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Your choice

The teams and the platforms of the CSU 2010 General Election

• JUSTIN GIOVANNETTI

When you step into the ballot box this week, you will be faced with two choices to lead the Concordia Student Union through 2010-11: Fusion, the purple-clad offspring of the incumbent government and

Community, the orange challenger.

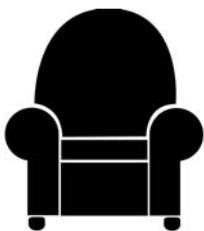
Although some have taken to labelling one slate the left and the other the right, that distinction only does a disservice to both slates.

The only thing that really sets these two slates apart are their two distinct platforms.

Fusion

Student centre

Promises to finalize current student centre plan and open \$43-million building by January 2011. The renovated building would be financed through an extra \$2.50 per credit, up to \$4.50 per credit, and would house all student-related services, including cafeterias, clubs' space, student government, health care and financial aid.



CFS

Has made getting out of the CFS a campaign priority, citing the national lobby group's "irresponsible spending, interference in local student elections and many undemocratic activities."



Mackay

Proposes to close Mackay Street from Sherbrooke Street to de Maisonneuve Boulevard and install grass and trees for students to study on. Promises student art within new walking space.



Student groups

Promises to expand the Loyola Luncheon program and introduce a new element to a student's transcript that would list involvement at student clubs. The new student centre would offer new clubs space and venues, easing the existing booking process with the university.



Transparency

Would introduce monthly Town Hall events—like the current bi-weekly Coffee with Amine event—where the public could meet with members of the student government and express problems and offer suggestions. This would all be part of a larger "open door" policy at the student union.



Sustainability

The Fusion slate promises to create a bottle-free campus at Concordia. This would be possible as the university's contract with Pepsi expires in December 2010.



GRAPHICS VIVIEN LEUNG

Community

Student Centre

Promises to scrap the current plan—where they argue the building would be owned by the university—and rent space near the Sir George Williams Campus "where student can display their art, afford to sit and drink fair trade coffee." Would look at reducing the fee levy from currently proposed \$4.50 per credit to \$1 per credit.

CFS

Although Community has no official platform point about the Canadian Federation of Students, they have attended "No to CFS events" during campaigning and spelt out No with their bodies with the Fusion slate.

Mackay

Pledges to work with business on Mackay Street to start new greening of Mackay program with trees and garden boxes. Cooperating with neighbours is biggest aim of program.

Student groups

Promises to establish controversial program whereby students would get five to 10 cents per Canadian dollar exchanged for Community Dollars that could be spent at campus groups. Would require all student groups to pay honorariums in Community Dollars.

Transparency

Would introduce three new seats to CSU Council who would represent clubs, Loyola and fee levy groups, a first for the CSU. Pledges to eliminate councillor affiliations during elections, admits to hypocrisy of running Community councillors. If the system's broken, use it.

Sustainability

Would offset CSU's carbon emissions through program with Trees Canada that would lead to carbon-neutral student government. A first in Canada.



Bronwen Agnew is a member of the Frigo's collective. The lack of a boss means that members are always training for new roles. PHOTO RILEY SPARKS

Le Frigo Vert aims for 12 cents

Student shop needs money to cover costs and expand hours

• JUSTIN GIOVANNETTI

Sitting on a milk crate in the stock room of Le Frigo Vert, surrounded by boxes of organic walnuts and Paraguayan raw sugar, Bronwen Agnew, a six-year veteran of Le Frigo Vert, explained why the student establishment needs more money.

"Demand for our service has increased a lot since I have been here. Every year I have seen more students coming in," said Agnew, wearing an apple barrel costume made of paper as part of the Frigo's campaign. "In terms of our sales, they are way up. The amount of product we go through goes up every year."

After being rejected twice by the Concordia Student Union Council, the Frigo's 12-cent-per-credit fee levy question was finally approved on Feb. 18. After the second rejection, the Frigo gathered 762 student signatures for a petition to be presented to Council.

"It doesn't make sense to me that people think that paying a fee levy makes it harder to be a student because you have to pay extra fees," said Agnew. "The reason fee levies came up in the first place was the idea of collective action. That if every student pays a small bit of money, then together we have a service that we can use."

A lot of the controversy was due to a misunderstanding of what the Frigo wanted to do with the money, according to Agnew.

"[Our rent] is a big part of why we need a subsidy to exist; we don't have a free space," said Agnew. The Frigo is not in a Concordia-owned building, but

pays nearly \$3,400 a month in rent. The electric bills for the store's many refrigerators and freezers are also a major expense.

"The subsidy is really not expensive when you consider how many people use the service and benefit from it, and how low we keep our prices," Agnew continued. She estimated that over 200 people a day use the store, with lineups at peak hours.

A key point of the Frigo's plan is to have longer store hours with more staff and more products. They have also promised to drop the price of samosas to 50 cents from the current 60 cents, subsidizing the product.

"Members who come in always have suggestions of what they want us to do," said Agnew. Staffing is the major issue, with workshops held in the past—including gluten-free cooking, beekeeping and lots of do-it-yourself tutorials—taking up much of the Frigo's time. More workshops would be held with the money provided by the fee levy.

"Not all of our members can physically access our store because we are not wheelchair-accessible, and we have three steps to get down," Agnew continued. "We would really like to have an online ordering service and do delivery."

A weekly market at the Loyola campus and an herbal pharmacy are also in the works.

"People who come in and take the time to get to know us inevitably say, 'I just didn't get it.' I hope more come in," said Agnew.

Fusion protests Community pamphlet

Ruled illegal, pamphlet supported members from both slates



Fusion presidential candidate Prince Ralph Osei takes off his trademark hat and speaks to a class in the Hall building at noon. PHOTO RILEY SPARKS

• CHRISTOPHER CURTIS

With one day of politicking left before the March 23 to 25 Concordia Student Union general election, controversy hit the campaign trail.

On March 22, the Community slate circulated a pamphlet promoting their candidates alongside nine Fusion hopefuls that they considered “honest and vocal about student issues.”

The pamphlet advocated voting for individual politicians over political slates, but Fusion presidential candidate Prince Ralph Osei isn't buying it.

“It's clear that they are trying to create confusion in the minds of the masses,” said Osei. “Our opponents have resorted to dirty tactics[...]. I've spoken to Chief Electoral Officer Oliver Cohen and I will be filing a formal contestation.”

Osei also claimed pictures of Fusion candidates were lifted from the slate's website without its permission.

“The pamphlets were likely done with good intentions,” said Fusion Council candidate Lex Gill, who was featured in the pamphlet. “But I am offended on behalf of my fellow slate members. We chose them because they are all competent, good, honest people who have the right experience and are involved in the community. I wasn't consulted about any of this; it creates an artificial sense of collusion.”

On the morning of March 22, Cohen told Community presidential candidate Mike Xenakis that the pamphlet would be disallowed.

“I helped create the pam-

phlet,” said Xenakis. “Personally I don't think it was problematic to have that pamphlet going around. We were trying to promote some of our people and some of theirs. I just wanted to look beyond party politics, but now I've been calling members of my slate all day trying to get them to stop handing out the pamphlets.”

Xenakis' slate hit another road block that day when Community stickers were found covering faces on Fusion posters all over Concordia's Hall building, violating election rules.

“This looks bad for my party,” he said. “I'm going to get hit with a million contestations now. We really don't need this.”

Both slates were frustrated earlier that day when a debate about defederation from the Canadian Federation of Students was cancelled by the Yes to CFS committee at the 11th hour. Fusion and Community are both in favour of defederating and were looking forward to the debate since defederation from the national lobby group will be an election referendum question.

“People had done hours of research for the debate,” said Gill. “And [Yes CFS coordinator] Audrey Peek just comes up and cancels it half an hour before it was scheduled. It shows you their level of commitment.”

The cancellation did not come as a surprise to Fusion Board of Governors candidate and outgoing CSU President Amine Dabchy.

“The CFS is facing opposition in 13 universities across the country,” Dabchy said. “They've realized they can't win here, so they'll fight their battles elsewhere.”



Sporting an orange armband, Community presidential candidate Mike Xenakis sells his slate's program at Loyola's The Hive. PHOTO MADELINE COLEMAN

Community plagued by last-minute controversy

Breaking rules ‘not the worst thing in the world’: presidential candidate

• MADELINE COLEMAN

Only a few hours before the last day of campaigning came to a close, Michael Xenakis was faced with multiple accusations of dirty campaign tactics.

The presidential candidate for the Community slate running in this year's Concordia Student Union general election, Xenakis took the heat for defaced Fusion posters in the Hall building; someone had placed Community stickers over the competing team's heads.

He stayed up all night Sunday making pamphlets to distribute Monday, only to have them ruled illegal by the Chief Electoral Officer Oliver Cohen because they promoted councillors from both Fusion and Community.

The day before, Fusion presidential candidate Prince Ralph Osei accused Community of racism after they posted animation on Facebook that depicted the Fusion slate as a crowned, accented bunch of grapes.

“Prince is very pissed off,” Xenakis said Monday night, preparing to speak to the Cinema Politica crowd while fielding phone calls about the illegal stickers. “I guess [Osei] sort of thought [the stickers were] likely my doing but has slowly come to realize they weren't.”

He said Community never produced campaign stickers because it is against election bylaws. He added that he had heard rumours of legal threats from Fusion.

“Everybody that's asked me about it I've told that Community hasn't endorsed this, Community hasn't asked anyone to do this,” he said. “But I haven't denounced it. When people break the rules, it's not the worst thing in the world.”

The pamphlets banned Monday featured the names and photos of all

the Community councillor candidates as well as selected candidates from Fusion.

Xenakis said his slate thinks councillors should run without affiliation because they are meant to police the actions of the CSU.

He explained that his party only ran with affiliated councillors because it would be unfeasible to win an election without the added manpower and financial support.

“I'm thinking [Fusion] likes affiliated councillors,” said Xenakis. “It makes it really easy to get stuff done when you're in office. It makes it really hard for councillors to be critical of what you do.”

The candidate also scoffed at the idea that the promotional animation might be racist.

“[Osei] had to bring it to that level,” Xenakis said incredulously.

The video features a bunch of grapes speaking with an affected, aristocratic air, only to fall apart when an orange, representing Community, proposes a debate. Xenakis said it was intended to target the Fusion slate's unwillingness to participate in any debate not arranged by CEO Cohen.

The Community slate took a quieter approach to campaigning. Faced with Fusion's barrage of slickly-produced promotional videos and ubiquitous purple T-shirts, Xenakis wore an orange armband; VP Finance candidate Tala Aoudi sported orange nail polish.

Xenakis said the increase in Community's visibility had been “exponential.”

“Every moment it's far bigger than it was prior to that. Even today, the stickers have been a huge thing.”

Xenakis had started the day at Loyola, handing out flyers and pamphlets—until they were banned—and making class speeches.

Briefs

Three new student-friendly bus routes

Three new bus routes will debut on March 29. The 120 Lachine/Lasalle will go to and from Dorval Park to the Angrignon metro. The 196 Parc-Industriel-Lachine will travel between Galeries Lachine and the Côte Vertu metro. The 427 Express Saint-Joseph provides a rush-hour connection for Plateau residents to the Guy-Concordia metro.

Quebec budget in the red

The Quebec government announced on March 19 that its annual budget will be tabled on March 30 with a \$4.7 billion deficit. After nearly a month of public consultations—a provincial record—Finance Minister Raymond Bachand will introduce higher sales tax, higher fees for public services and higher hydro rates to reduce the shortfall.

Suicide bomber scare at UQAM

Canadian citizen Slimane Zahaf, an MBA student and computer technician of Arabic descent, was arrested violently at the Université du Québec à Montréal on March 16 when the university's security told police the man was a bomb-laden terrorist. Zahaf claims that three white men matching his general description were ignored, but he was targeted instead.

Two shot dead in Old Montreal

Two men were shot dead by masked attackers at Old Montreal boutique FlawNego on March 18. Owner Ducharme Joseph, who has an extensive criminal past, is believed to have been the target, but his bodyguard and a bystander were shot instead. He remains in remand, as police believe he'll seek revenge for the attack if released.

Genocide Awareness Day

Genocide Awareness Day, organized by the United Armenian Youth Committee of Quebec, will be celebrated on March 23. It will mark the 95th anniversary of the Armenian genocide, where over one million Armenians were killed by Turkish troops, which Turkey has yet to acknowledge. Lectures will begin at 8 p.m. in room 1.210 of the MB building.



Purple, Orange and every colour in between. No to the CFS on the Hall building terrace. PHOTO RILEY SPARKS

No means leave, Yes means stay

Students faced with the future of the CFS

• JUSTIN GIOVANNETTI

They were sitting and laying on the terrace behind the Hall building, nearly 36 bodies in all. Dressed in the purple of Fusion and the orange of Community, they spelled out “NO.”

The March 18 event, organized by the No to the Canadian Federation of Students committee and its coordinator, Alejandro Lobo-Guerrero, bridged the political divide at Concordia with members of both slates running for the Concordia Student Union present.

“Even though there are political differences within the school, there are common points among everybody and the CFS is one of them,” said Lobo-Guerrero. “We are all on the same side on this issue.”

At the CSU general election from March 23 to 25, students will be asked if they want to stay in the CFS. Lobo-Guerrero, Fusion, Community and the sitting CSU executive hope they vote no.

“The CFS hasn’t achieved anything at the federal or provincial levels of government,” said Lobo-Guerrero. “Tuition has tripled over the past 12 years, student debt and student unemployment are at record levels and the government is looking to increase tuition and decrease student assistance.

“Students are giving money to someone who isn’t doing their job correctly.”

Lobo-Guerrero pointed to the fact that the Ottawa-based national lobby group has no employees in Quebec City, where decisions about tuition are made. Education is an area under provincial, not federal, control.

Audrey Peek, a Concordia student who ran as the VP University Affairs candidate in last year’s CSU election with the pro-CFS Change slate, is head of the Yes to CFS cam-

paign.

“It’s been rough. I am up against a student union with a \$1.8 million budget and no spending cap. As a sole student, it has been very difficult to campaign,” said Peek. She cited an e-mail CSU President Amine Dabchy sent to all students over the weekend encouraging them to vote against the CFS as proof of resources she does not have.

“It’s been a battle of David and Goliath,” Peek continued. “I think that might actually be an understatement.”

One of Peek’s first acts during the election was to log three complaints with the CSU’s Chief Electoral Officer Oliver Cohen and the Judicial Board. Peek questioned the legitimacy of the CSU’s March Council meeting—which was moved a week earlier with at least a month’s warning—the presence of anti-CFS posters on campus before the election campaign started and the rules being used to govern the CFS referendum question.

All three complaints were rejected by both the CEO and the JB.

“I found their reasons shaky and insufficient,” said Peek.

Concerned about the wording of the referendum question—where a voter must cast a “no” ballot to leave the CFS—Lobo-Guerrero said that many students had approached him with confusion. The situation was made worse because the campaigning material used by both the Yes and No sides was similar.

“They plagiarized all our material; they waited a week to put their material up and took the time to read what we had and react against it,” said Lobo-Guerrero.

Not true, said Peek.

“I would ask how his campaign material looked so much like mine,” she said. “His was up first, but that does not mean that he designed it first. Anyone who looks at the mate-

rial will see that the content is very different.”

Despite the different wording, the two sets of posters are very similar in appearance, with almost-identical colour schemes.

“The reasons that have been given to leave are not convincing at all; many of them are straight-out lies,” said Peek. “The student union’s claim that the CFS is offering nothing to students on campus this year is very misleading.”

Peek blamed the student union for hiding the CFS’s services and campaigns from Concordia students. She gave as an example the Drop Fees campaign in Ontario, in which she says the CSU chose not to participate.

Lobo-Guerrero disagreed.

“Many of the things that the CFS offers and says that we would lose are untrue, especially in the services they say they offer,” he said, citing the UFile tax service and ISIC cards as two services that students could continue using after leaving the CFS.

“Concordia deserves freedom,” said Lobo-Guerrero.

Peek, however, called for caution.

“We should think clearly about whether we want to take such drastic measures,” she warned.

Update

With half an hour’s warning Peek cancelled the March 22 debate with Beisan Zubi, a representative for the No to CFS Committee. Writing on the debate’s Facebook page, Peek declared: “I still have received no guarantee that the same sort of personal intimidation tactics which have been used in the facebook [sic] group will not be used.”

Zubi had written to her the evening before to guarantee that all measures would be taken, security would be present and questions would be limited to students.

Whatcha drinking, Judy?

TAPthirst says cooperation is key to eliminating bottled water on campus

• LAURA BEESTON

Circulating a petition since Bottle Water Free Day on March 11, TAPthirst says that Concordia can—and should—be the first university in Quebec to ban the sale and distribution of bottled water on campus.

They warn that a ban can’t happen without a push from both students and the administration.

Raising awareness during World Water Week, held during the week of March 22, TAPthirst founder Laura Beach plans on sending the petition with a letter to Concordia President Judith Woodsworth asking for her support to promote a bottled water-free campus.

“We want to collaborate with as many people as possible and come together to brainstorm ways that the university could become more sustainable,” said Beach.

The on-campus movement of students “taking back the tap” has gained momentum across the country over the last year, with the University of Winnipeg banning bottles one year ago.

Kelly Ross, VP Student Services with the University of Winnipeg Student Association, said that when the bottle ban went to referendum last year, students voted 75 per cent in favour of the ban.

“I think that what the U of Winnipeg and other universities have shown is that a dedicated bunch of students can make a huge difference,” said Beach.

Stephen Montague, president of the Student Union at Brandon University in Brandon, Man.—the third university in Canada to officially commit to kicking bottles off campus—said he believes the push for public water infrastructure starts with students but needs support from the university.

Since their on-campus victory, Brandon University has been pushing Brandon to ban bottles in schools and public buildings. None of it could have been done without the university’s “progressive-thinking” president, he said.

“We’ve heard about the fights going on in other campuses and [other student unions] have called us asking ‘how did you do it?’ Our answer is that we have a president that put environmental and ethical purchasing before profits,” Montague continued. “The rest is history.”

For Concordia, another consideration in the water war on campus is the lucrative and secretive beverage contract with PepsiCo, who provides all the drinks for vending machines on campus. PepsiCo’s contract with Concordia expires in December 2010. The company currently has contracts with the three Manitoban universities that banned bottles through student union initiatives.

For TAPthirst, uncovering the details of the contract is important.

“Basically what we’re aiming for is a renegotiation of the PepsiCo contract once it’s up in 2010,” said Beach.

Students raise \$30,000 for Dans La Rue

• CLAY HEMMERICH

The Canada-wide 5 days for the Homeless campaign was a complete success in Montreal this year, with Concordia business students raising over \$30,000 for Dans la rue, a non-profit organization whose mandate is to aid homeless and at-risk youth.

The haul nearly tied last year’s Montreal-wide total of \$31,000.

Combined with HEC Montreal’s \$8,400 contribution, the campaign exceeded the goal of \$35,000, even without the outstanding contributions from other Concordia sources.

“It’s truly exhausting to stay in one spot and panhandle,” said head campaign organizer Josh Redler, who slept outside for all five nights. “It’s easy when you are running around doing errands. I

barely slept the whole time.”

Campaign organizers said they couldn’t have reached their objective without the flow of support.

“[We] always had food donations brought to us,” said assistant campaign organizer Thomas Prince.

