I have known Museb for over five years now and can say with great confidence that he is a very hard-working person.

He is always engaging and involved in several activities, everything from sports to joining the Muslim Student Association at Concordia University to eventually becoming its president.

Having been involved in the MSA myself, it is through my experiences there that I can confirm that Museb clearly has a social commit-

ment to his fellow colleagues. He was always the first one to offer his help whenever we encountered a problem in the association and possesses excellent communication skills.

Museb more than fulfills the characteristics that an ideal Concordia Student Union executive should possess. He is a person who is highly reliable, who has a deep sense of self and of his own character. He is a person I trust completely.

I believe that he will be a tremendous asset to our CSU and I recommend him to you in full confidence.

—Hassan Abdullahi
Former CSU councillor

Another for Museb

I endorse Museb Abu-Thuraia as a qualifying candidate for the VP Internal and Clubs position. Being the founder and director of the Muslim Youth Soccer League, Mr. Abu-Thuraia has demonstrated leadership skills and exemplified himself as a mentor.

Having known him for more than four years, and being his executive assistant in MYSL, I can attest that he has proven to be a competent and a dedicated leader whose proficiency and initiative serve the youth and the community.

I highly recommend Museb Abu-Thuraia's candidacy for VP Internal and Clubs for he has the desired experience and required credentials.

—Ohoud Alsaieq
BSc Engineering & Computer Science

Iain for Sustainability

My name is Vivien Leung and I am the outreach coordinator of the 2012 Art Matters festival. This letter endorses Iain Meyer-Macaulay who is running for VP Sustainability in the upcoming Concordia Student Union elections. Iain volunteered for two festival events this year in which he was helpful and particularly involved.

He is also a very active and vocal participant at the Fine Arts Student Alliance council, where he represents *Interfold* magazine. From my perspective, Iain has demonstrated a keen interest in staying in contact with goings-on in the student community.

—Vivien Leung
BA Design Arts

Don't Forget Le Frigo

Like many Concordia fee levy groups, Le Frigo Vert is an important part of our campus community. They provide affordable and unique products that enhance the quality and diversity of food and health options for all Concordia students.

In this day and age of Chartwells and Tim Horton's, it is important for Concordia to support the campus community services that offer

healthier and more sustainable products, often at a lower cost.

Concordia's community is unique, in that it is graced with many amazing fee levy groups. These groups provide important services to students and their mandates aim to fight against injustice, poverty and systemic social issues.

Groups like Le Frigo Vert invigorate our environment by creating an alternative to fast-food chains and overpriced "green" products. This, in turn, contributes to the furthering of awareness, knowledge and opportunity to spread more socially conscious models in our campus and in our society.

Oftentimes, the hard work of these groups is overlooked, even while their services are offered at a fraction of the actual cost.

Considering this, I encourage all Concordia students to vote yes to Le Frigo Vert's referendum question in the upcoming election on March 20, 21 and 22.

Voting yes to Le Frigo Vert means having an accessible food co-op on campus (free coffee for strikers!) but it also means supporting a group that works hard to make Concordia a better place for all of us.

—CUTV Team

What's Up With the Posters, ABC?

I have been following the Concordia Student Union elections closely over the last few days and have noticed a few things.

I am a third-year student and have seen a few CSU campaigns in my time at Concordia, and this year's strikes me as a bit strange. Though I am not directly involved in student politics, I have always tried to keep informed about what is happening on campus.

I know that teams are allowed to begin campaigning midnight on Monday, and both teams have always been there, ready to put up their posters.

Though I have heard that the rules changed a bit with regards to "Poster Night," I still find it odd that one of the teams, *A Better Concordia*, did not have any posters up until Thursday night. I honestly didn't see them until I got to school on Friday.

I am simply wondering why the delay, since I would assume campaigning had been prepared for weeks before the actual official starting date.

How can a team of executives be trusted to manage tens of thousands of dollars of student money that is the CSU budget without being able to plan in advance of deadlines?

To me, this shows a lack of preparation.

