

THE LINK

sledge kids

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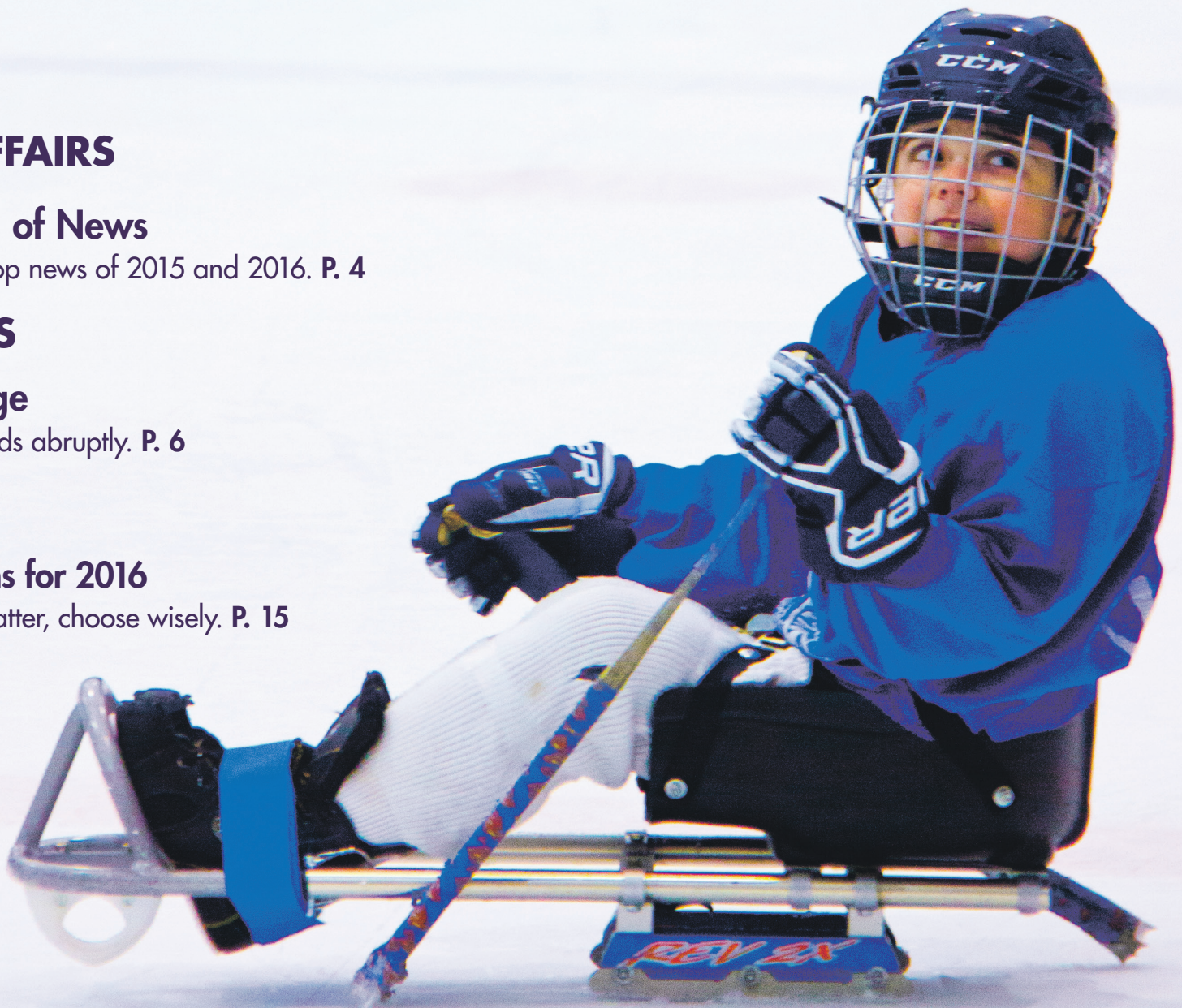
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WIN TICKETS INSIDE

Read inside for ways to win tickets to see Ninth Floor,
a documentary about Concordia's Computer Riots.

**BIENVENUE
SUR VOTRE
PISTE DE DANSE !**

**LES MARDIS
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LES CHANSONS CULTE DES ANNÉES 50 À L'AN 2000

**LES JEUDIS
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LES HITS POP DU MILLÉNAIRE

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"With carefully focused artistic merit,
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- Toronto Star

**NINTH
FLOOR**

WRITTEN AND DIRECTED BY MINA SHUM

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 EN with FR subtitles

 **Canada**

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FILM FESTIVAL
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2015

OFFICIAL SELECTION
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FESTIVAL DU
NOUVEAU CINEMA
MONTREAL
2015

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Québec**



An estimated 15,000 anti-austerity demonstrators gathered on McGill College Ave. on Oct. 3, 2015.

MATT D'AMOURS

A Year in Protests

MATT D'AMOURS
@MATTDAMOURS

After a turbulent year of strike mandates and anti-austerity demonstrations in the streets, the “Common Front” of public sector unions and Quebec’s Liberal government reached an agreement—in principle—over wages and pensions in late December, ostensibly putting an end to months of unrest.

A couple weeks into the new year, however, there are already signs that the situation is far from resolved. There are rumblings that factions within the common front oppose the Liberal government’s latest offer, fearing that the proposed wage increase of about 10 per cent over five years won’t keep up with inflation and the cost of living.

Another major hole in the tentative agreement is the lack of support from the Fédération autonome de l’enseignement, which represents 34,000 French public school teachers. As the FAE prepares to resume negotiations with the province, they’re also planning a large demonstration this Saturday to support “a massive reinvestment in public school,” according to a recent post on the FAE’s Facebook page.

“Although some of the unions seemed to have solved things with the government at the end of 2015, we are nonetheless still in a struggle that has not been resolved,” said FAE spokesperson Alain Marois in an interview with *The Link*. “Protests, for us, are important moments to assemble all the different stakeholders.”

As the movement enters a new year, it may prove useful to reflect on the key demonstrations of 2015, events that sent the streets of downtown Montreal into chaos and garnered international attention.

Presented here in chronological order are the top three protest highlights of 2015.

March 27, 2015

While the Printemps 2015 protest movement was already well underway by late March, thousands of protesters took to the

street for this peaceful student-organized anti-austerity demonstration. Riot police officers reinforced certain intersections, with the intent of blocking westward access to the busier parts of Ste. Catherine Street. Their tactics included baton blows, pepper spray and tear gas, which noticeably heightened the tension in the streets.

Eventually, the protest made its way to Dorchester Square. As people marched in the direction of Ste. Catherine St., police gave a loudspeaker announcement declaring the assembly illegal under Montreal’s P-6 bylaw, as no itinerary had been provided. Roughly 30 seconds later, riot police waiting on Ste. Catherine St. charged at the massive group, leading to a stampede of hundreds of protesters seeking cover in the square.

The chaos and confusion worsened when police deployed over half a dozen flash grenades directly into the crowd. As protesters split off and ran in every direction, riot officers gave chase, leading to an hour-long cat-and-mouse game in downtown Montreal.

April 8, 2015 - Occupation UQAM

On the afternoon of April 8, the administration of UQAM called for police assistance in one of its campus buildings, where striking students were engaging in hard pickets to block access to classes. Riot police entered the university and carried out several arrests.

In solidarity with the arrested students, several hundred activists gathered in the atrium of the J.A. de Séve university building to plan their response. By 7 p.m., it became clear that people would be staying put in the building to stage an occupation. Masked demonstrators gathered furniture and garbage bins to set up blockades at entrances and exits, and security cameras were smashed with hammers.

One reporter and a photojournalist from *The Link* were inside the building to witness what happened next: a dance party with a smoke machine and strobe lights; anarchist protesters pushed back private security agents attempting to enter the atrium from an underground escalator; spontaneous soccer games were orga-

nized using empty beer cans as balls—anyone suspected of belonging to the media was quickly called out and forced out of the building.