“People really care about [the campaign],” Redler continued. “Awareness is growing. Three years ago, there were only three people on the streets. This year, on one night, 28 people showed up to participate.”

Among the eager volunteers was Papineau MP Justin Trudeau, who showed his support on the first night of the campaign.

“It was nice to see [Trudeau] take time out of his busy schedule to come out and support us,” said Redler. “He stayed from 9:30 p.m. until 7 a.m.”

ASFA executives-elect disqualified for overspending

'We did everything in good faith,' they say

• TERRINE FRIDAY

Arts and science students Anna Goldfinch and Sarah Moore bought ice cream and chocolate cake last Friday evening to cheer themselves up after being disqualified for overspending during the Arts and Science Federation of Associations elections.

They ate all of it.

Goldfinch and Moore, who ran in affiliation with Stronger during the ASFA election, each had 100 votes deducted by ASFA's Judicial Committee for busting their budget, meaning they are no longer VP Internal-elect and VP Communications-elect, respectively.

New Energy candidates Nicole Devlin and Marco DeGregorio will automatically replace them.

According to Goldfinch, she and Moore adhered to the rules set out by Chief Electoral Colby Briggs.

"One of the regulations [as set out in ASFA bylaws] is that a candidate cannot spend more than \$50 on their campaign," Goldfinch acknowledged. "But what Colby [Briggs] introduced was a standardized pricing guide on posters saying that, no matter what you spent on a poster, you would be

deducted 55 cents per poster from your budget."

Although Goldfinch and Moore spent at least twice that amount on each poster, they said they thought it best to abide by the CEO's rules.

"Everyone was told about the rule and that was the rule that we followed," Goldfinch continued. "I think that it was really about seeing it two different ways. We did everything in good faith, we asked questions, we presented receipts—I mean, we wanted to win and if you mess up on your budget, you obviously get disqualified."

In an e-mail sent out to ASFA candidates on Feb. 6, Briggs stated candidates could pay whatever they wanted for posters, but would only be refunded 55 cents per poster. If a candidate decided to, for example, buy 50 posters at 70 cents each, "we will only consider \$27.50 (50 x 55 cents) deducted from your budget. Thus you have \$22.50 left to spend on your campaign."

But, according to ASFA bylaws, there are no exceptions for spending more than \$50 per candidate.

ASFA councillor Beisan Zubi, who brought the motion to reprimand Goldfinch and Moore to Council, said it wasn't her intention

to get the two candidates disqualified. Zubi, who was rumoured to be campaign manager for the two incoming New Energy executives, claims she never acted in that capacity and was instead an independent observer.

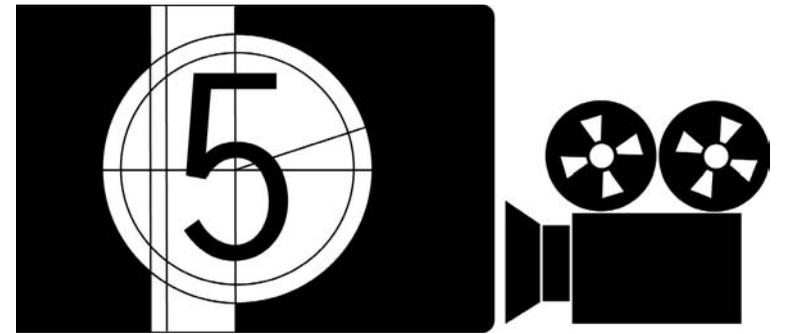
"I feel really bad for Anna and Sarah because I don't know who submitted the final budgets for the election expenses," Zubi said. "All I know is that what was submitted is not in adherence to ASFA bylaws in any way, shape or form. If everybody's mad at me, then I know I did the right thing."

The JC decided to penalize the Stronger candidates 100 votes each because "we felt that we had to be stern and we wanted to make sure [overspending] wouldn't happen in future years," said JC member Dimitri Koulis.

"I think there was a misunderstanding about how the CEO interprets the bylaws, in that he could interpret which direction to take," Koulis said. "I think it was an honest misunderstanding, if anything."

Koulis still acknowledged that Briggs "did screw up."

Briggs, who resigned as CEO, did not return *The Link's* phone calls.



GRAPHIC VIVIEN LEUNG

Spare a nickel for Cinema Politica

Slew of new programs promised if new fee levy passes this week

• JUSTIN GIOVANNETTI

The smallest fee levy group at Concordia is asking students for help.

Cinema Politica Concordia, the hub for what has become an international film screening network, is looking for an extra five cents per credit, up from the two cents it currently receives.

"We are the smallest fee levy on campus and we book 26 events per year, attracting nearly 10,000 students to those events," said Svetla Turnin, Cinema Politica's coordinator.

As a graduate student, Turnin has been limited to providing indirect aid to the fee levy campaign. Thomas Szacka-Manier, the head of the Yes to Cinema Politica campaign and Caroline Horton, a volunteer, have done most of the work.

The current two-cent-per-credit fee levy was approved overwhelmingly in 2005.

With Cinema Politica being already 95 per cent volunteer-run—one work-study student is paid a salary that is split with the university—there is little leeway in the group's budget.

"The cost of the increase buys you a bag of popcorn at a commercial cinema," said Turnin. For a 90-credit student the increase would cost \$4.50 over the course of their undergraduate degree at Concordia.

"We are hoping to expand Cinema Politica as an educational resource," said Turnin. "I think people already get a lot for two cents per credit. Students are able to come see films that are not available elsewhere, that are outside the mainstream."

If the fee levy passes, Turnin promised a slew of new projects and services that students would receive.

"A couple of years ago I started a project called RAVL, Research and Archive Viewing

Library. The idea was to digitize most of the films that we screened and to provide them for viewing and research," said Turnin.

Although the viewing service is already available at a room at Concordia University Television's offices, the extra money would be used to finish the time-consuming process of digitizing the movies.

"Until this moment we haven't had the ability to expand this as a resource and promote it to students," said Turnin.

\$4.50

The total cost of the \$0.05 increase for a 90-credit student.

The new money would also be spent to bring speakers to all of Cinema Politica's events. The group had speakers at seven of their 13 screenings this semester, which Turnin called "a great achievement," but warned that it was costly.

Cinema Politica started a three-day film festival, Sex, Labour, Smut, in October at the De Sève Theatre at Concordia. With the fee levy increase the festival would be made an annual event with a different theme every year.

Money would also be spent to provide new internship-for-credit positions.

"We provide an alternative, but complimentary education to the one students get at Concordia," said Turnin, who also announced that a short-documentary competition for students would be created with awards for emerging Concordia filmmakers.

"We could provide a part-time salaried Cinema Politica coordinator," said Turnin. "So that I can finally graduate and move on with my life."

International tuition increase catches students by surprise

Students not warned of 50 per cent hike before fall term

• TERRINE FRIDAY

When Michael Wang visited Canada as an exchange student in September 2008, he knew he had to come back permanently.

Wang, originally from China, studied at the University of Prince Edward Island and applied for an undergraduate major in accounting at Concordia, which UPEI didn't offer. He considered Carleton University but did not apply because international tuition at both universities cost \$17,000 as of last June.

With little to no notice, Wang must now pay an extra \$3,000 in tuition fees as a John Molson School of Business student.

"I don't want to chastise the university, I just want to speak out on this situation," Wang said. "I think almost \$20,000 is a little too high."

In their May 2009 meeting, Concordia's Board of Governors

approved an increase to international tuition fees for undergraduate engineering and computer science students as well as all JMSB students. The Board pointed out that the international fees had not increased since 2002 and that the Ministry of Education had partially deregulated international fees in 2008.

The resolution stated, "all reasonable efforts be taken to make this information known to the affected students as soon as possible."

Nadia Hausfather, a humanities PhD student at Concordia and advocate for accessible education, said Concordia did not follow through on its promise to notify 2009-10 incoming students of the fee hikes.

"All of the students I spoke to did not know their tuition would increase," said Hausfather, a member of Free Education Montreal. Hausfather said the group is considering launching a petition so that

"Concordia's Board of Governors [can] refund international students who were not warned of the increase."

Furthermore, she said, some of the fee hikes are ludicrous; tuition for the master's in business administration increased from \$14,000 to \$20,000—an increase of nearly 50 per cent.

Free Education Montreal, in conjunction with the Graduate Students' Association, will host a public debate on March 30 where Concordia President Judith Woodsworth and Montreal Chamber of Commerce President Michel Leblanc will square off with students from the Concordia community about accessible education in Quebec.

"We want this debate to be an open platform for different dialogues to circulate," Hausfather said, "which is why the debate will be open to society at large."



(Left to right) The 100 artists at 780 St. Remi St. will be evicted to make way for an on-ramp. The residents of the northern half of Cazalais Street won't be evicted. PHOTOS RILEY SPARKS

60 houses saved by new Turcot plan

Hundreds still threatened as citizens say too little was changed

• PIERRE CHAUVIN

In an update released on March 12, the province of Quebec announced that 60 homes on the north side of Cazalais Street would be saved from demolition during the controversial construction of a replacement for the Turcot interchange.

A hundred homes, however, would still be destroyed and the new structure would allow 25,000 more cars to access downtown every day.

On March 16, Concordia's school of community and public affairs

hosted a discussion to bridge the divide between the government's plan to create a larger Turcot interchange and the city and neighbourhood's proposals to increase public transit.

"This [update] is good news for residents of these areas, whose cause was taken up by the [province's environmental assessment office] in its final report," wrote Jacob Larsen in the blog *Spacing Montreal*. "However, the call to reduce total highway volume on the Turcot from the city and countless community groups went unheeded."

With their demand for greater public transit all but ignored by Quebec's ministry of transportation, the residents of the South West borough still fear demolition, health problems that could arise and green spaces that could disappear.

Professors and students gathered at the Concordia panel discussion called for a better system of public transportation downtown, the introduction of more buses on most routes and the speedy introduction of a streetcar network.

Some of the ideas that were proposed are already being studied or implemented. On March 11, the

Société de transport de Montréal announced the creation of a new shuttle bus—the 747 Airport Express—to serve the airport by way of the interchange.

Montreal currently has a plan to introduce a streetcar system into the city's downtown by 2018. The plan is supported by both Mayor Gerald Tremblay and Richard Bergeron, the head of Project Montreal and of the city's urban planning portfolio.

In September 2009, the city also announced a plan to extend the existing metro system to the north, south and east. The plan received

support from its benefactor, the provincial government.

Despite the progress in adding more public transit options, the people gathered on March 16 did not show any support for the project. Criticism was directed at all levels of government—federal, provincial and municipal—for what was considered a lack of interest in the subject.

The citizens felt that with the governments blaming each other for the problems of the project, the new Turcot interchange was moving forward without the major issues being addressed.

Hotchkiss not fit for Council: former co-executives

New documents show bleak end to Fusion candidate's Dawson Student Union days

• CHRISTOPHER CURTIS

With the Concordia Student Union elections underway, Fusion Council candidate Melanie Hotchkiss' political past remains an object of scrutiny.

On March 20, *The Link* obtained a copy of the minutes from Hotchkiss' final executive council meeting as Dawson Student Union president on Nov. 14, 2006. When asked about the meeting during an interview last week, Hotchkiss could not recall.

The minutes paint a bleak portrait of Hotchkiss' final days in office. In a meeting hampered with arguments and accusations, a unanimous motion was passed ordering her resignation as president of the DSU.

The motion that called for Hotchkiss' resignation began like this: "Whereas Melanie Hotchkiss has deliberately concealed information from the Executive Council; Whereas Melanie Hotchkiss is unwilling to cooperate with the Dawson College

Administration; Whereas Melanie Hotchkiss has been continuously making decisions without her executive[...]; Whereas Melanie Hotchkiss is seldom present during the union hours of operation; Whereas Melanie Hotchkiss has not assumed the leadership role of a president over her last two terms as president..."

According to an anonymous source who worked with the DSU in 2006, Hotchkiss' public support began to crumble shortly after the tragic Dawson shooting in September 2006, which left two dead and 19 injured.

On Sep. 14, one day after the shooting, the DSU held a press conference at Concordia University. In front of a televised audience, Hotchkiss criticized the Dawson administration for their response to the tragedy.

"I didn't expect that," said the source of Hotchkiss' criticism, who requested his name not be published for fear of jeopardizing his current career. "Everyone was saying 'don't say something stupid. If

you have problems with college administration, it is not the time to deal with that right now.' You don't do that. You don't play politics the day after a tragedy."

Moussa Noun, who sat in on Hotchkiss' final meeting as DSU president, claims she would regularly stray from her executive's decisions. Under the DSU's system of government, all of the executives are individually elected and decisions are reached by consensus.

"Before Hotchkiss was interviewed by [CBC reporter] Rex Murphy, we spoke about our stance on security," said Noun, who served as DSU executive secretary for Dawson's 2006 winter semester.

"All of the DSU executive and [Hotchkiss] agreed that they were opposed to seeing metal detectors and increased security at the school's entrance," Noun continued. "Nobody who had been through [the shooting] wanted to feel like they were walking into a prison everyday. But when [Hotchkiss] was interviewed, she

said we needed metal detectors and more security."

Noun, along with a team of DSU executives and other volunteers, helped coordinate crisis relief for Dawson students in the immediate aftermath of the shooting.

"Everyone was shaken up," he said. "While the executives, the volunteers and I worked on getting students water, blankets, food and access to psychological aid, we left the public relations stuff to [Hotchkiss]. And some of the comments she made put us in damage control mode at a really bad time."

Controversial public statements were among many sources of tension between DSU executives and their president.

Marie Vigouroux, who served as DSU executive secretary during Hotchkiss' last term in the student union, alleged that Hotchkiss' relationship with Esther Benoît, an unelected DSU employee, frustrated many of the DSU's executives.

While Benoît was supposed to operate under the authority of every DSU executive council mem-

ber, Vigouroux said that she rarely took orders from anyone without confirming with Hotchkiss first.

"It was easy for her to have access to Hotchkiss because they were roommates," said Vigouroux. "When [DSU VP Finance Liliann Malcolm] began her term, she didn't even know how much money was in the DSU's safe. The only two people with access to the safe over the previous summer were [Hotchkiss] and [Benoît]."

Vigouroux's testimony corroborates the November 2006 meeting minutes, in which DSU executives Nick Younes and Liliann Malcolm expressed a number of concerns regarding Benoît's insubordination and her frequent absenteeism.

"In the end, the executive found that [Hotchkiss] was no longer representing the interests of Dawson students," said Noun. "She was unreliable and dishonest with the DSU executive council. I worked with [Hotchkiss] for years and I honestly could not say I would vote for her for CSU Council."

Student union addresses concerns with student centre

Q&A decodes the documents behind the building

• LAURA BEESTON

Sitting in a lounge of empty chairs on March 18, Concordia Student Union VP Sustainability and Projects Alex Oster and Community VP External candidate Andrea Kessler had an opportunity to discuss the student centre and its proposed \$2.50 fee levy increase in intimate detail.

If students vote in favour of the fee levy after the ballots are counted on March 25, students can expect a \$43 million student centre on the downtown campus in January 2011.

Poor turnout at the information session enabled Kessler to pull up her chair and get to the heart of concerns about student space—the first initiative outlined on the Community slate's platform. She questioned how a student-run building would function if it was owned by the administration.

"It is, but it isn't," answered Oster. "The only time that the university is mentioned as the owner is for the tax purposes. The Concordia

Foundation's ownership of a building is tax exempt [...]. It just saves us a ridiculous amount of money."

Motioning to the 79-page legal agreement between the CSU and the university signed in May 2009, Oster explained who would own, control and finance the operation of the building.

"We are treated as the owner in the document, but people love to just read the executive summary and read the first page and that's it," he said. "All this preamble stuff, if you're in a court of law, is not meant to influence the interpretation of specific articles regarding who controls what and who contributes to what."

Oster hoped to quell rumours on the Community slate's Facebook page that the building would be university-owned and leave little for students.

"It was a very informative meeting and he lessened some of our concerns," said Kessler. "It still comes down to the basic question of autonomy. I was really surprised that peo-

ple from Fusion weren't there, since the student centre is a strong point in their platform."

In terms of student and retail space, Oster explained that the university administration is a "minor collaborative party" and would control only 32 per cent of the building. The document, he said, was drawn up in "good faith" between the university and the student union and that there is flexibility in terms of what goes into the space.

"I want to sit down and say 'here's why it's written the way it is and why it's framed the way it is.' I'd like to introduce our CSU lawyer who has looked at this—and who was a past executive and probably the most anti-administration of any lawyer I've ever met—but I can't do that," he said.

"I organized this public discussion to try to express these things, to try to present it to people and try to open it up for discussion but this is what happens," he said, gesturing to the empty room. "Like I said, maybe if Snoopy Dogg was here..."

Online campaign brings good with bad

Web extends reach of campaign, but leaves bitter aftertaste

• TOM LLEWELLIN

As the Concordia Student Union election campaign winds to a close, the piles of purple and orange posters on every available space remain the same, but the parallel campaign unfolding on the Web and social networks is steadily changing Concordia's political landscape.

"It seems to be becoming more and more important," said Community presidential candidate Mike Xenakis. "A lot of people know about the Facebook group and it's been a huge factor in the campaign."

"It's a great way to engage students," seconded Fusion presidential candidate Prince Ralph Osei.

The head of Fusion pointed to his Facebook group's 750 members as evidence that social networking was catching on. Community's boasted about a third at 246. Both had reservations about their abilities to reach students directly through the Internet, though.

"There are a lot of pros and a lot of cons," said Xenakis. "[Chief Electoral Officer Oliver Cohen] banned Facebook ads from the campaign. Traffic is cut down because of

that, and of course the student body is disillusioned."

Osei added that "there's nothing better than going to do classroom speeches. We've hit close to 80 per cent of classrooms and when it comes to politics, it's about getting the message across."

Xenakis concurred, adding that there should be "as many debates as possible. Debates online attract the already politically-inclined; they aren't the same as open-forum [in-person] debates."

Both slates have committed to sustainable student unions as a major plank of their campaign. The vast amount of paper consumed during an election campaign contributes a large amount of carbon emissions.

Osei commented that, in the long term, TV screens around campus could be used for the same purpose as posters are now, citing ones belonging to CUTV, the administration and a CSU-owned screen on the Loyola campus.

Xenakis harboured reservations about paperless campaigns, but he added that getting rid of slate affiliations for councillors—who currently poster as part of the slate they

run under—would help reduce the amount of paper consumed.

The heavy emphasis on social networking also showed another potential platform for back-and-forth arguments.

A spat on the Facebook wall of Fusion's group between members of the two slates, most of which were deleted by Fusion administrators, elicited differing reactions.

"On our side we're requesting debate," said Xenakis. "A lot of the bickering was revolving around [them]. A lot of the requests would be deleted from the wall."

Osei maintained that "unfortunately it was used by our opponents to promote their own affairs and character-assassinate people. It doesn't touch on people's performances, but challenges their reputations. I had to send a word of caution."

Xenakis countered that the charges were "ridiculous and totally false," adding that the two slates were in regular contact during the campaign to resolve any issues.

For more elections coverage, including a questionnaire answered by both slates go to thelinknewspaper.ca



Elaine Ostopkevich serves a pint at the Bull Pub. PHOTO RILEY SPARKS

A cock and bull story

Local bar finds new home and new name

• CHRISTOPHER CURTIS

On any given Thursday at the Cock and Bull, students and local youths would have knocked back pints of lager alongside middle-aged construction workers, professionals and university professors. They would crowd the basement pub off Fort Street, often dancing to live Bluegrass bands, shooting pool for a dollar or picking songs from the jukebox.