In the student papers, *A Better Concordia's* Schubert Laforest commented on the fact that they were running an "incremental" campaign, implying the campaign

will build upon something, and was wondering what exactly this meant, seeing as there has not exactly been a campaign to this point.

What exactly was being built upon?

Maybe there are good reasons for this and I am simply asking for a bit of clarification.

Either way, as a student, this worries me a bit and calls into question the team's ability to manage the CSU. The reason I would like these specific answers from *A Better Concordia* is that I think all students should be thinking critically about the elections and carefully examining all actions of both teams.

This transparency and further honesty is something that I expect from both teams, and would like to see more of throughout this CSU elections campaign in general.

—David Roaldi
BA Philosophy

Hotchkiss for President

I am writing to lend my most heartfelt support to Melanie Hotchkiss in her epic quest to become the next Concordia Student Union president. I had the honor of meeting Melanie a couple years ago on Arts and Science Federation of Associations Council where she taught me much of what I know today about the world of student politics.

Melanie is an incredibly thorough, professional and hardworking person with a strong, innate sense of integrity. Her working knowledge of the law was crucial to the Math and Statistics Students' Association when we had it accredited by the government.

Although Melanie and I are friends, she has never missed out on an opportunity to put me in my place when we sat together on CSU Council, and I am grateful to her for that. Her many years of experience will serve her well as president of the CSU.

—Bruno Joyal
Former CSU councillor

Strike Three

In order to empower students to organize Special General Meetings without having to rely on executives or administration, as of March 1, 2012, the Concordia Student Union was forced to change quorum from 2.5 per cent to 450 students (effectually, at this time, 1.25 per cent).

While changing quorum was previously against the bylaws, this was altered during the November referendum—finally allowing for quick and easy political decisions to be made here at Concordia University. Strike one.

Due to our "uniquely" apathetic student body, only three rooms could be booked between 3:00 p.m. and 6:00 p.m. on March 7.

Usually votes span over the course of three days, yet for some-

thing so high-priority it became apparent that we, the student body, needed to act with approximation and immediacy.

Rather than combating student apathy—much like the move to halve quorum—the CSU hurriedly executed the best plan they could come up with: four rooms bridged by shoddy technology, which unexpectedly presented more difficulties than solutions. Strike two.

So the overflow was guided to assemble in the library, where AJ West—who looks to ensure students' "integrity and accountability"—repeated how "surprised" he was at the turnout.

Where'd the apathy go all of a sudden?

In total, 2,128 people were able to register to vote, though only 1,726 placards were counted. (That leaves nearly 400 votes unresolved.) Some are left wondering why, others followed VP External Chad Walcott's directive to "shut up."

Strike three?

Although concern was expressed for part-time students—students still obliged to attend class—these inconveniences were apologized for and put aside.

Thankfully, those who missed out on the presentation are invited to read all about it in Concordia media—such as *The Link*, a publication that has no qualms with being subsidized through student tuition.

Though readers may feel misled at times, caught between "op-ed" and "news-news," Editor-in-Chief Laura Beeston warns on Twitter, "Well, if you don't like reading [*The Link*]... there are plenty of options out there." Home run!

Going on strike from March 15 to March 22 eats into the CSU elections campaign—but who cares. Certainly not me, the student body I belong to, nor those elected to represent us.

—Jack Allen
BA Honours English & Creative Writing

Chuck for Academic

Consider this letter to be my official endorsement of Chuck Wilson for the position of VP Academic and Advocacy in the Concordia Student Union's general elections.

I met Chuck when he became the chair of the Fine Arts Student Alliance in 2011.

Since that time, I've had the opportunity to speak to him on a regular basis and it is with the utmost sincerity that I can say he is one of the most intelligent, dedicated people that I've ever met.

As our chair, Chuck keeps FASA Council meetings running smoothly. He makes sure that everybody follows Robert's Rules, sticks to the speakers list (which is no easy task sometimes), and remains respectful at all times. Somehow, Chuck manages to keep us all in line at every meeting.

