

LINK

More Grease



Fight for \$15: American living wage movement comes to Montreal.

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Than Glam

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SPORTS

Snow Cricket, It's A Thing

We did our best to study the rules of the sport on the fly at the ninth annual Snow Cricket World Cup. P. 9

EDITORIAL

Homelessness in Canada

Over a million people across North America sleep in the streets. Here's what we think the Canadian government can do to help. P. 15

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PANEL DISCUSSION HELPING PLACE THE DISPLACED:

HOW ARE WE INTEGRATING REFUGEES INTO QUEBEC SOCIETY?

HENRY F. HALL
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Alexandre Paradis, founder of SOS Itinérance, spent time living on the street and knows the dangers of freezing temperatures firsthand.

MATT D'AMOURS

S.O.S. at City Hall

Homeless Organizations Urge Coderre to Get City's Homeless Out of the Cold

MATT D'AMOURS
@MATTDAMOURS

In a McDonald's restaurant near Berri-UQAM metro, Frank Stilaire waits patiently at the counter for his coffee—two creams, one sugar.

He recognizes a homeless man sitting at a nearby table, and walks over to say hello. As he lifts up his head and recognizes Frank, the man's face lights up with a warm, radiant smile.

This sight isn't rare. Frank spent 14 years living in the street, and he knows just about everyone still experiencing that hardship. Now living in his own apartment, Frank spends his days walking the streets of downtown Montreal, handing out sandwiches, gloves and whatever else he can to help the city's homeless.

"It's going to be cold as hell tonight—are you coming to the 'red roof' tonight?" Frank asks. He's referring to the St. Michael's Mission, one of the city's two new emergency warming stations for nights of extreme cold, distinguished by its red metallic roof.

The homeless man answers with a blank, puzzled look. "I've never heard of that," he says. "Where is it?"

Frank gives the man directions, and explains that he'll be able to stay warm indoors overnight, with soup and donuts being provided. They'll even try to find him a new pair of boots.

The homeless man can't contain himself; he hugs Frank in gratitude, and when he pulls away, tears are seen swelling up in his eyes.

Frank tells him not to cry. He knows how important the warming stations are—from experience. Last February, when he was still sleeping in the street, one of Frank's hands slipped out of its glove, quickly causing a severe case of frostbite.

When he was brought to the hospital, the doctors did what they could to help, but it was too late.

They had to amputate most of Frank's fingers.

The reality faced by Montreal's homeless in the winter months is a dangerous one, and now, homeless advocacy groups are ramping up the pressure on city hall to ensure that Frank's experience isn't shared by others on the street.

With this mission in mind, representatives from SOS Itinérance and Solidarité dans la rue met with Montreal Mayor Denis Coderre at city hall on Tuesday, hoping to improve the resources being offered to the homeless on nights of extreme cold.

Among them was Alexandre Paradis, founder of SOS Itinérance—a man who spent time living on the street, and knows the dangers of freezing temperatures firsthand. He says that a top priority for the city should be to improve coordination between Montreal's two warming stations—St. Michael's Mission in Ville-Marie, and l'Anonyme in Hochelaga-Maisonneuve.

"We asked for a coordinator to decide whether both warming stations will open their doors," Paradis said. "Right now it's left to the discretion of each station ... and we're requesting an independent official to manage this."

The call for an independent coordinator comes in the wake of an error that led to the St. Michael's Mission not opening its doors on the night of Jan. 4. Paradis says he contacted the station's director, George Green, throughout the day to verify if it would be open to the homeless overnight. The weather forecast called for a wind chill temperature of around -28 C, and the warming stations were instructed by the city to open in the event of a forecast of -27 C or lower.

Despite the mercury dropping to -28 C that night, St. Michael's remained closed, while l'Anonyme was open and ready to shelter the

city's homeless from the freezing winter air. City hall told *The Link* that they did not blame St. Michael's for the oversight. They stated, "the organization was not able to provide a warming station because of an incorrect interpretation of the temperature." However, the city added that it contacted the mission the following morning to "clarify its expectations with the organization."

The Link made several attempts to contact St. Michael's mission for comment, but the station could not be reached before press time.

In addition to better coordination, Paradis also lobbied the mayor to bring the warming stations' temperature threshold up to -15 C—a request backed up by a Change.org petition with the support of 3,429 people. The city's original standard of -27 C was based on advice from Montreal's Director of Public Health, who affirmed that the danger posed by the winter cold increases sharply at that temperature.

This conclusion is echoed by Environment Canada, which states that "exposed skin can freeze in 10 to 30 minutes" in temperatures ranging from -28 C to -39 C.

While the city would not commit to -15 C, a representative from the mayor's cabinet did point out to *The Link* that "the mayor ... increased the temperature to -20 C out of compassion" in the week prior to the meeting.

City hall added that the warming stations are not meant to replace homeless shelters, but rather serve as a last resort in cases of extreme cold. Paradis says he understands this position, but pointed out that the situation is different for homeless people with pets. "You have to understand that there are companion pets that freeze outdoors at -15 C," he explained. "Warming stations aren't a last resort for the homeless who have pets—it's their only option."

According to Paradis, mayor Coderre indicated that he was open to further discussions about the temperature threshold in the future.

The parties also discussed ways in which the city could better inform its homeless population on the location and availability of the warming stations.

"A homeless person doesn't carry around a barometer—they don't know if it's -15 C or -20 C outside," Paradis said. "There should be concrete measures to reach the homeless and let them know that the [warming stations] are open."

The group of homeless advocates proposed a system whereby the availability and location of the stations would be displayed on public screens, such as those inside the metro system. While no decision was made in the meeting, a repre-

sentative from the mayor's cabinet said they committed themselves "to finding solutions to improve broadcasting this information."

For now, people like Frank Stilaire continue to walk the streets, informing the city's homeless about the warming stations and making sure they're off the streets when the extreme cold poses a serious risk. As mayor Coderre wrote in a recent press release, "we have to find a solution ... it's a question of life or death."

As Frank walks out of the McDonald's into the frigid late-afternoon air, he looks on as the sun begins to descend on the streets of Montreal. He takes a deep breath, and smiles broadly at having found the homeless man inside and telling him about St. Michael's.

For all he knows, he just saved that man's life.



Frank Stilaire's had incisions between what was left of his fingers to increase circulation and improve hand mobility.

Progress for Tomorrow

HIV/AIDS Lecturer Advocates for Safe Injection Sites

KELSEY LITWIN
@KELSEYLITWIN

"Quebec has been, for many years, a beacon of progressive values," said Dr. M-J Milloy, epidemiologist from the University of British Columbia. This statement comes from a time of reflection during his undergrad at McGill, when he saw Quebec as a province that was open to new ideas, eager to embrace new methods of tackling not-so-new issues.

In particular, Milloy focuses his work on one issue that, anecdotally, some say links to Quebec right from its beginning: HIV/AIDS.

He will be returning to Montreal on March 20 to share how he thinks Quebec's progressive nature can help set a new precedent for HIV/AIDS prevention at an upcoming installment of Concordia's HIV/AIDS Public Lecture Series.

The Quebec connection stems from the myth of patient zero, a man named Gaëtan Dugas who—it was speculated—first brought the HIV virus into North America during the early 1980s. He was a flight attendant from Quebec City.

In 1984, a Centers for Disease Control and Prevention study published in the *American Journal of Medicine* explored the origins of HIV in North America, tracing reported cases of the virus back to Dugas. The theory was

that Dugas, who was painted as a sexually promiscuous gay man, brought the virus back with him from Africa and subsequently spread it in illicit underground gay bars and bathhouses.

HIV, short for human immunodeficiency virus, weakens the immune system and can develop into the AIDS after an incubation period, if left untreated. The median incubation period, according to the University of California San Francisco, is estimated at about ten years. The disease, acquired immunodeficiency syndrome or AIDS, will then destroy its host's immune system.

"That host is us," explained Milloy. Even more direly, he elaborated "the AIDS disease leads to death in 100 per cent of cases." Since its discovery in 1981 it has been the cause of death for more than 30 million people globally.

The origin of HIV/AIDS in North America has since been disputed—the patient zero theory was dismissed in 2007, as the *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* published a hypothesis that claimed that the genetic origin of the virus in North America was transmitted from Africa to Haiti in 1966, and then to the U.S. in 1969. What is not disputed is its prominence.

"The tremendous burden of disease is really being borne in Sub-Saharan Africa,"

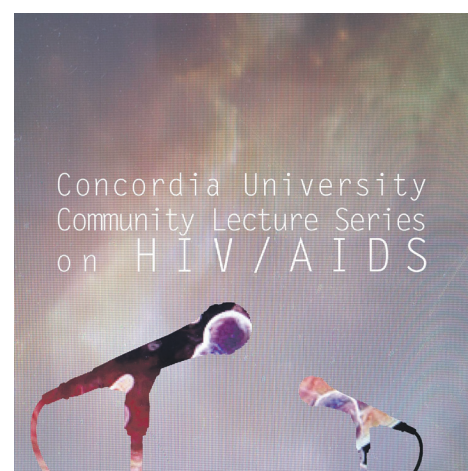
Milloy said. "The death and disruption of AIDS is threatening the stability of their nations. It is obviously different here. What we have in Canada is an epidemic that is really concentrated among particular groups."

These groups, Milloy elaborated, include some of our most vulnerable, including injection-drug users, as the virus is spread through bodily fluids. In this case, blood.

"At particular risk are ... [those] who are unable to access sterile, clean injection equipment and who may be sharing that injection equipment," he said. Safe injection sites became a lot trickier to obtain under the Conservative federal government, said Milloy, who is an advocate of harm-reduction programs and safe injection sites.