Patrons of the bar knew its owners and bartenders by name. Ellen McCann had managed the Cock and Bull in the 1980s; she bought it in 1990 and continued running it with her daughters Missy and Trish into the 21st century.

In 2009, Montreal restaurant magnate Peter Serkakis bought the building that had housed the bar for decades. Serkakis also owns neighbouring bars La Station des Sports, La Boite a Karoké as well as the Saint Henri's Black Jack and Montreal West's PJ's Pub.

He subsequently terminated the owner's longstanding lease of the bar's space and kept the rights to its name. The "Cock and Bull" is still a stone's throw away from Fort Street but bears

little resemblance to the McCann's bar. Today it looks more like one of Serkakis' other establishments.

"It had a lived-in feel that you just couldn't get elsewhere," said Elaine Ostopkevich, a former Cock and Bull bartender. "People would just walk in and it felt like home. It's not something you can just create."

For over six months, the McCann family worked to establish another bar a few blocks west of their old one. In March, they opened the Bull Pub on Ste-Catherine Street off of Lambert-Closse Street, near Atwater. The new location is brighter—its walls are lined with gyprock and glass instead of brick and wood—but the McCanns have retained their old staff and traditions.

"We're gonna be working on it," said Missy McCann of the bar's sterile look. "But we've kept everything else the same. We're a family business, my sister and mom still work here and so do my daughter and son."

Like its predecessor, the Bull Pub will have arts and crafts nights, monthly open mic nights, weekly live music, a karaoke night and cheap beer on a daily basis.

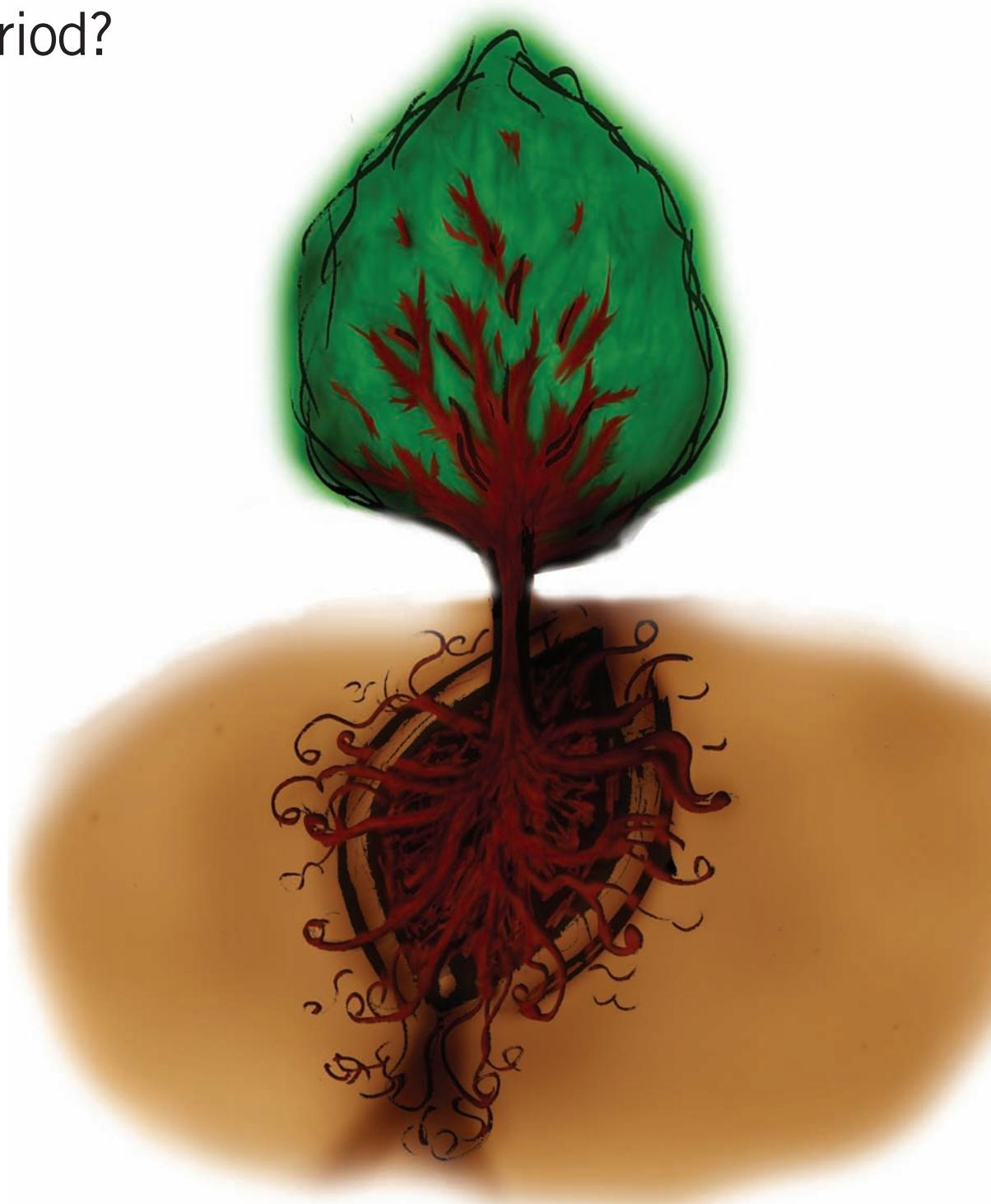
The greenest way to bleed

How sustainable is your period?

Are you one of the millions of women in North America currently sticking chemically-treated, chlorine-bleached rayon and plastic menstruation products in or around your vagina?

Do you know that you are contributing to the estimated 14 billion pads, tampons and applicators hitting landfills every year?

Your flow really doesn't have to be this wasteful.



Have a sustainable period. GRAPHIC DARYNA RUKHLYADEVA

• LAURA BEESTON

Once again, it's that time of the month.

That "natural" time to indulge in carte blanche emotional terrain, connect with the moon and tides, synch up with your lady friends and withstand the standard four-to-seven days of bleeding.

Oh, and of course, it's time to staunch that flow.

Are you one of the millions of women in North America currently sticking chemically-treated, chlorine-bleached rayon and plastic menstruation products in or around your vagina?

Do you know that you are contributing to the estimated 14 billion pads, tampons and applicators hitting landfills every year?

Your flow really doesn't have to be this wasteful. There are many options out there for a gal to have a more environmentally-conscious period.

Alternative reusable menstruation products are sustainable in the purest sense, since you can flourish (read: bleed) forever without all the freakin' waste.

Washable, 100 per cent organic-cotton reusable sanitary napkins, like made-in-Canada Lunapads, or a menstrual cup, such as the aptly named DivaCup, are both excellent eco-friendly products that look and feel like the standard pad or tampon.

There are many options out there and the bonus is that you lose the throw-away mentality if you simply wash and wear.

The sustainable cycle

According to the New York University Medical Center, tampons and pads are used by up to 70 per cent of menstruating women, one of whom will go through approximately 16,800 individual menstrual products in her lifetime.

Though that may seem like

quite a lot of flushing and chucking, a debate about the actual amount of waste per period was raised in a recent *Slate* article.

In "Greening the Crimson Tide," Nina Shen Rastogi wondered how much the estimated 300 pounds of pads, plugs and applicators a woman will use in her fertile years really means "in the grand scheme of things."

Her math suggested that period waste makes up about 0.5 per cent of a lady's personal landfill load, which left Rastogi wondering if this is really "worth fretting over" by giving women another reason to feel guilty about their periods.

Though she does draw a valid link between periods and a societal shaming of periods in general in the article, this logic misses the point about having a sustainable cycle.

Yes, it's true that a typical North American representation of periods and "feminine hygiene

products" is pretty fucked—I mean, Lysol was once actually marketed as a douche for lady parts—but I hope we're evolving into an understanding of menstruation that is more than embarrassing, medicalized or marketable.

By and large, though periods and vaginas are still seemingly unmentionable in media and popular discourse, bleeding is a naturally-occurring part of the feminine reproductive cycle and there is potential for a better, and greener, understanding of the time of the month.

Dollars and sense

If simply living green and shame free doesn't float your boat, what if I told you that bleeding green also saves you green?

Take the menstrual cup, for instance. For \$35, this gum rubber, silicone or latex cup can catch the drip for up to 10 years, working out to a measly \$0.29 a month

with zero packaged waste.

Or, for \$9.99, you can buy 36 plastic polypropylene Tampax tampons, hypothetically lasting two cycles.

In 10 years, you will have spent over \$600 accommodating your fated Aunt Flo and will have flushed over 2,000 bloody swabs of polyester down the drain.

Living green and having a waste-not-want-not mentality in life is about making little, individual choices every day that contribute to a better planet in the future. Periods, like menopause and myriad other womanly health-related things, have devolved into being about flashy, wasteful packaging, all in the name of marketing.

There are many individual steps that you can take to be nicer to the planet. Being mindful of the small choices we make for something as natural as your period may end up making a huge environmental difference.

Étranger chez-soi

Comment agir dans un espace anglophone

• HUGO PILON-LAROSE

Qu'ils soient originaires du Saguenay ou de la ville de Québec, de la banlieue ou même de Montréal, bon nombre de jeunes québécois portent un intérêt pour l'éducation anglophone. Leurs parents chantaient Joe Dassin et Beau Dommage, ce qui ne les a pas empêchés d'apprécier le rock des Beatles ou la verve de Leonard Cohen. Une acceptation pour l'anglais qu'ils ont transmis à leurs enfants.

Quoi qu'il y ait des universités francophones à Montréal telles que l'UQAM et l'Université de Montréal, certains choisissent le réseau universitaire anglophone. Malgré l'incompréhension que ceci peut engendrer chez leurs amis et familles, plusieurs font maintenant partie du corps étudiant de McGill ou de Concordia.

Alors que certains passent incognitos, d'autres sont immédiatement reconnus par leur accent francophone. Qui sont ces Québécois francophones qui décident à chaque année de franchir cette frontière linguistique? Quelles sont leurs motivations? Comment analysent-ils leur expériences anglophone?

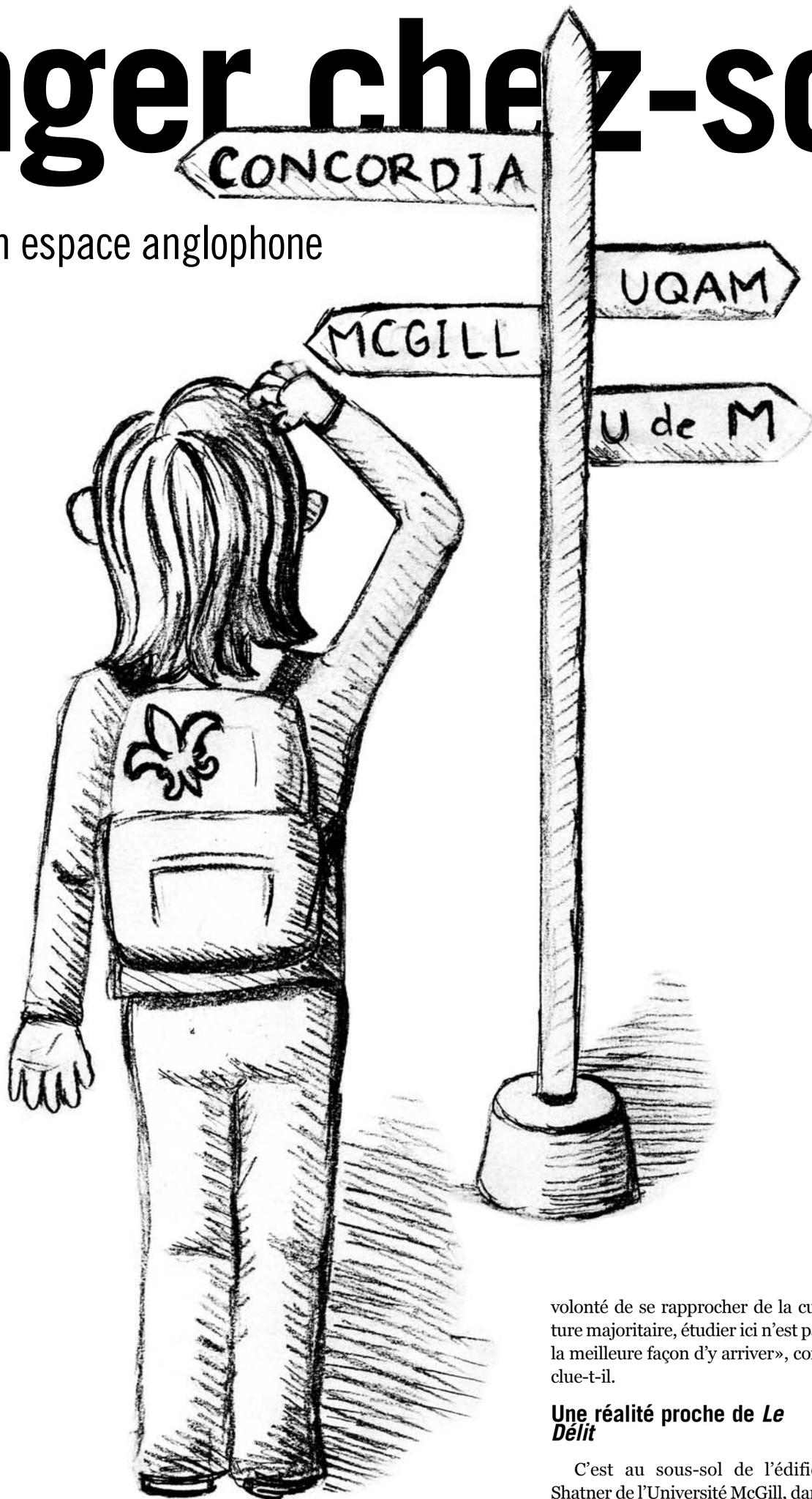
Qui sommes-nous?

«Pour un francophone qui a le désir de perfectionner son anglais, une manière intéressante de le faire est d'étudier dans sa langue seconde. En ce sens, la force de notre réseau universitaire anglophone est un atout pour les francophones du Québec», soutient Antoine Dionne, étudiant en deuxième année en sciences politiques à l'Université Concordia.

Issu d'une famille où le bilinguisme est chose courante, Dionne avait étudié uniquement en français avant de débiter sa carrière universitaire. Alors qu'il terminait son cégep à André-Grasset, il décida de poursuivre ses études dans un établissement anglophone sans pour autant renier sa culture française.

«Un francophone qui étudie en anglais ne devient pas un anglophone pour autant. Il faut rejeter cette idée qu'ont trop de Québécois. Quand tu studies ici, tu apprends de professeurs qui connaissent, plus souvent qu'autrement, très peu le français et la culture québécoise. Mais après tes cours, au café d'à-côté, tu commandes en français. Comme si c'était tout-à-fait normal», observe candidement Dionne.

Cependant, pour cet étudiant



On retrouve rapidement le phénomène des «deux solitudes» dans le réseau universitaire anglais. GRAPHIC AMY SMITH

engagé dans le militantisme politique, trop peu d'efforts sont faits par les universités anglophones pour rejoindre la communauté francophone majoritaire. Il adresse cette critique particulièrement à son université d'accueil.

«Ce serait la moindre des choses que Concordia, située en plein cœur d'une province où la seule langue officielle reconnue est le français, soit en mesure d'offrir les services administratifs, ainsi que tous portails web (site Internet officiel, My Concordia Portal, etc.) dans les

deux langues officielles», reproche Dionne. Selon lui, éviter la création de ghettos linguistiques est un défi qui s'impose.

«Quand on entre sur le campus de Concordia [ou McGill], on a le sentiment d'être à l'intérieur d'une microsociété à l'intérieur-même de la ville. Être sur le campus, c'est entrer dans une bulle qui se distingue essentiellement par la langue qui y est majoritairement parlée, soit l'anglais», analyse Dionne. «Il faut toutefois faire attention. Pour un néo-Québécois qui aurait la

volonté de se rapprocher de la culture majoritaire, étudier ici n'est pas la meilleure façon d'y arriver», conclue-t-il.

Une réalité proche de *Le Délit*

C'est au sous-sol de l'édifice Shatner de l'Université McGill, dans ce qui ressemble drôlement à un bunker, que se rencontrent régulièrement des journalistes étudiants francophones. Leur mission: produire un journal hebdomadaire dans la langue de Molière. *Le Délit* est largement distribué sur le campus et est lu par plus de 300 internautes chaque semaine.

Certains des rédacteurs étudient au département d'études françaises, la plupart venant de cégeps francophones. Quand on leur demande s'ils aiment leur expérience à McGill, plusieurs affirment avoir connu des journées difficiles.

«Tu sais qu'en choisissant McGill, tu auras à parler l'anglais.

Mais avant d'y arriver, tu ne réalises pas à quel point la vie sur le campus ne ressemble à rien de ce que tu avais vécu auparavant à Montréal», s'étonne Rosalie Dion-Picard, secrétaire de rédaction pour *Le Délit*.

Selon certains membres de l'équipe, y compris la rédactrice en chef Stéphanie Dufresne, le local du *Le Délit*, partagé avec *The McGill Daily*, est représentatif de la dualité culturelle canadienne: on y retrouve rapidement le phénomène des «deux solitudes».

«D'un côté de la pièce, il y a les journalistes du *Daily*, de l'autre côté, ceux du *Le Délit*. Même si l'on fait essentiellement le même travail, il est très rare que les deux équipes se parlent», avoue la rédactrice en chef.

À la fin novembre, les deux journaux ont publié un numéro conjoint dans lequel chaque équipe constituait les bases de leur université rêvée. L'équipe de rédaction du *Le Délit* abordait essentiellement les thèmes reliés à la francophonie, tandis que le *Daily* se concentrait plutôt sur l'environnement et l'influence des multinationales sur le campus.

«Les deux équipes se sont très peu consultées pour l'écriture et le choix des thèmes de ce numéro spécial», avoue Dufresne.

Évolution de la situation

Les étudiants francophones qui choisissent l'université en anglais sont de plus en plus nombreux, comme le constatait déjà en novembre 2008 la rectrice de l'Université Concordia, Judith Woodsworth, en entrevue au quotidien *Le Devoir*. Malgré la perspective d'un marché intéressant à l'époque, l'université a depuis très peu amélioré ses services dans les deux langues. À ce jour, le nouveau site Internet de l'établissement n'est toujours pas disponible en français et sur la page web officielle de Mme. Woodsworth, les messages sont uniquement écrits en anglais.

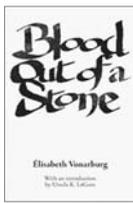
En contrepartie, l'Université McGill offre tous ses documents administratifs, ainsi que son site Internet, dans les deux langues. Malgré cet effort, est-ce que cela aide vraiment les étudiants francophones à s'y sentir chez eux?

«Éventuellement, tu acceptes que tes études universitaires ne seront pas comme celles de tes amis qui ont choisi le réseau francophone», conclut Rosalie Dion-Picard du journal *Le Délit*. «Étudier à McGill, c'est finalement étudier à l'étranger, mais dans sa propre ville.»

quick reads

Sci-fi edition

CanLit meets spaceship



Blood Out of A Stone
Élisabeth Vonarburg
Nanopress
248 pp
\$21.90

What really separates literary fiction from so-called genre fiction? Okay, robots and aliens and biologically-engineered spaceships. But what else?

