




A Brave New World P. 35

PLUS: Our Gender & Sexuality Special Issue P. 11





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**The Link Publication Society Inc.
SPECIAL GENERAL ASSEMBLY
Tuesday, April 4th, 2017, 4 p.m.
1455 de Maisonneuve W. Blvd. Room H-649**

Agenda

1. Call to order
2. Election of a secretary
3. Reading and approval of the agenda
4. Request for additional Letters Patent
5. Other business
6. End of the assembly

MODIFICATIONS OF LETTERS PATENT
- **Objects of the company**
Whereas The Link Publication Society wishes to cover as many activities as possible;
Be it resolved that the Society modifies its Lettres Patentes point 5. Objects -paragraph one- as follow:

"Le but de l'association est de produire, d'imprimer, de publier, d'éditer des magazines, des journaux ou toute autre publication imprimée ou électronique et, de produire, de publier, d'éditer toute autre publication multimédia en version imprimée ou électronique et, plus généralement, de diffuser toutes informations et nouvelles concernant les événements qui ont lieu à l'extérieur comme à l'intérieur des murs de l'institution."

- **Board of Directors**
Whereas The Link Publication Society wishes to align its by-laws with provincial patent requirements.
Be it resolved that the Society modifies its Lettres Patentes point 6.2 as follow:
"Le conseil d'administration est composé de dix administrateurs; ce nombre peut être modifié conformément à l'article 87 de la loi sur les compagnie;"

MODIFICATIONS TO BY-LAWS
Modification of By-Law Thirteen
As approved at the Annual General Assembly - March 30, 2017

Be it resolved that BY-LAW THIRTEEN
Special General Assembly to be modified as follows:
Article One. Special General Assemblies may be called by:

- i) The Board of Directors of the Society.
- ii) A two-thirds vote of at least half the Staff.
- iii) The presentation of a petition of at least one hundred (100) members in good standing of the Society to the chairperson of the Board.

Article Two. **Quorum for a Special General Assembly called by the Board of Directors is thirty (30) people.**

Article Three. Quorum for a Special General Assembly **called by a two-thirds vote of at least half the Staff or by petition is two-and-one-half (2.5) per cent of the members in good standing of the Society.** ~~except for the filling of a vacancy on the Board as provided for in By-law Four which shall require quorum of thirty (30).~~

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Atwater



Image : Socrates Sotos

Does the Hive Practice What It Preaches?

Past and Present Employees Question Whether the Café Is an Anti-Oppressive Space

JONATHAN CARAGAY-COOK
@HIIMBIRACIAL

Ke Xin, an employee at the Hive, still has faith in what the café is trying to do.

Only in its third year of existence, the student-run organization located on both Concordia campuses has hit financial snags in the past year, but has maintained a reputation as a progressive alternative to places like Tim Horton's or Java U. The Hive Café's vision of creating an inclusive and accessible food system has measurable support, with over 4,000 registered user-members in its solidarity cooperative business structure.

Despite remaining faithful towards the café, Xin also said they've become disillusioned with it. A second-year Concordia student, Xin currently works as a barista at the branch on the Loyola campus and sits on the Board of Directors as a worker-member. They say the Hive management and staff lack racial diversity, calling for the organization to practice affirmative action in its hiring practices.

There are only two people of colour working at the Loyola Café, said Xin—a space that they haven't felt safe working in. Xin said this stems from an incident that happened the day after the U.S. Presidential Election.

It was Nov. 9 and Donald Trump was the president-elect. Xin, an American with family in the States, says they saw someone wearing a "Make America Great Again" red cap in their class. They were at work talking with a coworker about seeing this Trump supporter. A customer the two were serving overheard their conversation and began arguing the merits of freedom of speech, saying that they can't silence people's thoughts and opinions.

As the customer continued to push the unwanted argument, Xin began crying and had to be taken outside by their coworker, while someone else finished the transaction. Worried about returning to work in the coming days, Xin emailed the Hive's Board of Directors explaining the incident, and asked that a poster they made be put up in the café.

The poster had the infamous red cap behind a no symbol with large text stating, "If you support Trump you support oppression." In smaller text, the poster read, "The Hive Café has an anti-oppressive and safer space policy, therefore you will not be served. We ask you to leave the space and not bother any employees."

In their email to the Board, Xin asked for thoughts on the poster and when it could be hung up so that they could feel better about returning to work.

"Dismissed" and "disempowered" are the words Xin uses to describe how they felt about the email responses they received. In the email thread, two people replied—a Board member and one of the café's coordinators. They explained to Xin that they should file an incident report with HR, that the Board would decide

on the poster, and that the Hive doesn't take political stances. As well, they told Xin that a private ad-hoc committee had been formed to discuss the matter.

"It would be addressed in all this bureaucratic speech which is super frustrating because it's not accessible," Xin said.

The US election became a moment of crisis for people of colour, said Xin, a queer trans person of colour. Displaying the sign was vital to showing solidarity with the movement against Donald Trump, and protecting user- and worker-members, Xin tried explaining over email to their peers.

"It crushed a lot of my dreams because I really believed in this café when I started working there," they added about how members of the Hive responded.

"Being myself and being from a marginalized community wasn't enough."

Xin continued about the general inaction of the Board and coordinators.

Ben Prunty, the Board member who responded to Xin's first email, declined to be interviewed for the story. "These matters have been handled months ago with multi-stakeholder representation through the Hive's internal processes and include information that is inappropriate to divulge publicly," Prunty wrote in an email.

It's been over four months since the Hive created an ad-hoc committee to address Xin's request, and a new safer space poster still hasn't been put up in the cafés. The new sign is being finalized and should be ready

for approval shortly, said Leigh Hoffman, the finance coordinator of the Hive.

The Hive already has a safe space poster displayed in each café, Hoffman explained, but this new one will be revamped to empower employees to intervene in situations of harassment. The reason it's taken so long to formally address Xin's concerns, they said, is because the decision had to go through due process of the Board, and that the Hive operates under a multi-stakeholder mandate of its customers and workers.

"History has shown decisions made out of a sense of urgency don't hold the long-term goal of nuanced multi-stakeholder perspectives," Hoffman said about not taking immediate action following Xin's email. They added that Xin has been invited to join the meetings of the ad-hoc committee but didn't attend them.

Paige Hilderman, the events coordinator of the Hive, said that if Xin wanted to, they could've brought their zero-tolerance poster to the Concordia Student Union, had it officially stamped and approved for display, and hung it up in the Café themselves.

"Even if the poster didn't go up exactly the way Ke wanted it to, the Board was so dismissive," Hilderman said. "The excuse was that they don't take political stances."

A 24-hour emergency Board meeting should have been called, Hilderman continued, and a public statement possibly should have been made condemning what happened to Xin.

The Hive as an organization has taken political stances in the past and hung up ban-

ners to demonstrate this. On April 2, 2015, the worker-members of the Hive went on strike to protest provincial austerity measures alongside thousands of other striking students. At a Hive Board of Directors meeting on Dec. 5, 2016, they approved a request to hang up banners made by Divest Concordia.

"If it's activism they care about," Xin said, "it flies across the Board and gets completely accepted."

Another Board member, Maidina Kadeer, wrote a statement explaining that the Board has recognized Xin's concerns as legitimate. "With this, we have taken extra measure, and continue to do so both within visual indications of safer space policies, and worker/worker-board/board communication, in order to ensure that both workers and customers feel safe in our location, and when engaging with other members," they wrote.

Zaya Solange was one of Xin's coworkers who intervened in the incident with the customer the day after the elections. She's been working at the Hive since September of last semester, but worked her final shift last Thursday. She left due to personal reasons but adds that she never felt welcomed or supported at the café.

"I definitely enjoyed it a lot in the beginning especially compared to other jobs," she said, mentioning the diversity amongst the staff, in terms of gender identity and sexual orientation.

Solange says she began feeling singled out at the café after experiencing microaggressions from some coordinators, who act as the managers and administrators of the Hive.

One example, she recounts, involved a coordinator randomly asking her what the term misogynoir meant. Solange, a Black woman, explained that misogynoir is a term used to describe the forms of racialized misogyny that Black women specifically face.

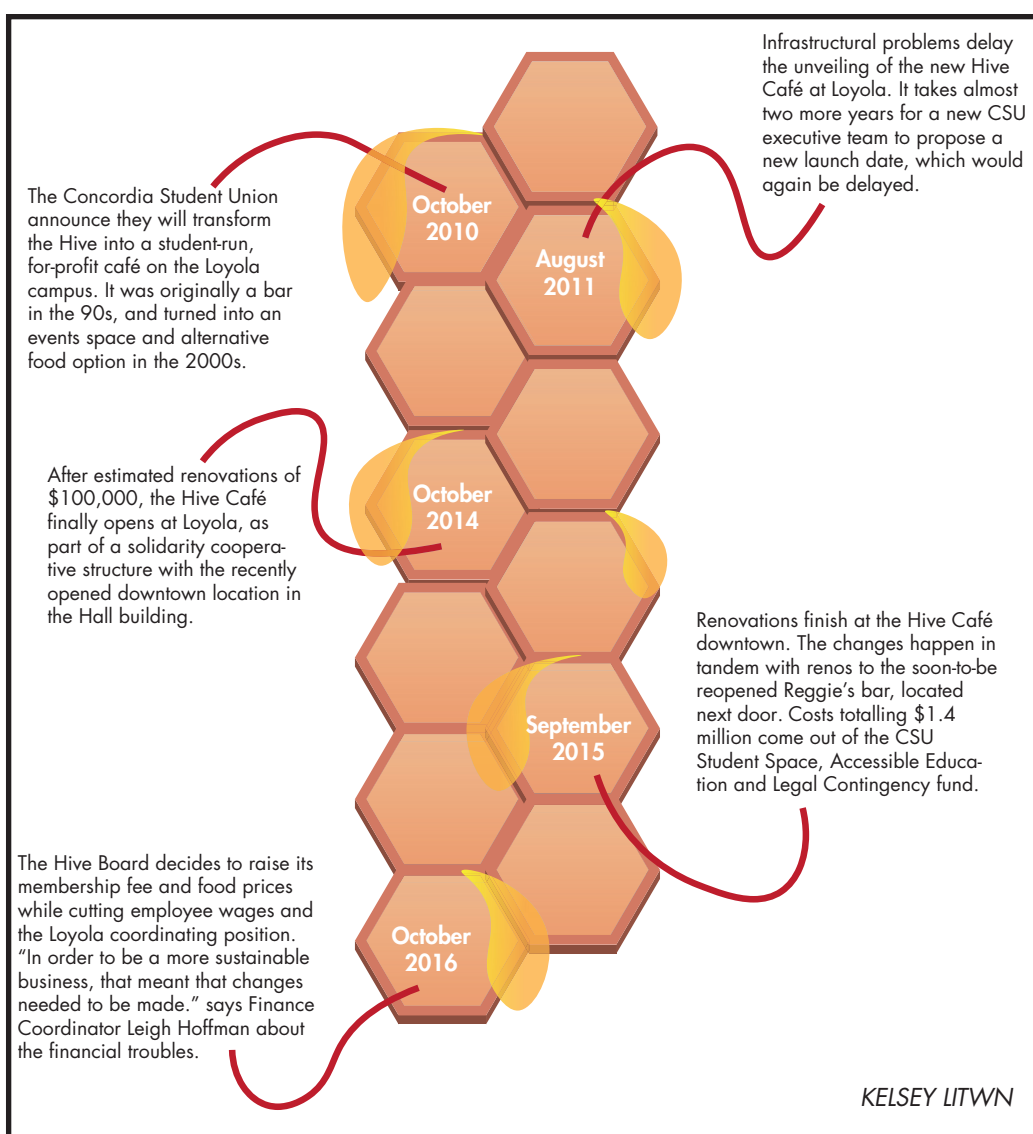
"Oh, that's what I thought," is what Solange remembered the coordinator saying before walking away.

"That term is on our safe space poster," Solange said. "If you don't even know what the term is, how are we supposed to make sure this space is safe and educated?"

Rather than begin a dialogue about misogynoir, all that interaction did was remind her about the oppression she experiences on a daily basis, Solange said. If she was a barista working at a Starbucks, she added, then she would expect this type of behaviour. But not at the Hive, which states it's an anti-oppression organization in its bylaws.

During this past winter semester, Xin took time off of work for personal reasons, but has since returned. They haven't been to a Board meeting in a while, but they said they plan to return soon. Changes Xin wants to see at the Hive include addressing the imbalance of power between the Board and worker-members.

"It doesn't allow new people to enter with new ideas," Xin said.



KELSEY LITWN

Kissing a Police Baton

Busted Teeth, Far-Right at Concordia's Doorstep, Antifascists Mobilize

by **Brian Lapuz**



Link photo editor Brian Lapuz bares his teeth, minutes after the violent incident, on March 25, 2017.

COURTESY ACTIVIST

I wasn't sure that I wanted to get out of bed that morning. Had I known I'd get a facial makeover, courtesy of the Montreal police, I would have indulged myself.

I even felt a cold coming along and desperately wanted to sleep in. But hey, when you tell your fellow editors you're going to cover an event, you gotta come through. I took some cold meds, got some toast in me and made my way downtown.

On March 25, the Resist Trump & the Far-Right Network of Montreal had planned activist workshops. They revolved around organizing against the rise of xenophobia and racism in Canada and the U.S. at Concordia's Hall building.

The Canadian Coalition of Concerned Citizens and the Soldiers of Odin, two well-known far-right groups, worried that the anti-racist activists gathering at Concordia were organizing "terrorist workshops." As illustrated on their Facebook event banner, anarchists and ISIS supposedly work hand-in-hand to bring "death to the West."

The anti-racist workshops were scheduled for 10 a.m., so the CCCC and Soldiers of Odin said they would show at 9:45 a.m. to disrupt the proceedings. In response, the anti-fascists sent a call-out to gather at 9 a.m. for a counter-protest.

Police presence was hefty before most people showed up. There were at least a dozen squad cars, police vans, and a couple of those minibuses used to transport the riot squad parked around the Hall building. Some

officers were paired-up and patrolling De Maisonneuve Blvd. on foot.

Anti-racist protesters began to trickle in at their set meeting time. Most were clad in black, wearing hoodies and bandanas to hide their faces.

Dean of Students Andrew Woodall seemingly drew the short straw and was the official Concordia University observer—a hall monitor, if you will. Both of us were skeptical anything was going to happen.

Montreal activist and organizer Jaggi Singh, on the other hand, was fairly certain the far-right would show their faces.

I was feeling pretty cold, so I got some tea at Hinnawi Bros on the corner of Mackay St. and De Maisonneuve. As soon as I walked in, five riot cops came in behind me. What a scene: big dudes in riot gear, sans shield and helmet, walking through an art-filled, brick wall café.

"Bonjour, madame. Bonjour, monsieur," one officer said, greeting the staff.

They came in for a washroom break. A couple ogled at the extensive list of bagel sandwich options, written on a chalkboard wall. One got an americano.

Come 9:45 a.m., the far-right was nowhere to be seen. Neither was any other media, for that matter.

I took a stroll down De Maisonneuve to the Guy-Concordia metro exit on Guy St. I figured these people wouldn't know the layout of Concordia's tunnel system and would possibly gather at that exit. I went down the escalators and through the tunnel heading back, going

full-circle to the Hall building.

At 9:52 a.m., there seemed to be a ruckus just outside Hall. People said some guy pulled-up and tried to whack anti-racist activists with a hockey stick, which had a Canadian flag tied to it.

I still can't believe I missed such an absurd scene.

At 9:57 a.m., protesters began to yell at a man across the street. They said he was far-right. He wore black combat boots, oversized jeans with hanging red suspenders, a worn-out leather jacket with spikes, and had a bald-ish head with hair just a few millimetres too long to make him an official skinhead. He lit a cigarette and hung out in front of the Webster Library for a bit.

"Dégage d'ici, osti d'racist," protesters yelled. He gestured dismissively and walked towards the corner of Bishop St. and De Maisonneuve.

Protesters bolted after him. Naturally, I followed to get some shots.

Some protesters ran straight to the corner, but I cut through to the sidewalk to avoid traffic. Then I ran down the library's columns. I heard some yelling behind me. I turned around and saw riot police shoving protesters near the bike path.

I pointed my camera and took a series of photos. Protesters and riot police were closing in a lot faster than I expected. I put my camera down to get a better sense of my surroundings.

BANG!

If we do have souls, mine left my body for a moment.

"IF WE DO HAVE
LEFT MY BODY F



Montreal police push demonstrators out of the way, le baton hit, on March 25, 2017.

“MY SOULS, MINE FOR A MOMENT”



Running up to the second before Lapuz receives a

I found myself on the ground at 9:59 a.m. right after kissing a police baton. I thought I lost all my front teeth. I tasted blood and felt fragments of teeth moving around in my mouth. I spat some out. I was in disbelief.

I looked up and saw a row of riot police. One of them yelled at me to move.

“*Vous m’avez péter les dents,*” I said, mouth-bloodied, sitting on the ground.

“*Vas-t’en de l’autre côté de la rue!*” she replied with a crackling voice, seemingly unsure of herself after looking at me.

I got up and waded through the protesters like some drunken dude on Saint-Paddy’s Day. A couple of them escorted me to the sidewalk.

“How are your nerves? Are you in pain?” one asked.

“Nah, I’m fine,” I said, playing it off. The adrenaline must have been rushing through me, because I can’t recall the feeling of any physical pain.

“Did you swallow any teeth?”

“I don’t think so...”

“You need to rinse out your mouth. You need to go to the hospital.”

They brought me inside to a washroom. I rinsed my mouth out with saline, stuffed my mouth with gauze and headed back out to see what was going on.

The anti-racist protest moved to the corner of Mackay St. and De Maisonneuve. A line of riot police was blocking the path down Mackay. You could see a group of people with Quebec flags surrounded by police down the street in front of the McDonald’s on Mackay and Ste. Catherine St.

“Go home you fucking racists. You fake bikers,” Singh shouted through a megaphone.

The Soldiers of Odin are known to go on neighbourhood patrols in their black jackets with the Viking emblem on the back.

“Go to Valhalla!”

I wanted to stay as long as possible, but at some point, my conscience kicked in and said it was time to go to the hospital.

I checked in at the emergency room of the Montreal General Hospital and got fast tracked to see a doctor because I had loose teeth.

“So, tell me, what’s going on? There’s a protest downtown?” Dr. Yang asked.

“MhmmhmHmhmhm,” I said.

“Oh, right.”

He brought me the trash bin from the corner of the room. I spat out the gauze. I gave him the exclusive rundown of the events of the morning. He inspected my teeth. He left the room. I put gauze in my mouth. He came back in.

“So, hold on. Could I take another look?”

