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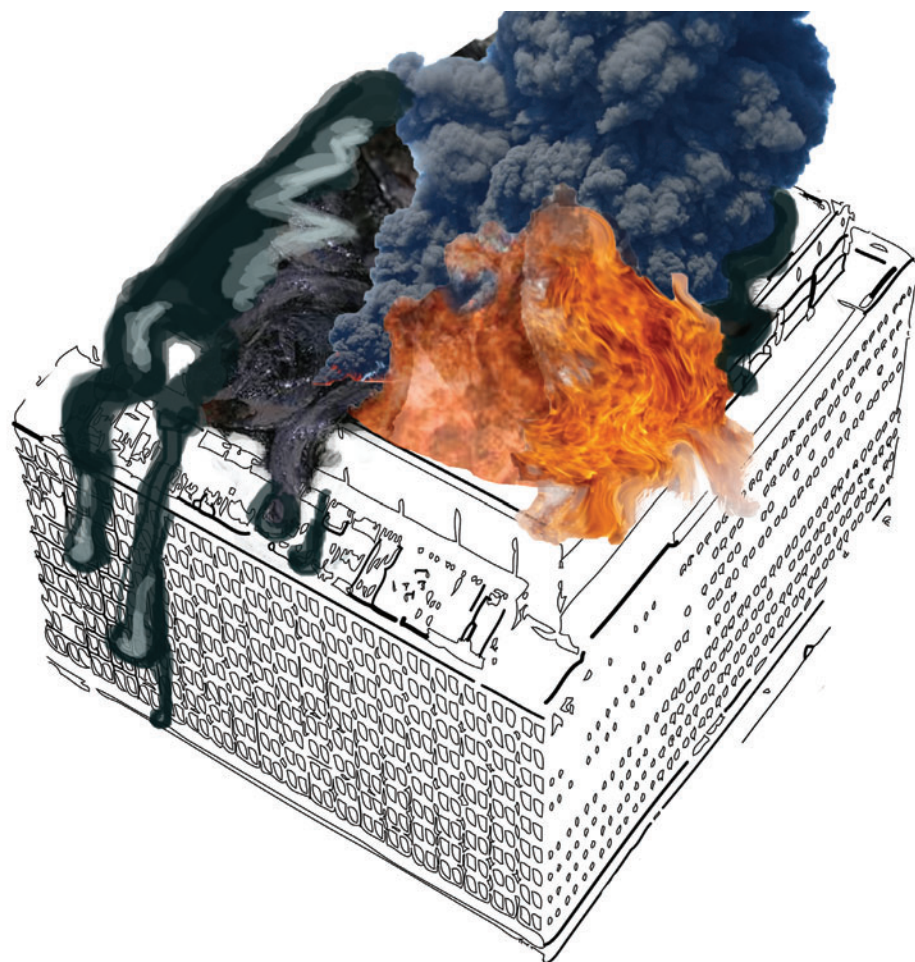
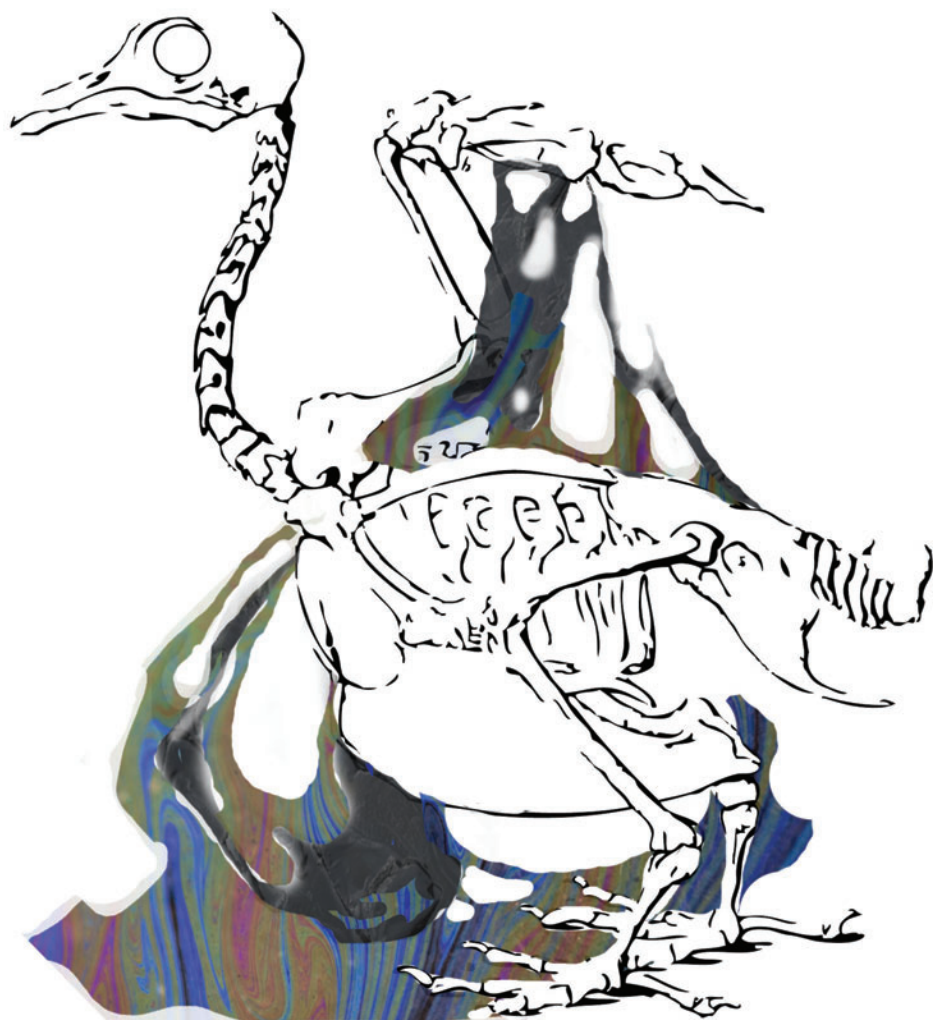
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FOR ART IN ALL ITS FORMS

Professor Takes Montreal Police to Court for Alleged Assault During Student Strikes

A McGill professor is suing the city of Montreal for misconduct after being allegedly beaten and pepper sprayed during the student strikes in 2011.

Concordia Leans Green

University's Foundation Commits to Partial Divestment



by Michelle Pucci @michellempucci

The people that control Concordia's biggest investment fund, creatively named the Concordia University Foundation, are reserving a portion of that money for companies that care about the environment.

On Nov. 26, the university released a statement that they will dedicate \$5 million from the foundation to a sustainable investment fund as of January.

Sustainable investment or divesting means selling shares in fossil fuels and reinvesting in renewable energy to move towards a low-carbon economy.

Officially it means investing in companies that comply with high environmental, social and corporate governance standards, like those concerned with climate change, food and water, and avoiding those that don't comply, like fossil fuels, weapons or tobacco.

It's a small step in the right direction, according to Anthony Garoufalidis-Auger, the Concordia Student Union's VP External Mobilization and a spokesperson for the provincial anti-pipeline student coalition Étudiants et étudiantes contre les oléoducs.

"It is nice that the university recognized that fossil fuels are unsustainable and the CSU welcomes that," he said. "We know the process of divestment is not done overnight."

The fund is made up of donations given to the university and transferred to the foundation. The foundation manages them to increase their value, so there ends up being more money available to support student scholarships and bursaries.

A working group formed last year with

representation from different student bodies including the CSU, the GSA and Divest Concordia along with two or three members of the Concordia Foundation board.

"The Foundation board wanted to get a better sense of what it is student leaders are talking about and what was being proposed," Concordia's VP External Relations Bram Freedman said.

Marcus Peters from Divest Concordia says the working group is a successful initiative for student groups to create a dialogue with Concordia's administration and the foundation.

"It's still a positive move in that it shows a willingness to negotiate, a willingness to accept it as an issue," said Peters.

But Divest Concordia says the university needs to continue moving forward. It released a negative statement, accusing the university of greenwashing by pretending to be a leader in sustainability without making any long-term commitment to divestment.

Freedman wasn't surprised by Divest Concordia's response. "We know what their mandate is, and what they feel the proper approach is," he said.

"We see this as a first step," Freedman said. "This is new territory for all of us."

The CSU commissioned research by PhD candidate and part-time professor Erik Chevrier about socially responsible investment. The research is already out there, Garoufalidis-Auger said; it's just a matter of the university taking steps and divesting all their shares from fossil fuels.

Most of the CUF's investing is done

through pooled funds, making it difficult to track down the actual companies getting Concordian cash, since it's all managed by a third-party investment manager. Divest Concordia says there's a lack of transparency in this process.

Freedman admits he doesn't actually have an idea off-hand of how much of the fund is currently invested in fossil fuels. Investment managers sell pooled funds of investments that don't necessarily label all the companies being invested in.

"We don't have a grip on how much of our endowment is currently [invested in fossil fuels], but we know that some of it is," said Freedman.

In the CUF's 2011 financial report, investments under common shares are given labels like oil and gas, pipelines, metals and minerals. But in 2012 those labels became more ambiguously named as energy, materials and utilities, according to Chevrier's report.

Divest Concordia collected over 2,400 signatures on a petition calling for complete divestment within three years. The entire endowment fund is estimated to be about \$100 million.

The CSU and GSA also have mandates to support divestment and sustainability groups. The CSU has its own large fund, the SSAELC fund, which isn't invested in anything at the moment.

Concordia is the first university in Canada to join a movement that is growing worldwide.

Concordia President Alan Shepard discussed the idea of a Sustainable Invest-

ment Fund with *The Link* a few months ago when environmentalist Bill McKibben came to speak at Concordia.

The issue was brought to the forefront again at the Fossil Free Canada Convergence jointly hosted by Concordia and McGill last month.

Last month the University of Glasgow's court voted to divest £18 million (\$28 million) from fossil fuels and freeze the rest of its investments for its total endowment of £128 million (\$201 million). It was the first university in Europe to do so, joining over a dozen U.S. universities with a commitment to divestment, including Stanford University.

Concordia's decision came a day after Dalhousie University in Halifax voted against divesting in fossil fuels while it was considering the future of \$20 million-worth in investments out of its \$500 million fund. The school's board of governors made the decision.

"If we turn our back on a number of companies, why would they put money in here?" George McLellan, head of the board of governor's investment committee, told CBC news.

Freedman says at the end of the day, the obligation of the foundation is to make sure that it generates enough returns to be able to support student bursaries and student scholarships.

"Let's see what the results are and then we can keep talking and see what is available," he said.

graphics Madeleine Gendreau

ASFA

By-election Results

by Erica Pishdadian @ericapish

The Arts and Science Federation of Associations (ASFA) announced the results of their fall by-elections on Nov. 28 as their proposed fee-levy increase from \$0.38 to \$1.60 per credit was rejected. Iman Hassanein won the election for VP Academic and Loyola, and Lianne Barnes was elected to VP External and Sustainability.

ASFA has two options moving forward—figuring out the reservations of students and working to address those reservations when possible, or working on figuring out alternatives in terms of budgetary allocations within the association, according to ASFA President Paul Jerajian.

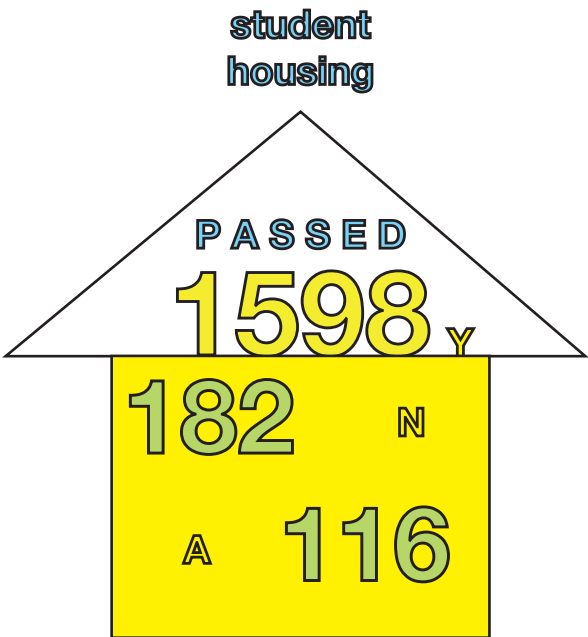
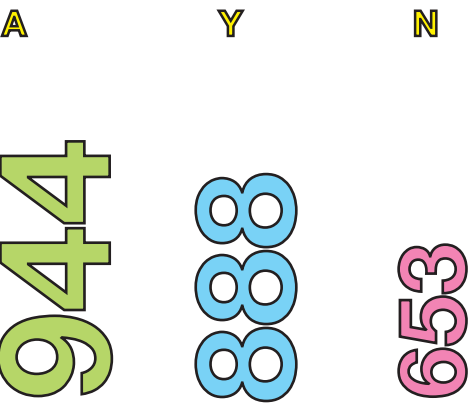
“The latter may result in changes in certain budgetary allocations and a potential restructuring of our budget, but this is a long way from being certain,” he said.

Part of Hassanein’s campaign involved the idea of increasing coordination between student organizations and academic departments. She also emphasized the importance of keeping Loyola’s interests equal with the downtown campus. Barnes focused on the idea of pursuing partnerships and sponsorships from outside the university.

The two new vice-presidents each won their election by narrow margins. Hassanein had 190 votes to runner-up Hannah Spidle’s 178, and Barnes defeated opponent David Ness 181-160. ASFA’s Chief Electoral Officer, Andréa Fernandes, said she’s “very satisfied with the way things went” in the election.

“The candidates conducted themselves well; participation was precisely where we expected. I’m quite satisfied with the entire procedure,” she said. “We had a few, brief technical difficulties, but nothing that we weren’t able to resolve.”

CONMUN FEE LEVY



CSU By-election Results

by Jonathan Cook

Unlike the BDS issue, some referendum questions did receive a count and tally after the Concordia Student Union’s by-election last week. Notably, the referenda for creating new student housing, a daycare centre and the approval for the CSU to pay back the Hive Café Solidarity Cooperative start up loan through a specific fund all passed.

“I think we have a strong mandate to continue with both these projects,” CSU VP Academic and Advocacy Terry Wilkings said. “[We] definitely need to prioritize communicating with students more details about [these projects] going forward.”

The referendum question asking for student approval to consider new student co-op housing initiatives as a student space project had the highest success rate, with 1598 “Yes” votes and 182 “No” votes. The Unité de travail pour l’implantation de logement étudiant (UTILE) already presented its work on student housing co-ops to the CSU.

“Seeing the support for the student housing received the highest amounts of ‘Yes’ votes was really exciting,” Wilkings said. “I think that we’re starting to see a broader awareness of the difficulty students face in the tenant market.”

