

THE

LINK 35

CONCORDIA'S INDEPENDENT NEWSPAPER SINCE 1980



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P. 11

editorial

Concordia should take the right path at food services crossroads P. 27



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The Link is an independent, student-run, not-for-profit multi-media publication at Concordia University in Montréal. The Link aims to publish stories not usually covered by mainstream media, with a focus on advocacy journalism. Contributors cover stories about student life, as well as local, national and international issues of interest to the Concordia and Montréal communities.

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## taking back the plate

## 2nd Annual Concordia Transitions Brings Co-op Specialists to ConU

by Verity Stevenson @vestevie

There's still a lot left to do before Concordia could see its food system fully run by students.

Last year's Concordia Transitions—a daylong conference promoting food cooperatives—focused on the building blocks of the school's first food cooperative, the Hive Café.

This year, the conference focused on occupying space. The Concordia Food Coalition and the Concordia Student Union want to expand the ways Concordia can be self-sufficient when it comes to providing food for its population.

The goal is to eliminate big companies having control over most of the food sources at the university. An exclusivity contract Chartwells signed with Concordia 12 years ago is ending soon.

"There's a long-term strategy and the little events add up," CSU VP Sustainability and Transitions organizer Jessica Cabana told *The Link*. "The more we add pieces of the puzzle, the more it becomes the transition to a fully student-run food system."

The conference, held Sunday on the seventh floor, featured three speakers experienced with food and housing cooperatives, as well as workshops on food activism, cooperatives and growing and making different foods.

Succulent houseplants were placed on round tables, where half-eaten bagels and different coloured mugs filled with tea and coffee lingered from the 9 a.m. breakfast. Each table was abuzz with students, growing livelier as the morning progressed.

Events like Transitions help create awareness about the movement toward a student-run cafeteria and bring more people into the fold. After the first Transitions event

last February, several people got involved in the Hive Cafe project and have remained on board since then, Cabana explained.

"They really helped push the food movements forward at Concordia," she said of those that got involved after last year's conference.

If last year's conference was about making the Hive Cafe a reality in place of the Hall Building's Java U, this year the CSU is nearing the development of a Loyola Greenhouse. Cabana says the union is still working out costs and location.

It's one more step towards developing the capacity to create a cooperative food system—from growing to selling—that survives the transient nature of student bodies, Cabana said.

She said the CSU and CFC would like to see more of the spaces owned by students occupied, “taking them back, making sure they’re student-run and that they’re viable,” Cabana said. “We want to make sure that when we take over, that it’s successful. That it’s not just taking over to take over.”

The Concordia Food Coalition is one of the bidders in the request for proposal (RFP) for a new campus-wide food service provider, which should be ready within the month, according to university spokesperson Chris Mota.

The CFC's aim is for several smaller organizations to take over the feat of feeding Concordia's 43,000 students, rather than leaving it in the hands of one multi-national corporation. It says it would increase accountability and sustainability for the university's food sources.

Malik Yakini of the Detroit Black Community Food Security Network, who helped create urban agriculture farms D-Town Farms, said consumers shouldn't be reliant on food supplies from someone else.

“The majority population has to lead the work,” Yakini said, referring to a time 10 years ago when all of Detroit’s grocery stores were run by white owners and to organizations that resemble his but aren’t run by black people, which make up the majority of Detroit’s population.

He explained that the last nationally-owned grocery store in Detroit closed its doors in 2007 and that the small stores in the city sell lower-grade produce, while grocery stores in the predominantly white suburbs sell Grade A fruits and vegetables.

"We think it's important that the people who are most impacted by food insecurity, the people who are most marginalized lead the work to change the food system," he told the room, which was overflowing with people during his speech.

Yakini said there were several things he wanted students to think of in developing food systems within the university: white supremacy and “the importance of equity and justice in the food system.”

"Capitalism is a bad idea for human beings period," he said, linking the ideology and foreign food sources, like what California is to Montreal.

And patriarchy, “that somehow suggests that men are more capable of leading.” Yakini said women were often sexually harassed while trying to do groceries in Detroit.