He brought me the trash bin from the corner of the room. I spat out the gauze. He put on some nitrile gloves and confirmed that I had loose teeth at the top. He left the room. I put gauze in my mouth. He came back in.

“Sorry, I know this is weird, but could I take another look? Okay... actually, never mind.”

Montreal General had emergency dentists on call, but I had to wait. Call it luck. The nearest hospital happened to have exactly what I needed.

In the meantime, I realized I was cold and shivering because my socks were wet.

It was slushy out that day, and I had worn running shoes instead of boots. Clearly, it was a poor choice. My editor-in-chief brought some socks, but I was still shivering, so I sent



The Resist-Trump & the Far-Right Network of Montreal at a counter-protest in front of the Hall Building, on March 25, 2017.

Miriam Lafontaine, *The Link*’s current affairs editor, on a quest.

“Can you go steal a blanket, or something?”

I asked her.

She came back with a bed-wetting pad and carefully laid it on my legs.

“Does it smell like piss?”

“It doesn’t smell like piss,” she affirmed.

I recognized one of the protesters in the emergency room. His name is Oliver Smith-Jones. He had an arm sling and was visibly shaken.

He told me his version of what happened after I left. Apparently, protesters hooked through the EV building in an attempt to confront the far-right in front of the McDonald’s. Instead, they got caught up with the riot police at the Mackay exit of the EV. That’s where he said the police brutalized him. At some point he was on the ground and felt pressure on his back from a boot or a knee.

“I wasn’t all there. I was being hit so much in such a small amount of time,” Smith-Jones recalled. “I didn’t see that it was happening to me. I felt like I was out of... my... body. I was seeing things happen, like the snow, the tire of a car...”

They cuffed him, took him to a squad car, then to another squad car. Then slapped him with a \$642 fine for taking part in a brawl.

Smith-Jones’ right hand was swollen,

almost doubling the size of his other hand. Following the X-ray, he learned that he had fractured two metacarpals.

I had an X-ray done, as well. The doctors wanted to be sure I hadn’t swallowed any teeth bits.

When the dentists arrived, they brought me to a clinic. By clinic, I mean a large room with at least two-dozen dental operating booths, arranged like an open office space for dentists.

They did their own X-ray and gave me the lowdown.

I had two loose teeth and one serious chip. Luckily it was just under the pulp of the incisor. Despite that, the nerve may die due to the trauma and may require a root canal. Ten years down the line, the ligament holding the tooth in place might disintegrate and lead to the tooth fusing with my skull, or tooth ankylosis, they said. This will complicate any attempts of extraction, should it be needed.

For two weeks, I have to wear temporary braces: a simple rigid wire, anchored by white-filling material. A soft food diet is also recommended.

By the time I got home, it was late afternoon.

I crashed on my couch shamelessly for five hours. I was doing exactly what I should have been doing that Saturday morning: sleeping.

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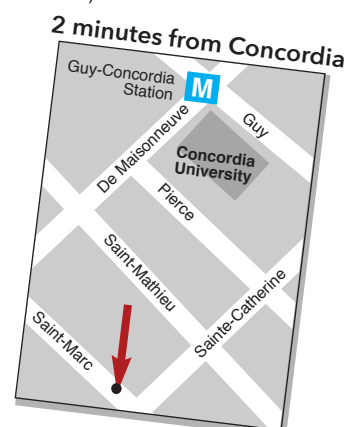
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The Legendary Oliver Jones

The Humble Roots of a Jazz Icon

GABRIELLE BÉLAND

When ranking the best of the best in jazz music history, child prodigy and Little Burgundy native Oliver Jones is definitely a contender.

Recently, Jones officially decided to put an end to his wonderful 77-year career.

Staying true to his humble beginnings, the 82 year-old world-renowned jazz musician lives a modest life in the southwest borough of Montreal—still doing his own groceries and striking up conversations with his neighbours.

Jones began playing the piano when he was three years old. He remembers his two sisters telling him how he would recreate jingles or songs he heard on the radio as a child.

“I can’t remember when I haven’t played the piano,” Jones said over the phone.

The music scene was where he felt the most comfortable. By the age of five, Jones started playing the piano at the United Union Church in Little Burgundy. The church was a crucial part of his life—it was the first place he played the piano in front of an audience.

Jones later moved 15 doors down from jazz legend Oscar Peterson’s family, making it easier for him to take piano lessons with Peterson’s older sister, Daisy. He admitted he wasn’t very focused on music at that age.

“I had my sports—baseball and hockey.”

At nine years old, Jones’ idol was Jackie Robinson, the first black Major League Baseball player. That same year, however, Oscar Peterson’s success was growing and Jones wanted to follow in his footsteps. “I’ll always remember [Daisy] telling me that it takes a lot of hard work and discipline.”

At the time, jazz was only beginning to grow in the music industry, so Jones’ parents had a hard time getting on board. They were only interested in Jones studying classical piano and hymns from their church.

As a teenager, Jones played in hotels and clubs around Montreal. At the age of 18 he moved to Valleyfield where he played with other musicians for seven years. He then moved to Miami, Florida with Jamaican Calypso singer Kenny Hamilton. Jones became Hamilton’s musical director for 19 years, but maintained his career and still played at venues in Miami.

“From that job we had the opportunity to go to Puerto Rico. That was supposed to be four months and we ended up staying 16 years, [...] it was just a different world,” Jones said.

In 1980, Jones exploded onto the jazz scene. He played up to 150 shows a year at clubs, hotels and festivals all over the world. Jones said of all the places he’d travelled, New Zealand was his favourite because—for the first time in his life—he got to play a full set of jazz in front of a large audience.

Throughout his career Jones had the opportunity to share the stage with some of jazz’s greatest musicians, including Ella Fitzgerald and Hank Jones. He continued to play in Montreal at his old friend Charlie Biddle’s club, who was an accomplished jazz bassist.

In 2004, four years after he originally announced his retirement, the Festival de Jazz de Montreal asked Jones to come back for one more show. Jones said the festival had done so much for him and his career—it was the least he could do.

During that concert he finally had the opportunity to play with his lifelong idol and mentor, Oscar Peterson. This concert, he said, was without a doubt the highlight of his career. He was very proud of how happy Peterson was to play with him.

The day after the concert, Jones received multiple phone calls from festivals across Canada. He hadn’t planned on coming out of retirement but Jones’ wife suggested he do a couple more shows to satisfy the audience.

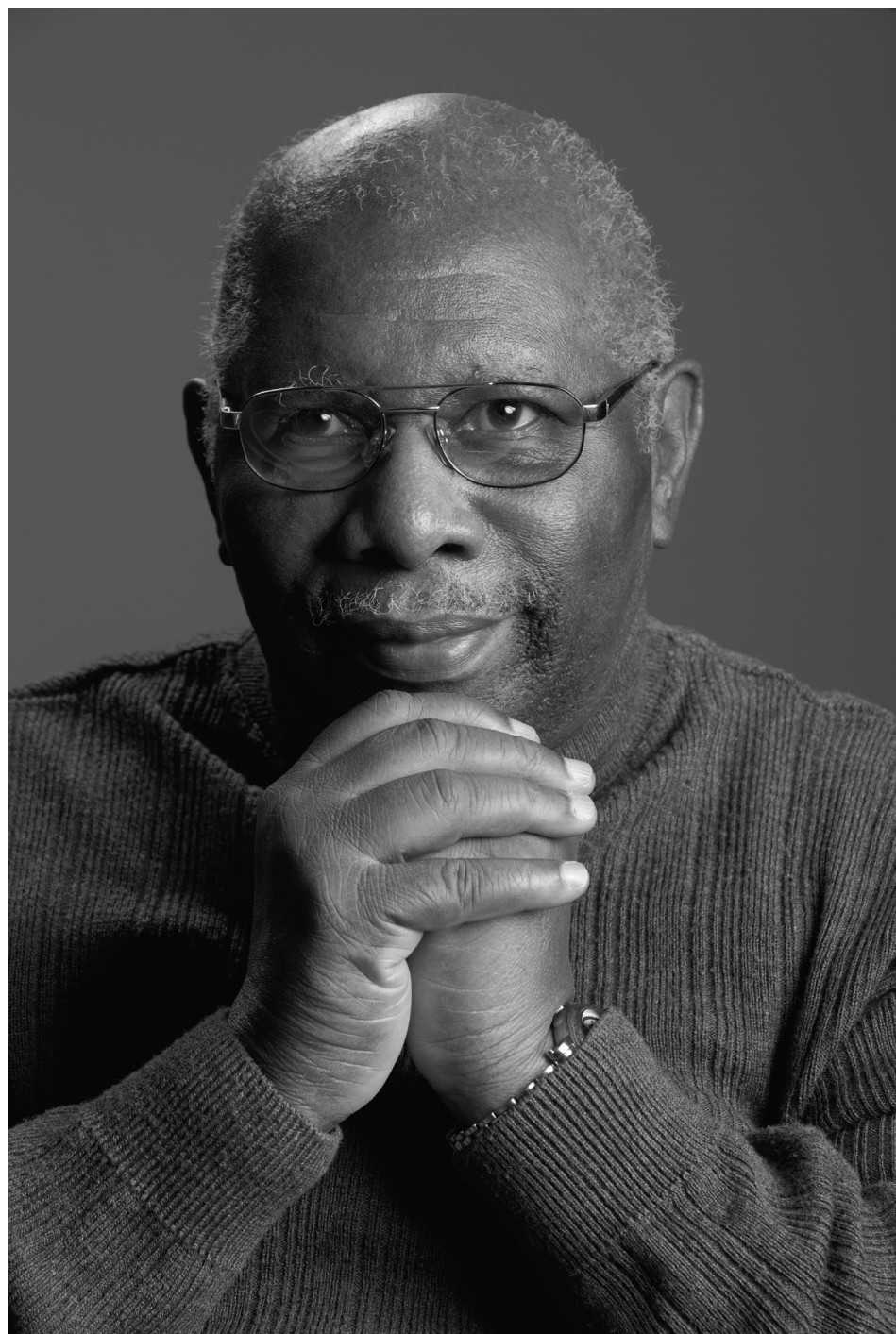
“Before I knew it, I was back on the road again,” he said.

Jones ended up doing 84 concerts that year. Last year, he played concerts from Vancouver all the way to Halifax. “I wanted to say goodbye and thank everyone,” he explained.

Throughout his career, Jones won three Junos and 11 Félix Awards. Over a span of 20 years he released 15 albums with the Justin Time Records label. On some albums he played as a solo pianist, on others he played alongside other musicians as a trio.

“I accomplished more than I ever thought I could,” he said.

Two years ago Jones underwent open-heart



World-renowned jazz pianist Oliver Jones retires after 77 years.

COURTESY JUSTIN TIME RECORDS

surgery. The experience made him realize it was time to stop performing and settle down.

“I decided it was time to retire, sit back and enjoy the fruits of my labor,” he said.

And he’s very grateful for all the memories. “If I didn’t have music, I don’t know what I would have done,” he said.

Jones now watches from the sidelines, but couldn’t be prouder of the young talent in Montreal. He said there are so many talented people across Canada, but unfortunately too many give up on music.

In the future, Jones plans to visit schools and encourage young people to pursue careers in music. He wants to inspire students and give them someone to look up to. He also hopes to give confidence to shy youngsters, just like he was as a kid.

Jones still regularly goes to the Union United Church where it all started.

“Remember where you came from and remember there’s always someone better than you and you can always learn,” he said.

For his legacy, he wants musicians to take pride in what they’re doing.

“When you remember old man Oliver Jones, remember I tried my best and was very fortunate to have a tremendous audience.”

“Remember where you came from and remember there’s always someone better than you and you can always learn.”

— Oliver Jones

This week in Fringe online at thelinknewspaper.ca/arts

A Glance into Austria’s “Old Gold”: David Schalko talks about his film *Altes Geld* and the themes that surround his work.

Fantasy or Nightmare—I Am Neither

by **Jenny Mourad** @jenn_m1

I wish I could just be myself.
I wish I could simply love
a good cup of coffee
and think that red lips are sexy.
I wish that when you speak to me,
you see a person - a woman with a good heart
and distinctly wide hips.

I wish I could be that woman,
but instead I only get to be
who you want me to be.
The woman that you've told me how to be.
I can only be your exotic fantasy.
So mysterious but superficial,
the way you can handle,
the way that is sexy not strange.

I can only be your scary terrorist.
There is no question
as to where I come from or why I exist.
The idea that my body simply races with evil blood
is explanation enough.

I wish I could just be myself,
but if I have to choose one,
I'd rather be your fantasy than your nightmare.
I'd rather seduce you than terrify you.

After all, no one has gotten shot for being seductive.
While fantasies get disrespect, nightmares get fought,
nightmares get feared.
I'd rather be your fantasy than your nightmare.

Whereas fantasies are held in a pigeonhole,
nightmares are held in a cell.
Unable to enter the country,
scared of the man with a badge
and his "random security check."

I wish I could just be myself,
but in times of bans and bombs,
you look at me and I see that my options are limited.

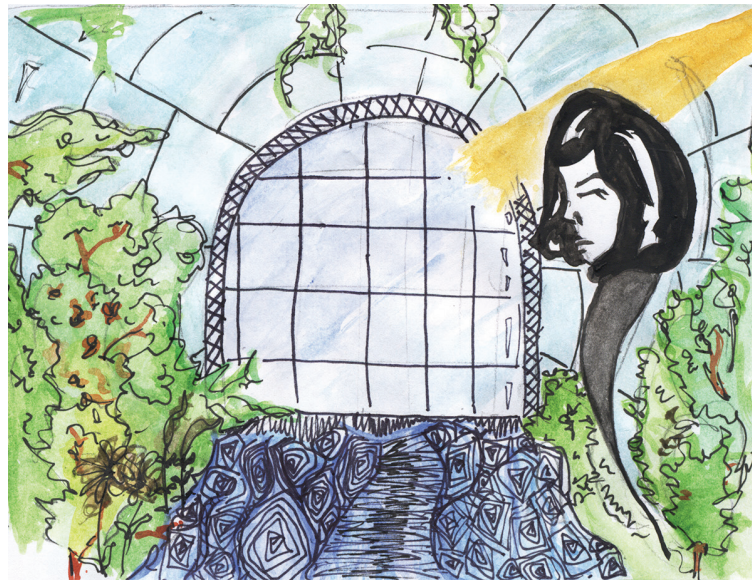
Poems

Dear Galatea

by **Diane Dollisen** @grumpywednesday

Last night I dreamt of wearing your skin:

I put on your milk-white face,
squeezed into your dainty body,
slipped into your red dress and your diamonds,
parted my golden hair down the middle—
precisely down the middle—
and prayed to God I looked
holy enough.



OCEAN DEROUCHIE

Can I Get a Refund?

by **Diane Dollisen** @grumpywednesday

Jesus Christ,
I saw a smiling baby on the train today
eating a croissant on her mother's lap
and I couldn't believe my heart –
Now why can't that be me?

It reminds me of the time you sent a flightless pigeon
stuck between sidewalks
and I slipped on the winter ice
because I could've sworn
that body was mine –

Damn you.
Was that me?

Jesus Christ,
it's been four years.
I think the pills are still working –
I use my teeth to cut them in half now
instead of a knife.
Now I can deal
but it's not very precise, so
can I get a refund?

Jesus Christ,
I hope you send me someone new soon
because I keep pining for ghosts
on strangers' beds
to try to make them mine,
but my god,
I hate them more than you.

Jesus,
one of these days
I'll find a way to make me proud –
My body will be mine
and I won't float over my own head –
But until then,

Christ,
can you hear me?

Well, it's been an eventful year.

Since the school year started, we've watched the world change around us, and we've had the immense pleasure of bringing that news to you. We broke stories about our student unions and our administration, wrote features about our gentrifying neighbourhoods, reported on the ground from protests, and opened up a conversation about Canadian history. Through it all, we did our best to keep you informed.

It's been an unforgettable year, and none of it would be possible without you, our readers.

Thanks for reading.

"Always room for innovation"

Throw Poetry Collective Offers Safe Space for Beginners and Experts Alike

EDWARD KEZBER

The Throw Poetry Collective is well established among the anglophone slam poetry community in Montreal.

Operating out of the cozy performance venue Le Divan Orange on St. Laurent Blvd., the Throw Poetry Collective hosts monthly slam competitions on the first Sunday of every month during the academic year.

On April 2, slammers gathered at Le Divan Orange to compete in the last slam competition before contestants were chosen for the season finals. This last slam has high stakes, as the top five will form a team to represent Montreal at the Canadian Festival of Spoken Word. The CFSW is a team-based slam competition tournament with the highest-ranking poets of the other spoken word communities of Canada.

Le Divan Orange is ideal for a poetry slam, a relatively small space with a warm ambience and boldly fashioned Montreal art on the walls that is constantly in rotation.

Diverse vocalists with varying levels of experience can be seen catching up with each other, making last minute edits to their pieces, and discreetly muttering to themselves, rehearsing in preparation for the night to come.

Anomaly, a regular performer at the Throw Poetry Collective, has represented Montreal with the Throw at the CFSW on multiple occasions.

"It's a really vulnerable art form," Anomaly said. "The friends that I've made through spoken word are some of the people that I'm closest to because you have to connect on such a deep level, then you get to make really cool art with them and travel together."

What separates a slam competition from a regular poetry reading, besides the supportive yelling from audience members, is the scoring system. At the start of the night five judges are chosen from out of the audience at random.

These five must not know any of the competitors personally, and are encouraged to score the artists based on whatever metric they deem to be important. The rules stipulate a score penalty for anyone

who goes over their allotted time of three minutes per poem.

After each poem is read, the judges hold up scorecards ranging from zero to ten. After the highest and lowest numbers are dropped, the remaining are tallied to help determine a winner at the end of each night.

Holding scores to an art as entirely subjective as poetry may seem tedious, but these scores play an important role for the regulars over the course of a slam competition season. As the season goes on all of the scores are tallied and compiled, leaving a ranked top twelve performers to be invited to the final slam of the year.

MCC is another poet with regular attendance at the Throw and has also participated in the CFSW on the Montreal team.

"Everybody is familiar with the image of the guy on the soapbox, yelling his opinion," MCC said. "I like to think that we are taking that very democratic principle of 'anybody can get up and say what they believe to be their truth and their reality,' and get it out into a space that's welcoming, and ready to listen."

While there is a tangible reward for high scoring poets, the air is anything but serious. The community of readers and listeners alike come to the show to share their ideas and pieces in a safe and encouraging environment.

The slam itself has an open sign-up sheet, allowing anyone to partake in the competition on a first come, first serve basis. Some new readers may be intimidated by the idea of being scored on the secret gems in their notebooks, which is why there is also an open mic portion at the start of the evening. Open mic performances are not scored or judged, and are a great way for newcomers to test the waters.

Chris Masson, a Concordia alumnus and one of the founding members of the Throw Poetry Collective, acts primarily as the host for the monthly slams.

