

THE

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THE

TAR SANDS

ARE COMING

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Live from New York...

Controversial Briton George Galloway broadcast into Concordia

• JUSTIN GIOVANNETTI

Despite being stopped at the border by federal Immigration Minister Jason Kenney, the voice of British MP George Galloway was heard at Concordia's H-110 auditorium on April 1.

Speaking through a hastily organized videocast from New York City, Galloway's speaking tour through Canada, "Resisting War from Gaza to Kandahar," was cancelled after the Canadian government said that he was a threat to national security.

Galloway was branded a "terrorist" by the Canadian Border Services Agency for having given aid to Hamas—Gaza's government and a terrorist organization according to the Canadian government—during the recent war in the occupied territory.

"What is my terrorism?" Galloway asked the crowd. "In your government's own words: I took an aid convoy to Gaza, and gave that aid to the democratically elected government in Gaza."

"What kind of terrorism is a box of biscuits and a pack of children's nappies?"

—George Galloway

Galloway's aid convoy—labelled as either humanitarian or an act of vanity, depending on whom you ask—saw 350 British citizens drive over 100 vehicles, including a fire truck and 24 ambulances, from the United Kingdom to Gaza.

"We took ambulances to Gaza and they called this terrorism?"

What kind of terrorism is this?" was Galloway's rhetorical question.

"What kind of terrorism is a box of biscuits and a pack of children's nappies?"

Concordia University security initially refused to allow Galloway's videocast, citing the federal ban on his entry.

"When the school found out that Galloway had been banned, they contacted us and said, 'I guess this is cancelled by default.' They knew he had been banned before we did," said event organizer Doug Smith.

The university lifted the ban 48 hours before the event's scheduled date. "In the end Concordia did the right thing and cooler heads did prevail," Smith added.

Before Galloway spoke, Smith told the audience, "We're not afraid of the RCMP, the Jewish Defence League or your FBI cronies." This was in response to a threat broadcasted in the United Kingdom by the head of the JDL that the Canadian government would monitor anyone who attended Galloway's event.



Orwell could not have done it better himself, as George Galloway's voice boomed through H-110. PHOTO RACHEL TETRAULT

ter," Galloway told the crowd.

The chief executive of the Canadian Jewish Congress, Bernie Farber, claimed on CTV News that Galloway was a supporter of a terrorist organization.

"On CTV he didn't just defame me, he put my personal safety and that of my family at risk, and I am simply not going to put up with it anymore," Galloway continued.

"I am not going to be accused of being a terrorist anymore by anybody in Canada. If they do, they are going to have to establish it in a court of law."

Galloway made mention of the terror attacks on New York and London, but said nothing of the

terror or rocket attacks on Israel. Galloway also had nothing to say about acts undertaken by any group in the Middle East, like Hamas or Hezbollah.

Although Galloway did criticize the Canadian government's ban as an attack on freedom of speech, he admitted with a smile that the Conservative plan had backfired.

"It's another packed house tonight, this ban isn't working," said Galloway to the 150 faces in the crowd he could not see. "Thanks to Jason Kenney, Stephen Harper and the dead-end, has-been, George Bush government in Ottawa, the anti-war movement is on the march."

Smith, who is also a member of Concordia's Solidarity for Palestinian Human Rights chapter, said Galloway's refusal of entry into Canada is only part of the problem.

"This is a matter of freedom of speech and we have a lot of work to do," Smith said after the talk. "We have a government that was able to block this man from coming. There is a long road ahead."

Galloway reserved his closing statement for the two Conservative politicians who kept him out of Canada. "Like all politicians, Mr. Harper and Mr. Kenney are here today and gone tomorrow."

One step forward, two steps back

Former Concordia student Mohamed Kohail condemned to death again

• CLARE RASPOPOW

The life of Mohamed Kohail has again been thrown into peril after the Jeddah General Court upheld their original decision to condemn him to death last week.

In February of this year the Saudi Supreme Judicial Council, the country's highest court of appeal, overruled the judgment of the General Court, which condemned Kohail to die in March 2008. The lower court was told to reconsider its decision.

While this recent turn of events is a blow to Kohail and his family, the news might not be as dire as it first seems.

The lower court's decision to uphold their earlier judgment does not put Kohail in immediate danger. The judg-

ment must now renegotiate all of the higher levels of the Saudi judicial system—including the Supreme Judicial Council—that has already rejected the death sentence.

This does not mean that Kohail's situation has improved any as the case is currently at a stalemate.

"The current legal system does not grant the [Supreme Judicial Council] power to overturn a decision by itself," informed Aubrey Harris, a member of Amnesty International's campaign to have the death penalty abolished globally. "Unfortunately it is the lower court, [the General Court] which must concede before the sentence can be overturned."

The Supreme Judicial Council is allowed to continue to recommend that

the lower case review their sentence, but the Jeddah General Court is not required to alter their decision.

According to Saudi Law, once the accused has been convicted there is a system whereby the family of the victim can grant a pardon in exchange for blood money. But the sum required is "quite expensive," explained Harris.

To the best of Harris' knowledge the Canadian Foreign Affairs Minister has been advocating on behalf of Kohail. He can't know for sure because "once the Foreign Affairs Minister has begun to act on behalf of a citizen, it becomes a private matter."

For now, Harris encourages all Canadians to let the Canadian government know that they want immediate action on Kohail's behalf.

January 2007: Munzer Haraki is killed in a schoolyard fight. Mohamed Kohail, Sultan Kohail and Mehanna Sa'd are arrested for Haraki's death. Witnesses claim the altercation was started due to an insult levelled at Haraki's cousin. Amnesty International reports that the Kohail boys were held with no contact to the outside world for one and a half months, and beaten in an attempt to make them confess.

March 3, 2008: Mohamed Kohail is sentenced to death by the Jeddah General Court. His trial consisted of nine sessions. According to Amnesty International, Kohail's lawyer was only allowed to attend one or two of the sessions and was not allowed to challenge the evidence against his client. Kohail's case is sent to the Saudi Court of Cassation, a mid-level court of appeals.

August 2008: The lower court rejects the Court of Cassation's recommendation to review the sentence.

November 2008: The Court of Cassation upholds the General Court's death sentence after sending it back to the lower court three times.

February 2009: The Supreme Judicial Council orders the Jeddah General Court to review their death sentence for Kohail.

April 2009: The lower court upholds its initial judgment to behead Mohamed Kohail.

CSU election outcome still questioned

Elections chief promises ‘serious recommendations’ on electoral reform

• JUSTIN GIOVANNETTI

Two weeks after the end of the Concordia Student Union election, Chief Electoral Officer Oliver Cohen is still receiving contestations as the electoral battle moves from the ballot box to the legal process.

“I heard in past years that they got five or seven contestations,” Cohen said as his phone rang throughout his interview with *The Link*. “This year I got at least 50 or 60.”

The contestations—legal challenges calling for penalties or a re-election—began pouring into the CEO’s office before the election began, as posters were torn down and racist comments were written on Facebook. But in the past two weeks, the tone of those contestations has changed.

“This became a battle between the two major parties as they went back and forth at each other with contestations. Every day they came up with a new one,” Cohen said of the Vision and CHANGE slates. “We received every kind of contestation you could ever imagine.”

According to CHANGE VP University candidate Audrey Peek,



Chief Electoral Officer Oliver Cohen gets tough on reform. PHOTO ELSA JABRE

her slate’s 26 contestations were essential because “the election was completely unfair and violated the rules of fair play in an obvious and explicit manner.”

Some of CHANGE’s contestations called for: the sanctioning of

Vision for allegedly calling students at home; a new election because Vision allegedly called students at home while pretending to be CHANGE; a new election because Vision allegedly paid for a truck with a CHANGE ad to drive around

Concordia campus; the sanctioning of Vision because the brother of candidate John Kyras stood near a polling station and spoke to people about the election when prompted.

“Of our first 12 contestations, all were rejected except for the one against Alaa Salman for her anti-Semitic comments on Facebook,” said CHANGE presidential candidate Kurt Reckziegel. “All of our 14 contestations after the election were thrown out with the words, ‘contestation rejected,’ and no explanation.”

Reckziegel said he had yet to speak to the CEO about the rejected contestations, but he is going to appeal them all to the CSU Judicial Board.

Peek said that overturning the election, where Vision won by 13 per cent of the vote, was a defence of student’s rights. “This is about so much more than us, this is about administering justice for the voters who were misled, for the teams who were in an unfair election and for the sake of the student union so that the best ideas can be promoted and the best team wins,” Peek said.

Cohen was not convinced of Peek’s motives. “I am sure CHANGE was very upset for losing;

this is part of the game and they are going to do whatever they can to give themselves a second chance.”

In his election report that he has yet to present to CSU Council, Cohen said that he would call for no re-election and would make “serious recommendations” for electoral reform.

One area where Cohen said reform was needed is campaign finance. When asked how CHANGE afforded their posters, website, condoms, Tic-Tacs and Facebook advertisements—along with other expenses—with a campaign spending limit of \$750, Cohen was stumped.

“I ask myself the same question: how do they afford this?” Cohen said. “It is clear to me that there were over-expenditures by all parties [...] but according to receipts that they have submitted, everything is accounted for.”

Despite the contestations, Cohen said he was satisfied with how the election was run. “I put everything I have into these elections, I put my reputation at stake and I said that if these elections were a failure, I would resign.”

He confirmed he has no intention to resign.

Coffee, two creams and sugar... don’t forget the Vision

• JUSTIN GIOVANNETTI

The recent Concordia Student Union election was vicious. Posters were put up and torn down, official debates were shadowed by third party smear campaigns and the flood of legal challenges has yet to cease.

“My favourite moments were in the morning, at breakfast,” recalled President-elect Amine Dabchy.

Despite the chaos of the campaign, Dabchy and his seven executive running mates met every morning at 8 a.m. for breakfast at Délices Mont-Blanc, a small restaurant at the corner of Bishop and de Maisonneuve.

“We would get pumped for the day ahead and compare our schedules,” Dabchy said of the breakfast tradition. “We got to know each other better every day. We know now that John [Kyras] doesn’t drink milk. I miss them—I don’t see them 24 hours a day anymore.”

The Vision team would meet again in the evening and look back at what went wrong that day and how they could improve.

Dabchy, a self-proclaimed “big coffee drinker,” was kept awake during the campaign by drinking cup after cup. When asked what executive he missed the most, he had only one name: Prince Ralph Osei.

“Prince was amazing. He gave the best class speeches. I went to one of his speeches and I had goose bumps,” Dabchy said of his VP services and Loyola-elect. “People were standing and clapping, it was really inspiring.”

The road to the classroom speeches began in early October when the CSU controversially tried to eliminate the Sustainability Action Fund during a referendum.

“We started working on this campaign a while ago, after the SAF problems started and we stopped believing in our executive,” Dabchy said. “Alejandro [Lobo-Guerrero]

and I started thinking that we deserved a better government. Then Prince joined us and Louise [Birdsell-Bauer] started helping a lot.”

With the help of those three other CSU councillors, Dabchy began thinking about running an executive slate. But Dabchy’s parents were not wholly supportive of their son’s ambition; his dad wanted him to finish university and graduate. Dabchy was also convinced he couldn’t really change anything. “I didn’t believe that it was possible to win,” he said.

The decision to run was made for him when he saw who else was running.

“I wasn’t sure that I was going to run until January, when I saw that the CSU was getting involved in [the Arts and Science Federation of Associations] and President Audrey Peek was only listening to the CSU executive,” Dabchy said. “I knew [Peek] was running and I thought, ‘The same thing can’t happen next year,’ so I decided to start

putting together a team to run.”

The team that emerged was a coalition of the student government’s “left” and “right” wings; the political terms are more of a divisive mechanism rather than a true reflection of differing ideology. “This is the first time that a government is formed that includes a VP of the Muslim Student Association and a president of Hillel in the same executive,” Dabchy said proudly.

Despite the outstanding contestations calling for a re-election, Dabchy and his executives are getting ready for the transition into the CSU’s offices on the seventh floor of the Hall building.

Dabchy expects that his presidency will be his final political office. “I will never run in any elections anymore, anywhere.”

With his year as president in front of him, Dabchy says he is going to keep his winning schedule. “We are going to keep the breakfasts going, and the coffee. I’m a really big fan of coffee.”



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Pillow Fight Day ends with soggy faces



Smiling faces and heavy pillows at Philips Square as participants take a swing at each other during International Pillow Fight Day. PHOTO ION EXTEBARRIA

• LINDSAY SYKES

Rainy weather put a damper on Montreal's participation in International Pillow Fight Day on April 4, as a smaller than expected crowd showed up with soggy pillow in hand.

"About 30 to 40 people showed up and the event lasted from 3:05 until about 3:30," said Robin Friedman, head organizer of Montreal's pillow fight.

Promoted through Facebook, blogs and other websites, 300

expected participants were told that the event would proceed rain or shine.

The wet weather reduced the three-hour long affair to a mere 25 minutes.

The participants who did show up respected the new rule that banned feathered pillows. The mess the feathers would create would have been too much of a hassle to clean up, Friedman explained.

Over 70 cities across the world engaged in outdoor pillow

fights on April 4, including Amsterdam, Paris, New York and Vancouver.

Participants at all the pillow fights around the world began swinging after a signal was given; in many cities, feathers quickly began to fly.

In Montreal, the small crowd grew tired and dispersed as the pillows grew heavy from the rain.

Although disappointed, many participants said they were looking forward to a sunny event next year.

70

cities around the world participated in International Pillow Fight Day.