Acknowledged author and founder of Québécois science fiction, French author Élisabeth Vonarburg proves her mastery of the genre—as much as I loathe that word—in *Blood Out of A Stone*, a compilation of her short stories.

Vonarburg is, in fact, highly literary in her fantastic explorations of language and authorial intent. Fittingly, the first story in this book of English translations of her works, done in collaboration with various interpreters, is about the act of interpretation itself. In a universe where sentient aqua-marine animals are the only means of interpreting alien languages—and vice versa—a paranoia erupts among interstellar species over the purity of the meaning that's actually conveyed.

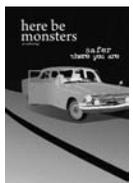
"The Museum of Impermanence" proposes a world where space junk fills the solar system, and genetically-engineered creatures closely resembling—and actually related to—whales are tasked with the chore of cleaning it up. Rather than a thinly-veiled ecological metaphor, the story is written as a detailed proposal for an art installation on the moon constructed from whale bones.

Don't be threatened by the genre label; *Blood Out of A Stone* is bona-fide CanLit at its uncanniest.

5/5

—Christopher Olson

Stay Where You Are



Here Be Monsters
Vol. 2
Safer Where You Are
90 pp
\$10

The second edition of the self-published sci-fi anthology *Here Be Monsters, Safer Where You Are*, serves up its share of humour and whimsy.

Concordia creative writing graduate Alexander Newcombe's "The Spark Gap Blog" is perhaps the most grounded story in the collection, a succinctly-worded tale of a B.C. ghost town whose world-weary inhabitants realize they may be richer than they think.

The second tale, "Paradigms Lost" by Concordia linguistics bachelor Duane Burry, involves a man's quest to uncover hidden memories that were kept from him by a variety of millennia-old adversaries. Burry's revelation of the true cause is a slow burn, a marked feat given the story's relative shortness.

"Alistair's Armageddon" by Vincent Mackay takes a light-hearted turn, exploring what would occur if the aristocracy survived a nuclear holocaust. This rather humorous tale shows the upper-class handing out snide remarks to each other as a group of country club members arm themselves against monsters spawned by the Apocalypse.

Fans of different slants of sci-fi should be sure to pick up *Safer Where You Are*, which is available in a short run at the Concordia Co-op Bookstore.

4.5/5

—R. Brian Hastie

SkyDome turns Thunderdome

Toronto gets all post-apocalyptic in *Quarter-Life Crisis*



"I was trying to make the post-apocalypse fun [and add] a little bit of levity to life after the end times."

—Evan Munday,
author of *Quarter-Life Crisis*

Aaron Yung and Harper Yung, 25-year-old survivors of the Apocalypse.

• CHRISTOPHER OLSON

Graphic artist Evan Munday has been envisioning the apocalypse since he's been able to draw.

"When I was in high school, I worked on this comic that no one saw except my friends called *The Post-Apocalyptic Warriors of the Post-Apocalypse*," said Munday, who works as Toronto publisher Coach House Books' publicist between the odd illustration job.

Pitched by Munday as a cross between *Mad Max* and *Scott Pilgrim*, *Quarter-Life Crisis: Only the Good Die Yung* is a world inhabited entirely by the 25-year-old survivors of an undetermined age-discriminating cataclysm.

No explanation is given for the apocalypse, because none is needed, says Munday.

"I'm always annoyed when I read a book or watch a movie where they take the first 10 minutes to explain [the plot]," he said. "The point of [*Quarter-Life Crisis*] is not necessarily how the world got this way. The point is how people spend their

time from then on."

In Munday's Toronto, The Rogers, a tyrannical gang who hang out in the Rogers Centre, patrol the streets while The Bay Street Thugs, who dress uncannily like the band members of Adam Ant, stake out their own turf. The Eaton Centre is neutral territory, and protagonists Harper Yung and his older brother Aaron—whose promising medical career is cut short by the apocalypse—make their home in the Design Centre for the Ontario College of Art and Design.

"If you live in Toronto, there'll be all these inside jokes," said Munday. But even if you're not familiar with the big T-dot, Munday hopes you will be after reading his book.

"Part of the project was hoping to make Toronto a place that was almost mythic," he said, "so that people who hadn't been there could say, 'Oh, that's the store where they play *Dance Dance Revolution* to the death.'"

The aforementioned dance-off is just one of the familiar sights made surreal in *Quarter-Life Crisis*.

"Most of my comics are a blend of the extremely mundane and the extremely bizarre," said Munday. "So it's a post-apocalypse, but at the same time, it's set in Toronto. It's not set in some hellish desert."

Growing up in Waterloo, Ont., Munday inked a series of comics called *The Amazing Challengers of Unknown Mystery*, featuring Waterloo's greatest superheroes, including a punk psychic and Canada's greatest living biographer—a man with the ability to raise historic figures from the dead to resolve gaps in their biographies.

Montrealers might remember his illustration work for Concordia prof Jon Paul Fiorentino's *Stripmalling* last year.

Next Spring, Munday will make his prose-writing debut with the young-adult novel *The Dead Kid Detective Agency*, about a girl and her five dead friends who help her solve mysteries.

"Each of the dead kids is from a different era in Canadian history," he

explained. "So there's the dead United Empire Loyalist and the dead girl who arrived in Canada via the Underground Railroad and the dead [Dionne] quintuplet. So it's edutainment as well," he added.

Meanwhile, *Quarter-Life Crisis* is only a quarter done. Books two, three and four in the proposed series are projected for release one year apart starting this September. Each one will feature a different narrator, and perhaps shed a little more light on the cause of everyone's demise.

"With [*Quarter-Life Crisis*] I was trying to make the post-apocalypse fun," said Munday. "Hopefully, I added a little bit of levity to life after the end times."

Copies of *Quarter-Life Crisis* can be purchased online at idontlikemundays.com.



Quarter-Life Crisis: Only the Good Die Yung
Evan Munday
121 pp
\$12

Do androids hog the sheets?

Robot love, Latin rap and Lady Gaga with poet Ian Christopher Goodman

• ARSHAD KHAN

When does no mean no for a robot? What constitutes third base with an android? Do machines have trouble expressing their feelings, or are they only interested in sex?

These are some of the questions that Ian Christopher Goodman, a Concordia creative writing graduate, has been pondering, some of which you will find in his first book of poetry, *Generator*, from Snare Books.

Goodman was good enough to answer some of *The Link's* lingering questions.

The Link: *In a world where most people get their poetry from Lady Gaga, what got you into poetry?*

Ian Christopher Goodman: I'm too busy watching "Telephone" to answer this question. But I faintly remember Smog and Silver Jews inspiring me somewhere in my fog-filled past. Later, I signed up for Concordia's creative writing program in 2003, thinking poetry classes would help me write better songs. But I discovered they were two different breeds. And I also discovered that I liked breeding poetry.

There is a huge technology/mechanics component (bardic cybernetics and robot love) to your writing.

I think a lot of my writing is done somewhat unconsciously. "Stream-of-unconsciousness" seems like a more apt term for the kind of writing that just spills out. When it's not censored, I feel like it really is the unconscious speaking. So, yeah, tech stuff was appearing in some poems and I kept that in. After, I consciously decided to continue with that kind of imagery. Looking back now, it seems I'm more sensitive than usual to all the technology that surrounds us. Even DNA seems like technology to me. All of reality perhaps. I don't know why I think this way. I usually just keep it to myself and in my poems.

There were some words I could not understand nor find meanings for. You use Greek mythology along with some other languages that are difficult to pronounce. Perhaps it is a vernacular too hip for my understanding. Can you speak about your choice of language and style?

No, definitely not vernacular, though maybe it will inspire



Poet and Concordia grad Ian Christopher Goodman has come to see "all of reality" as technology. PHOTO ELSA JABRE

more rapping in Latin and ancient Greek. That reminds me: I recently heard a Japanese rap of the *Heart Sutra*. Pretty cool. You'll have to look harder for the meanings. Some of my poems are like treasure maps. Oh, and some of the words are made up, too.

Some of your poems are almost gibberish. The use of HTML and

online chats makes for quite a twist in styles at times. How has the response been to these more abstract works?

People often laugh. Or put a concerned hand on me and ask if I'm okay. I've heard the smile evolved from our primitive habit of baring teeth when we're afraid.

How long do you work on a

piece of poetry? What is the most frustrating part about writing poems?

Often I write poems in under an hour. Sometimes five minutes. Then comes the crafting that can take weeks, months, years of on-again/off-again work. I certainly have written a lot of stinky poems. The trick is catching them early before the coddling. I don't think I get too

frustrated with writing poems. If so, I wouldn't have the patience or the joy needed to craft them. I haven't been writing much poetry these days, and I don't get worked up by that, either.

Who are your influences?

Well, aside from Zaldy Goco, the costume designer for "Telephone," I would say... Actually, no, no. Zaldy is my only influence. You see what you've done by mentioning Lady Gaga? No, but influences are everywhere for me: poetry, music, dance, dreams, plants, science. In fact, I'm now so fascinated by nature and science's engagement with it that I haven't had time to pause and write.

What do you feel about the state of poetry and literature today? Do you think film and animation are a good way of disseminating the word of the writer?

Yeah, well, film and animation are good ways for disseminating anything, and there's no reason why poetry can't dally with moving images. But I feel it's important to respect the purity of poetry as well—creative manipulation of language on the printed page—without cluttering it up with other art forms. In a world full of clutter, it's nice to have reprieve from time to time.

Are you able to sustain yourself with your art? What is your advice to aspiring poets at Concordia and readers of *The Link*?

I think art sustains me emotionally and energetically—though I had resolved to not use the word "energetically" in 2010. I see a really good concert or dance piece and my mind and body awaken and enliven so much. I wonder if there's any poet who sustains him or herself on poetry publications alone. I suspect very few. But I haven't looked into it. Personally, I've started my own gardening company called Les jardiniers à bicyclette. A somewhat poetic enterprise, I hope, and the latest channel for my creative energies. I mean, juices. In a way, I'm happy not trying to make a living through art. It gives me more freedom.



Generator
Ian Christopher
Goodman
Snare Books
88 pp
\$12.00

General elections

March 26, 2010

4 p.m. H-649

The following people are eligible to vote:

David Adelman, Laura Beeston, Esther Bernard, Mathieu Biard, Madeline Coleman, Christopher Curtis, Travis Dandro, Alex Di Pietro, Terrine Friday, Justin Giovannetti, R. Brian Hastie, Emma Healey, Clay Hemmerich, Les Honywill, Elsa Jabre, David Kaufmann, Adam Kovac, Stephanie La Leggia, Tristan LaPointe, Vivien Leung, Brittany Levett, Tom Llewelin, Alex Manley, Tania Mohsen, Christopher Olson, Ashley Opheim, Diego Pelaez Gaetz, Hugo Pilon-Larose, Clare Raspopow, Daryna Rukhlyadeva, Shawna Satz, Riley Sparks, Julia Wolfe

Snacks will be served

For more information email:
editor@thelinknewspaper.ca
or call 514-848-2424 ext.7407.

The following people are running for positions positions:

Editor-in-chief

Justin Giovannetti

Managing editor

Laura Beeston

News editor

Christopher Curtis

Features editor

Adam Kovac

Christopher Olson

Fringe arts editor

Stephanie La Leggia

Tom Llewelin

Ashley Opheim

Literary arts editor

Emma Healey

Sports editor

Alex Di Pietro

David Kaufmann

Opinions editor

Clay Hemmerich

Stephanie La Leggia

Tania Mohsen

Copy editor

Diego Pelaez Gaetz

Student Press Liaison

Tania Mohsen

Photo editor

Riley Sparks

Graphics editor

Julia Wolfe

Layout manager

Vivien Leung

Christopher Olson

Julia Wolfe

Online editor

Tom Llewelin

Sit up and pay attention

Things That Go Bump brings plays to post-adolescents

• CELIA STE-CROIX

Standing behind the dusty velvet curtain just off stage, you peek out at the teenagers filing into the auditorium. They look bored. One girl snaps her gum while her friend sends texts on her phone. There is a tightness in your chest. You've just forgotten your lines and you're pretty sure your crack is showing. Plus you're fresh out of Concordia's theatre department and haven't set foot in a high school in almost eight years.

Kit Brennan, an associate professor in Concordia's theatre department, writes award-winning plays and has edited several collections of Canadian theatre pieces. Her most recent publication is a two-volume collection intended for a very specific and often-challenging audience: young adults.

"High school kids kind of go [into plays] saying 'okay, show me something. Yeah I'm away from math class, but do something good here,'" Brennan said sitting in her downtown office.

Things That Go Bump Volume 1: Plays for Young Adults is a collection of five plays written by Canadian playwrights from across the country for high school stu-

dents. Playwrights from Montreal and from Concordia figured in the making of many of them.

Hannah Moscovitch's *In This World*, a heated debate between teen girls about sex, was commissioned by the Montreal-based Youth Theatre Company.

Concordia theatre alumnus Graham Cuthbertson starred in the first run of Jason Long's *Offensive Fouls*—which was toured by local Geordie Productions. Not to be left out, Brian Drader's play *To Be Frank* was directed and performed by four Concordia theatre alumni.

High school teachers are always looking for new material for their students and plays written by Canadian playwrights can be hard to find, said Brennan. *Things That Go Bump*, and its forthcoming counterpart aimed at elementary school audiences, are part of a larger attempt on behalf of Brennan to support Canadian playwrights.

The plays in this collection have already been "road-tested," performed in high schools and tweaked by the writers to really speak to the intended audience. After each play in the book, the authors write about the process he or she went through in creating it.

The five included playwrights agree that constraints on length and budget for such plays can be limiting. The biggest challenge for Long was telling a compelling story to a relatively captive audience. He wanted to discuss relevant issues without preaching and to make sure it was challenging, exciting and, most of all, entertaining.

Brennan said that writing and performing for young people is an exciting and daunting undertaking.

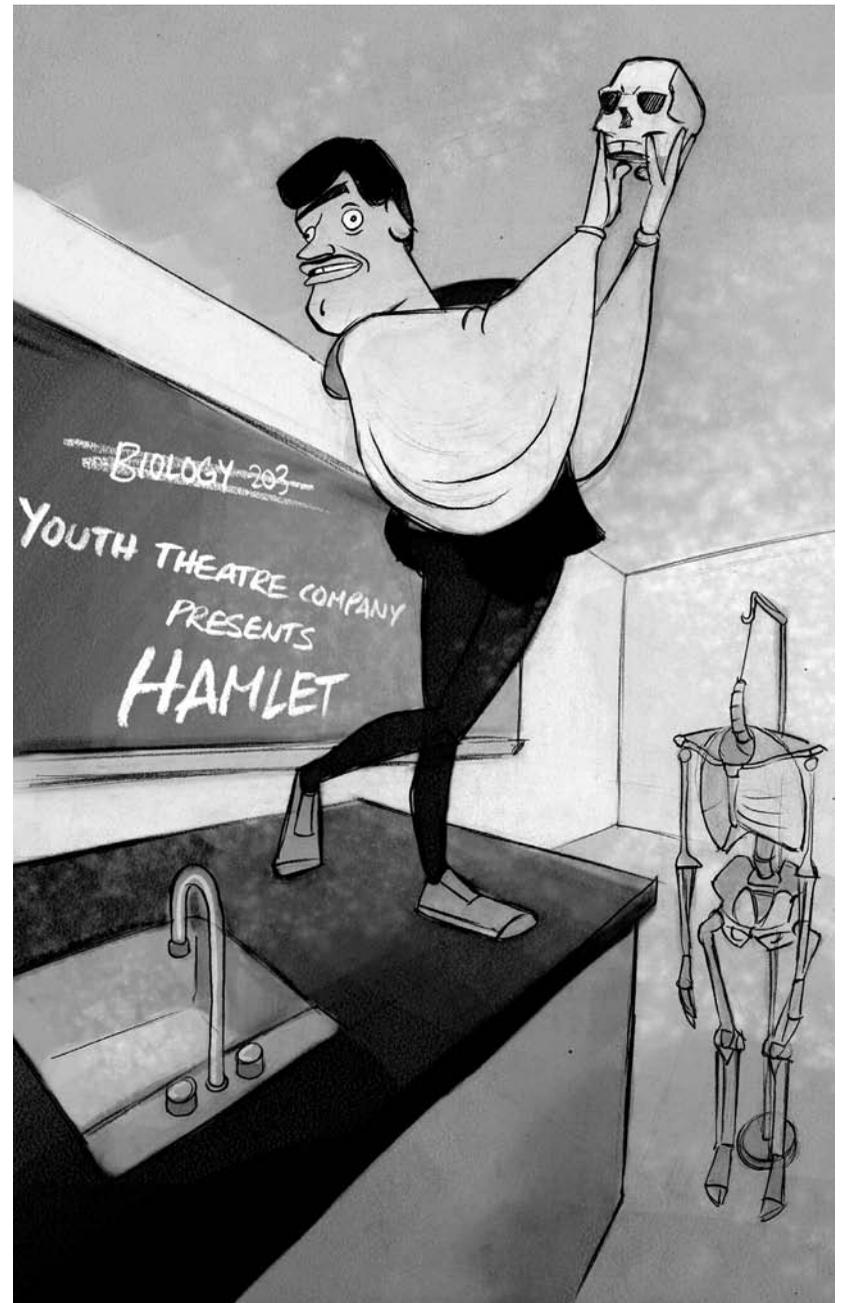
"In intensity, you know the audience is going to give you things immediately back, which is part of the fun of it as an actor and a writer," she said, "because youth audiences really let you know where they are with it."

Brennan also said she's proud of the selections she made.

"These playwrights are pretty savvy and know they've got to deliver a really good play to make [teens] go 'Whoa!' and sit up and pay attention."



Things That Go Bump Vol. 1
Kit Brennan
Signature Editions
200 pp
\$24.95



Apathetic teenagers are some of the most challenging audiences for a performer, says Concordia playwright and professor Kit Brennan. GRAPHIC DAVID BARLOW-KRELIINA

Fight Boredom



• CHRISTOPHER OLSON

Queer feminist zine-maker Amber Forrester, the author of perzine *Culture Slut* #1 through #20, is teaching others to combat restlessness with compilation zine *Fight Boredom*.

The Link: You write a lot about the word "cunt." Do you mind if I use the word cunt even though I'm a man?

Amber Forrester: Not at all. I'm a huge fan of the word cunt and use it often, though only when I'm referring to, like, an actual cunt. I would never call someone a cunt as an insult 'cause cunts are awesome. And I think it's really fucking hot when my boyfriend says cunt.

You mentioned in your blog that sometimes you don't feel "queer enough."

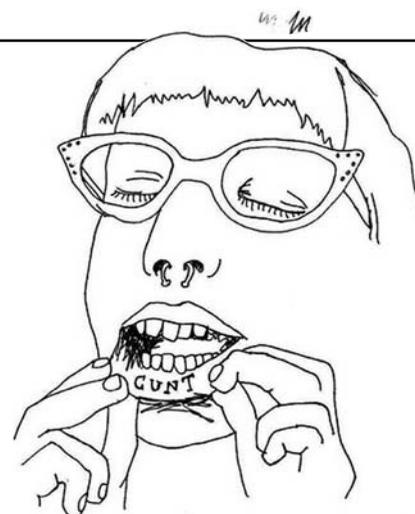
Sometimes I feel as if there is a certain

"dress code" for queers, and if you don't follow it, they may not notice you. I always make jokes about short, asymmetrical haircuts and skinny jeans, which are often the calling cards of queer girls. And actually, I love that look, but it definitely isn't me. I have long hair and don't really subscribe to any particular "fashion"—so I feel like people just assume that I'm straight, which obviously makes it difficult to become involved in the queer community, and, you know, to pick up chicks.