A question which would give the CSU a mandate to pursue an on-campus daycare centre

also saw a high success rate, with 1551 students voting “Yes” and 236 voting “No.” Wilkings said that the next step in the project is to negotiate with the university for space.

“The scale of the service will be dependent on the space we procure,” Wilkings added. “We would have a more comprehensive understanding of the financial commitments of the daycare in terms of annual operating costs and things like that.”

Both the daycare and student housing questions received the same amount of abstentions—613—but Wilkings said this was a “coincidence.” When final proposals are drawn up to begin construction on a facility, students will vote on a new ballot for further approval.

Approval to loan money from the Student Space, Accessible Education and Legal Contingency Fund (SSAELC) to pay back the Hive Café Co-op’s startup costs also passed with 952 “Yes” votes to 448 “No” votes. The CSU now has \$102,536.79 to repay the fees.

“The student support with the Hive was clearly established with the general elections in the previous year,” Wilkings said. “It was something we received a clear indication from students to prioritize.”

The only referendum question that didn’t pass was the International and Ethnic Association Council asking to double its fee-levy, with 708 “Yes” votes and 761 “No” votes. However,

the IEAC did receive approval to separate from the Concordia Student Union. The association said that it’s able to represent more clubs as an autonomous organization.

The Concordia’s Model United Nations club received student approval to become a fee-levy group with seven cents per credit, and students also supported the referendum question for the CSU to take an official stance against austerity.

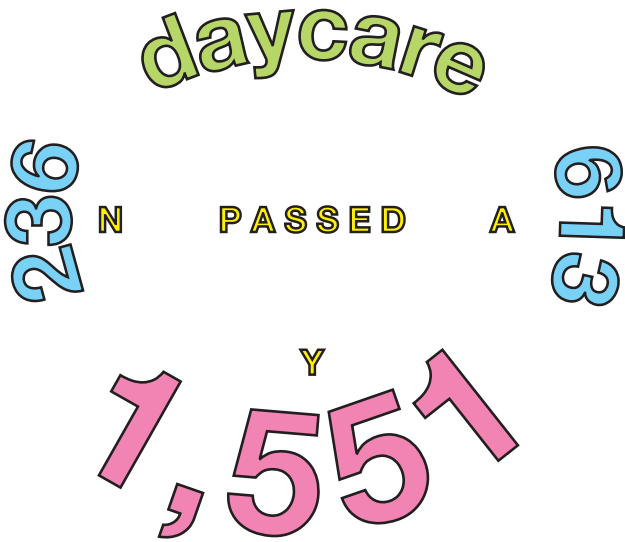
The remaining referendum question, asking for approval to support the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions movement against Israel, has yet to be counted. Wilkings said that campaigning increased for this by-election because of the controversial referendum on the ballot.

“I don’t want to say whether that necessarily led to this higher turnout, but I definitely think there was more campaigning in this by-election than any by-election in the recent past,” Wilkings said.

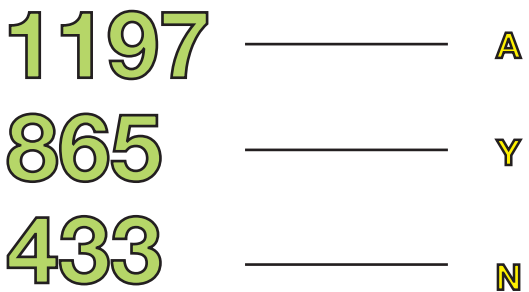
Students elected new CSU Council members as well. Jason Poirier Lavoie is the new representative for Arts and Science. Scott Carr, Maylen Cytryn and Taimur Tanoli are the new members of the JMSB Council. Faddy Kamel now represents the ENCS and Marie Briere de la Hossayere is part of the Independent Student Council.

graphic Laura Lalonde

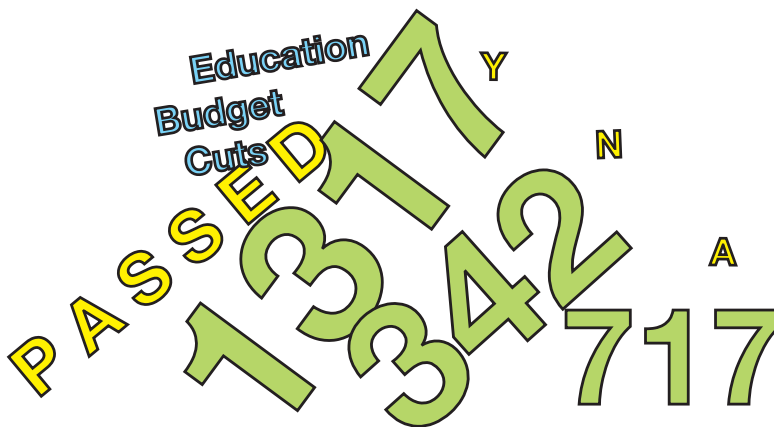
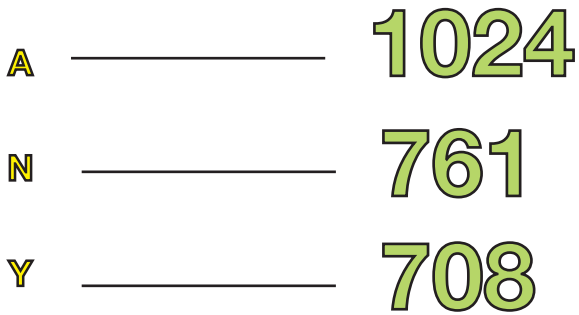
VOTES YES VOTES NO ABSTAIN

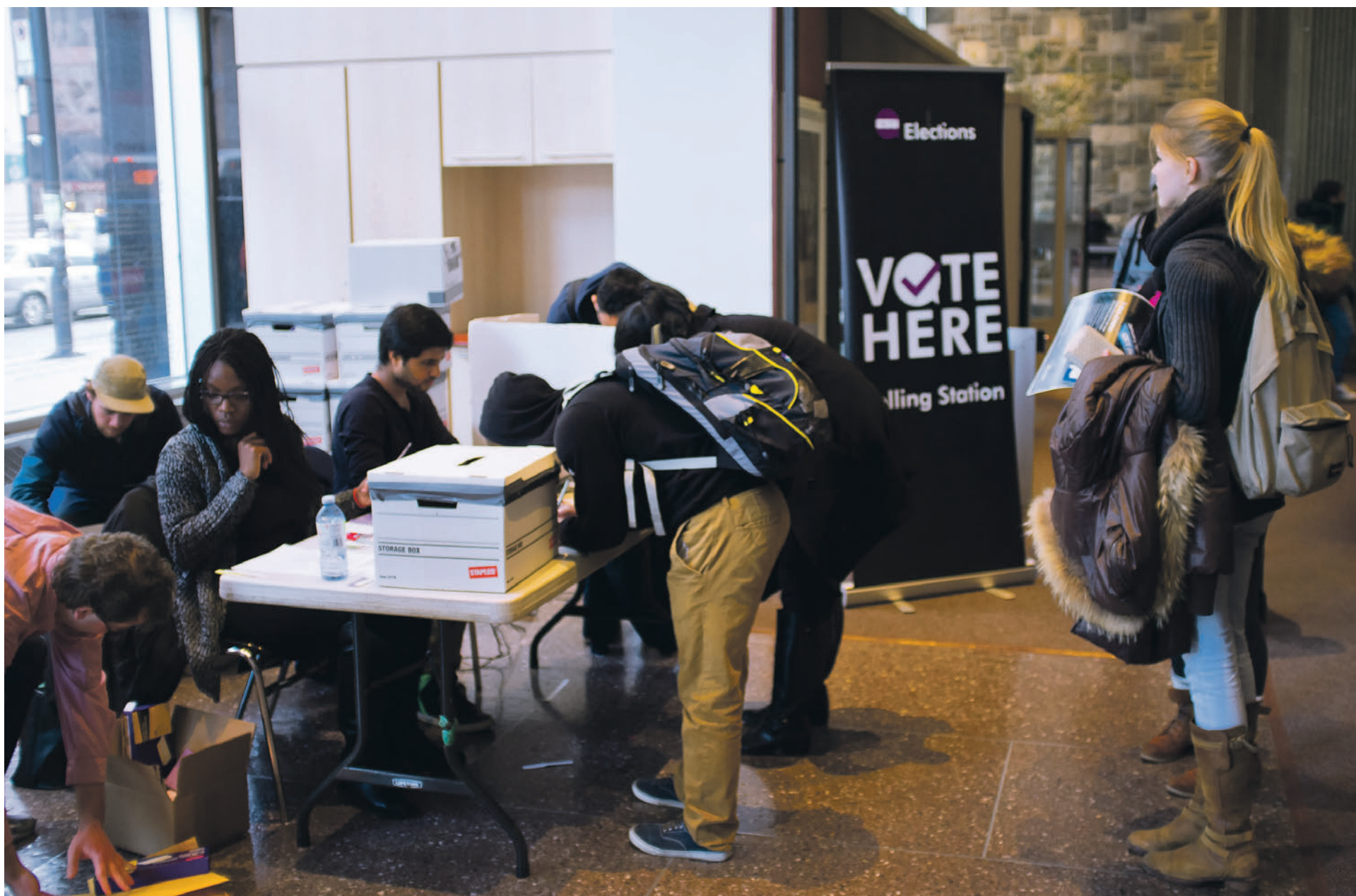


IEAC SEPARATION



IEAC FEE LEVY





Will the BDS Ballots Ever Be Counted?

Vote Count Suspended Indefinitely After "Overwhelming" Number of Complaints

by Jonathan Cook

After weeks of campaigning, hundreds of Concordia University students voted on the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions referendum question this past week. But the ballots for the controversial question have not been counted and there's still a chance they never will be.

The vote count's indefinite suspension on Thursday was announced in an email by Andre-Marcel Baril, the Concordia Student Union's Chief Electoral Officer, who said there was an "overwhelming" amount of "complaints" about the referendum question.

An independent firm that practices law and specializes in "interpreting specific institution bylaws and regulations" will be consulted for future action, according to Baril. The firm's name has not been disclosed and a budget to hire the firm has been approved by the CSU, he added.

"For important issues like this, I think there should be something set up—like a support system—where it's not just one person's responsibility," Baril told *The Link*.

"Whereas I'm organizing staff, organizing ballots, dealing with issues related to other candidates—then to have on top of that this big issue—it's just really hard to find the time to sit down and think objectively about that problem."

The CEO added that he is "optimistic" the ballot count will happen, but throwing out the question entirely remains a possibility, albeit an "extreme" one.

"I personally would not say there's a moratorium on this," Baril continued. "My recommendation would be to go to election again with some more regulations."

Javier Hoyos, the chair of Concordians in Support of BDS, told *The Link* that the Concordians United Against BDS group benefits more from a potential cancellation of a count. He acknowledged that the CEO was facing "a lot of pressure".

On Monday night last week, the CSU Judicial Board reviewed whether the wording of the question was "prejudicial to the outcome of the referendum."

The question, which was the result of two edits by Baril, asked, "Do you approve of the CSU endorsing the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) movement against Israel's occupation of Palestine until Israel complies with International Law and Universal Principles of Human Rights?"

The JB did not find that question to be biased. Nonetheless, due to the "sensitive nature of the issue," it decided to use an alternate question—one also written by Baril—which stated, "Do you approve of the CSU endorsing the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) movement against Israel?"

"That [alternate] was a horrible question. It was pretty much asking, 'Do you hate Israel?' That's how we see it," Hoyos said. "We did not ask that question. That's what people see when they go to the ballot."

"We were campaigning against Israel on their human rights violations and violations of international law."

The Judicial Board chair Zach Braman told *The Link* that the new question incorporated the "most reasonable, clear and least ambiguous" phrasing. The board, made up of five

members, reached a unanimous consensus.

The reason the Judicial Board meeting did not happen earlier was because a CSU regulation states that the emergency window for appeal is only available 24 hours prior to voting. Baril said that this was probably created to better deal with issues regarding candidates rather than referendum questions. He already wrote a recommendation to change its time period in his evaluation report.

"I think the idea of pushing [the emergency window] back a week when you're talking about a referendum question—especially when you're talking about changing it—it would be a very responsible thing to do," Baril said.

Zach Ross, a member of the Concordians United Against BDS committee, said that Baril's second edit—which produced the previous version of the ballot question tossed aside by the JB—violated CSU by-laws. He said they were not notified of a change to the referendum question at least seven days prior to the voting.

He added that his group continued campaigning with the previous question for "four days" after its release. Based on this accusation, Ross originally called for the cancellation of the question completely.

Baril denied the accusation and said that he publicly posted the altered, previous iteration of the question on Nov. 16 at 8:15 p.m., which is more than seven days removed from the voting period.

The CSU CEO provided evidence in the form of a timestamp of his post on his personal website. He added that he did not directly contact any member from the Con-

cordians United Against BDS committee after the change. On further review, he said that he understood their complaint.

"To be entirely frank, that was also at a time where things were happening and I didn't have the legal or bylaw responsibility [to tell them]," the CEO told *The Link*.

"It would have helped the process a lot and yes, I do think I should have done them that favour."

Ross also said that the previous iteration mentioned a "vague" timeline for how long the boycott will last, that it did not define what constitutes Palestine's borders, that there were no parameters for how the CSU will conduct a boycott, and no "universal principles of human rights" were explicitly available for reference anywhere.

With the change to the alternate question, new, separate ballots had to be printed late into Monday night.

The new ballots did not have removable tabs like the ones the other referenda were printed on. Baril said there is "no requirement anywhere in the regulations" for every ballot to have a detachable tab, which called into question the reason for their presence in the first place.

"The only thing it needs to have is to be labeled with specific serial numbers and it has to say which number of the referendum questions it is," Baril told *The Link* about requirements for a ballot.

The CEO added that the whole process has been "completely transparent."

photo Brandon Johnston

“No Evidence” of Bedbug Infestation in Webster Library

Post on Satirical Blog Turns into Soocial Media Fiasco

by Noelle Didierjean @noellesolange

Concordia University has denied that the Webster Library downtown is infested with bedbugs after a photo of an insect was posted to the “Spotted: Concordia University” Facebook page Monday, provoking an outcry on social media.

The photo shows an insect next to a notebook, with the caption, “is it me or anyone else has found bed bugs in library. It’s not the first time, I f***ing hate bed bugs.”

According to Concordia spokesperson Chris Mota, “there is no evidence that there is any infestation of any kind.”

The public reassurance comes after the allegations were brought up in the “/r/Concordia” subsection of the forum website Reddit by user “t-rexarms.”