Global protests as NATO turns 60

Montrealers gather to speak out against war in Afghanistan

• JUSTIN GIOVANNETTI

As the 28 leaders of the NATO countries settled in Strasbourg, France on April 4 to celebrate the defence alliance's 60th birthday, 160 protesters walked down Ste-Catherine Street, holding signs and chanting anti-war slogans.

The procession was a bright, loud muddle. Communists held red signs high, peaceniks carried dapper yellow posters and black standards bearing the names of villages bombed in Afghanistan—as well as the number of dead—bobbed within the crowd.

"NATO has only given us 60 years of war," some of the young protesters yelled. "End the occupation," others answered.

As the protesters' rhyming slogans were read off one by one, the few reactions from Montreal's scurrying shoppers were smiles and finger pointing—the city's irritated motorists provided sufficient background noise.

Dressed in a tidy grey coat, Gisele Turcott, 69, was at the demonstration to show her sup-

port for disarmament and a culture based on peace.

"The culture of violence is, sadly, too common in this country. We shouldn't have parents killing children or school shootings. There is a real thirst for peace," Turcott said. "There is real safety in peace [...] but real peace cannot be achieved with the barrel of a gun."

The loud procession stopped in front of Christ Church Cathedral on Ste-Catherine Street and fell silent as a bilingual choir of six elderly women sang from the church steps.

"Bring them home," the choir sang as the protestors joined in.

The demonstration came to a close near the American consulate where the crowd squeezed onto St-Alexandre Street. The shivering protesters shouted at the building and chanted "terrorist."

During a similar protest held in Strasbourg on the same day, over 300 demonstrators were arrested after heavy clashes with police.



Grannies for peace march through downtown. PHOTOS ION EXTEBARRIA

On short notice, Churchill speaks at Concordia

• JUSTIN GIOVANNETTI

Controversial Native American author Ward Churchill will speak at Concordia on April 15 at 7 p.m. American Outrage, a short film about indigenous sovereignty, will precede the free event in H-110. Churchill is known as an eclectic speaker who ad-libs his speeches, guaranteeing an exciting evening.

Hoist a drink and send volunteers to Uganda

• CYNTHIA D'CRUZ

Working on humanitarian projects in northern Uganda is not a cheap task. To help fund student participation in the low-level infrastructure projects, the Concordia University Volunteer Abroad Program is holding a fundraiser at Le Social, 1445 Bishop St., on the evening of April 9. Volunteers need to raise \$500 to pay for the price of transportation, vaccinations and insurance. Tickets are \$7 at the door.

Tibet activists disrupt Chinese talks in Montreal

• JUSTIN GIOVANNETTI

Pro-Tibet activist and ex-Concordia student Christopher Schwartz disrupted a speech by China's Ambassador to Canada, Lan Lijun, on April 2.



Chris Schwartz

"Canadians will never accept your government's attempts to put profits before Tibetans' human rights," Schwartz yelled at the ambassador before he was removed by security.

Schwartz was arrested in China during last summer's Beijing Olympics for protesting against China's brutal occupation of Tibet. He was later deported to Canada.

Recall against CSU is valid, but too late to work

• JUSTIN GIOVANNETTI

The Quebec Superior Court has ruled that the 3,000 signatures on the recall petition against the Concordia Student Union were valid, but that it was too late in the year to hold a recall election.

"This ruling is disappointing but certainly not unexpected. At this late date in the semester we weren't really expecting the judge to order a new election," said the plaintiff and leader of the recall, Patrice Blais.

The recall petition was first rejected by former CSU Chair Jessica Nudo in January after she claimed that she had verified the petition's 3,000 signatures and found that more than half were invalid.

Tear down your highways

New Urbanism could make Montreal pedestrian-friendly, happier and save the environment

• GINGER COONS

In 1922, famed architect Le Corbusier depicted his City of Tomorrow: clusters of steel-framed skyscrapers connected by raised highways.

On April 3, John Norquist, president of the United States' Congress for the New Urbanism, told Montrealers to tear that city down.

Montreal has a unique opportunity with its failing highways, Norquist told the crowd of 200 at McGill's Macdonald-Harrington building.

"Don't build them back," he said to cheers. "Put them back in the gravel pit where they belong."

Norquist's CNU is a leading organization calling for cities to be more pedestrian-friendly.

No stranger to Montreal, Norquist began his presentation in halting French, speaking with fond memories of Expo 67. This soon gave way to strong criticism of the city built by Mayor Jean Drapeau during the 1960s and 1970s—especially the Turcot interchange and the highway trenches that serve it.

Using the extreme urban decay of Detroit as an example, Norquist blamed the decline of downtowns on the rise of the highway system.

To back this claim Norquist showed pictures of Milwaukee, the city he served for four terms as mayor.

The pictures showed stretches of highway, with grass on either side—space for possible road expansion. The ex-mayor explained the historical explanations for highways: movement, economic purposes and social interaction.

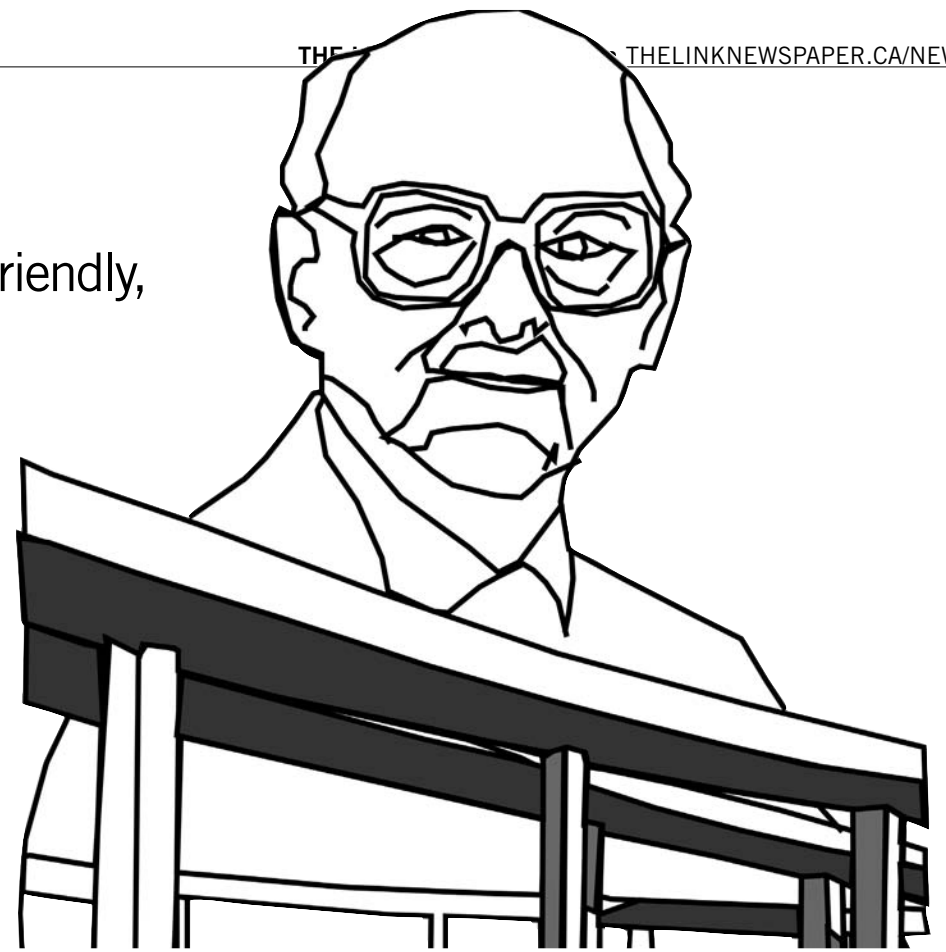
But, said Norquist, highways take human interaction away from our transportation, killing cities and causing sprawl. Instead of individuals walking, seeing and smelling the city around them, transportation has been reduced to metal boxes speeding along in sticky tunnels and trenches.

Norquist gave pride of place to his view that in order to make cities denser and more functional, inner city highways need to be torn down and their traffic absorbed by the city street grid.

Standing in front of a slide depicting Al Gore, Norquist stressed the point that walkable cities can save the world. He explained that Manhattanites use 25 per cent less energy than the average American.

Because of these savings, proper city design is "one of the pillars of environmentalism," said the CNU president.

But a major change in thinking is necessary



Mayor Jean Drapeau's dominated Montreal's growth for nearly 30 years. GRAPHIC GINGER COONS

to see that the cities of tomorrow are livable.

"Just imagine what the United States Department of Transportation could do for Prague," Norquist joked, explaining that the American department would probably tear down the city's ancient bridges and build highways in their place.

Le Corbusier never built the City of Tomorrow, but most North Americans experience it every day when they eat, work and

live in it.

Montreal needs to escape its present trap, Norquist said. Highways shouldn't be replaced when they crumble, the waterfront should be reclaimed and neighbourhoods should boast a mix of commercial, residential and industrial buildings—a more pedestrian-friendly community called "mixed-use."

According to Norquist, highways need to get out of the city.

McGill students 'die' for life-saving drugs

• JUSTIN GIOVANNETTI

On April Fool's Day a dozen students "died" on the McGill University campus as a demonstration against the Canadian federal government's delay in delivering life-saving drugs to the developing world.

"For the 2.3 million children in developing countries infected with HIV, access to medicines is a question of life or death," said Jamie Lundine, director of McGill's Global AIDS Coalition and the organizer of the die-in.

In a press release, the group said the Canadian Access to Medicines Regime is overdue for reform; CAMR is five years old.

CAMR was created to provide cheap medicine for the developing world, but has made only one shipment since it was created.

"People are dying as the government drags its feet on making the necessary changes to the legislation," Lundine said.

Similar events were held in Halifax, Ottawa, Toronto, Winnipeg and Vancouver.



Students stage a die-in to raise HIV/AIDS awareness. PHOTO MATTHEW HOOD

Dark clouds on the horizon

The business, money and health risks behind bringing the tar sands to Montreal

• TERRINE FRIDAY

Montrealers are a lot closer to the tar sands than they thought, especially now that Calgary-based oil giant Enbridge plans on piping the tar sands to Petro-Canada's refineries in Montreal's east end.

Montreal activists Dru Oja Jay and Maya Rolbin-Ghanie spoke about the negative implications of Enbridge's plan to reverse the flow of an existing Montreal-Sarnia pipeline, which would send the tar sands from Alberta, through Sarnia, to Montreal. They also screened their documentary *Tar Sands & Oil Water* at the April 2 talk at McGill.

"We need to localize the struggle because Montreal is affected by tar sands, as is every other Canadian city," Rolbin-Ghanie said. She added that raising awareness about the prospective impact of the tar sands in Quebec is key to understanding the trans-Canadian implications of the unsustainable source of energy.

Last month, Petro-Canada and Canadian energy giant Suncor announced a \$46 billion merger. The merged company, to be known as Suncor, will own some of the largest reserves of tar sands, considered to be the dirtiest source of energy known to man.

It will also build an oil refinery system—or coker—in Montreal to deal with the heavy oil from Alberta.

Jay calls the recent merger announcement between Suncor and Petro-Canada a "consolidation of corporate power in the face of the economic downturn" that could have negative repercussions.

"Every Petro-Canada in Canada is going to supply tar sands oil," Jay said. "Once the price of oil starts to increase again, we're going to see more of these newly founded companies throwing their weight around."

For their documentary, Jay and Rolbin-Ghanie travelled to Alberta where the tar sands cover an area of 150,000 square kilometres—about the size of Florida.

"People are getting sick. People are dying from cancer when it never used to be like that," said Celina Harpe, an elder of the Fort Mackay Native community in Alberta. Harpe was quick to say the oil companies' "almighty dollar comes first. It's pretty sad."

The communities of Fort Mackay and Fort Chipewyan live off fish and water from the nearby Athabasca River. Massive tailing ponds—which contain the toxic by-products of oil refinery—bleed into the Athabasca River, tainting the water and contaminating fish.