"Slam poetry doesn't exist, it's anything that is performed on the mic," Masson said. "It has certain structural restraints, three minutes long, no costumes, no props. Saying slam poetry is a style is kind of a misnomer. There's always room for innovation."



Top: Organizer Chris Masson invites the next contestant to the stage.

Middle: Performers with varying levels of experience throw at the poetry slam.

Bottom: Anomaly is an organizer and a performer at the Throw Poetry Collective.

PHOTOS SHANNON CARRANCO

"We are taking that very democratic principle of 'anybody can get up and say what they believe to be their truth and their reality'"
— MCC

This week in Fringe online at thelinknewspaper.ca/arts

From laughing about it to actually enjoying it—a review of B.A. Johnston's latest album *Gremlins III*.

THE **LINK CALENDAR OF EVENTS:****April 4 - 11**

TU 4 Meeting - <i>The Link's</i> Special General Assembly It's official! We're transitioning into a monthly magazine next year. If you've got any questions or concerns, stop by and chat with us. We'll have free coffee and donuts. <i>The Link</i> office • 1455 de Maisonneuve Blvd. W. • 4 p.m. // FREE	WE 5 Performance - Shadow/Presence and Land of Hayal An evening of poetry and performance where selected short poetry will be performed onstage. Content warning: gore/graphic content, self-harm, abuse and sexual violence. John Molson School of Business • 1600 de Maisonneuve Blvd. W. • 6:30 p.m. // \$12 for general admission OR \$7 for students Meeting - Centre for Gender Advocacy's Annual General Meeting If you're wondering what the Centre for Gender Advocacy has been doing this past year then join them for their yearly update and to vote for a new Board of Directors. Centre for Gender Advocacy Space • 2110 Mackay St. • 6 p.m. // FREE	TH 6 Show - <i>Welcome to Night Vale</i> live The ongoing and highly popular podcast <i>Welcome to Night Vale</i> is returning to Montreal for another live reading with podcast host Cecil Baldwin as well as guest speakers! Corona Theatre • 2490 Notre-Dame St. W. • 8 p.m. // \$40.50 Magazine Launch - <i>Yara Magazine</i> <i>Yara</i> is celebrating the launch of their 5th volume! Go celebrate with the team. Bar Le Ritz PDB • 179 Jean-Talon St. W. • 8 p.m. // FREE	FR 7 Writing - Writing in a Fine Arts Museum Got a writing project that you're working on, but looking for an inspirational place to work in? Be sure to join Concordia Write Nights as they go to the Musée des Beaux Arts. Musée des Beaux Arts • 1380 Sherbrooke St. W. • 2 p.m. // FREE for ages 13-30 at the permanent collection OR \$15 for ages 31+ Concert - Pick a Piper, Yoo Doo Right, Tiny Hazard, and Ada Lea Blue Skies Turn Black presents a night of performances from some pretty good and chill musicians. Bring some friends or go by yourself and have a good time! Casa del Popolo • 4848 St. Laurent Blvd. • 9 p.m. // \$9 in advance OR \$12 at the door
SA 8 Screening - <i>Inside These Walls</i> A documentary film following the story of a family that is bound together by sacrifice, hope, and idealism. A Q&A will follow with the director and special guests. Cinema de Sève • 1400 de Maisonneuve Blvd. W. • 7 p.m. // PWYC Roller Derby - Les Montreal Sexpos VS Capital City Derby Dolls Dolly Rogers The roller derby season is in full swing, and we've got another match coming. It's sure to be a heated match and an overall good time. Taz Skatepark • 8931 Papineau Ave. • 7 p.m. // \$11.34 in advance or \$15 at the door	SU 9 Market - Artist Market Sunday Session A bunch of artists are getting together to sell their work starting at \$5! Live music by Colin Sim, Pottery, and James Clay Patterson. Glass Door Gallery • 4064 St. Laurent Blvd. • 12 p.m. // PWYC Concert - All Ears All Thumbs, gus.tave, and Mark Molnar Small Scale Music is proud to present some performances by some bands that all have their own unique sound. Check 'em out! La Vitrola • 4602 St. Laurent Blvd. • 9 p.m. // PWYC	MO 10 Concert - Pale Lips, Crossed Wires, Tough Age, and BBQT A night of pop, punk, rock, and an all around good jam session. Turbo Haüs • 5011 Notre-Dame St. W. • 8:30 p.m. // \$10 Screening and Launch Party - <i>Inhabit: A Permaculture Perspective and POV Magazine</i> Cinema Politica is having its final regular screening of the semester. At the same time, <i>Point of View Magazine</i> will be celebrating their 150th launch party! Concordia Hall Building • 1455 de Maisonneuve Blvd. W. • 7 p.m. // FREE	TU 11 Concert - Bing and Ruth, Rêves Sonores feat. ari swan, and Evan Tighe Blue Skies Turn Black presents a lineup of bands and musicians that are sure to bring forth an energetic and lively show. Divan Orange • 4234 St. Laurent Blvd. • 9 p.m. // \$12 in advance OR \$15 at the door

If you have an event you want featured, email: calendar@thelinknewspaper.ca



THE **LINK**

Hello dear reader,
and welcome to this year's
special issue on Gender
and Sexuality.

Both gender and sexuality operate on vast spectrums. Among the issues that are encompassed by these two words—which are far too often tackled as black and white—there are colourful, diverse and meaningful ways in which we can engage with these topics.

As such, we at *The Link* offer to you, dear reader, some of that rainbow.

Transparency, love and understanding are at the crux of this special issue, along with a strong sense of willingness to talk about things that may not be the easiest to talk about. We believe that with accessible knowledge and information, these conversations can be more comfortable for everyone.

We are an unapologetically feminist publication and we stand in solidarity with survivors of sexual violence. As *The Link* promotes a safe space for everybody in our office, we'd also like to extend that to the pages of this publication. Some of these articles talk about the tough stuff, such as rape, misogyny and gender-based discrimination. Below is a table of contents, feel free to use it to guide you through this issue.

We at *The Link* acknowledge that this special issue is by no means exhaustive, or representative of the many communities, identities and narratives that exist within the realm of gender and sex, but we hope that nevertheless, these pages might inspire you.

Love always,
The Link

CONTENTS

Being Muslim + LGBT
p. 13

**A Lipstick Lesbian
Takes Off the Makeup**
p. 14

Perks: A Comic
p. 15

**Finding More
Diversity for CUTV**
p. 16

Algae vs. HPV
p. 16

**Filling a Gap in
the Porn Industry**
p. 17

**Gender Inequality in
Tech + Engineering**
p. 18

**De-Stigmatizing
Alcoholism**
p. 19

Poetry
p. 20

Polyamorous Happiness
p. 21

Sexual Violence in Sports
p. 22

Sexist Sports Journalism
p. 23

Rape Culture Is Real
p. 24

What the Fuck Is Feminism?
p. 25



Being Muslim and LGBT

by **Anonymous**

“**To me, those people are deranged.** They’re ill, obviously. They’re not normal.”

I was fourteen when I heard those words from my mother. They were hushed—we rarely talked about homosexuality at home—but the disgust was evident in her tone. I wasn’t surprised. I didn’t agree, obviously, but I simply shrugged it off. I didn’t think that arguing with my religious mother about a topic we’d never agree on was worthwhile.

Then again, in those days, I was still convinced I was straight. I thought that the odd attraction I had towards one, or a few, of my female friends could be explained by us being closer than others. Or that it could simply be a stronger friendship. I thought my fantasies involving both boys and girls were something natural and common, and that it couldn’t possibly mean anything.

That is, until I casually mentioned it in a conversation with one of my Muslim friends. She stared at me in shock, her words disconcerted and incredulous. “That’s gay, you know. I don’t think about things like that,” she told me.

Her words made me stop short, reconsidering what I had just shared. Her words and harsh tone of voice actually hurt, hitting closer to home than I ever thought they could.

There’s an odd double standard that comes with being Muslim and LGBT. It’s more than just the Muslim community as a whole barely acknowledging its LGBT counterpart. It goes beyond that—it’s as if the Muslim community completely failed to recognize the possibility of Muslims not being straight. As if being queer and Muslim weren’t compatible and were mutually exclusive. Maybe it’s why it took me so long to realize I was bisexual.

I came to terms with my sexuality at sixteen, but it wasn’t easy. Although I soon realized that I had always felt an attraction for men and women, accepting this reality was difficult.

The biggest barrier was my Muslim faith. After being told time and time again by both family and friends that being anything but straight was wrong—disgusting, even—I started questioning whether my faith was still valid; whether it was really compatible with who I was.

The Quran’s address of homosexuality is rather vague, and disputed by many. Typically, the story of Lot is the one most often referenced to demonstrate Islam’s disapproval of homosexuality. Lot was a Prophet of God, sent to the towns of Sodom and Gomorrah to preach God’s Almighty power and dissuade them from their “sinning” ways.

“Indeed, you approach men with desire, instead of women. Rather, you are a transgressing people,” the Quran quotes (7:81). Faced with the disobedience of the people he was preaching to—as well as his own wife—the story also details that Lot was told by God to leave, and the cities were destroyed the next day, as it “rained upon them stones of layered hard clay,” (11:82).

Due to its direct mention of a man-on-man relationship, Lot’s story is widely interpreted

as a direct and clear disapproval of homosexuality in Islam. That’s the case for my parents, anyways. Lot’s story is almost always mentioned when homosexuality is brought up during a discussion, as a reminder of its “impurity” and “immorality.”

However, some scholars have pointed out the lack of explicit condemnation of that type of relationship, paired with the practices of rape also mentioned in Lot’s story that might be misleading when interpreting the nature of those relationships. The ambiguous nature of that tale makes it difficult to assume anything about the real reason for the punishment of the people of Sodom and Gomorrah. Was it their alleged homosexual relationships, or their disbelief of God?

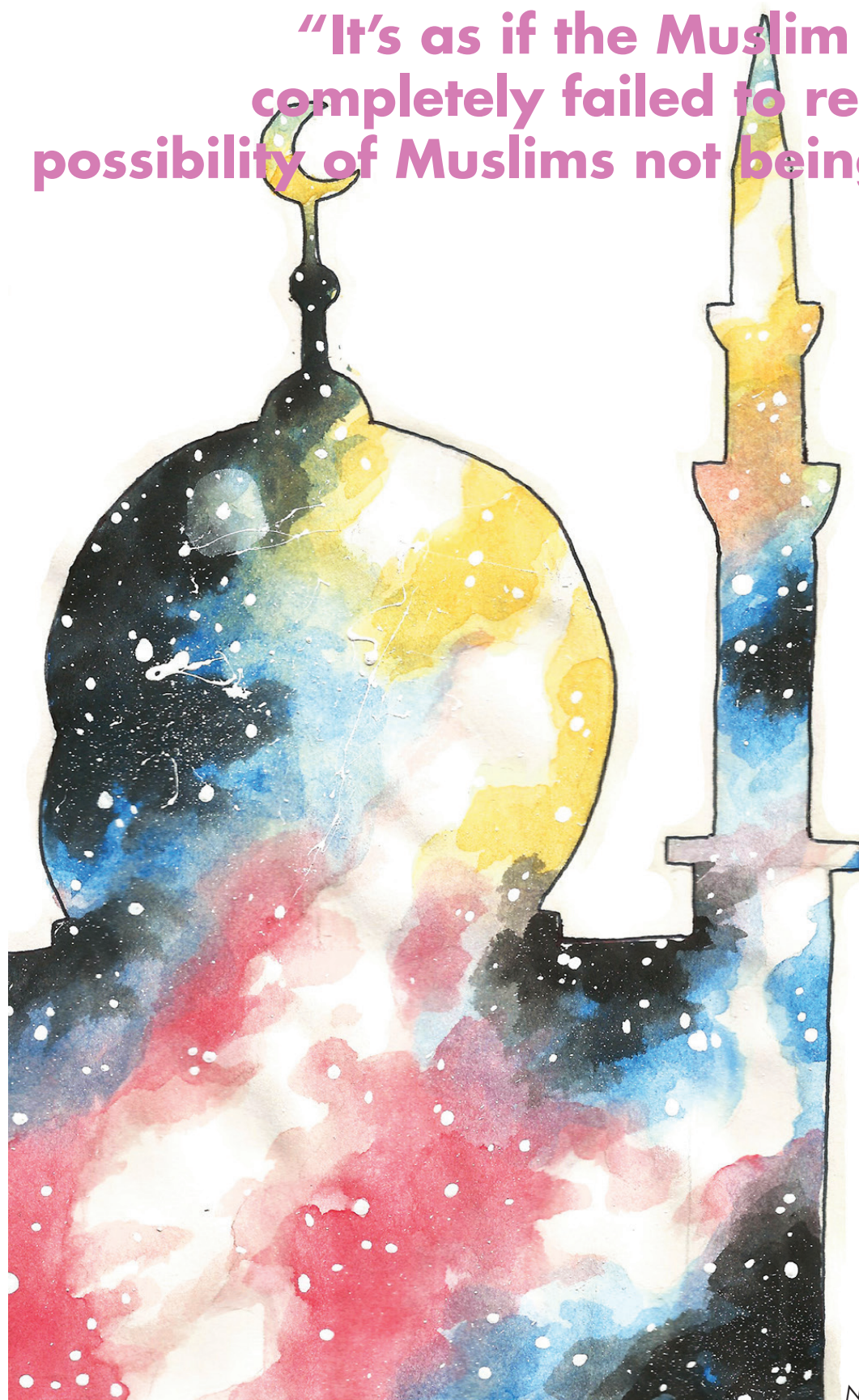
Personally, Lot’s story does very little to convince me of any sin related to homosexuality. My views as a Muslim might be seen as liberal to some, but I strongly believe that my faith and my actions towards it matter more than things like my sexual identity or orientation. My bisexuality doesn’t have to alter my faith in God, or my will to help others, to preach peace, to be a better Muslim. After all, my relationship with God concerns me and me alone, and no one else should have a say in that.

Of course, coming to that conclusion took time. At sixteen, I had no one to share my thoughts with. Friends with little to no knowledge of Islam simply couldn’t understand or relate to my point of view as a

Muslim. Meanwhile, I had no one within my Muslim community who was willing to challenge their own ideas on LGBT issues, let alone accept me as a bisexual. I sorted it out on my own, in the end, but I still feel the need to speak up.

I might never be able to properly come out to my family due to their views. I might never be able to speak about these issues under my real name. But I can try my best to shine light on a reality that I believe is often overlooked: The reality of LGBT Muslim youth is stuck in a precarious equilibrium between faith and identity. By sharing my story, I hope we start considering the need to acknowledge those people; to give them a voice, to welcome them, and to listen to them.

“It’s as if the Muslim community completely failed to recognize the possibility of Muslims not being straight.”



NICO HOLZMANN @hangedmagpie

Get Your Internalized Misogyny Away From My Dildo Collection

A Lipstick Lesbian Takes Off the Makeup

by Everest Gheorghiu

It's 5:44 p.m. My phone screen lights up and blares a familiar ding—it's a Tinder notification.

My heart doesn't quite skip a beat with anticipation of this new match. Rather, I abruptly spring up, like bread just popped out of my dumpster-dived toaster.

This instills some anxiety in me. I wonder how the interaction will play out. Sometimes I'm pleasantly surprised to find that my bread is perfectly crisp, but other times it's flat-out burnt, even if I set the dial precisely between two and three.

It's always a gamble with these kinds of things. I emotionally brace myself before clicking on the notification, and after 15 minutes of light-hearted exchanges, it begins to feel like five minutes in the toaster isn't so risky.

That is, until it happens again. It jumps out from around the corner, catching me off-guard.

"My boyfriend said it's fine for me to be with other girls," her message reads; a burn as charred as the heart of ingrained misogyny.

Internalized misogyny doesn't only refer to the outright belief that women are inferior, but often to the byproducts of societal views causing women to doubt, shame, and undervalue themselves and each other. It's insidious, and can be present even in the most socially conscious feminist thought.

Let me level with you here. As a lipstick lesbian, meaning a lesbian who appears to be more outwardly "feminine" than the stereotype, I am often treated like a sex toy to be used and then discarded once I'm no longer useful. Because of the way I present myself, it's common for people to assume that I am a) promiscuous, b) confused, and c) willing to live up to both of those assumptions.

Don't get me wrong—straight femme women face this same stigma. For lesbians, however, there is an extra layer that entices men in particular to challenge our identity. Lesbians who portray a more outwardly "masculine" appearance aren't typically as fetishized or questioned as much. They may be perceived as more secure in their identity and are taken more seriously as a

"If I had a dollar for every woman that asks me to have a threesome with her and her boyfriend..."

result, simply because they take on "masculine attitudes," and that's proof enough of their attraction to women.

If I had a dollar for every woman that asks me to have a threesome with her and her boyfriend, or every dude that has asked me if I'm sure I just haven't found "the right guy yet," I would stop having to dumpster dive for home appliances.

When I meet a woman in a monogamous relationship with a guy, and who is encouraged to be romantically involved with other women—but not other men, of course—I begin to ask questions.

"Why is he uncomfortable with you seeing other guys?" I ask.

"It's different with a man. It insinuates

...I would stop having to dumpster dive for home appliances."

that I'm not fulfilled in my current relationship," she replies.

"So in other words, it could be threatening?"

"Yeah, I guess so," she admits.

I am so sick of having this conversation. "Because getting romantically and sexually involved with a woman isn't as serious as if it were with a man?"

Silence.

This particular brand of situation comes from the same sort of harmful mentality that fuels questions like, "Who's the man in the relationship?"

To which my answer is, "Luckily, neither of us!" Relationships don't inherently need masculinity to be satisfying, happy, healthy, and complete.

The most prominent images of lesbians in the media are hyper-sexualized and primarily through the male gaze. "Lesbian" suddenly means "erotic," and my sexuality has become an object. The beauty of a love between two women, and what I do in bed, is subsequently dehumanized.

Lesbians aren't a fantasy. We are more than sex, and our sex has nothing to do with men. The concept that others can use us to explore their own sexuality, to satisfy their partner's chimera, or to have mindless fun while in a monogamous relationship with a man, perpetuates the notion that women are less valuable and are to be taken less seriously than men.

The chance of another woman and I developing real feelings for each other is just as likely as if she were to become seriously romantically involved with a man.

My sexuality isn't to be taken as a challenge for a guy to "turn" me. I don't care if your husband is Barack Obama and you, Michelle, are messaging me on Tinder. My sexuality is not fluid just because another woman is present, either.

The whole argument of, "Well, you use dildos, right? Wouldn't you rather have the real thing?" is also completely ridiculous. If you're a man that enjoys anal sex with women, does it mean that you're going to enjoy it with another man? Probably not. It's a matter of attraction, not of practicality.