The Respect for Communities Act, or Bill C-2, is an amendment to the Controlled Drugs and Substances Act passed in the summer of 2015. The law states that a separate exemption must be created for activities involving the use of substances that were obtained illegally. In practice, this makes it increasingly difficult to implement harm reduction programs and open safe-injection facilities, such as Vancouver's Insite.

Another group affected by this law are the indigenous communities of Canada. According to the Public Health Agency of Canada, the individuals living with HIV/



Concordia University Community Lecture Series on HIV/AIDS Poster. JASON MILAN

AIDS in Aboriginal communities make up 8.9 per cent of the total number of Canadians with HIV. This is despite the fact that indigenous people only make up 4.3 per cent of the population. The agency also reports that injection drug use remains the leading cause of the virus for indigenous carriers.

Safe injection sites, Milloy argues, would show significant positive results, ideally curbing the spread of HIV.

Milloy sees the Montreal audience as one who can embrace these controversial, yet data-driven concepts that will better their society. Looking back at Quebec as an early-adopter of gay marriage, he says, "I think Montreal now has a chance to do things like that again, in terms of providing safe injection sites for its citizens."

Lending a Helping Hand

Concordia Students Push to Sponsor Syrian Refugees

SARAH JESMER

John Christou, 37, isn't just raising money for a Syrian student to come study at Concordia, he's helping pave the way for refugees by providing educational opportunities.

"Aside from protesting or supporting our government doing violent things like dropping bombs or sending soldiers, providing education is the most useful thing we can do in Canada," Christou said.

Christou launched a crowdfunding campaign on Gofundme.com to help cover sponsorship costs for Syrian refugees at the Al Salam school in Turkey that have been selected to come study in Montreal by the Syrian Kids Foundation. He modeled his initiative after the university's, which announced it will cover the costs of five Syrian student's tuition chosen by the SKF.

The crowdfund page was created on Jan. 9 and received multiple donations, raising over \$1,000 in 12 days. It costs \$12,062 to sponsor a refugee to come to Montreal, according to the Quebec government. That number

covers basic living expenses. Christou hopes to raise the money by mid-February, and he's confident he will reach his goal.

Christou earned an undergraduate degree in creative writing, and is currently completing his executive MBA at Concordia. In addition to studying, he focuses his energy into film production.

"I've run a couple of crowd funding pages before [for films that I've produced] so I know a little bit about how they work," he said.

Concordia's Syrian Students' Association put Christou in touch with the Montreal based organization, the SKF.

Concordia students have been responsive to the drive for funding education. Christou said fellow classmates and his program director support his project, even though Concordia is not officially affiliated in the initiative.

For some people, Syria is so remote that they feel as though they are powerless in helping. However, there are ways to help the refugees right at home, from clothing drives, to fundraising for living expenses and more.



John Christou launched a GoFundMe campaign to cover sponsorship costs for Syrian refugees.

SARAH JESMER

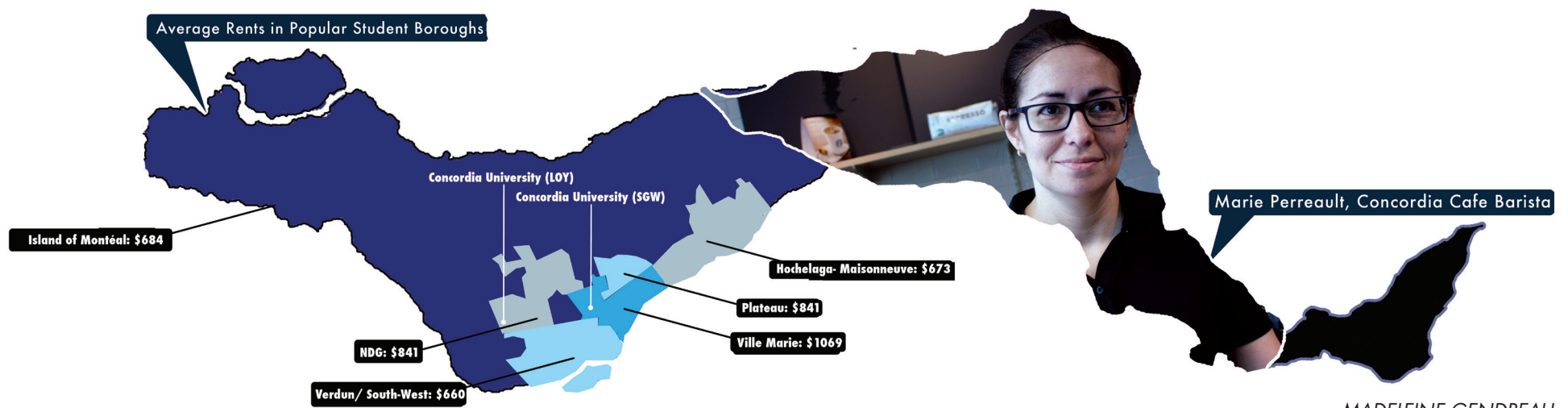
Many individuals have made great efforts to help Syrian refugees comfortably transition into Canadian life.

"If you see the pictures and you read the articles—it's a crime against humanity to let them go on like that without doing anything, without providing refuge," said Concordia student Callum Pfohl.

When Pfohl learned online about the opportunity to donate clothes and winter gear to local clothing centres for refugees, he

initiated his own clothing drive to drop off at donation centers. Pfohl sat for hours in both the Grey Nun's Residence lobby and the lobby of the MB building with a bag waiting to be filled and a sign. He gathered two large bags of clothing and a \$70 donation to spend on food.

These student-led initiatives demonstrate that individuals at Concordia are contributing to efforts, standing as the voice of a student body, eager to make a difference in our city and our nation.



MADELINE GENDREAU

Waging War Against The Minimum

A Fight to Raise Minimum Wage in Montreal

HÉLÈNE BAUER
@HELENEVBAUER

Marie Perreault greets every customer with that-first-week at a new job enthusiasm.

Still unfamiliar with the café in the CJ Building at Concordia's Loyola campus, she struggles to find the price of a croissant on her cheat-sheet next to the cash register.

"I'm going to a concert tonight with my friend," said Perreault, anxious to finish her shift.

A few months ago, a friend invited Perreault to attend a Muse concert at the Bell Centre. At the time, she had saved enough from her minimum wage jobs to pay for her ticket and decided to go.

"I haven't been to a concert in forever," she said. "I need to get home, change and do my makeup."

Perreault works 40 hours a week at \$10.55 per hour. She doesn't receive any tips as Aramark—the food provider hired by the university—doesn't allow tip jars at their locations on campus.

Over the past year, student groups and labour unions affiliated with McGill University have assembled to create the Fifteen and Fair Campaign. It's modeled after the \$15 and Fair campaign that began in New York in 2012 when McDonald's workers asked their employer to raise the minimum wage.

Similarly, the Fifteen and Fair campaign at McGill is demanding that the university institute a \$15 minimum wage for all its workers, adjusted to inflation. They're also asking for workplace practices such as equal access to benefits, health care, parental leave and subsidized transportation, said Molly Swain, president of the Association of McGill University Support Employees.

Studies have shown that "\$15 is the bare minimum for living wage in Montreal," according to Swain.

However, some, like Christian Sigouin, a Concordia economics professor, don't agree that raising the minimum wage is a viable business model. Some theorize that raising the minimum wage would lead to higher dropout rates in high school because students would have more incentive to start working right away, he explained.

"It'd be counterproductive," he remarked.

The goal is that young students get a higher education and enter the workforce in high positions to reverse the trend, Sigouin said.

His theory echoes a Fraser Institute study that came out in 2009, stating there are "significant negative economic costs associated with increasing minimum wages."

As president of AMUSE, Swain's role is to represent the rights of McGill's large workforce. Over the past years, the university has been enforcing austerity measures, which mirror city and province-wide politics. As a result, she's seen a rise in "casual workers."

"Now, the austerity measures have started to chew through the most vulnerable and precarious workers," she said. The university is replacing staff workers with casual workers, paying them as little as half the salary for the exact same labour and allotting them fewer benefits, she continued.

"Part of austerity is to get as much cheap and disposable labour as you can have," Swain said.

Universities much like McGill and Concordia often exist as their own microcosm within the city. As the employer, McGill has the power to raise their minimum wage without having to wait for any laws or regulations from the city, explained Swain.

She graduated last year from McGill with an Honours degree in women's studies and a minor in world religion. Throughout her studies, she relied on her jobs both on and off campus to pay for out-of-province tuition, food and rent. There were times when she had to choose between paying for her rent or buying food, and she often relied on the food bank to get a decent meal.

Working at the union, Swain meets people with similar and sometimes even worse stories than her own.

Nevertheless, the Fraser Institute's research deducted that an increase in the minimum wage "translates into a three per cent to six per cent job loss among this group." The study was focused on young workers between the age of 15 and 24.

It's a common misconception to think that those working minimum wage jobs are students, who live at home with their parents and who are only working for "beer money," said Swain. In fact, she said that's one of the arguments McGill continues to use to justify their low wages.

However, according to the Institut de la statistique du Québec, 50 per cent of employees working minimum wage are not studying, while 61.8 per cent are 25 and over.

That's the case of Perreault, barista at the CJ Loyola café. She's a 43-year old single mother and has been bouncing from one minimum wage job to another for the past two years now and she's struggling to make ends meet.

She started working at the café two weeks ago and hasn't received her first pay cheque yet, but she's planned out her monthly finance and thinks she will be making just enough money to get by.

"The only reason I can afford to live on minimum wage is because I don't have any debts," she said. She still lives pay cheque to pay cheque though, providing for herself and her two children, both of whom are subsidized by the government.