"I did want to mention [these concepts] as I frame the work that we do, and I hope that as you go about creating a sustainable food system here on the campus, that you think about these ideas and that they help guide the work that you're doing here," he added.

The conference's first speaker, Laurent Levesque of the Unité de travail pour l'implantation de logement étudiant (UTILE), spoke of the process of developing co-ops within a student structure. The group has been researching student housing in the city and elsewhere in the hopes of creating a student-housing co-op.

In creating a co-op that can be sustained despite student turnover, organizers need to understand where it could falter, Levesque said. But it's also "important to break the traditional [existing] structures," he concluded.

Photos 1. Verity Stevenson 2. Shaun Michaud  
**2.**





## Canada's Youngest MP to Run for Re-Election

Pierre-Luc Dusseault:  
Conservative Government  
Doesn't "Respect Parliament"



by Michael Wrobel

Canada's youngest Member of Parliament is running for re-election and he says other young Canadians should throw their hats into the ring too.

"Go for it," says 23-year-old Pierre-Luc Dusseault, the New Democratic Party MP for Sherbrooke. "We need more young people in politics, at every level [of government]. We have a voice and our voice should be heard."

In the 2011 federal election, Dusseault's upset victory at the age of 19 made him the youngest person to ever be elected to the House of Commons. As a young MP, Dusseault says he's concerned about the low voter turnout among Canada's youth.

"If all young people would vote at, say, 90 per cent, we would see a big difference in the next government. I think youth maybe underestimate their influence," he told *The Link*.

People aged 20 to 34 represent roughly a quarter of the voting-aged public, according to Statistics Canada.

"Well, we should have 25 per cent of the votes in the House of Commons," says Dusseault. "I think it's really the role of Parliament and of every level, every legislature to be, as much as possible, representative of the general population."

When Dusseault decided to become a candidate, he was studying applied politics at the Université de Sherbrooke. He ran a "modest campaign" with just \$5,000 and a dozen or so volunteers. "I did the best I could, being in different places in the riding, door knocking, giving out flyers, going to old-age residences," he says.

Swept up in the so-called "orange wave" that washed over Quebec, Dusseault went on to win his seat with 43.1 per cent of the vote. He says voters reacted positively to his age. "People were saying, 'Oh, it's nice you're so young. It's nice to see young people in politics.'"

But within days of the election, Dusseault had gotten himself into hot water over wading into the debate on Quebec sovereignty. "Sovereignty will be done in Quebec. And Quebecers will decide if they want to be a country," he told Toronto radio host John Oakley.

His comments and those of other rookie NDP MPs sparked an article in *The National Post* with the headline "NDP inexperience shows in latest gaffes."

"Maybe the way I said it wasn't perfect, because I was not as good at English back then," Dusseault says.

"I said if Quebec wants [to become independent], they can do it, but I'm not in favour of that. I respect the choice, the decisions people make in a democratic country. If a democracy says something, I think all people should respect that."

Since he was elected, Dusseault's typical day on Parliament Hill has consisted of a lot of meetings—committee meetings, the NDP's national, regional and youth caucus meetings, and meetings with different interest groups.

He has served as the chairperson of two House of Commons standing committees—first the one for access to information, privacy and ethics; later the one that reviews government operations and expenditure plans. One of his most recent actions as chair of that committee was to provide the House with a report on the Conservatives' Bill C-21, dubbed the "Red Tape Reduction Act."

Passed by the House and now before the Senate, the bill seeks to enshrine into law the so-called "one-for-one" rule implemented in 2012, which states that government departments and agencies should remove a regulation each time they implement a new one so as not to increase the administrative burden on businesses.

It's a bill that Dusseault calls "useless" and "just a smokescreen."

"At the end of the day, you're still [left] with the same number of regulations," he says. "One minus one is zero. There's no reduction in red tape."

"The Conservative government is branding itself as being pro-business and everything and they try to paint [the NDP] as not being pro-business. It's fair game. It's politics. They have the right to do that, but we have some very good policies for small business," he adds.

Mid-interview, a bell chimes in the hallway outside Dusseault's office on the fourth floor of the Confederation Building just west of Parliament. Getting up from his chair at the head of the table, Dusseault finds a remote to turn on the television in the corner of the room.