At the centre of the issue is honesty. Being dishonest and insincere about your intentions to involve a lesbian in a monogamous heterosexual relationship with double standards in place is inherently misogynistic. This is why it's so important to be real with yourself, your partner or partners, and whoever you're about to embark on a new sexual journey with.

We need to recognize that these desires and limitations are intertwined with internalized misogyny. To infer that a relationship between two women, regardless of commitment levels, is less important than a relationship between a man and a woman, is dangerous.

It's disheartening for me when someone tries to manipulate me to fulfill their

...or every dude that has asked me if I'm sure I just haven't found 'the right guy yet'...

own desires, especially in a manner that is so objectifying and dismissive of my sexual identity. These circumstances can create trust issues and encourage biphobia as a result, harming everybody on the spectrum. Remember that lesbians—lipstick or not—don't exist for your pleasure, for your exploration, for your boyfriend, or for you.

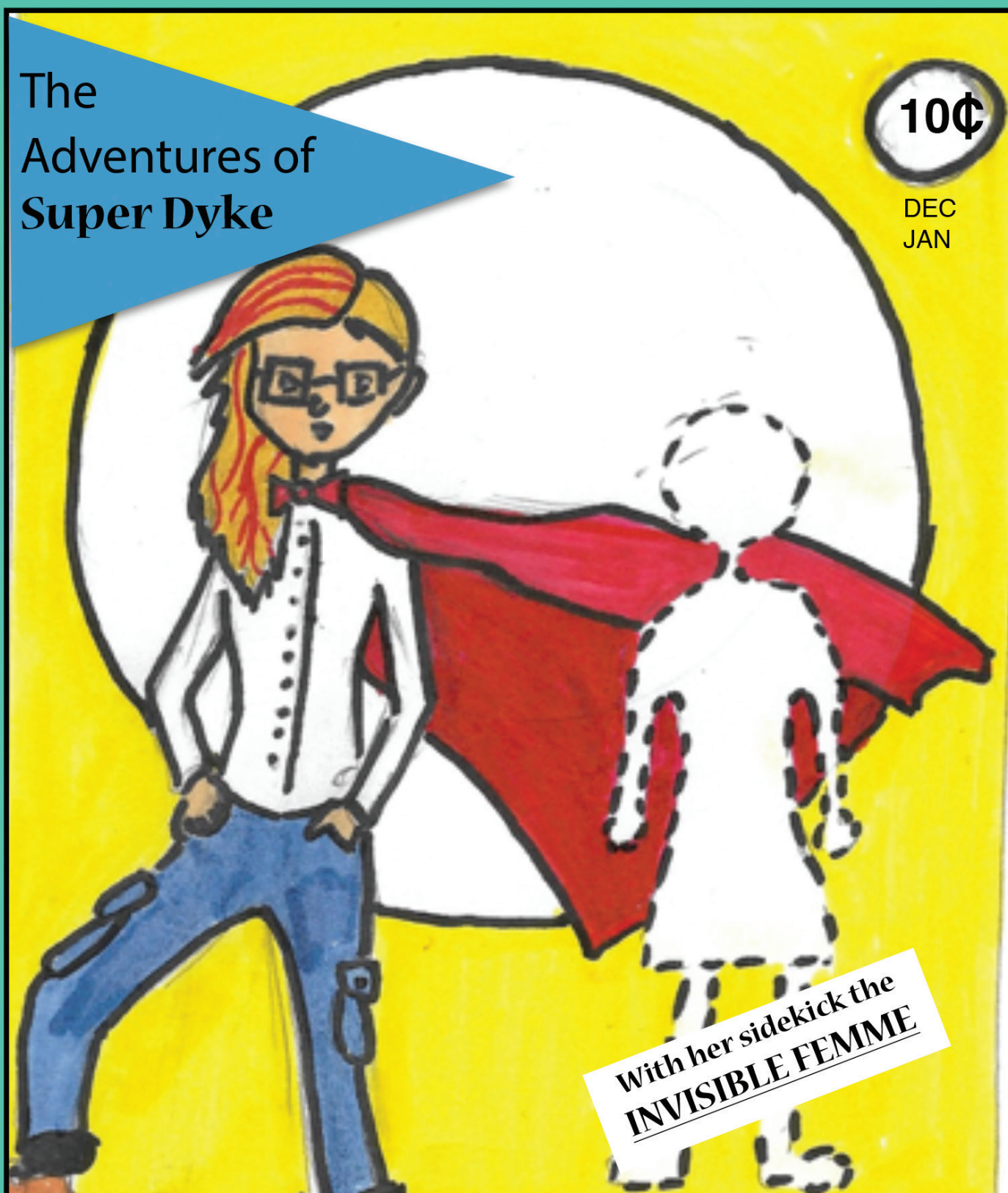
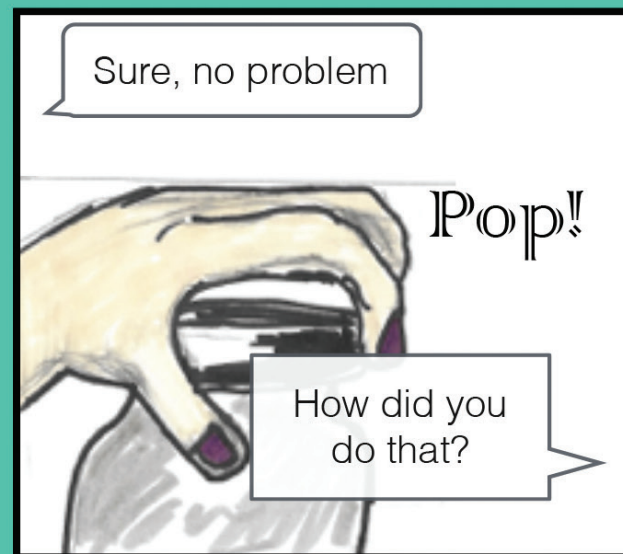
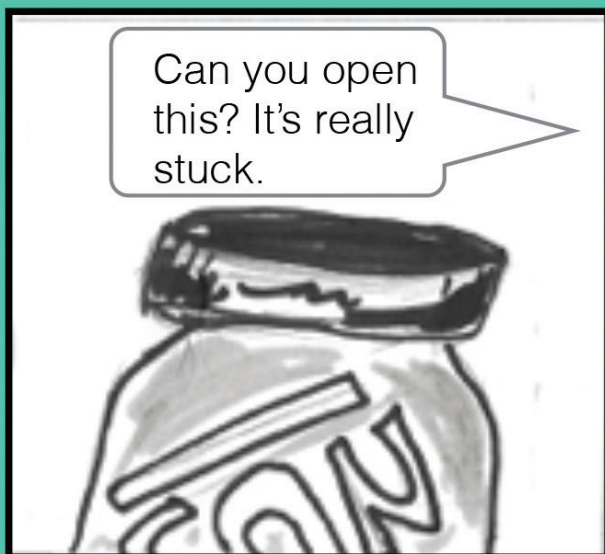
So if you ever do find yourself asking a lesbian these touchy questions, it's time to assess your own identity, intentions, and facilitate an open discussion with your partner or partners. Because at the end of the day, all we want is to have our favourite bread toasted just right.



BRIAN LAPUZ

Perks

by Nicola Sibthorpe



Can Algae Prevent HPV?

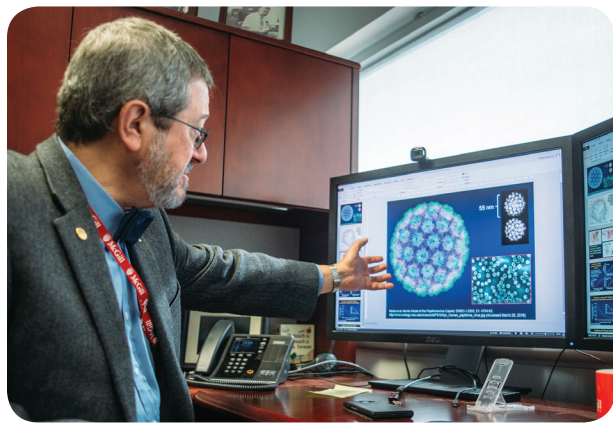
McGill Study Thinks That Carrageenan May Slow Spread of Virus

by **Jesse Stein**

A research team at McGill University recently showed that red algae could be used to prevent human papillomavirus. Sindy Magnan, one of the PhD students working on the study, is very excited about the potential of the findings.

The research found a 40 per cent reduction in overall instances of HPV among participants and an almost 60 per cent reduction in key strains of the virus that are known to cause cervical cancer. The team unveiled the preliminary results of their study at the International Papillomavirus Conference held in Cape Town, South Africa.

The study focused on how carrageenan—a non-



Dr. Eduardo Franco, the director of cancer epidemiology at McGill University, led the study. PHOTO STEPHANE LAVOIE

toxic substance found in red algae and often used in food manufacturing—could be used to prevent the spread of HPV and clear up ongoing infections.

So far, 214 women have taken part in the study after being split into two groups. The control group received a lubricant gel that did not

contain carrageenan, while the experiment group was given one that did. Women then followed up with researchers several times over the course of a year to track their results.

Dr. Eduardo Franco, the director of cancer epidemiology at McGill University, led the study. Franco's trail-

blazing work on the study of HPV has left a lasting impact on what research communities know today. His research spans three decades, and he was one of the researchers who helped show the causal link between HPV and cervical cancer. The main scope of his research has revolved around the prevention of the spread of the virus, and working on new methods to screen for precancerous lesions.

According to Dr. Franco, a cost efficient and safe way to prevent the spread of HPV will play a large role in limiting the occurrence of cervical cancer.

As of now, the best way to protect against HPV is through the use of vaccines such as Gardasil. But while they're extremely effec-

tive, they don't prevent all of the 120 known HPV strains. Currently, the standard vaccine only protects against nine of them. It's still a major improvement over the previous vaccine, which only protected against four, said Franco.

HPV is still a major problem in developing countries where the high cost for treatment renders them inaccessible for many, he explained.

While more research still needs to be done, the study has shown carrageenan to be effective for all strains of HPV—and because of its low cost, it could be a possible alternative for countries that are unable to provide widespread vaccination.

The research team is currently hoping to finish the study, which will account

for samples from 500 women within the next two years. They will also be testing the hypothesis that using carrageenan gel can prevent the spread of a previous infection and make it possible for an individual's own immune system to deal with the virus.

Dr. Franco is hoping to extend the research to a number of other areas such as the effectiveness of carrageenan gel in conjunction with condoms for preventing HPV.

He's "cautiously optimistic" about the study, but so far believes that it has shown very promising results. He is also involved with a separate study, which is providing carrageenan gel to gay men. It is Franco's hope that they will find similar results and also test to see if HIV can hinder the effectiveness of carrageenan gel.

CUTV Looking to Attract More Women

Members Hope Soon-to-Debut Bollywood Film Will Help Break Gender Norms

by **Miriam Lafontaine**

Concordia University Television wants you to know that their doors are open to all.

Based out of their offices on Mackay St., CUTV lends their video equipment to students and Montrealers, as well as provide workshops on how to shoot and edit video from Monday through Wednesday.

In 2016, only seven per cent of directors who worked on the top 250 most successful films in the US and Canada were women, while only 17 per cent held other roles behind the camera. The inequality that prevails throughout the film industry makes it difficult and intimidating for many women to break in.

Seema Arora has been working with CUTV since 2008, and through the years she's said that it hasn't always been the best environment for young women looking to work in the video production industry. As it used to be a space primarily of men, many women felt intimidated to come in, she said.

But since then, gender parity has become more of a reality. "I definitely see a stronger presence of women," Arora said. She now estimates that the membership of CUTV is perhaps made up of 40 per cent women and 60 per cent men.

As a member of CUTV's Board of Directors, Arora has made it her goal to mainly focus on attracting more women into their organization. She's been able to do so by personally reaching out to women around Concordia and Montreal, by writing scripts with strong female characters and by starting a Facebook page called "Women in Media," so that she can keep in touch with women around the city.

CUTV's outreach coordinator Sasha Lip-



CUTV and their outreach coordinator, Sasha Lipskaia, want more women in the station.

MIRIAM LAFONTAINE

skaia has been aiming to increase women representation as well. She's been trying to get CUTV to work with more non-profit groups. In the past, they've worked in collaboration with Girl Action Foundation, a Montreal-based group that provides funding to programs made by and for women, and has provided coverage on one of their workshops.

Lipskaia has also reached out to the Concordia's Centre for Gender Advocacy—which she is planning on meeting up with sometime in early April—and with the Simone de Beauvoir Institute who have yet to respond.

"I don't know if that's because of the kind of reputation that CUTV has had in the past," Lipskaia said. "It hasn't been very easy to connect."

In the winter of 2012 CUTV reached a peak in popularity due to their coverage of the 2012 tuition hike protests. But the fee-levy group received criticism around campus for having too many external members on their Board of

Directors. Recently, two Concordia students resigned from their positions on the Board, meaning that CUTV is not able to uphold their bylaw which states that the Board needs to have a Concordia student majority.

Lipskaia said she wants to organize workshops over the summer that are aimed at inviting more women so they can share their stories and personal experiences as women. She explained that she wants it to be an open and casual environment, where anyone, whether they are a recent immigrant, a person of colour, or gender nonconforming, can come in and start experimenting with video.

Lipskaia is used to working in the competitive field. "For me, I'm used to it being intimidating, but I don't think it should be," she said.

From there, she hopes that CUTV will continue to pursue their goal to become a safer space, where people are able to speak up and

ask for help without fear of being disrespected.

"More and more we're becoming aware that what we hear isn't acceptable," she said, mentioning that in the past, members would occasionally make comments that had sexist and misogynistic undertones. Lipskaia wants CUTV to become a more conscious environment.

As a part of their attempts to branch out, CUTV is currently involved in the production of a Bollywood-inspired film, which is being produced "largely with positions filled by women," said Arora, who will be directing the movie. Expected to have a four-minute runtime, plans for the short film have been in the works since January 2017.

The choreographer, who is also the main actress, and the sound producer are both women, and most of the cast of the film is as well. The group consists of a mix of students, experienced actors and a cast from various backgrounds.

"Not everyone is Indian in the film. You have people of varying nationalities that are participating, which is really nice," said Arora.

Filming for the movie will be complete by April 3, and once the editing process has been done the plan is to send the movie off to various film festivals around the world. Arora said that she would target South Asian festivals, dance festivals and local festivals.

She also explained that it'll likely be made public on their YouTube page by the summer or early fall. In the meantime, she hopes to hold a private screening on campus while she waits for feedback from festivals.

Her advice for young women looking to get into filmmaking and the communications industry: "You just have to take that leap of faith and give it a shot."

"If you're interested in film just go for it," she said. "If you cannot get on a production yourself, because you don't have experience, create your own content."

CUTV holds their production meetings every Wednesday night at 5 p.m.

Bellesa Fills the Gap in the Porn Industry

New Website Centres Feminine and Non-Binary Pleasure

by **Kelsey Litwin** @kelseylitwin

There are some conversations that are harder to have than others. Telling your mom that you do porn is one of those.

"I remember the first time I kind of just [told] my mom—I was merciless—I kind of just said, 'I'm doing feminist porn,'" Michelle Schnaidman chuckled.

Her mom's reaction: "A head tilt and a 'What?'" she recalled, with a giggle in her voice.

When she said that she was "doing feminist porn," Schnaidman doesn't mean it the way that most do when they say they "do porn." Curate might be a better way to describe it, for instance, or facilitate, maybe, but not "do." Schnaidman does not produce porn herself in anyway.

Rather, she makes it available for those who seek it.

With Bellesa.co, her new website which is based out of Montreal, Schnaidman is trying to break down the stigma surrounding feminine sexuality. The idea, she explained, was to create a space in which female-identifying and non-binary people could go to embrace their sexuality, in all its forms. Something prior to starting Bellesa,

she didn't always do herself.

"It's quite funny because I actually didn't really watch porn before," she said. "I dabbled in it a couple times and I was like 'Eh, cool. It's not for me, I don't like it.'"

But the process it took simply to find something worth watching, she continued, furthered this disdain. It was tedious, she said, having to dig through pages of abrasive videos, titles and ads to find something worthwhile.

"I remember there was one time, I was looking for a video to watch and it was just this insane experience of being shown these ads and these images," she said. "I thought, 'This can't be it.'"

And it's not it. Schnaidman explained that the content people like her want to watch is out there. The deterrent is the challenges that they need to go through to get it.

She shared her experience with a friend of hers, who succumbed to saying that's just how things are—porn websites are a space made for men.

"Wait a minute? What do you mean 'That's just how it is?'" Schnaidman remembered thinking.

"It was just this insane experience of being shown these ads and these images. I thought, 'This can't be it'"

—Michelle Schnaidman

That, she said, is when she laced up her bootstraps.

After launching Bellesa for a closed beta-test, she and her team saw immediate success. When they took the site down to prepare for the official launch on Feb. 15, Schnaidman explained that the desire for a site like it became blaringly obvious.

"We got these emails—really angry emails—asking where the hell Bellesa went," she said. "It was the best kind of problem to have."

The reason why they were so upset was because Bellesa's users "wanted this thing so badly," Schnaidman explained.

The aspect that appealed to its users is that the site goes beyond pornographic videos. It's a holistic approach to sexuality that provides Bellesa's users with different ways to consume sexual content. Beyond the videos, Schnaidman and her team have sought out erotic fiction writers to produce stories specifically for the website.

Jessica McLaren is one of those writers. She said before Bellesa, she had never considered writing erotic fiction for public consumption. But after seeing an ad online, she knew there was something special.

"I knew that it was going to turn into something much bigger than a quick few dollars," she said over the phone. After signing on last February as a contracted writer, she proved herself to the team and quickly moved up to becoming the site's head of erotic fiction.

But what they're trying to do, Schnaidman explained, is probably most evident not in the videos or fiction on Bellesa, but in the articles that can be found at the bottom of the homepage.

The "Collective" tab leads readers to articles that aren't explicitly sexual—Schnaidman describes them as being "safe for work." The Collective is what shapes the overall tone of Bellesa. While there isn't any porn in this section, she said, "We do talk about all things female empowering. That includes sex, love, relationships, culture, body positivity, feminism—anything."

This, she said, helps clear up a lot of the confusion about what exactly her website is. When she first started getting serious about Bellesa, Schnaidman explained that she was

faced with a lot of raised-eyebrows.

"I've been trying to sell an idea and I'm telling them, 'Yeah this is about empowerment and the movement,' and all people really hear is 'Okay it's a porn site,'" Schnaidman continued. "But everyone's come around, I think. Even my grandmother!"

Gabrielle Bouchard, the trans advocacy coordinator of the Centre for Gender Advocacy didn't need any convincing to buy into the idea. What Schnaidman had brought to fruition, she said, addresses something that is truly lacking in the porn world.