After a few hours, around 50 riot police officers descended on the protest, smashing a glass wall to gain entry to the occupied building. Protesters fled out of a back entrance onto Sanguinet St., where more police officers were waiting. Riot cops used tear gas, pepper spray and rubber bullets to break up the crowd. After an hour, the splintered groups were mainly dispersed, leaving behind a trashed university building and a fractured student body.

May 1, 2015 - May Day

As part of May Day activities across the globe, protesters and union members from all over Quebec took to the streets of Montreal to speak out against the Liberal government’s austerity agenda. People gathered in Phillips Square at around 6 p.m., culminating in several thousands marching westward toward the downtown core.

On the intersection of de Maisonneuve Blvd. and McGill College Ave., a heavy line made up of Montreal riot police and Sûreté du Québec officers was blocking westward access, and many protesters at the head of the march became agitated.

As heated words between the marchers and police were exchanged, some of the more militant activists made their move: a lit flare was launched in the direction of police, and one individual emptied the contents of a fire extinguisher, obscuring the riot line’s view of the intersection. After a tense, minute-long standoff, the march continued down McGill College Ave. toward Ste. Catherine Street.

Things escalated further once protesters arrived at the intersection: a group of riot police charged into the middle of the march—splitting it in two—and launched tear gas at both halves of the demonstration.

Thousands ran in multiple directions to flee the chemical irritant, and hundreds of early-evening shoppers, tourists and terrace patrons were caught in the crossfire. Several parents were seen running away from the scene with

their children in arms, and many activists rushed to pour milk in the eyes of a child that was painfully tearing up from the gas.

What Lies Ahead for 2016

Anarchist and activist groups on social media are still abuzz about the police treatment they received in 2015, and there are no signs that the fervor behind the anti-austerity movement is being kicked to the curb in the new year along with all the discarded Christmas trees.

With this continuing anger amongst anti-austerity activists, and the apparent schisms in the Liberal government’s negotiation tactics, it seems safe to anticipate more street demonstrations in 2016.

Anarchopanda, the well recognized panda mascot symbol of the Maple Spring movement of 2012 and ardent supporter of protest rights in Quebec, affirmed the right of activists to take the streets in an interview last November. “Streets are where protests happen, and it’s not up to the police to determine who can use the street for protests and who cannot,” Anarchopanda said.

For their part, the police have argued that protesters’ rights to march must be balanced with enforcing law and order. One senior SPVM official involved in coordinating riot police deployments told *The Link* last year that officers are required to intervene with force when protesters threaten public safety, or pose a danger to officers on the ground at protests.

In response to the police presence seen at Montreal protests over the course of 2015, Anarchopanda said that police claims of protecting public security were disingenuous, concealing the true objective of these types of violent crackdowns: “The goal is not to protect the public—the goal is to intimidate, to make people scared to protest.”

But as it’s been seen time and time again, Montreal’s activists are not deterred by rubber bullets, batons, kettles, pepper spray and tear gas. As the austerity debate in Quebec rages on with no immediate end in sight, so too will the people take to the streets to make their voices heard.



MADELEINE GENDREAU

Six Things to Expect From the New Year

A Montreal Forecast for 2016

HÉLÈNE BAUER
@HELENEVBAUER

1. More Protests

The year 2016 kicks off with another series of protests organized by various labour unions and student associations. The Fédération autonome de l'enseignement has already organized its first protest of the year for this upcoming Saturday, Jan. 16. It calls for the government to reinvest in the public school system, protesting austerity measures that have been put in place.

In the past few months, the anti-austerity movement has been gaining momentum and if the trend suggests anything, it's not going to be put to rest any time soon.

Expect to see students and workers taking to the streets and making more noise as they fight for their beliefs.

2. Police Brutality

In the last month of 2015, the Concordia community experienced several real-life examples of police brutality.

Concordia professor David Waddington said police attacked him on his way home from work. He told *The Link* in a previous interview that he found himself trapped in the nucleus of a protest and was hit by police with a nightstick, pushed to the ground, and kicked several times.

Concordia student and activist Katie Nelson was assaulted by undercover police during a protest and hospitalized because of the injuries inflicted on her, she told *The Link*.

Montreal has been cultivating a protest

culture over the last few years and the demonstrations have become increasingly violent—in both police and protester factions. In several interviews, the Montreal police have stated that they use force only if the progression of street protests threatens the public. However, civilians fear the police more with every unwarranted attack on peaceful protesters, and the tension between police and demonstrators is building with every confrontation.

3. Meet Your New Neighbour, a Syrian Refugee

Just over 2,000 refugees have already landed in Montreal, and more are on the way. The Liberal government promised to welcome a total of 25,000 Syrian refugees into the country by the end of February, according to their website.

Since November, 7,671 refugees have arrived on Canadian soil, here and in Toronto. The new arrivals will diversify the city even more, possibly creating a new Syrian neighbourhood—a place where the newcomers will share their culture with Montrealers, as we've seen with Little Italy and Chinatown. Nevertheless, a fundamental part of accepting refugees is integrating them more, and welcoming them as your neighbour.

In the fall 2016, you or one of your family members might have a new classmate who comes from the Al Salam in Reyhanli, Turkey—a school created in 2012 by a Syrian-Canadian diaspora living in Montreal. Concordia University has also announced that they will be pledging to sponsor six Syrian refugee students so far. Be open-minded to meet and welcome these new Montrealers.

4. The Cold

We didn't have a white Christmas, but skiers and snowboarders were praying to the snow gods for some fresh powder, and their prayers were answered. Did we all really believe the temperature wouldn't eventually drop to an abominable freezing cold?

While we're all cozying up and drinking spiked coffee on our way to class, let's take time to think about how the homeless are surviving. In recent years, the city has been thinking up new ways to keep them off the street—but not by giving them viable options to find a home. Instead, urban designers are turning the city into an obstacle course by redesigning metro stations and other public spaces so the homeless won't have anywhere to settle down for the night. That's hopefully about to change.

In December, Mayor Coderre announced that within the next few months, the city will create a new department at City Hall whose mandate will be to manage services for the homeless. The Montreal Movement to End Homelessness is planning to help 2,000 people out of the cold and is also working to procure affordable and subsidized housing for them. In March last year, volunteers of the organization counted 3,016 homeless people on the streets in Montreal.

5. The Rise of Food Prices

Foodies and students looking to save a buck will be frustrated to know that a University of Guelph study suggests an increase in food prices this year—an approximate two to four per cent on average—in every department in

your grocery store.

The cost of meat, vegetables, fruits and nuts increased more than anticipated in 2015, and the trend will continue in 2016, in large part due to the weak Canadian dollar. Eighty-one per cent of produce is imported from outside of Canada and food prices are directly correlated to the Canadian economy and lacking loonie. According to the same report, the average household could spend up to \$345 more on food.

6. Voulez-Vous un Sac?

Montreal will be the first metropolis in Canada to stop using plastic bags in grocery stores by 2018 if the city follows through with its plan.

Since 2007, Quebec has reduced plastic bag use by half—from 2.2 billion to 1 billion single-use plastic bags since the \$0.05 charge fee was instituted, according to Recyc-Québec. Starting this year, Quebec is moving toward an even greener initiative to ban all plastic bags. So for the next couple of years, don't be surprised if you end up carrying your groceries home in your arms because the local store has phased out the use of plastic bags.

With the recent COP21 conference and other green initiatives raising awareness, citizens are acknowledging the environmental impact of plastic and toxic waste on the planet and our health. Plastic bags are a source of pollution that don't decompose in nature and litters parks, rivers, beaches and oceans.

If you're not already using re-usable bags for your groceries, now is the time to start, because soon you won't have a choice.

thelinknewspaper.ca

Racism 101

The Centre for Gender Advocacy hosted a workshop last Thursday on how to be a better ally.



Montreal artist Aquil Virani participated in a live painting show for L'Oreal Canada where he used hair colouration as paint.

COURTESY AQUIL VIRANI

Fine Arts Marathon

Montreal Artist Embarks on a Restless Challenge: Creating 100 Artworks a Week

OCEAN DEROUCHIE
@OSHIEPOSHIE

Montreal-based artist Aquil Virani challenged himself to create 100 pieces of art in seven sleep-deprived days.