The post was met with multiple testimonials of bedbug infestations from library books.

The parody website Sooo MTL picked up on the story, adding to the rumour mill. The article on the satirical blog cited the Reddit post, saying “we’ve heard it through the grapevine that apparently the entire campus of Concordia University is infested with bedbugs, possibly due to filthy nerds studying in the library.”

“Concordia has confirmed through their Reddit account that bed bugs are everywhere, in a big way,” the satirical post said, referencing a comment made by the Concordia Student Union’s Housing and Off-Campus Job Bank (HoJo) on the Reddit thread informing Concordia students they could help them if their apartment was infested.

CSU VP Student Life Charles Bourassa told *The Link* he doubted the authenticity of the Reddit testimonials after he saw that the three main posters

claiming to have gotten bedbugs from library books had only had an account for one day, and had made no other posts.

“Two of them had similar usernames, in terms of cats, so it looks like it was orchestrated on Reddit to create hype,” he said in reference to Reddit users “thecatsmeow42069” and “catchow,” neither of whom had ever posted outside of the bedbug-related thread.

The story gained still more traction when MTL Blog, a website known for so-called “listicles” and sponsored content, garnered 8,175 views with the headline, “Montreal’s Concordia University’s Downtown Library Is Allegedly Infested With Bed Bugs.”

“It was crazy to see how fast it spread, it was like a wildfire,” Bourassa said of the reaction on social media, adding that he had received numerous messages from concerned students throughout the day.

HoJo coordinator Leanne Ashworth said she was concerned for students who were afraid to go into the library during finals period.

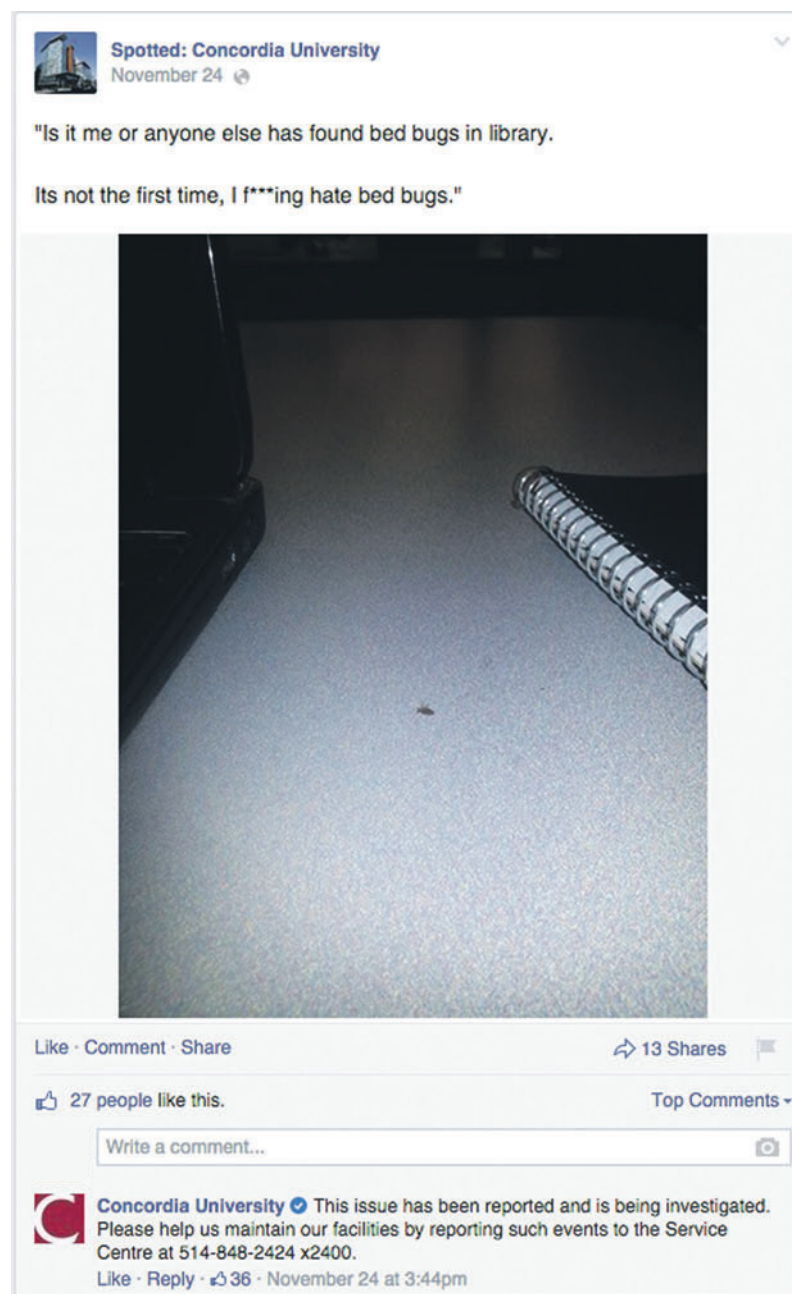
“Everybody needs to be in the library studying, so it’s a really bad time to be paranoid. [...] It’s kind of hard to know if it’s a hoax,” she said of the possibility of false allegations.

Ashworth added that since people are staying in the library during finals late into the night, which is when the insects come out, it’s possible that “people are just noticing that there are bedbugs now.”

“It’s highly possible that it’s something students here are dealing with, whether it’s at the library or at home,” she said.

Reddit user AlkalineMTL was unimpressed from the get-go.

“It’s just JMSB students trying to scare people away from the library to get study rooms for finals.”



A screenshot of the post on the Facebook page “Spotted: Concordia University.”

Black Lives Matter

Candlelight Vigil Held in Solidarity with US Protests After Ferguson Decision

by Jonathan Cook

Hundreds gathered outside McGill for a candlelight vigil on Nov. 25, standing in solidarity with U.S. protesters who took to the streets following a grand jury’s decision not to indict a police officer for the death of Michael Brown.

“When I was walking from the gates and looked up to the field and saw that the field had been covered with people, I was shocked,” said Samantha Samuels, co-president of the Black Students’ Network of McGill (BSN).

“That struck a chord. I was very emotional when I saw that.”

On Nov. 24 a grand jury chose not to indict officer Darren Wilson, who fatally shot Brown more than three months ago in Ferguson, a suburb of St. Louis, Missouri. The African-American teenager was unarmed. The grand jury was made up of nine whites and three blacks.

Samuels said the BSN hosted this vigil soon after the grand jury’s decision to show people suffering through inner turmoil that there was support available.

“When the news came out [...] I was very upset and saddened,” she said. “I feel like you came here to show that and weren’t alone.”

The co-president added that Brown’s death is not an isolated incident and is the result of systematic

racism. She said people with “hearts” realize that it is a “big issue” and that change is required.

“If it’s not clear enough when you see an unarmed black man shot in the middle of the street, then nothing will change your mind,” Samuels said. “Then I definitely won’t waste my time talking to you.” The BSN is currently striving to become an open community for not only black students but all those that wish to learn more about these racial issues, according to Samuels.

“This does demonstrate progress,” she said about events like the vigil. “Situations that occur like this, in my mind at least, it just sets me all the way back—back to the Civil War, back to slavery.”

“But you realize when these things happen, it’s pushing us to make that change.”

Maya Taylor, external coordinator of BSN, echoed her colleague’s sentiments, saying that she was “disappointed” with the verdict and was appreciative of people from different backgrounds and universities coming out to show their solidarity with Ferguson.

“[This event] makes people aware that systematic violence exists, that police violence specifically against black bodies is something that [...] continues to exist,” Taylor said. “It’s not just about isolated cases, it’s about the system in which those isolated cases are working.”

photo Alex Bailey





Are You Dreaming of a Green Christmas?

by Jane Lakes

It's Boxing Day.

The presents have been unwrapped, the family has finally left, the Christmas tree is somehow still intact, and the United States has produced an extra 25 million tons of waste.

Once thought of as the most joyful time of the year, Christmas has now become one of the most wasteful.

The toxic combination of consumerism, excessive waste, and increased sales has created a carbon footprint that will haunt the globe like the ghost of Christmases past.

Everything from the tree in your living room to the knick-knacks in the stockings poses a threat to the environment.

41 per cent of the toys children will receive will be broken within three months, according to the U.K. waste fallout of December 2006. An additional 125,000 tons of plastic packaging will be disposed of.

Consumers throw away 25 per cent more trash during the holidays than regular days, according to Cecilia Ramirez of environmental blog Green Poppies.

This is equivalent to about 110 pounds per person, or 1 million extra tons per week.

Though the consequences of Christmas consumerism are not immediate, they are severe.

"Whenever you're producing anything, there's impacts to the entire life cycle that need to be considered," explained Faisal Shennib, Concordia University's Environmental Coordinator. "Everything that we make or do or service in this world has a life cycle to it, and this has an impact."

Plastic products can take up to 1,000 years to decompose, creating a ripple effect on the environment.

The small plastic particles that are produced by the decomposition of plastic are leaked into the Earth's waters. They are subsequently ingested by marine animals and transferred into the food chain, wreaking havoc on the ecosystem, according to the international scientific journal *Environmental Pollution*.

Nearly every product on Toys "R" Us' "2014 Hot Toy List" is made with plastic.

"The difference is going to have to be systematic," said Shennib. "Producers [...] should be responsible for the impact of it, not just the consumers."

One of the major issues, according to David Lank of Concordia's David O'Brien Centre for Sustainable Enterprise, is the lack of incentive for companies to change.

With consumerism at an all-time high, Christmas sales

accounted for 19.2 per cent of U.S. retail sales in 2013, according to statista.com.

"Christmas is a huge sales opportunity for a lot of companies," said Lank. "You can't really get companies to change because it feels good."

Going green at Christmas is not only beneficial to the planet, but also to producers and consumers, Lank explained.

"There's a little bit of a movement or a twist on trying to reconnect with the true meaning of the holidays," said Lank. "Not only are you doing good but you're actually saving money in the long term. [...] A lot of this push for change in business comes from demand from consumers to have more environmentally-friendly products."

Luckily for Mother Nature, new products and creative alternatives are making it easier to make green Christmases a reality.

To help save some of the 33 million live Christmas trees that are tossed away or mulched every year, several organizations across Canada have introduced a rental Christmas tree system. Companies such as Evergrow Christmas Trees offer delivery of potted Christmas trees to customer's doorsteps and pick-up after the holidays are over.

Canadians throw away 545,000 tonnes of gift wrap and shopping bags every year. If every Canadian wrapped three gifts in reused material, it would save enough paper to cover 45,000 hockey rinks, according to the Regional District of Nanaimo's website.

"[Gift wrap is] pretty packaging, and it makes the experience maybe more enjoyable for some people," said Shennib, "but that's not the only way to have an enjoyable experience."

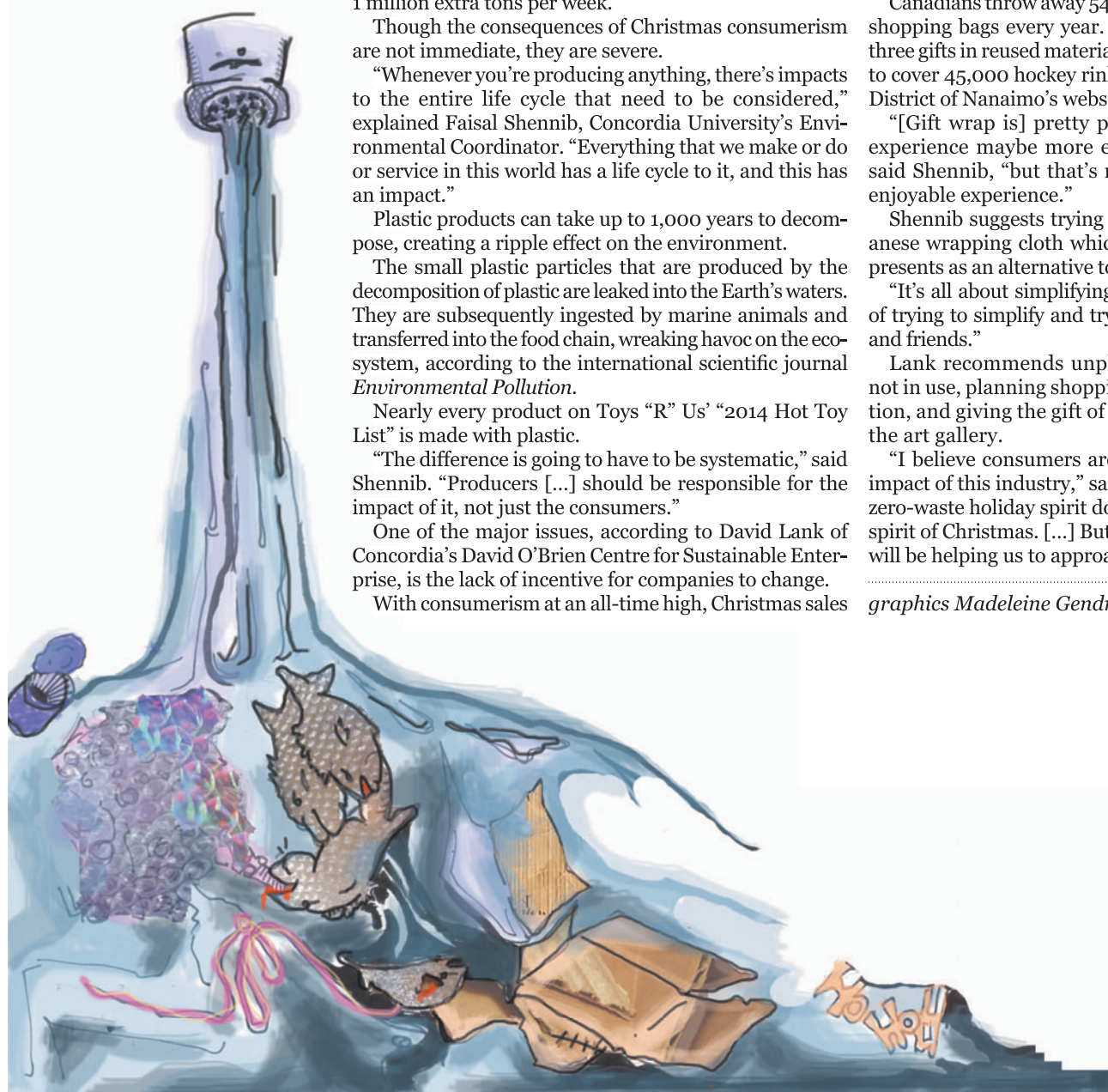
Shennib suggests trying Furoshiki, a traditional Japanese wrapping cloth which can be used for wrapping presents as an alternative to disposable wrapping paper.