The focus is shifted onto feminine pleasure, said Bouchard. "It's not going to be accessory anymore. It's going to be the centre of the porn, right?" she continued. "That's a huge shift."

Bellesa ensures that shift by putting control into the hands of users. On the top right corner of all videos displayed on the site are hearts with numbers next to them—some four or five, others 29 or 53, and a few with upwards of 150. This, Schnaidman explained, is how they choose which videos to promote.

It's an up-vote and down-vote system. Much like other websites like Reddit, the users are in control of what content gets uploaded—there's a link at the bottom of the home page which redirects to an upload form—and then they choose which work gets featured. The result is a site that is grounded in the community, Schnaidman said.

But that doesn't mean that just anything can end up on Bellesa. The content must meet their guidelines, she continued, which means "none of the -isms," such as tokenism, ableism or sexism.

But Bouchard still has her reservations. She said only time will tell whether Bellesa will be able to live up to its intersectional goal of having content that represents femme, non-heterosexual, trans and non-binary folks from a variety of backgrounds in a non-fetishizing way.

Schnaidman acknowledges and shares these concerns. Bellesa is a unique concept, and like with anything that's new, she explained, they run some inherent risks.

But for now, "I'm happy," Schnaidman shared. "I'm fucking thrilled."



DEANNA HEWITT @decoma_

A Rotten Apple Spoils the Bunch

How Gender Biases in STEM Create Oppressive Environments

by **Pooja Patil**

Women have made astonishing gains in the past 50 years, shattering gender bias in all aspects of life. More young women are choosing careers in traditionally male-dominant fields, such as engineering and technology.

Coming from a computer science engineering background, I have seen an increase in female enrollment in Concordia's engineering department. But having worked in the corporate sector for two years, I have also had my share of discrimination at work.

Being considered not good enough for a certain project and having to turn a deaf ear every time my colleagues made a sexist joke were a part and parcel of my everyday life. Although there are women working with equal status at every level of a company, there's still an air of discrimination, in many cases, that very subtly keeps reminding women that they aren't a part of the team.

At a panel hosted by the multinational software company Autodesk, I had a chance to meet successful female figures in the technology industry who have devoted their lives to their careers. The issues that came up made me realize that although a lot has changed, there are still a few small minds who perpetuate this stigma which force women to constantly contemplate

their every action, just so that they are considered capable by their peers.

Janick Valois, a quality assurance manager, noted that most of the time women are told to "act like a man," a phrase which holds no specific meaning. Nonetheless, a lot of women are subjected to it.

It was also mentioned that women have to dress down just to be taken seriously. They pass on wearing their new floral skirt or their colourful high heels. Most women are afraid to be branded as "dumb," a fear that fuels a slew of insecurities. This, I realized, most men don't experience.

It's natural for a man to make a mistake and get over it, but the same doesn't hold true for a woman, especially if she is among 30 other men in a room, giving a presentation while trying to prove her credibility.

When the question, "How would you want to be treated in a meeting room with majority of men?" was thrown at the audience at the panel, all that came up was, "As equals!"

Nobody wants to be treated differently or special. All that anyone could want is to be treated as a part of the team. Generally, when men are given a task, both themselves and their peers believe that they will be able to do and it understand it. Women, however, are more hesitant—a result of years of patriar-

chal oppression. This mentality holds women back from seizing many opportunities.

Women are generally asked how they manage both work and family life, whereas men are rarely subjected to the same question, which causes women to feel guilty. Having family dinners shouldn't just be a women's agenda, but a family one.

Recent statistics show that only 17 per cent of students who enroll into engineering programs are women, and out of those, only 7 per cent make it as registered professionals in the field. These numbers raise an alarm.

The Women in Engineering association at Concordia aims to help female engineering students attain academic and financial support, and encourages them to get involved in various competitive teams and social events.

During a meeting with Karina Bagryan, one of the co-presidents at WIE, and a building engineering student, she shared her experiences of gender bias in the field with me. Bagryan's field of study consists of about 15 per cent women.

Five years ago at one of her many internships, she asked the vice president of sales what he would do if he were presented with two resumes that were the exact same, with the exception of one being a man's and one a woman's. He responded that he would go with the man, and he wouldn't even think twice.

When she asked for an explanation, he simply said a woman would get pregnant and leave the company. Moreover, he continued, due to the nature of sales, clients need to be brought into the bars and hockey games, where the product would be pitched. "How would a girl see herself doing all that?" Bagryan remembered him asking.

At another internship, Bagryan was told that she would be a distraction to the men on her team, something that she had to deal with with the company's president.

Bagryan believes with passion, precision and professionalism, one can tackle these issues with dignity and can dedicate their energy into pursuing their goals.

This won't necessarily change the few small minds that contribute to oppression. But as women build confidence in their own abilities—proven by the significant contributions of women in engineering and technology—they will continue to prove sexist notions wrong.

Bagryan's colleague, Konstantinos Bakalis, agreed with her thoughts on the gender biases in the field. He said involving women and increasing diversity in groups brings forward alternate points of view. It would be foolish to shut down a different perspective, he said.

The problems prevailing in the field might not be obvious to spot. They are subtle. Men need to understand that. Women need to be strong, follow their heart, work hard and most importantly not be afraid to raise their hands and ask questions.

We do have a long way to go, but this new generation is producing more confident women and much more understanding men. Hopefully, the field of engineering and technology will see a more balanced and healthy ratio of men and women in the future.



SHREYA BISWAS @SHREYA_DORA

De-Stigmatizing Alcoholism

Social Pressures Prevent Women From Getting the Help They Need

by **Savannah Stewart** @Sav_Eden_S

Until recently, we didn't know much about women's relationship with alcohol, even though alcohol abuse among women has been rising steadily for years.

Most of the studies on alcoholism that were conducted in the last century were only carried out with male subjects. This is a problem.

Lately, studies have shown that women and men drink in different ways and for different reasons. This means that a lot of what we know in regards to alcohol consumption and abuse has to be thrown out the window when we're talking about women.

For one thing, we've discovered that since women have on average less water in their bodies, they'll often have a higher blood alcohol level than men do even if they were to drink the same amount. That—paired with the fact that women tend to be smaller in stature than men—means that it can take a woman as low as half the amount of alcohol to get drunk as it would a man. Women also have the potential to develop health complications from abusive drinking at an earlier age and at lower consumption levels than men.

However, the differences are more than just physical—the psychology behind alcohol consumption and abuse differs, too. While studies have concluded that there are a variety of reasons men will drink—be it dealing with anger or to have an easier time socializing—a 2008 study conducted by Dr. Stephanie Covington concluded that women tend to self-medicate using alcohol to deal with trauma. Covington's study goes along with many other studies regarding this issue.

One in three women worldwide have been physically or sexually assaulted in their lifetime. Women who were sexually assaulted are six times more likely to abuse alcohol than women who weren't. Many female problem-drinkers report abusive or neglectful early years. So when we're talking about women and alcohol, trauma needs to be a part of the conversation.

There's another major difference between male and female problem-drinkers that we don't tend to talk about—the stigma.

In 1988—around the time when we began to pay more attention to women's relationship to alcohol—a study conducted by the University of Michigan revealed that women, both with and without alcoholic tendencies, had more negative feelings toward female problem-drinkers than male problem-drinkers. The women in the study also agreed that society as a whole seems to hold this view.

Though the study came out almost 30 years ago, experts say this stigma is alive and well today. In a 2009 issue of the the Canadian Women's Health Network's periodical, Carolyn Shimmin wrote that it's "important to understand that stigma experienced by those living with addictions varies by gender and therefore requires different approaches and treatment options."

According to some experts, this stigma comes from the role we commonly attribute

to women in our society: that of a mother or caregiver, who should uphold the morals of society. It's also been attributed to the fact that women who excessively drink are often stereotyped as being sexually promiscuous, an association we do not make for men in the same situation.

Women problem-drinkers being stigmatized, shamed and rejected for their habits makes it that much more difficult for them to seek the help they need. The World Health Organization has found that men are far more likely to disclose problem-drinking to a medical professional than women.

Furthermore, because alcohol abuse in women is often triggered by violence, the

for example, the McGill University Health Centre has women-only addiction support group meetings twice a week. They explain on their website that, because violence against women is most often perpetrated by men and is closely tied to addictions for women, "it is important to provide a safe and supportive environment where male/female dynamics does not play a role."

What needs to change now are our societal notions that stigmatize and isolate women dealing with alcohol abuse. Progress in the treatment methods are well and good, but that doesn't change the fact that women have a much harder time than men do when it comes to admitting that they have a prob-

"Clearly, there is no 'one size fits all' treatment that works regardless of gender"

healing process addresses that violence, and they are made to relive it. Reaching out for help can therefore be a difficult and emotionally exhausting experience.

We can't ignore how these factors play into treatment for alcohol abuse. Clearly, there is no "one size fits all" treatment that works regardless of gender.

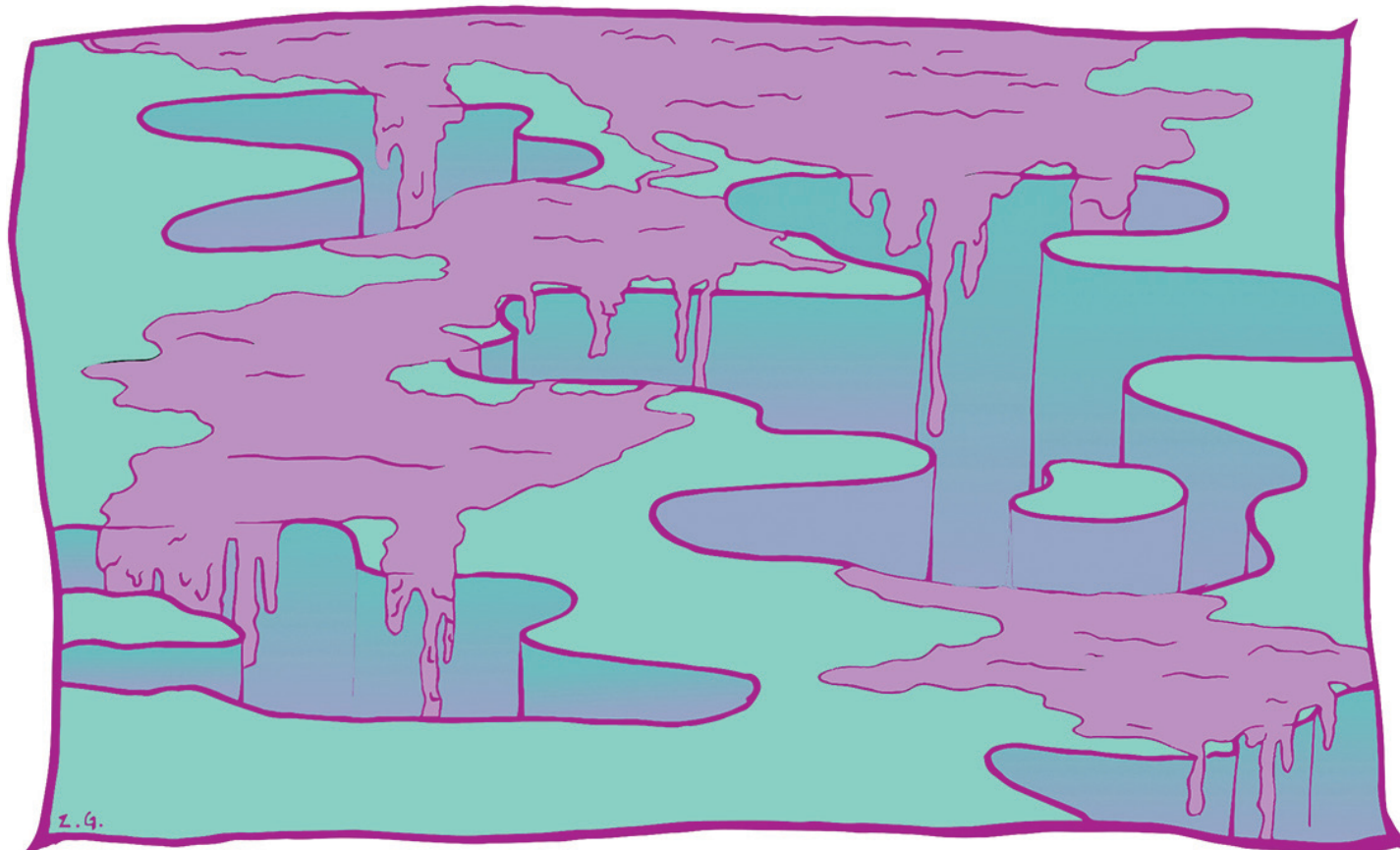
In much of North America, experts have come to realize that their treatment methods need to be tailored to women's needs if they are to be effective. Here in Montreal

lem in the first place.

That isn't to say society is totally accepting of male problem-drinkers. People with addictions often deal with rejection and isolation, regardless of their gender. But until women are guaranteed equal footing in this world, it'll continue to be more difficult for them to reach out when they are in need of help.

Unless it becomes easier and more socially accepted for women to seek the help they need, alcohol abuse among women will continue to rise as steadily as it has been for years.

ZOE GELFANT @203631f4n7



Unstable Toxicity

by **Vernon LeCraw**

Fat privilege
In a world so skinny.
I do not struggle
to have my audience.
Listen attentively when
my sisters hold
more authority.
Yet, I bear the audacity
to smother others' opportunities
by raising mY VOICE.
What choice do I have?
I plea
desperate for sympathy.
So, pity me
while I am sexy
because I need you
to make me feel
manly.

Virginia

by **Diane Dollisen** @grumpywednesday

The day your mother caught us kissing in your bedroom,
you told me that the world looked like how your insides felt:
*trauma after trauma
relived and relived.*

I traced flower petals on your stomach with the tips of my fingers
and told you stories
to keep us both from crying.

The next day I couldn't shut up about rebirth
and the sadness of a world that would never know us
as Vita and Virginia
reincarnated in brown skin.
You called me silly
and you never went back home
and our mothers called us twenty times
while we abandoned the world
in your boyfriend's ugly one-bedroom apartment.

And I know that in the next life, you'll still try to convince me
that the sun is better for my skin
and I'll just tell you how the light only stops hurting
when you touch me
and you'll pretend to be happy for as long as you can.

Today my mother still scolds me for dreaming
and says no boy will ever love me this way,
only now she apologizes too much
and I guess I agree with her.

Because sometimes I'll rage at god for making me forget your face
when you show up everywhere,
even though I know it's not her fault.
And sometimes I'll leave myself behind to make up
entire days with you
on all the moons and in all the gardens
and in all the fairy tales we created,

before the world began to look like how my insides feel:
*trauma after trauma
relived and relived.*

JENNIFER AEDY

Learning and Loving

Polyamory Is Based on Honesty, Communication and Openness

by **Ocean DeRouchie** @oshieposhie

Until I made the conscious choice to opt-out of monogamous relationships, I had cheated on every partner I had ever been with.

I know how bad that might look on paper. But for the longest time, no matter how long I was with someone, no matter how much I cared for them, I would eventually find myself in a situation where I had serious feelings for another person(s). Any sentiment of guilt or shame I felt came less so from the consequences of any action, and more so from a societal belief that “sleeping with someone else is something you do to your partner, not for yourself,” as Dossie Easton and Janet W. Hardy put it so eloquently in their remarkable book, *The Ethical Slut*.

It wasn’t out of not loving my partner, or out of wanting to cause harm, that I acted on those feelings—I was just happy to share love, and I found that the more love I had to give, the more love I had to share.

So for years, I would try to follow my heart—and end up hurting everyone else’s in the process.

At the end of summer of 2015, I came to the conclusion that being in exclusive relationships was a no-no. I started telling new romantic interests that I was polyamorous, and soon enough my heart felt lighter and lighter. The realization that polyamory, for me, was more so a part of *who I am*, rather than a lifestyle choice, came with a strong sense of self, and an even stronger feeling of relief.

That’s not to say that sharing this with people didn’t come without some intense reactions. When I first told my mom, she was like, “No, Ocean, you just need a boyfriend.” To which I responded, “No, Mom—I have like, five of them.” Her concern and bewilderment—which comes from a sincere, distinct place of love—is shared by many others who find out that someone in their life is polyamorous. It comes from a sheer lack of public knowledge or even comfortable conversation around non-monogamy.

However, polyamory still remains taboo in nature, and is largely ignored as a research topic as a result. It was only last summer that data from the first-ever national survey on polyamorous families emerged.

The survey collected information from 547 respondents—all self-identified poly folks in “families,” or what I just call “relationships,” between three or more consenting adults. It’s worth noting that this is by no



BRIAN LAPUZ & OCEAN DEROUCHIE

means an exhaustive representation of polyamorous relationship structures.

The survey also (somewhat) reclaims the word “family,” indicating that the meaning of it in Canada is evolving.

Of these respondents, there was a general consensus that public acceptance of polyamory is increasing, but perceptions that it’s a kink or fetish, or is somehow aligned with polygamy, is still giving it a bad rap.

Poly peeps have to consider who they tell, because “many parts of the world will not welcome us with open arms,” write Easton and Hardy. People have lost jobs, been denied leases and lost custody battles. “It’s not easy being easy,” they point out.

My experiences telling potential partners since this coming-to-terms with myself are different depending on the person. Some are uncomfortable with the idea of a partner pursuing other interests—and that’s okay; people need to set their own boundaries. On the other hand though, there are people who are into it, and they aren’t as few and far

between as you might expect.

Poly living situations are on the rise, too. There was a time not too long ago when I was considering a move-in with two of my former partners. The dream, as a friend of mine once called it, never came true, but discussions around the idea included how many bedrooms we might want, in what context would it be appropriate to bring our other partners into the shared space, and beyond.

When looking at poly living situations, the 2016 survey found that most people lived between two households. However, one fifth of them said that all members of their relationship lived in one home. In these single-home families, three fifths of them included one married couple.

It’s interesting, because even though “life-long monogamous heterosexual marriages” have been ingrained in us as “normal and natural,” as Easton and Hardy tell us, slightly more than half of all the respondents of the survey identified as non-straight. The

findings also show that many people in polyamorous relationships still value these kinds of commitments. “Poly,” to some, might suggest that the person is “immature, or inauthentic,” says *The Ethical Slut*; that we

do not want to settle down or grow up—that we’re adventurous.

And to that I say, “Hell yeah, we’re adventurous.” But that doesn’t mean I don’t want to have a stable life, with solid partners; that I don’t want to one day raise kids, do meaningful work, or buy a house. I do want those things, and when I imagine having them, I picture my best friends, our partners, and our kids living together in an environment that offers unconditional love, support, and different experiences to share with one another.

It’s not unheard of, either. Just under a quarter of survey respondents have at least one child living in their household. They say it takes a village to raise a child, and I don’t see how this is any different.