Some may call it ambitious, but for the multi-talented artist, it's simply a way to keep his passion burning and creativity flowing—and to celebrate his 25th birthday.

Snuggled in the Plateau, Virani sat in his studio apartment, strewn with canvases. Little fabric flags hung overhead. In the background, classical music filled the gaps between questions and answers. Outside, a cold January night subsisted. Virani's grounded demeanor, and warm, welcoming little space could make anywhere feel at home.

The project is not the first time he's taken on a challenge with a time constraint attached. Virani embarked on an endeavour of the same flavour last year, when he made 24 pieces in 24 hours, celebrating his 24th birthday.

"After doing a similar challenge over 24 hours, I know how difficult it will be to produce quality work once the fatigue of even eight hours of concentration kicks in," he said.

He achieved his goal with flying colours, and hopes to do so again.

The seedling of the project's conception was based around how difficult it can be to set aside time for our passions. For Virani, this was, of course, his art.

"Even to carve out 24 hours ... I have to tell

people—clients—that I'm doin' this!" he said. "But the world needs art!"

While Virani's passion is art, he also studied marketing and philosophy—specifically ethics—at McGill. He also works as a professional graphic designer and speaker for events.

Media will be varied, as are his talents—possibilities for this project are infinite, ranging from the expected paint and illustration-based works, to collages, graphics and beyond.

"I'll show you," he said, as he wandered off into his bedroom. He emerged smiling, holding a Styrofoam head.

"I'm probably going to paint these," he

motioned at the few blank faces in his room.

Virani began the process of creating his 100 works last Thursday. For the first four days, he worked from his studio. For the following days, Virani is working live at Galerie Mile-End, where the fully finished show will premiere on Friday.

As for whether he'll be posting up in the gallery for an extended amount of time, Virani said he's unsure. "I'm thinking of bringing a pillow ... I doubt I'll sleep in the last two days."

Before the beginning of the challenge, Virani had come up with some numbers indicating how many pieces he would need

to create each day—a daunting minimum of 14—he said he tried not to over-plan.

"I think people respond to the vulnerability and honesty as to whether I will get it done or not," he added.

Don't think quality always dominates quantity, or that the two are mutually exclusive. When asked, Virani recounted a story of a pottery class. "One half of the class is told they'll be graded on their best work; the best ceramic they can come up with. The other part of the class is graded based on how many they can make," he said. "What ends up happening is the people who make as many as possible end up making the better work."

Aside from the challenging elements of his project, Virani plans to incorporate different themes and social messages into his art.

"A lot of the work I have done is about empowering people ... to assert themselves as the viewers and as artists," he says. He adds that if you can write the ABC's, you can draw. "It's just lines and shapes."

The candour of Virani's project culminates in a work that is at once enthralling and welcoming. There's something warm and inclusive about an artist challenging himself to accomplish such a daunting task so publicly.

You can catch a glimpse of his weeklong adventure as Virani creates his works until Jan. 14, live at Galerie Mile-End, 5345 Parc Ave. The completed show will be up in the gallery from Jan. 15 to 17.



"Nature" was created as part of Canada's Self Portrait in July 2015. COURTESY AQUIL VIRANI



THE FINAL CHAPTER

No Second Chance for Second-Hand Bookshops

MARIE BRIÈRE DE LA HOSSERAYE
@MBDLH

Every night after closing hours, Gilles Lacroix would place his tiny futon mattress on the wooden floor of his bookstore. He would sleep there, surrounded by the narrow and busy walls of his shop.

After moving to 5372 Parc Ave., Lacroix started piling up abandoned books in his new apartment. His love for books and recycling led him to amass a considerable collection. He started selling them on the sidewalk, but it quickly grew and invaded his personal space.

In 2005, he turned the space into a second-hand bookstore, despite lacking an official permit to run a business in his home. It became known as Le VIIe Sablier. He built bookshelves from newspaper racks and futon frames he found in the street.

Lacroix always encouraged exchange in his community and promoted recycling. His neighbours would come to him to drop books, CDs or records they wanted to recycle.

Whenever he would hear that people were getting rid of their libraries or find books being thrown out, he would bring them back into his store to give them a second life.

The bookstore was filled with random and weird publications, said Manouane Beauchamp, the person behind the literary website *lelecteur.ca*.

Living for books, surrounded by them, Lacroix's shop was his home and business all at once—it was the only way to run it without going bankrupt.

He used to sleep in a room at the back of the store, but the threatened viability of his business forced him to find a roommate. He chose to give her the bedroom and decided to set a futon in the store at night, to sleep surrounded by his precious possessions.

Early in December Lacroix received an eviction notice from the Régie du logement. He had

not been able to pay the rent recently, and his late payments got him summoned for a meeting with the Régie. Lacroix attempted to explain why he had not been able to pay his debt yet.

The decision was non-negotiable—he was being evicted. Lacroix said a tenant should be granted three months to adapt before leaving. However, the present laws required him to move out within a month of receiving the letter. Lacroix tried to negotiate the terms of the eviction in order to have time to pack, organize his move and to save his passion.

All his attempts failed. If he had been given an extended deadline, he would have organized a sale, or a giveaway of his thousands of books.

After spending his life attempting to recycle goods, he was forced to empty his home and pile up his books in the street, telling passers-by to grab some for free, lest he have to dump them in the trash. At the end of the first week of January, all that was left were a few books left out on a table, outside of the empty shop.

“For a bookworm, it's like losing a child. It's heartbreaking,” said Sean Madden, owner of the second-hand bookstore *Encore*.

On social media, Montrealers reacted to the closing announcement—all wanted to save the books. Some suggested to collect them and organize a sale, with profits going to Lacroix. There was one catch to that plan—the man was nowhere to be found.

On Facebook, no one knew where he went. His neighbours didn't know about it either. The shop is now empty, and silence is the only answer you'll get by knocking on the door.

Montreal hosts a small but tight bookstore community. Bookstore owners from across the city, from *Encore*, *The Word*, *Millenium*, *Henri-Julien* and *Argo* were all saddened by the news, and tried to reach out to the community to find

out what was next for Lacroix.

He was overheard saying he would be spending winter at a friend's place, before figuring out what is expected of him.

“It's really scary,” said Madden from *Encore*. “In Montreal, tenants are at the mercy of their landlords.”

The state of the economy is a burden for all businesses in the city. Restaurants and shops close regularly, but according to Madden, bookstores tell a different story.

“Today, no one ever opens an independent bookstore to make money,” he said. “It's tough. You have to love it. You have to want it.”

Michel Lefebvre, owner of the *Henri-Julien* bookstore, agreed. Twenty-seven years after opening his business, he wouldn't miss a day of work for anything in the world. In convalescence after fighting cancer for two years, he

had to trust his assistant with the shop for two months. He is now happy to be back and missed being away from his books.

“I missed it almost as much as I miss *La Presse's* crosswords,” added Lefebvre, who doesn't know how to use a laptop.

For 10 years, his revenues have been steadily decreasing. “It's the decadence,” he sighed.

Thanks to the reputation of his place and its rare items, customers keep coming back. As he said this, two visitors wandered leisurely, absorbed in the hundreds of antiquarian books piled up around them. The smell of the paper created a mystic and timeless atmosphere in the room. Stopped in time, peace emanated from exploring the bookstore.

“Walking around is an education on its own,” Madden said.



Gilles Lacroix is the ex-owner of *Le VIIe Sablier*.

SARAH DIMMOCK

Librairie Henri-Julien
4800 Henri Julien Ave.

Encore Books
5670 Sherbrooke St. W.

Millenium Inc.
451 Marie-Anne St. E.

The Word
469 Milton St.

Argo
1915 Ste. Catherine St. W.