People in general seem to make the assumption that everyone around them is straight unless they are told otherwise; I try to do the opposite. I often feel out of place in both "straight" crowds and queer crowds, because I'm not really living up to anyone's expectations appearance-wise. It's something that I think about a lot, and that I enjoy writing about. Since distributing *Culture Slut* #20 and participating in a few zine readings, I've met a lot of people who feel this way and it's very comforting and validating.

How do you feel about putting out compilation zines versus something only you had a hand in?

Culture Slut and *Fight Boredom* are two totally different projects, in my eyes. I find that when it comes to the cutting and pasting of *Fight Boredom*, I have a lot of trouble with it. The problem is that I don't work well with other people's words.



Cunt shouldn't be a dirty word. GRAPHIC TUKRU

When people e-mail their submissions, I sorta feel like, "Great, what am I supposed to do with this?" It feels strange to me to "decorate" a page of someone else's words, which is why the layout of *Fight Boredom* is a little less exciting than my perzines.

For the upcoming issue, I've asked contributors to mail in their pieces to me; that way the pages are ready-made and each page reflects the writer's style. I'm currently working on two issues. One is *Fight Boredom with Action*, which will feature pieces written by various zinesters from around the world, the other is *Fight Boredom with Radical Ladies*, which is a bit of a look at Riot Grrrl politics and why I feel they're still relevant today, as well as talk of girl-hate and jealousy.

The laying out of *Culture Slut* is all

sorts of fun. I love pounding away on my favourite typewriter and attacking my collection of clippings and vintage magazines and children's books with scissors and glue. I spent the better part of Saturday afternoon putting *Culture Slut* #21 together and had a blast.

What's the most interesting suggestion someone has given you to fight boredom?

Someone suggested walking on a mirror to pretend that you're on the ceiling, which I thought sounded like fun. Or counting the red lines that make up the numbers on a digital clock. I like hearing about the tiny, strange things that other people's brains come up with. I spend a lot of time studying French, reading zines and exploring the city, so personally, I seldom feel bored.

I started making the zine when I lived in Lindsay, Ont. and a lot of my friends were complaining of boredom. I'm one of those annoying people who always says, "Only boring people get bored," and I wanted them to feel inspired and do something creative. I like to think that I'm making a tiny positive difference in the world.

Copies of *Fight Boredom* and *Culture Slut* can be purchased through amber.nor-rean@gmail.com. You can follow Amber on her blog at hello-amber.blogspot.com. The deadline for submissions for *Fight Boredom* #4 is April 1.

Zine Scene

Creatures from the black lagoon

The Black Lips emerge from the swamp, slither over the border

• TRISTAN LAPOINTE

They've got love for Montreal, but the Black Lips used to have trouble getting here. A run-in with a Canadian border official a few years ago threatened to keep the Atlanta, GA band out of the country—and it's all Google's fault.

"I forged all the papers to make it look like we were going to Canada to record and spend money, but when we got to the border the guard just googled 'Black Lips' and realized we were playing in Montreal," explained Black Lips frontman Jared Swilley.

Canada isn't the only country to take issue with their antics. A tour in India went sour last year when tour sponsors were shocked that the band wanted to drink and smoke while playing. Things got tense when concert promoters tried to take their passports, but the band eventually escaped unscathed, leaving the rest of their tour dates behind them.

Immigration issues aside, the rock 'n' roll band formerly known for playing guitar with their dicks and peeing onstage are coming back to Montreal—legally.

Currently a quartet, the band is touring in support of their fifth studio album, *200 Million Thousand*, released last year on Vice Records. They've come a long way from their gritty 2003 self-titled debut. *The Link* caught up with bassist and singer Swilley at his home in Atlanta.

The Link: Hey man, are you on break right now?

Jared Swilley: We leave again in a week. We just got back from Japan like two weeks ago. After this it's pretty much on tour until summer's over.

How was Japan?

Japan was awesome. I didn't know what to expect but it went great. The crowds were the same there as here—people were dancing and going wild. You'd expect a more reserved atmosphere, but I guess not.

Are you excited about coming up the East Coast?

I'm always excited about Montreal. We played a wedding there last August for [garage-rocker] King Kahn's older brother. That was the last time we were in the city. We have a lot of friends that live there, we have a close connection with a lot of people that live there too. The city is

really pretty and cool and the girls are babes and stuff.

So you were able to work out border problems?

Well, I was banned, but I think I got kicked out as many times as I got in. We had a proposed Quebec-only tour, to go to Chicoutimi and some of the out-of-the-way places. I'd really [have] like[d] to do that, but I think we were having immigration problems at the time. I'd love to see rural Quebec—it just seems so foreign to me.

That's kind of a theme for you guys though, playing in foreign countries like India. Do you do it for the adventure or more for novelty?

It's a mixture of both. It's definitely adventure and it's the best way to travel. You get to stay with locals and hang with families. The whole thing about India [before we got kicked off the tour], people would come up to me after the show and say they'd never really seen anything like that and they loved it. They've never seen anything besides U2 and Metallica or whatever. They were excited to see a band that couldn't play that well.

Do you think that, when you haven't grown up with a popular legacy of rock 'n' roll, the music means something different to you?

I really don't know what that would be like, but I do think that's why metal is so huge in developing countries—because it's really un-radio friendly and widely available everywhere. Like kids in India: all they listen to is metal. That was like their thing.

They have that thing with metal in the Middle East too.

Well, I think it's just so universally available. It's the only rebellious form of music that a lot of kids have access too. Maybe that and, like, hip-hop, as far as reaching far corners of the globe [goes].

What were the shows like in India? Did they feel stiff at first?

I remember the first show it felt really stiff. I remember everyone thought we were just four crappy white guys who couldn't play at all and we were, like, playing on this weird polo field in a battle of the bands with all these Indian metal bands and Indian metalhead kids. They kind of moshed while we were playing, but it was more like wrestling. Just, like, 200 guys kind of wrestling. Even during our slow



Touring really takes its toll on you, says Black Lips frontman Jared Swilley (far right). "It's fun when you're 17 to 20," he admits, "[but] the novelty starts to wear off and you feel really sick and you don't have any money."

"They were excited to see a band that couldn't play that well."

—Jared Swilley,
on audiences in India

songs they were all wrestling.

What about the rest of the tour, before you got kicked out?

The first few shows we were pretty tame. We didn't know what to expect and no one had ever heard of us; we were introduced as a band from America. They wouldn't let us drink at the shows and that was boring. So finally I got some whiskey and we snuck it in because they wouldn't let you drink or smoke at the shows. We were having fun doing these weird shows. We went wild at this college and that was the best crowd response we got. We thought we'd done a really good thing but I guess that pissed off the sponsors of the tour and we got kicked off.

How did you feel about your new album, *200 Million Thousand*?

I don't think any of us were

really that happy with it. I think it's alright, but we could have done a lot better.

Was it tough to record yourselves?

Oh man, Atlanta summers get well into the 90s (Fahrenheit) and it's super humid and this place we had was, like, set into this little swampland. The heat was so intense, I was in my underwear the whole time. We had a really bad mosquito problem because of the marsh all around. We all looked like we had leprosy because of all the bites.

I know you're working on a new record, but what's this stuff about recording inside of a human skull?

Oh yeah, well, it's basically just like a normal echo chamber. [Guitarist Cole Alexander] got it at, like, some voodoo shop and he

made an echo chamber out of it. I don't know if it adds anything but it looks pretty cool.

What about signing with Vice Records? Did that make things any easier? Or did the whole "hipster" thing bite you in the ass?

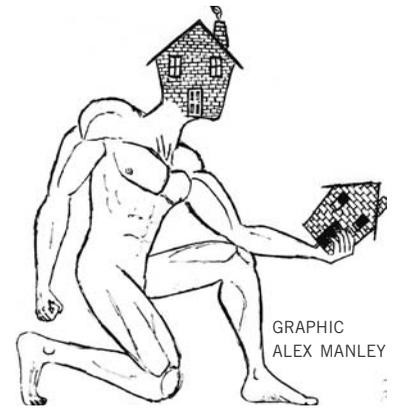
Oh yeah, we definitely got the hipster backlash from people. It's a dumb thing to base your opinion of somebody on their label. We were just doing our thing and they gave us a good opportunity. We definitely got people writing us off. I mean, the magazine is the magazine and the label is the label.

At that point [when we were signed] we had been homeless and starving in the bad old days. It was really a rough time. They helped us get some attention. We started to be able to play music for a living and tour for a living. I'm glad we toured, but after six years of that it wears on you. It's fun when you're 17 to 20, [but] the novelty starts to wear off and you feel really sick and you don't have any money.

The Black Lips play with Demon's Claws and Box Elders on March 26 at Studio Juste pour rire (2109 St-Laurent Blvd.). Tickets are \$18.



Artist Bernadette Lefebvre brings her work "The Kentucky Coffee Break," in which she shares a slice of bread with guests, to Play Between/Entre-Deux. "I seek to create an experience of communion with the material, an interaction between an individual and an aspect of the world we live in, a mutual adaptation, towards a better future," writes the artist.



A sense of Place

Work by sculpture students finds home

• STEPHANIE LA LEGGIA

Sixteen Concordia sculpture students show their work in *Place*, an exhibition opening at Eastern Bloc this week.

The artists, all from the same class, will each exhibit a piece originally created for a school assignment.

"We've been working towards this at least from the beginning of the semester," said Amélie Bissonnette, a studio art major showing in the exhibition. "We all had to do our final project around the theme of home, which is really a big theme, so everyone is going to put their own input in this piece."

With the encouragement of the teachers and their key student organizer Jonathan Lemieux, the sculpture class took on the responsibility of shopping for a venue and raising money with weekly bake sales while finishing their own artworks. The venue they chose for the show, Eastern Bloc, has a mandate to encourage up and coming artists.

"Organizing a show is a lot of work and the fact that all the artists were in a set location at a set time every week made it easier to discuss amongst ourselves and stay in touch," she said.

Students interpreted the theme using materials like metal, wood and recycled items, as well as mediums like video.

"[The artists] may also need more specific facilities depending on what materials compose the piece and they may have more questions to ask themselves in terms of the way the work should be presented," said Bissonnette, who is working mainly with Plexiglass.

"Something that I found in the recycling bin inspired me," she said.

The vernissage for *Place* is March 25 at 5 p.m. at Eastern Bloc (7240 Clark St., unit level 2). The show runs until March 28.

Hands in demand

A multimedia art show where guests can get touchy-feely

• R. BRIAN HASTIE

You've been misled.

You've been told that, in an art gallery, touching and prodding, questioning and trying to alter artworks is strictly off-limits. Keep your hands to yourself and don't say anything. Don't disturb the artist. Come in single-file, view and leave. If you must discuss, do it later, on your own time.

It doesn't need to be that way, and a group of Concordia students have banded together to challenge the dogma in a multimedia show called *Play Between/Entre-Deux*.

The show's curators pledge to break the fourth wall with a photo exhibit inviting viewers to snap their own pictures, totally inclusive jam sessions, performances and video pieces, as well as workshops, discussions and walks with some of the creators.

Jessica Watchorn, one of five co-curators of the 17-person bilingual show, said that *Play Between* is "all about engagement."

"I think that it was really important to break down the barriers in between artist and gallery, between gallery and viewer, and in between viewer and artist," Watchorn explained. "In a way we're asking a person to just not be a viewer, not to just come and look and walk away, but to come and engage with us and engage with the work. And at the same time we're also trying to actively engage the community."

Watchorn acknowledged it could be difficult to encourage viewers to become participants.

"Art is a very daunting thing," Watchorn said. "Even to just go and see a show at a museum, a space where no one's going to talk to you, is sort of a stressful experience for some people. I think

people are scared."

Watchorn noted that it's easier to participate in an art school context because viewers might be more likely to know the artists and have a marked understanding of the artistic process. "But there's always this question: in 'real life,' how will people actually be brave enough to participate? We're all conditioned to this gallery system where you can't touch anything, you can't stand too close, you can't talk too loud."

And it's all a moot point if guests really don't want to join in. "You can't force people to participate. You can't trick them," admitted Watchorn. "It's sometimes tempting, but you have to be respectful of their right to be viewers." She was optimistic that those attending the show could be persuaded, hoping "maybe people will go, see others participate and next time come back braver."

The show will not just be limit-

ed to the gallery itself. It will branch outwards, breaking free from physical constraints and bringing art front and centre outside the gallery walls. Apart from many workshops (including chocolate- and periscope-making), Watchorn herself will plaster walls with politically-minded posters and conduct a walking tour. Other artists involved in the show will stage performances around the neighbourhood, even in front of a nearby metro station, inviting people to come along. The novelty might be enough to force viewers out of their comfort zone because, as Watchorn pointed out, "how often do you see a presentation in front of a metro station?"

Play Between/Entre-Deux runs March 24 to 30 at Gallery Ethecae (2131 Ste-Catherine St. E.). See playbetween.wordpress.com for event schedules.



(Left to right) Susil Sharma, Cody Dyck and Jeff Boyd of Dirty Wedding. The band releases its first full-length at Club Lambi this week. PHOTO ROSE ATHENA

A Dirty Wedding and a funeral

Montreal band mourns the death of a hero, gives birth to a new LP

• MATTHEW FIORENTINO

Susil Sharma, bassist for the rock 'n' roll outfit Dirty Wedding, leans up against the wall outside his favourite St. Henri haunt, Blackjack, cigarette dangling from his lip, like a cross between James Dean and a young George Harrison.

Sharma and his bandmates, drummer Jeff Boyd and singer/guitarist Cody Dyck, a dharma bum-like figure who found his way from northern Saskatchewan to Sharma's couch, formed Dirty Wedding one year ago. This week sees the release of their debut self-titled LP as the three are already hard at work recording a follow-up titled *My Generation*.

What should've been a celebratory evening was deflated by the sad news of the death of Memphis-born musician Alex Chilton, of Box Tops and Big Star fame.

The Link: *I think we both know how this interview is going to start...*
Susil Sharma: I think I can

speak for all of us in the band... we'll never be able to repay the debt we owe Alex Chilton. His life and music were so important to us.

I went through two packs of cigarettes while listening to Big Star's #1 Record last night.

I made love to my girlfriend while listening to "Thirteen" on a loop. That song...

You used to play in a group called Famous Lovers. Where does Dirty Wedding come from?

I dropped out of school when I was 17. I spent a lot of time touring North America in various bands. That trip came to an end when we flipped our touring van in a ditch somewhere in northern Vermont. After that I went through a brief period of depression. I visited Nepal shortly after. I met with a yogi who told me my mantra—it's too personal, I can't tell you. But after that I knew I had to come back to Montreal.

There's a little bit of Tom Petty & the Heartbreakers in your songs.

That heartland sound—where does that come from?

You've got to realize that Jeff and I both come from small towns in New Brunswick where you got beat up for wearing tight pants and doing things differently. But we don't hold it against anyone.

I was watching a great BBC documentary the other week on the life of Ronnie Lane [of Small Faces, Faces & Slim Chance].

I'm glad you brought that up. We've been on a huge Ronnie Lane kick lately...

I hear you guys referencing Ronnie's later work—the communal, sing-along aspect.

We count everyone among us. I don't ever want anyone to run down what we're doing. I have no respect for anyone who degrades humanity. It's the most beautiful thing we'll ever be part of.

Montreal's music landscape has shifted a lot in the past two years. Weird punk, garage punk, heavy psych and power plop is the now

sound. But then there's Dirty Wedding who have taken a lone cue from the '71-era Stones.

Back to the basics. From Bo Diddley to The Replacements—

Yeah. That feel, that action that needs shaking.

Listen. There's no scene in Montreal right now. If your name isn't Demon's Claws then we don't care. We are the scene. Some bands are content to play small venues like Casa del Popolo for the rest of their careers. We want to open for Lady Gaga.

Lester Bangs was interviewed once on the notion of rock 'n' roll and superstardom being inextricably entwined.

I think that being a part of Lester Bangs is rock 'n' roll. And that's us.

Dirty Wedding plays with Blue Hawaii and Hayden Simpson at Club Lambi (4465 St-Laurent Blvd.) on March 25 at 9 p.m. The show will feature Super 8 film projections by Whitney Mallett. Tickets are \$5.

"There's no scene in Montreal right now. If your name isn't Demon's Claws then we don't care. We are the scene."

—Susil Sharma, Dirty Wedding bassist

Art for the downtrodden

Film looks at the benefits and the price of radical activism

• TOM LLEWELLIN

A white-tablecloth dinner with foie gras for the homeless. Hundreds of plastic bags speared on brittle tree branches. A burned-out SUV dumped in the heart of Canada's biggest oil town.

To Pierre Allard and Annie Roy, the subjects of Magnus Isacsson's documentary *Art in Action*, these are virtuous acts of terrorism.

"They want to do things directly, start a real social debate," said Isacsson, who directed the one-hour French-language film.

Through their organization Action terroriste socialement acceptable, Allard and Roy have made bold guerrilla statements about what they see as Montreal's most pressing social issues of the past 12 years. Their projects have included "État d'urgence," an annual tent city set up for the homeless, "Zone épineuse," where yellow tape was wrapped around all of Parc Avenue's elm trees as if they were about to be chopped down, and many others.

Isacsson said he grew to see the pair as pragmatic people with an ability to raise real awareness.

"They have a way for finding formulas to capture public attention," he said. "Their installations are very cinematic and have had a big public impact. The more creative you can make your protest or your activism, the more it's going to have an impact, even beyond your own borders. Even a couple of advertising agencies have been interested."

Isacsson and assistant director Simon Bujold took four years to produce *Art In Action*, taking advantage of the fact that they lived in the same neighbourhood



Action terroriste socialement acceptable dumped a burned-out SUV in the middle of Calgary.

as Roy and Allard.

"It was great because we could just come over with the cameras. And as time goes on you can see them getting a higher and higher profile," he said.

To Isacsson, the film isn't about tactics, or about idealism, but "l'intensité de l'engagement."

"It's about investing passionately in something you believe in," he continued, "but it's also about the consequences, about the costs of working so hard at something until you neglect the other parts of your life."

"They didn't really think about what it would mean to have a film crew around for several years," he admitted. "We ended up filming a lot of things where we wished we weren't there."

There are moments where frayed nerves come through on camera: Allard and Roy sometimes had fierce arguments, and the latter broke down during one event for the homeless.

Even though Allard and Roy deal in direct action at times, like when they hand out blankets to the homeless, ATSA's focus is different, he said.

"They do want to do something that's useful to people in a direct way, but really the main thrust of their work is to create a social debate, to try and attract people's attention to issues," Isacsson explained.

Critics who see ATSA as idealists trying to solve social issues through art are missing the point, Isacsson insisted. "It's nice that

they're having a holiday week for homeless people with all this food, but I think their most significant usefulness is on [...] calling attention to the media."