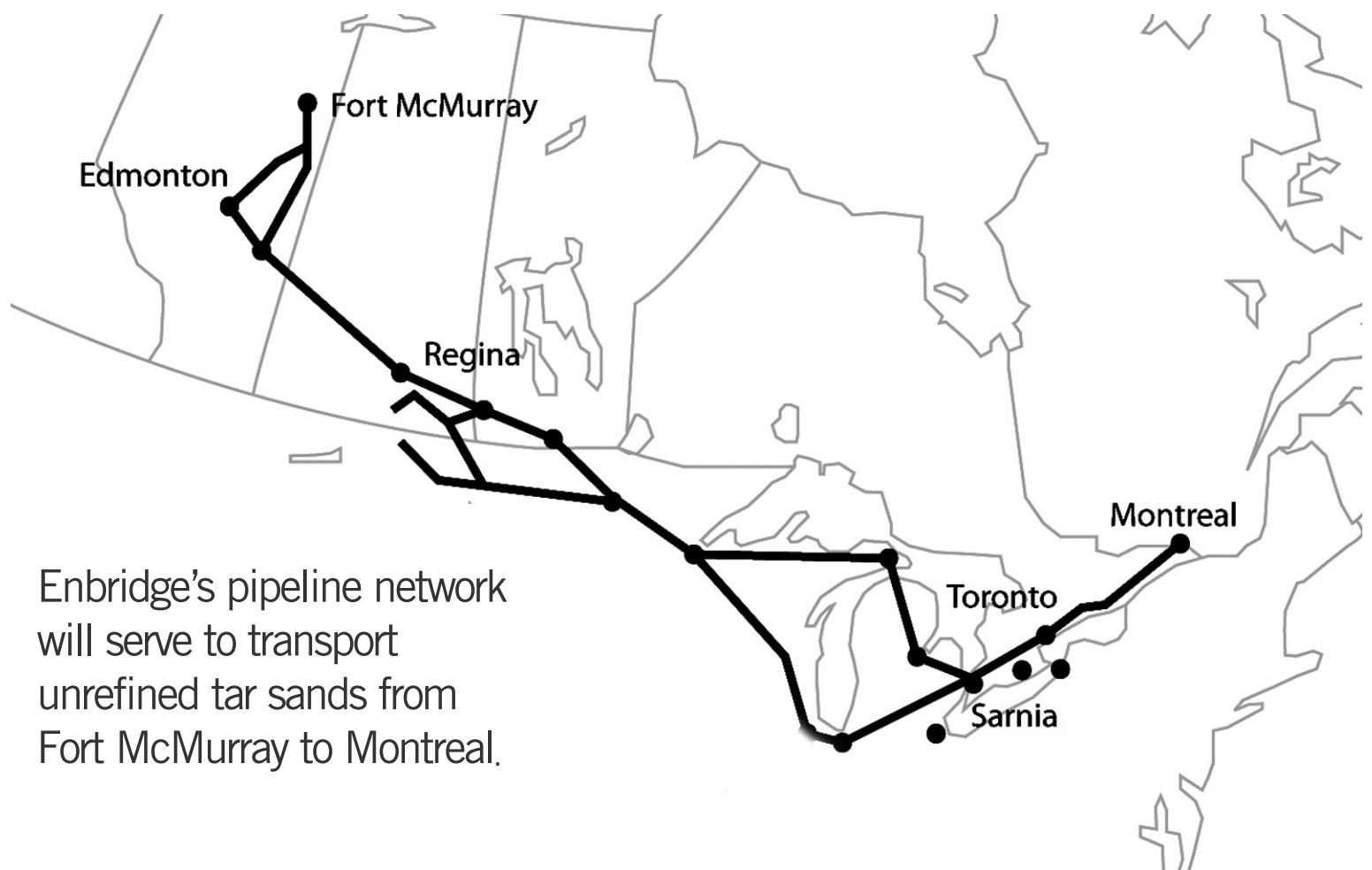
"You can't drink oil to live," Harpe continued. "If you have no water, you have no life."

To read *The Link* reporter Justin Bromberg's interview with *Soil Not Oil* author Vandana Shiva, turn to "No soil for oil" on pg. 19.

Part 2: Sustaining the dirty industry
in next week's issue of *The Link*.



This tailing pond is vast compared to the 600-metre wide Athabasca River, in the top left corner of this aerial photo. PHOTO DRU OJA JAY, THE DOMINION



Enbridge's pipeline network will serve to transport unrefined tar sands from Fort McMurray to Montreal.

Uncovering a Communist past

Researchers set to expose Czech Republic's difficult history



The Institute has amassed 25 kilometres worth of archival material. GRAPHIC EMILIO ESTEBAN

• WILLY LOWRY

In the Czech capital, an army of historians and political scientists sift through a river of files containing the country's darkest secrets.

These researchers are part of the newly established Institute for the Study of Totalitarian Regimes. Their goal is to document the Czech Republic's Communist past, exposing the hardships and human rights violations inflicted on so many Czech citizens during the Communist era between 1948 and 1989.

Despite a comparatively smooth transition to democracy and integration into the European Union, the country continues to grapple with its oppressive past. Communism's reign in the Czech Republic evokes strong emotions from the country's citizens and the creation of the Institute in January 2008 was met with great controversy.

"Some people don't feel comfortable having their pasts researched," said Vojtech Ripka, who is the head of the documentation unit at the Institute.

The Institute's mission to make the past accessible to the public aggravates old wounds, which have been festering since the Velvet Revolution peacefully swept away communism in 1989. It reminds people, "nearly everybody played a part in the Communist regime," said Ripka.

Unjust imprisonments, secrecy and deception stain the Communist era. The Czechoslovakian Secrete Police (StB) cultivated a vicious culture of complicity.

"Atmosphere is not general or abstract; it is created by specific people and actions, so the Institute looks at specific examples as illustrations," Ripka said. He claims the

"Countries not dealing with what happened during the Communist era, like Russia, will be continuously struggling with it."

—Vojtech Ripka,
head of the documentation unit at the
Institute for the Study of Totalitarian Regimes

Institute is only interested in disclosing information pertaining to key players and people who performed reprehensible actions.

But it has already released controversial documents of questionable importance. In October of last year, Adam Hradilek, a researcher at the Institute, published an article in the Czech magazine Respekt disclosing that internationally renowned Czech author Milan Kundera had been an informant for the communist regime.

Hradilek accidentally stumbled across a secret police report from 1950 that stated Kundera had informed on a western spy.

In the aftermath, many people argued that what Kundera had done was a com-

mon occurrence during the Communist regime and did not warrant the public exposure. Ripka argues that because informing to the police was so common, specific examples must be given. The Kundera case illustrates the strained and suspicious mentality that people had during the regime.

The more information that is made public, the more honest and free society can become. Even today, nearly 20 years later, "hidden information is used as blackmail," Ripka explained.

Post-communist countries in Eastern Europe face the challenges of confronting their past. Similar institutes exist in Poland, Germany and Slovakia, to name a few.

"Typically, their work is controversial" said Michael Kraus, a political science professor at Middlebury College in Vermont, United States.

"Politics, competition between historians over resources, and the question whether secret police archives should be

accessible to everyone or governed by special rules—which, among other things, protect the privacy of individuals—are at the core of the public debate over these institutes.

"Yet most people, including Czechs, would also agree that such materials must somehow be made available," said Kraus.

However, not all post-communist countries are confronting their past. "Countries not dealing with what happened during the Communist era, like Russia, will be continuously struggling with it," said Ripka.

Innate human curiosity drives the uncovering of the past.

"People are continuously wanting to know about history," said Ripka. This desire will persist and, in the case of Russia, continue to hinder its forward progress.

If former Communist countries wish to develop into successful European states, they must first look to the past and deal with the cancerous residues of the Communist regimes that ruled them for over four decades. Both Ripka and Kraus say that centres like the Czech Republic's Institute are a necessary step to achieve this goal.

The 25 kilometres worth of archival material that the Institute possesses are integral to the country's ability to finally emerge out of the shadows of communism.

October 1918:
Czechoslovakia declares independence from the Austro-Hungarian Empire.

1938:
Munich Agreement, Czechoslovakia forced to cede to Nazi Germany.

Aug. 21, 1968:
The Soviet Union and other members of the Warsaw Pact invade Prague and restore the Communist regime.

Jan. 1, 1993:
Czechoslovakia officially dissolves into two separate states, the Czech Republic and Slovakia. Vaclav Havel elected first president of Czech Republic 25 days later.

March 12, 1999:
Czech Republic joins NATO.

1945:
Czechoslovakia is re-established.

1948:
Communist Party of Czechoslovakia, backed by Soviet support, seizes power.

Nov. 16-Dec. 29, 1989:
Velvet Revolution—a peaceful revolt that overthrew the Communist party, officially severing communism's grip.

May 1, 2004:
Czech Republic joins the European Union.

Jan. 1, 2009:
The Czech Republic assumes the Presidency of the Council of the European Union, the first former Communist country to hold the position.

Struggling
for democracy:
A timeline of
Czech Republic government

Learning to lead

Concordia students found Missions de solidarité responsable internationale

• CHRISTOPHER OLSON

Finding a summer job while still managing to get some much needed vacation time can be rough. Fortunately, if you're an aspiring doctor at Concordia, you can have both.

Like other non-governmental and non-profit organizations, the Missions de solidarité responsable internationale is trying to rectify the neglect and lack of medical resources available in the third world by organizing medical missions over the summer months. What makes MSR International different is that it was conceived and realized by current Concordia undergrads.

Founded in February of this year by biochemistry major Victor Bourdeau and Elnaz Balashi, who's studying for a specialization in biology, MSR International plans to send up to 15 science students and students from various other disciplines to shadow American physicians in the nation of Laos.

"We were both looking for missions and humanitarian activities abroad and, well, I didn't find anything, and [Victor] didn't find anything, so we decided that we should create one," said Balashi.

"We'd like to do this as professionals in our future careers and we thought that the best way to learn about it is to go right now and observe these doctors," said Bourdeau, who spent his formative years traveling between Hong Kong and France. "We also wanted to provide the chance for other pre-med students—most of them in Concordia—to do this with us."

During the month of July, MSR International will be shadowing physicians in the Mahosot Hospital in Vientiane, Laos. As the capital of the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Vientiane is one of the poorest and least developed countries in East Asia—but also one of the safest, says Bourdeau. He spent last summer as a volunteer in Cambodia during their controversial elections, but decided he wanted to stay out of trouble this summer.

"It's really bigger than just a university project," Balashi said. "It was created by Concordia students, but in order to really reach out and make it an international humanitarian movement, we had to set up all over the world and recruit directors." Directors include Montrealers from McGill and the Université de Montréal, but also international students from France and Yale University.

Bourdeau felt something was lacking in the Concordia curriculum for students who wish to pursue medicine.

"When you want to study medicine at Concordia, you have to figure out yourself the courses you need to take," he said.

"I've been told to call McGill and ask them what I should do," said Balashi, "[but] they're not very helpful. They toss you off."

Bourdeau has been travelling to South East Asia with his parents since he was a child. But two years ago he started going out on his own with the hope of doing some volunteer work.

"[I went to Laos] to see the hospitals, to see if there was anything I could do to help, and I got quite negative answers because either I was too young or I didn't have the necessary papers."

"We allow non-professionals to follow and have a close relationship with professionals," which is difficult if you're not one already, said Balashi. "Most people won't look at you. They're not going to take you seriously, so that's what makes us different from [other NGOs]."

Bourdeau and Balashi will be shadowing Dr. Phoumy Bounkeua, the head of Health Leadership International. The NGO, now in its third year of existence, is based in Seattle and performs annual medical missions to Laos.

"I thought that this was a great idea for these young physicians to explore the third-world health care system," Bounkeua said.

HLI is made of "seasoned college professors and physicians who've been in practice for awhile, and who have a strong interest in teaching," Bounkeua says, all the better to give undergraduate students on-the-job training.

"Travelling across the world can be done [in] only a matter of hours, and I really want to contribute and create a new generation of doctors that will have been aware of what the third world needs."

—Victor Bourdeau,
MSR International

The goal of both organizations is to train local surgeons to be able to continue running their own facilities, while HLI—and soon MSR—can move on to other parts of the country on future missions.

"It's really a sustainable vision of humanitarian aid," Bourdeau said, because it builds on the medical infrastructure that is already in place in these communities.

The biggest problem in Laos is the underutilization of the current



(Top and right) MSR International will be shadowing physicians at the hospital pictured. PHOTO VICTOR BOURDEAU
(Left) Concordia undergrads and founders of MRI International Victor Bourdeau and Elnaz Balashi. PHOTO ELSA JABRE

health care system, especially in the rural areas, which account for 80 per cent of the country's population.

"People don't have enough access to health care because of the roads [...] and a lot of these poor indigenous people don't have money for transportation to go to the provinces to get health care," Bounkeua said.

"It's only this year that [Laos] had their first railway," Bourdeau added. "It's been only a few years since there have been roads [either]."

Travel Channel," said Bounkeua. His own whose father was a Laotian army medic during the Vietnam war, a time when Laos was caught in the international crossfire.

Bounkeua came to the United States in 1979 and finished his medical training at the University of Washington, where he now teaches.

"When my father brought me to this country, he had a dream for my younger sister and I to get a doctor's degree, and then he died about six years ago. So I was able to fulfill his dying wish by contributing to his native country."

"It's really a new era," said Bourdeau. "Travelling across the world can be done [in] only a matter of hours, and I really want to contribute and create a new generation of doctors that will have been aware of what the third world needs since an early stage in their academic development."

Although primarily meant to serve pre-med students, Bourdeau hopes students studying in other disciplines will opt to come along as well.

"We're in science, so we're taking care of this pre-med mission. But there are other ways that we

can help besides medicine. [...] We're aiming to connect different competencies and provide whatever is needed in the third world."

Bourdeau and Balashi hope to convince the Concordia administration to make it possible for students to obtain credit for the medical mission.

"Like anything, the first year is going to be a little bit of a growing pain," admits Bounkeua.

Bourdeau also noted that since "This is our first year, we're going to really prospect for other projects." Adding sustainable housing development and micro-financing to MSR International's charitable endeavours are possible ventures.

For the students who end up going on the trip, being able to still have a summer vacation is important, says Balashi.

"We have plans to have excursions and to see the people and the culture and allow people to actually have a summer vacation, and not just be stuck in a hospital the whole time."

The deadline for applying to MSR International's mission to Laos is May 20. Visit msr-intl.com for reports and updates, including pictures and footage.

Microcredit allows networks of women to participate in their local economy. GRAPHIC EMILIO ESTEBAN

Microcredit generates female entrepreneurship in Canada and abroad

• SARAH LADIK

The Canadian government, in conjunction with the Union culturelle des Franco-Ontariennes, recently launched a new credit program for Francophone women living in rural areas of Northern Ontario.

The microloans granted to French-speaking women will allow them to start their own businesses and participate in their local economies.

The linguistic barrier is a force to be reckoned with in more remote areas of the country and, in Ontario, Francophones have the same problems as Anglophones do in rural Quebec. Reaching those who would otherwise be unable to start their own companies is a trend that seems to be catching on with banks and governments alike, with programs popping up all over Canada and the world.

Microloans are designed to help people who are unable to get traditional funding through banks: people with bad credit history, no credit history, or those who fail to meet the criteria lending institutions require. Many women fall into these categories, either because their assets are under their husband's name or due to the demands of having a family.