"It's all about simplifying," said Lank. "I get a joy out of trying to simplify and trying to reconnect with family and friends."

Lank recommends unplugging lights when they're not in use, planning shopping trips to cut gas consumption, and giving the gift of experience, such as a trip to the art gallery.

"I believe consumers are still to be educated on the impact of this industry," said Ramirez. "Getting into the zero-waste holiday spirit doesn't mean losing out on the spirit of Christmas. [...] But it is the sum of all these that will be helping us to approach to a greener future."

graphics Madeleine Gendreau



thelinknewspaper.ca/fringe

- **Show Review: Emmure in Montreal** by Jake Russell
- **Sugar Sammy Q&A** by Mariana Voronovska
- **Exclusive Review of the Latest AC/DC Album: Rock or Bust** by Noah Dayan
- **Show review of No One Like You** by Chris Aitkens

SKATE AND CREATE

Art Exhibit 'KICKFLIP' Showcases Montreal Artists' Work on Skateboard-Canvases

by Jake Russell @Jakeryanrussell

Skateboarding: a throwaway pastime of potheads and punks, or a creative craft of athletes and outcasts? Ask any skater you see on the street, hucking themselves down stair sets or waxing up ledges for the perfect slide, and you'll ultimately hear the latter.

To a skater, the rumble of wheels on pavement is like an urban orchestra; the perfectly caught tre flip, a graceful pirouette (or with "steez"—style and ease). Skateboarding can be an act of solo or collective artistic expression, just like any of the more socially acceptable arts.

No one knows this better than New Brunswick-born artist and skater Pascal Leo Cormier, who is curating the exhibit KICKFLIP, named after the foundational skateboard trick, at Montreal's Galerie Abyss in Griffintown this month.

"It's a liberating sport. The only rules that apply are the laws of physics, and you have to rely on your imagination as to what you can do with your given environment," Cormier told *The Link*.

"That was always appealing to me—no uniforms, no coach, just friends trying things out together. It creates bonds and a sense of encouragement between friends and pushing one another to do better," he continued.

Cormier says his first exposure to skateboarding was seeing Bart Simpson shredding on his TV and an older friend doing wall plants and old-school tricks with a clunky board from the '80s. After that, he was hooked.

"My entire youth and teenage years were spent with a skateboard by my side or beneath my feet. All I did in high school was draw, skateboard and play in punk rock bands," Cormier said.

"I am certain that I would have gotten myself into much more trouble as a kid if I didn't have my skateboarding, art and music to focus on," he continued.

Praise the Board

For KICKFLIP, Cormier recruited over 40 artists around the city to create works of art on a unique canvas—blank skateboard decks. Galerie Abyss, a tattoo parlour and contemporary art gallery rolled into one, co-sponsored the exhibit by providing low-cost decks for each artist to create on.

"[They were] able to provide all the skateboard decks to the artists for very cheap, which made it all possible. The downfall was that I had to sand and prime all those suckers," Cormier said.

The result is Galerie Abyss's open-air space being lined wall-to-wall with innovative skate decks hung up on display. According to Cormier's website, the boards' designs were created with tools from across the artistic spectrum: acrylic, ink, coloured pencils, oil and more. Not to mention the boards designed using three-dimensional mixed media, with the boards seeming to jump (or ollie) off the wall into art-goers' faces.

Cormier is more than just a curator for KICKFLIP, however—he has a number of his own skate deck artworks hanging in the gallery, bridging the well-travelled gap between artist and skater.

The spheres of art and skateboarding do often collide. Famed director Spike Jonze co-owns the skateboard company Girl and has directed a number of their videos. Hollywood actor Jason Lee was a professional skateboarder before entering the limelight. Many legendary skateboarders are visual art-

ists themselves, such as Steve Caballero and Mark Gonzales.

Cormier says skating has actually taken a backseat to his art in recent years—but this show is reviving his love to shred.

"It's probably due to the fact that whatever little extra money that I make goes mostly towards art supplies. Everything costs too much nowadays, even toilet paper," Cormier said.

"The whole experience [of KICKFLIP] has been extremely inspiring to get back into skateboarding, for sure."

And if passersby find themselves attracted to a particular board on Abyss' wall, they can bring it home—all the boards are up for sale, with many having been sold already.

"It makes for a great gift for anyone who likes skateboarding, art or both," Cormier said.

After the Sesh

For future shows, Cormier plans to keep operating under his curator alter ego—

head of the Unique Corn Artistic Initiative, "unique corn" referencing the mythical equestrian animal with a head protrusion. He's curated five shows already under this fantastical guise.

Cormier wishes to continue working with Galerie Abyss, which he said has a "beautiful space."

"I personally am working on a solo show for June of 2015 at Galerie Abyss. I will also be part of the group show *XL*, all large format works, in April of 2015 at Espace 40, in which I will have a big five foot by five foot painting," he said.

But for now, he's content with hosting KICKFLIP, and showing the city a creative new side to skateboarding culture.

KICKFLIP // Galerie Abyss, 1520 Notre-Dame St. W. // Nov. 15 – Jan. 15 // Wednesday – Saturday, 1 p.m. – 7 p.m. // Free admission

"I am certain that I would have gotten myself into much more trouble as a kid if I didn't have my skateboarding, art and music to focus on"
—Pascal Leo Cormier





INTO THE FOLDS OF THE UNKNOWN

Yanick Sasseville Explores Expectations and Reality Through Origami and Photography

by Elysia-Marie Campbell

You're travelling from point A to B with an idea of where you're headed. You have expectations to be fulfilled when you get there, but the truth is you can't predict the future.

Yanick Sasseville's *Exil: Vérité trompeuse* is a three-dimensional art exhibition displaying thousands of paper origami birds that morph out of a typewriter and fly from one side of the room to the other. The birds fill the space around the ceiling and head towards a window, which stands in front of a painted landscape.

The idea of expectation versus false reality is the main idea behind Sasseville's artwork. "When you're in the process of going somewhere, you're in the unknown—you're not where you were, and you're not in your final destination, but until you get there, you won't know if it will be what you expected," he said.

The thought-provoking art installment has been on display now for nearly two months at Montreal's TOHU. The free exhibit allows audiences to experience the process of "exile" from their own point of view.

Footprints lead to a desk that sits in the foreground and a typewriter on it has a page that reads, "Qu'est-ce que le futur me réserve, et suis-je prêt?" The phrase was translated from Edward Abbey's 1975 book *Monkey Ranch Gang*.

Sasseville's idea also stemmed from René Magritte's 1929 oil painting *The Treachery of Images*, which depicts a pipe under which the words "Ceci n'est pas une pipe" ("This is not a pipe") are written.

"Whenever you draw or paint an image of

something, it's not the object," Sasseville said. "So I played with that kind of thought. It's the unknown, you have to guess."

The work has evolved over the course of five years. The exhibit was first shown in Sept-Îles and then moved on to galleries in Baie-Comeau and Trois-Rivières before coming to Montreal. Sasseville altered his installation depending on the room he had available. Throughout the process, the message he was trying to get across changed as well. "When I started, it was a bit too simplistic. It eventually evolved into something more personal," he said.

The large space at TOHU allowed him to include two big paintings that he had made for previous works, measuring nine by 20 feet each. "As I work on many things at the same time, I will always get inspired by what I do and bring ideas into other projects, and take one part of a project and transform it into something else. In the studio, I can do pretty much anything with my work," he said.

The paper cranes he made were all recycled paper from screenplays that Sasseville's film-director friends had finished using. "It made sense, because in every bird there's something written, and it kind of goes with the typewriter," he said.

To Sasseville, the underlying message is you can only believe what you can find. Having friends that came to Montreal from France and Belgium allowed him to see the problems they encountered when they arrived firsthand. As similar as Montreal may be to those European countries, "nothing was exactly as they thought it would be," he said.

"When you watch the TV and see what is happening in another country, is that really what is happening? Or only what is chosen

by that network? There could be a whole set of facts that may be left out, or shown on another station," he said.

Sasseville believes in open interpretations of *Exil: Vérité trompeuse*. "Even if I explain my way of seeing it, [...] my guidelines are not the same as the person standing next to me. Audiences should get what they want from the artwork," he said.

If there are questions, however, he'll be happy to explain his ideas as well.

His favourite part of being an artist is solving problems. "It's the first piece of any project. Before or during the first draft, I have to question myself [...] and find loopholes, or something that doesn't work. Then I have to come up with an answer," he said.

After that, the process is just mechanics, and he must piece the project together. "It's [also] fun, but it took me a while to realize that I love to solve problems."

At the moment, his biggest challenge is to find a way to connect with audiences. "I think I'm really sensitive. I have my eyes open, I see what's going on around me, and I focus on that," he said.

Sasseville doesn't see himself as an artist who produces work with a consistent message or connected themes.

"I'd be full of shit to tell you that that's the kind of artist I am," he said.

"Art is what I do, but at the same time I'm really insecure. I can't just say, 'OK, I do this.' It's always a tug of war between following my gut feeling and doing the right thing. [...] It's part of who I am, and that's the reason why I create the way I create."

photo courtesy of Yanick Sasseville



THE CALL OF AUTUMN



Folk-Pop Band Autumn Still Offer a Glimpse into the Consciousness of a Musician

by Athina Lugez @AthinaLugez

Autumn Still, a thriving pop-folk trio from Winnipeg, Manitoba, is the product of a long-term friendship bound by a shared passion for music. Set to release their new self-titled EP on Dec. 4, the band's latest songs evoke themes of internal dialogue, relationships and isolation.

The band comprises lead vocalist and bassist Bethany Swanson, guitarist Trevor Graumann and drummer Roger Arseneault, a lineup that forms the culmination of several previous collaborations. Autumn Still has recently attracted a fair share of buzz across Canada's local music scene and college radio stations, hoping to take the scene by storm.

"The core of the band is comprised of myself and Bethany; we're the two principal sub-writers," Graumann told *The Link*. "We've actually been friends since high school. For several years before, we were doing solo projects and were in a couple of bands. But just about a year and half ago, we got together with our drummer Roger to create Autumn Still."

Following their formation, the band started

recording songs in Arseneault's home studio. While the collection that appears on the self-titled EP runs under 15 minutes, Graumann explained that they wanted to highlight their best and most carefully-crafted songs.

"We worked hard to get to the point where we felt it was beautiful. Often people ask why [there are] only three songs and we felt that it was [about] quality over quantity."

"We had worked out the arrangements to a certain point and we realized that lyrically these songs have a tightness together," Graumann continued, adding that the band paid special attention to composing their music around their lyrics. "It was a matter of where the arrangements [should go] and it lumped together nicely," he said.

Motown, 1950s doo-wop and 1960s pop music have greatly impacted Autumn Still's creative process, which shines through in their old-school guitar tones.

Their longing for a particular musical past can be heard through their three songs "Our Last," "Long Terms" and "Bartholomew." Melodically akin to ballads of the 1960s, the band adds a modern pop-rock vibe with Swanson's haunting vocals

and Graumann's guitar licks that resemble 1990s indie pop bands Camera Obscura or Belle and Sebastian.

However, Autumn Still attributes their greatest musical inspirations to British-American rock band Fleetwood Mac and Canadian folk singer-songwriter Leonard Cohen. Autumn Still strives to create quality recordings with strong and meaningful lyrics, which they see those artists as exemplifying.

"Fleetwood Mac represents a spiritual influence on the band because it's a common interest we bonded over for a long time. Leonard Cohen also has played a great role because of his emphasis on lyrical work that we stress," Graumann said.

"In a general sense, we qualify ourselves as an accommodation of a folk band with pop elements. Folk especially because of our lyricism that we take a lot of time to craft. I know that a lot of people would define us as such and we spend a lot of time thinking about how to write well and how it will fit into the musical arrangement."

Friendship, relationships and isolation were themes the band decided to explore in the songs "Our Last" and "Long Terms"

because of close personal experiences that have affected them. Graumann and Swanson structured the lyrics in a way that exposed their mind's internal stream of consciousness.

"The lyrics are disjointed, which accounts for their mysteriousness. That's when the stream of consciousness comes in. The whole idea of not speaking coherently when you're talking to yourself," Graumann said.

"These songs are about different people and friends," he continued. "Mostly about how I've seen them change in the long term. Particularly about someone who's becoming increasingly isolated, and sort of not living much of a life now."

Autumn Still will be releasing their EP on Dec. 4 in Winnipeg at the Good Will - Social Club. The band intends to tour across Canada this spring, with hopes of stopping by in Montreal.

"By the springtime we'll be on the road. We're putting the EP out right now on college radio, at this point we're trying to see who responds to it, where it makes sense for us to go," Graumann said.

photo courtesy of Autumn Still



Let's Not Get Physical

Stingers Held Back by Referees in Loss to UQAM

Julien Assouline @JulienAssouline

Weeks after Stingers women's basketball coach Keith Pruden complained over the quality of officiating in his team's season opener, the coach bemoaned the referees once more.

"Quebec [league] allows too much contact," Pruden lamented. "I said that three weeks ago after our first league game. It's not hockey. It's basketball. It's supposed to be a non-contact sport."

It's been a recurring theme for Pruden and the Concordia Stingers women's basketball team this season.

The Stingers lost another physical game against the UQAM Citadins 61-49 on Thursday. Plenty of calls were missed by the referees, including a punch to the face to All-Canadian guard Kaylah Barrett in the first quarter, which frustrated many of the Stingers players. While the punch was allegedly not intentional, she needed to be removed from the game.

"Kaylah's going to have a fantastic shiner tomorrow," said Pruden.

The Stingers' head coach voiced his displeasure on the officiating, but called on his players to adjust to referees' tendencies.

"The onus is on us to adjust to the way [the game is] being called and we didn't adjust, we got frustrated," Pruden said. "The refs aren't going to make a huge adjustment just because we're not happy with the way they're calling it."

The Stingers were also poor with their possessions, causing 25 turnovers throughout the game, the most they've done in a game all season.

"For the season so far we've been averaging only nine turnovers a game. We had 25 tonight and their defense is good, but it's not that good," Pruden added. "That's us making

mental errors."

The score was 32-30 at the end of the first half, in favour of the Stingers. Third-year forward Marilyse Roy-Viau was the star performer. She had 14 of the team's first 22 points, and 16 points by half time.

But the game took a sharp turn in the second half when Roy-Viau went down with a twisted ankle and got up limping.

"She's had problems with that ankle all year but she's really, really tough," said Pruden.

Roy-Viau clearly slowed down in the second half, scoring only five points, but coach Pruden would not blame it on Roy-Viau's ankle.