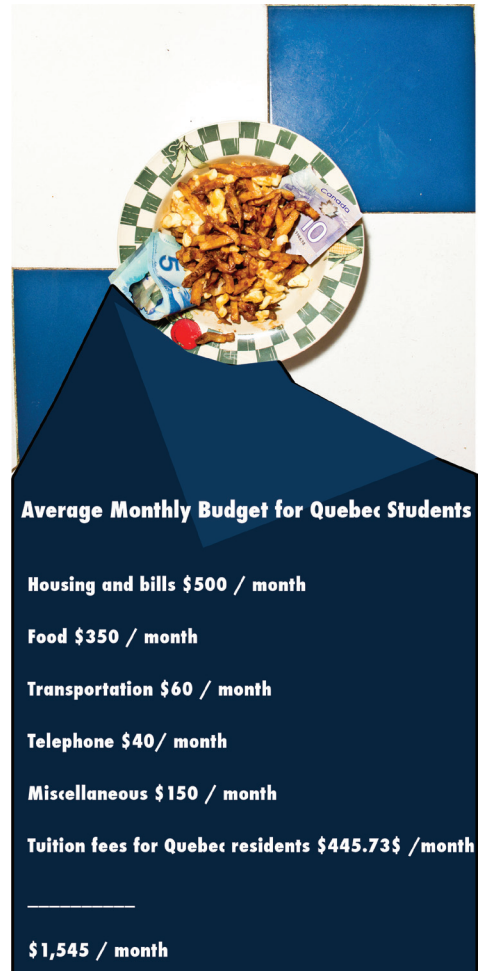
"The only reason I can afford to live on minimum wage is because I don't have any debts."

- Marie Perreault

Before being hired at the café, Perreault was unemployed for a few months. She had just quit her job at The Rail restaurant in Kahnawake, where she was also living. As a Cree First Nations woman working and living on the reserve, she was exempted from paying taxes. However, since Perreault moved into the city, she no longer benefits from this exemption.

Perreault and 453,845 people in Montreal, or 24.6 per cent of the population, are living on a low income. According to Statistic Canada, the low-income cut-off is when a family devotes a larger share of its income on necessities—food, shelter and clothing—than the average family.

"I'm okay now but I can't live an extravagant life," Perreault said.



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Sources: Société canadienne d'hypothèque et de logements, Bureau des étudiants internationaux Université de Montréal, Concordia.ca

Warding Off Winter Woes

Natural Remedies as Alternatives for Cold and Flu Season

AMY HALLORAN
@MSAMYHALLORAN

With the dread of sneezing and coughing that's often synonymous with winter, the first instinct is often to stock up the medicine cabinet with the strongest pharmaceutical drugs.

Often overlooked are the amazing preventative properties of certain natural remedies, which come without the unwanted side effects pharmaceutical drugs can incur.

According to naturopathy student Laurence Couture-Dubé, the biggest advantage of taking natural remedies as opposed to antibiotics is that these plants respect the homeostasis—the maintenance of balance and stability—of bodily functions. They strengthen and nourish the body so that it can heal itself through its own resources. On the other hand, antibiotics, while often necessary in cases of emergency or chronic illness, kill all bacteria, some of which are good and strengthen the immune system.

Advil and Tylenol are also widely used as a response to the first symptoms of a cold or flu. However, these drugs take a toll on our liver and can prevent the body's natural defense mechanism of raising its temperature to kill intruding germs.

Some common conditions that the winter months bring are colds, the flu, sinus and ear infections and whooping cough. More serious infections include bronchitis and pneumonia.

Couture-Dubé, who is finishing her degree at L'Ecole d'Enseignement Supérieur de

Naturopathie du Québec, is also a trained massage therapist and yoga teacher. She cites three categories of medicinal herbs key to naturally staying healthy in the winter months: toning, stimulating and pectoral.

Toning plants, such as cordyceps and astragalus, strengthen the immune system and can be taken all winter long.

Stimulating plants may be the ones most associated with cold prevention and include echinacea, elderberry and usnea. When taken, they activate the body to fight an oncoming cold. They should be taken upon the first appearance of symptoms and for a maximum of one month, in order to avoid exhausting the immune system. The three stimulating plants mentioned above are particularly effective in tincture form.

Pectoral plants heal the respiratory system. Thyme, marshmallow root and mullein are known to strengthen and soothe irritated respiratory tracts. They also kill germs, reduce coughing and clear up mucus.

Any medicinal plant must be taken often and diligently in order to fight infection. In order for them to be most effective, Couture-Dubé recommends taking them every day at the same hour. There are also other ways to stay healthy at this time of year.

"Sleep, plenty of water, warm feet, eating frugally and consuming the occasional vegetable broth are small things that we can do to get back on our feet as quickly as possible," Couture-Dubé said.

Beside teas and tinctures as recipes for a

healthy winter, essential oils can do wonders for congested lungs. Eucalyptus, balsam fir and ravintsara are antiviral, warming and can act as an expectorant. Mix a few drops with water and spray around the room, or take one or two small drops and gently rub them on the affected area.

A workshop about alternative ways to survive the winter was held on Jan. 20 at the Concordia Greenhouse. Speaker Lisa-Francesca Lewak spoke extensively about healing the body by changing diets.

"If we warm ourselves from the inside, we will be hot on the outside," she stated.

She encouraged consumption of warming

foods, such as ginger, and the importance of avoiding raw, "cold" foods, such as salads, to stay healthy at this time of year. Also, she stressed that properly functioning kidneys are vital for good energy levels and are particularly under attack during the cold season.

Lewak recommended taking astragalus, nicknamed "the Great Protector," for kidney health. To explore these natural alternatives to conventional drugs, Le Frigo Vert has many interesting medicinal herbs and supplements in stock, as well as l'Alchimiste en herbe and Carrefour Santé. Quebec-based companies Clef-des-champs, Botanica and St-Francis make blends of herbs to treat specific illnesses.



AMY HALLORAN

CALL FOR CONTRIBUTORS RACE SPECIAL ISSUE

Is mainstream media too white?

Stories about people of colour are often seen as niche and written stereotypically through a systemic racist lens.

The Link is publishing a Race Special Issue on Feb. 9 to tell stories you may not normally see, and talk about issues white media may be too afraid—or too ignorant—to discuss.

It's not too late to contribute—we still want to hear your stories and ideas. *The Link* wants to be a platform to amplify your voice.

Deadline for submissions is Jan. 29 at 12 P.M.

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Or drop by *The Link* office Mon-Fri @ 1455 de Maisonneuve Blvd. W Room H-649



Suzanne Clement and Paul Doucet as Maya and David in *Early Winter* by Michael Rowe.

COURTESY LAURENT GUERIN

Early Winter: A Freezing Look Into Marital Drama

Director Michael Rowe Discusses Chilling Realism in Film

AMBRE SACHET
@AMBRESACHET

The awkwardness settles in with a close-up on an intimate slice of life—a non-reciprocal orgasm. The scene is set in an isolated house somewhere in Quebec. Devoid of communication and music, *Early Winter* is a sharp and glacial experience.

Australian director Michael Rowe's spine-chilling third feature film, which won the 2015 Venice Days Award, is as motionless as it is intense—it's no wonder the Canadian release of the film is set for Jan. 29.

Rowe's latest film is the story of a complete rediscovery of love and commitment. In *Early Winter*, he juggles the different emotional stages and seasons that can be found in a long-term relationship. A discussion of Canada's long winters with Serge Noel, the film's producer, planted the idea in Rowe's head.

"The pressure of a long winter on a long-term relationship must be a way to push things over the edge," Rowe said. "It was interesting to explore that."

The main characters, David and Maya, are a couple like any other. David's willingness to give himself over completely to his family would send shivers down anyone's spine. After moving away from her native Russia, Maya tries to compensate for having

no frame of reference in a new culture by amassing every latest gadget. Surrounded by a messy apartment and overwhelming technology, the relationship soon slips into an icy silence.

"I think that society, as we perceived it up until 30 years ago, was based on personal contact, and going out in the streets and now people feel like by putting a 'like' on Facebook they've done their duty," Rowe said. Maya's obsessive materialistic needs are destroying what's left of the couple's bond.

After the absence of words—dialogue is minimalist—comes the absence of music. Rowe's distinctive style is an intrusive approach to relationships, a shivering way of getting to the core with the human condition, without the artificial jelly found in cheesy comedies.

"I think music is used generally to intensify emotions that the audience feels, and I like to be as purist in that sense as I can," Rowe asserted. "I believe that cinema is constituted of good acting, and a good script. Putting music over the top is cheating."

The confined space and sound in which the characters are trapped is suffocating. Rowe explores the inability to communicate from a minimalist, almost visceral, perspective.

"I think we have been mis-educated in expecting to have everything explained to

us, and I don't believe in narratives that do that. It's artificial," Rowe affirmed. "I choose to explain the minimum. I wanted the audience to feel what they [the characters] feel, the frustration."

When asked about the film's protagonists, Rowe explained that some people in real life can be more likeable than others. He flirts with documentary style by staying as close as he can to the reality of human interaction.

The experienced lead actors—Suzanne Clément and Paul Doucet—are a winning combination. They deliver a dazzling performance of a couple's highway to hell. But by dawdling on the acting and the exhaustion of the relationship with long-take shots, Rowe's hallmark, the story takes times to settle.

A closer look at a frigid Maya reveals that barging into a character's life doesn't mean laying her bare emotionally. While David—a jealous man weakened by a heavy past—is in freefall, Maya sinks into the contemplation of her own downfall.

Rowe's philosophy of cinema is tied to honesty, especially when it comes to working with the actors.

"I don't believe in rehearsing, but we try to create an organic and creative process, by talking about the characters, the script and our personal lives," he said.

Winning the Venice Days Award, *Early*

Winter is a source of pride for the 44-year-old Australian director.

"It's always gratifying on such personal films that are so close to my own frustrations and pains to know that it's not just me, that things find resonance in the emotions and hearts of other people," Rowe explained. "That's what the prize represents for me."