Poly is full of challenge, but then again, nothing worth having comes easy. No matter who we are or who we love, we will fumble and trip. Mistakes are a part of learning, and no relationship is exempted from that process. Operating on a basis of honesty, trust and communication is key in any relationship, but I believe polyamory pushes us to take those concepts to their furthest extents.

My father said to me once, while walking up Rachel St. on our way to Patati Patata for a late-night tofu burger that “it’s okay to love more than one person.” To be fair, even today we have our disagreements about relationships. But what we do have in common is that we believe in love—in whatever form that it comes in.

“I was just happy to share love, and I found that the more love I had to give, the more love I had to share.”

Changing the Conversation

Sports Culture Needs to Move Away From Rape Culture

by **Harrison-Milo Rahajason** @harrimilo

Accusations of sexual assault within university athletics programs are far too commonplace. The Baylor University rape scandal made the issue a major topic of conversation.

In Oct. 2016, the *Wall Street Journal* reported that, since 2011, 17 female students at Baylor University, in Waco, Texas, had accused up to 19 members of the football team of committing acts of sexual violence—including four gang rapes. Since then, only two players have been sentenced to jail time.

Art Briles, former head football coach at Baylor, was fired in May of 2016 for his involvement in the scandal. Not only was he aware of the attacks, but he also did nothing to reprimand the members of his team who committed them. On the contrary, he did everything he could to cover up these incidents, if only to ensure that his program was running smoothly. After all, the football team was winning games—and he didn't want anything to get in the way of that.

On Nov. 25 2016, Baylor was set to meet the Texas Tech Raiders for a neutral site game at AT&T Stadium in Dallas, Texas. Baylor took the field dressed in all black uniforms instead of their usual green and yellow ones. They wore those alternate uniforms as a gesture of solidarity for Briles.

The message it sent was beyond fucked up.

"You're going to find individual cases that are exceptions, but the system as it is in the U.S. around big-money collegiate sports is all about continuing to make money," said freelance journalist Jessica Luther—who initially helped break the news of the cover-up.

"Sometimes an institution will make the conscious decision to not interfere with the running of their team," she continued.

All of this went public around the same time as Brock Turner's case hit the news. Turner sexually assaulted a fellow student at Stanford University while she was unconscious. He was not reprimanded for the full extent of his acts, and his father lamented the punishments, stressing his disappointment for Brock's swimming career being derailed over "20 minutes of action." And by the way, he's already been released from jail, after only serving three of his laughable six-month sentence.

Both situations were incredibly disturbing, and they both had people wondering whether sports culture promotes rape culture, and why sexual assault in sports is so common.

"What's going on at Baylor is not dissimilar to other cases across the U.S., and internationally," said Annie E. Clark, founder of End Rape on Campus and one of the survivors documented in the film *The Hunting Grounds*.

Luther believes that the violent masculinity found in certain sports does, in part, contribute to the intersection of sports and rape culture. However, she also thinks that the issue lies in the way these cases are covered.

"I get these really sad Google alerts that really catch my attention, because they'll begin with 'former collegiate linebacker, or former so-and-so wide receiver arrested for domestic violence,'" explained Luther. "My thought is 'who cares?' I care about the people who are having these things happen to them—why should the accused's athletic career matter?"

She stressed that the media's focus on a perpetrator's sports achievements diverts attention from other instances of abuse, as well. "The media chooses to report this, but they won't talk about the banker down the street that beats his wife. If they can attach it to a sports program, they'll always do that," she said.

When details of Brock Turner's case became public, large parts of the conversation revolved around how the accusations would affect his swimming career. When Shawn Oakman, one of the players involved in the Baylor scandal, was accused of his crimes, football media was more interested in how this would affect his prospects of playing in professional leagues, rather than the atrocities for which he had not been punished.

"In a lot of these articles, it's important to see how things are covered. It's not about the crimes, but rather how many touchdowns they throw or his swimming time; how many

records does he hold; where will he transfer?" said Clark.

Between the cover-ups and the poor reporting, it's not difficult to see that sports culture lacks accountability.

"Anytime someone has privilege in society, I do think they are less likely to be held accountable for their actions. And that's across the board. We see this at schools where athletes are put on a pedestal, but also [with] anybody else on campus who has power," said Clark.

The issue of sexual violence in sports is not lost on Jennifer Drummond, coordinator of the Sexual Assault Resource Center at Concordia. For the last two years, the SARC has put every student-athlete at Concordia through sexual assault workshops where they learn about consent, intervention, and rape culture.

"Through the training, I really want athletes to understand their position as potential role models and leaders," said Drummond.

This type of training is important. Luther believes that the problem with how we deal with sexual assault is that as a society, we are far too reactive.

"One thing we haven't tried really hard is prevention; education about consent; what a healthy relationship looks like; even stuff like educating people on what dating violence looks like. We're still very reactive about that," said Luther.

The reason Baylor covered up the assaults was because when they were faced with accusations of harm that had already been done, they came to the conclusion that it was in their best interest to sweep it under the rug—and let the players keep racking up wins.

Preventative measures, according to Luther, are a big part of what we can do to eradicate rape culture in sports culture.

At Concordia, Drummond wants to make sure student-athletes are aware of the influence they can have on the university community.

"Athletes are given a lot of status and a lot of power, whether it's in a university or more broadly," she said. "Using that responsibly and using that for good is also important because they have a lot of power in shifting the culture [...] a lot of people look up to athletes."

"The media chooses to report this, but they won't talk about the banker down the street that beats his wife. If they can attach it to a sports program, they'll always do that."

— Jessica Luther, journalist



DEANNA HEWITT @decoma_

The Fight for Equality Is Far From Over

Sexism and Racism Continue to Dominate Sports Journalism

by **Safia Ahmad** @safs_onthego

In 1980, Concordia University journalism professor Linda Kay became the first-ever female sports journalist at *The Chicago Tribune*. She was paired with one of the senior sports reporters who took her under his wing. However, other colleagues treated her differently than their male counterparts.

“My mail was read,” she explained, “just to find stuff on me.”

Between 2011 and 2015, TSN 690 producer and host of Centre Ice, Robyn Flynn, found herself working alongside two other sports journalists, Jessica Rusnak and Amanda Stein, in what would usually be a male-dominated work environment.

While three women might not seem like a lot, “if you look at other sports radio stations, they have no women—maybe one,” said Flynn. “To work at a station that had three women at one time was something kind of special that [didn’t] exist anywhere else.”

Flynn found herself to be the subject of sexist remarks and offensive criticism.

In 2015, she wrote an article criticizing how the NHL dealt with forward Patrick Kane’s sexual assault allegations. Rather than suspending him until the issue was resolved, the Chicago Blackhawks organization held a press conference. Kane refused to answer questions about the accusations. A few days later, Chicago gave away Kane bobble heads at a game.

After the article dropped, Flynn began receiving hateful messages on Twitter.

“I got [messages] like ‘I hope you get raped.’ They were graphic like, ‘Someone should rape you with a hockey stick until you die,’” detailed Flynn. “Stuff like that [...] and, ‘You’re just jealous because Patrick Kane would never rape you.’”

While Kay and Flynn’s experiences are different, these are but a few examples of the type of abusive and intrusive treatments that women in sports journalism have to deal with on a daily basis.

Issues of sexism are only exacerbated once female sports journalists make the leap into the professional world, despite the progress they’ve made over time. It’s unlikely that there is a single woman in this field who hasn’t experienced some form of misogyny.

Some journalists have already given up on a career in sports journalism because of these circumstances, or have at the very least, considered doing so.

Shireen Ahmed, a Pakistani freelance sports journalist and social activist, witnessed firsthand the concerns of many aspiring women at NASH, a Canadian journalism student conference that took place in Fredericton, New Brunswick this January.

“I can’t tell you the number of women who came up to me and said, ‘We’re really inter-

ested in becoming aspiring sports writers but we don’t think we fit in,’” she said over the phone.

Lack of Inclusivity

Many people are led to believe that the world of sports journalism has become

harassment women get on social media is one of the biggest challenges to deal with—something she never dealt with as a reporter in the pre-social media age.

“That’s a hard thing to deal with on a day-to-day basis,” she said.

The fear of dealing with sexist, racist, vio-

“We have to work twice as hard—which is exhausting”

—Robyn Flynn

more welcoming to women, and that any issue of gender equality has been resolved.

Yet it’s a known fact that men dominate all multimedia platforms in North America.

Female sports journalists remain the least represented in all types of journalism today. According to the Women’s Media Centre, only 11 per cent of women in the United States cover sports, while men cover 89 per cent. Moreover, “the number of female assistant sports editors at 100 U.S. and Canadian newspapers and websites fell by roughly half between 2012 and 2014—from 17.2 percent

lent or sexualized social media backlash if they present a wrong fact or a difference in opinion from their male colleagues or audience members also makes this field daunting. And while men still have to face criticism, the nature of the insults often target their intelligence, rather than their gender.

“We have to work twice as hard—which is exhausting—and you’re going to get a lot of flack,” said Flynn. “I think a lot of women just don’t want to deal with it. And I don’t blame them. It’s really, really hard to open up your Twitter and for no reason,

According to the Women's Media Center 2017 annual report, there are currently **756 men** who cover sports compared to **97 women** across 20 different news outlets in 2016.



SAFIA AHMAD & CARL BINDMAN

of all such editors to 9.8 percent.”

There are several reasons for the decline of women in this field. Kay mentioned that some journalists want to start families and the long hours of working weekend games can be arduous. But she highlighted that the

just randomly, all of a sudden someone is threatening you or calling you the ‘c’ word.”

Progress, with Room for Growth

Fortunately, the field is improving for non-male reporters. It’s becoming more common

to see women on television screens presenting and explaining game highlights and hosting panels during game nights on TSN and Sportsnet. Jennifer Hedger of TSN and Chantal Machabée of RDS have become household names for their audiences.

Moreover, ever since Flynn became the first woman in Canada to host a sports radio talk show, others that have emerged around the country. However, she’d like to see more women occupying positions where they can analyze sports and present their own opinions. For now, many female sports journalists are either sideline reporters or hosts, which limits them to presenting facts and letting others—their male colleagues—to share their astute analysis.

There needs to be more female role models in sports journalism in order to attract more women to the field. Women need to see that they can thrive in male-dominated jobs. Flynn recalled wanting to be a play-by-play sports commentator from a young age, but didn’t have any female role models to look up to. Her mother even told her, “It’s true, girls still don’t do that.”

Flynn decided to try her hand at broadcasting when she first found out about Andie Bennett, a CBC sports reporter who used to work at TSN 690.

“Andie Bennett was sort of the first woman [...] I heard have an opinion about sports,” said Flynn. “And that sort of was a game changer for me.”

It’s not just about having more women either. People of color are also a minority in sports journalism. According to the 2014 Associated Press Sports Editors Racial and Gender Report Card, more women and people of color—regardless of gender—have been seen at ESPN.

However, the report card still displayed some troubling statistics. In 2014, across news outlets in the U.S. and Canada, 91.5 per cent of sports editors were white and only 9.5 per cent were women. These numbers were similar across other sports journalism positions as well.

Ahmed believes that including a variety of voices and increasing the presence people of colour will be key for a progressive future for sports journalism.

“For far too long, sports was literally the white guys speakers corner,” she said. “Wouldn’t you want to engage and challenge your readers to something different?”

Sexism and racism are pervasive ideologies that won’t go away overnight. In order to overcome these struggles, Ahmed feels that it is important to form a “sisterhood of other sports writers that are female and are important to your career.”

“I feel like it’s probably the only reason that I survived as long as I have,” she said.

On Feb 17, Michèle Ouimet—a well-known reporter from *La Presse*—published an article on the topic of rape culture. Essentially, Ouimet claimed that rape culture is not an issue in Quebec.

Compared to places like Afghanistan and Yemen, we should consider ourselves lucky, she stated in her article. Ouimet explained that she wonders whether today's young feminists lack some historical perspective. She said women should perhaps look at past victories instead of grasping at the straws of today's imaginary and futile battles.

The stance that she took was enough to get me angry, but it was the condescending tone that dripped from every word that pushed me to write an open letter in response. To my surprise, *La Presse* decided to publish it a week after the original article's publication.

What was less surprising though, were the reactions and controversy my letter sparked. I tend not to get involved in heavy debates on the Internet, since they seem to be never ending and exhausting. However, I was curious, and no matter how ill-advised a decision it was, I decided to read some of the comments my letter had generated.

It was ironic to be on the receiving end of all these dismissive, hateful and violent comments. Ironic because most of the people who were strongly denying my experiences; denying that rape culture is rampant in our society and denying me my agency to write about it in an assertive way, were the ones proving its very existence and propagating its problems.

There were also a few women who had commented on my letter, saying that they had never experienced sexism and misogyny in their lives. Therefore, at best, they didn't relate to my experiences, and that at worst, they just didn't believe in them.

However, the overwhelming majority of the criticism I received came from men, who felt entitled to explain my own life to me. They dismissed the psychological violence and trauma that comes with being raped, claiming that it is not "real" violence. They defined microaggressions as "PC bullshit." Some of these comments also stated that they missed when men could be men without being constantly called out by feminists.

What some people don't realize is that rape culture is not only about rape. A lot of people focus on the word "rape," when the word "culture" remains just as important. Many people have qualms about using the word "rape" in this context—this was one of the points that Ouimet had made.

She argues that using this word takes its power away. By overusing it, it will somehow lose its potency and become banal and meaningless. As if by addressing the question of rape culture, we will somehow diminish the question of rape and sexual assault.

There is power in words just as there is power in naming. Rape culture was first coined in the 1970s to address the commonality of rape and its societal and systemic

Rape Culture Is Real and It's Time to Confront It

by **Éloïse Choquette**



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normalization. As with a lot of feminist concepts, "rape culture" has evolved to encompass more than just rape. It addresses a very toxic and pervasive reality in which female gender and sexuality are dismissed, diminished and degraded.

Rape culture affects everybody regardless of their gender, and it also affects people differently depending of their identities. One needs only look at all the disappearances of Black and Indigenous women without mainstream media even batting an eyelash to understand that racism and rape culture go hand in hand.

Saying that we live in a society that enables rape culture—that women, gender non-conforming and marginalized people are more often its victims than white cis-gender men—does not deny that men have the potential to be rape victims, and that women can potentially be rapists.

Rape culture encompasses how the concept of consent still needs to be spelled out, how catcalling as a form of street harassment is still controversial, and how victim-blaming and slut-shaming tend to be the norm when evaluating harassment, assault or even murder.

How "she was asking for it" is still more pervasive than "he assaulted her"; how "stay safe" rather than "don't rape" is taught to young people; how rapists defend themselves by making statements on the beauty—or lack thereof—of their victims; how the blame is constantly shifted from the aggressor to the victim; how the policies, and sometimes even the laws in place, protect the perpetrator more than the victim.

Where a vast number of Black and Indigenous women's disappearances are dismissed without a proper investigation; how women of colour are exoticized and objectified; how Muslim women are assumed to be servile, obedient and unable to think for themselves because of their religion; how sex work erases the possibility of rape because "it's their job"; how domestic violence is still not always taken seriously; how femininity is debased, criticized, scrutinized at every turn, and far more than masculinity.

This is rape culture. It still exists, no matter what these men commenting on articles have to say. It hasn't magically disappeared, banished beyond the occidental world, to be confined in the countries we like to bomb in the name of "freedom."

At the end of the day, one thing seems clear to me. These men are angry, yes—but also scared. Scared of losing their privileges. Scared of simply opening their eyes. Scared of realizing that the fabric of their world—of what they've always held as truth—is in fact threaded with white strands. Scared of acknowledging that they live in a bubble on the verge of exploding.

It doesn't make it okay for them to confront their fear with hatred and abuse, but it certainly won't stop me from trying to pop their bubbles in every way I can. I am done being scared, and I am done being silenced by their fear.

Feminism Is for Everybody

And Why It's Important to Talk About It

by **Julia Miele** @thatjuliamiele

I've often encountered people who've strongly stated that feminism is just a group of angry women who hate men; women who would rather overpower the male population rather than work alongside them as equals.

These are the kinds of people that call feminists "feminazis," and those who state that feminists disregard the struggles that men go through as well. The list goes on, but I digress.

I'm here to talk about feminism, and how it benefits everybody, and is inclusive for all genders. I was surprised when I was first told this some years ago. But like almost everything in life, being a feminist is a learning process.

I noticed a flux of people who were saying things like "I'm not a feminist because I believe in equality for all genders!" Did you know that that's what feminism is? Or at the very least, what it's supposed to be.

Feminism today aims to even out the playing field for everyone, so that we can all be paid equally and be considered as equals among our peers in any field. Feminism today also aims to break gender binaries, allowing for anyone to dress the way they want, talk how they want, or even like whatever they want, without being judged or discriminated against.

Feminism aims to destroy the patriarchy—the enemy of all genders, not just women. The patriarchy tells us that men aren't allowed to like the colour pink or feel emotional, cannot be victims of sexual violence, and must be the breadwinners in families. On the other hand, the patriarchy tells women that they must produce babies like it's their birthright, know their place which is in the shadow of men, and are blamed for being sexually harassed or raped because of the way they dressed which, as we all know, obviously means she was asking for it.

As inclusive as the feminist movement is supposed to be, a lot of men feel intimidated by it and do not feel welcome in conversations revolving around feminist issues. Sometimes a genuine question about feminism can be met with hostility.

Perhaps this contributes to the negative perception of feminism, or perhaps

why they think feminism is solely for women. It's because of this hostile reaction that people don't talk about it as much as we should, leaving people to make their own negative assumptions about it.

"When I think of feminism, I think of the struggle to bring equality to the way that we treat different genders," artist and game developer Louis Sciannamblo said. "It's trying to address a problem that exists in our society. That we don't treat men and women equally, and the way that we treat either gender is based on old stigmas and rules." Sciannamblo identifies as a straight cisgendered man. In his work, he aims to create strong and diverse characters.

Feminism, Sciannamblo said, benefits men in terms of taking off a lot of unhealthy expectations that are impressed upon them, being able to have healthier relationships with their partners and with themselves, and breaks the notion of what it means to "be a man."