"The issue was when she was getting frustrated with how physical the game was and she wasn't getting any calls, so she kind of backed off a little bit," Pruden said. "Everybody did, not just her, but she's very sensitive about the ankle so it probably added to the distractions."

The Stingers fell behind 49-40 after three quarters, but it was in the fourth quarter that they fell too far back to catch up to UQAM.

The Stingers were unable to generate any type of offense as the Citadins went on an 8-0 run, giving them a 57-40 lead and putting the game out of reach. In fact, the Stingers were unable to score a point until 5:18 was left in the quarter, when Kaylah Barrett made a free throw.

Concordia attempted a comeback after Barrett made her free throw, outscoring the Citadins 8-4 in the last five minutes of the game. The final score was a more respectable 61-49.

This is the team's second straight loss, giving them a record of 1-3. They will now have the winter break to rest and improve. Their next league game will be against the Bishop's Gaitsers on Jan. 15.

photo Shaun Michaud

Late Fouls Cut

Stingers Comeback Short

Stingers Lose Enthralling Game to UQAM Citadins

Julien Assouline @JulienAssouline

The Concordia Stingers men's basketball team kept it close against the UQAM Citadins this past Thursday night, but ultimately came up short, losing 80-73 at the Concordia Gymnasium.

The Stingers were down by as many as 10 points in some parts of the game, but managed to hold a 70-68 lead late in the fourth, their first lead since the second quarter.

However, Concordia lost two key players, Ricardo Monge and Ken Beaulieu, who were forced out of the game after questionable fouls.

"I didn't think it was a well-officiated game," said head coach John Dore after the loss.

"[Beaulieu] got the technical [foul] for demonstrative behaviour and you can't show up a referee," Dore continued. "Obviously, I didn't agree with that call at that point in the game, but at that time I think the referee should warn him."

Coach Dore was not the only person who had a problem with that call.

"[The referees] said that we were complaining all the time. I don't know what to say, just stupid calls. Just lost a game we should have won," said Beaulieu. "I think I could have made a change [if I was in the game]."

While Beaulieu was a key part of

the Stingers' play until his exit, it was Mukiya Post who carried the team, scoring 25 of his 27 points in the second half.

"I think Mukiya started the game slowly. He did not have a good first half," said Stingers head coach John Dore. "But then he made some shots in the second half, got to the free throw line, got some rebounds."

Post came up big for the Stingers late in the game, scoring clutch shots to keep the score close.

"Everyone likes to play in those moments to make a big shot," said Post. "For sure everyone likes to do that, everyone likes to hit the big shots and the shots that put you ahead late in the game."

Unfortunately, Post couldn't deliver the Stingers to victory once Monge and Beaulieu were out of the game, as they allowed nine straight points from UQAM after Monge fouled out. The Stingers scored one more three-pointer from Post, but they could not keep up.

The Maroon and Gold will be playing in two tournaments, the Dick Versace Classic and the Chuck Daly Memorial Classic after Christmas, before they play their first league game of 2015 against the Bishop's University Gaitsers on Jan. 15.

photo Fatma Daldoul



BOX SCORES

WEEK OF NOV. 25 TO DEC. 1

THURSDAY

27

Men's Hockey—Concordia 3, McGill 5
Women's Basketball—Concordia 49, UQAM 61
Men's Basketball—Concordia 73, UQAM 80

FRIDAY

28

Women's Hockey—Concordia 0, Ottawa 1

SATURDAY

29

Men's Hockey—Concordia 5, Royal Military College 4 (SO)

SUNDAY

30

Women's Hockey—Concordia 2, McGill 3

UPCOMING GAMES

COMING UP IN CONCORDIA SPORTS

SUNDAY

28

TBA Women's Basketball at Concordia Tournament

MONDAY

29

TBA Women's Basketball at Concordia Tournament
5:00 p.m. Men's Basketball at Dakota Wesleyan Tigers (Dick Versace Classic)

SUNDAY

30

7:00 p.m. Men's Hockey at Royal Military College Paladins

FRIDAY

2

3:00 p.m. Women's Hockey vs. McGill Martlets (Ed Meagher Arena)

FRIDAY

3

TBA Women's Hockey at Concordia Theresa Humes Tournament
5:00 p.m. Men's Basketball at Southeastern Fire

SATURDAY

4

TBA Women's Hockey at Concordia Theresa Humes

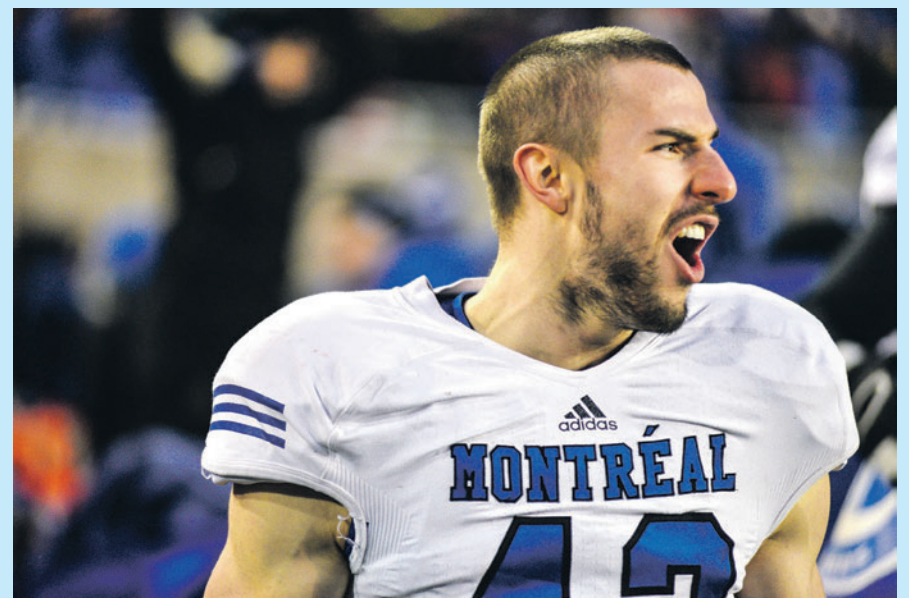
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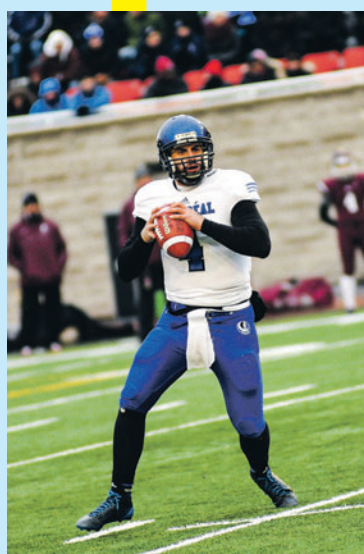
Stay up to date with all of our sports recaps and other sports stories in our online sports section!



"We needed a fresh face. I think it's good for university football in general, and I think [it will lead] other institutions to believe that [winning a championship] could happen to them. If they take that from this victory today, then I think it's a positive message."

—UdeM Carabins head coach Danny Maciocia





Les Bleus Sont Victorieux

UNIVERSITÉ DE MONTRÉAL CARABINS CLINCH FIRST-EVER VANIER CUP TROPHY AFTER HEART-STOPPING ENDING



by Julian McKenzie @JulianTheIntern

There's a new top dog in Quebec football. After years of the Laval Rouge et Or dominating the Réseau du sport étudiant du Québec conference and the Canadian Interuniversity Sport, there is, finally, a new champion from the conference. UdeM Carabins head coach Danny Maciocia is quite pleased that his team has disrupted the norm of RSEQ and Canadian university football.

"We needed a fresh face," Maciocia said after his team's 20-19 victory over the McMaster Marauders this past Saturday afternoon at Molson Stadium. "I think it's good for university football in general and I think [it will lead] other institutions to believe that [winning a championship] could happen to them. If they take that from this victory today, then I think it's a positive message."

The Carabins captured their first ever Vanier Cup title in school history and became the first RSEQ team not named Laval to win a Vanier Cup since 1987, when McGill University won over the University of British Columbia.

"This is one of the highlights of my coaching career," said Maciocia, who is the first head coach to win a Canadian Football League Grey Cup title and a Vanier Cup.

Despite trailing for most of the contest, the Carabins gained a 20-19 lead following a late field goal made by L-P Simoneau with 2:45 left to play.

"We started slow, but big teams come up in big moments," said UdeM quarterback Gabriel Cousineau, who threw a touchdown pass and completed 17 of his 33 pass attempts for 196 yards. "We made it and we finished the job well today."

UdeM was threatened with a field goal attempt from McMaster kicker Tyler Crapigna, who was four-for-four leading up the kick, late in the fourth quarter. Unfortunately for McMaster, Carabins lineman Mathieu Girard blocked Crapigna's kick,

giving UdeM the win.

"[It was a] freak play. It happens. That's sports for you," said Marauders quarterback Marshall Ferguson after the loss.

"I started screaming," said Cousineau. "It was incredible. Special teams make the difference and they proved that today."

Carabins receiver Régis Cibusu was honoured as the game's Most Valuable Player after the game, ending his day with six catches for 90 yards, while Carabins halfback Anthony Coady won the Bruce Coulter Award as the best defensive player for the day, after catching two interceptions in the game.

While the Carabins fans were jubilant in victory, the Marauders, who were looking for their second Vanier Cup championship in four seasons, were understandably disappointed. Ferguson lamented his team's inability to close out the game, despite having led for almost 57 of the 60 minutes played.

"That's been the story of our year, unfortunately," he said. "There's too many throws that I want back and when you're a fifth-year senior and you lose in your final game, you don't get any of those back unless you play catch with your kids in ten years."

UdeM had home advantage at Percival Molson Stadium as they played in front of a pro-Carabins crowd of 22,649 spectators, including Montreal mayor and UdeM graduate Denis Coderre.

However, the Carabins started off slowly, allowing two Crapigna field goals in the opening quarter and a 50-yard run from running back Wayne Moore in the second quarter. All UdeM could muster on offense in the first half was a field goal from Simoneau in the second quarter.

The Carabins were facing a 10-point deficit at half time and instead of panicking and worrying the players hummed, laughed, and enjoyed themselves in the locker room.

"A couple of people just went with it and then everybody just did it together," said Carabins halfback Anthony Coady.

UdeM pounded their chests as they hummed the famous chest beat from the 2014 film *The Wolf of Wall Street*, unphased by their slow

start in the first half. The thumping ultimately served as a rallying point for turning their game around.

"We just said [to each other] that we had to come up big in the second half," said Cousineau.

In the third quarter, Cousineau threw a nine-yard touchdown pass to receiver Phillip Enchill, putting his team within three points of the lead. McMaster added two more field goals from Crapigna, before UdeM responded with another a three-yard touchdown run from Sean Thomas Erlington in the fourth quarter, making the score 19-17.

Following Simoneau's kick to give UdeM a

20-19 lead, McMaster tried to reply with a field goal on their ensuing possession. The Marauders were given great field position thanks to runs from running back Wayne Moore, but Crapigna's field goal attempt was blocked, leading to Montreal's victory.

In a game that will go down as one of the most memorable in the Vanier Cup's history, UdeM's resilience and never-say-die attitude will be a part of that championship game's legacy.

"We have a team that never stopped believing in our goal," said Coady. "No one stopped believing."

photos Matt Garies



BDS issue overshadows election week

Mismanagement and confusion: does everyone now concede that the CSU's bylaws are in need of reform?



Concordia's Latest Greenwashing Half-Measure

Concordia's \$5-Million Green Fund Doesn't Go Far Enough

by Trevor James Smith

The Concordia University Foundation announced in a press release last week that it would invest \$5 million in a fund adhering to “environmental, social and corporate governance” criteria.

This is certainly a nice gesture, but it doesn't go nearly far enough.

Canadians across the country are currently being assaulted by projects from the likes of Enbridge, Kinder Morgan and TransCanada, oil corporations that are hoping to find ways to move Albertan bitumen west, east, south or any other cardinal direction to international seaports.

Environmental models suggest that success for these corporations will spell disaster for our global climate and to Canadian forests, waterways and local municipalities as well.

In a recent report from the International Energy Agency, researchers informed the world that if we want to avoid catastrophic climate change, 80 per cent of known carbon reserves need to stay in the ground.

In other words, the clock is ticking for us to end our love affair with oil. In the context of our steadily rising annual emissions, this will be difficult.

After more than a year of talks held between

the CUF, the Graduate Students' Association and the Concordia Student Union on the topic of divesting from fossil fuels, the university's initiative is a far cry from the target that the Concordia community requested.

In fact, the fund is entirely the CUF's design and it wholly ignores the suggestions of Divest Concordia and the student associations involved.

As a co-coordinator of Divest Concordia, I was privy to the discussions of Concordia's Socially Responsible Investment working group as the GSA representative.

It is partly because of these talks that Divest Concordia hasn't been as active this past semester. We have been eagerly awaiting the CUF's response and, failing to see divestment mentioned even once, I can't help but feel that our demands fell on deaf ears.

Similarly, this week we heard that after several years of discussions and campaigning, Dalhousie University's Board of Governors decided not to divest their endowment fund from fossil fuels.

The news from Dal, historically known for being the first Canadian university to divest from and boycott South African companies in response to their apartheid regime in 1987, may have been a factor in timing this week's announcement by Concordia's administration that the foundation would

carve out a green fund.

The fear that Dal would beat Concordia to the divestment punch may have had a lot to do with the CUF's rush to announce their green fund this week, despite the CSU's Fund Allocation committee not having met to discuss the SRI working group's initial proposal.

The proposal the CUF was waiting to hear back on from the CSU would have involved allocating a significant portion of the CSU's Student Space fund into their project.

The logistics and management of such a move aside, the CSU couldn't have ethically agreed to entrust student money to CUF's fund managers in the end.

Additionally, we, the members of the SRI working group, wouldn't have felt comfortable setting the precedent in Canada of demanding student associations to “buy in” for control.

Rather than follow-through on legitimate divestment of fossil fuels, pressure was placed on the CSU to be willing to pony up the money to have some degree of control over the investment criteria. In no way does that address divestment. Concordia will not be the first Canadian university to legitimize these “greenwashing” practices.

The pledge to divest endowment funds has been taken by a number of American universities and I fail to see why Concordia refuses

to be the first Canadian institution to do so.

Despite the demands of the student representatives—that the CUF commit to divesting in the next three years and create a socially responsible investment oversight group that included students, faculty and administrators—what we have been presented with is little more than a public relations stunt.

I can only wonder about the real reasons why Bram Freedman and Howard Davidson, the president and the chair of the CUF, respectively, are so reluctant to include the Concordia community on matters that impact the sustainable governance of the university.