After the long production process, Isacsson said he looks back at the finished product with an admiration for ATSA's work.

"They're very fascinating characters; they're not paper cutouts," he said. "They're full of contradictions [...] always coming at things from different perspectives. They're very lively."

Art In Action, presented by Cinema Politica, screens in room H-110 of Concordia's Hall building (1455 de Maisonneuve Blvd. W.) on March 29 at 8 p.m. The filmmakers will be in attendance.

spins

Five Star Trailer Park
Dark as the North
Atlantic



Independent

Despite singer Nick Spence's somewhat-generic voice, Five Star Trailer Park's vibrance is undeniable. Originally from Toronto, this album brings us incredibly engaging soft rock accompanied by a walking bass line. Not too hardcore but not too boring either, the album is easy listening and will most probably make you smile. The lyrics, full of heartache and hope, are authentic and lack the cheesiness of most love songs. Five Star's rhythmic songs show an enthusiasm and desire to accept life's imperfections.

Five Star Trailer Park is an amazing surprise: unexpected and irresistible.

9/10

—Ioana Vanessa Bezman

Open Fields
You Gave Up
the Ghost EP



Independent

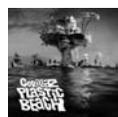
Open Fields have a velveteen sound, dreamy and soothing like a fuzzy blanket on a rainy day. The first track "Son, You Better Wake Up" is a standout. Blending bouncy pop with sweet choral arrangements, the tune is topped by the ethereal voice of lead singer Danielle Hamelle. Almost childlike, her choirboy vocals are the centrepiece of the group's sound. Unfortunately, her pixie charm starts to wear a little thin about

halfway through the album. The band's otherwise predictable indie rock isn't quite enticing enough to hold interest on its own. The band could still make for an enjoyable live show—they play Le Divan Orange (4234 St-Laurent Blvd.) on March 24.

7.5/10

—Emily Brass

Gorillaz
Plastic Beach



Virgin

One of the world's most famous virtual bands invites you to a virtual world of cultural pirates and environmental disaster. Still the sardonic indie-rap fusion you've come to expect of Gorillaz, *Plastic Beach* departs from the funk flavour of *Demon Days* to stand alone musically

as well as conceptually.

The band's third LP hearkens back to the '70s. It picks up around track six with "Superfast Jelly Fish," a rap ditty that packs a reggae rhythm. "Empire Ants" recapitulates the island feel, blooming into a delectable disco groove that gives way to the glam rock sound of "Glitter Freeze." The lazy ragtime of "Some Kind of Nature" features Lou Reed and recalls (appropriately) the early works of The Velvet Underground and Hunky Dory-era David Bowie.

This is a concept album in the great Bowie tradition. His likeness even appears in the liner notes and his influence haunts Damon Albarn's dreamy vocals on the slower, nostalgic tracks like "On Melancholy Hill."

8/10

—Heather Anderson

The DOWN-LOW

Event listings March 23-29

MUSIC

CJLO's Battle of the Bands
Concordia musicians including Interracial Love Triangle and Hey Predator! duel for studio time on a university stage.

Wednesday, March 24 at 6:30 p.m.
F.C. Smith Auditorium (Loyola Campus)
7141 Sherbrooke St. W.
Tickets: \$2

Postcards

with Grimes, Human Athlete, DJ Tsitso and DJ Karn

Friday, March 26 at 10 p.m.
Jupiter Room
3874 St-Laurent Blvd.

LECTURE

Naim Kattan discusses his novel *Farewell, Babylon* with Prof. Norman Cornett.

Saturday, March 27 at 1 p.m.

Galerie Samuel Lallouç
1434 Sherbrooke St. W.
Tickets: \$20 for students

COMEDY

Comedy auditions for inter-university competition Montreal's Hilarious. Come with four to six minutes of original material.

Monday, March 29 and Tuesday, March 30, from 10 a.m. to 12 p.m.

Reggie's (in the Hall building, mezzanine level)
1455 de Maisonneuve Blvd. W.

VISUAL ART

Still River Still Leaving

Ink drawings and paintings by Nadia Moss

Until April 25
PUSH Gallery
372 Ste-Catherine St., suite 425 (Belgo building)

Srebrenica: L'absence

Photojournalist Roger Lemoine's photos from the Balkans following the 1995 Srebrenica massacre of Bosniak men and boys, also known as the Srebrenica Genocide.

Until April 18
Maison de la culture Frontenac
2550 Ontario St. E.

THEATRE

Pygmalion

Produced by the Concordia Liberal Arts College

March 26 to 28 at 8 p.m.
Concordia's JMSB building (seventh floor, room MB 425)

1450 Guy St.
Tickets: \$7 general admission, \$5 for students.

— compiled by
Madeline Coleman

Born again baseball

Stingers find new life inside Dome



Howard Schwartz and company are looking forward to an influx of talent this season. PHOTO RILEY SPARKS

• STEVEN MYERS

Imagine for a moment it's August 2010: opening day in Trudeau Park, Côte St-Luc. The Concordia Stingers are ready to defend their Canadian baseball crown. The bleachers are filled with fans waving black and burgundy Stinger banners. Montreal baseball fever is alive and well.

The Stingers are like the New York Yankees in the most important way: they're the standard of excellence every other team aspires to be.

Rewind to the present day. The baseball climate in Montreal has never been brighter. Concordia's new Stinger Dome provides athletes with a training facility all year long.

"We have something significant to offer kids now," said manager Howard Schwartz. "Not many teams at any level can offer that." Though Schwartz lost some key players from last year's championship team, he seems very hopeful about a new recruiting class.

"We are looking at a player from B.C., a couple kids from Toronto," he started. "In addition, local kids from John Abbott and Vanier colleges have been practicing with us this winter."

Big-league baseball dreamers born in Canada typically pack their bags and head south. They enroll in two-year junior colleges to attract the attention of D-1 schools. According to Schwartz, Canada is

the have-not baseball nation compared to the United States, but he is quick to sing his players' praise.

"During my baseball vacations to Vancouver and Winnipeg, I've seen low-level professional teams that I believe [the Stingers] could compete with," he said. "We have a deep and talented coaching staff and some players who could be bona fide pros."

Schwartz is a life-long baseball fan who served as the Montreal Expos' team psychologist. He accepts the challenges Canadian baseball players face, but focuses instead on the advantages.

"We can't compete with what America has to offer in baseball," he continued. "It's not only the better weather. The training and general interest is overwhelming there. But we now have a better training facility than anywhere in Canada."

Though Montrealers suffer through one long, miserable winter after another, by mid-March they shed their animal skins and flock to the streets while baseball players head off to the diamonds.

There is talent and passion here in Quebec and all of Canada.

Over the years, 27 Quebec-born players have reached the major leagues. Who can forget 2004? Russell Martin flashing hand signals to his pitcher, fellow Quebecer Eric Gagné. The Dodger duo were the first ever Quebec battery mate (pitcher and catcher) to appear in a game together.

There were 122 Canadians playing in affiliated minor league systems during the 2009 season, plus 42 in independent ball and nine in foreign leagues.

The cream of the crop may be Gatineau's Philippe Aumont, the Seattle Mariners 11th overall pick in the 2007 draft and first Quebec-born player to be a first-round selection. In the offseason, the six-foot-seven right-handed pitcher was traded to Philadelphia where he hopes to join Roy Halladay in the Phillies starting rotation.

Both Martin and Gagne played in the Quebec Elite League on the same fields where past Stinger standouts spent their summers in preparation for the university season.

Thanks to the new Dome, though, the scales may tilt in favour of Montreal as a place to train and develop ballplayers instead of American snowbird destinations like Florida and Texas. Baseball season at Concordia, is now a 12-months long.

To practice with the Stingers, contact Howard Schwartz at baseball@alcor.concordia.ca. Practices take place every Saturday from 12 to 3 p.m. inside the Stinger Dome.

In the coming weeks, summer rosters will be finalized and fans can follow the Stingers' progress right up until opening day. For all the latest news, visit lbeq.com or lbseq.com



Flip yo' bike part 2

• TRISTAN LAPOINTE

It's finally that time of year. The time when everybody who left their bike out over the winter, sold it to pay for hydro or made a resolution to never spend another summer in the metro is looking for a new ride. And as new riders come out of hibernation, so too do the bike flippers, people who sell used bikes for profit.

Last week we discussed the emotional hurdles associated with buying a bike off Craigslist. This week it's all about how to sell them, make money and not be a wiener while you do it. In order of importance:

How not to seem like a shady vampire

Don't steal bikes. No fuckin' way. Even if you don't mind the idea (you dink), stolen bikes have little value because you can't advertise their sale without getting busted. Bikes from the trash are okay, and it's also fine to strip parts from a bike that got hit by a plow.

-Keep records! Even if you're the worst mechanic in the world at least you can prove you didn't steal the damn things. Handwritten receipts and serial numbers will do.

-Don't be secretive. Telling a buyer you want to meet on a street corner in the Plateau is weird; drug dealers don't even do that. Meet at your house/workspace.

-Try not to be stoned or drunk when people come to your house. Most people don't mind, but five minutes before a buyer arrives is a bad time to realize your roommate has just erected a record-setting gravity bong.

How to actually fix bikes

Buy the tools you need. It might cut into your profits but you'll find having the right-sized wrench is better than relying on a hammer and chisel to smash parts off of frames. Park Tools makes just about anything you could possibly want.

Replace broken parts. Obviously, but the hard part

of this is knowing how to identify if something is in fact broken. If you can't tell, ask a real mechanic, or Google it.

Use the Internet. BikeForums.net and Sheldon Brown's website are a wealth of information. Between the two, there are few problems you can't at least get decent advice on, if not solve outright.

-Ask for help from a pro. Sometimes you'll have to pay for it, but knowing exactly how to do something is an asset that's worth more than the 10 bucks you might pay a shop to do the work.

-Keep parts on hand. Even if your tool selection is based largely on the dollar store, a large and well-organized stock of parts can help you save any bike build. Save everything, every nut, bolt and washer. You WILL eventually miss something if you throw it away.

Buy low, sell high

Buy low. The cheaper you can get bikes the better. When you start flipping, your bikes will probably be crappy. Free machines from the trash, junks from garage sales or old stuff from scrap metal dealers. It'll take a bit of money and work to get them running well so try to pay as little as possible.

-Build contacts. The best way to get stuff is to have other people find bikes for you. There are a lot of folks who make their living picking over estate sales, junk piles and antique collections. Check with them.

-Use Craigslist and Kijiji. It's pretty much a no-brainer. The Gazette classifieds ain't gonna get you anywhere.

-Understand what it's worth. If you know your market and what it's generally willing to pay for a given type of bike, this is where the real profit is. If you have a good feel for value you can do fewer sales and make more money. It can also help keep you from looking like an idiot with massively inflated prices.

When fair trade runs amok

Keep metro car production local

• TAYLOR C. NOAKES

So you walk into a restaurant and you have lobster on your mind. It's springtime and your stomach yearns for a taste of summer. Seated, you patiently wait for the menus, only to discover this particular restaurant is no longer serving lobster.

Disappointed, and looking to satisfy your craving, you decide to go to another restaurant and politely excuse yourself. On your way out, the Maitre D hands you a neatly folded document; because you participate in a democratic capitalist system, the restaurant has decided to sue you for not being open to their products. Moreover, you are compelled to rectify the situation before satisfying your hunger, and you are accused of preferential purchasing.

This situation is absurd to the point of being laughable, something akin to a Monty Python sketch. Except that it is happening right now, and the Société de transport de Montréal finds itself trying to determine whether an already behind-schedule project to replace the city's metro cars will have to start all over from square one—opening the con-

tract to a new set of bidders.

First, our metro cars are old, but they were built to last. A well-maintained metro car operating in enclosed tunnels will likely last considerably longer than an automobile, which is subject to difficult road conditions and a temperamental climate. Our metro may slow down from time to time, but we have an exceptionally safe and efficient system, one which has been studied and replicated the world over.

In addition, we are still using the system as it was originally conceived, that is, incorporating the green technologies of the Expo era.

Design details from 1966 survive to this very day, and have been chiefly responsible for a mass transit system that leaves a minute ecological footprint.

For one, the entire system is powered by local hydroelectricity. Two, the metro doesn't need artificial climate control. Friction from the trains provides heat in the winter, groundwater trickling into station and tunnel walls provides cooling drafts in summer and electric vents and fans circulate air. It may not be perfect—the suction coming into Mont-Royal can blow someone



ZhuZhou Electric Locomotive Company of China filed a contestation with the government-level equivalent of the Better Business Bureau, specifying in the complaint that the initial bidding process was not open to ZELC due to the metro's design limitations. GRAPHIC JULIA WOLFE

over, the water coming into Guy-Concordia has left mildew stalactites and rust-coloured stains—but it works, and with time, as the system evolves and the number of passengers increase, revenue will not only provide for expansion but improvements as well.

New cars for the old ceremony

That said, our 40-year-old metro cars will need to be replaced soon, as the cost of maintenance is already high. If the city is planning to offer extended hours of service and additional stations, it will need a new and very large fleet of vehicles. As ridership has increased dramatically over the last few years, it has become clear to the STM and the provincial government that new cars are a necessity, and it may be

better to have new vehicles before new stations.

Back in 2004 it was announced that local heavyweight Bombardier would be awarded a contract for almost 400 new metro cars, all to be built locally. Then the French company Alstom, which has a large local presence and a major production centre in Pointe-St-Charles, filed a complaint. Alstom complained that the Charest government had demonstrated preferential treatment to Bombardier and that they could do a better job for less.

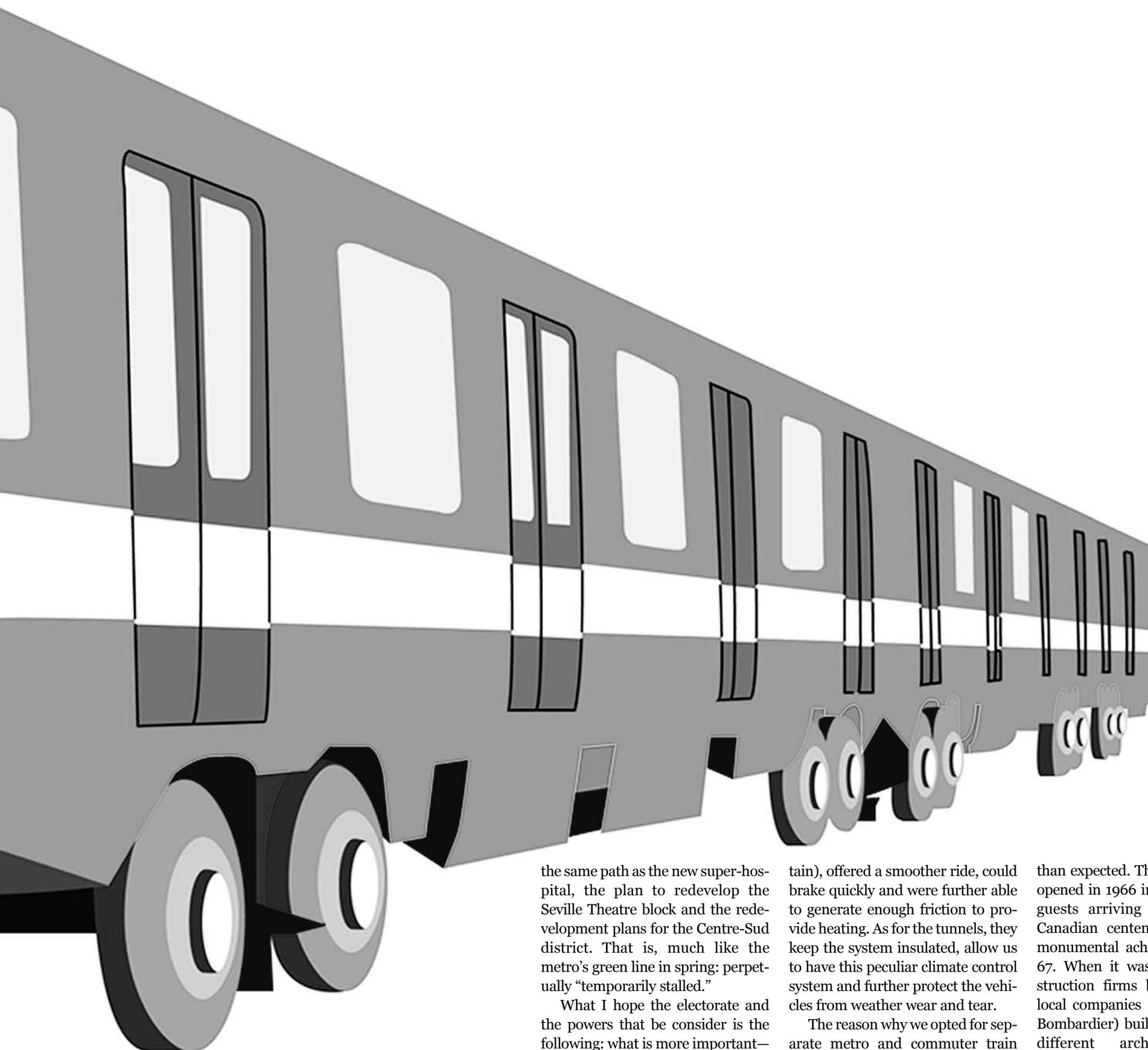
Seeking to find a comfortable and mutually beneficial arrangement, the premier announced with some fanfare in 2006 that Alstom and Bombardier would form a consortium and share in design and production. Furthermore, they would nearly double the total num-

ber of cars to be built to 765, giving a strong indication that the metro would expand significantly.

The project was moving ahead in the design phase late last year when a local resident, Glen Fisher, acting on behalf of the ZhuZhou Electric Locomotive Company of China, filed a contestation with the government-level equivalent of the Better Business Bureau, specifying in the complaint that the initial bidding process was not open to ZELC due to the metro's design limitations.

Come again?

If this last sentence didn't make much sense to you, you're not alone. The STM was left scratching their heads, too. Even more odd was the fact that ZELC and their local sales-agent and promoter had hired renowned local civil rights attorney Julius Grey to defend them.



When pressed for an explanation, Fisher indicated the initial contract was for rubber-tired metro cars, that ZELC could only produce steel-wheel metro cars and that the design of the Montreal metro was limiting potential bidders to only those who had experience building such vehicles, like Alstom and Bombardier.

Fisher then added that renovating the entire metro system to accommodate steel wheels could be done on the cheap and without disrupting service in any noticeable way for the year or so it would take to replace over 71 kilometres of track.

He finished by indicating that by using steel wheels, the metro could be expanded outdoors, which would make expansion of the system less expensive as tunnels would not have

to be built. Montreal is the only metro system in the world that uses rubber wheels exclusively; others use a combination of rubber and steel.

Whither Zhuzhou

At the time this article was written, the provincial government and the STM have rejected ZELC's bid, and they've countered by indicating they would take the matter to the courts. Crawling through the open wound, a Spanish company has thrown their model into the ring, despite the Alstom-Bombardier consortium's indication that they are ready to begin construction immediately.

The province and the STM have not yet indicated what they are planning to do, and the project to replace the metro cars seems headed down

the same path as the new super-hospital, the plan to redevelop the Seville Theatre block and the redevelopment plans for the Centre-Sud district. That is, much like the metro's green line in spring: perpetually "temporarily stalled."