Ariel Soucy peruses the selection of books in the Librairie Henri-Julien on Tuesday, Nov. 24, 2015. (right)

A Librairie Encore client exits the bookstore on Saturday, Nov. 21, 2015. (left)

Owner of Librairie Henri-Julien, Michel Lefebvre, examines a book brought by a client on Tuesday, Nov. 24, 2015. (below)

PHOTOS MARIE-PIERRE SAVARD



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Fringe Giveaway
Ninth Floor

Win tickets to see *Ninth Floor*, a documentary on the Sir George Williams affair otherwise known as the Computer Riots, by **sending us a photo of you with a copy of this issue.** Tweet or Instagram at us by mentioning **@Linknewspaper** to win one of four tickets for two people. First come first serve. The film opens on Jan. 15 at Cinema du Parc (3575 Parc Ave.).



Every Saturday morning, the Montreal Pirates junior team practices at the Howie Morenz Arena.

NIKOLAS LITZENBERGER

Hidden Gems

The Montreal Pirates Offer a Great Treasure: A Chance

VINCE MORELLO
@VINNYMORELLZ

The Montreal Pirates don't play in a typical league, but then again, they don't play typical hockey either.

"The parents thank us after the game. They don't give a shit after the game, they say 'good job.' It's a difference from other hockey leagues," said the director of Montreal Sledge Hockey, Maxime Gagnon.

Sledge hockey is designed so people with physical disabilities can get out on the ice to enjoy Canada's favourite national sport. Instead of skating, players are on a sledge with two skates and a frame so that the puck can slide underneath. The players have two small sticks that are curved on one end to handle the puck. The other end has metal teeth so the players can easily maneuver around the ice.

The big difference between sledge hockey and its more mainstream counterpart isn't the equipment however—instead, it's the spirit of the game. It's not about winning, but having the opportunity to enjoy a team sport.

"It's harder to go outside and play with other kids or anything like that, but here the kids are all level, physically and cognitively," said Montreal Pirates junior coach Jonathan Montpetit. "It's like a second school for them."

Arriving at the Howie Morenz Arena for practice Saturday morning, there was excitement in the air. The Montreal Pirates practices

are social gatherings as much as they are times to play some sledge hockey. It was not hard to see that the kids were enjoying themselves and smiling behind their caged masks.

The Pirates are a junior sledge hockey team that includes both male and female players. They play in the Montreal Sledge Hockey League and the team sometimes travels for inter-province play. The team is both a development team as well as place to have fun. Some players are able to train their skills and eventually play for Quebec's official sledge hockey team.

"All the kids come year after year, so it's always the same group of parents. They're always together," said Montpetit. "It's a great family, everybody's fun."

Some of the players have been with the Pirates for a long time. Andreas Kyriakakis, who was diagnosed with Duchenne muscular dystrophy, has been with the team for five years already and describes the experience as "actually fun."

Before his family found out about his condition, Andreas was a regular at hockey and soccer, but once he got the diagnosis, he had to stop.

"Him being a kid who watches more TSN SportsCenter than the Cabbage Patch kids, he was dying to find something where can participate in as a team. So we came here," said Peter Kyriakakis, Andreas's father.

For everyone involved, whether they are new junior players or the older squad, there is a sense of community and belonging. A lot

of the kids and parents stay with the team for multiple seasons, so the team becomes closer as time goes on.

"It's like a family where the young ones like to see the older ones, and the older players, most of the time, will stay on the ice to help the younger players," Gagnon said.

The team relies on sponsors and dona-

"It's harder to go outside and play with other kids or anything like that, but here the kids are all level, physically and cognitively."

—Jonathan Montpetit, Coach

tions to keep themselves afloat. Luckily, its director is Gagnon, who also happens to be the director for Défi sportif AlterGo, which prides itself on helping athletes with disabilities compete in sports.

Gagnon is able to use his connections with

Défi sportif to get sponsors for the Pirates. Donations are also regularly accepted to contribute to the team's operating budget.

"I know donors are very present and it's a good thing that we have because obviously we know the parents have medical appointments and everything so that's another financial aspect that can be hard sometimes," Montpetit said.

With the team's inter-provincial play, the financial aspect of running a team can be difficult. However, it isn't something that most parents are concerned about.

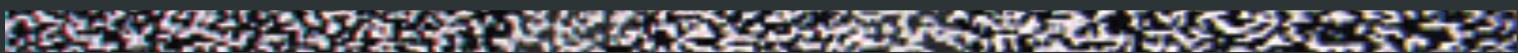
"There's willingness among the parents to help and pay what we need to pay to keep it going. If you ask any parent here, if they say registration is going to go up 100 bucks, they're all going to say no problem," Kyriakakis said. "The options for our kids are limited because of their disability so, we take what we can."

The kids are not the first, and they definitely will not be the last to practice and play with the Pirates. With the encouragement from the staff, parents, and each other, the Pirates junior squad will continue to live on and provide the opportunity for every kid to enjoy playing hockey.

"It's a sentimental belonging. It's having their own hockey jersey like their big brother or little brother who plays hockey," Gagnon said. "It's like 'me too, I play hockey, me too, I won a medal.' It's the same thing as hockey, except there isn't a rivalry with the players, it's really fun."

THE LINK

DOES THE MEDIA REPRESENT YOU?



Do you feel discouraged to tell a story due to your race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, religious beliefs, disability, or any combination?

The industry can often be too white, too male, and too exclusive. *The Link* wants to be a platform for your voice.

In 2016, *The Link* will be publishing a Race Special Issue on Feb. 9, and a Gender and Sexuality Special Issue on March 22.

We encourage all types of contributions like writing submissions (features, arts, sports, opinions) in French or English, photography/videography, graphics/illustrations, etc.

IMPORTANT DATES

January 12 & 19 Race Special Issue Brainstorm @ 6 P.M. in room H-649

January 22 Special Issue Workshop @ 4 P.M. in room H-649

January 29 Race Special Issue Content Deadline

March 11 Gender & Sexuality Special Issue Content Deadline

CONTACT

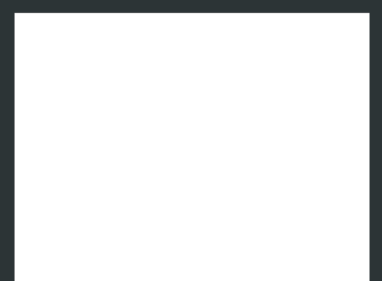
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Drop by *The Link* office Mon-Fri @ H-649





Kyle Bower dreams of repping Canada at the 2020 Paralympics and will be playing for Nova Scotia in the Badminton National Championships in May.

NIKOLAS LITZENBERGER

Making a Racket

Concordia Student Pursues 2020 Paralympics in Badminton

NIKOLAS LITZENBERGER
@NIKELITZ8

Catching his breath, he wipes the thick beads of sweat off his brow. The other players make their way off the court and into the changing room. He takes a moment to limp to the sidelines—today was tough. He rolls down his sock and gently rubs his ankle, acknowledging it for the first time—the pain is excruciating.

When you observe first-year Concordia student Kyle Bower seamlessly run around the badminton court with commendable determination, it's hard to believe he was born with a severely twisted right foot.

Named after the shape the deformity takes, clubfoot is a condition in which a person's foot is rotated internally at the ankle. It affects one of 1,000 babies born in the United States, and 150,000 to 200,000 worldwide each year. It is two times more likely to affect boys before birth than girls, according to HealthResearch-

Funding.org.

Despite this, Bower has learned to adapt and is pursuing the opportunity to represent Canada at the 2020 Paralympics in Tokyo.

Originally from Halifax, Nova Scotia, Bower suffered a case of clubfoot that was quite severe. At an early age, doctors were quick to determine it would be hard for him to ever walk properly, let alone do anything athletic. Throughout his childhood, he underwent five surgeries, which sometimes included breaking his bones in order to reset them. The growth plates in his left leg were also stunted in an effort to adjust to the slower growth of his right, which is still slightly shorter.

"I can pendulate my right leg," he said. "It's quite the party trick." Bower refused to submit to the so-called constraints of the condition.

"My parents weren't going to take no for an answer," he said, "and neither was I."

Early signs of success in the corrected growth of Bower's foot gave his parents incen-

tive to involve him in sports.