After his films *Leap Year* in 2010 and *The Well* in 2013, Rowe closes what he refers to as his trilogy of solitude with an emblematic definition of the Western contemporary loneliness.

"Loneliness is one of the most difficult and irreducible conditions of the human being, and many manifestations of art are based in loneliness, particularly cinema," Rowe emphasized.

His key themes, isolation and immigration, converge in a bilingual cinematographic experience where both Clément and Rowe had to cope with the language barrier. Rowe described it as a challenge to work both in French and English in a Quebec context.

The character David illustrates the overall misunderstanding of this *Early Winter* with one of the most powerful lines on long-term relationship: "Quand ça fait un bout de temps qu'on est ensemble, c'est normal qu'il y ait moins de passion... c'est là que l'engagement commence."



Catherine Lafortune helps a participant measuring the plank at a woodworking workshop in Helios Makerspace on Jan. 24. PHOTOS OCEAN DEROUCHIE

Build Your Own

Woodworking Workshop in a Montreal Makerspace

OCEAN DEROUCHIE
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Wandering into Helios, you can't be sure of what to expect. It might not be the tour led by a volunteer, or the big dog jumping up excitedly at the counter—both are a welcome surprise. Any ambiguous predictions are probably representative of the reality that very few people know what elements comprise a makerspace.

Helios Makerspace, a non-profit workshop in St. Henri, is a genuine treasure for handy-people and craft lovers alike. It offers access to tools and the space for anyone to work on their DIY projects. To use the workshop, you must become a member, but after that, you can use it and the tools to your heart's content, so long as you bring your own supplies. Members also get to participate in workshop tutorials led by knowledgeable volunteers.

The workshop space offers many tools for its members, such as a 3D printer, laser cutters and sewing machines.

"Helios is dedicated to providing a space for people to execute their projects," said Cedric Breton Daigle, a council member of Helios. "We want to give them the space, the tools and the expertise. The volunteers come from various backgrounds, and depending on when you come, you have different people who can help you in different areas."

Helios is the brainchild of a few former Concordia students.

"The founders used a workshop in Concordia, where they had access during their studies," Breton Daigle explained. "But once they graduated they didn't have access to it

anymore. They wanted to provide a space just like it for the public, so they thought of starting Helios."

The makerspace puts a large focus on building a community.

"We have a big community of woodworkers in our workshop, and have many people coming back over and over," Breton Daigle said. "By slowly gathering a big community around it, we try to make it more than a space."

While the concept is considered a hit by those who know about it, the biggest issue Helios faces is that most are unaware of its existence. As Breton Daigle explained, someone who has an idea, but not the space or the tools to execute it, may not even know what a makerspace is.

"Maybe someone across the street is wondering how to make a library, but he doesn't have the space or the band saw. He has the

need, but he just doesn't know that this concept exists," he said.

Helios offers many workshops that focus on teaching people how to use the tools to make such visions a reality. This past Sunday, Montreal-based woodworker and teacher Catherine Lafortune teamed up with the makerspace to bring Toucher du Bois! an intro to woodworking class.

Lafortune teaches at the École nationale du meuble et de l'ébénisterie, where she also studied for three years.

With a group of six, she went through the safety-related elements of the equipment. For some, this was their first brush with a table or band saw. In the woodshop, Lafortune's eyes were bright. She was comfortable in the setting. Her enthusiasm for the craft only served to amplify her abilities as an instructor.

"Ebenisterie means woodworking; it's a

really French word from le temps des rois. 'Eben' is a kind of wood. They were making really nice furniture with eben," she said. "So really, it means 'fine woodworking.'"

"Now, there are a lot of people interested in learning things; in building their own furniture," Lafortune added. According to her, this is how people can be more independent from industry. She said there has been a big boom when it comes to people wanting to learn the art of woodworking.

After getting the safety low-down, the group tried the table saw. Lafortune worked through all of the equipment before the group branched off to work individually.

Cutting, drilling and sanding soon began. Once everyone got into the groove of things, the process seemed fluid and fun. People chatted and worked together to create what would be small shelves with four golden hooks.

Within a few hours people were adding the finishing touches to their projects. Meanwhile, those from the next class began the shuffle into the lively workshop, looking excited as they studied the morning group's completed pieces.

The workshop was easy to follow, and very hands-on. For anybody thinking about a project—whether it be a tea rack, an end table or even curtains—Helios is the place to go. Passionate staff and volunteers willing to share their knowledge make creating your own projects very accessible.

Lafortune's classes sold out due to popular demand, however, Helios attests on Facebook that they will indeed be back with more. In the meantime, check out the makerspace at 137 St. Ferdinand St., suite 270.



Breaking Into the Icy World of Snow Cricket

A First-Timer's World Cup Cricket Story

The ninth Snow Cricket World Cup took place in Jeanne-Mance Park on Jan. 23, 2016.

NIKOLAS LITZENBERGER

CARL BINDMAN
@CARLBINDMAN

It's Saturday afternoon, and the Australians are everywhere. There's one crouched behind me, nine spread across the field, and one straight ahead, whipping a ball at my face.

I swing at the ball. I miss, hard. I yank my shoulder, scream in pain and close my eyes as everything goes white. Cringing, I drop the bat, and it clatters to the frozen plywood—I let my team down in a double-whammy of physical and emotional pain. My eyes open but everything stays white—because this is snow cricket.

Snow cricket is Angus Bell's invention. A Scottish expat living in Montreal, the idea came to him ten years ago while touring through the former Soviet Bloc, writing a book on extreme cricket playing.

"I played cricket on ice inside a Soviet missile factory against the Estonian national team," Bell says. "I thought, when we come back to Montreal with six months of winter, it's a perfect fit."

This year's perfect fit is the ninth Snow Cricket World Cup, and Bell says that around 70 people are here in our corner of Jeanne-Mance Park for the event. He gestures across the snow at the three cricket fields, made of plastic wickets and plywood boards. Colourful snowsuits stand out against the white as people from all over the world chase frozen tennis balls—the only thing that bounces in this weather.

"There are some very loose alliances here," Bell says of the teams. He's wearing a kilt over his snow pants, a St. Andrew's Cross jersey over his jacket and is on what could be called the non-English British people team: Celts, Gauls, Scots, Welsh and a South African. There's also the Canada-U.S. team, the actually-English English team, the Asian Bloc (Indians and a Brit born in Hong-Kong), New Zealand and Australia.

The Asian Bloc won last year's tournament, so I join their team in the second match against Canada-U.S. They're short a player, and I can't figure out how cricket works just by watching—besides, Bell says the tournament is for beginners too. There's just something about playing in snowsuits and boots that makes everyone bad at sports.

Pratik Joshi, the Asian Bloc captain, directs me to stand near the Canadian batsman, and explains the basics. Just like baseball, the idea is to get full coverage of the field. If the batsman hits the ball as it is bowled or pitched, then we fielders have to catch it and send it to the bowler or the wicket-keeper. If the bowler or wicket-keeper catches it and hits the wicket before the batsman runs to the wicket, the batsman is out. If the batsman gets there first, they get a point. Simple right? Except it's not.

See, there are two wickets: the one you bowl at and the batsman runs from, and the one you bowl from and the batsman runs at. There's another batsman, who runs to the first wicket after the first batsman bats, to get more points. Also if the bowler hits the wicket, the batsman is out, but the bowler only has ten bowls before they have to be substituted out of the game for another player, and before I understand any of it, the batsman hits the ball and it lands in front of me.

I dive into the snow and throw the tennis ball to the wicket-keeper, Pratik. I don't know if that was right. The Canadian batsman doesn't run. Nothing happens. But the team says to me, "good fielding," so I guess it was okay? I dust the snow off my jacket. I can get used to this.

The bowler bowls again and the batsman bats, but he misses the tennis ball and promptly crumples to the wood, screaming. He has twisted his knee, maybe dislocated it. We gather around him. Somebody calls an ambulance.

Yes, cricket is complex and intense and, like

any sport, potentially dangerous, but this is snow cricket, and we're here to have fun, so we help him to the stands and we keep playing.

Gradually, I learn the ebb and flow of the game, when to run and when to stand and when to go get your jacket because it's really cold out when you're not chasing balls. I learn to bowl—I'm not bad at it. I learn to bat—I'm very bad at it. I learn to run—I'm very good at it.

Time passes, and we beat the Canadians handily. I feel no remorse or pity for my former country folk; I'm team Asia now, there's no looking back. Our next match is against England, and when I bowl I get a wicket—an "out"—against a tall fellow named Felix. Never mind that he gets me out when I'm batting, I got an Englishman out at cricket!

And yes, I do blow out my shoulder in our blowout against Australia, but our opponents showed real concern and compassion as I limped away from the wicket. Everybody wants everybody else to have fun.

"Are you alright mate?" somebody asks me. No, but I think I will be. After all, I've made a team's worth of new friends and got to enjoy a beautiful sunny day I otherwise would have watched through a window.

Bell calls snow cricket "the gateway drug to real cricket," and I understand why. Talking to one of my teammates who was born in India, I feel like part of something bigger. This is a sport that linked the largest empire in history, and the game connects people like my teammate to their home countries and culture. By playing it in the snow, he can link his sport to his homes, old and new. Plus, meat pies for lunch.

The best part of snow cricket is that everyone is welcome—from beginners like me to strategists like Pratik, to whoever the slugger on the Australian team was. Bell runs an indoor cricket centre and an outdoor cricket league, too. And, like snow cricket, he says there's just one rule: cricket for all.

Well there are actually hundreds of rules, but that's the only one that matters.