Chuck’s most valuable asset, as difficult as it is to pick just one, is that he actually cares about improving the student body. He is passionate about making a difference at Concordia and he goes above and beyond the call of duty to help everyone.

A vote for Chuck would mean having a VP Academic and Advocacy who is approachable and will take students’ concerns to heart. He is the type of person who listens because he is genuinely interested in what you have to say.

I know that I can always count on Chuck to be honest and forthcoming in any situation and I think that that is an essential quality for any VP Academic and Advocacy to have.

Members of the CSU need to know that they are voting for somebody who has their best interests at heart, and Chuck is definitely that person.

Chuck Wilson is my vote for VP Academic and Advocacy. I hope he’s yours, too.

—Erika Couto
FASA Councillor

Chuck, Again

As a fellow student, I would like to show support for Chuck Wilson in his campaign to work with the Concordia Student Union next year as VP Academic and Advocacy.

In getting to know Chuck over my time at Concordia, I am convinced that he is more than capable of fulfilling the responsibilities associated with this role.

To succeed in any of these positions a person requires strong character, clear and rational understanding of the work that needs to be done, and a willingness to accept the associated challenges. Pair these traits with an excellent sense of humour, and you’ve got a

champion executive.

Good luck to all the souls brave enough to run in the upcoming elections!

—Barb Charalambides
BSc Electrical Engineering

Lina For Life

I’m writing to endorse Lina Saigol for VP Student Life. Her position on *Concordia Could Be* is nothing short of well, typical.

Lina is a natural leader, with creative ideas that surpass a normal person’s imagination. Her hands-on experience over the past year working with frosh, and the Concordia Student Union events committee only makes her natural skills more qualified and has led her to grow and network within the Concordia community.

Lina has found a gap in Concordia’s community and has the drive, resources and creative outlook to implement killer events that will no doubt fill the void and make our university community something to be jealous of.

While her qualifications, creative and otherwise, are important, her ability to communicate with her peers, student groups and the public is what makes her surpass the level of simply being qualified. In order to be a community, we as students, groups and faculties need to associate and communicate with each other.

Knowing Lina on both a personal and academic level she has proved her ability to successfully make a difference in Concordia’s community and I would not leave the job to anyone else.

—Olivia Randall
BA Sociology

Cameron Could Be

Concordia is once again caught in the whirlwind of excitement, mo-

bilization, and involvement that is the student union elections.

You’ll notice that the system has been changed this year; instead of a large slate composed of councillors and executives, we’ve not got the executives on a slate, and the councillors running individually.

This system is new and refreshing, but it will also require students to be more aware and less apathetic about whom they vote for. Getting to know the candidates is the best way to do this, hence why I’m writing this letter.

I’ve had the pleasure to know Cameron Monagle now for two years. He has not only been a friend to me, but also a coworker. So not only do I know that he is a great, loyal and genuinely pleasant guy to be friends with, but that he is hard-working, persistent and fully dedicated to anything he puts his mind to.

He is the type of guy to forego regular human necessities (e.g. sleep, food, etc.), leading many to believe he might not be human.

But let me assure you, potential voters, his heart of gold proves his humanity.

I believe Cameron’s experiences here at Concordia make him highly qualified for this position. He worked in Residence Life here at Concordia, where he has organized the logistics and helped coordinate many large-scale events involving Concordia affiliates and outside organizations.

He also currently sits on the Concordia Student Union as an Arts and Science Federation of Associations councillor, and has demonstrated he dedication to the CSU through his involvement in committees and events.

He also sits on the Board of Governors where he has never been one to shy away from a point that he is

passionate about, no matter how contentious it might be.

Through these experiences I feel he has really gotten to know not just the students here at Concordia, but also many of the services and faculty. His work ethic is consistent and always on the right track, and this has been put to the test time and time again.

So this election period I will be supporting *Concordia Could Be* and Cameron Monagle.

Please take the time to go online, read the posters and the student newspapers and get informed. And finally, once election time rolls around make sure to take the opportunity to have your voice heard.