It would appear that the work on SRI is far from finished and, although some might call the fund a success from student initiatives, Divest Concordia certainly has some work to do as well.

A quote from Bethany Hindmarsh, a Dal student, sums it up best: “Any decision other than a decision to divest is a signal that they [university administrators] are comfortable with complicity in the greatest injustice of our time.”

Trevor James Smith is one of four graduate students who sit on Concordia's senate, the university's highest academic body, and is a coordinator at Divest Concordia.

graphic Madeleine Gendreau

Obituary: Brendan Cahill

The Link has learned that Brendan Cahill, a staffer on this publication in the mid-1980s, passed away a number of months ago in Toronto. He was 54.

Brendan spent the better part of his time at Concordia in the fourth floor corridor of the Hall Building that once housed *The Link*, where he served terms as sports and entertainment editor. He was also a member of a staff that won a Rolling Stone College Journalism Award for an investigative series on the athletic department in 1985.

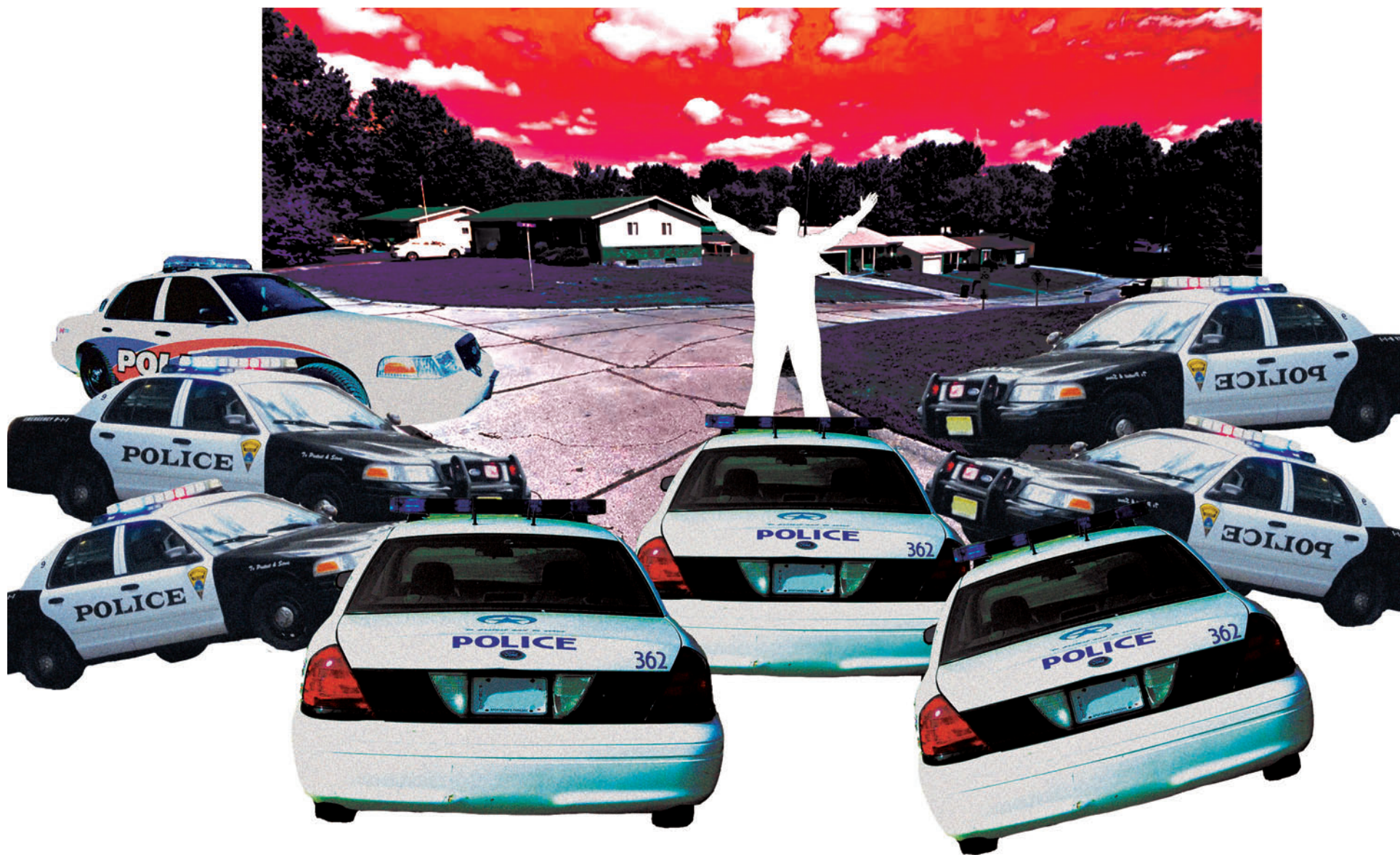
After relocating to Toronto in the mid-

1990s, Brendan visited Montreal regularly and on more than one occasion popped by to pick up a current issue.

In October 2012, in town and looking for something to do, he got in touch with the incumbent sports editor, wondering if *The Link* needed an extra hand over Homecoming Weekend.

We did.

Brendan's byline appeared on Oct. 8, above coverage of a pair of Stingers basketball games during that year's Nike Tournament. It had been 25 years since he was last published in *The Link*.



The Fires That Bind

Neoliberal Parallels From Ferguson to Montreal

by Pierce Nettlung

There will come a time in our lives when we will set our backyards on fire and watch them burn.

In most cases, the fire will be extinguished. But sometimes the force of the blaze will burn unhindered and spread, connecting with other fires until there is nothing left to burn but the ground underneath.

This is what happened last week in the United States and Canada, and at its root is the everyday lived experience of neoliberalism.

The first fire occurred last Monday in Ferguson, Missouri after the announcement that a grand jury did not indict Darren Wilson, a white police officer, for shooting and killing Michael Brown, an unarmed black teenager, over an alleged robbery of cigarillos at a local gas station on Aug. 9. While Ferguson burned on Monday, its flames spread everywhere else.

Throughout the week thousands of people marched against police brutality under the banner of “Black Lives Matter” on the streets of Oakland, Seattle, Los Angeles, San Francisco and New York City.

In Montreal, hundreds of people gathered for a vigil at McGill, listening to American members of the Black Students’ Network express their fear of going back home for the winter break. While the Montreal police watched from a distance, the crowd lit candles and sang “Amazing Grace.”

These moments fit within the all-too-familiar reality of neoliberal economic restructuring and public policies that have shaped the North American landscape since the early 1970s.

Under neoliberalism, the state and its managerial responsibilities have been scaled down to the municipal level.

City governments, now given more

responsibility but fewer resources and revenue streams, turn their internal governance structures towards entrepreneurialism and privatize public utilities, slash public services such as public transit funding, and in turn fight with other cities both regionally and globally for capital investment.

The result of this zero-sum game has led to a geography in the United States where cities incite big-box retailers to move down the street through corporate tax schemes—effectively turning the suburbs into places of continual abandonment as capital moves from one location to another.

From 2000 to 2010, the governments in the St. Louis region spent \$1.3 billion in tax incentives through a policy tool known as tax increment financing to subsidize development.

TIF, as it is known, was designed to encourage urban renewal and ease the burden for developers in building a retail strip mall or an office park. When mapped, however, the majority of the municipalities using TIF tend to be in wealthier and predominantly white, suburban areas—not the districts the policy was originally designed for.

The climax of this zero-sum geography occurred during the mid-2000’s, after the US Supreme Court ruled in favour of cities using eminent domain (taking private property for public use) after *Kelo v. City of New London*.

Municipalities in St. Louis County, emboldened by the ruling, used eminent domain to clear “blighted” neighbourhoods for development—mostly working-class to middle-class residential areas, but in some cases, subdivisions of minorities within a majority white city.

This use of eminent domain has effectively signaled the return of a particular neoliberalized urban slum clearance policy direction in the United States.

Unable to use TIF policies or similar

measures, cash-strapped inner-ring suburban communities—which in North St. Louis County have been decimated by economic decline, the historical legacies of racial covenants and redlining, white flight and predatory subprime mortgage lending during the financial crisis—have resorted to using the police force as the local revenue stream.

According to ArchCity Defenders, a law advocacy group in St. Louis, the cities of Ferguson and Florissant, both in North St. Louis County, made \$3.5 million from the municipal courts in 2013. Pine Lawn, another neighbouring city, where the population is 96 per cent African-American and has a per capita income of \$13,000, made \$1.7 million from court fees.

For stops and searches in Ferguson, 86 per cent of all police stops involved a black motorist, even though the total African-American population for the city is 67 per cent—only 12.7 per cent of stops were white motorists, who make up of 29 per cent of the population.

The use of the police as revenue generators demonstrates both the pervasiveness of neoliberal restructuring after decades of decline and the historically localized legacies of racism and segregation that manifest within the processes of capital accumulation.

Outside the governance of the state, another fire has erupted over the past year—a nationwide grassroots movement demanding \$15 an hour as the minimum wage.

What started with fast food workers going on a one-day strike in cities such as New York, Cleveland and Chicago has led to more organized efforts at the city level in cities like Seattle, which saw \$15 an hour become law.

The movement has now shifted to Wal-Mart, where employees are using the tactics of

illegal sit-ins. On “Black Friday,” the day after Thanksgiving in the United States, these two fires of anti-police brutality and the labour movement seemed to converge as over 1,600 Wal-Mart locations experienced sit-ins, with some expressing solidarity with Ferguson.

In St. Louis this led to “dead-ins,” which saw protestors falling to the ground, mimicking dead bodies, at local malls and Wal-Marts. The stores closed for hours and the malls were temporarily shut.

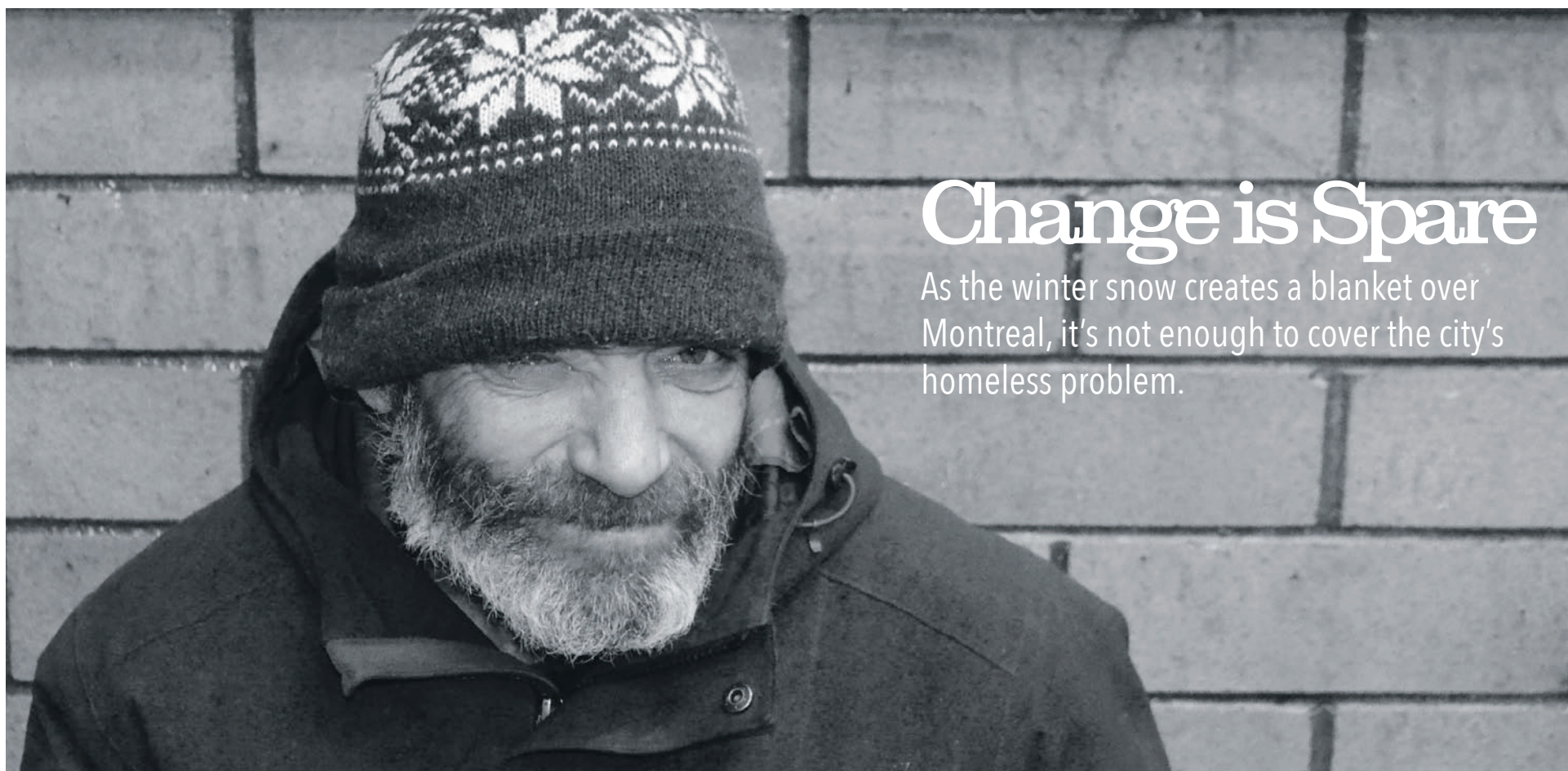
Taken as a whole, the localized fire of Ferguson now resembles a semi-organized national movement of two particular struggles from within the same class and racial groups—marginalized minorities. The people who live in places like Ferguson work in retailers like Wal-Mart, and this reality cannot be untethered politically. What we are witnessing is two sides of the same movement for equality and justice.

What does this mean, however, for Quebec and Canada? The voices against austerity here are aligned with those to the south. The experience of neoliberalism through the policing and subsidizing of the crisis will happen here too, but on different terms, reflecting the historically rooted race and class histories of Canada and Quebec.

In the end, neoliberalism is an economic philosophy and political agenda that does not attempt to tackle the structural legacies of racism and settler colonialism, nor the geographic unevenness of capital accumulation, but exploits both for the benefit of a particular class of individuals.

In other words, the fires we are currently witnessing right now will never be put out as long as they continue to be stoked. We have nothing to fear and everything to gain.

graphic Jennifer Aedy



John Scotsman has been on the street for 26 years.

by Matthia Busby @itsmattha

The scowl that many homeless people receive when asking “Vous avez un peu de change?” is one that I myself sometimes bestow upon them.

Society at large needs to reexamine the ways in which we treat those that we keep on the margins. Otherwise we will only perpetuate a growing problem.