Microcredit is a way to build a financial history with little risk to either party. Very small amounts, typically between \$500 and \$5,000 in Canada, are lent at no interest or at very low rates to be repaid in a short period of time.

Although many associations deal with women in urban centres, there is an increasing focus on those living in rural areas. The reality is that there are far fewer employers out in the country and many can only support an average of 20 workers each, according to Lorraine Bureau, Director of the Argenteuil Community Loan Fund for Women in Lachute.

The challenge is to encourage women to not only become self-employed, but to start businesses that will create work for others in their community as well.

Audrey Bourbonnais worked as a hairdresser in the Argenteuil area (about an hour north of Montreal) for many years. She watched as all sorts of chemicals from dyes and other hair products were washed down the drain daily and eventually decided it didn't bode with her desire to protect the environment. She was dependent on a paycheck that covered her expenses, but didn't allow for much in terms of savings.

The perfect solution seemed to be to

start a business. This would allow her to work her schedule around her kids, make a step towards being more ecologically friendly and, more importantly, gain control of her income.

Bourbonnais believes that her requests for funding were refused by banks time and time again because she was a woman with children. She wanted to do things her own way, but felt her gender was preventing her from doing so.

In her experience in Argenteuil, it's not uncommon for men to walk into a bank with little or no business plan, explain their idea and get a loan right away, but she feels banks have doubts about mothers in particular.

"If the kids get sick, who will take care of the business? Who will make sure the payments are made?" said Bourbonnais, commenting on the preconceived fears of a woman with a business. She also believes that women are at a disadvantage because of the stereotypes of women in media.

"People don't want to lend money to the half-naked girl on the billboard," she said.

After having been turned down for traditional funding by her bank, Bourbonnais went to the Community Loan Fund for Women in Lachute where they helped her create a viable business plan. She then went back to the bank, got her loan, and started an ecologically friendly hair salon.

This situation is typical for many women living in rural areas of Canada. Organizations like the CLFW not only provide small loans to help build a good credit history, but they also offer classes on how to develop a business plan and do market research. Bureau explains to all the women who come through her office that the goal is financial autonomy. They lend between \$500 and \$5,000 at national prime lending rate plus two per cent, then re-invest all profit into the fund for others who need it.

The CLFW recently received \$200,000 from the Caisse Desjardins. Banks—Desjardins in particular to Quebec—are seeing the long-term investment and the short-term returns that go with microcredit. Not only are they making money on loans being paid back very quickly, but they are also expanding their clientele to people who had been previously excluded.

Although Canadians have adopted microcredit all across the country, the trend started in other places long before. Most notable was Muhammad Yunus' Grameen Model, created in 1983, which won the Nobel Peace Prize in 2006. The

Grameen Model involves the creation of groups of women in remote areas of India. The lack of traditional collateral posed a problem, but the Grameen system allowed for the women to rely on each other. Each group was allotted a certain amount of money and couldn't borrow more until the first loan was repaid. This initiative also involved banks becoming more accessible to people in rural areas. Prior to this, if you lived in rural India, it sometimes took a day on a bus to get to a bank. The Grameen Model took a long time to grow but it proved to be successful, with more women joining loan communities every day.

Sheila Arnopoulos, a former journalism professor at Concordia University, wrote a book on the phenomenon of microcredit in India. She connected women using microloans to fund businesses to the larger issues of social justice and progress. According to Arnopoulos, when women get together to talk about money, they discuss other issues as well.

The second wave of the women's movement that raged through Western countries in the second half of the 20th century has reached the Third World, said Arnopoulos, but it has changed to fit the women's mentality in India. The Indian women's movement is pro-family, pro-community and isn't fuelled by the ideology of feminism, per se.

In Western countries, according to Arnopoulos, the community aspect has to be emphasized and is something that our culture fails to promote. She said that we see ourselves as individuals and view our successes as very personal, whereas women in Third World countries take more pride in the growth of the community than anything else.

Although India's government passed laws in the early 1990s that were designed to give women a greater role in politics, they couldn't enforce them in remote areas. Local women picked up the slack and pushed for their rights in the economy and government of their villages. All this was a result of lower-class women getting together and talking to each other, with microcredit being their catalyst.

Arnopoulos said that there was a growing sense of hope in the communities she visited and the same can be said for the growing number of self-employed, independent women in Argenteuil. India or Canada, microcredit operations prove that the push for a greater role for women in the economy ought to become a world-wide phenomenon.

71%

of women in Quebec make under \$10 per hour.

58%

of women in Quebec are minimum wage workers.

578

women obtained help from CLFW d'Argenteuil to start a business since 2004.

65

loans have been given out by the CLFW, totalling \$234,525.

\$2.38

million: the total value of the CLFW businesses since 2004.

2.5

million workers in Canada live in rural areas.

23%

of these Canadian workers are entrepreneurs.

Chairlift reach summit

Brooklyn trio hit the big time with their second album

• BARBARA PAVONE

It took several years and several unsuccessful bands for Chairlift to reach their current state of infectious, indie synth-pop. Now with their roots firmly grounded, they're focusing on conquering the world.

Drummer Patrick Wimberly says he and singer Caroline Polachek met "around 2003, 2004" when she "came to a show of [his] band when [they] opened for Cat Power." Polachek soon joined Wimberly's band but, unfortunately, the project came to a halt only six months later.

Polachek then hooked up with Aaron Pfenning (guitar and vocals) and the first phase of Chairlift was born. The duo moved to New York when Polachek started attending New York University.

Coincidentally, Wimberly would soon find himself in the Big Apple as well.

In a twist of fate, Wimberly ran into Polachek and Pfenning in Union Square. It was all a matter of time before he "weaseled [his] way in."

"Why are we in a band?" Wimberly paused to reflect, then laughed. "Because we had to [be]."

The group's second album *Does You Inspire You* has been wooing fans across the globe. Their first single, "Bruises," was featured in a recent iPod Nano



Left to right: Caroline Polachek, Patrick Wimberly and Aaron Pfenning of Brooklyn's Chairlift.

commercial.

Their songs "usually start with Caroline or Aaron, who'll bring in a piece or somewhat completed song into the studio," where they take their final form. Their influences range from Art of Noise to

David Bowie to Boston R&B—not to mention, Wimberly said, "Stevie Wonder and Mariah Carey."

Why music? Wimberly says his passion comes from his parents, who "always bred creativity in me

and encouraged me to make my ideas come to life. Every aspect of being in a band allows for creativity."

But he adds that the "people aspect" is by far the highest perk. The experience wouldn't be the

same if it weren't for "all the awesome, creative, talented people we get to work with."

Catch Chairlift live on April 27 at Le National, 1220 Ste-Catherine St. E. Tickets are \$25 at door.

Enigma: dancing for a cause

Concordia students get down for charity

• LAURA GIACCARI

When Dawson student Melanie Weinstein lost a close family friend to cancer, she decided to do something to better the lives of cancer patients. Weinstein, a dancer, was determined to use her talent to make a difference.

Dancers, singers and students will come together on April 28 to raise money for cancer patients in an unparalleled performance titled *Enigma*.

All proceeds from *Enigma* will go to Vision of Hope, a charity founded by the Samberg family and dedicated to refurbishing the oncology wing of the Jewish General Hospital. Weinstein said she thought it would be appropriate to raise funds through dance because "it is all [she has] to offer as a form of art and entertainment."

After choosing a charity to benefit, Weinstein contacted two of her good friends, Concordia students Candice Simpson and Ashley Dana, to help put together the show.

The cast of *Enigma* is filled with young dancers

between the ages of 18 to 25. The show is geared towards raising youth awareness and getting the younger generation involved in charitable activities.

Enigma promises to display a variety of dancing throughout the night, from hip hop to contemporary to tap, and will showcase the talent of some of Montreal and Toronto's finest choreographers.

Co-producer and head choreographer Simpson, whose work has been known to move audiences to tears, says "through movement you get to express stories or anything that you cannot express verbally."

"Everyone has unanswered questions that deserve to be answered and stories that deserve to be told," she continued. "*Enigma* will tell these stories."

Enigma will take place at Club Soda, 1225 St-Laurent Blvd. on April 28. Doors open at 7 p.m. Tickets range from \$30-\$60 and all proceeds go to Vision of Hope. For more information or to purchase tickets email enigma2009@live.com



Enigma: everything from hip hop to tap. GRAPHIC ROSEN II



Shoppers get wet in debt in a scene from *Malls R Us*.

The deep end of debt

Decaying shopping malls and dried up equities at Cinema Politica

• CHRISTOPHER OLSON

It never fails. You make a movie about the looming collapse of the Canadian economy and a few months later it's already out of date.

In *Debt Trap*, to be screened at Cinema Politica next week, director David Adkin addresses everything from student debt to the payday loan scandal.

"Like an increasing number of Canadians, I went through my own issues with debt," said Adkin. "And being a documentary filmmaker in Canada, [...] I thought it was probably just the line of work that I was in. [But] then when I started to do a little reading about it, I started to realize that it wasn't just me. It was really reaching across all demographics."

Adkin is the production manager of the SkyWorks Charitable Foundation, which makes documentary films "to serve as community tools to mobilize people

around social change."

Like most people looking for career opportunities, Adkin turned to craigslist.ca to find subjects that he could interview.

"A lot of people, when I told them I was going to make a film on this subject, they said, 'You'll never get anyone to talk about their debt. They'd rather reveal their sex secrets or show you their lingerie than talk about their money situation.' But then I realized that it only takes a few people to come forward."

Adkin—who is already at work on a film attempting to explain the current economic crisis—blames changing social attitudes towards spending as a major contributor.

"These huge financial institutions have gone about very deliberately changing our values," he said. "They had a hard time convincing senior citizens back in the '60s and '70s to take credit cards because those older generations grew up with a strong

set of values that debt was bad and it was something you don't want."

This generation, however, has grown up with credit card debt as if it were a right of passage.

"I was one of those kids who spent every weekend at a shopping mall when I was a teenager," said Helene Klodawsky, whose film *Malls R Us* will be screened alongside *Debt Trap*. "So I understood that optimism to a certain extent."

In *Malls R Us*, Klodawsky explores both the naïve idealism that led to the construction of the first shopping malls to the calculating commercial interests that refined them to suck up every last penny from shoppers.

Part of malls' success is in maintaining the illusion that they serve a constructive and—more importantly—communal purpose, Klodawsky said.

Shopping malls are, however, proving to be an unsustainable business venture

as "people are trying to save money and are questioning shopping habits," she continued.

The increasing abandonment of these once vibrant areas of commercial retail "not only speaks about a dying mall," Klodawsky said, "it can also speak about a dying neighbourhood."

Ironically, malls may bring more people together after their closure.

"Some urbanists are trying to figure out what to do with these places, [such as] turning them into schools and colleges," Klodawsky said. "I've even heard, strangely enough, of turning malls into prisons, because that's an up-and-up industry in the States."

Directors David Adkin and Helene Klodawsky will introduce *Debt Trap* and *Malls R Us* on April 14 at 7:30 p.m. in Room H-110, 1455 de Maisonneuve Blvd. W. For a full list of screenings, check out cinemapolitica.org/concordia.

The
DOWN-LOWEvents listings
April 7-13**DANCE/THEATRE**

Blue Light Burlesque with Mlle Oui Oui
Encore
Wednesday, doors open at 7 p.m.
Petit Campus
57 Prince Arthur St. E.
Tickets: \$20

ENDINGS

Multimedia performance choreographed by Zoja Smutny combining movement, video, sound and text.
Friday and Saturday, 8 p.m.
Studio 303
372 Ste-Catherine St. W., 3rd floor
Tickets: \$10 students, \$12 regular

ART

AS MUCH AS POSSIBLE GIVEN THE TIME AND SPACE ALLOTTED
Until April 17
Leonard and Bina Ellen Gallery
1400 de Maisonneuve Blvd. W.

FILM

Spike Lee retrospective for the Vues d'Afrique Festival
Wednesday until April 26
Cinémathèque Québécoise
335 de Maisonneuve Blvd. E.
Full schedule at cinematheque.qc.ca

MUSIC

World/Inferno Friendship Society
With Winslow
Tuesday at 8 p.m.
Petit Campus
57 Prince Arthur St. E.
Tickets: \$15

MUTEK Tour Launch
Celebrating the 10th anniversary of Montreal's cutting-edge electronic music festival.
With The Mole, Pier Bucci, Guillaume & the Coutu Dumonts
Wednesday at 10 p.m.
Agora Hydro-Quebec, Coeur des Sciences
175 President-Kennedy Ave.
Tickets: \$10

Mt Eerie
With Wyrd Visions
Friday at 8:30 p.m.
Il Motore
179 Jean-Talon St. W.
Tickets: \$10 advance, \$12 at the door

Artists Against Apartheid VII
Benefit jazz concert for Palestine.
Sunday at 8 p.m.
La Sala Rossa
4848 St. Laurent
Tickets: \$5-10

—compiled by Madeline Coleman

Cutting the cord

Charlotte Cornfield takes her acoustic act on the road



Cornfield and her guitar get set to go cross-continental this summer. PHOTO ANA DJAPA

• ANA DJAPA

At a time when contemporary music is overcome by electronic sampling, looping and overall computer production, it is refreshing to come across an artist who is completely divorced from the prevailing reign.

Concordia student Charlotte Cornfield's musical aesthetic is invigoratingly organic.

The 20-year-old Toronto native has already made her mark in the Montreal music scene and across Canada. Since releasing her debut EP *It's Like That Here* in 2007, she has had airplay on CBC, toured eastern Canada and performed at numerous folk festivals. Simultaneously sombre and playful, her eat-your-heart-out tracks echo like true folk-rock classics.