—Jacob Dobias
BA Political Science

Peace on the Picket Lines

Since the beginning of strike activities last week, a lot has been said about strikers needing to respect the rights of their fellow students.

Obviously, this is a valid and important point. A strike is a forceful action and one that many students aren’t used to seeing or dealing with.

When I was growing up, my mom was a teacher, so I spent my formative years on picket lines and supporting teacher’s unions, but I understand that most students at Concordia may not have that kind of background or understanding of working-class movements and history.

It’s important for strikers to recognize this and react accordingly to the concerns of non-striking students and professors. However, it is deeply troubling to me that in numerous statements released by administrators, professors and students opposed to the strike there has been not a word about preventing violence against striking stu-

dents.

I can personally attest that not a day has gone by when, as a student actively involved in the strike, I have not experienced some form of harassment, intimidation or assault from non-striking students.

This comes in the form of non-strikers shoving strikers around on their way into classes, threatening strikers with assault, following us down the street to yell at us when we’re not even demonstrating, etc.

After all, strikers have passed mandates precluding us from violent actions against our fellow students; non-strikers have not recently voted in favor of any such mandates.

For those of us familiar with public discourse around gendered and radicalized violence, it seems disturbingly clear that there is an attempt going on to frame strikers at Concordia as being inherently violent, aggressive and acceptable targets for violence, while simultaneously framing non-strikers as passive, innocent victims.

This framing echoes racist, sexist, and classist constructions around the issues of violence and abuse in general, and can only contribute to a deeply unsafe environment for all students.

If we are going to ensure the safety of all students during this time of intense action and rising tension among the Concordia community, it is important to challenge this kind of hypocrisy and make room for strikers to talk about our experiences with violence at the hands of anti-strikers.

The fact that administration, non-striking students, etc. seem to be consistently denying that such violence is even a possibility is deeply disturbing.

—Laura Robbins
BA Fine Arts and Women’s Studies

HOW TO KEEP FRIENDS AND NOT ALIENATE PEOPLE

Seven Secrets of Highly Successful Strikers

• ALEX MANLEY

These are troubling times, my friends. Brother is fighting sister. Babies are making babies. The lion is laying down with the lamb. In short, I’m talking about the issue of tuition hikes.

The cloud that was looming over the semester broke open a bit last week, and I’m not just referring to the torrential rain that washed the blood and red felt patches off the streets Thursday night.

Wednesday was the Concordia Student Union’s General Assembly on the strike—and a massive student protest that ended in multiple arrests and a possible eye-loss, in one case. Next week, on March 15, a one-week general strike will kick off.

In these new and confusing times, we will have to draw up new guidelines for how best to live our lives. Specifically the main problem,

as I see it, is that now you have to confront the issue of how to deal with friends of yours that don’t see eye-to-eye with you on the subject of hikes, and strikes.

With that in mind, here are five secrets of highly successful strikers—whether they’re on strike against their will, despite not having attended the GA to vote against it, or whether they’re on the treating the picket line like the front, replete with WWI-era headgear and WWI-era hygiene.

1) Are you in fine arts, the department, but don’t share your sistren and brethen’s pro-strike attitude—you just want to get your degree and get outta there? Don’t sweat it.

A fine arts degree doesn’t really mean anything, anyway. The point of a program like that is to be in an environment that will fuel your creative juices and smell permanently

of patchouli, incense and weed. If you’ve been through three or more years of the program already, technically you’ve passed! The diploma is just a tool of the man.

2) Are you a John Molson School of Bla Bla BlackBerry student? Do you wear a suit to school and aren’t concerned with Jean Charest trying to steal your little brother’s lunch money?

Good news! Starting on the 14th, all of Concordia is on strike. This means a lot of free time for a lot of poor students—creating overnight a sizable potential workforce.

This could be the time to start that start-up business venture you’ve been thinking about... but beware! The strike is only a week long, and depending on the vote, it may not go past that, so don’t be afraid to be liberal with the fine-print clauses regarding early termination.