Montreal Canadiens legend Yvan Cournoyer (left), Officer Pierre Brochet (middle left), Tom Quinn (middle right), and Elise Couture, the wife of the late Jean Beliveau were all on hand for the Soirée des Athlètes for Special Olympics Québec held on Jan. 21, 2016. ANDREJ IVANOV

One Special Night

Athletes, Celebrities and More Celebrate in Special Olympics Quebec Soirée

SAFIA AHMAD
@SAFSOTG

When co-ambassador Alexandre Bilodeau asked swimmer Valmor Quitich his thoughts after winning Athlète masculin émérite, the Joliette native replied with pride.

"I'm pretty happy to have won," he said.

Four other athletes expressed this same sentiment as the night unfolded at the Molson Brewery, where the Soirée des Athlètes for Special Olympics Quebec was being held last Thursday.

Founded in 1981 by Noella Douglas, SOQ is part of Special Olympics Canada, which was created in 1968. This annual event celebrates the accomplishments throughout the course of the previous year of Quebec athletes with intellectual deficiencies.

The award ceremony was followed by the induction of four prominent individuals into the Special Olympics Quebec Partners' Hall of Fame for their contributions towards the organization.

Among the honoured figures were Montreal Canadiens legend Yvan Cournoyer, president of RDS Gerry Frappier, Laval police department director Pierre Brochet, and former president and Chief Operating Officer of Forzani Group Tom Quinn. The night ended with a tribute to the late Jean Beliveau, who was highly involved with the organization before his passing.

Despite the presence of many prominent sports and business figures, the spotlight was on the Special Olympics athletes, whose accomplishments and work ethic were praised by those in attendance at the gala.

"Sports builds confidence, and I'm an example of it," said Hall-of-Famer and former Montreal Alouettes quarterback Anthony Calvillo. "I was a very shy kid, but sports gave me a lot of confidence. It taught me how to get along with other people and to be a part of a big team."

"The individuals here right now are doing the exact same thing. They are living the dream, competing and [learning] how to be in a team atmosphere, and that goes a long way," Calvillo added.

The movement to have individuals with intellectual disabilities take part in sports is based on research performed by Dr. Frank Hayden in the 1960s. His research proved that participants would benefit from sports by improving their overall fitness and motor skills. Moreover, these athletes have also demonstrated an improved social life and increased independence.

"The athletes will have no problem [approaching] you, talking to you," said Jacques Blais, who is on the SOQ's board of directors, "whereas in the first years of the movement, they were extremely shy and not as outgoing as they are now."

In the past year, Special Olympics Quebec has increased the number of young athletes to over 5,500, which they see as a step in the right direction.

"It's been pretty amazing to see the growth across the world," Calvillo said. "You would have never seen the Special Olympics on TV every single time. Now it [has] become a tradition and they're trying to improve on that by getting more athletes and going to different locations."

Their growing recognition has been supported by several fundraising efforts throughout the years. Pierre Brochet, who also serves as a member of the board of directors, is in charge of many such events. For instance, the Law Enforcement Torch Run is an organization of police officers from all over North America and they develop activities to raise money.

In 2014, the Quebec edition raised \$156,532. For Brochet, the ultimate goal is to make people realize that individuals with intellectual disabilities are just like everyone else.

"At the beginning, when you talk to people with intellectual disabilities, it's difficult. But once you start to get to know them, you understand where they are coming from," Brochet said. "This is what we're trying to achieve when we organize fundraisers."

As much as the night was about celebrating athletes for their accomplishments, the importance of parental support was also highlighted.

"It's not easy for the parents because they have to work very hard," Cournoyer said. "When I was young and my parents helped me to [become] a hockey player, they [gave me] a lot of support."

The program has indirectly helped parents cope and provide them with resources to help their children succeed.

"He's taken me on a great journey," said mother and Special Olympics swimming coach Cathy Perez, whose son Andrew has autism. He was a finalist for male athlete of the year at the event.

"We've seen the changes in his attitude, and the social aspect of his life," Perez said. "I also

saw a great sibling bonding with his brother and his sister," she added.

Jacques Blais and the rest of Special Olympics Quebec want to keep increasing recognition and distinction. The organization is often confused with the Paralympics, which is for individuals with physical, rather than intellectual, disabilities.

"We do have athletes that have physical disabilities, but the first notion is they must have mental disability or a dysfunctional disability," Blais said.

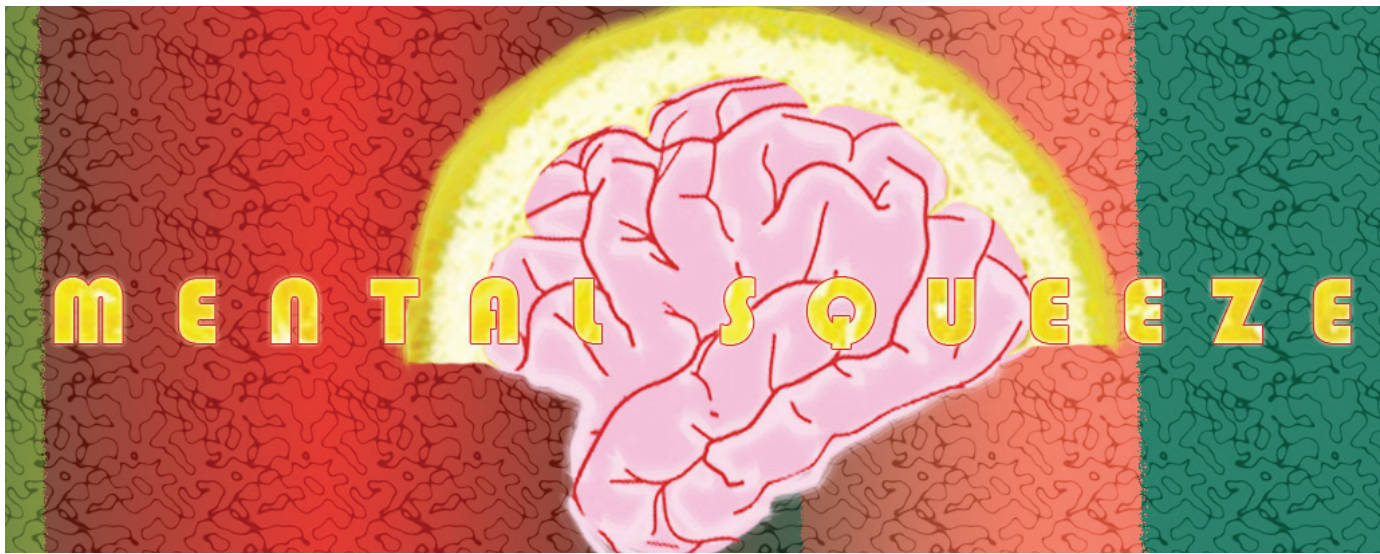
While the athletes have some time to soak up their night, they will be looking forward to the Special Olympic Games in Corner Brook, Newfoundland this coming March. While the desire to win and compete is ever-present, the number one goal is to have fun.

"I think that whether you're playing sports [for] the Special Olympics [or for] the Montreal Canadiens, the main point, now that I have retired, [is realizing that it's] only a game," Bilodeau said. "I think these guys are just having fun, while trying to achieve [their] goals, dreams of winning and competing against each other on an equal field of play. For me, that's what sports is all about."

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BUSY BEES

Drama, victory, and heartbreak, and that's just from the Stingers men's basketball teams last two games. We've got you covered in the week that was in Concordia Stingers.



Addiction: Not All in the Family

MATTHEW ALLISON

I remember the first time I encountered alcohol without parents present.

It was a very casual setting at my friend's vacant house after the last day of grade seven, and I remember being terrified of the murky liquid in the orange Smirnoff Ice bottle that was being passed around, hoping that it would be finished by the time it got to me.

When the half-full bottle finally made it to me, I took a sip of the toxic-sweet liquid and passed it back. No big deal, and three sips later I found myself feigning drunk, feeling a little older and a whole lot cooler. That would be my only encounter with alcohol for the next three years, and it would be the last time I was blissfully ignorant on the subject.

My education on the topic of alcoholism and addiction began after those three years, when one night as dinner was being prepared, my sister gathered my brother, my mom, my dad and me in the kitchen and tearfully admitted her struggles with alcohol. At 15 I knew next to nothing about addiction, other than a stereotypical ideal of what an addict would look like, with a very clear image of an old, beer-bellied and bearded homeless man slumped over outside somewhere. In my mind, my 21-year-old sister, a model who excelled in university while taking six courses and also interning, was not who I pictured to be an alcoholic. I knew young people drank, and I knew it was considered cool to drink, but I definitely did not think anyone could be classified as being an addict at such a young age.

This thought is not exclusively reserved for my younger self, as education on addiction is hugely lacking. It is rarely discussed in school, other than maybe a brief mention in health class, in which the teachers opt to scare students from trying alcohol or drugs, rather than actually educating them on being responsible.

Something that is not taught in school is how to know when the young, innocent-seeming phase of experimentation and drinking to excess no longer qualify as just a phase, but a full-blown, life altering addiction, or how we can avoid it if possible.

For most people, binge drinking and partying is just a phase. There is no way of knowing which kids will have the predisposition for addiction that is often set off by

drinking or using drugs.

"Substance abuse and addiction can look the same to the outsider, but there is an invisible line that separates the two," says Amy Allison, my sister, now six years sober and an addictions counsellor in Calgary.

"Once a person crosses over into addiction, they are unable to ever return to using substances in a safe way, as the 'pleasure centre' of their brain has been permanently altered." She also says that abuse becomes addiction when the person is unable to stop their use despite consequences, such as negative impacts on important relationships, health problems or other important aspects of one's life.

The topic of youth experimenting with drinking and drugs is strangely held as an abnormal norm, something that parents deem both taboo, but also as a rite of passage and many turn a blind eye to. It is something that is greatly romanticized and glamorized in youth culture, partly due to its frowned-upon nature, but it also lacks the edification that young people desperately need.

Alcoholism is in part due to genetics, but this doesn't mean that people who are not genetically predisposed to addiction are exempt from one day battling the disease.