"They were very adamant on not letting me quit," he said. This led to his adoption of hockey at age four. A passion for basketball in the family has also had him running up and down courts for ten years. "I had to learn to do what everybody else around me was doing and just adapt it to my ability." It wasn't long before Bower realized he was adapting very successfully.

"In school I was making tryouts and beating kids that didn't have what I had," he said. "I was still able to perform well and people didn't even realize I had an issue."

He realized he had great potential to take his athleticism to a competitive level. Having developed a passion for badminton in the seventh grade, Bower joined the Sackville Badminton Club in Nova Scotia to play junior league.

He has since played for Nova Scotia's junior development team, and this year, he will be representing his province at the badminton nationals—a rare feat for para-qualifying athletes.

"Probably my biggest achievement yet was placing third in doubles in last year's Atlantics [tournament]," he said. "My teammate had moved up a division. I normally play U-19, but this was U-23, in a tough division."

Sam Cutler, one of Bower's teammates from Sackville, doesn't notice much of a difference between him and the other players, despite his condition.

"I know it affects him personally, but he plays very well and I don't notice any disability because of it. He copes with it very well," Cutler said.

In 2015, Bower was contacted by the executive director of Badminton Canada, Joe Morissette, regarding an opportunity to go

as far as representing Canada, this time as a para-athlete.

"I remember reading the email and just thinking: 'oh my god this is actually happening.'" He has since been in touch with chair of the Para-Badminton Committee, Cindy Bruce.

Balancing his studies with his athletic dreams has proven difficult. Bower studies International Business at Concordia, which he is focused on prioritizing. Nevertheless, he continues to train hard, with high hopes of representing his nation in the biggest para-sports event in the world.

Bower sees some irony in his situation, having learned to embrace his disability to use it to his own advantage.

"I know what this can do for me," he said, pointing to his foot. "Though it hurts and makes things difficult, it opens doors for me," Bower said.

"It hurts a lot," he added, "but it's not the end of the world. There are people out there who have lost limbs and still are doing sports."

His condition is not something he carries in shame.

"It's not something I want to hide," he said. "I wear shorts, I wear flip flops. I wouldn't be the same person if I didn't have to deal with it. It's part of me."



NIKOLAS LITZENBERGER
thelinknewspaper.ca/sports • Jan. 12, 2016

thelinknewspaper.ca

NEW YEAR, NEW BUZZ

We're back at it with game recaps on the Concordia Stingers' hockey teams and the latest podcast from the Pressbox Hat Trick team online.

Five Ways to Upcycle Your Christmas Tree

SAVANNAH SCOTT
@VANZILLASCOTT

I come from a home run by an overly organized matriarch, so our Christmas tree came down on Boxing Day. No longer able to stand the sight of its plastic and rubber pine needles, we dismantled the faux fir piece by piece, threw it in an old box, and taped it shut until next year.

Here are four practical suggestions to help you to dispose of your unwanted fir. Considering you probably left home after the holidays without dealing with it, be nice for once and send this to your parents if you don't have a tree in your own place.

1. Contribute to an animal shelter

The Hope for Wildlife Society, run by Hope Swinimer, suggests animal-friendly alternatives. Not only does Swinimer take tree donations for her animal sanctuary in Nova Scotia, she encourages everyone to find a local shelter that could use the trees to help improve the animals' habitats. In an interview with CBC in 2011 she added that trees should be "totally clean because tinsel [could] seriously hurt an animal if they ate it."

2. Make pine needle syrup

Another great use for a chemical-free tree is this do-it-yourself product, an awesome natural remedy for colds and coughs. You need two cups of water, two cups of sugar, two cups of chopped pine needles and one tablespoon of lemon juice. Boil the sugar in water until

fully dissolved, then turn off the stove and stir in the pine needles. Cover the pot and let it sit overnight. The longer you leave the needles in the water, the more intense the flavour will be. Strain and add lemon juice—then keep refrigerated for up to a month.

3. Make coasters

So this is where it gets a little messy, but the handy Pinterest addicts of the world will rejoice. Lay down and secure your tree, then saw off thin discs of wood from the trunk, sand them down and place a final coat of varnish to make them ultra smooth. Congrats, you just upped your Canadian cred.

4. Leave it to the city

If you leave it out on the curb, city workers will pick up your pine and bring it to a disposal facility where the wood will be chipped and made into fertilizing mulch. According to the City of Montreal website, 2016 Christmas tree collection will be offered on the weeks of Jan. 11, Jan. 25 and Feb. 8—you can check the website for the pick up date in your borough.

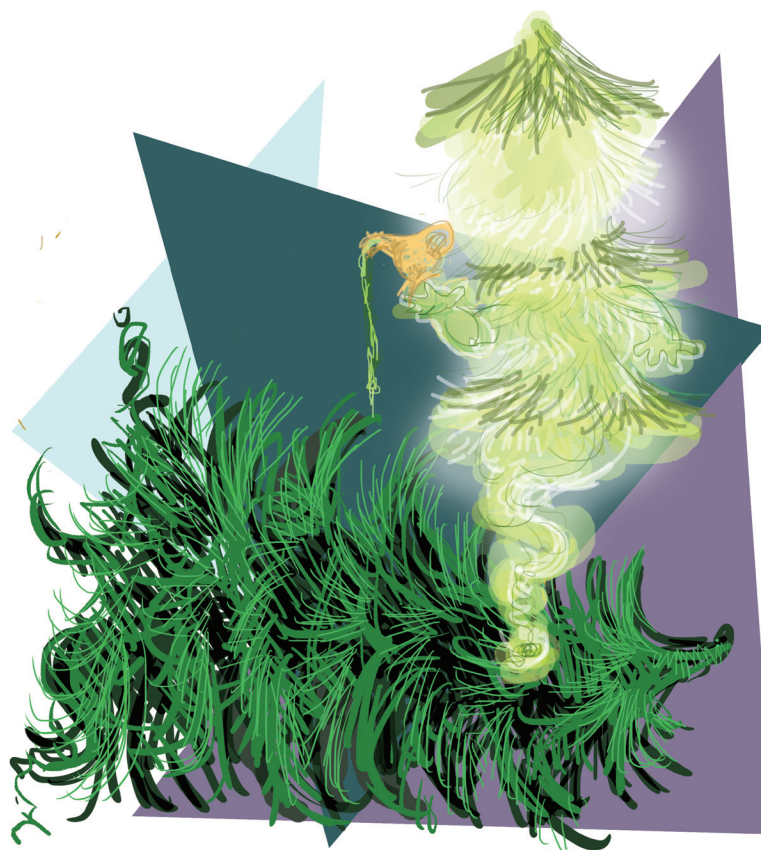
One thing not to do is use the tree as firewood. Burning pine can create a buildup of creosote inside your chimney, which can result in a raging fire that could cause damage to your home.

The ideal solution to the annual Christmas tree problem is not to have one at all. Not only will you avoid the hassle of getting rid of your tree after the holidays, you will minimize your carbon footprint by declining to strip our for-

ests. Artificial trees are no better. According to environmental research team Ellipsos, fake firs have three times more of an impact on climate change than real ones.

Next year, consider hanging your orna-

ments on a fallen Christmas branch, found pretty much anywhere, and light a pine-scented candle. The holidays don't have to be harmful to the environment, and this starts with your tree.



MADELINE GENDREAU

The SPVM Have a Police Brutality Problem

One Photographer's Call for Reform on Institutionalized Violence Against Peaceful Protesters

WILLIE WILSON
@WILLIEWILSON39

On May 1, 2015 I saw a high school-aged protester dragged by her hair across the pavement by police in riot gear.

As a photographer who has covered political demonstrations in Montreal over the previous year, I've witnessed dozens of disturbing instances of the Service de Police de la Ville de Montréal using excessive force against otherwise peaceful protesters.

Since the anti-austerity movement began in earnest last spring, at least 13 student-organized protests were forcefully dispersed by police, at least 50 arrests were made and at least 214 fines were issued by the SPVM, as reported by *The Link*.