Next month will see the release of her second EP, *Collage Light*, and the kick-off of a North American tour that will take her across the conti-

nent and end in Los Angeles.

Cornfield's intimate solo performances are offset by her collaborations with other talented local musicians, particularly fellow Concordia music student Stephen Tchir. Together, the multi-instrumental duo has the stage presence of a full band. Cornfield alone plays piano, French horn, guitar and, most importantly, percussion.

"I've always been writing, since I was very young," Cornfield explained. "[I went from] making up lyrics for songs already written to eventually creating my own melodies."

Moving to Montreal in 2006 was the catalyst for Cornfield's musical ambitions.

"Here I connected with so many people and was completely inspired by the city," she said. For the past year, she could be found all around town performing in at least two venues a week; she makes regular appearances at Le Divan Orange and hosts weekly open mics at Arts Café.

What started as weekly performances at her elementary school has evolved into a mature and seasoned style. Cornfield creates a multifaceted sound, sometimes working with little more than her unfeigned voice and acoustic guitar. Her influences (Joni Mitchell, Leonard Cohen and Velvet Underground, to name a few) are evident in her compositions but never overshadow Cornfield's unique voice. The singer is reluctant to classify herself.

"The only reason I would be considered a folk musician is because I carry around an acoustic guitar," she said, "but my belief is in catchy hooks and insightful lyrics. Sometimes I just need to rock out. If you really want to, you can call my music pop."

The *Catch the Bus 2009* tour starts May 14 at Green Room, 5386 St-Laurent Blvd. to promote the release of *Collage Light* EP.

spins

The Obits
I Blame You

Sub Pop



Finally, the debut record from the driving, Wipers-esque surf rock group led by the former singer of Hot Snakes, one of the greatest pissed-off rock bands of the millenium. I'm happy to report that he still has one of the most urgent and passionate voices in left-field rock. Rick Froberg doesn't stray too far from the sound of Hot Snakes or Drive Like Jehu, and fans will relish the consistency.

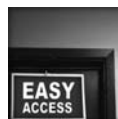
But for those of you who feel that originality is tantamount to quality, turn away. There is no innovation on this record, but that's the point. To hell with originality! You don't look to acid-punk legends like Froberg to hear something

innovative. Go ahead and throw on some Animal Collective if you want something innovative. I'll stick to passionate and powerful guitar rock over bloopy-droopy genre-pushing indie rock any day.

3.5/5
—Cody Hicks

Winslow
Easy Access

Independent



I'll always love the Ramones, The Clash, and the Sex Pistols. Even Blink-182 gets the occasional nostalgic nod. But Winslow, whose "cock-rock" sound is reminiscent of bad kissers and juvenile goings-on, have yet to prove their worth. Opener "Another Stiff in a Jacket" conjures images of skate parks and sunny days, but the sound holds no intrigue.

It's angry, it's loud—congratulations, you're a punk band! But punk was about more than anger; it was controversial, not fluffy. Blink-182 rolled in on the wave that ushered in a new punk-pop sound but, listening to Winslow's debut EP, *Easy Access*, I'm not sure that's a good thing. "Fill Me With Paint And Call Me Picasso" may be the worst track of the 6-song EP. I'm halfway through and I'm already bored. Following in the footsteps of Montreal's fluke-success Simple Plan, this band is nothing special.

1/5
—Joelle Lemieux

Les Ekorchés
IV Demons

Indica Records



Metal doesn't usually age well. Sure, early

Metallica records still sound as good today as they did to your uncle back in '85, but the band (what's left of it) hasn't farted out anything relevant in over a decade. The principal holds true for most "adult" metal interpretations that play with instruments and timbre, not to mention that once Pat Boone does a lounge cover of your song things are pretty much over. You wouldn't expect Les Ekorchés, a super-group of aged Montreal metal figures (Michael Langevin of Voivod, etc.) to actually rock. I spent the first four tracks trying to figure out why there was so much bass. Then I read the insert—vocals, drums, acoustic guitar, cello. Production could have been a little more raw, or maybe my Anglo ears just felt awkward with the metalized French, but this album is as heavy as the lineup can get.

3.5/5
—Tristan LaPointe

Art immersion

Concordia art students take the plunge with *Undisciplined Practices*



Having a pool party at *Undisciplined Practices*. PHOTO WILLY LOWRY

• WILLY LOWRY

The vacant swimming pool and grungy bathrooms of Bain St-Michel are not a conventional venue for an art exhibition, but the eclectic work that makes up *Undisciplined Practices* is a perfect fit for the space.

The brainchild of a collective of emerging artists from Concordia's studio arts program, ARTX, the exhibit uses the unique space as a catalyst to challenge the status quo of contemporary society.

"It was a really fun process working with this space," said Sally Lee, a graduate student and teaching assistant in Concordia's faculty of fine arts. "I think it's been transformed really nicely."

Art is carefully strewn across the pool, in the bathroom and in the showers. Each piece works well in its place and the show takes advantage of the unique building.

The 15 artists featured in *Undisciplined Practices* all present vastly different works and views on contemporary society.

"I look at the show as a gathering of real-

ly stubborn undergraduates," said Elif Saydem, whose piece, "Quilt," is in the show. "The theme is there is no theme."

Of note is a work by fourth-year student Bob Jeffreys, who created an installation using cornstarch, speakers, an amplifier and a CD player to "question the relationship between the external world and our internal reactions." The result is a constantly changing amorphous mass that bounces off the vibrating speakers. It is both thought provoking and visually stimulating.

Undisciplined Practices focuses more on

social commentary than aesthetic value. None of the pieces are "easy"; each work requires thought and energy to appreciate. The show is a reaction to globalization and the increasing accessibility of information, with a focus on the abstract and intellectually challenging.

"Things don't always have to be literal," said Saydem.

Undisciplined Practices runs until Monday at Bain St-Michel, 5300 St-Dominique St., open 12-6 p.m. every day. Admission is free.

Life outside of the womb

Demon Knights

• CODY HICKS

This column comes with a bit of disclaimer: prepare to be confused but titillated. Practicing witches and wizards, prepare to be offended. But if you're into positive energy and haven't quite made up your mind about the occult, mark your calendars: from 11 p.m. 'til sunrise this April 18, Lab Synthèse will be transformed into a womb-tent for the first Demon Night extravaganza.

But what is a Demon Night? When contacting the purveyors of said night, I found they were as confused as me.

Let's meet the minds behind this consciousness-expanding

event. Jason Harvey is a multi-disciplinary Concordia artist whose body of work is a rejection of what he calls the "bro-ification" of modern society by Bluetooth headset-wearing businessmen and jocks. His cousin, Michael Farsky, is a towering Czech ex-pat who sings with local noise freaks Black Mammoth and moonlights as the bespectacled bouncer at the venerable St-Laurent watering hole Korova.

Despite the name and the fact that there will be a live demon and free tie-dyed cult robes for all who enter, this ritual isn't satanic. In fact, it has a positive message.

"It's nice to do things that are

not in an awful bar," says Jason. "It's not so much about conjuring literal demons, but about ridding yourself of your demons." This event is less an occult evening and more of a funhouse mirror view of the nastiness of Western culture.

The idea is to exorcize your stress with a laundry list of performances, installations and celebrity appearances, including what has been described as a "Matt Damon digital oracle" and a robot DJ, programmed to generate a high-octane party.

But don't expect an after dark tam-tams. There won't be any hippie-dippie drum circle bands playing. Most exciting, in my books, is the unveiling of

Horace Hawk: yet another alter ego of Floridian deep-psychedelic wizard Andy Summers, the only artist who I've ever seen make a Britney Spears headset mic look cool.

Also appearing will be self-described "tape-slime kingpins" Wasted Nymph, who apparently have the strongest attachment to the dark arts of all the performers of the evening. Finally, there will be a performance by Black Mammoth, featuring both Jason and Mike. I can't tell you what to expect—no two shows are alike—but I'm sure there will be life-affirming violence and some form of audience participation.

If 11 p.m. is way past your

bedtime, there will be a full-scale "Cuddle Wing" for those who need to recharge before the sunrise trek to the top of the mountain.

If this all sounds a little overwhelming and confusing, I'll assure you again that you're not alone. At five bucks though, it's really a steal of a deal. Show up with an open mind and give in to the most positive Demon Night I've ever heard of. The only rules are no parents and no haters. Oh, and no rules.

Demon Night goes down at 11 p.m. Saturday, April 18 at Lab Synthèse 435 Beaubien St. W. The \$5 admission includes a free robe and necklace!

Interactive fiction's internet revival

It all started when the father of Stephen Granade—a physicist who works in R&D at Advanced Optical Systems, which makes “space qualified manufacturing”—came home one day with a bundle of games for an old TSR-80 home computer.

Unlike *Pong* or *Super Mario Bros.*, these games were completely text-based—but unlike most books, they required the reader’s collaboration to get from point A to point B through a series of commands inputted by the player. Say you find a dresser drawer: type “open,” and you’ll be given a list of objects. Type “take,” and that item will be placed in your inventory.

In a stroke of pure Zen, type, “Who am I?” and you’ll be politely reminded which character you are currently inhabiting.

Although early interactive fiction games had him playing “guess the verb,” Granada was already hooked.

"I started writing them about two hours after I played my first one," he says, although thinking about his early output makes him blush. "[I've written] around 20 to date, but only six of them I'll still admit to writing."

In the 1990s, Granade sold *Losing Your Grip*, a piece of shareware that only registered 50 copies.

“Not a lot, clearly, but enough that I was glad to have done it,” he admits.

Jim Munroe, a science fiction author and filmmaker who began writing interactive fiction in 2002, started playing them when he was 12 years old.

"The amazing thing [about interactive fiction] is that you can actually make a game just using your writing skills," says Munroe. "The tools have been getting better and better in regards to helping people who are not such natural programmers."

Inform 7, a piece of homebrew software, based on the original programming that was used to make commercial games in the 80s, was reverse engineered and created largely on a volunteer basis by the fan community.

“If you grew up with these games, there’s something inherently engaging to create something in that same format, even if it’s just an ephemeral digital code,” says Munroe. “People who see text games in the context of gaming in general, they see it as kind of minimalist.”

“It’s kind of like the poetry of the game scene,” he added.

Though the original games in the 1980s were on the sparse side in terms of prose, “a lot of people are interested in seeing it more as a literary form than as a computer game.”

Like all forms of fiction, “you have to



GRAPHIC PHOU CAMVAN

engage the superior processing power of your own brain to process all those visuals, so it just comes out better than if you have a painstakingly realized 3D environment, and not to mention [they're] enormously more difficult to make," says Munroe.

Granade is the founder of the Annual Interactive Fiction Competition, now in its 14th year, which puts out a yearly list of the best games.

“It’s kind of like the poetry of the game scene.”

"[It's] less about competition than recognizing good games and encouraging new ones," says Granade.

“Like a lot of things, if you don’t have a deadline for something, you don’t do it,” says Munroe, whose second interactive fiction game, *Everybody Dies*, won third place in this year’s competition, and was reviewed in *The Onion’s AV Club* and *Variety* magazine.

The golden era of interactive fiction was the '80s, says Granade. Back then Infocom, the lead manufacturer and distributor of games at the time, was selling 600,000 titles a year, and authors like Douglas Adams were publishing interactive ver-

sions of their novels, like *The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy*, released on the Apple II.

“[The audience is] definitely not nearly as large as it was in the 1980s,” says Granade, whereas today that number is probably in the hundreds.

“What is true is that there are more games, and more good games, available each year than there were back [then].

— Jim Munroe,
interactive fiction author

Even if the audience has gotten much smaller, the games have gotten much better, both technically and artistically."

At the same time that interactive fiction was building a following, books with branching plot lines were starting to gain popularity as well.

“There’s a definite link between them,” says Granade. “But *Choose Your Own Adventure* books were far more random [and] most of them prized having a lot of very different story lines and endings over one coherent story.”

"I prefer text-games," says Munroe, "with *Choose Your Own Adventure* games, it's really clear there's a finite number of

things you can do; you can do this thing or you could do that thing, whereas with text adventures, there's just a prompt. You have to decide what you want to do on your own, even if there may be only two choices to make, that illusion is more successfully carried off."

“The big trick is to structure your game so that it supports what the player’s likely to want to do,” says Granade. “In a lot of cases, because of the power of narrative, players will cooperate with the game. They only really start trying to break things when they’re not making progress or enjoying themselves.”

Munroe is currently planning to do an interactive non-fiction game during a trip to the Toronto Game Jam in May, where participants are encouraged to make a game from scratch in just three days.

"It's a similar thing to the interactive fiction community," says Munroe, who suspects he'll be the only one whose game will be based on true events, and will be written, instead of programmed.

Visit the Interactive Fiction Database for a list of games at ifdb.tads.org, and for a list of previous winners of the Annual Interactive Fiction Competition, visit ifcomp.org. Download *Everybody Dies* at nomediakings.org.

Science fiction zine makes the case for genre fiction

• CHRISTOPHER OLSON

A “gloaming” is a transitional space where anything can happen, and where dark and unusual things often do.

It’s also the name of a science fiction zine founded by recent Concordia creative writing graduate Mila Rishkova and creative writing Masters student Angela Roberts. While Rishkova writes horror and suspense, Roberts specializes in science fiction and fantasy.

“We did a lot of free association [when coming up with a name],” says Roberts. “We were looking for something that represents the space between worlds and is unbounded by time, where science fiction, fantasy and horror fit in.”

The two started talking about creating their own magazine in an advanced prose fiction class in 2006.

“We discussed it in class and [discovered we] had the same interests,” she says. “Concordia didn’t have anything like *The.Gloaming* and we wanted an outlet for science fiction writing.”