3) Are you at lunch with a bunch of buddies, when someone loudly voices a very nasal, uninformed opinion about the strikes that you find offensive? Now’s a good time to make with the platitudes.

Find creative ways to compliment someone’s felt square—whether green or red—and tell them that it really sets off their eyes.

Point out that, no matter what tuition is like, we all wish we had more money for mocha frappuccinos, and no matter what the strikes are like, they can be a great place to meet cute protesters—nothing adds a little spark in the sack like strong political views!

4) Lots of social things happen mostly—or exclusively—online, these days. This carries over to awkward arguments about tuition.

Maybe your news feed is choked by huffy people protesting one way or another; maybe you’re getting

tweeted at by hashtag-wielding morons; maybe you keep hearing about Canada Gooses and you don’t know what Branta canadensis has to do with Quebec tuition rates; maybe that guy you haven’t been in touch with since you ignored him in high school is all self-righteous on your Concordia University Memes post.

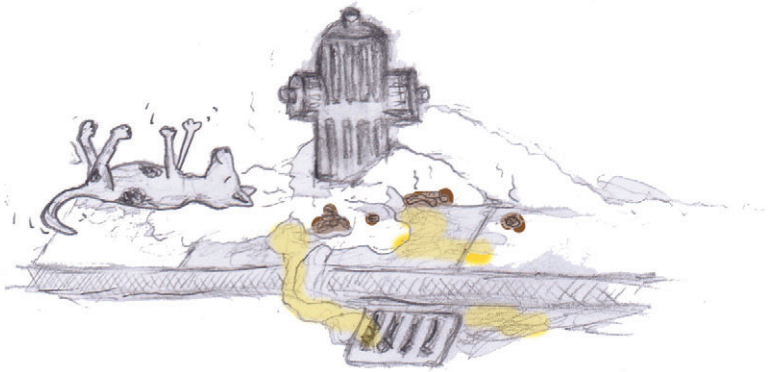
There’s one, great, catch-all policy for this—post photos of cute animals. Twitter, Facebook, MySpace if you still have one; heck, even YouTube allows for slideshow vids. Just make sure to set it to “Good Riddance (Time of Your Life)” by Green Day.

5) On strike? Don’t know what to do with your free time? Have you considered part-time employment? Word on the street is that some local business ventures will be popping up in the Concordia area in the near future...