William Jubb is a great example of someone who has battled addiction from a very early age. Being over ten years sober now, he owns his own construction business. His addiction started very early, as he started smoking weed when he was just seven-years-old. This developed through the years, ultimately resulting in a life threatening crack addiction, which he dealt with by going to rehab.

"Of course it wasn't my choice to go, but I was so deep into my addiction that I wouldn't have been able to make that decision at the time," Jubb says. "Now I attend weekly meetings, even after ten years of sobriety. I think I still would have become an addict if they taught us better about addiction when I was in school, but I may have gotten help earlier if they had."

I am pretty confident that had it not been for my sister and her addiction impacting and educating me, I myself would suffer from addiction. There was no other source that warned me of the dangers of alcohol abuse found in today's youth culture—how else would I get such knowledge on the serious ongoing theme of addiction that

many people think will never happen to them? However, this higher education that I acquired does not mean that I practice abstinence from the bottle, rather it makes me drink smarter, know my limits and that drinking has consequences greater than the inevitable hangover—something that much of youth sum up to fairy tales or things that can never happen to them.

Phylicia Tran, a 22-year-old recent graduate from the University of Calgary believes that we are currently living in an alcohol-driven youth culture, but that it is completely normal.

"I do think excessive drinking and partying is a phase, but the rate and age at which people grow out of it varies. I have friends that are 22 who are already over partying, and I have 40-year-old friends who still party more than I do. It's all relative," Tran says. "However, I think it is no longer a phase and is actually addiction when you can't imagine your life without alcohol or drugs."

Funnily enough, this education that my whole family inevitably received was not enough to inhibit addiction rearing its ugly head once more; it has not yet been two years that my brother Chris, the person whom we thought we didn't have to worry about, became the topic of discussion, and an intervention had been arranged. His decline into addiction had happened at such a slow pace that it caught us all off guard.

Two weeks later, we sat in a circle and intervened, resulting in his half-year stay at the British Columbia rehab centre, Edgewood.

Now sober, Chris sums it up to a perfect storm of a bad breakup, high anxiety and a genetic predisposition that threw him over the edge. Having chosen to not participate in drinking or drug use in high school, it was when Chris went to university that he started experimenting.

"It started off as an adventure, something unknown, something I wasn't supposed to do, that was very exciting. I had the idea in my head that university was the time to do all this partying. I found that my priorities had changed slowly over time, so slowly that I didn't notice it," says Chris. He goes on to say that the basis of addiction rocked him to his core.

"I was no longer confident in my future. There was a lot of fear, guilt and shame over failing at post-secondary," he says. "It was no longer a choice. It was no longer a party."

Letter



GSA Needs to
Take a Stand on Austerity

The Graduate Students Association will hold another general assembly on Jan. 29, 2016. During the GA, a by-election will be conducted for the position of VP Academic/Advocacy and 6 director positions. Despite the problems in previous GAs, this is a very important assembly to attend. Please do not be discouraged from taking an active role, or from expressing your democratic right.

Besides by-elections, we have proposed bylaw changes for a compulsory audit, which would help ensure that GSA has more reliable and transparent financial statements.

We have been able to implement some changes in the GSA that were called for by most candidates that won in the winter 2015 elections. However, change is difficult to achieve, especially when plans are sabotaged to resist change. We have had plans to start a student run café—that would provide free coffee and subsidized snacks to graduate students—stopped as well. Our plan to develop a platform to connect graduate students with job opportunities was frustrated.

Students voted in a referendum in 2011 to establish an advocacy center, for which they pay \$2.50 per semester. We set up an advocacy center in the GSA house but were not able to have a motion to create the required staff positions passed during the Jan. 9 council meeting. One director voted against this motion and a few directors abstained from this important vote, which required a 2/3 majority.

We conducted interviews to hire researchers to assist in research to evaluate the impact of budget cuts on graduate education, but their hiring was delayed because of a conflict of interest situation. During the Oct. 4, 2015 council meeting, our council chair, Ribal Abi Raad was hired for one of the researcher positions, despite the fact that there were better-qualified candidates that applied. The motion to hire Ribal was based on the opinion of one councillor. The researchers were supposed to work independently on different aspects of austerity. I am not aware if any work has been done by the candidate who was hired. I was told not to interfere in a research plan that I came up with.

We need to take a stand on austerity, and this assembly would provide an opportunity for this. General assemblies gives graduate students the opportunity to participate in the affairs of their association, ask their elected representatives questions and voices their opinions on various issues.

—Alex Ocheoha

Nice Tat, Bro

Thinking About Inking in a Cultural Context

HANNA JOY FAROOQ

I always wanted a tattoo for the sake of it, as a kind of rite of passage on my journey to becoming more me. But—partly because of what I considered the shallowness of my desire, partly because of laziness—I never followed through.

At 16, it was Frank Zappa with his middle finger wedged high up in his nose. My friends more or less told me to stand in the corner and stay there until I learned to keep such ideas to myself. Whatever, I didn't know Zappa's work anyway.

At 18, it was a big black phoenix on the inner part of my forearm. The tattoo artist man told me you don't walk in for something like that half an hour before closing. Whatever, man, I kind of wanted a peacock anyway.

At 20, it was some henna-style thing my friend designed. Whatever, I don't even remember it.

In his article "If Tattoos Could Talk," published in *Psychology Today*, Dr. Kirby Farrell, a professor studying human behaviour,

explains the social and personal significance of tattoos. He says that the tattoo, as a symbol and practice, has power.

"The tattoo implies you're in an eternal present, willing to change your body permanently, not worried that the image will eventually become an embarrassing cliché or a maze of wrinkles on grandma's tired skin," he writes. Basically, YOLO.

Mimi Santiago, whose real name she asked to withhold, got her first tattoo five years ago. She was 17. Now, the script which reads "Beauty is Beast" and runs down her right ribs, seems too simple.

"I do still love it, [but] I want to add more to it. Maybe add a peacock or a couple of hummingbirds," she said.

The act of getting a tattoo was once counter-cultural, a tangible expression of non-conformity. They were associated with sailors, with rebels, with jailbirds and with bikers. Today, according to a 2010 study by the PEW Research Centre, 38 per cent of millennials—people currently 18 to 29 years old—claim to have at least one tattoo.

"Tattoos spotlight the individual but also signify membership in the group of similarly marked folks," says Farrell. A tattoo, then, is simultaneously a mark of one's individuality and one's like-mindedness.

In conducting my research for this piece, I've found that it's not uncommon for the tattooed, like Santiago, to express a desire to alter or add to an existing tattoo.

"It's really quite common for someone to get another tattoo after the [first]. That's why [most] people that have tattoos have a bunch—it's not because they wanted to have all of them, but they add up one by one," said Mark Kelvin Libario, a part-time finance student at the John Molson School of Business.

Libario got his first tattoo (a small tribal dragon on the right side of his chest) in 2010, and has added to it twice, expanding to his shoulders in 2013, and to his back the following year.

If one tattoo is, as per Farrell, an affirmation of the eternal present, subsequent ones are perhaps reminders that indeed, you are still seizing the day, you beautiful beasts, you.



SAM JONES

Seen

Swipe Left for Ghosts

HAROLD EUGENE POLTERGEIST



2016 / 01 / 23

MORAG RAHN-CAMPBELL

Ghosting (noun): a modern dating dilemma in which one person suddenly ceases contact with another, with no explanation of why. – Karley Sciortino from her column "Breathless: To Ghost or Not to Ghost?"

Being a millennial is an exciting, sometimes ridiculous experience. Before potentially meeting a girl he secretly adored, Friend X was the subject of an intensive digital makeover. Facebook profile re-vampage isn't Friend Y's area of expertise, but he declared a Facebook state of emergency and searched in desperation for an appropriate profile photo for Friend X.

When so much of our communication is done via screen, it's silly and unrealistic to pretend your digital persona doesn't matter. This isn't always a bad thing: seeing a post related to someone's interests can make it easier to bond IRL, and spreading ideas through the internet tubes can have significant social impact.

However, the flip side of making it so easy to sustain digital relationships at a physical distance is the heightened ease with which we can break them off. After entering into a few fledgling non-exclusive trysts, several times I've gone through the full five stages of ghosting grief, convinced the person I was waiting for would never contact me again, only to feel ridiculous several hours later when an explanatory message pings.

Instagram, Facebook, WhatsApp,

Snapchat: never have we had so many ways to hit someone up. Never before has it been so confusing. If a message has been delivered but not opened, does it mean the recipient never wants to see me again, or have they just forgotten to respond? Outside the formality of a pager or answering machine, we're left fumbling to make our own rules. Sometimes I peruse 18th century etiquette books in a state of fond and jealous nostalgia, pining for a time when rules were set in stone and a calling card didn't have ten possible interpretations. Then I remember how lucky I am not to be a housewife.

The growing fragility of net-heavy interpersonal relations mirrors the increasingly dystopian state of post-industrial capitalism, which made swiping right on 30 people a minute possible in the first place.

Perhaps with a social and political revolution there would be a cultural shift, the re-establishment of a social state and collective ownership of the means of production, in turn sparking real and physical bonds of solidarity between people and eliminating the need for superficial intimacy.

Would a communist revolution do away with the simultaneously antiquated and techno-dystopian fragility of a Tinder date? Who knows. In the meantime, I'm back to analyzing their Snapchat story, looking for signs of their innermost self.

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The Link publishes letters to the editor. If there's an article, event, issue or general happening you want to comment on, send us a letter under 400 words before 4 p.m. on Friday at letters@thelinknewspaper.ca.

Nah'msayin?