What I hope the electorate and the powers that be consider is the following: what is more important—showcasing local industrial achievements and know-how, or providing short-term cost-savings? ZELC has argued that they can do the job for considerably less than the Alstom-Bombardier consortium, and that their product will be better suited to our needs.

I find this last point a total stretch. Aside from the unknown costs of replacing the entire track and signalling systems, the specific points that kept ZELC out of the bidding process initially—rubber tires and tunnels—is exactly what makes our metro so unique and effective. Steel wheels pose numerous problems, such as requiring considerable braking distance, being unable to climb steep inclines and offering a rougher and louder ride.

Rubber tires were chosen specifically because they were better at climbing steep grades (remember, we're living on the sides of a moun-

tain), offered a smoother ride, could brake quickly and were further able to generate enough friction to provide heating. As for the tunnels, they keep the system insulated, allow us to have this peculiar climate control system and further protect the vehicles from weather wear and tear.

The reason why we opted for separate metro and commuter train systems was because different transportation modes are better suited to different environments and operational requirements. It's why a decent public transit system has to offer multiple levels of transit, often overlapping, using different kinds of vehicles on different schedules for different purposes.

Can you imagine if, for efficiency's sake, we got rid of the metro and commuter trains and relied uniquely on a massive fleet of buses? It wouldn't work, and the city is moving in the direction of increasing the myriad types of vehicles; trams, articulated buses and light rail are all being either considered or implemented. And so, when you have multiplicity and integration, streamlining is anathema to success.

Our system was well-built and well-conceived initially and works well to this day, perhaps even better

than expected. The Montreal metro opened in 1966 in time to welcome guests arriving to celebrate the Canadian centennial and see the monumental achievement of Expo 67. When it was built, local construction firms built the tunnels, local companies (later acquired by Bombardier) built the vehicles and different architectural firms designed each station independently, providing unique esthetic and functional components and a grand celebration of local design and culture.

Because the whole point of an exposition is to show off your technological achievements as well as your city and country's industrial and artistic capabilities, it would have been illogical to use a foreign company to build the original metro cars. Why should it be any different today?

The metro is more than just a means to move people from point A to B. It is a constant reminder of our socialist perspective, our collaborative community spirit and our rich history and culture. It is a grand statement to the glory of collective improvement and a reminder that all citizens share a fundamental, reciprocal relationship with one-another.

With a decision looming on whether to remain a member of Canada's largest student lobby group, which way should you vote?



Don't cut the cord with Canada's students

• AUDREY PEEK

Audrey Peek is a former president of Concordia's Arts and Science Federation of Associations, and is currently heading the Yes to the CFS campaign at Concordia.

Twenty-eight years ago, university and college students across the country made a choice: to work together and speak with one voice in favour of a higher quality, more equitable and more affordable system of post-secondary education in Canada. They did so by uniting under a single banner: the Canadian Federation of Students. The undergraduate students of Concordia University have been members of that alliance for over a decade.

Since that time the CFS has won many important victories for students at Concordia and across Canada. Here are just a few recent examples:

—In 2005, the CFS successfully lobbied the federal government to reinvest a whopping \$1.5 billion with the aim of increasing the affordability of post-secondary education.

—In 2007, the CFS won a fur-

ther \$800 million reinvestment from the federal government to increase transfer payments to the provinces for post-secondary education.

—Again in 2007, international students won the right to work off-campus thanks to the CFS holding the only student seat on the federal Advisory Committee on International Student Issues.

—Most importantly in 2008, after years of drawing attention to ballooning student debt, the government responded to the CFS's calls for the first national system of grants. The Canada Student Grants Program is valued at \$430 million and will support 245,000 Canadian students per year.

Although some detractors have argued that the Quebec government does not participate in this new program, they ignore the \$35 million of federal funding that is being injected into Quebec's loans and bursaries program.

The CFS is recognized as the voice of students in Canada by countless partners and allies in the labour and social justice movements who look to work with students. Should Concordia students stop being part of the CFS, they will not only lose their con-

nection to hundreds of thousands of students, but also to the many organizations that view the CFS as one of their strongest allies.

As numerous as the CFS's successes are, the organization does have opponents who claim that the CFS doesn't represent them and must be destroyed. Among those detractors is the right-leaning leadership of the Concordia Student Union.

Like most Conservatives, these individuals don't like to admit their actual politics and instead take a lesson from Stephen Harper's playbook by attacking the credibility of the organization and its representatives.

Around the country, anti-CFS activists have pretended to represent a wide range of political values and beliefs. It's probably true that they do not all agree, but make no mistake: the attack against the Canadian Federation of Students is organized, well-funded and comes from the Conservative party. In Ontario, the Conservative Campus Association has launched an official campaign against the CFS.

While troubling, this campaign pales in comparison to the training workshops that sitting

Conservative members of Parliament were caught giving youth on how to establish fake campus clubs to gain funding for back-door campaigns to kick Public Interest Research Groups (PIRGs) and the CFS off campus.

Regrettably, some progressive students, including the leadership of the NO committee here at Concordia, have joined forces with the Conservatives, but there can be no doubt that the broad push to discontinue membership in the CFS comes from the Conservative Party of Canada.

Concordia's vote on continued membership in the CFS will have lasting impact on the student movement across Canada. Certainly there are legitimate criticisms of the CFS—like all organizations, it is imperfect. Yet, in the words of Jim Turk, the executive director of the Canadian Association of University Teachers, "The CFS has been the most effective and articulate voice for students in Canada in many years."

Post-secondary education in Canada faces an uncertain future. For now, federal Conservatives have tempered their actions but we should make no mistake, their

goal is to disassemble Canada's public post-secondary education system. Here in Québec, our premier wants to see tuition fees skyrocket to the levels that students pay in the rest of Canada, or higher.

Some detractors of the CFS have argued that Concordia students don't need federal representation because education is in the provincial jurisdiction and we don't need to have our voices heard by the federal government. This argument may sound rational but it ignores the reality that the federal government is the largest source of funding for universities and colleges in Canada.

For the first time in 12 years, Concordia undergraduates are once again faced with a choice: work with over 500,000 students across Canada to protect the quality and accessibility of our public universities and colleges or let a small group of clandestine conservative activists give government free reign to take away our right to an affordable, high-quality university education. This Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday, vote to work with students across Canada.

Vote Yes to the CFS.



CFS 'a parasite on the student movement'

• BEISAN ZUBI

Beisan Zubi is the VP Internal of the Political Science Students' Association and is currently a member of the No to the CFS campaign at Concordia.

Last year, a group of us set out to do what countless before had tried and failed: we tried to reform the Canadian Federation of Students, to work from the inside to enact democratic change, to end interference in local elections, to end corruption and shady deals with Greenshield (the only insurance contracts the CFS peddles), to change the bylaw that allows executives to collect undeclared bonus wages, to make its structure accountable to the students it represents, to reverse the image they have as a parasite on the student movement and to make their campaigns actually work for their members.

On the way, we discovered a network of students across the country with every political inclination imaginable that saw the CFS for what it was: a bloated corporate bureaucracy that accomplishes nothing but justify its own existence. Together, we

fought to challenge the status quo, and were inspired by the support of students across the country in the fight against the CFS. We were the true student movement: fighters, activists, reformers, all rejecting this failed institution with a vision of better days ahead.

CFS semi-annual general meeting

Sadly, it was a hopeless fight. At the CFS meeting in November, we joined hands with students across Canada who had had enough. We brought dozens of reforms to the table, including the creation of a conflict of interest policy, a judicial board, the deconsolidation of financial statements, reinvigorating campaigns that have stagnated for decades.

In the end, the assembly was stacked and every reform failed.

Knowing we couldn't win, some ran for positions as a final opportunity to express our vision. Concordia Student Union President Amine Dabchy was one of those, giving a speech designed to inspire change in the CFS.

But change never came. The CFS has since stayed its course:

rather than being a catalyst of the grassroots, it stagnates it, all the while oppressing anyone that challenges its self-anointed monopoly on the student movement in Canada.

If the purpose of the CFS is to lobby the government for students, they have failed. Since the CFS's inception, tuition has risen astronomically in every province and territory. It shouldn't surprise us that they still release the same "student action plan" year after year. CFS representatives have even been caught lying while testifying at parliamentary committees.

Meanwhile, over 20 schools have tried to leave the CFS over the past five years. And they wonder why the government doesn't take them seriously?

On the flip side, they cannot mobilize students. At the CFS's "National Day of Action" in November, barely 1,000 students in only two provinces (Ontario and Manitoba) demonstrated. And so it is that many students don't take them seriously either.

When we talk about the failure of the organization to fulfil its mandate, CFS proponents

inevitably bring up their services. However, CFS Services are overpriced, and in many cases actually encourage students to incur debt. Notably, every service they offer (except for the ISIC card) can be obtained for the same fee whether or not you are a member of the CFS.

Do we need a bureaucracy to be united?

The counter-commentary will read that the connection the CSU has with thousands of students across Canada is essential. But we need not have a corrupt, undemocratic, parasitic bureaucracy to call ourselves united.

Personally, my connection with Canadian students is based on the common bond we have of being students, the shared experience of going to school and scraping through it. We don't need an organization like the CFS to carry that out. Indeed, I feel no less connected with a student at a non-CFS school than I do with a student at a CFS school.

Our bond as students does not come from a detached, corporate bureaucracy, but from ourselves.

13

official petitions to defederate from the CFS have been circulated in Canada

5,357

or 16.9 per cent of Concordia students have signed a petition to leave the CFS

\$1 M

is the approximate amount the CFS claims the CSU owes them

\$0.41

per credit is paid to the CFS at Concordia, adding up to \$200,000 a year

 Letters@thelinknewspaper.ca

Courageous reporting

Laura Beeston and Christopher Curtis exhibited tremendous courage to bring reports out on the demonstration against police brutality (Vol. 30, Iss. 26, March 16). One can only hope that one day someone in the Montreal police force or some member of the National Assembly will say "enough is enough" and start the process of ending the very poor reputation of the Montreal police force by letting people demonstrate without police presence and, lo and behold, show they are not guilty of brutality and the demonstrations will gradually cease to have any significance.

One day we will use the finest example the world has to offer in terms of policing and detective work, that of the London Metropolitan Police Force and Scotland Yard.

—David Sommer Rovins,
Independent Student

Our duty to vote

The Concordia Student Union elections are once again upon us. It is that time of year where we must look upon ourselves to go out and vote for the candidates we feel will best represent us in the coming year.

Students should vote considering we financially contribute to the union in order for them to represent our interests. I'm not going to lie, I find it extremely disappointing this year that only one real slate is campaigning this election season, yet I see something positive from this.

I am really enthusiastic that my fellow friend, Prince Ralph Osei, is running for CSU president. I met Prince in my second year while we were frosh leaders for the Arts and Science Federation of Associations' orientation week. I can say that out of my four years at Concordia, one person that has stood out from the rest was Prince.

The reason for this is because, as anyone who has met him can firmly say, he is one of the most happy, open, and sincere people you'll ever meet. For the people that know and love Prince, he is a very special person. Whenever you are around someone like him, you can't help but to laugh, joke around, and be in a good mood, he just has that affect on you.

For the first two years I knew Prince, I got to know him on a personal level, but it wasn't until my third year I saw a totally other side of him, the political leader.

I remember the first time I went to CSU Council and saw Prince's fierceness for representing students' interests. I sat there in complete shock, watching a friend who I knew only to make me laugh and always have a good time was standing in Council with complete passion and seriousness in dealing with issues that matter to Concordia students.

From then on I've seen him grow into a political leader and that is why I completely support him running for CSU president, as I know that he is a man of his word and truly believes in doing what is right for students. Based on Prince's judgment, I truly believe he set up a complete team of VPs that will work together to improve the CSU. I am highly recommending to the Concordia student body to vote for Prince Ralph and his Fusion team.

—Amir Sheth,
ASFA VP Social

Zubi unfairly smeared

I am writing to respond to the accusations and misrepresentation that certain people made last week in *The Link's* letters section. I find it disgusting that people would go as low as twisting the truth to try and sway sympathy for their cause.

Personal attacks, which amount to defamation on the part of certain individuals, about Beisan Zubi are ridiculous. If these individuals at the Arts and Science Federation of Associations Council listened to the proceedings, they would know that this was a Council-wide concern.

The VP Finance presented concerns regarding an affiliation's spending. This is something that is only reported after the election and outside the contestation period. To bring this up is completely within the laws.

As discussion grew about this, many councillors were curious about the impact of the allegations. There was a discussion period about this where Anna Goldfinch was able to speak on the matter.

However, the question period turned ugly when Carolyn Wilson began attacking the integrity of Council. It was a shame; all year Council has been a fair and harmonious place for discussion and resolution. One student changed that. It disappoints me to see this, as Council was only following procedures on our rules and was a shame people who have not read them have started calling us undemocratic.

The process that occurred was very transparent. Council remained in open session, open to all reporters and any student who wanted to speak or just listen. Never in the session did Beisan motion for a disqualification. She did indeed motion for this financial problem to be dealt with by ASFA's independent body, the Judicial Committee. The motion was seconded and we proceeded for a discussion about this where again the discussion turned into complete and utter disrespect for all councillors.

After the long and heated discussion, which saw many points of personal privilege for being out of line and accusatory, a vote was called by the Chair. Four separate councillors suggested this go to secret ballot because of heated words and for fear that some councillors were feeling. This process was very democratic and secret ballot was only utilized to protect us from assault and defamation, as seen in the letters last week.

It is too bad the people elected to represented you not only do not know the laws to which they were elected to protect, but instead act worse than spoiled children.

—Elliot Kmec,
ASFA councillor

Haig's facts get failing grade

The Link has printed Andrew Haig's article (Opinions, Vol.30, Iss.26, March 16) calling for a no vote on the Frigo Vert fee levy question without looking into the numbers he so generously peppered it with.

I really wish we were swimming in money. Unfortunately, having \$91,000 in liquid assets in May 2009 does not mean having cash. I'll explain; it is used for cash flow every year, as we must wait five months for the bulk of our student funds to be available, with a small part going to our cash register for the store and

petty cash. As for the rest of our assets, well, I am sorry to disappoint you but it's not like our actual inventory or our old fridges could make much income in case things go bad.

Moreover, liabilities and expenses are not the same thing. Last year, our total operating expenses came to \$253,691,88. Our wages and salaries went up by \$600 since last year, despite the increased demand on our service. A far cry from \$15,000 Mr. Haig so enthusiastically claims.

As far as board costs and stuff applications go, we are legally required to give our volunteer student board between \$1,000 and \$1,800 every year for our Annual General Meeting and other legally required expenses.

Last year and the year before, we spent \$0 on staff appreciation. The only money filed in that category were first aid and kitchen supplies which amounted to \$750, also used by students and volunteers. Giving money to "like-minded organizations" means giving food to campus and community groups for events.

I would like to finish by saying that if some reporters need to use the oldest tricks in the dirty book to support their argument, then who needs to argue?

—Alex Lee,
Frigo Vert Yes Committee

Dabchy's CFS past

I am tired of being forced to put up with our Concordia Student Union president's ego every time I walk onto my campus. It's bad enough that I have to stare at his unflattering picture for Amine & Co. coffee hours once a month, but now he is forcing an undemocratic referendum to drag us out of the organization that represents students to the federal government, the Canadian Federation of Students.

I recently learned that our President Amine Dabchy, after bashing the Canadian Federation of Students all fall, actually ran for the CFS executive in November. Which is it, Amine, do you like the CFS or don't you? My question is whether this referendum is about the quality of the CFS or about Amine's bruised ego at not getting elected to an important national lobby group.

I guess students across Canada won't get to share in the joy of seeing Amine's pretty face posted up all over their campuses too!

—Carolyn Wilson,
Études françaises & Women's Studies

Support for Hotchkiss

I am writing in support of the candidacy of Melanie Hotchkiss for the position of arts and sciences councillor.

I got to know Melanie during the organization of the accreditation drive at Dawson College. This drive, which represents—to my knowledge—the toughest and most conflict-filled drive I had the chance to witness, made me discover a young woman who, with little experience and a very tough mandate, did an exemplary performance.

Today as she joins university ranks many years later and with experience in both the student movement and the union world, I have no doubt that she will be an asset to the student council and to her fellow constituents. I do encourage all students to vote and have a nice thought for Melanie while doing so.

—Patrice Blais,
CSU president 2001-2002



BY DIEGO PELAEZ GAETZ & GRAPHIC VIVIEN LEUNG

A message from Prince Ralph

As Concordia goes to the polls this week, I am writing to urge every student to vote in the Concordia Student Union general election and make your voice heard. It is your student union and your money at stake, and as a good shareholder, you should help make the right decisions for this union.

It has been a great two-week exercise as Fusion went to almost 80 per cent of all undergraduate classes to engage and share our ideas with the student population. We shared our thoughts with students about getting out of the Canadian Federation of Students, expansion of the Loyola luncheon, a bottle-free campus, fighting tuition increase and the greening of Mackay. Questions have been asked and in all cases we have done our best to provide honest answers.

We are not promising students the moon, but making feasible promises. We do not assume to know the solutions to all problems, but

rather we acknowledge that we will need help from our fellow students to get things done.

This year, I have faithfully and diligently served as VP Services and Loyola to all students. We have worked to take the CSU to greater heights than ever seen before. We created an image of our union where professionalism and respect have become the order of the day, all in the aim of representing our diverse student body and improving the quality of our education.

It is on this note that I am asking students to entrust the union to my team and me for another year. We will continue the trend of open doors and transparency, grassroots participation and a vibrant union. We will work with groups that have our students' interests at heart and vehemently oppose and dissociate from those that want to take our students for a ride, one such culprit being the CFS.

Please be informed by visiting our websites and I am more than convinced you will vote Fusion. Thank you for voting.

—Prince Ralph Osei,
Fusion candidate for CSU president

 Letters@thelinknewspaper.ca

Former CEO speaks out

I was hired in December to run the Arts and Science Federation of Associations' elections. Entering into the position, I had great hopes of learning more legal and management skills and, yes, helping my fellow students.

But as the election went on, I learned how despicable those who run, and seek to run this school's student politics, are.

Now, that isn't to say they are all bad; there certainly are some great people at ASFA and, to a lesser extent, the Concordia Student Union. But damn! I cannot believe what many students do. Call me small town-minded (I'm from Lantzville, B.C.) or old-fashioned, but I have always believed we should try to conduct our lives in a considerate and empathetic manner towards others.

Such is not the case in Concordia politics. I've seen cheating, manipulation, lies, lies and more lies, abuses of power, back-stabbing, corruption and harassment from people now running with Fusion.

Why does this keep happening?

It's because most of us see our time at Concordia as transitory. We need to stop. We need to say no to the lying, the corruption, the cheating and, most recently, the clout used to get a duly elected political rival disqualified in the ASFA elections. Also, I wonder if anyone running with Fusion knows who this artificial Facebook character Mo Zubeiri is?

I came into ASFA politics because I wanted to make things better, but all I have seen is hatred, a lack of human decency and hidden agendas. I never wanted to take up a side, I only wanted to make things better, but now it seems the best way to do this is to help a side. I don't want to tell you who to vote for in the CSU elections, but as someone who always wanted to be a neutral third party, I have this to say: if you want your vote to make Concordia's politics decent again—a CSU that is made up of real students and not these little Nixons—please take a look at Community. The CSU isn't a real government, it's a student government. It's about time we start acting like it and the upcoming election is a good start.