I have seen police batons swung with malicious intent at harmless demonstrators, medical volunteers shoved as they attempted to treat injured protesters, dozens upon dozens of rounds of tear gas lobbed, often for no discernable reason, children treated for tear gas exposure, a grocery store fill up with tear gas as the check-out clerk woefully scanned products with her shirt over her nose—and I'm convinced many have seen much worse.

As the high frequency of police intervention in protests demonstrates, the widespread and frighteningly predictable nature of the SPVM's use of violence is, in this photographer's opinion, not the case of a few bad apples who lose

their cool every once in awhile—it's much worse than that. It's a culture of excessive violence against peaceful political demonstrators inherent in Montreal's police force. Political repression has become normalized in a public institution that is expressly tasked with protecting the safety of its citizens, regardless of their political convictions.

Robert Young, a Concordia student who has participated in several demonstrations that have been dispersed by the police, argues the SPVM are needlessly suppressing political expression.

"The point is to throw everyone off-balance, it's to have a thin pretext for shutting down the whole thing. It's so obviously about political repression rather than the rule of law, it's a sham," Young said.

Referring to the SPVM's dispersion tactics, Young added, "It's kind of like a gang. There's a party line and everyone sticks to it and you don't sell out your comrades."

Although it often is by many who have attended demonstrations in Montreal, it should not be expected that a protest will be met with needless police violence.

In an interview with *Le Devoir* last October, Philippe Pichet, Montreal's chief of police, gave a statement regarding the SPVM's use of dispersion tactics during protests.

"When I think the security of the populace is in danger, I then make a decision [to intervene]," Pichet said.

Despite Pichet's rationale, the police are placing a vastly greater number of citizens'

safety in jeopardy when they choose to disperse a protest with violent tactics.

Nobody deserves to be bashed with a baton, suffer the effects of tear gas or face enormous unconstitutional fines under the P-6 bylaw because they are attempting to practice the fundamental, constitutionally protected democratic right to assemble and petition the government in the streets.

Undercover police infiltrating demonstrations is not a new tactic for Montreal police, and is another obstacle in exercising the right to assemble. On Dec. 18, several undercover SPVM officers pulled a gun on protesters, chased *The Link* staff and assaulted a Con-

cordia student.

When a culture trait becomes as pervasive and ingrained in an institution as violence has become within the SPVM, it becomes difficult to reverse without a fundamental change in the way that officers conduct themselves—but that's exactly what must happen.

The SPVM must be held to a higher standard of accountability. Officers, but more importantly, officers who give the orders to intervene violently, should face consequences, enforced by an independent and accountable public body if they continue to demonstrate the current callous level of disregard for the safety of Montreal citizens.



About four dozen riot cops fired off tear gas on Nov. 30, 2015.

WILLIE WILSON



MADELEINE GENDREAU

A Call for Greater Understanding

The Importance of Consent Education as a Measure Against Rape Culture

NOELLE DIDIERJEAN
@NOELLESOLANGE

Anna walked out of the Centre for Victims of Sexual Aggression into the crisp January air feeling doubly traumatized.

The Concordia student had recently escaped an abusive relationship, and while she thought reporting the rape at the hands of her former partner would bring closure, it did the exact opposite.

"They make you feel like an object," Anna, whose name has been changed to keep her anonymity, said of the police who took her testimony. "I felt like a science project."

Anna, who isn't white, felt ill at ease speaking to the two white, male police officers who were visibly skeptical as they listened to her account. Only when she broke down and cried while describing how her former partner would penetrate her without her consent while emotionally abusing her did their attitude of disbelief turn to empathy.

"I felt really weird, and started to get dizzy," she said. She had gone to the Centre pour les victimes d'agression sexuelle de Montréal a month earlier to get forensic evidence of her assault. However, although her then-partner ejaculated inside of her without her consent, she was menstruating, and getting DNA evidence of the assault proved impossible.

She wasn't ready to press legal charges at the time, so the centre held onto the rape kit—something normally destroyed after three weeks if it isn't used in a criminal process—until she was ready to do so. Part of her motivation to go to the police was so that the intense experience of subjecting herself to post-trauma clinical inspection didn't go to waste.

However, the steps taken to expose her

rapist hurt the process of emotional recuperation more than it healed. Reliving the trauma she'd been through left her emotionally vulnerable and reinforced all the feelings of self-disgust the abusive relationship had fostered. As soon as she got home after giving the police her confession, Anna locked herself in her room and cried.

"I felt violated. I felt sick. Having to go through that process, having to convince people that my experience actually happened," she said, was the opposite of the empowering process she had hoped for in exposing her assailant.

Worse, the experience was nothing more than a joke for her rapist, who was totally insulated from legal and social repercussions.

Anna had not been able to tell anyone about the sexual and emotional abuse she experienced for months, as her then-partner became increasingly controlling and their relationship further isolated her from the outside world. When she publicly denounced him, many people ostracized her, excluding her from social events. To this day, her rapist remains a well-liked, charismatic figure in the social circles they share.

"It's very taboo to talk about intimate partner violence, there's a lot of victim blaming," said Anaïs Cadieux Van Vliet, an employee of the Centre for Gender Advocacy.

Myths of sexual violence usually depict rapists as strangers, shadowy figures attacking a virginal, naive young woman. As a result, intimate partner violence, also known as acquaintance rape, is often erased or disregarded. The truth is that many sexual assaults are committed by someone the victim knows, in contrast to the widely perpetuated stereotype.

Rather than trying to understand the difficulties of leaving an abusive relationship, many people blame the victim.

"If it was so bad, why would they stay [in the relationship] so long?" is a knee-jerk reaction many people have, according to Cadieux Van Vliet.

In the thorny core of the problem, there is a cultural narrative that posits male entitlement to women's bodies as the norm.

"Men are raised being taught to manipulate women," Anna said. "We grow up in a bubble where everything [men do to women] is okay." She believes talking about consent to elementary school students would be a good first step in preventing rape culture from ruining people's lives.

The importance of this has already begun being recognized elsewhere in Canada—Ontario's recently updated sexual education curriculum has been lauded for including the topic of consent and how to be a respectful partner. In a similar vein, last year Quebec launched a two-year pilot project for mandatory sexual education at 15 public schools across the province. The subject of "safe and mutual sexual conduct" is on the docket, but only in secondary school lessons.

"We need to start early, because there's a point where it's too late," Anna said, matter-of-factly.

Cadieux Van Vliet echoed the sentiment.

"People are taught it's not okay to say no, especially in terms of sexuality," Cadieux Van Vliet said, adding that it's important to build a world where people talk about consent in a real, proactive way.

Cadieux Van Vliet also thinks that widespread consent training is an important step in the right direction, as well as taking on

shared responsibility when it comes to confronting people about their behaviour, and learning new ways to support those subjected to sexual assault.

Being trapped in an abusive relationship was difficult for Anna. She would stay in the shower for an entire day, or cry for days on end. Now she has difficulty trusting even close friends, and finds it hard to enjoy sex.

Despite the effects of PTSD, Anna said that if she had the choice to go back in time and warn herself against her predator, she would let herself do it again. After waking up from the trauma, she learned to value herself as a person.

Whereas before the relationship, she would often let racist and sexist comments go unaddressed, now she's very outspoken when she disagrees with people.

When referring to the process of reporting the rape, she used the term 'victim' in quotation marks—she doesn't identify as one, and refuses to allow the experience to define her.