Weed Kinda Sucks, Though

ZACH GOLDBERG
@ZACHGOLDBERGG

It's another closing shift's end. I'm tired as hell and sore; I can only think of sleep. As I pull my punch card and head for the door, a fellow cook, coated in the night's sweat and twelve hours worth of grease, sidles over to me, a mischievous glint in his eye.

I have never liked this man; his askew moustache, his jokes about domestic violence, the way he says, 'spank you!' instead of thank you. Before I can make good my quiet escape, he places a moist palm on my shoulder.

"Hey bro... Wanna smoke some weed?"

I knew the question was coming. That's the reality of all 20-somethings with decent taste in music: weed's smiling, neutered face, omnipresent and forever emanating peace and love and chill vibes for everyone. At some point, weed

was defanged entirely, and a pervasive, false culture sprung up around it and invited everybody in. I've got long hair and some serious critical discourse on Kanye, so of course I want to smoke weed with this greasy stranger, right?

Wrong. I don't want to smoke weed with this man. In fact, I genuinely think weed is a shitty, debilitating drug, with one of the worst cultures surrounding it. I'm not going to say I don't smoke weed, to excess even, but I will definitely say that's something to be ashamed of.

We're living in an age where pot has been normalized—it's not even a drug in most people's minds. It doesn't carry any of the negative weight of Reagan's propaganda that still clings to heroin or coke. It shouldn't, that's fair—it's not the same, but damn, it can still ruin lives. Try smoking weed all day: your brain will fry, any motivation will evaporate, your emotions will drip to the floor and pool into a muddy malaise at your feet.

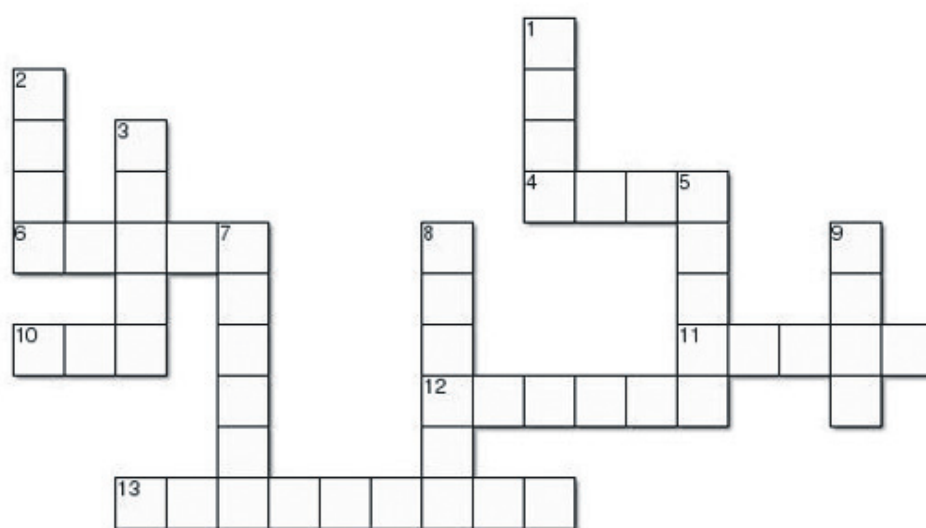
And those stoners, considered so harmless by our culture, so laughably emasculated? I grew up with those kids, was one of those kids, and even then, it was just addiction, no different than hanging out with a bunch of hardcore fans of cough syrup. All the same tenets apply—the routine, the need, the constant searching, the highs of acquisition, the lows of a stash's end, the stealing. Have you ever collected ancient dusty roaches from a barn attic for two hours? Have you ever stolen money from your baby sister?

So, no. I don't want to smoke weed with you, creepy cook. I barely want to smoke weed with myself, and I reject this idea that being hip is akin to being down with weed. It's a fucking drug, treat it like any other—do it occasionally, and then ashamedly run five miles and drink a hemp smoothie the next morning. Don't make it your life, and don't buy into a culture that'll have you believe that filling your life with substances isn't just a way to keep you stupid, unproductive and unfulfilled.



ELIZABETH XU

The Stoner's Crossword



Across

4. One way to smoke weed using water, take a ____ rip
6. Chemicals that alter, block, or mimic chemical reactions in the brain
10. Your parents' slang for marijuana
11. One way to smoke weed, a.k.a. spliff, weed cigarette
12. A strain of marijuana known to create a strong physical body high that will make you sleepy
13. Weed's female name

Down

1. Term for marijuana; ____ and spice
2. Slang for marijuana; annoying plants that grow very fast
3. Weed cigarette wrapped in a tobacco leaf
5. A term for weed of Hindi origin
7. One who smokes marijuana every day and identifies as a weed smoker
8. A strain of marijuana known to create a euphoric, energetic, cerebral high
9. Slang term for strong weed, also used to describe anything of high quality

Letter



LAS Wants Charges Dropped,
Better Working Conditions

Dr. Alan Shepard,

We appreciate the emphasis you have placed on community building at Concordia University. This is why your recent divisive actions towards students and segments of the teaching staff alike have puzzled us.

Your rhetoric is not consistent with your actions. The Quebec Liberal government's austerity measures undermine Concordia's academic mission by impacting the quality of the education it provides, and harm the most vulnerable members of our community. Given your discourse, we would have expected you, as Concordia's primary spokesperson, to present a united front leading all actors of the university against these cuts. Instead, the Concordia administration played into the government's game by bringing the conflict between the Quebec community and Philippe Couillard's government within the university's walls.

The students have been at the forefront of the mobilization against austerity. Instead of recognizing this effort, 25 of them currently face disciplinary charges under Concordia's Code of Rights and Responsibilities, and eight of them have already met with a hearing panel.

We ask that you drop the charges against these students, and conduct a review of the Code that includes student representation.

The quality of our education, and Concordia's reputation, depend on the administration treating its entire teaching staff fairly and equitably. Part-time faculty, teaching and research assistants, are the most vulnerable members of Concordia's faculty. Nonetheless, they have yet to be offered satisfactory collective agreements.

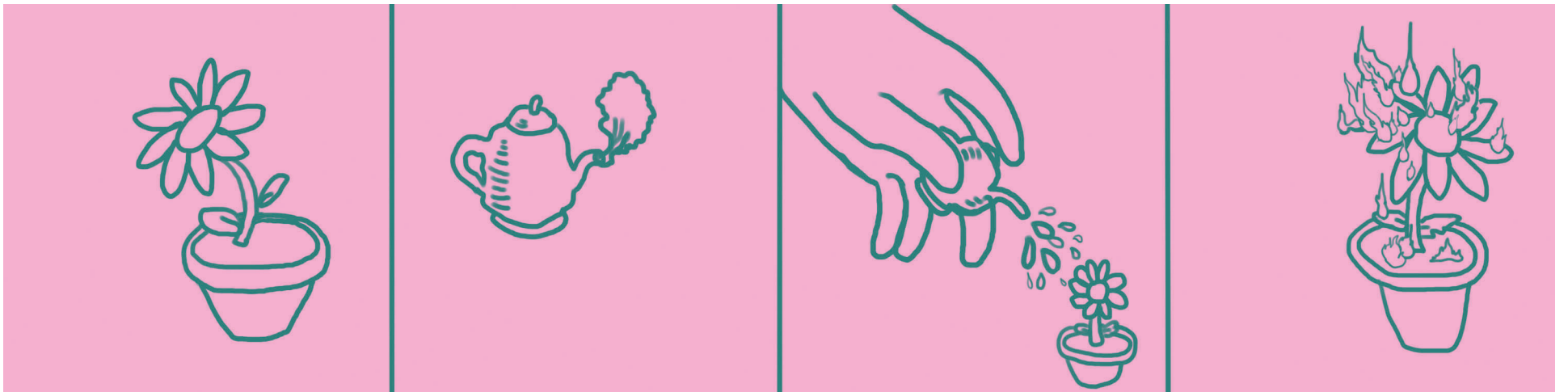
We further ask that TRAC and CUPFA's demands be met, as their working conditions create the conditions necessary for Concordia's student body to flourish.

Instead of standing united, the Concordia administration chose to follow the government's example by repressing its students, and not offering fair and acceptable working conditions to its employees. This is the time to prove that community-building is not just a rhetorical device, but that the administration you lead is willing to actively bridge the gaps that have defined the last few months. It is time to fight the culture of distrust now wedged between the administration and the rest of this institution's members.

We know firsthand the benefits and the opportunities Concordia gives its students. We know because we are students here, but we cannot stand idly by as our fellow students and the very integrity of professorship at Concordia fall under threat. So we address this letter to you, and hope to see the end of the tribunals, and the beginnings of better working conditions for the teaching staff in need of these changes.