—Colby Briggs,
Former CEO, ASFA elections

Ignoring the benefits of the CFS

It has come to my attention that the Concordia student body owes a considerable amount of money to its national student lobby group, the Canadian Federation of Students.

Concordians have enjoyed the countless benefits of membership in the CFS since 1998. The money owed has been explained a number of times and is well-documented. Embarrassingly, albeit predictably, CSU President Amine Dabchy is responding like a

four-year-old, putting his fingers in his ears and calling the CFS "mean." Basically, Mr. Dabchy has responded, "We will not pay what we owe you, because it is a lot and we don't want to."

I realize this debt puts a wrench in Mr. Dabchy's plans to legally hold a referendum regarding the CSU's membership to CFS, which he has decided to proceed with anyway, but can one attempt to leave an organization without settling its finances?

No. At least not in accordance with the CFS's bylaws, which students voted to adhere to when they chose to become members.

This begs the question: who is Mr. Dabchy really representing? Certainly not the students' interests. Indeed, Mr. Dabchy's misleading and illegal referendum is simply driving the CSU into a lawsuit, increasing the debt owed and adding lawyer's fees to boot. All because Mr. Dabchy believes the CFS is "mean."

Did I mention he is running for Board of Governors this year?

I won't even go into the amount of money that is being wasted on the colourful and content-less posters Mr. Dabchy has created to manipulate students into supporting his personal campaign against CFS.

Indeed, it is nothing less than a personal campaign. Why else would he seek to have students blindly disaffiliate from the largest national student lobby group in Canada, one that has served the interest of all students in a non-partisan fashion for over 12 years?

In Mr. Dabchy's failure to present the facts or identify ways in which he seeks to replicate the CFS's importance, he is choosing to ignore students' welfare for his own interests.

Please Concordians, don't fall for this. You are smarter than to support such an empty endeavour and certainly deserve better representation than Mr. Dabchy. Vote to stick with the CFS.

—Tara Dominguez,
Liberal Arts/History

Vote Tsofliakis

If I were to describe Nikki Tsofliakis in one word, it would be passionate. Whether it is her devotion to discovering the world or her love for meeting new people, Nikki is passionate in everything she does.

I have worked with Nikki this year in the John Molson International Exchange Committee (JIC). As president of the JIC, I can say that Nikki is an asset to any association. She has the motivation, organizational skills and dedication to be a leader, making her the ideal fit for VP Finance of the Concordia Student Union.

I stand by Nikki and the rest of the Fusion

team because they care about us, fellow Concordians.

—Cristina Baptista,
JIC president

The ethical Mr. Lopez

Andres Lopez is an excellent person, with solid moral and ethical values. I've known him for the last two years, in which a great friendship has grown. I have additionally worked with him in various events, classes and projects, and can therefore testify that Andres is a person worth of trust, dedicated to his work and highly motivated.

It's his motivation and his guidance that led me to become more involved within Concordia. I can tell he really cares about Concordia, as he knows a lot about how the school works and is always the first person in my mind when it comes to questions about it. Anyone that knows Andres can tell he has the qualities of a leader and the modesty of a friend who will always be there for you no matter what.

I can only say the best things about Andres, as I'm sure only great things wait for him in the future. Best of luck, Andres.

—Carlos Puerta,
President-elect, Latin American Student Organization

The Link's letters and opinions policy: The deadline for letters is 4 p.m. on Friday before the issue prints. *The Link* reserves the right to verify your identity via telephone or email. We reserve the right to refuse letters that are libellous, sexist, homophobic, racist or xenophobic. The limit is 400 words. If your letter is longer, it won't appear in the paper. Please include your full name, weekend phone number, student ID number and program of study. The comments in the letters and opinions section do not necessarily reflect those of the editorial board.

Sak pase, Haïti?

From shock value to no value in mainstream media

• ELI LEVINSON

When the Haitian earthquake happened, it quickly became the news story of the year, with constant coverage of the most minute details of the disaster dominating the media for days. Then of course, as the initial shock wore off for those not directly tied to what happened, we moved on, and the media got back to its usual reporting.

Like any other major news event, it followed the pattern of furious initial coverage which quickly becomes no coverage at all as the goldfish mentality and craving for the next big item supersedes any considerations of the plight of those at the heart of the story.

At the same time, we stop talking about it, stop trying to

help, stop having events, stop having the plight of those at the heart of the story in our minds. Now, even though there is an unfolding story taking place, a story of people trying to rebuild something cruelly taken away, it is not an important story to us. If the media started round-the-clock coverage of the rebuilding effort in Haiti, our reaction would most likely be "Why are they showing us this, it's not news."

This is the contradiction of modern mass media: it has constructed in our minds an idea of human activity as being based on specific events, people and stories that are fast-paced and responds to the need of the audience to have the world explained in very small doses, when in reality these stories take place over a much

longer period of time than we are willing to devote to them.

We live in a fast-paced modern world that communicates rapidly. That does not mean that the millions of stories happening all around the world are fast-paced, far from it. Nobody is going to believe that life has no nuance, and yet our consumption of news hinges on this idea of simplified news bites. If it takes longer than five minutes to explain what is going on, it is not a news story, it's a sociology paper.

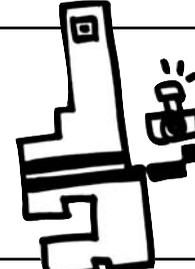
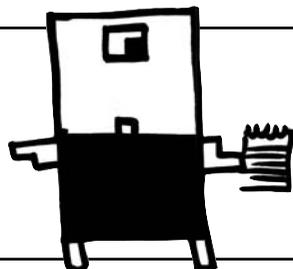
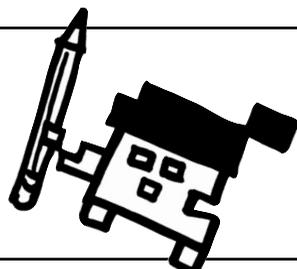
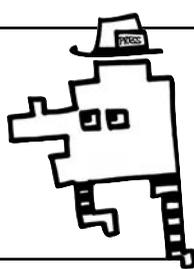
And we go along with it because we don't have the time or desire to understand the situation in more depth. It is very difficult for people with no stake in an event to maintain a high level of interest for very long, given the slowly unfolding drama that happens every day all over the world.

It is very easy to blame the media and those in power for creating the short attention spans that define our generation, but that is not the whole story.

How do we consume media and specifically news? Do we have the time every day to follow up—in depth—on all the things that pop up on our radar, to really engage with these stories that rarely have obvious turning points or climaxes and are more like a Dostoyevsky novel? Whose fault is this? Or is playing the blame game a waste of time?

Changing our attitudes and patterns, as reflected in the media, is something that takes time and happens slowly. It's an ongoing struggle that cannot be explained by specific moments and is best understood in hindsight.

If the media started round-the-clock coverage of the rebuilding effort in Haiti, our reaction would most likely be "Why are they showing us this, it's not news."



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Concordia U gripes

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International students in debt

• NADIA HAUSFATHER

Nadia Hausfather is a humanities PhD student and a founding member of Free Education Montreal (formerly Montreal Students Against Tuition Increase).

It is a story of a group of anonymous international students at Concordia—anonymous because they are scared to speak out.

They feel they don't have the same rights as Canadian citizens here and that they worry their immigration status or work opportunities could be at risk if they say anything.

Already one of them returned to India because he couldn't afford the 50 per cent tuition increase at Concordia University's John Molson School of Business. He had a scholarship from TD Bank, but it still wasn't enough to pay for the unexpected increase.

MBA student John, whose name has been changed for confidentiality reasons, is still here, but he wonders for how long. John came here from his home country with his life savings. The April 2009 acceptance letter from Concordia promised that "the fees for the John Molson MBA Program for the academic year 2009-2010 are approximately \$13,700." He planned accordingly; it was tight, but he could just make

it. Yet when he arrived in Canada in August 2009, he was charged \$19,676.98—an increase of around 50 per cent. The university had given him no warning.

Since learning this news, John has suffered from extreme stress, depression, homesickness and has had a hard time focusing on school and looking for a job. When he first found out about the \$6,000 yearly increase, he thought he would have to go back to his home country, so he lost the roommate he planned to share an apartment with. Due to his shattered plans and financial stress, he spent his first weeks in Montreal on a friend's couch.

Now John shares an apartment with another student from his country, but his stress remains. He waits for the next answer from an office at Concordia that will supposedly help him out. He has been sent from office to office at the university. He even managed to get a \$2,000 remission from Concordia, but it is not enough.

Now John has to pay for the entire year's tuition, whether or not he continues his MBA. He realized too late that he could have asked for a leave of absence from Concordia. He was waiting for months to find out if the university would give him a full tuition remission for the entire increase. He finally applied to the university for the leave of absence, but was

refused. The deadline had passed.

When John is not stressed and depressed, he is smiling and laughing, even though he doesn't have enough money to go to movies or dinner with friends. But even in his moments of contentment, he always knows that his return to his home country could be around the corner. For John, this would be the greatest failure of his life: to have sacrificed his job and all his life savings without a degree to show for it.

Back in December, he "hadn't bought a winter jacket, I was waiting until January trembling to buy a cheaper one," he said. "This [tuition increase] affects my socialization, my focus on my studies, my nutrition, everything, everything."

It has also negatively affected his view of Canada's respect for human rights.

"If a Canadian consumer that is overcharged by any company can take legal actions against them and the media and consumers' rights associations would support him or her, it is painful to see that Canadian universities have found international students as their best choice for so-called 'development,' and nobody is there to listen to overcharged and helpless students."

John says it is even more painful when considering Article

26 of United Nations Declaration of Human Rights, which states: "Everyone has the right to education. Education shall be free, at least in the elementary and fundamental stages. Elementary education shall be compulsory. Technical and professional education shall be made generally available and higher education shall be equally accessible to all on the basis of merit."

Two other international students from the JMSB program have also spoken out, but also wish to remain anonymous. One of them paid his tuition in Pakistan, before even coming to Canada, in the summer of 2009. He was glad to have paid his tuition the year before his arrival. Yet just a few weeks ago, he noticed that he still owed the university around \$6,000. He is shocked that this whole time, the university never told him of the increase. It's the least they could have done, he says.

Free Education Montreal, a group founded by Concordia students in June 2009 but open to all people living in Montreal, has documented various cases where international students were not given a warning of tuition increases and were thus unable to pay. Some of those students worked 80 hours a week during the summer and hardly made enough to cover their tuition.

To address what John has

referred to as a "human rights violation," as well as recent announcements by the Quebec government and Quebec leaders such as Lucien Bouchard advocating for tuition increases for all students, Free Education Montreal in collaboration with the Graduate Students' Association is hosting a public panel and debate about accessibility to education. The panel will include a diverse array of perspectives: a Concordia administrator, a representative from the business community, a faculty member, a student and a community member.

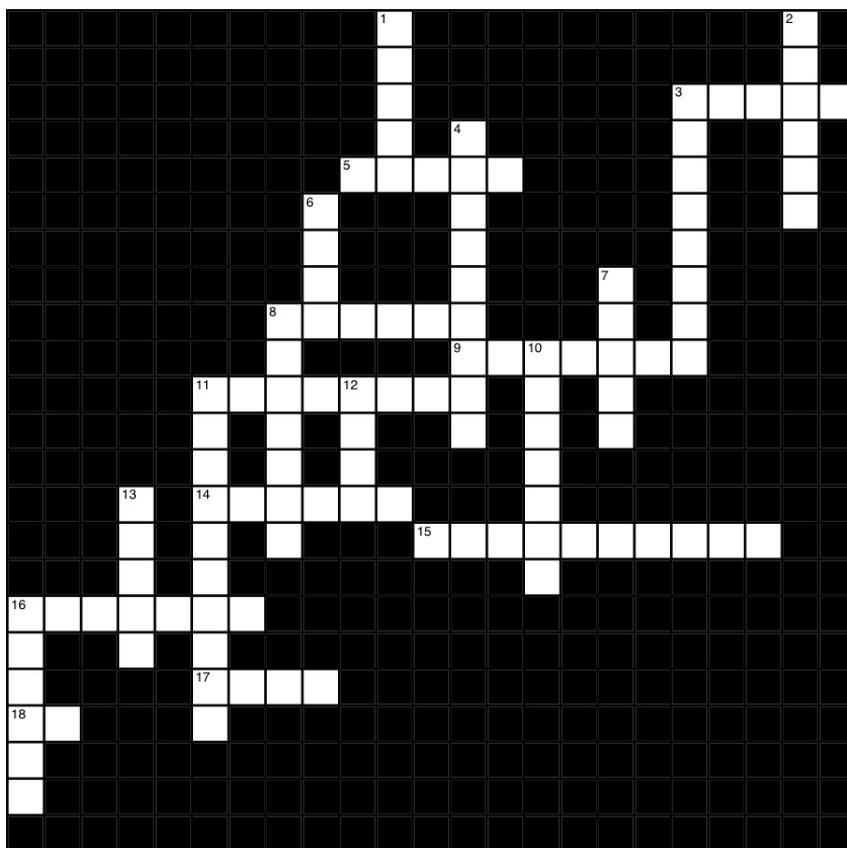
The panel will revolve around two main questions: how do you propose we fund university education? What is the effect of these funding models on accessibility and quality of higher education?

The event is open to anyone who has an opinion about accessibility to quality education in Quebec, regardless of income or country of origin.

The public debate "Who Should Pay for Higher Education?" will take place March 30 at 6:30 p.m. in room H-110 of Concordia University's Hall building (1455 de Maisonneuve Blvd. W.). Panellists will include Concordia President Judith Woodsworth, political science PhD candidate Eric Martin and more.

pzzlol crswrd

THE "NONSENSICAL" EDITION
• R. BRIAN "THE R IS FOR RABID,
FOLKS" HASTIE



issue 26
solutionz



Across

- Those hooded mo'fuckas from Tatooine, and I don't mean the Tuskans.
- The wizard of oohs and aahs and tra_____.
- The greatest place on Earth, after Narnia (Nationalist propaganda in full effect!).
- Cadence Weapon, Shad, D-Sisive, Buck 65. (Hint: the answer is not renaissance men)
- Longest month of the year, according to Adam Duritz.
- Robotic Matt Groening creation, or what I spent my weekend doing. Sorry to those I fist-fought.
- Smash Mouth and Milli Vanilli, in the public sphere. At least that's

what the kids think.

- The next step in feline e-volution (thanks, Internet).
- The nü-age spelling of more. If you don't like it then FUUUUUUUUU.
- Not not if.

Down

- Pie sprinkled with veggies and cheese, then cooked.
- Undead muttering of choice.
- Gob's greatest purchase, or of the We Were Promised variety. (plural)
- Christian Slater DJ persona. (2 words)
- The process of talking about writing the crossword you are

reading in this clue space is a little like this. (Alternatively, old-school HTML tags to denote search terms)

- "All hail the new _____"—David. (or Devin)
- Dr. Rockso-approved indulgence. Not for the weak of heart, or the empty of wallet.
- Perplexed.
- Instead of clap-pause-clap-pause, it's clap-clap-clap-clap.
- Prideful piece of animal hair, or Gucci.
- He of Zombi and New York Ripper fame, kinda like Argento but more literal.
- If up is down, and left is right, then _____ must be dead.

heartaches anonymous

Dear Heartaches Anonymous,
So I'm going through a breakup and it's anything but rainbows and confetti. Names were called and things were thrown. The problem is our separate groups of friends have mingled to become one big happy family. Now they're subject to choosing sides and, quite often, I'm on the losing end. They say it's a breakup because it's broken, but in this situation should we forget our differences and our passionate past to salvage friendship?
—Don't Wanna Find New Friends

Dearest Don't Wanna,
Considering that

you're "going through" a breakup rather than having "gone through" one, I'd say maintaining a healthy friendship with your ex should be the least of your worries right now. That doesn't mean you shouldn't keep it on the civil side—just that you shouldn't beat yourself up if you aren't currently on the best of terms with her or her friends.

Losing friends is a common (and frustrating) side-effect of a breakup. You might suspect that people you met

through your ex suddenly think you're an asshole, and honestly, they might—right now. Try not to let it get to you. Allow yourself to be friendly when you run into them.

So what do you do if the people siding with your ex were your friends first? Forget those people. You don't need them. They're disloyal. You know that old chestnut about "if you really love something, let it go?" Uh, yeah. I guess it's like that.

I want to cut any and all friends out of this

equation and tell you to just focus on working through the breakup itself. No breakup happens in a vacuum, but the problems with your ex should take precedence. Work through those before you worry about rebuilding shaky friendships. One problem at a time, buddy. Bonne chance.

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

editorial

Why don't you care?

On March 18, the Concordia Student Union held a meeting where students could ask questions about the \$43 million Student Centre that is planned for a January launch. The project represents a heavy financial commitment that will last decades, and students should take it quite seriously.

No one showed up.

This despite the fact that 35,000 students will be on the hook for that money.

One journalist and one candidate for the Community slate appeared. In the days before the meeting, posters were put up around campus announcing the time and location. But at the right place and right time, VP Sustainability & Projects Alex Oster waited in a room full of empty chairs.

Despite reading many articles written in the student press about the Student Centre plan, I still don't quite have my head around the project. How will it work? How will the services be organized? Will student groups really need to make the move? How will the study space work? The worst thing is, I've written most of those articles.

How then, from Tuesday to Thursday of this week, is a student to understand what they are voting on? Standing alone in a cardboard hutch, with students walking by and a worn pen in hand, students will be faced by a ballot with a seemingly innocuous question: Do you want to give an additional \$2.50 per credit to the Student Centre?

If that question passes, a 90-credit student will pay \$405 over the next three to four years towards the Student Centre. If they are so inclined, their children could still be paying that tab two decades from now. This week, they gave up on their final chance to ask questions about where that money will go.

Members of the Community slate will tell you to vote against the project because it will be a building owned by the university administration. Although that is true, it ignores the foot-thick document that outlines who will control the building.

The university will own it, but students will control it.

The greater problem is that Concordia's 35,000 undergraduate students have given up all power of oversight. Members of the press showed up, serving a certain level of oversight, but Concordia politics demand a level of popular interaction.

This university was not designed to be a commuter school. Its institutions and values demand that students participate in large numbers. Students need to protest on de Maisonneuve Boulevard for their beliefs, sleep in on the seventh floor to demand more from the administration and stand on a soap box to debate the issues of the day.

That is not the Concordia of today.

With \$46 million being decided at this election, students only have a final voice left: their vote. Luckily, that vote is worth a lot of money. If good value can't convince this current crop of students, nothing will. If voter turnout stays at historic lows, and if the March 18 no-show is any indication, then the 4,000 to 8,000 voters who show up will each control \$5,000 to \$10,000 of student money.

Your vote is worth \$10,000. Isn't that a good reason to vote?

If less than five per cent of students cast their ballot, regardless of their choice at the ballot box, the following things will happen: Concordia will stay a member of the Canadian Federation of Students; Le Frigo Vert will cut back on most of its hours; Cinema Politica will stay a Monday night staple and nothing more; and a new CSU executive will barely have the legitimacy to govern.

If less than five per cent of Concordia walks by a voting booth this week and decides that the minute or so it will take to cast a ballot is asking too much from them, then Concordia will inherit the university it deserves: one where student fees are collected regardless of what students think, distributed regardless of what students want and spent without student input.

That's not my Concordia. Is it yours?

—Justin Giovannetti,
News editor