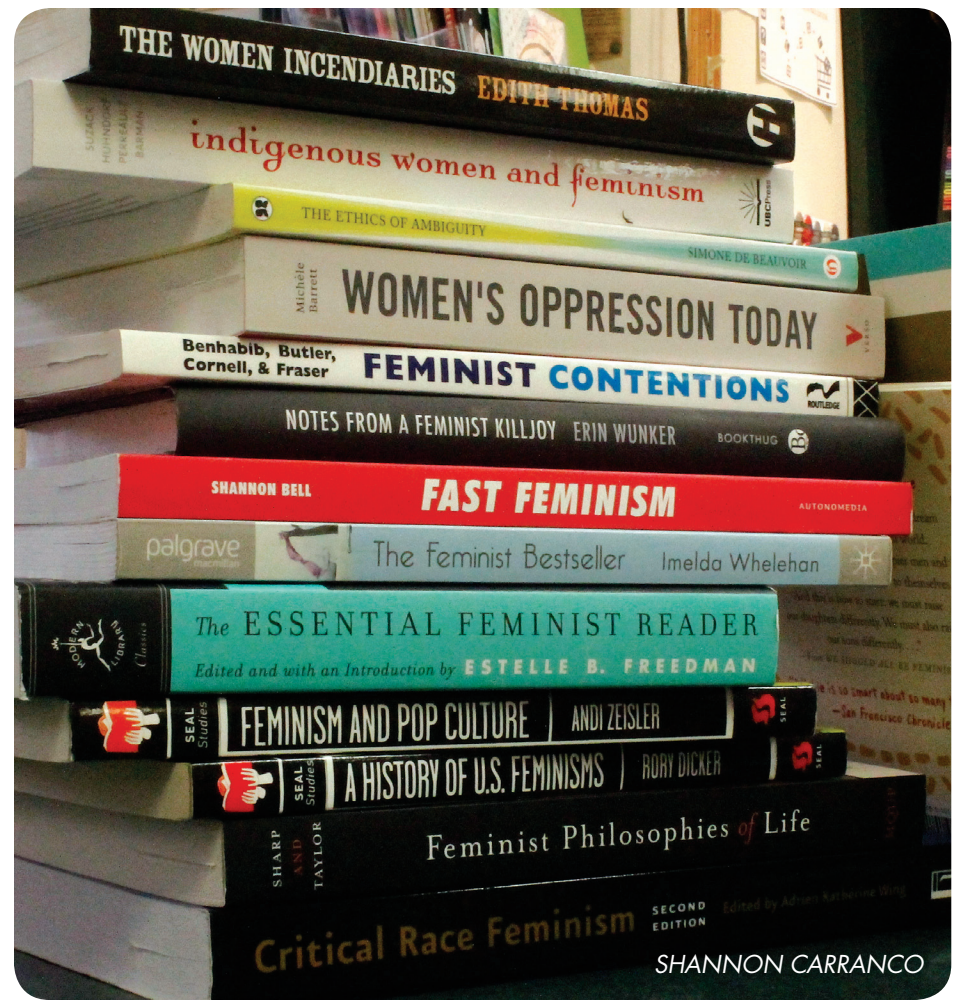
"It lets us know that it's okay to be emotional, caring and loving, and not have to be stern and intense all the time. That it's okay to lean on people for help as a good thing and not being perceived as weak for doing so."

Cutting men off from the conversation is counterproductive—it only creates more hostility and keeps everyone in a stagnant state. Making information and conversation accessible is key to moving forward in this case.

I learned about feminism when I was in CEGEP, only getting a rough idea of exactly what the fight was for. I remember making a comment like, "Yeah, men have issues, but they're not as bad as women's!" The person who I said this to had made an unhappy face, and I wondered why. Luckily, I had people I could approach and talk about these things with, allowing me to grow and learn.

The same can be said for Max Bradley, an experimental filmmaker in the process of completing their master's degree in filmmaking at Université de Montréal. Bradley identifies as non-binary.

"A lot of people consider feminism to be a movement that's meant to give power to women, but really



it's another word that advocates for equality between all genders," Bradley explained in French. "I think it's an important and essential fight. It is first and foremost a fight to attain equality between all genders."

Lately, Bradley said, transgender and non-binary folks are a part of feminist conversations. "I don't think that feminism is hostile towards transgender or non-binary people, but it's a new fight that's growing in parallel to feminism, and feminism gives us a platform to be able to talk about these issues."

"I think we can implement some talks about feminism in school, particularly primary school to talk about gender equality to children at a young age," Bradley said on peacefully spreading the word about feminism. "Maybe introduce some prominent non-binary or transgender characters in television shows, which the media is already trying to do with homosexuality."

"Feminism is a movement to end all oppression," Oliver Leon Porter, who is genderfluid, said. Leon Porter stated that they believe it's important to talk about feminism and inclusivity as much as possible, agreeing that it should be more widespread in all spaces as well so as to better educate people on the issues.

"I think people don't tend to have a basic definition of what feminism is, so they believe the stereotypes that they see. A common example of this

is [the image of] bra-burning women who hate men."

Leon Porter went on to explain that perhaps people have a negative view on feminism because people are scared of people challenging the gender binary and the social norms. "I think people are just freaked out when other people upset the status quo. It's really just a fear problem, a fear of difference. I want to have a feminism that celebrates diversity rather than celebrating sameist [sic]."

Overall, all these people that I spoke with agreed that it's important to just talk about feminism and make it as inclusive as possible. Hateful comments that alienate-specific groups really just mislead people into thinking that feminism hates all other genders save for women, which definitely is not what feminism is.

When you push anyone away from the conversation, explaining that they can't talk about feminism because they can't relate or understand, then you're just missing out on the opportunity to educate people.

The best remedy for ignorance is to talk about it openly. Shutting people out is probably the worst thing people can do. Had I not had anyone to talk to about it in CEGEP, I either wouldn't know what feminism was, or I would have continued to think that it was only about women. So let's talk. All of us.

"Feminism is a movement to end all oppression"
—Olivier Leon Porter



special issue cover by **Carl Bindman, Brian Lapuz, and Morag Rahn-Campbell**

The End of the Road

Tracy-Ann Lavigne Reflects on Five Years With the Stingers

SAFIA AHMAD
@SAFS_ONTHEGO

Tracy-Ann Lavigne wasn't sad after the Concordia Stingers women's hockey team lost to the McGill Martlets in the Réseau du sport étudiant du Québec finals—not even a little bit. In fact, she probably wasn't even thinking about the loss.

Like a true athlete, her mind was already focused on the next challenge: the U Sports national championships in Napanee, Ontario.

"To actually go to nationals for the first time and for my last year, it was just awesome," she said.

Concordia ranked seventh out of eight teams heading into the national tournament, but turned heads after upsetting the second-seeded Guelph Gryphons 4-3 in a shootout. They fell quickly from cloud nine after losing the next two games to the University of Alberta Pandas—who were crowned champions—and the University of British Columbia Thunderbirds in the bronze medal game.

Despite the loss, Lavigne and the team relished in finishing fourth amongst 33 teams in the country and playing against teams they would normally never play against.

"I'm happy that we finished fourth in the country because even though we didn't win a medal, it's been like [12] years that we didn't go to nationals," she said.

Lavigne's five years with the Concordia Stingers has been marked by ups and downs. Until this year, the team was underwhelming. The captain recalled missing the RSEQ playoffs in her first season with the team in 2012-2013. Over the course of the four previous seasons, the team's winning percentage was below .500. In total, they had 21 wins, 52 losses and seven overtime losses in 80 regular season games.

The Stingers have turned heads this year. After getting off to a slow start with seven losses in their first 10 league games, they quickly turned things around in the second half of the season. With seven wins and three losses to finish third with 21 points in the RSEQ conference, Concordia managed a .500 win percentage.

"We had such good recruits coming in this year that our whole attitude changed," said second-year forward Claudia Dubois.

Concordia then went on to defeat the defending U Sports champions Université de Montreal Carabins in a two-game sweep. That achievement itself was enough to stand out as one of Lavigne's most memorable moments as a Stinger.

"They won a lot, they're a good team," she said. "And then we're able to get there and get together as a team and win two games in a row [...] I think that was one of my really good moments."

Another memorable moment was reaching the U Sports National Championships. By making it to the RSEQ finals, Concordia automatically qualified for the tournament

for the first time since the 2004-2005 season under then-head coach Les Lawton.

The former coach came to nationals to give advice to players and the coaching staff, who were only getting their first taste of national competition.

"[Lawton] was a great resource for us," said head coach Julie Chu. "It was our first experience so we did need guidance."

Like the seven other teams, the Stingers played three games in three consecutive days—something they did during pre-season and the Theresa Humes Tournament in December.

"That's always a challenge," said Chu. "It is really different because you have the rest and the recovery habits [which] are really important."

While the Stingers didn't acquire any hardware, they welcomed the experience of playing against teams from different conferences. In the RSEQ, they only face four other teams.

"It was fun because we didn't really know them," she said. "Instead of just knowing the plays like 'watch that player, watch this player,' we were just playing our system and just going with everything we learned throughout the year."

For players like Dubois, playing for veterans like Lavigne made the tournament even more special.

"It was cool for the players in their last year," said Dubois in French. "We were really happy to go for them because they were finishing on a good note."

The graduating veterans can scratch nationals off their bucket list. Lavigne's personal bucket list, however, keeps growing as she has set her sights on trying out for Les Canadiennes of the Canadian Women's Hockey League next year.

"I know it's hard, like Olympians play on that team," she said. "I gotta train so hard this summer."

Success Doesn't Come Overnight

The Stingers' seemingly overnight success—compared to previous seasons—looked almost too good to be true. Concordia has been slowly cultivating a new team culture centred on accountability and having a "team first" mentality.

As one of the oldest players on the team, Lavigne first witnessed this shift in mentality during her third year when Chu began taking a bigger role as an assistant coach.

"Everyone plays their own role, there's some [players that] play more, there's some that play less," explained the captain. "But we all have our own role and we embrace it. By being like that, you're moving forward as a team."

It took time for the Stingers to come around and truly buy into that mentality, as some players didn't appreciate the new system. Lavigne said that over time, there were fewer and fewer players that felt alienated by it—and it showed this year.

While the team got off to a rocky start, Chu mentioned in a mid-season interview that her

team needed to focus on becoming mentally stronger and believing that they can beat McGill and UdeM. They gained momentum as the second-half of the season progressed, picking up big come-from-behind wins and defeating McGill on one occasion.

"That's something last year that wasn't possible because we weren't mentally strong enough for that," said Chu about winning games down by several goals. "So I think for us, it was a great experience and I think all

those different experiences in the season prepared us for [nationals]."

Moving Forward

Chu hopes to capitalize on the momentum of this season and bring it into the next. With many returning fourth and fifth year players, the head coach and recipient of the RSEQ Coach of the Year award will rely heavily on her veterans to set a strong example for everyone.

"I really believe that the culture of a team is determined by the veteran players," she said. "There's a good diversity amongst them, their personalities and the qualities that they can bring. We need that. We need a diverse group of leaders."

The Stingers will only lose four players going into next season: back-up netminder Briar Bache, forwards Anne-Julie Deschenes, Valerie Wade and of course, Lavigne. The players will nominate a new captain next year prior to the beginning of the season.

While Lavigne donned the "C" on her chest for only one season, she left her mark.

"We're gonna miss her," said Chu. "[Lavigne] embodies absolutely everything we want in our program. She's a team first player and she's an incredible captain and leader."

"To actually go to nationals for the first time and for my last year, it was just awesome."

—Tracy-Ann Lavigne



Tracy-Ann Lavigne played her fifth and final season for the Concordia Stingers.

COURTESY BRIANNA THICKE

This week in sports online at thelinknewspaper.ca/sports

Catch up with Concordia's women's tennis club, and The Montreal Impact's new summer project



Places to Play

by **Tristan D'Amours** @tristandamours
& **Alexander Perez** @dasalexperz

Montreal is a sporty city. With three professional teams, and varsity teams from four universities, the island has lots of places to play. Montreal's boroughs all have their stories—this applies to the sporting world as well. So, we've explored the city to see how unique its sports complexes are, in their own way. How does the borough influence these places to play? The answers are in the photos.





Left:
A skeletal look at the Olympic Stadium's tower as restorations take place.

Top:
Parc Jean Drapeau's 10-metre competition diving tower under the snow.

Above:
Percival Molson Stadium has sat on the hill since its establishment in 1915.

Photos Tristan D'amours

Left Top:
Concordia Stadium's football posts touches the bleak grey sky on the winter offseason

Left:
A thick sheet of snow covers the Concordia Stadium, but in October, the fall leaves match the vibrant Maroon and Gold for the Stingers.

Far Left Bottom
The John Dore Court, which houses the Stingers basketball teams, is named after the renowned women's coach who is the RSEQ's all-time leader in wins.

Near Left Bottom
The Montreal Impact inaugurated their mini-pitch on Nov. 4, 2016 in back of the L'Eglise Du Gesù, downtown Montreal.

Photos Alexander Perez

Right:
A look at the Olympic Stadium from the Big-O, a 1976 Olympic prop turned local skateboarding attraction.

Photo Tristan D'Amours



When “Okay” Isn’t Good Enough

The STM Has an Accessibility Problem

PENINA SIMON
@PURPLECRAZE18

We have a decent public transit system in Montreal. Sure, there are cities that have it far worse than we do, and the STM is continuously making strides to improve.

In spite of this, there are still issues with public transit—issues that are more serious than they might seem at first glance.

For many, public transit isn’t just an option, or the thing you use when you don’t want to think about parking. It’s our only way to get around this city.

I’m disabled. I can’t drive. And a lot of people are in similar situations. When it comes to transit, our disabilities aren’t the thing stopping us.

Accessibility is a major issue. Too many metro stations and bus stops aren’t wheelchair accessible. Most metro stations have a lot of stairs, and escalators that only work a fraction of the time. Our very own Guy-Concordia metro station is a culprit of all three.

Wheelchair users, as well as anyone else who cannot climb stairs, are left with few options. Should people just not go to these metro stations? There is constant conversation around how disabled people should be more independent, but there are structural factors that impede us. It’s impossible to be as independent as we’d like to be in a world that refuses to give us opportunities. When public transit is our only option and it isn’t accessible, we are left feeling trapped.

Unfortunately, the STM isn’t just a small part of our lives. Access to good transit informs where we live, where we shop and where we go to school. It even influences where we can work. If there is a job located in an area that isn’t accessible in some way or another, people will be forced not to take it, even if it offers a great salary and could potentially be career altering.

The main issue here is that the STM is not treated like a necessity, and disabled people are treated like rare instances. Who cares if not all metro stops are accessible? Who cares if the STM abandons certain individuals and certain areas of the city?

There seems to be an assumption that people can just grab their car and go, and if certain buses and metro stations aren’t accessible to everyone, they can easily find another one, right?

In reality, many people live with some form of disability or chronic illness. This shouldn’t

be ignored just because it isn’t all people.

This stems from a weirdly common idea that people can just stop being disabled. This might sound obviously untrue, but deep down many individuals genuinely believe that there is always a way around something that is inaccessible. But sometimes, there isn’t—no matter how hard you try to believe in yourself, or repeat mantras like “the only disability in life is a bad attitude.” We cannot always control our situations, which is why we ask for accessibility.

People can’t stop being disabled, but we can make spaces accessible for us. We know how to build ramps, we know how to make the print on signs bigger and we know how to implement many other necessary things. We have the answers, so we need to take action.

Yes, it is impossible to accommodate everyone, but it is our responsibility to do the best we can. Accessibility isn’t something that only exists in a perfect world. If people are willing to put in the effort, it can exist right here in Montreal.



BRIAN LAPUZ

Letter

The REM Is Not the Answer to Montreal’s Public Transit Problems

It was surprising to see an article in *The Link* in favour of the Caisse de Dépôt’s Réseau Électrique Montréal. It does not service either Concordia campuses.

We need to extend public transit to the West Island, but along populated corridors, not through ecologically-sensitive natural green lands. We need to increase the frequency of AMT trains along the northwest train route—add a track.

Even though driving a car may be faster, there is the stress of traffic con-

gestion and, to top it off, looking for parking and feeding the meter. Time spent on public transit by reading the newspaper, answering emails, and writing papers is time well spent.

We need to increase the reliability of buses. Let’s put some money in the budget to allow the STM to do that—electric buses too.

The Vancouver Skytrain has many breakdowns, and is stopped by snow and ice on the tracks. If you think current infrastructure construction is causing disruptions in Montreal traffic, the REM would cause even more. Cement manufacturing releases a large amount of CO₂. The REM would block our views like the “L” in Chicago.

Some environmental groups support the REM only if there is no net loss of agricultural land, natural areas are not threatened, and there will be surveillance to monitor potential urban sprawl effects. But after it is built, it is too late to study urban sprawl. The REM is a recipe for sprawl. They recommend a sustainable mobility policy. We need it before any projects are considered.

These sustainable mobility plans need to be designed by our transit authorities and companies, city urban planners, and schools of urban planning, with consultation by citizens. Public transit solutions proposed by groups like Option transport durable, Pour un meilleur projet, and Transit

Research at McGill demonstrate that viable alternatives perform better to build a more livable, human-centric city. Solutions might be an electric light rail train in combination with the new Champlain Bridge, an electric light train to the airport, a pink metro line between McGill and Anjou, extending metro lines, and bus lanes.

Transparence.ca shows us this project is just hiding the destruction of Montreal.

Jane Jacobs managed to stop expressways from damaging New York and Toronto. The REM, as planned by the Caisse de Depot, has to be stopped too.

Claire Adamson

Crash Landing Into Adulthood

Post-College Depression Is a Rite of Passage

ARASH SHARMA
@BEARASHIONAL

Whether enduring the bites of a thousand fire ants, or diving off tall cliffs secured by flimsy vines, young people across all societies enter adulthood through structured and ritualized rites of passage. But rituals in our modern society are far less unequivocal.

Commencement speakers address wide-eyed undergraduates with persuasive messages of inspiration. And then, the moment comes when we turn the tassel and toss our academic caps. Most step out of the ceremonial hall feeling like the world is at their fingertips, but the unlucky few see their ambitions drifting out of reach.

They're left in dismay when faced with choice—either because of its overabundance, or its scarcity. They end up lost in the emotional smog of post-college depression, a dark cloud fed by the man-made pollutants of relentless self-criticism and shame.

I've grappled with this genre of gloom throughout my graduating year. Navigating a transition into adulthood has been a rough ride so far. My view is tellingly summarized by the wisecrack that "adulthood is like looking both ways before you cross the street, and then getting hit by an airplane."

Upon graduation, we're struck with an uncompromising reality as the burden of responsibility grows heavier. Some, like myself, begin to bend under the weight.

Our zeitgeist propagates post-college depression. University degrees are the equiva-

lent of what high school diplomas were only a few decades ago. As such, millennials face challenges that earlier generations did not.

People in their twenties are under more pressure partly because of the cutthroat job market in an otherwise sluggish economy. Worse still, many of us feel woefully unprepared and ill-equipped. We're digging for buried treasure with a plastic fork.

In an article published in the American Psychologist in 2000, Jeffrey Arnett coined the term "emerging adulthood" to describe a new wave of

young people who cannot reach financial independence by their mid-to-late twenties.

Arnett suggests that emerging adults between 18 and 25 years play "roleless roles" as they struggle with "identity exploration, instability, self-focus, and feeling in-between." According to Arnett, various plausible factors such as longer lifespans, helicopter parenting, and fewer high-paying jobs perpetuate the delayed passage into adulthood.