— Liberal Arts Society

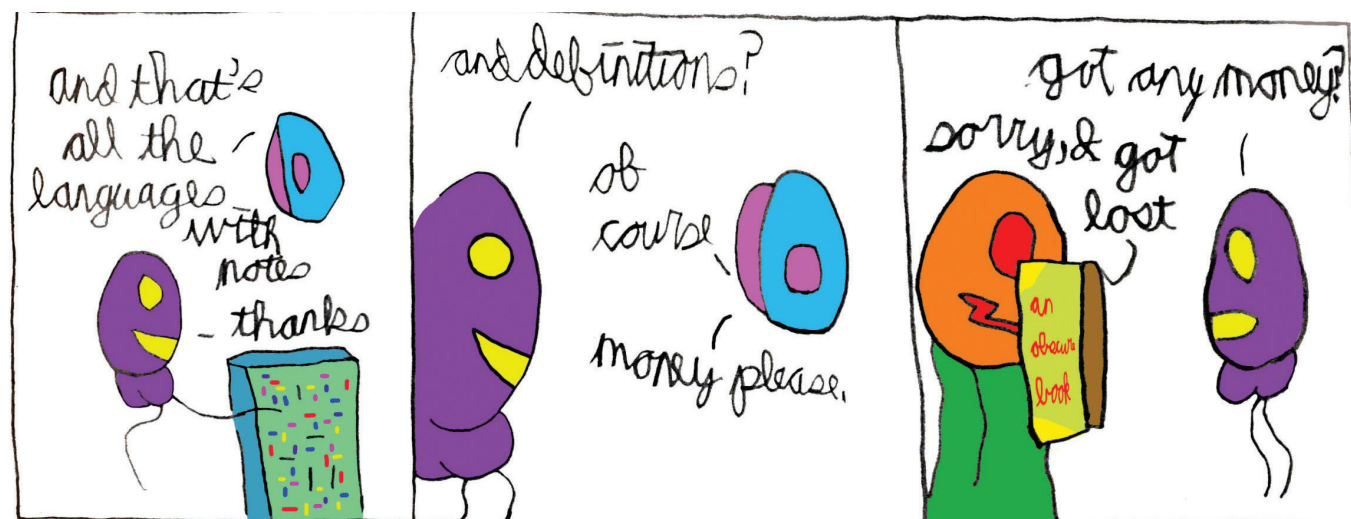
Standards by Graeme Shorten Adams @foreshortening



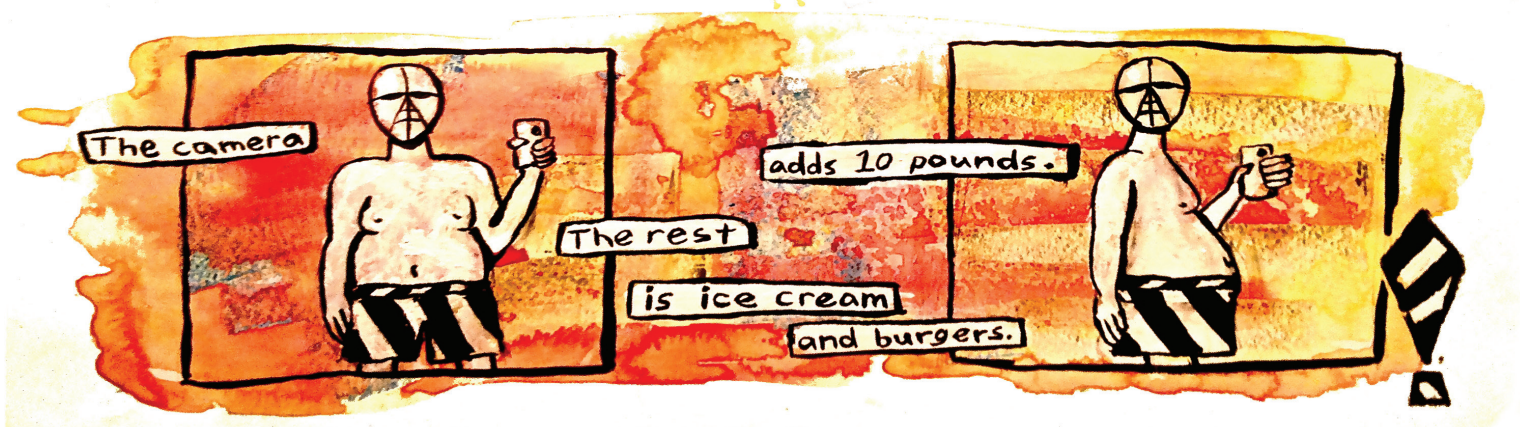
Crap Comics by Morag Rahn-Campbell



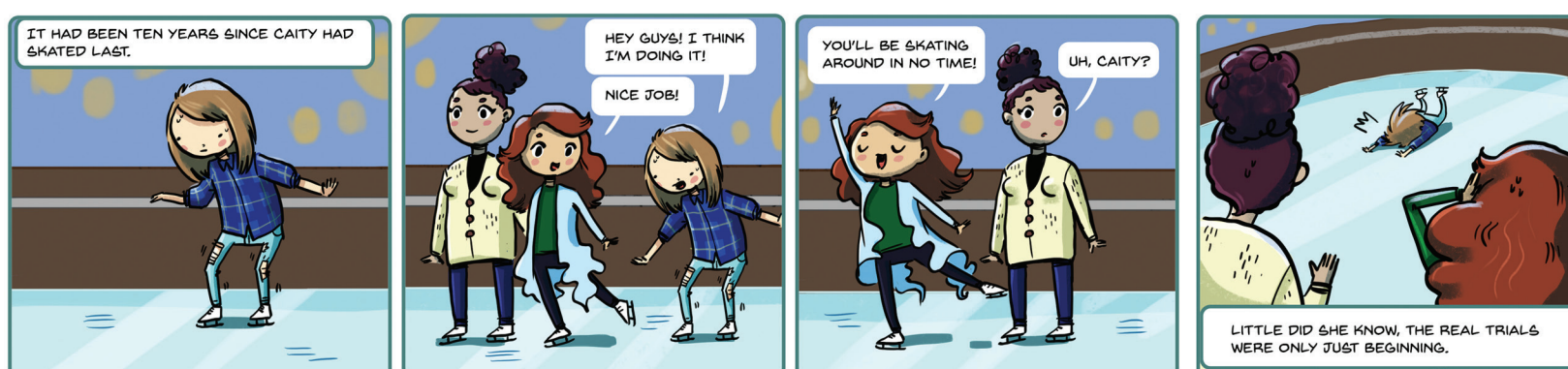
Balloon Ventures by Mangekko Jones



The Adventures of Every-Man by @samdchurchii



Caity Comics by Caity Hall @caityhallart





MADELEINE GENDREAU

EDITORIAL

Canada Needs to Give Homelessness a Formal Address

Homelessness in Montreal is no secret. You might be inclined to turn your face away from the dirty shame of capitalism, but the problem remains: existing in an end-game capitalist society leaves many on the fringes. Those who find themselves at odds with our current societal structure are swept under the collective rug. For many, this means living on the streets; this means being ignored.

But hey, it's not your problem, right? You're just one person, right? Wrong—we, as a society, are responsible for the wellbeing of those cast aside by capitalism. It is our fault, all of us so-called “contributing” members of society, that rush our way past outstretched cups each day, and it is our duty to rectify this.

Rectify, by the way, in the true sense—as

in, “fix homelessness.” Have you ever considered that? Homelessness isn't a necessary aspect of urban living. As of a 2015 count, there are just over 3,000 homeless people in Montreal, with an estimated 235,000 across Canada—nearly one per cent of the overall population. That number is closer to 600,000 in the States. Approximately one million people across continental North America are sleeping on the streets at any given time. It's no wonder we're inclined to turn our faces away—a sight like that ain't pretty.

To reiterate—this doesn't have to be our reality. As recently as the late 1950s, Canada's homelessness problem was undeniably smaller. Through a concerted public and political interest, adequate and affordable housing was on the docket and ensured.

It was only during trade liberalization and deindustrialization of the '80s and '90s, when public interest swayed toward a collection of neo-liberalization policies that this reality shifted. These new administrative tactics favoured “smaller government,” lower taxes, and suddenly, national housing strategies were being dismantled, and systemic poverty was booming.

With the recent Economic Action Plan 2014, Canada is promising to “renew and refocus” the Homelessness Partnering Strategy, injecting \$600 million toward finding sustainable, long-term housing, while making the vague promise of “providing necessary supports.” Despite these positive words, places like Montreal are still making decisions that are tone-deaf to the needs of its citizens, such as refusing to open emer-

gency shelters at anything “warmer” than -15 C. Though Canada's intentions may be good, homelessness will remain a systemic problem until we return it to the political table, and make it a serious part of the public conversation.

Currently, all we have are band-aid solutions. Montreal collects millions in taxpayer money every year; Canada collects billions, and we're all plenty happy to see it go to our healthcare or road repairs. But, in reality, offering reliable mental health resources, affordable or public housing and free education will do just what so many other nations have done.

Canada needs to respect the public enough to make serious investments in society as a whole, rather than adding too-little-too-late band-aids to systemic issues.

THE LINK

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THURSDAY, JANUARY 28 6:30 P.M.
**GAMES, ETHICS
AND HOW WE
CONNECT**

Clive Thompson, author of *Smarter Than You Think: How Technology is Changing Our Minds for the Better*, and Professor **Mia Consalvo**, (Concordia's Department of Communication Studies), talk digital games and our social connections.



THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 11 6:30 P.M.
**CONNECTING AND
WELLNESS — YOUR
BRAIN MATTERS**

Author and psychologist **Susan Pinker** (*The Village Effect: Why Face-to-Face Contact Matters*) and Concordia Professor of Psychology **William Bukowski** discuss face-to-face contact in a time of virtual connections.



TUESDAY, MARCH 1 6:30 P.M.
**CONNECTING YOUR
TECH FUTURE — A
CONVERSATION ABOUT
WHAT'S NEXT**

Nora Young, broadcaster and author of *The Virtual Self: How Our Digital Lives Are Altering the World Around Us*, and Professor **Jeremy Clark** (Concordia Institute for Information Systems Engineering) talk privacy in a world where self-tracking and over sharing are routine.



WEDNESDAY, MARCH 2 7 P.M.
**READER'S DIGEST
ANNUAL LECTURE
SERIES IN
JOURNALISM**

Hear Canadian journalist **Chantal Hébert** (*Toronto Star*, *Le Devoir*, *L'Actualité*) deliver the 2016 Reader's Digest Annual Lecture Series in Journalism, moderated by **Francine Pelletier**.



MONDAY, MARCH 14 6:30 P.M.
**CONNECT THE DOTS
— THE SCIENCE
OF CRIME**

Kathy Reichs, a forensic anthropologist and best-selling novelist, **Cameron Skinner**, an associate professor in Concordia's Department of Chemistry and Biochemistry, and PhD student **Brigitte Desharnais** discuss the real deal on *Bones*-style science and crime solving.

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