“I was able to write science fiction and horror for some classes and although it was never directly discouraged, I have to say that it wasn’t exactly encouraged either,” says Rishkova. “Most professors understood my penchant



It’s always gloomiest before *The.Gloaming*. GRAPHIC EMILIE OLSON

for the darker and more genre-oriented side of literature and accepted it, but not without warning me that I had certain adjustments to make in order to get a good grade in class.

“In my opinion, most teachers feel compelled to steer their students in a more literary direction. In my case, [they] didn’t always succeed.”

Roberts says there’s a public misconception towards what science fiction is all about; people assume it’s limited to stories about

space ships, extraterrestrials and cyborgs.

“Not that we don’t occasionally indulge in that aspect of it,” she admits. “Cyborg stories can be fun to play with, but what people often forget is that science fiction is also speculative fiction. All you have to do is read the first few pages of Margaret Atwood’s *A Handmaid’s Tale*. She might tell you it’s not science fiction, but we all know better.”

Roberts and Rishkova do all the layout, promotion and artwork themselves with copy

editor Sarah Curci, an English literature grad, and in-house artist Adriana Coluccio, who received her bachelor’s in visual arts.

“Mind you, we have several faithful writers,” says Roberts.

The majority are Concordia students, although not all of them are studying creative writing.

“We’re changing to an online-only format next issue,” she says, partly because the printing costs come out of their own wallets, but also because readers have been asking for it to come out more often.

“[We want to] open the magazine to a more international audience who might not have submitted before because they lived too far away or weren’t members of the Montreal scene,” Roberts explains.

Copies of the issue will still be available in the form of print-on-demand.

So if you’re into cyborgs and aliens—though not necessarily in that order, or even at all—check out *The.Gloaming*.

The deadline for submissions for the next issue is June 14. Send yours to the.gloaming@hotmail.com. Visit thegloaming.com for future updates. Copies of the first four issues are available at the Concordia Solidarity Co-op Bookstore, 2150 Bishop St. and La Kafein, 1429a Bishop St.

The ironic chef

Vegan cookbook battles bitchin’ kitchen

• GINGER COONS

Go-Go is so-so



Vegan a Go-Go
Sarah Kramer
Arsenal Pulp Press
September 2008
256 pp
\$17.95

The first cookbook I bought after going vegan was Sarah Kramer and Tanya Barnard’s *How It All Vegan* in 2002. It taught me the wonders of nutritional yeast, Bragg’s and tamari sauce. It actually managed to make veganism seem easy and tasty, not just an uphill battle for the sake of morals and health.

Her latest follow-up is *Vegan a Go-Go*.

Vegan a Go-Go is a little, bitty vegan travel cookbook. I had high hopes.

It’s small enough to fit into a large pocket and looks just as adorable as all her previous works. While the aesthetics are nice, there’s a problem with the premise.

Being vegan at home takes some preparation, lots of fresh food and at least a little cooking space. Being the vegan when all your friends go to a restaurant is even more difficult. It’s sometimes awkward asking the server picky questions and hoping the kitchen staff don’t resent leaving the cheese off the pizza. Being vegan in a city you don’t know well is even harder.

I started with *Vegan a Go-Go* at home. Leafing through, I noticed that the majority

of the recipes are pulled from Kramer’s previous cookbooks, like that of an absolutely spectacular mushroom soup—it’s well worth making, even if it isn’t new. Granted, there were a few new recipes, but not nearly enough.

Of course, the worth of a travel book can’t be judged at home, so I took it on the road. *Vegan a Go-Go* got tossed into the back of the car in anticipation of a roadtrip off-island—unfortunately, it stayed in the backseat the whole trip.

Vegan a Go-Go is, sadly, not a practical book for travel. Almost every recipe requires access to a properly equipped kitchen. If there isn’t a stove close at hand, you’ll be out of luck.

Save yourself some trouble: If you want to eat vegan on the road, head to happy-cow.net and scope out the vegan restaurants in whichever city you’re headed to. If you want a vegan cookbook, pick up a copy of *How It All Vegan*. It’s got way better mileage than *Vegan a Go-Go*.

• STEPHANIE LALEGGIA

Bitchin’ in the Kitchen and in life



Bitchin’ Kitchen Cookbook
Nadia Giosia Skirt!
December 2008
224 pp
\$19.95

Nadia G’s *Bitchin’ Kitchen Cookbook* leaves you hot and speechless... or is that sex?

This 28-year-old Italian-Canadian from our own hometown of Montreal manages to integrate food and sex—and I don’t mean the corny 1990s strawberry-covered chocolate-before-foreplay routine.

Her cookbook is one that all single and relationship-scarred ladies should have, not only in their kitchen to gratify every

craving and awkward one-night-stands, but on their bedsides to boost them up when they’re down.

Nadia G seems to have a recipe for every kind of man problem you could think of. From “One-Night-Stand Breakfasts” to “Break-up Bonanza” to “Impress the In-laws,” this Montrealer has a chapter to deal with your every issue. Confront problems with delicious home-cooked meals instead of yelling and throwing slippers.

She refers to her Italian mother’s “witchcraft cooking”; never using a measuring cup, using instead what God gave her. Not only is her book full of seductive and mouth-watering dishes (trust me on this one), but chockful of life lessons and the kind of cutthroat truth you would normally only get from your Sicilian grandmother.

Like every Italian, Nadia G doesn’t believe in margarine or the idea that you can’t put Parmesan cheese on seafood pasta. What she does believe in is good quality meat and the different types of salt you can (and can’t?) have on a dish.

Though it may not be apparent from her very sexy photos, Nadia G has values, ones that most Italians can relate to. Although she believes one-night stands and morning-after breakfasts are necessary, she knows that when your “mudder” has a bad feeling about the guy you’re bringing to Christmas dinner, out the door he goes; family is more important.



GRAPHIC VIVIEN LEUNG

No soil for oil

Renowned environmentalist Vandana Shiva sounds a call to action

• JUSTIN BROMBERG

The world is facing a triple crisis, according to Dr. Vandana Shiva—including food insecurity, peak oil and climate change—and what she has to say in *Soil Not Oil* will either have you nodding in helpless agreement or deliver you a call to action.

Hailing from India, the world-renowned environmental leader has a clear message: we can either live a little longer at the expense of everyone else or fix the problem now, live a truly organic lifestyle that employs people instead of machines and decide that development is not defined as industrialization.

“The interesting thing is, while writing this book, I presented it as the desirable alternative,” said Shiva from her home in New Delhi. “[But] this current crisis is going to make this an economic imperative. People are simply not going to be able to eat.”

Shiva argues that the so-called industrialized countries have for far too long embraced a mechanistic

economy based on industrial technologies that assume limitless growth in a world of limited resources, and they’re doing so at the expense of the world’s most impoverished countries and species, a process Shiva dubs “eco-imperialism.”

Many of our solutions to repair the damage will only delay any concrete action, argues Shiva. Carbon credits, for instance, allow rich countries to “sell” their pollution and reduce their emission levels, but it actually increases output on all fronts.

The tragedy of the situation, says Shiva, is that the communities, regions, countries and peoples who have been systematically abused throughout history are the ones who are coming up with solutions and fighting from the grassroots, perhaps in part because they have everything to lose.

Shiva foresees one of two possible outcomes: a violent disintegration of society, or a higher level of consciousness that will “use the crisis to make the transition I’m talk-

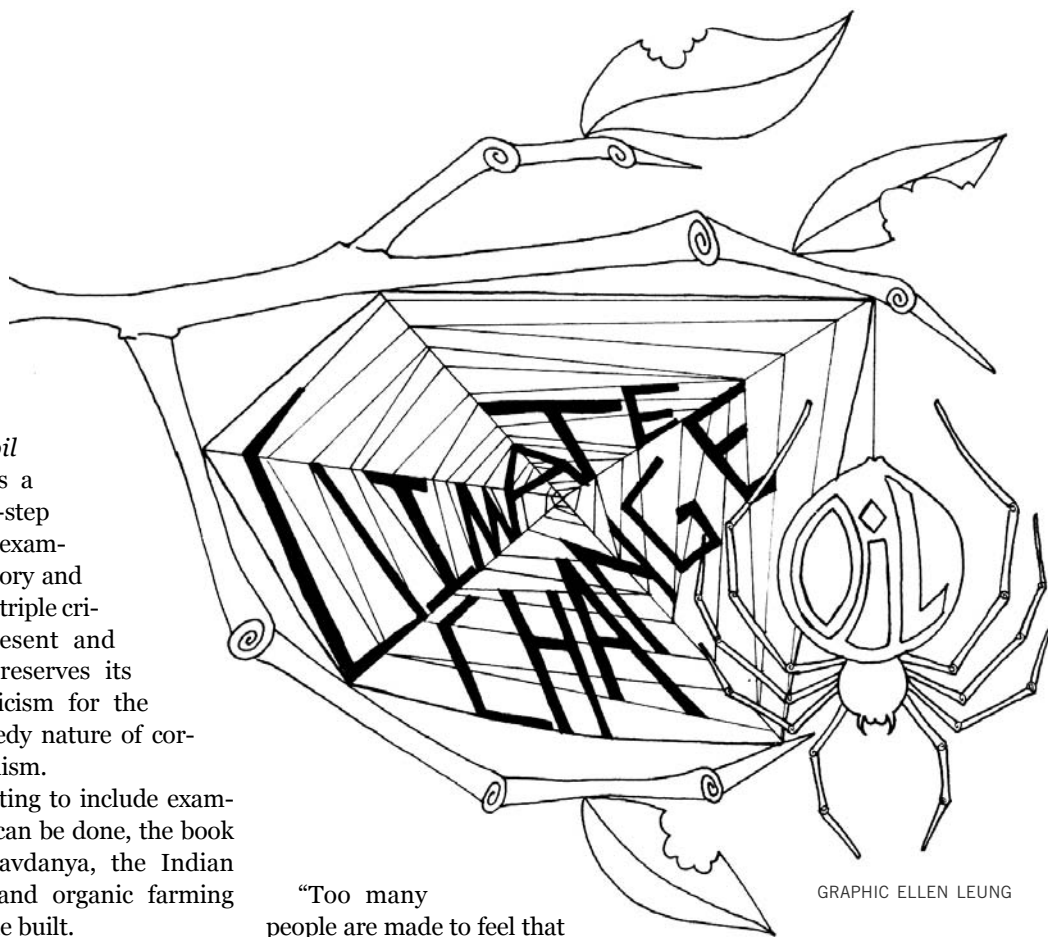
ing about.”

In that respect, *Soil Not Oil* takes a very step-by-step approach to examining the history and impact of the triple crisis—past, present and future—and reserves its harshest criticism for the wasteful, greedy nature of corporate capitalism.

Not forgetting to include examples of what can be done, the book highlights Navdanya, the Indian biodiversity and organic farming movement she built.

“Navdanya’s work over the past 20 years has shown that we can grow more food and provide higher incomes to farmers without destroying the environment and killing peasants. We can lower the costs of production while increasing output.”

As for our own country, “Canada could be leading in these areas [of development]. It has no excuse to not be renewable.



GRAPHIC ELLEN LEUNG

“Too many people are made to feel that their ideas don’t matter,” she said. “What we need is impact science; partly to create, but also to have the power to deal with the brutality of the imperialists. They can go after individuals, but a collective is much stronger and is very much what is needed.”

We thus owe it to ourselves, on the most basic of human levels, to rise above this challenge. We have the knowledge to do so—that

much is certain. But we owe it ever more so to the Earth, to those who have suffered and to those that stand to suffer.



Soil Not Oil
Vandana Shiva
Southend Press
February 2009
160 pp
\$23.19

Lit Writ

Afterwards

• J.R.A CASEY

“She said to me, out of nowhere, well, not out of nowhere, it was just afterwards in that quiet space where there’s still some faint something, y’know? Some electricity left over from before.

“You feel that static charge, all caught up in and ‘round you, right? So, she turns towards me, her hair was blonde and brown at the same time, what do they call it? ‘Strawberry,’ right? Yeah, so she turns to me, I couldn’t really see her hair, it was dark in her room, and she says that it feels like she’s died twice. She says it with this crooked smile, like a smirk, and I don’t know what to say to this.

“I know it’s tradition, or not tradition, it’s customary to talk afterwards and say cute little things that don’t really mean anything, just utter nonsense knowing nothing will stick. Afterwards you can talk with the certainty that your words aren’t being remembered, like when you write on the mirror after a shower, you can see what you wrote, but it goes away when the steam dies down. But she says this thing, this two deaths thing.

“I didn’t know what she meant by two deaths, so I started thinking and trying to figure it out, and I thought of, what’s it called, the petit mort thing. Isn’t that what

an orgasm is called sometimes?

“But I figured, no, she doesn’t seem like the kind of girl that makes allusions to other languages, but I don’t know her that well. So I ask her what she means by two deaths, and she says that it’s like she’s lived twice, two lifetimes have gone by and they’ve ended, and I’m starting to wonder about this girl that talks this way afterwards.

“Maybe this was her custom, her routine. I thought maybe this was an old bit she had with an ex-boyfriend, some sort of inside joke that I was meant to feel curious about, and I did. I felt curious.

“I wanted to know what kind of person says stuff like that? I mean anytime, not just after the fact, but who is so cryptic and self-serious and, y’know, I wanted to accuse her of something, or I wanted to throw something out there just as obscure like, ‘I feel like my heart only beats in the morning,’ or something, y’know? Beat her at her own game, right?