Not only are young people entering adulthood later, but declines in their mental health

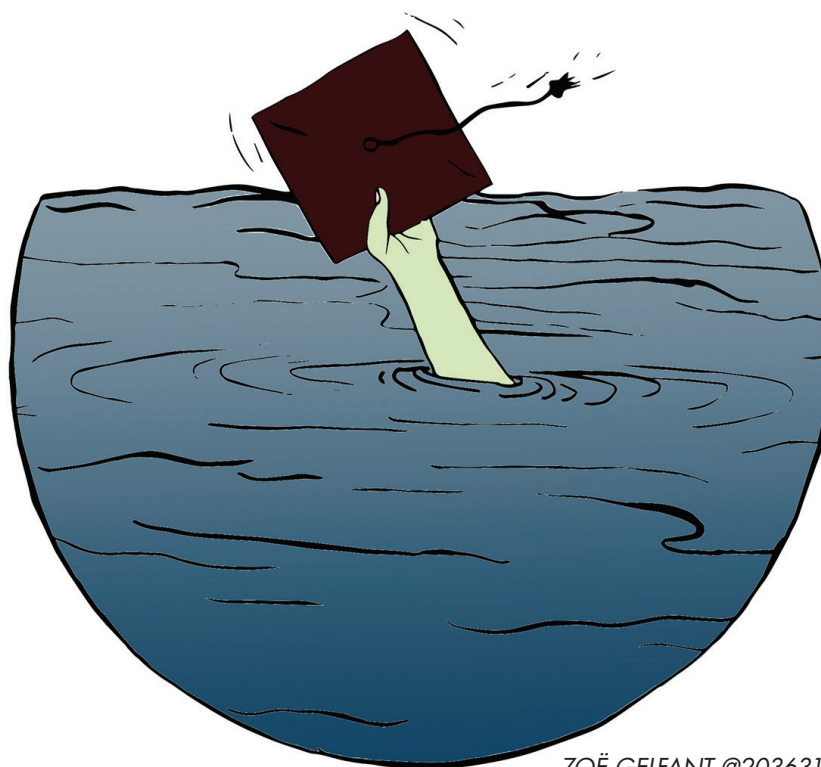
are also following en route. According to the National College Health Assessment's survey of 43,000 postsecondary students from 41 Canadian institutions in 2016, a fifth of young Canadians are depressed and anxious or suffering from other mental disorders.

The survey also presented a rise in reports of serious mental health crises such as depression and suicidal thoughts. That is, eight per cent fewer students than in 2013 reported that their health was good or excellent. Between three and four per cent more students said they experienced anxiety, depression, and stress that affected their academic performance. Even more alarmingly, 13 per cent of students reported considering suicide, up 3.5 per cent in 2013.

Transition periods are a state of flux and instability that serve as a significant source of anxiety and depression. This effect is heightened after graduation, when infinite possibilities bear infinite unanswered questions.

Between all the uncertainties, we need to muster up the courage to make responsible decisions. My advice is to develop a greater tolerance for frustration, and the ability to self-soothe. We need to find meaningful roles that can be personally fulfilling yet publicly contributive. Undoubtedly, this requires some patience and introspection—but we should expect obstacles along the way.

Visit Counselling and Psychological Services on campus at H-440 (SGW) or AD 103 (Loyola) to request to see a counsellor. You can reach them at 514-848-2424 ext. 3545 (SGW) or at ext. 3555 (Loyola).



ZOË GELFANT @203631f4n7

Nah'msayin?

Can I Please Just Sneeze in Peace?

DARRAGH MONDOUX
@DARRAGHNOVA

I'll be "enjoying" a class lecture or the silence of the library—when they're not drilling away as they have been for a couple centuries now—or comfortably enjoying urban anonymity on the metro when suddenly, I feel a rising pressure through my chest that moves into my face.

The force of a perfectly normal bodily function is about to course through my nasal passages. I raise my elbow to my face in preparation to enjoy the satisfying release of a sneeze.

"BLESS YOU!" some random stranger mindlessly reacts with.

Folks, we live in an increasingly secular society, and despite what certain nimrods think, I happen to appreciate how citizens of this city respectfully leave each other the hell alone in public. So, what is this vestige of a Christian superstition still doing in our social etiquette?

When I unconsciously sneeze in class—muffling up a naturally loud-ass

convulsion—I find it especially disruptive when a colleague insistently stage whispers a "bless you" at me. Is it going too far to call this a form of "virtue signaling?" As though loudly reminding everyone around us what a concerned and upstanding citizen you are in extending a benediction upon this poor unfortunate victim of dust.

I also wonder why this became such a spiritual concern in the first place.

We think we know the origin of this senseless superstition has something to do with an imagined bid for escape of our immortal souls... through our face. But it is my contention that the pleasant release we feel is associated with that other marvelous involuntary contraction and release our bodies give our minds and, the shame associated with autonomous O-moments. "Bless you" is a socially condoned kink. Shame on those of us who pleasure sneeze!

I'll admit, this may be a bit of a stretch. Sure. Still, I for one think it's time we bring this whole thing up to date.

The next time a complete stranger sneezes



near you, whether it be on the metro or in class or at the dinner table, give some of these reactions a shot instead: "Heck yeah!" or how about "Well I never!" or even "Live long and prosper!" You can even mimic their particular

sneeze with sarcastic exaggeration, which is pretty fucking hysterical.

All of these have got to be better than perpetuating an empty gesture of goodwill and an outdated superstition.



Trials and Triumphs of Black Canadians

Remembering Canada's History of Racism

by **Nicholas Roberts**

For Black Canadians, racial prejudice has always been a complex issue.

Before the American civil war, Canada represented—even if only on the surface—a safe haven for Blacks fleeing the bitter realities of slave life. However, while the shelter of the Canadian flag afforded legal protection, Blacks would soon find that “going north” did not mean leaving racial oppression behind in the slave labor camps of the Deep South. Rather, like a shadow, it would follow them right across the border.

At the turn of the 20th century, the Black population in Canada was less than 18,000. However, this marked the first time that white Canadians began to become aware—and fearful—of the fact that there was a growing and increasingly visible minority of Blacks in Canada. White Canadians who were at first tolerant or indifferent to migrants became progressively hostile.

Shortly after slavery became illegal in the U.S., Blacks looking to carve out a life in the Canadian West had to contend with the pseudo-anthropology and pseudo-science of racial theories of Black inferiority that comprised mainstream academic, cultural, and social thought. Having already gripped the imagination of whites in Europe, Britain, and the United States, it was now

spilling over into Canada.

Post-civil war “theatre” productions known as minstrel shows involved skits in which men—often white—painted in blackface portrayed Blacks as dim-witted, lazy, buffoonish, superstitious, and happy-go-lucky characters. It quickly became a popular Canadian cultural form.

In Halifax in 1884, Academy Hall boasted a full house to see Callender's Colored Minstrel. A well-known cartoonist, Henri Julien, was praised for his charming piece “By-Town Coons” in which well-known Canadian politicians were painted in blackface.

“It is a well-known fact,” read one Ontario publication, “that every different race of people emits a different smell, it being an especial characteristic of the Negro.”

In Nova Scotia, *The Windsor Mail* concluded that Black “peculiarities... [are] so abnormal that... he sinks to the level of the animal,” due to their supposed proclivity for gin, fried liver, outlandish religion, witchcraft, sex, and song.

Unfortunately, as far as racial discrimination goes, we are not short on examples. Not only language, literature, and theatre but also science and history were deployed to conjure powerful mythologies of that pleasure-loving, lustful, unreliable, foul-smelling, and primitive character within the Canadian

imagination known as “the Negro.”

Though facing stiff opposition from Canadian society, many Black migrants were not deterred. In March 1911, a party of two hundred Blacks came to the border station at Emerson, Manitoba hoping to be reunited with their relatives who had already made it across the border. Though they were unfairly subjected to harsh examinations, the border officials found that none of them could be legally prevented from gaining admission. They all had three times more than the required \$100 amount, impeccable health, the required documentation, and written attestation of their character.

Fearing the potential of even more qualified Black migrants, the Secretary of the Edmonton Board, in a swift act of legislation, barred entry to all Blacks and a head tax on all Negroes was proposed. The Winnipeg Board of Trade, having seen eye to eye with the Edmonton Board, endorsed the head tax, and concluded—dishonestly—that those Blacks had “not proved themselves satisfactory as farmers, thrifty as settlers, or desirable [as] neighbors” despite the obvious fact that they had not been given the chance to harvest a single crop. In spite of their resilience, the obstacles for hopeful Black migrants were proving to be many.

During an investigation shortly after, the American Consul-General at Winnipeg learned that the Commissioner of Immigration for Western Canada had been bribing the medical inspector at Emerson with a sum for every failed physical examination of a Black person.

The same year, the Great Northern Railway informed all its employees that Blacks would not be allowed into Canada. When WWI broke out, Blacks faced similar opposition enlisting in the army. The commander of the 10th Overseas Battalion wrote to the Minister of Militia and Defense, Colonel Sam Hughes, that, having turned away nineteen Blacks in Saint John: “I have been fortunate to have secured a very fine class of recruits, and I did not think it was fair to these men that they should have to mingle with negroes.”

Getting across the border was not the only feat. Integration into Canadian social life also had its challenges. In 1924, the Edmonton City Commissioner closed public swimming pools and parks to Blacks. In Colchester, Ontario, police kept strict patrols to prevent Blacks from frequenting beaches or parks. In 1915 in Saint John, Black residents were forbidden from going to any restaurants or theatres. The list goes on.

Nevertheless, many Blacks managed to



NICO HOLZMANN @hangedmagpie

"In spite of their resilience, the obstacles for hopeful Black migrants were proving to be many."

rise above pervasive economic and social exclusion. Some Blacks arriving in Toronto in the 19th century such as Wilson Ruffin Abbott became successful businessmen and active members of political life.

Born to a free mother in Richmond, Virginia, Abbott left home at 15 in search for work. Though initially apprenticed as a carpenter, he moved to Mobile, Alabama to open a grocery store with his young wife, Ellen Toyer, whom he met during his travels. Having been driven from town by whites who pillaged their store, they moved to Toronto where Abbott became an up-and-coming real estate broker.

In 1871, Abbott, having spent 36 years in Canada, owned forty-two houses, five vacant lots, and a warehouse. His financial success allowed him to purchase the freedom of fugitive slaves, to keep his wife's sister as a housekeeper, and to remain actively engaged in community life. He helped found the Colored Wesleyan Meth-

odist Church of Toronto, hoping that it would create a sense of community and solidarity among Canadian Blacks. Having been elected to the Toronto City Council, he also served on the Reform Central Committee. In addition, his wife also organized the Queen Victoria Benevolent Society in 1840 to help poor Black women.

Five years before Abbott died in 1876, he saw his son, Anderson Ruffin, graduate from the University of Toronto and become the first Canadian-born black to receive a license in medicine. Two years later, Ruffin was appointed a surgeon in the Northern army. When the war ended, he opened his own practice in Chatham, Ontario, and became president of the Wilberforce Educational Institute from 1873 until 1880.

Writing for various local papers, he spoke out against the Canadian segregated school system. A man with a towering intellect, he composed a great variety of manuscripts—some eventually becoming public lectures.

His writing spanned numerous areas of study, exploring topics like medicine, history, Darwinism, poetry, and education. Ruffin, like his father before him, was committed to life in Canada.

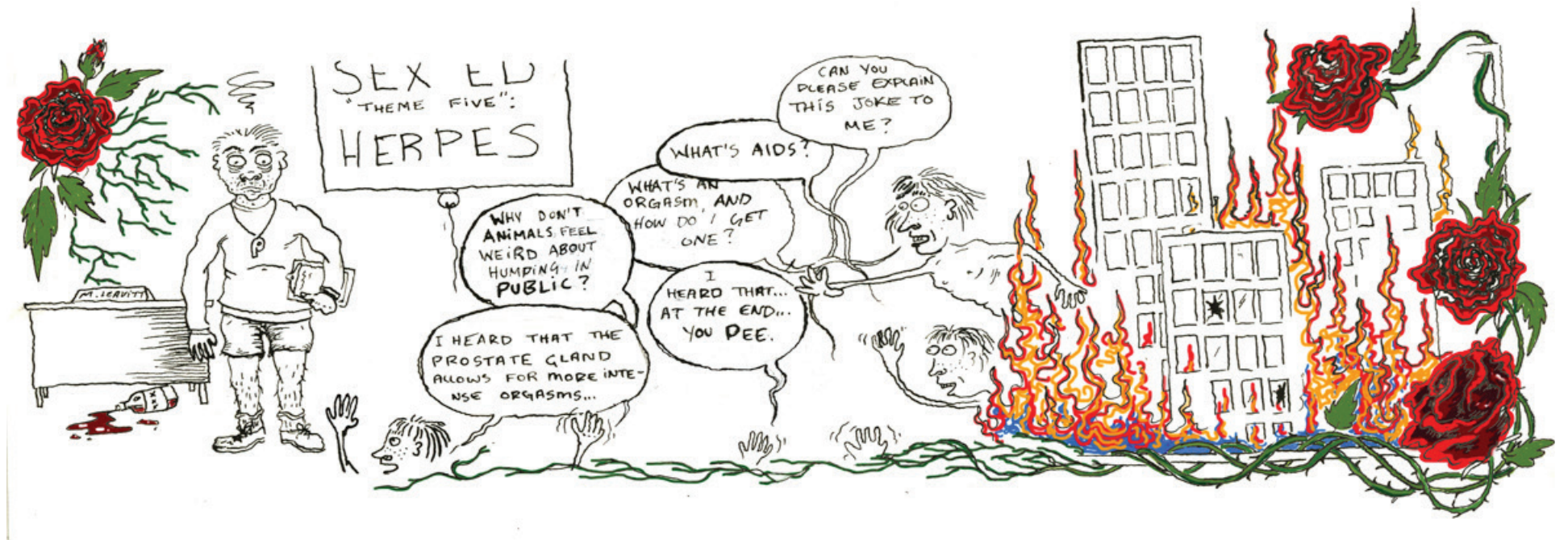
Upon the death of Queen Victoria in 1901, he composed the poem "Neath the Crown and Maple Leaf, an Afro-Canadian Elegy" which was published in *The Colored American Magazine*. It captured the pride Ruffin felt for being Black and Canadian.

His ardent belief that Canadian Blacks could succeed in a hostile Canadian social climate motivated him to condemn the creation of a new all-negro school in Saint John, support armed resistance of Blacks in the south, and begin his project of mapping out a broad history of negro activity in Canada in an attempt to arouse greater racial pride. His historic project pointed to other Black Canadian trailblazers who embodied the kind of character and perseverance that Ruffin and his father epitomized.

Hey, does an article in *The Link* make you react in 400 words or less?

Well, write a letter, make sure it meets our guidelines (found on the last page), and we'll publish it online!

Mo Maudlin by Morag Rahn-Campbell @madd.egg



Hastily Put Together by Theo Radomski @flannelogue



Caity Comics by Caity Hall @caityhallart



The Epic Adventures of Every Man by Every Man





This is a love letter.

This is a love letter to you, our dear readers.

Every decision we, as *The Link's* editorial team, make has you at heart. Every word we write, every photo we take, every video and podcast we produce—everything is for you.

That's why we, as a team, proposed to make a transition to focus on daily online content and discontinue the weekly newspaper.

In 2011, a letter from our then-outgoing and incoming Editor-in-Chiefs Justin Giovannetti and Laura Beeston, titled "Meet *The Link* 2.0," explained what was then the biggest shift in this publication's history. That was when our masthead—the team of student editors who put their hearts and souls into this publication each week—was split into the current structure, with part of the team responsible for online-only content, and others responsible for the weekly print edition.

"*The Link* wants to be as accessible as possible—we want to tell your stories, hear your feedback and interact," wrote Beeston.

This sentiment has not changed in the six years that have passed since this letter was published. What has changed is what it means to be as accessible as possible, and that is why two years ago, at our 35th anniversary celebration, these conversations started. It's also

why, on March 30, we asked you, our members, to vote on this proposal.

Most of our readership comes from our digital platforms. About 30,000 people visit our website each month. Our Twitter followers and Facebook likes are growing significantly, as well. The way that you, our beloved reader, consume media is changing. As a result, we need to change as well. Everything we do is for you, after all.

This is a love letter to the newspaper that you're holding in your hands.

Every Tuesday morning, a new issue of *The Link* appears on stands. That newspaper is a labour of love. We, a team of 16 students, spend an exorbitant number of hours in our Hall building office writing, editing and creating this newspaper every week with the help of our dedicated, overachieving contributors.

We do this because seeing the newspaper on stands every Tuesday is a big deal for us, and because we know it is for you as well. But we also recognize that more and more of you—a majority, even—are reading your news online. Online news has become a game-changer in the industry, allowing journalists to break stories immediately, update them with to-the-minute information, and integrate video

storytelling. These are some of the things that we hope to do more often as *The Link* goes online, and we're really excited about it.

Because of this change in the industry, and the way that we've already begun adapting to it, an increasing number of copies of this paper are being left on newsstands each week. And we get it. Newsprint is cumbersome, and when you can read the same stories on a website, a physical edition is not as necessary.

The Link has a long and storied history of printing newspapers, and training extremely talented journalists to do so. Digging through the archives of this paper is like taking a step back in time and seeing the early days of journalists who we admire today. They were trailblazers, people who were not afraid to ask tough questions and make powerful people uncomfortable.

We're making this change to honour that legacy, and continue on the path that has been laid out by the giants who came before us. The media industry is changing and we're jumping headfirst into it, rather than having that change happen to us—just like the pioneering journalists whose shoes we fill.

By setting our own terms, and defining our change for ourselves, we hope that we too can push the limits in a changing field. We want to create a space for *The Link* to further cement

itself as an integral part of the Concordia community, and Montreal as a whole.

This is a love letter to what's to come.

When you walk into the university next September, we might look a little different. What you will see on stands will be a bit smaller, a little thicker and much glossier. Our magazine, *The Link* magazine, will be full of the in-depth features, carefully composed photos and expertly-designed graphics that you've come to expect of us, and we can't wait to bring these things to you in a new and exciting format. We hope that it will be something that you will flip back to continuously. We hope that you will cherish it, much as you have cherished this newspaper since 1980.

We hope that our actions—this big change that we're making—will make you happy, and help to keep you informed about what's going on in your communities. That's why we stay up late at night making phone calls, writing, editing, designing and producing. That's why we've put out a newspaper for 37 years, that's why we're making this change. We do this for you.

With love,
The Link

THE LINK

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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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FINAL EXAMS ARE NOT IMPORTANT!

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THEY PAY THEIR EXAMS'
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THE LOWEST RATE
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