The proceedings in the House of Commons come onscreen. MPs will soon vote on a motion for time allocation that would limit the length of debate on Bill C-44, the government's spy bill.

Called the "Protection of Canada from Terrorists Act," the bill would give "greater protection" to the Canadian Security Intelligence Service's confidential informants, as well as confirm the right of the federal court to issue warrants that have effect outside Canada.

It's the 85th time the Conservatives have used time allocation to curtail debate on one of their bills, breaking the previously established record, Green Party leader Elizabeth May said in the House.

"We will vote against [time allocation], for sure, but they have the majority," Dusseault notes.

"The current government, I think, doesn't really respect Parliament," he adds. "They use time allocation and closure on different bills. They fast-forward every bill in committee."

Deciding to run again in the election taking place later this year was an "easy choice," according to Dusseault. But with the NDP in third place in opinion polls, it'll be

a challenging campaign for the party. Dusseault says he sees all candidates as people who can possibly defeat him.

"We never know in politics, so I don't take anything for granted," he says.

The Liberal Party has nominated 68-year-old Tom Allen as their candidate in Sherbrooke. In a phone interview, Allen said he wants to convince people to vote "for" him, not "against" Dusseault. "It's a vote for, it's never a vote against," he said.

Facing off against Canada's youngest MP, the Liberal candidate told *The Link* he relates well to younger generations and the issues of concern to them. "I coached university athletes, CEGEP athletes all my life," he says.

Allen served for 16 years as a city councillor and worked for nearly 30 years as a sports director, first at Champlain College and then at Bishop's University. He says he chose to run with the Liberals because of the party's "support of the middle class" and "the general philosophy of being liberal."

"I think that we would be the best option for Canadians across the country to be the next party in power," he added.

Like Allen, Dusseault says he wants to help his party "become the next government." If the NDP forms government after the election, Dusseault says the party will take the country in a different direction than the Conservatives, beginning with the United Nations Climate Change Conference to be held in December 2015 in Paris.

"Our leader has been saying for a couple of years that our first important action on the international scene will be to go there and play an important role, an active role, on this issue," Dusseault says.

"I think it will be a very big change in direction from the current government, who don't really participate in those conferences and always receive [Fossil of the Year] prizes."

Photo Michael Wrobel





# mission objectively impossible

Panel on Objectivity in the Media Agrees: It's Subjective

by Josh Fischlin

Objectivity is considered by many to be a sacred tenet of journalism. It is the overarching principle that comes with the responsibility of delivering news to the public. As part of an anti-austerity Teach-In week, a discussion held in Concordia's Hive Café on Saturday questioned the obligation of reporters to be objective, especially when covering social movements.

"I don't think that anybody is truly objective as a journalist," said Damon Van Der Linde, a journalist at the CBC.

He said that the line is drawn when journalists are unwilling to criticize, or shine a "negative light," on an issue that they individually support.

"I do not think it is really possible to be a part of a social movement and consider yourself to be a journalist that strives for objectivity," Van Der Linde said.

"If you as a journalist are unwilling to report something that can be perceived as negative about the movement you're involved

in, it's not journalism, it's communication."

Although it's tough to deliver truly objective reporting, it's still something that all journalists should strive for, Van Der Linde asserted.

"It's really important that you understand that traditional media and I include what you call commercial media and the public broadcasters [...] think of themselves as striving for objectivity," added Philippe Marcoux, a CBC/Radio-Canada reporter.

On the opposite end of the objectivity debate was Laith Marouf, a multimedia activist and radio producer. "I have no shame in actually saying I am a biased person," he said.

He considers himself to have been fully embedded within certain social movements and was very vocal about the role that he thinks independent and community media should play in delivering the news.

"When you are a community producer, you don't only have your bias that you want to deliver on, but you actually have an obligation to deliver on balancing the imbalance."

His experience covering the student strikes of 2012 formed his opinion. As the director

of CUTV, he gave more space to the activists themselves than mainstream news outlets.

Marcoux considers the media responsible for covering social movements and that proper reporting could help "change the balance and the outcome" of movements.