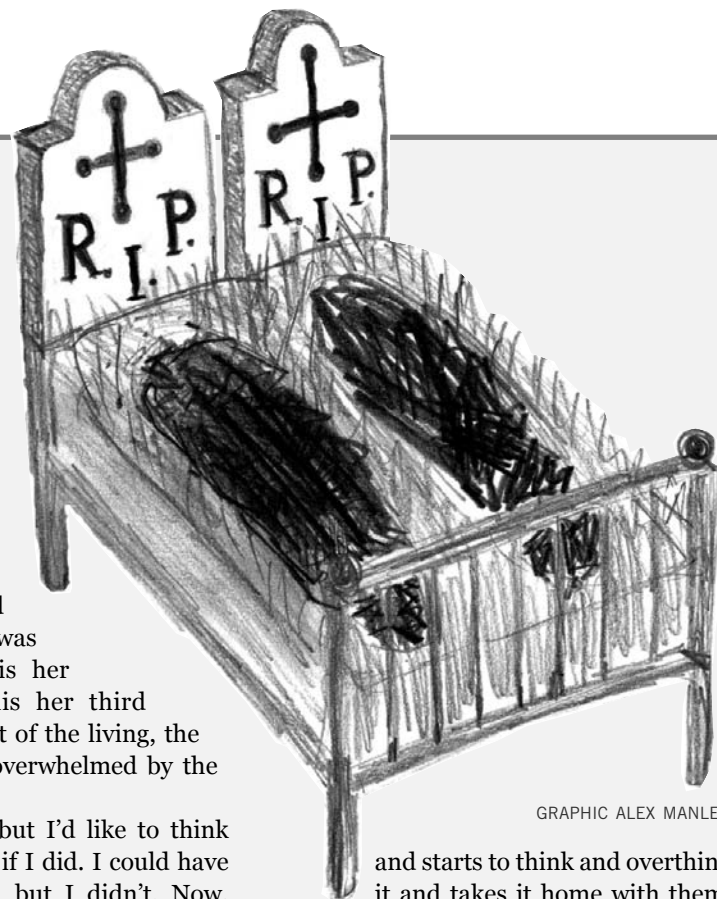
“But I didn’t. I didn’t say much of anything. I stayed awake and the girl who died two deaths slept and I left her place just before the sun came up, the birds started making noise and that was it, but I kept thinking about it. She had made an impression, y’know? Afterwards. The before part was good but forgettable, but it was the

afterwards that struck me as, maybe not important, but memorable.

“It was a couple days later that I thought of what I should have asked, because, she said she died two deaths and she had lived two lifetimes, and I should have asked what she was living now? Was this her third birth? Was this her third death? Was I just part of the living, the middle bit that gets overwhelmed by the end?

“I didn’t ask her, but I’d like to think she’d have an answer if I did. I could have called her I suppose, but I didn’t. Now, every time there’s an afterwards with someone new, like someone I’ve just met, I kind of want to say that I feel like I’ve died twice. I want to take her line and use it, but I don’t.

“Usually I don’t say much afterwards, usually I’m just quiet and let whoever I’m with lead the way, set the tone. I like to hear what others have to say, but I’m always very cautious about what I say, just in case someone takes what I say seriously,



GRAPHIC ALEX MANLEY

and starts to think and overthink it and takes it home with them, like I did with the girl who died twice.”

He stops speaking now. I heard very little; the cars on the street below are shushing loudly by and all I can think about is how early I have to be up tomorrow morning and strawberries and his honest failure to make me cum.

To submit your fiction or poetry to the Lit Writ column, email them to lit@thelink.concordia.ca.

Summer leagues at Concordia

Concordia Roller Hockey League

Advanced Registration: April 6 to 10
(For returning teams only)
Registration: Starts April 13, 4 p.m.
(New teams and individuals)
Fee: \$100 per person/ \$700 per team
Season: May 11 to Aug. 11
League coordinator: Ray Kirkwood

Concordia Ball Hockey League

Advanced Registration: April 6 to 9
(For returning teams only)
Registration: Starts April 16, 4 p.m.
(New teams and individuals)
Fee: \$100 per person/ \$700 per team
Season: May 13 to Aug. 13
League coordinator: Mike Rinaldi

Concordia Ultimate

Registration: Starts March 23
Fee: \$60 per person/ \$600 per team
Season: April 19 to Aug. 9
League coordinators:
Bobby Lee/ Lindsey Patterson

Concordia Intramural Outdoor Soccer

Registration: Starts April 7 (All levels)
Fee: \$50 per person/ \$500 per team
Season: April 28 to Aug. 11
League coordinator: Atish Woozageer

*All interested players and teams can register at:
Campus Recreation Office—PA-104
Athletic Complex, Loyola Campus
7200 Sherbrooke St. W.
Office hours: Mon.-Fri., 9 a.m.-9 p.m.
All registration is first come, first serve. Players must pay the fee at registration.*

Don't forget:

Registration for EV Fitness Centre, Spring Instructional Activities and Winter class extensions will begin Wednesday, April 1.

Regular registration for the Summer Le Gym session will start as of Monday, April 6.



This year marked Concordia's first time participating in the two-year-old CIS curling championships. PHOTO KERRY LAUGHLIN

A league of their own

Concordia's performance at curling nationals fuels a desire for a Quebec university league

• CLARE RASPOPOW

Attending the Canadian Interuniversity Sport national women's curling championships, held in Montreal this year, was a first for Concordia University, but Kerry Laughlin, manager of the curling club, hopes it will be the first of many.

This year's team—made up of Brittany O'Rourke, Sasha Beauchamp, Kristen Richard and Erin Ryan—finished the championships with a 2-3 record, a finish Laughlin is very proud of.

"We did well," she said. "We could have done a bit better, but it was a learning experience."

Laughlin said the key to improvement is to encourage a more competitive sporting environment for curlers in Quebec universities.

"There's a disadvantage in Quebec because there's no conference league" and, therefore, a lack of competition, explained Laughlin. She

added that she hopes the situation will change soon.

"I've talked with the curling coach at McGill," she said. "We've had some informal conversations. Over the next couple of years we're going to work to get more kids involved [in curling]."

A curling conference league would allow

"There's a disadvantage in Quebec, because there's no conference league."

*—Kerry Laughlin,
coach of the Concordia curling club*

Quebec's university level curlers to regularly compete against one another and sharpen their skills. Right now, most of the curlers who have approached Laughlin—including this year's team—have come from already established, independent teams.

"Three of the girls [who competed in this year's] CIS championship have played together for the past three years," Laughlin said.

O'Rourke, Beauchamp and Richard all represented Team Quebec in the junior curling nationals from '07 to '09. All four girls from this year's team are first-year students and will be back next year.

While Laughlin is happy to have such experienced players representing Concordia, she's still striving to stimulate interest from students wishing to get into the sport.

"I've had some people call me to learn how to curl," said Laughlin. "But we're not at the point where I've had enough people to start a league."

In the meantime, Laughlin looks forward to the CIS championships next year.

"This year was in Montreal; there were no travelling costs. Next year we'll have to be more prepared."



Kristen Richard, Brittany O'Rourke, Sasha Beauchamp and Erin Ryan made up this year's team. All four girls on this year's team have a lot of experience on the ice. PHOTO KERRY LAUGHLIN

Tip of the hat



Students receive awards and cheer each other on at the 2008-09 Student-Athlete Awards Banquet. PHOTO PABLO BRAVO

Concordia's top Stingers honoured at Student-Athlete Awards

• LES HONYWILL

A year of hard work and dedication culminated in one night of awards for Concordia student-athletes last Friday.

The 2009 Student-Athlete Awards Banquet saw Nikita Chicoine and Damian Buckley take home the honours for Student-Athletes of the Year, while David Tremblay and Jackie Tittley were named Rookies of the Year.

Chicoine, who wrestles in the 67 kg category for the Stingers, was honoured with the Sally Kemp Award. This comes after an impressive campaign last year for which she took home Rookie of the Year honours; Chicoine won three tournaments in 2008-09 including a bronze medal at this year's Canadian Interuniversity Sport nationals.

"It was surprising, I was speechless," Chicoine said, who conceded that, despite the award, she didn't live up to her own expectations. "Last year I was second, this year I was first, so I'm expecting first next year."

Along with top female athlete, Chicoine picked up the Bourse olympique Radio-Canada for high performance in academics as well as athletics.

Ultimately Chicoine said she hopes to compete in the Vancouver 2010 Olympics, but before that she's looking to continue her success at the coming world championships.

Also bringing home Athlete of the Year hardware for a second year in a row was

Damian Buckley, all-star point guard for the Stingers basketball team.

"It's a great honour to be Male Athlete of the Year for the second time in a row," Buckley said. "It's quite a feat, to be honest, because we have so many great athletes here at Concordia."

Buckley was a unanimous selection as Quebec conference Most Valuable Player and first-team All-Canadian. Coinciding with his personal accomplishments was leading the Stingers to the conference title and a berth at the CIS national championships.

"It's tough to be a student-athlete," Buckley said, "but this is what you live for. University life: it's the best period of your life and Concordia is a great place to experience that."

Buckley admitted Concordia wasn't his first choice when he was looking to go to university.

"I wasn't planning on coming to Concordia," Buckley said. "I actually signed a scholarship to go to the States, but I decided to stay and play with my brother [Dwayne Buckley]. It was the best decision I made, to become a Stinger."

Concordia also honoured two of its young stars, wrestler David Tremblay and rugby centre Jackie Tittley, with Rookie of the Year Awards.

Tremblay, who wrestles in the 61 kg category, took home the gold medal and was named Outstanding Male Competitor at the

CIS Championships in February. Tremblay outscored opponents by a whopping 39-3 in the tournament including overwhelming his opponent, Simon Fraser's Raj Virdi, 6-1 in the gold medal match.

Success didn't come easy for Tremblay, who said he puts in an average of 35-40 hours a week into training alone.

"I train two to three times a day, seven days a week, so training is a big part of my life," Tremblay said, adding that he wrestles for four clubs, including the national team. "I train hard and that led to most of my accomplishments this year. I've still got some things to work on, but it's been a good season."

Fellow Rookie of the Year Jackie Tittley also had an incredible season. The former national under-20 rugby team captain scored four tries in five games, along with kicking 10 converts and 10 penalty goals.

Tittley remembers when her passion for the game was first kindled in grade seven.

"I remember seeing the game, immediately felt the attraction to it and wanted to be a part of it," said Tittley, adding that the women who play for the Canadian national team further influenced her. "I heard about them being leaders in their communities. I got to meet them and they really took me under their wing."

In total, 59 awards were handed out to honour a wide range of athletes—from those who triumphed in the face of adversity to those who triumphed in the classroom.

Award winners

President's Academic Awards

Fanny Berthiaume - Soccer Goalkeeper - 4.08 GPA
Percy Graham - Scrum Half/Winger - 4.19 GPA

Marvin Cooper Award - *For overcoming adversity through hard work, commitment and dedication*

William Miller - Football Defensive End
Dwayne Buckley - Basketball Forward

Fittest Athletes

Men's Basketball - Decee Krah
Women's Basketball - Krystle Douglas
Football - William Miller *Male Overall Winner
Men's Hockey - Mike Baslyk
Women's Hockey - Kelly Feehan *Female Overall Winner
Men's Rugby - Courtney Bishop
Women's Rugby - Claire Hortop
Men's Soccer - Bryan Bourbonnais
Women's Soccer - Karen Stewart

Awards of Distinction

Jenn Rosenbaum - Rugby Fullback
Jamal Gallier - Basketball Centre

Rookies of the Year

Female

Basketball - Anne-Marie Prophete
Cross-Country - Melissa Fournier
Hockey - Nathalie May
Rugby - Jackie Tittley *Overall Winner
Soccer - Molly Howes
Wrestling - Andrea Davidson

Male

Baseball - Emmanuel Hamel-Carey & Edward Evans
Basketball - Evens Laroche
Cross-Country - Jean-Marc LaForest
Football - Sanchez Deschamps
Golf - Tom Blondon
Hockey - Nicolas D'Aoust
Rugby - Jonathan Francois
Skiing - Vincent Levesque
Soccer - Giancarlo Vitagliano
Wrestling - David Tremblay *Overall Winner

Denise Beaudet Award - Academics, leadership and community service

Erin Ryan - Curler/Rugby Hooker

Ron Lapointe Award - Loyalty to team and academics

Tom Kuchiran - Football Defensive End

Bourse olympique Radio-Canada

Nikita Chicoine - Wrestler

Sally Kemp Award - Female MVP

Basketball - Kristin Portwine
Cross-Country - Rebecca Trembath
Hockey - Catherine Desjardins
Rugby - Claire Hortop
Skiing - Brianne Ormerod
Soccer - Fanny Berthiaume & Allison Burgess
Wrestling - Nikita Chicoine *Overall Winner

Male Athlete of the Year

Baseball - Emmanuel Hamel-Carey
Basketball - Damian Buckley *Overall Winner
Cross-Country - Sofiane Guend
Football - Liam Mahoney
Golf - Jeff Barkun
Hockey - Maxime Joyal
Rugby - Eric Van Thiel
Soccer - Alfred Moody
Skiing - Vincent Levesque
Wrestling - David Tremblay

19.3

average points per game scored by
Damian Buckley

5.8

average assists per game by Damian
Buckley

3.75

average steals per game by Damian
Buckley



Letters @ thelink.concordia.ca

A new day has come

On behalf of team VISION, I would like to thank our numerous supporters that worked tirelessly during the two weeks of campaigning to ensure our victory in this election, and the CEO of the student union, Oliver Cohen, for running a historic election, one that was free, fair and transparent. Our thanks also goes to the entire student body for coming out to exercise their franchise and the other teams, be it New Union, Attention, CHANGE, Fresh and Decentralization for participating in our democracy to make it stronger.