This year, the city of Montreal increased its annual expenditure on homelessness from \$1.4 to \$2.4 million. The city’s total operating budget stands at \$4.9 billion.

Food for thought: \$2.4 million as a percentage of \$4.9 billion stands at roughly 0.0005 per cent. With approximately 6,000 homeless individuals in the city, this amounts to roughly \$400 per person.

The first person I interviewed as I began my research for this article, a particularly articulate man named John Hawkins, told me several interesting things that I sought to investigate further.

He was highly critical of the state. “[Society] is designed to keep us in this situation,” he told me. “Without us on the street, there’s no need for people to delegate whatever they delegate; there’s corruption in high echelons.”

When asked what he does now that it’s rather cold outside, he said that he tries to get into a shelter sometimes, although “the shelters give preference to occupants over new admissions.” In the absence of a bed in a shelter, “we stay in the metro until it closes and then we go out into the streets.”

How do you get welfare payments?

When asked about the possibility of obtaining welfare, one man I spoke to lamented: “You cannot get welfare without an address.”

David Chapman, assistant director at Westmount drop-in centre La Porte Ouverte, confirmed that you need an address to obtain social assistance.

“[However] various groups will provide an address to those without one. Many people get the minimum \$600 through that route,” he said.

I visited downtown women’s shelter Chez Doris and met Marie Hampton, who was critical of the welfare payments.

“There’s a baseball catcher who just earned \$52 million. I’m 60 and I make \$10,000 in welfare and disability [\$927 per month], so there’s hope for me yet,” she said.

Bruce Fraser, a regular visitor to La Porte

Ouverte, said it’s “too easy” to get social assistance.

“[All you need is a] doctor’s certificate that proves you’re unable to work,” the welfare recipient said, noting that he had not had a medical evaluation in 27 years. The state tried to revoke his social assistance payments 15 years ago, but he “hopped back on the wagon and bullshitted the doctor.”

“No matter if you’re in good health or not, no one can deny you medical welfare,” he said.

Bruce believes that society must “de-stigmatize both the homeless and ex-drug addicts, [especially] those with criminal records, through an affirmative action-style thing.” He said there aren’t enough reintegration programs for the homeless.

I found that there are some systems in place to help those in poverty to survive, but the whole of society has to radically alter the way it treats and views the homeless.

As I stopped to speak with homeless people throughout the past two weeks, it was hard to ignore the scorn in the eyes of passers-by.

There may be day services, but there need to be more social reintegration schemes. Currently, if you can’t find employment, you don’t really have a way out. Change is clearly not reaching the right people.

Montreal mayor Denis Coderre’s announcement of more municipal funding for dealing with homelessness amounts to little more than rhetoric.

There need to be more work schemes backed by municipal, provincial and federal authorities, along with psychological treatment if necessary, which will not just keep the homeless alive but improve their quality of life.

Is there enough room at the inn?

The homeless begin to line up at Old Brewery Mission or the Welcome Hall Mission around 1 p.m. to secure a bed for the night. Unfortunately, there are far fewer beds than needed.

This is why day centres like La Porte Ouverte and Chez Doris are so busy.

One man wearing a cap that read “Native Pride,” who preferred to not be named, doesn’t go to shelters because they’re infested with bedbugs. “I prefer my sleeping bag,” he said.

I also spoke to Benoit, who begs in the city throughout the day before camping on the mountain and has a similar dislike for shelters.

Part of Coderre’s plan to fight homelessness is to create 600 social housing units and 400 rooming house beds. He gave a timeframe of

three years for the new housing in September.

There still aren’t enough beds in the city, and as economic conditions continue to deteriorate outside of metropolitan centres, we can expect plenty of new arrivals.

Through my research, I found that the welfare state is actually broadly inclusive. \$600 per month appears to be readily available, but it’s not much. It’s almost enough to survive, but it surely can’t facilitate upward social mobility.

Who is homeless?

Matthew Pearce, the Old Mission Brewery’s president and CEO, told *The Link* that “critical housing shortages in the north [of Quebec] are forcing people south, which particularly affects densely populated Inuit communities.”

He estimated there are around 6,000 homeless people in Montreal. In September, Coderre announced plans for a “homeless census” in order to get a better idea of where to allocate resources.

We have yet to get a definitive census from Coderre’s office, for it was never supposed to happen in the fall.

“People aren’t homeless because they lost the keys to their apartment,” Pearce said. “Housing must come with counselling support.”

Chapman echoed Pearce’s remarks. “Many Inuit people leave thinking life will be better, but when they get to Montreal they realize getting that job isn’t that easy if you don’t speak French.”

When asked what he thought the root of homelessness was, Chapman listed “mental illness, drug use, family violence and displacement from northern communities.”

However, austerity is also producing some new, more unlikely victims of homelessness. There is a “high-functioning populace that are on the margins of being on the street,” Chapman said.

“There may have been cutbacks at work and whereas you used to work 40 hours a week, you now work for only 10-12 hours,” Chapman said. “There is a huge range to what homelessness is.”

It must be difficult to administer a system in which some people do not seek upward socioeconomic mobility, though. Nadejdra Yilich, visiting Chez Doris, said her son “likes to be on the street” and “works the system.”

Nadejdra—which is Russian for hope—grew up in a ruined house in Leningrad with four other families. She moved to Nigeria with a man she had met at her university,

who then abused her.

She later came to Montreal and obtained a degree in linguistics from Concordia. Now she shares a 1 ½ and hangs out at Chez Doris after a brain tumour left her unable to work.

She believes that the housing system and landlords in Montreal discriminate against outsiders.

She told the story of her friend who lived on Newman Blvd. at the edge of LaSalle. When she returned one day, she found her stuff had been chucked out because her landlord had found her cats.

Nadejdra herself awaits a court hearing after her landlord allegedly demanded \$10,000 for water damage. She said the damage had existed before she moved into the apartment.

Even when you get off the street, life is never an easy ride.

What to do if times get tough

There are many services throughout the city to help the homeless. These include Dans la rue, the Old Brewery Mission and the YMCA, in addition to Chez Doris and La Porte Ouverte.

“Homeless people are moving around a lot at night, which is why day centres exist,” said Chapman of La Porte Ouverte. “We put the pews to good use out there.”

La Porte Ouverte provides a food bag worth \$40 for around an hour’s work along with free clothing, breakfast and lunch, laundry and footwash facilities, telephone/Internet access, haircuts and eyeglasses.

Relief organisations such as Doctors Without Borders often visit to provide medical help.

The centre aims to help people regain hope in themselves—and there are indeed stories of hope.

Chapman told me that the work he does is all the more worth it when the centre helps reintegrate people within society.

This, however, is not happening often enough.

And as Pearce reminded us, “85 per cent of the people who use our shelter are in a chronic state of homelessness.”

“Shelters are not a solution,” he said. “We should focus on getting them out of the shelter and into supported housing in a more respectable environment, which will give people a chance to succeed.”

photo Matthia Busby



Fertility Awareness Methods

I'm curious about natural contraception methods, but it seems like there are many different approaches and I'm overwhelmed trying to pick one. Is there one you suggest? —Only Natural

Natural contraception methods, more commonly known as fertility awareness-based methods (FAMs), are a great alternative for people who want a hormone-free contraception option.

They can be challenging at first since they require more consistent awareness and work than hormonal or barrier methods, but they also offer great benefits by allowing you to be more aware of and fully experience your body's natural cycles since they don't involve introducing hormones that alter these cycles. FAMs are symptom-based methods that rely on tracking bodily changes to predict when you're ovulating.

Once you know when you're ovulating you can avoid having unprotected sex on days surrounding ovulation to prevent pregnancy.

Several methods exist and involve daily tracking of one or more of the following: your cycle, your cervical mucus and cervical positioning, and your temperature.

I'll provide some basic information on these methods but this should not be used as more than an introduction.

The calendar method involves tracking the number of days in your menstrual cycle, starting with the first day of your period as day 1, in order to determine when you ovulate.

This should be done for a minimum of 8 cycles, meaning it takes a full 8 months before you can reliably use this method as contraception.

This method should also only be used if most of your cycles are 27 days or longer. Once you know the number of days in your cycles, you can predict your first and last fertile days.

For the first fertile day, subtract 18 from the number of days in your shortest cycle (ex: 27-18=9).

Then, starting with the first day of your current cycle (your period start date), count that number of days and mark the last day with an x. That is your first fertile day.

For the last fertile day, subtract 11 days from the number of days in your longest cycle (ex: 30-11= 19).

Starting with the first day of your current cycle, count that number of days and mark it with an x for your last fertile day.

This would mean that you're fertile from day 9 to 19 of your cycle and would want to

use a backup method of protection during sex.

The next method involves tracking changes in your cervical mucus and cervical positioning.

Throughout your cycle, the quality and quantity of your cervical mucus changes. Some days you won't have any, other days it might be yellow, white, clear, cloudy, sticky or slippery.

The clear, slippery days are typically the fertile ones, but getting to know your own personal fluctuations is the key. The second component to this method is cervical positioning.

Throughout your cycle, your cervix also changes and you can track these changes by checking your cervix daily.

When you're fertile the cervix rests higher up in the vaginal canal, is more open and softer to allow sperm to travel through more easily. When you're not fertile the cervix rests lower, is more closed, hard and dry.

The basal body temperature method involves tracking your daily temperatures when your body is at rest.

This must be done first thing in the morning while still lying in bed. There is a very slight rise in temperature after ovulation, and a slight drop right before your period, and these can be identified and then used to predict ovulation.

The most effective and only FAM I rec-

ommend looking into is the sympto-thermal method, which combines all three of the previously mentioned methods. Combining them yields the most accurate results, making the prediction of ovulation more precise and reliable.

FAMs require commitment and consistency. Without sticking to the tracking schedule, it's impossible for this method to become reliable, because it is based on identifying patterns that emerge over several months.

It's very important to educate yourself on proper use and techniques before attempting to use these natural methods since the failure rate with improper use is high.

There are group and individual trainings available that I highly recommend checking out for detailed information before giving FAMs a try.

For more on fertility awareness-based methods, check out Planned Parenthood's great article at <http://shar.es/1XFml>. For more on the sympto-thermal FAM and workshops in Montreal, check out serena.ca.

—Melissa Fuller @mel_full

Submit your question anonymously at sex-pancakes.com and like "Sex & Pancakes" on Facebook.



Santa's Shamanic Origins

When Mythology and Mycology Collide

by Gonzo Nieto @gonzebo

With the holidays approaching, I would like to share an interesting take on the origins of Christmas mythology.

It has been proposed that many aspects of the Christmas tradition may be rooted in the mythologies of pre-Christian indigenous peoples of Northern Europe and Siberia, cultures whose shamans used psychoactive mushrooms in their rituals.

The mushroom in question is the red-capped, white-spotted Amanita muscaria, otherwise known as "fly agaric".

This is the dancing mushroom in *Fantasia*; the same that appears in *Super Mario Bros.* video games and in *The Smurfs*. It is also thought that this mushroom is the sacrament referred to as *Soma* in the Rigveda, one of the foundational texts of Hinduism.

In the case of these European and Sibe-

rian cultures, their shamans consumed the mushroom as a sacrament to enter into trance states, otherwise accessed through dancing and drumming. In some regions, participants in ceremonies would also consume the sacrament.

The parallels between these cultures' mythologies and our existing Christmas tradition are numerous and interesting to consider, so let's take a look at some of them.

One of the most salient similarities is the red-and-white colour scheme, worn by both the Amanita mushroom and Santa himself. While some claim that Santa's dress is derived from the red-and-white shamanic dresses of some mushroom-using Siberian cultures, others doubt the validity of the connection, noting that the first time Santa appeared in red was in an illustration by Thomas Nast in the late 1800s.

The Amanita muscaria mushroom also

grows under firs and evergreens and was believed to be the fruit of these trees. This gave the trees a sacred quality as the source of the sacrament, which is reflected today in our use of firs and evergreens as Christmas trees.

The Christmas tree itself is derived from the belief in a World Tree, which was prominent in this region. This tree was representative of a cosmic axis, with the roots reaching into the underworld and the branches reaching towards the realm of the gods. The shamans, after entering a trance state, would ascend the World Tree into the heavens.

The North Star, being the center point in the night sky around which all other stars revolve, was seen as the top of this cosmic axis; this is represented in the placement of a star atop the Christmas tree.

Reindeer, which provided both food and clothing for the people of these ancient cultures, also pulled sleighs for transportation.

These reindeer also seek out the Amanita muscaria mushroom in the wild.

It is suggested that the flight of reindeer originated from the intoxicated state that both human and animal would have been enjoying following consumption of the mushroom.

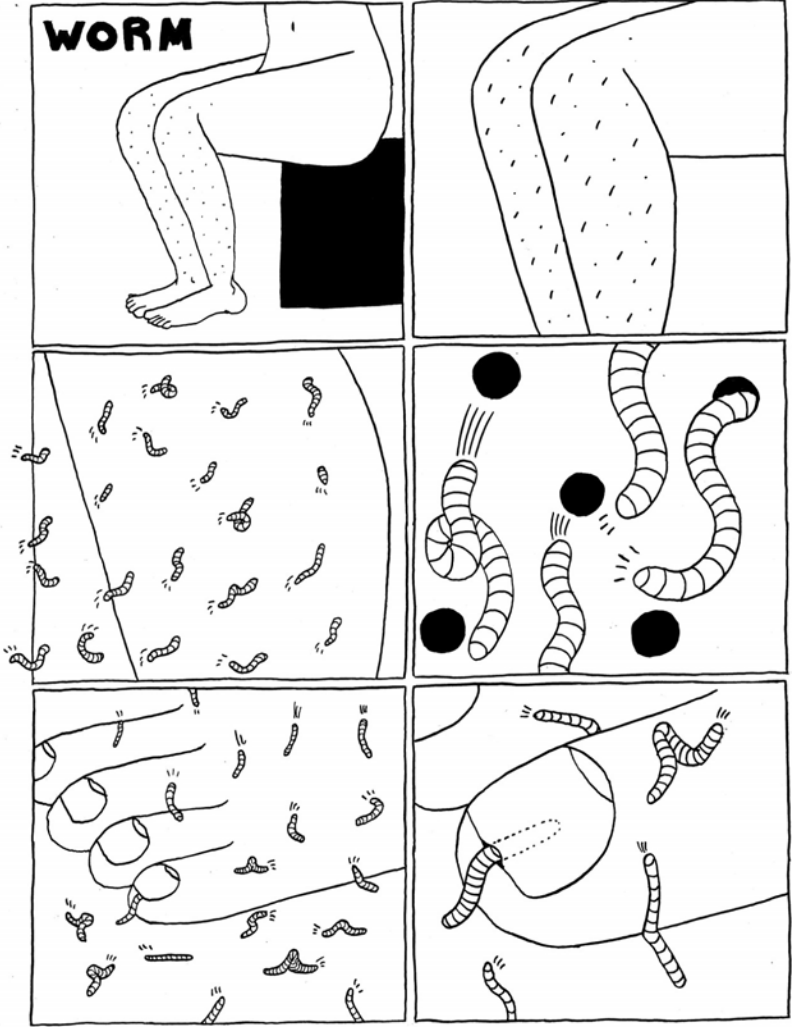
Of course, the certainty of some of these associations is debated. And as we take more of the similarities between our current Christmas tradition and shamanic Siberian cultures, we also have to recognize that the image and story of Santa Claus have been shaped by a number of cultural influences throughout time, from Christianity to Coca-Cola.