Marouf said government funded public broadcasters are "mouthpieces" of the ruling political party. Similarly, the corporate media sector speaks for the "financial powers within our societies," he added.

"It does exist. I'm not going to claim that there is no influence," Marcoux responded. "We have money influences, we have ads on TV. There is political influence, but there's political influence on every media."

However, he asserted, "there is no such thing as a political line that is decided by the government, and funneled down to the CBC newsroom."

The CBC is not a state-owned media outlet, but a publicly funded broadcaster, he said.

He also responded to Marouf's earlier comment that when "a new government comes into power... they change the CEO

of the organization."

"As far as naming the president and the board [...] it's a process that happens every five years. If the government changes, obviously when they name the people, they name their people," Marcoux said.

"That's unfortunately the way we've decided to have the top of the CBC named. It's a political decision because it's a decision made by politicians."

Marcoux continued to assure the audience that "the president of the CBC does not have a direct influence on the editorial line."

"You can't achieve [media objectivity]," Marcoux said. "I for one believe you should strive for it, but I'm not convinced that every type of journalism should aim for it."

If you are openly an activist for a certain cause, it will effect the way that your audience views your work, and hurt your credibility, said Marcoux.

"You don't have to strive for objectivity, but there are consequences for not doing so."

Graphic Madeleine Gendreau and Sam Jones



# Marching for Murdered Women In Light of Renewed Debate

Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women  
Organization Prepares For March to Raise  
Awareness of Unresolved Issues



by Alison Bertho

On Jan. 12, the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights released a report on “Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women in British Columbia” continuing the debate on whether there should be an inquiry into missing and murdered aboriginal women in Canada.

Aboriginal people have been calling for an inquiry to be made into the phenomenon for years.

“I think if an inquiry is done, stronger statistics would come out of it,” Alan Ross Gull, a worker at the Native Friendship Centre of Montreal, told *The Link*.

Although the Conservative Party of Canada has classified the issue as a criminal matter rather than a sociological one, many disagree.

“The simple high numbers of missing and murdered aboriginal women and the percentages immediately tell you that there’s something else going on beyond the simple fact of murder,” said Karl Hele, Associate Professor and Director of First Peoples Studies at Concordia University.

“The government says it’s just a criminal issue and that the police will deal with it, but the police don’t deal with it.”

The report concludes that police have “failed to adequately prevent and protect indigenous women and girls from killings and disappearances.”

“Police forces put a lot of money into the understanding of different immigrant’s

group cultures, but they don’t do that for native people,” Hele said.

However, the best way to deal with the issue is debated.

“I know that an inquiry would be really expensive,” Gull said, “but at this point I really think it’s important just to give peace to the families. They need peace, they want answers, they want to know where and why they were murdered.”

The director of Projets Autochtones du Québec, Adrienne Campbell thinks an inquiry would have little use beyond raising awareness and bringing peace of mind.

“The focus has to be on long-term solutions, such as healing programs and development within the aboriginal populations and also awareness in the general society. I think that’s where money needs to be put,” she said.

“I think they already know what actions need to be taken, they just need to invest the money into programs,” said Campbell.

The 24th Annual Memorial March for Missing and Murdered Women will be held on Valentine’s Day.

“It is worth it and I think that it is necessary emotionally for a lot of people,” Maya Rolbin-Ghanie, campaign coordinator of the Centre for Gender Advocacy and member of the solidarity collective Missing Justice, said of the march.

The event will start at 3 p.m. on Ste. Catherine St. beside Cabot Square.

Photo Shaun Michaud

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## the monarch butterfly, the gray whale and the free trade agreement

Tearing Down Borders for  
Environmental Solutions

by Michelle Pucci @michellemucci

Canada, the U.S. and Mexico share a lot. While borders divide North America, free trade agreements from the 1990s allow products and resources to move easily through them. Shared environmental governance, on the other hand, is still in the works.

When the North American Free Trade Agreement was written up, an environmental agreement was created to go along with it. Officially it's known as the North American Agreement on Environmental Cooperation and its watchdog, the Commission for Environmental Cooperation, is based in Montreal.

But this environmental watchdog has been blocked by Canada and its free trade partners in the past few years.