Resources for people who have experienced sexual assault:

Concordia Sexual Assault Resource Centre
514-848-2424 ext. 3353
jennifer.drummond@concordia.ca
Guy Metro Building, Room GM-300.27
1550 de Maisonneuve Blvd. W.
Open 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., Monday through Friday

Centre pour les victimes d'agression sexuelle de Montréal
514 934-0354 ext. 7456
Email: info@cvasm.ca

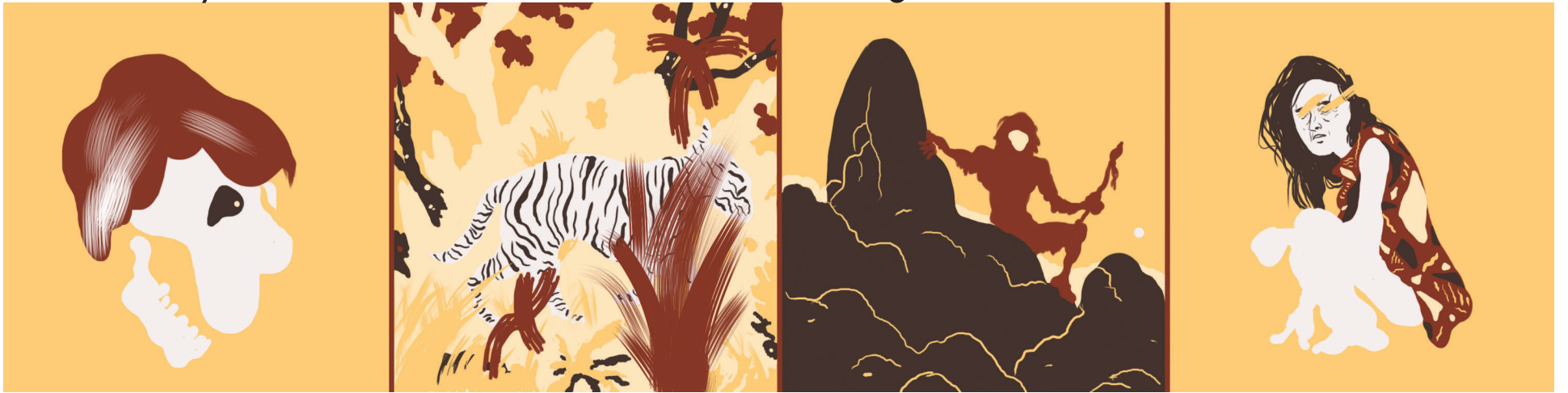
24/7 Crisis hotline for greater Montreal
514 934-4504

thelinknewspaper.ca

Posture of Patriarchy

Want more from this writer? Read about societally ingrained male entitlement explored in a personal narrative.

Standards by Graeme Shorten Adams @foreshortening



Crap Comics by Morag Rahn-Campbell



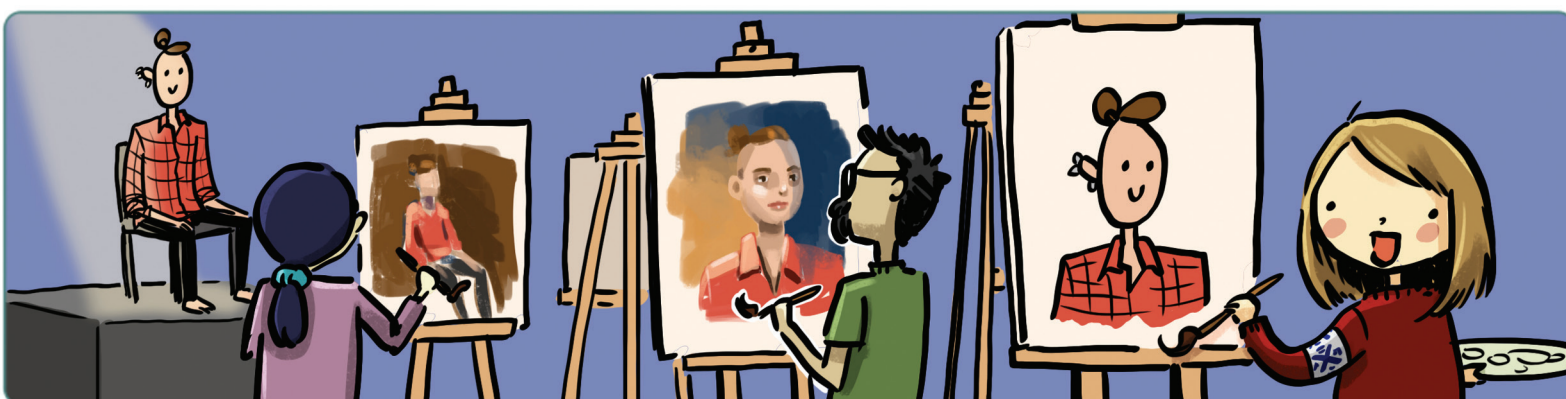
Balloon Ventures by Mangekko Jones

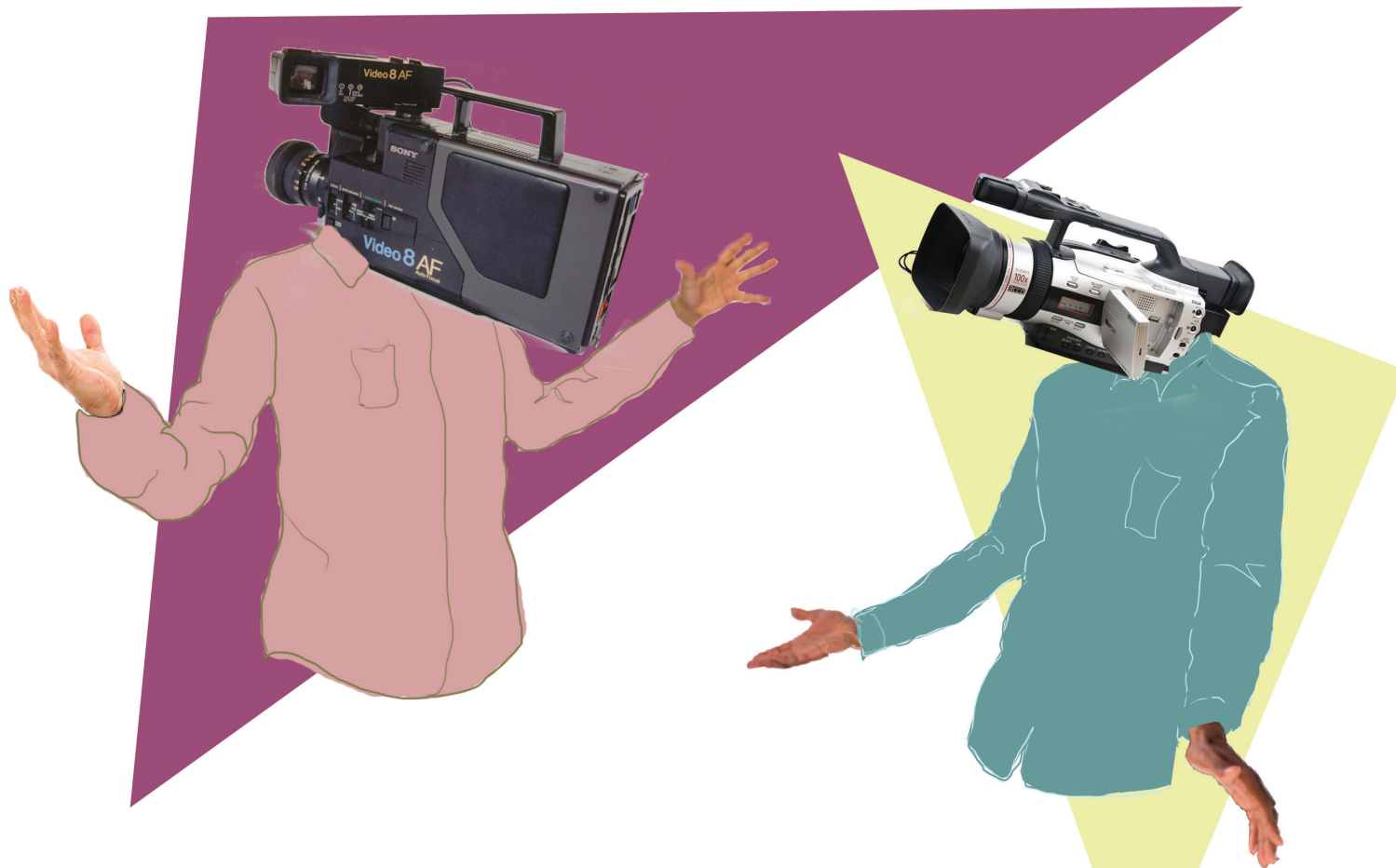


The Adventures of Every-Man by @samdchurchii



Caity Comics by Caity Hall @caityhallart





EDITORIAL

The Link Standards of Media Rhetoric, 2016

MADELEINE GENDREAU

Balance is a loaded word in media these days.