Now to the average student, we want to assure you that over the coming months your new leadership will be working around the clock to make sure your stay in the university will be an experience you will forever cherish. Right from day one, we will hit the ground running to ensure every single promise we made to you becomes a reality. We will let you know the real numbers as what is happening to your money and want you to know that our doors are always opened.

Your comments, input, suggestions and contributions are always welcomed, and we want you to know for a fact that we will work with you to make this Union a better union. We will need volunteers and workers over the fall to run all the programs and services we have for you. Please be involved, as we need all hands on deck. The tasks ahead demand everyone's involvement. There are numerous opportunities for you to get involved; sit on committees on council, the senate, orientation, the book-exchange program, etc.

On a final note, thank you Concordia for this mandate, good luck on your finals, have a wonderful summer and see you in school in the fall. For those graduating, bonne chance in all your endeavours.

Thank you.

—Prince Ralph Osei,
VP-Elect Services & Loyola

We left before the sun went down

The Gaza Strip invasion, Operation Cast Lead, left 1,417 Palestinians dead: that's the point. And guess what? It was launched on Shabbat.

I wonder, by extending Mick [Mendelsohn, of Hillel Concordia]'s line of reasoning, if protesting on Shabbat questions our legitimacy as a Jewish group, does bombing on Shabbat question the legitimacy of a Jewish state? Hmmm. Send that one back to the think tank.

Defining "Jewishness" with Shabbat is silly and retrograde, something I thought was beyond even Hillel. Young Jews for Social Justice is a group of Jews fed up with sectarian, right-wing, pro-war politics, peddled by paid bureaucrats like Mick. We are a grassroots student organization, unlike our top-down counterparts.

On Facebook, Mick defines his political status as "petty." Go figure.

But figuring pettiness into this debate—we left before the sun went down, so it wasn't yet Shabbat. So there.

—Yesse Gutman,
McGill Law

A time to set aside petty politics

Young Jews for Social Justice "is nothing more than a logo; a tiny collective whose sole purpose is to shield those who flagrantly demonize the Jewish state from charges of anti-Semitism" as stated by Mick Mendelsohn of Hillel Concordia in *The Link* on March 31.

The Jewish people consist of many disparate voices representing a wide range of beliefs within the religious, political, social and cultural spectrum. Not every Jewish student identifies with nor feels at home in Hillel or shares all Hillel's values.

When a Jewish Organization invites the leader of a major political party to partake in a Sabbath dinner, as Hillel recently did, political opportunism is an important function of the event. Sabbath is a time of rest from the usual weekly matters, a time to learn, a time to think about the Torah. Jews are encouraged to invite a stranger to a Sabbath meal after attending synagogue so they will have a place to celebrate. I hardly doubt that this was the case in this instance.

Mick Mendelsohn stated that Young Jews for Social Justice did not articulate what they were protesting about, but I would respond that a Jewish group that feels strongly enough to protest a Sabbath event sponsored by Hillel indicates that Hillel is far from serving or representing all the Jewish students or their values.

—Leslie Lutsky,
Independent student

We let these people run the country?

With our student elections now over and the students having clearly spoken, it is time to focus on our federal politicians. All of us can be encouraged that Helen Downie will be a member of the executive. As a genuine humanitarian and a brilliantly skilled diplomat with a keen intelligence, she hopefully represents the future of politics in Canada.

It can be successfully argued that there have been very few periods in Canadian history, if any, where the populace is faced with the weakest and most unethical leaders of political parties in our history. There is not only no vision, there is a crude manifestation of seeking power over principles every step of the way. Of course we all have been spoilt by the genius and vision of Pierre Trudeau as it is not often one gets a giant in the history of civilization to be a nation's leader.

We must concentrate our efforts on eliminating war and weapons, enforcing the equality provisions of our Charter of Rights and Freedoms and diverting those resources so wasted on the mass murder of individuals all over the world into building the finest of health and educational systems so that each individual can contribute to the betterment of humanity.

—David S. Rovins,
Independent student

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 libelous, 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.

Strategic plan will lead to recession

Contradictions will have to be dealt with first

• MATTHEW BRETT

Concordia is in the final stages of adopting a strategic plan, a major document designed to establish Concordia among the top five comprehensive universities in Canada. Before it is even approved by Concordia's Senate or Board of Governors, the recession poses a number of inconsistencies between the plan and reality. These contradictions need to be dealt with before Concordia can launch itself to top-five status.

Maclean's Guide to Canadian Universities rankings, a disputed system in its own right, has charted Concordia's fall from Canada's seventh-best comprehensive university in 2007 to eleventh today. A book could be written on *Maclean's* dubious ranking system, but the point here is that Concordia has a ways to go.

The strategic plan is meant to chart that course by increasing academic standards, improving

student satisfaction and getting a bigger piece of the research and government funding pies. But the onslaught of the recession has effectively stonewalled these goals, and there are now clear contradictions between the plan's aims and what is actually happening.

[...] a report issued by the library committee in March states that the libraries are facing a projected shortfall of \$700,000 for the 2009-10 budget.

For example, the draft of the plan released this January says the university will improve Concordia libraries' research capabilities. However, a report issued by the library committee in March states that the libraries are facing a projected shortfall of \$700,000 for the 2009-10 budget. If this holds true, Concordia's libraries will have to make "difficult decisions regarding cancellation of journal subscriptions and other

cost-cutting measures." In other words, realities on the ground clearly inhibit the goals of the strategic plan.

In fact, many of the key indicators outlined in the plan run counter to the current economic environment; external research funding, government envelope

increases and external financial contributions are more likely to dwindle than climb. These key indicators, all of which are supposed to have tacked-on timelines, will face a lengthy struggle climbing out of the red before they can even hope to reach their targeted outcomes.

What we have here is a university that is trying to strive for greatness when, in reality, it just needs to keep its head above water.

CALLING ALL ARTISTS

The Link is celebrating 30 years of serving the Concordia Community! All Concordia students (including those graduating in 2009) are invited to use our distribution boxes as on-campus display canvases.

Submit a proposal! A panel will select the top 10.

Please send name, student number, a description of the submission, and a PDF of the sketch to **boxes.thelink@gmail.com** no later than May 12 at midnight!

The theme is Concordia.

The boxes will be on display for a year at the end of which the student body will vote for their favourite. **The prize is 200\$**

Submissions containing images promoting sexism, homophobia, racism or xenophobia will not be considered.
For more information: thelinknewspaper.com

Corrections

An updated version of Benjamin Croze's "Le woof-woof là" (Vol. 29 Issue 28, pg. 20) is now available at thelinknewspaper.ca. In "Working out their issues" (Vol. 29 Issue 28, pg. 16) the time of the meetings for the Cross Country Club was incorrect. They meet Monday through Thursday, as opposed to Monday and Thursday, and they meet at 5:30 p.m., not 5:30 a.m. *The Link* regrets the error.

crswrdpzzlol

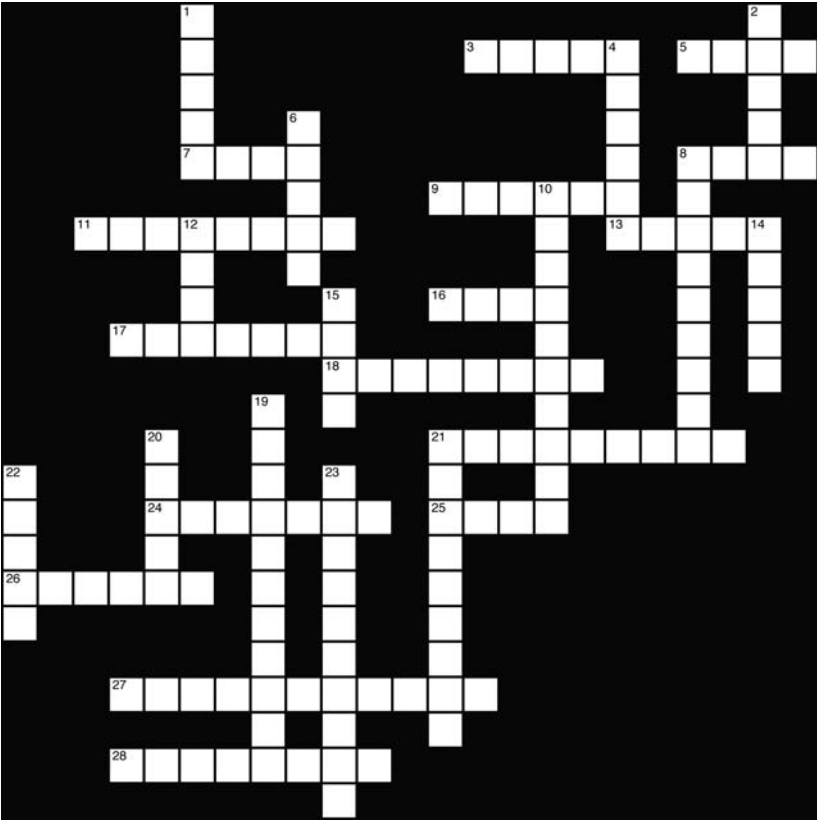
MUSIC VS. REAL LIFE • “PAY ME” HASTIE AND B-RUNES DE ROSA

Across

- 3. “Lola,” or someone with unusual sexual tastes
- 5. The source of an artist’s inspiration, or *Absolution*
- 7. A visible rip or tear, or “Malibu”
- 8. The remedy, or “Boys Don’t Cry”
- 9. “Roxanne,” or the enforcing arm of The Man
- 11. *Deja Entendu*, or terminology for something that has just come out on the market
- 13. Alex Haley masterpiece, or “The Seed (2.0)”
- 16. Sludge metal super-group featuring Phil Anselmo, or the inverse of up
- 17. The country of the free, or “A Horse With No Name”
- 18. A delectable supper dish, or *Bat Out Of Hell*
- 21. The man who grants you access on movable public transportation, or *Temporary Forever*
- 24. Unruly hooligans or “Die, Die My Darling”
- 25. Religious declaration of affirmation or “We Have Come For Your Parents”
- 26. Collapse of a geologic formation, mine or other structure, or “Anchor”
- 27. Steven Seagal flick or Suge Knight-backed g-funk group
- 28. A specialised organization responsible for a sector of government public administration, or *Psalms 69*

Down

- 1. To collide, or “Guns Of Brixton”
- 2. *8701*, or the man who will show you to your seat
- 4. A killer, or *Seasons In The Abyss*
- 6. A precious stone, or “Who Will Save Your Soul?”
- 8. To dissolve one audio source into another, or “So Cold”
- 10. Medieval cabinet-like torture device, or *Powerslave*
- 12. The world’s longest river, or *Annihilation Of The Wicked*
- 14. A sharp and sudden pain, or “Desert Rose”
- 15. Any number of Parker Bros. products, or “Hate It Or Love It”
- 19. A term used by World War II pilots to describe strange flying fireballs they sometimes saw, or “Times Like These”
- 20. Italian spelling for the undead, or *Spirit Animal*
- 21. Anarchist symbol, or *Damaged*
- 22. A badly performed operation, or “We Are The Romans”
- 23. A particular environment or surrounding influence, or *God Loves Ugly*



editorial

Our silence is damning

This past week, Canadian citizen Mohamed Kohail—sentenced to death by beheading for the death of a teenager in a schoolyard fight—had yet another appeal overturned by the Saudi Arabian judicial system. The Jeddah General Court rejected the suggestion from a higher court to overturn Kohail’s sentence, and nearly every legal avenue has been exhausted.

By any democratic standard, Kohail’s trial cannot be considered fair. His lawyer was only allowed to attend one or two of the nine sessions, and he wasn’t allowed to enter evidence on behalf of Kohail. Even Saudi Arabia’s higher courts expressed reservations about the initial ruling, and are now Kohail’s last hope of avoiding the death sentence.

While our own federal government has been loath to make any efforts to aid Kohail prior to this past week, their stance is at least understandable, if unforgivable. The Harper government has made clear their stance on seeking clemency for Canadians abroad; essentially, you’re on your own. Whether it’s Omar Khadr or Ronald Smith, the Harper government has maintained that its tough law and order agenda doesn’t end at Canada’s borders. For Canadians facing trial around the world, the message is loud and clear: your government will not help you.

Given this ideology, it is easy to understand why the government has been hesitant to intervene in the case of Kohail. Little, if anything, has been done beyond releasing a tepid statement stating that the Harper government is “deeply disappointed” by the Saudi courts’ rulings and that they continue to push for “a fair and transparent review of the wording and sentence.” What was missing from the government’s statement was any sort of plan to engage Saudi Arabia diplomatically, as well as any of the urgency that is necessary to prevent a Canadian citizen from being beheaded in any foreign country.

Most disappointing, however, is the silence of Concordia University. A former student is receiving an unfair trial and faces execution, and the school hasn’t released so much as a statement in his support.

Clearly, the responsibility of Concordia is not that great in this matter. The clout the administration could potentially bring to the conflict is minimal, and it is certainly not their responsibility to ensure clemency for Kohail. However, if I was a former student in similar straits, it would deeply depress me to know that the institution of higher learning that I attended couldn’t even bother to acknowledge my plight, let alone take any steps to encourage a diplomatic resolution.

While the silence of the Concordia administration is disappointing, the silence from the student populace is puzzling more than anything. With Concordia’s history of activism, one would assume some of that energy would be mustered up to protest the fact that one of our former students is being left to hang in the wind by our government.

Ultimately, our collective silence is damning. A trial that is getting attention nationwide can barely be felt in the place that Kohail called home for so many years. Our government’s policy is disturbing, but expected; what wasn’t expected was our community’s complete lack of a response to a questionable administration of justice.

We should expect our school to stand up for the rights of students and former students alike.

—Diego Pelaez-Gaetz,
Opinions editor

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