That being said, something that stands out to me is the degree to which these preceding cultures had rich mythologies with a depth of meaning that is not found in our present-day society.

Boop by Caity Hall



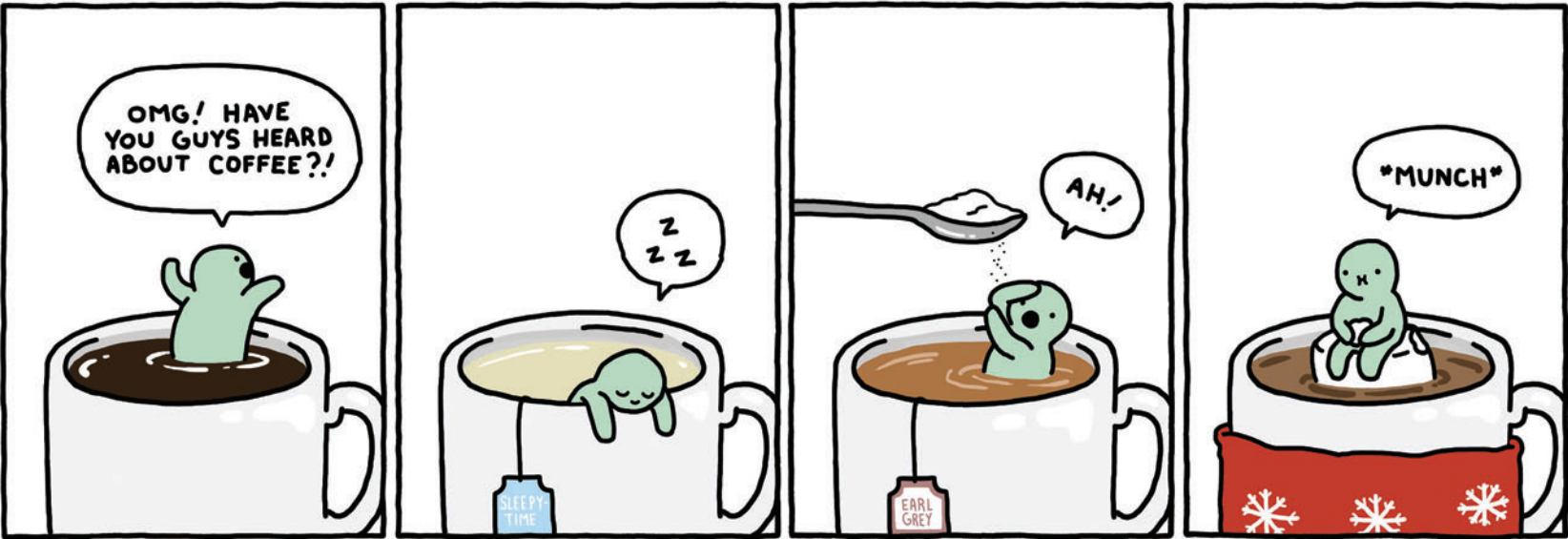
Nosebleed Comics



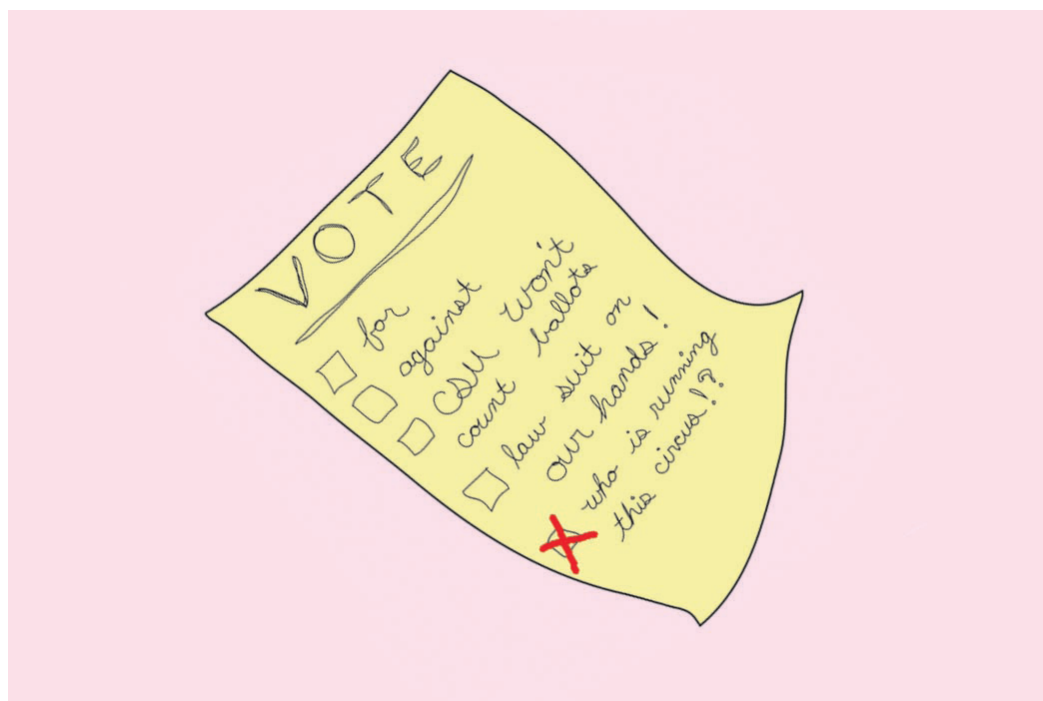
False Knees by Joshua Barkman



Power Theatre by Alex Callard



Editorial



We Need Electoral Reform at the CSU

Following last week's decision to change the wording of the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions question hours before voting opened, *The Link* and the CSU can finally agree on something: the electoral process needs reform.

The CSU agrees, the CSU's chief electoral officer agrees and the campaigns on either side of the issue agree—it doesn't make sense to first approve a question, then run campaigns about it, then change it without consultation at the eleventh hour.

Concordia's 36,000 undergraduate students were provided with a question that was initially formulated by Solidarity for Palestinian Human Rights, before being edited by Chief Electoral Officer Andre-Marcel Baril, before being switched by the CSU's Judicial Board for an alternate question also written by the CEO.

Zach Braman, chair of the Judicial Board, is confident that he followed the bylaws in allowing a last-minute appeal from the "No" camp to alter the question after they claimed they had not been informed of the first edit.

The CSU's bylaws state that the Judicial Board has "the authority to establish their own procedures in order to be able to deal with issues in a timely manner following the principles of natural justice."

The problem is not that any rules were broken, but rather that the rules in place do not facilitate responsible governance and are an impediment to the democratic process.

Changes are urgently needed in the CSU's bylaws and in the roles of the Judicial Board and the Chief Electoral Officer in order to avoid a repeat of last week's farce—it's to no one's benefit to have a contentious referendum question change the night before polling stations open.

The current 24-hour window for emergency appeals to the Judicial Board might work for a candidate, but it certainly doesn't work for a referendum question. As a result, the election has been thrown into question and CSU employees are awaiting the advice of a legal firm.

Flexibility is important to maintain within universities, but we must strive for balanced adjudication in student matters, which means correcting highly controversial or biased questions before campaigning begins.

What would be more sensible, and more democratic, would be a more rigorous process to formulate a question, conducted by an independent commission several weeks in advance of the vote.

The CSU's standing regulations regarding elections are also in need of an overhaul. Article 294 of the standing regulations states that campaign material may only be posted or broadcasted during the official campaign period, which begins ten days prior to polling and ends at 9 p.m. the night before polls open.

Wanting to inform students about arguments for and against BDS, *The Link* reached out to both the pro-BDS and anti-BDS camps,

looking for interviews. The pro-BDS camp spoke to our paper before 9 p.m., but the opposing camp refused to give an interview out of fear of violating the election regulations, since the interview would appear for the first time in print after the campaign period ended. Without an interview from the anti-BDS campaign, we resorted to using content from their official Facebook page to present their point of view.

During past CSU elections, *The Link* has published candidate profiles and analyses of referendum questions on the first day of polling. The CSU voting period usually begins on Tuesdays, the day *The Link* is published in print each week. Concerns have never before been raised as to whether an interview given for a news piece before the 9 p.m. deadline would be a violation of the CSU standing regulations.

The need to ensure that students aren't harassed or intimidated at the polling stations by campaigners is understandable—calm must prevail during the voting period. However, given the low voter turnout in our student union's elections, CSU regulations should avoid roadblocks to students becoming informed.

The inconsistent application of this regulation to referendum campaigns' interactions with the student press is problematic, particularly when the referendum question is changed so late. Both campaigns felt muzzled, unsure whether they might be sanctioned if they chose to speak out to the campus media

about the reformulated question.

Zach Braman told *The Link* that the question had been changed because it contained "prejudicial wording [such as the] 'Siege of Palestine' and various other things." In fact, the word "siege" was not in any version of the question. If even the chair of the Judicial Board isn't thoroughly versed in the many iterations of the question, can the student body be confident that due democratic process is being respected?

On the CSU's Facebook page, Baril posted a message admitting "it is impossible to find time to give the situation the significant amount of thought and research that it deserves." He goes on to say "the problem is further compounded by the magnitude and complexity of the question being voted on." For lack of time and knowledge, he couldn't consider a highly controversial question, yet he is the only person appointed to do so.

"To use a metaphor, my position acts as the police, judge and jury of the elections. There is no support system in place, beyond appeals to the Judicial Board presented by individuals who feel my decision was manifestly unreasonable. In this particular context, I do not feel that it would be responsible for one person to be entrusted with navigating the situation alone, and thus I have decided on taking an alternative methodology."

His confession speaks for itself.

graphic Jennifer Aedy

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Letters to the editor are welcome. All letters 400 words or less will be printed, space permitting. The letters deadline is Friday at 4:00 p.m.

The Link reserves the right to edit letters for clarity and length and refuse those deemed racist, sexist, homophobic, xenophobic, libellous, or otherwise contrary to The Link's statement of principles.

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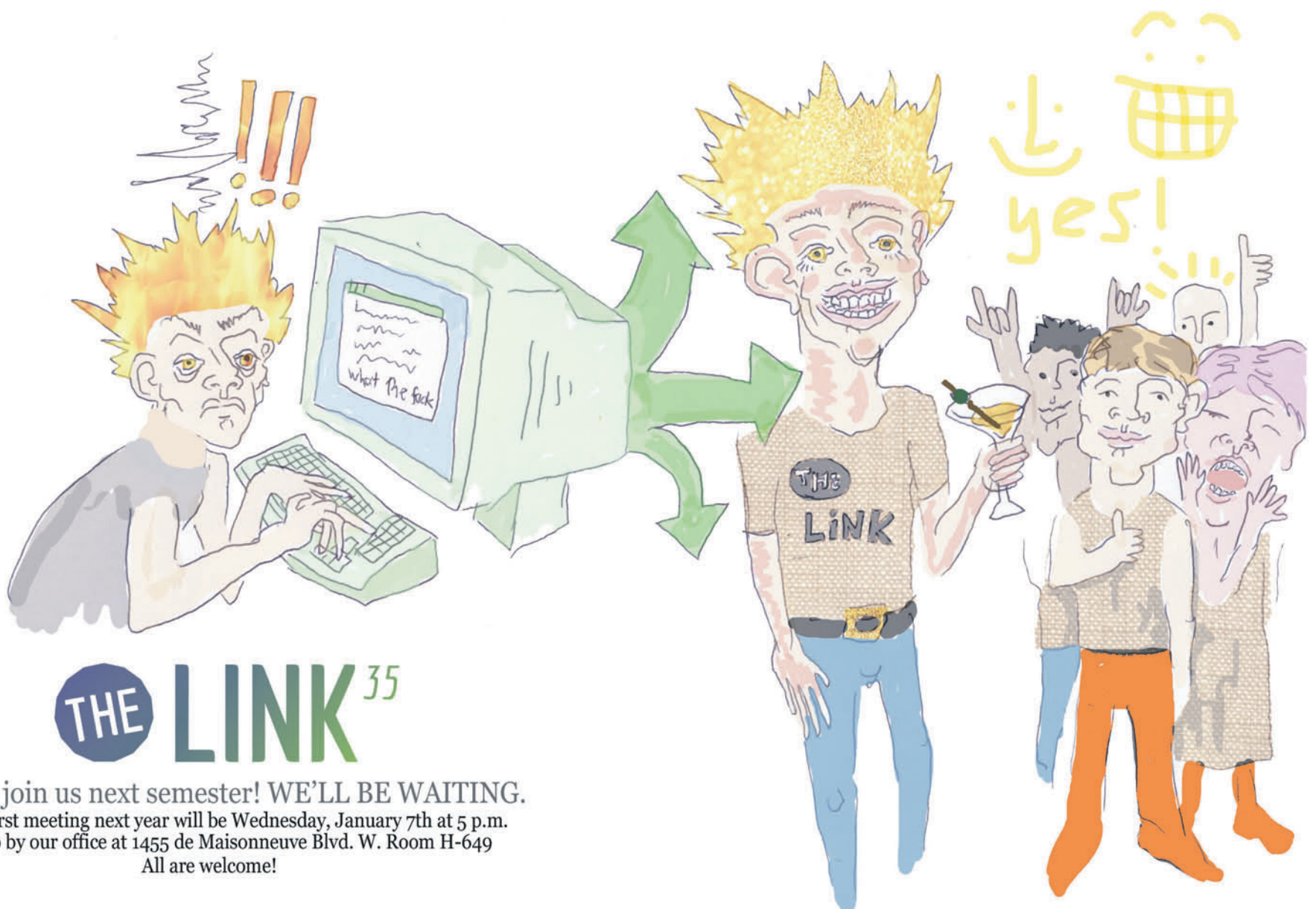
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Our first meeting next year will be Wednesday, January 7th at 5 p.m.
Drop by our office at 1455 de Maisonneuve Blvd. W. Room H-649
All are welcome!