We think we know what it means. We're taught in journalism school that balance is akin to objectivity, and to good journalism. As journalists, our paramount importance, our central function to a working democracy, is in our objective, non-partisan reporting on events.

The sad truth is that media objectivity is a joke—instead, bias is institutionalized into our journalistic rhetoric. The decision makers at corporate media cater to people who look like them—namely white people who are usually male. As such, this demographic doesn't necessarily self-educate on progressive politics in terms of race, gender, and other topics.

A lack of understanding on complex issues like these will and does lead to problematic, "objective" reporting.

With this in mind, *The Link* has outlined a few areas requiring a redefining of balance, and a refocusing of efforts for the coming year. Some media resolutions, if you will, so that in 2016, the media might shift itself back toward representation of truth, and away from sponsorship of corporate policy.

Sexual Assault

In May, *The Ottawa Sun* published a piece on the assault of a 12-year-old girl by her gym teacher. The piece ran with the headline, "Tryst with girl, 12, gets coach 5 months in jail." The article, which described them as a "star-crossed pair," gave heavy credence to the survivor's belief that her abuser was a friend, a trusted confidant.

The coverage crafted an image of a lovers' plight, unfairly ended by a heartless justice system, removing the context and ignoring the fact that a child is unsuited for emotionally healthy sexualized relationships. *The Sun* published a reductive view of sexual assault as a non-serious, individualized crime, rather than an intensely traumatic product of institutionalized power dynamics.

As journalists, we shape our community's conversation over issues such as assault, and it is a disservice to the people we work to inform to participate in the perpetuation of rape culture. Instead, we have to shift toward a media consent culture that both recognizes rape as violence, not sex, and contextualizes sexual assault as a widely prevalent result of attitudes, power dynamics and institutions within all communities. Framing assault stories with

reductive language dishonours the survivors' stories, discourages them from acknowledging their traumas and normalizes the violent nature of rape.

Race and Gender

The Toronto Star published a story last March featuring a new ghee shop in the city—ghee being an ancient form of clarified butter that originated in India. The new owner of the shop? A white woman. The piece's hook was that she was a former model turned local business owner. Not only did this woman profit from a cultural food tradition found in a plethora of local Indian grocery stores, she also did so while wearing a sari.

We don't claim to be without fault in this issue either. In November 2015, *The Link* wrote a story about Montreal's annual "Take Back the Night" march. In the story, we misidentified someone as "he" when they preferred the pronoun "they." The mistake occurred after a rewrite during a four-part editing process—we assumed when we shouldn't have.

Moral of these stories—let people of colour and members of the LGBTQ community tell their stories as often as possible, if they so desire. If they can't (or don't want to), listen

carefully and make sure you understand fully. Fight your inherent biases. Media is an old white cis-hetero male industry. This culture permeates into the day-to-day editorial decisions about who and what to cover, and how.

Mainstream media needs to prioritize hiring from marginalized groups. Representation is just as important as ever. It seems obvious, but who better to write about systemic issues than those who understand them first-hand? It's clear that many people from more privileged groups don't quite comprehend cultural appropriation and identity politics yet.

Final Thoughts

We, the media, hold massive sway over the nature and direction of our national conversations. If we operate without consideration, without independence from policy or outside pressure, we remove our ability to honestly, positively inform a democratic populace. Instead, we become a de facto tool of disingenuous propaganda, as useful as the hand of a dictator. We must refuse to perpetuate disinformation, we must reject indoctrination, we must illuminate authentically and choose our words wisely.

THE LINK

Volume 36, Issue 16
Tuesday, Jan. 12, 2016
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The Link is published every Tuesday during the academic year by The Link Publication Society Inc. Content is independent of the university and student associations (ECA, CASA, ASFA, FASA, CSU). Editorial policy is set by an elected board as provided for in *The Link*'s constitution. Any student is welcome to work on *The Link* and become a voting staff member.

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Letters to the editor are welcome. All letters 400 words or less will be printed, space permitting. The letters deadline is Friday at 4:00 p.m. *The Link* reserves the right to edit letters for clarity and length and refuse those deemed racist, sexist, homophobic, xenophobic, libellous, or otherwise contrary to *The Link*'s statement of principles.

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TYPESETTING by The Link **PRINTING** by Hebdo-Litho.

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Nov.
10
–
Jan.
30


EXHIBITION



Georges & Guy
Justin Kingsley

Jan.
11
and
14


FILM



Canada's Top Ten Shorts / Student Shorts
Various directors

Jan.
14


FILM



Ninth Floor
Mina Shum

Jan.
15
–
16

FILM




OUR PICK
♥

Montreal Premiere
Tharlo
Pema Tseden

Jan.
16

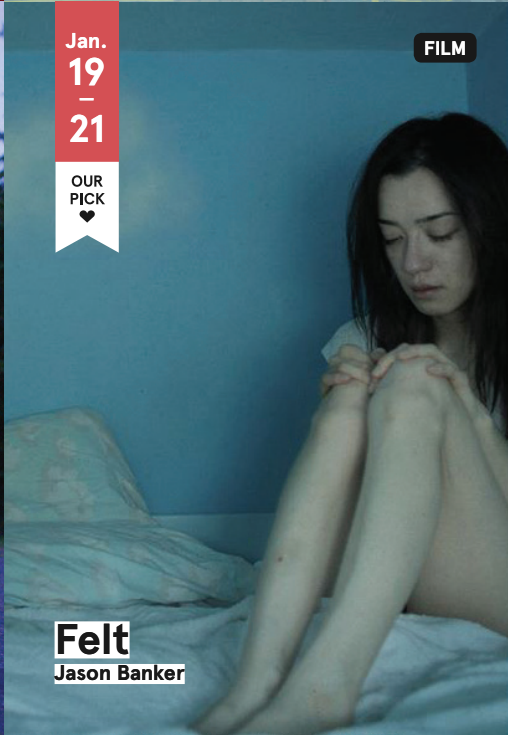
FILM



Sleeping Giant
Andrew Cividino

Jan.
19
–
21

FILM




OUR PICK
♥

Felt
Jason Banker


Jan.
18
–
Mar.
30

INSTALLATION



Virtual Reality Garden
4 experiences surrounding 21st century challenges

SPECIAL EVENT

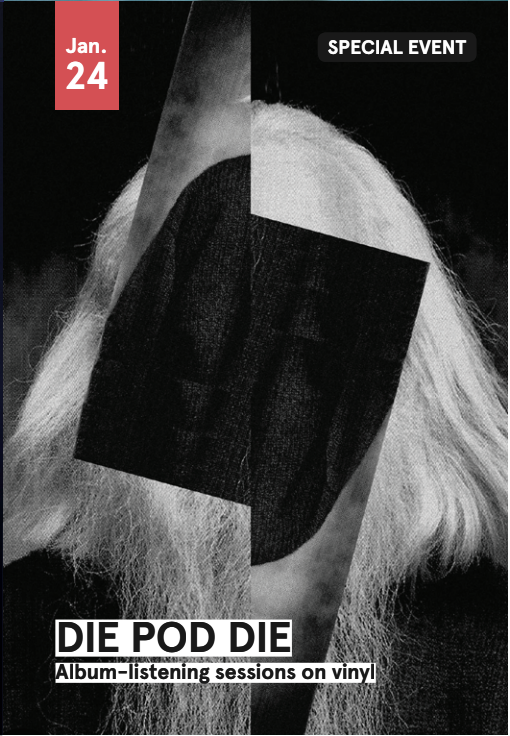


LIGHT THERAPY
BRIGHTEN YOUR WINTER

Le Rhinocéros by Phi
Boutique and Curiosities

Jan.
24

SPECIAL EVENT



DIE POD DIE
Album-listening sessions on vinyl