The latest case was a recommendation by the CEC Secretariat to look into Alberta tailings ponds. The tailings ponds hold waste that's left over when oil is extracted.

A submission was filed over a year ago with concerns that the tailings ponds were breaking Canada's Fisheries Act. The tailings pond, it claimed, was leaking into the nearby Athabasca River and creeks in Northern Alberta.

The submission didn't pass because a similar complaint was filed in court, but that case was dismissed long before the secretariat was turned down. "Normally it doesn't work like that," said Hugh Benevides from the CEC. Secretariat recommendations usually suggest there's enough material for an investigation and the council votes along with the secretariat.

The Alberta tailings pond recommenda-

tion from the secretariat is the fifth to be rejected by the council since 1994—three of them were in 2014 and 2015.

The other two rejected recommendations hoped to investigate Canada's polar bear protection and B.C. salmon farms.

"The process is supposed to be transparent," Benevides said. "You'd be shining a light on how the system works."

"In this situation, the public's not really getting that because the council voted against getting to the end result," he said.

These issues will likely be brought up at next week's Symposium on North American Environmental Governance, hosted by the Loyola Sustainability Research Centre.

The roundtables will feature the executive director of the CEC's secretariat Irasema Coronado, president of the International Institute for Sustainable Development Scott Vaughan and executive secretary of the UN Convention on Biological Diversity Bráulio Dias.

All of these international organizations are based in Canada—the UN Convention on Biological Diversity secretariat is in downtown Montreal.

A representative from Central America and the Dominican Republic free trade agreement will also be there to "compare notes" on their processes, Benevides said.

The symposium will highlight the publication of a book series called *Environmental Governance: Local-Regional-Global Interactions* by Loyola Sustainability Research Centre director Peter Stoett and University of Texas-Pan American assistant professor Owen Temby.

The series will focus on transnational envi-

ronmental governance and feature experts on biodiversity, invasive species and energy.

Scholars will come together to discuss environmental policies and issues on handling oil and shale gas, biodiversity and conservation.

"It's a controversial moment in the history of Canada's relationship with the CEC," said Stoett.

"[Environmental policy] got distilled in this debate over a pipeline," he said. The Canadian government is being accused of leaving environmental issues behind in its promotion of the Keystone XL pipeline.

Stoett says Canada has a harmonious relationship with the U.S. and Mexico regarding environmental issues. As climate change increases the stress on natural resources, those relationships will be challenged.

Tri-national institutions will need to help manage that rough terrain, and they need to be effective, he said.

"Right now we're all over the place and we have to come closer together," Stoett said. "None of these countries will solve these problems on their own."

Policy coordination will have to confront the Great Lakes drying up while the coasts risk flooding. All the while invasive species move north as the climate becomes more temperate.

Stoett says North America needs a common standard of wildlife conservation.

That way when species like the monarch butterfly and the gray whale migrate across the borders of all three countries, governments will know how to protect them.

Graphic Isabelle Nguyen

## THE CEC, EXPLAINED.

The CEC has two branches. The Secretariat analyzes claims submitted by citizens or organizations. The claims should prove a country isn't enforcing environment laws.

If they fit the requirements, submissions get recommended to the CEC's council. The council is made up of environmental officials from each country rather than an independent body.

Since the CEC was created only 83 submissions have been filed—20 of them resulted in "factual records," produced by the secretariat with council approval.

Submissions will not always result in a factual record if they don't meet the requirements, or if the implicated government can provide a response or remedy. They usually deal with issues concerning migratory birds, endangered species, forestry and mining.

Canada, Mexico and the U.S. created the NAAEC to work on environmental issues that touch the three countries, specifically the issues linked to free trade.

But the CEC has grown so that it can study cases not directly linked to trade.

"We're looking at the environmental stuff, no matter how it arises," said Benevides from the CEC.

But it isn't a legal body and doesn't enforce environmental laws.

"The public can do whatever they like with it, but it's often to raise awareness or pass that factual record onto others," Benevides said.