Barton Flats

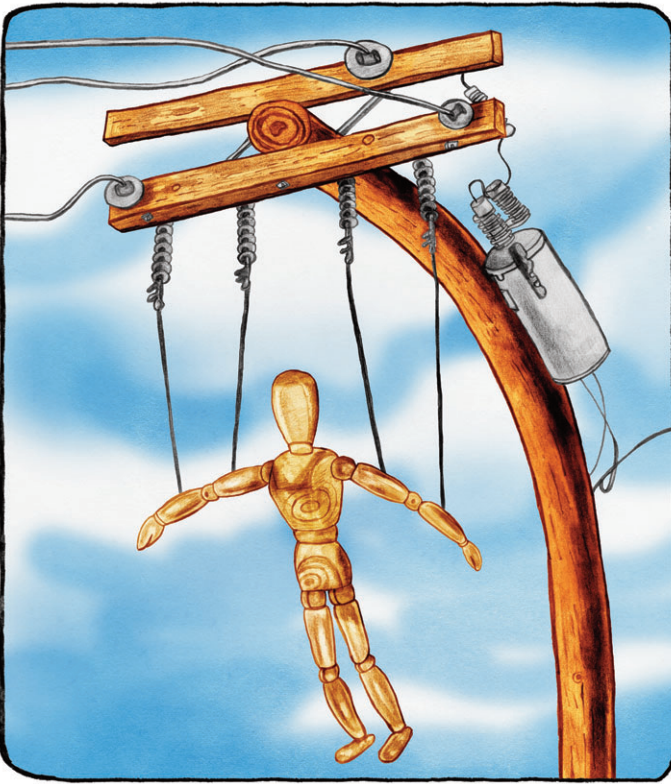
COMIC JONATHAN WOODS

SCOODS: Springtime Canine Olfactory Overdose Syndrome



Tremendous Tales

by Christopher Olson

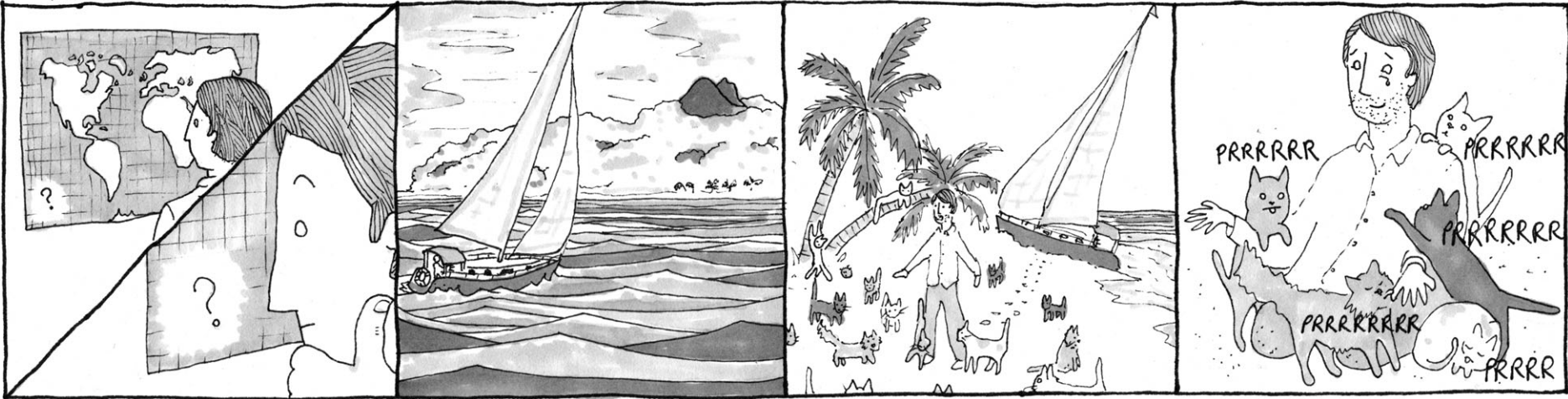


Brian tried to remember a time when the human race wasn't enslaved by machines, and that's when, inexplicably, he began to miss his BlackBerry.

False Knees

COMIC JOSHUA BARKMAN

THE LEGENDS ARE TRUE



Nah'msayin?

Trolling at the GA

While the commotion and political banter was handled in a (somewhat) civil manner on Wednesday, a more—let's say colourful—conversation happened on the CUTV message boards. I was witness to the most racist, hateful, trollified, anonymous loud-mouthing I've ever seen from Concordia students. In short, the English language was turned into a cesspool of indecency and profanity. If language were to take a physical form, the message board would accumulatively form a face that would make the Elephant Man wince. For example: one person calling himself 'Barack' outright called moderator of the general

assembly, Chad Walcott, the N-word and compared him to a primate. Others were ironically shocked at the amount of women voting in the Hall Building auditorium—a timely jab at women's equity, given that it was the day before International Women's Day. It makes me wonder... do these people actually think like that in real life? If everyone in the Hall Building had a laptop and could vote and discuss through anonymous avatars, would any form of democracy exist, or would we be trapped under a socio-political troll-bridge? Does more technology lead to

more offensive people? Could these dim-witted individuals rule the free world one day without so much as an eighth-grade vocabulary? Despite the trolls, there was one thing that did make me laugh. No, it wasn't Walcott's egregious unprofessionalism when dancing, beat boxing and awkwardly dealing with a very serious strike vote—it was one anonymous messenger on the troll board: CSUCKS. Get it? A mix of CSU and SUCKS? Lol.

—David Murphy
Lifestyle Editor



GRAPHIC JOSHUA BARKMAN