# st. henri's new music collective

Montreal Bands at FATTAL Create Music Collective To Facilitate Artistic Collaborations

by Peggy Kabeya

In the dingy, graffiti-covered former industrial buildings that comprise the FATTAL, Montreal hip-hop group Cannonhead possesses a music studio rich with an odd collection of vintage folk art. The jam space was ripe with cigarette smoke and overused ashtrays.

Often considered Montreal's equivalent to the grit and grime of New York's Lower East Side in the 1980s, St. Henri's run-down FATTAL lofts house hosts an assortment of anarchists, drug addicts and starving artists drawn by cheap rents and communal living arrangements.

While waiting for Cannonhead emcees Jay Lindsay and Freddie Five to turn up for an interview, neo-soul group Ojiwawi was conducting a pre-recording practice.

Four years ago, after the split of their former group Velvet Trench Vibes, childhood friends Jay Newcomen (a.k.a. Jay Lindsay) and Mike Larsson (a.k.a. Freddy Five) decided to spearhead a new hip hop project under the name Cannonhead along with bassist Matthieu "Toge" Lefebvre, guitarist Dillon Crosilla and drummer Maxim Lapointe.

"They have the most flawless work chemistry of any team I've ever worked with," said former Velvet Trench Vibes drummer and producer Akil Roberts. "I've never seen a fight, disagreement or anything. They just bounce off each other creatively."

After a year of playing together, the quintet decided to go their separate ways due to creative differences. Lefebvre, Crosilla and Lapointe went on to form a punk band called The Bloody Cunt Rags while MC Jay Lindsay and Freddy Five stayed on as Cannonhead, reverting to mixing and producing their own beats.

"Overall we were moving in different directions musically, and the old studio in St. Michel reflected that rift," said Cannon-

head rapper Jay Lindsay.

"We [Jay Lindsay and Freddie Five] had a new perspective on beat making after playing with a live band for so long. It really opened up our world and strengthened us as musicians," he continued.

In 2010, armed with their new studio space in FATTAL, the duo began cultivating relationships with the community of talented musicians, producers, artists in Montreal's music scene.

"It was really important for us and Cannonhead to get a new studio. St. Michel was so out of the way and with all the changes going on we really needed to shed our old skin," said former guitarist Dillon Crosilla. "With the FATTAL space we didn't have to reach out to musicians; they just came through. I'd bring some people by, Jay Lindsay would bring some people by, we all brought people and the talented ones stuck."

Largely through chance encounters and effective networking, Cannonhead now shares the FATTAL studio with a couple

other immensely talented artists such as jazz-funk band Perfect Strangers, rapper Shogun and neo-soul band Ojiwawi.

"We've been listening to music and doing music for a long time and it's rare that this kinda thing exists," said Jay Lindsay. "We have so much talent and we want to channel this into something bigger than ourselves."

Recognizing the level of talent that routinely congregates in the 617 St. Remi street studio, Jay Lindsay and Freddie Five, along with KC Sampson, "Skin Deep" Roberts and Dillon Crosilla, are looking to use their knowledge of the music industry to create a sort of unofficial in-house record label.

"We don't really see what we're trying to create here as a record label. We don't really know what to call it, but we've been signed to labels before and that's not what we're trying to do. We want to facilitate our creativity and that of the bands, producers and rappers that use our space under one collective," noted Freddie Five.

Using the experiences they've garnered over the years, the boys from FATTAL are hoping to transmit their knowledge to facilitate each other's success while exploring their own creativity.

The creative collective known as the St. Canard is an ambitious project that hopes to facilitate the quality and creative acumen of the musicians and artists sharing the FATTAL music studio.

St. Canard is slated the release of several EPs and full-length albums later this year. Coupled with the organizational structure of the St. Canard co-op model, everyone involved is excited at the prospects of what this new approach can bring.

"None of us are rich, so we have to fundraise a lot for equipment, on top of making rent. Everything in our studio is ours and our sound recording equipments, instruments, it's all really expensive," said Ojiwawi frontman KC Sampson.

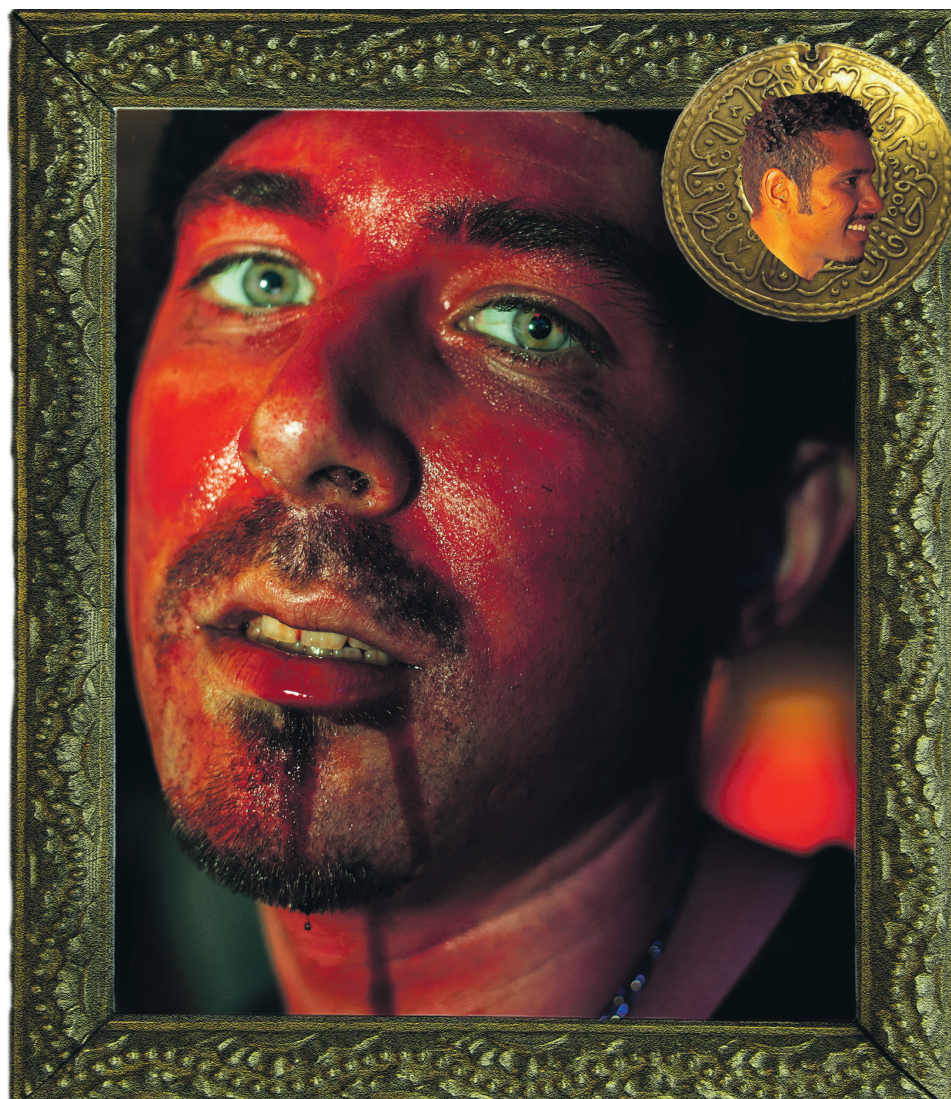
Crosilla, who is also a member of Ojiwawi, is very much excited over the direction the collective is moving in.

"I think Jay Lindsay and Freddie Five's creative counsel on all projects coming out of the space works towards what we're try to build here, [like how] when you think Barry Gordy you think Motown or Al Bell's influence at Stax," said Crosilla. "Their ability as producers and leaders will really help to influence the St. Canard sound."

Jay Lindsay and Freddie Five's musical advice and technical sound ability is the driving force behind the push for St. Canard. The collective hope to harness this musical ability and amplify it with the synergy of the talented in-house musicians.

"We're all so different, and that's what makes us unique," Lindsay said. "We can do great things, and with St. Canard, there's no reason why we shouldn't."

Photo Shaun Michaud



Jay Lindsay wears makeup at Fattalloween 2013 Circled right: Freddie Five





## softening the borders

Multimedia Artist Explores How Boundaries Define the Human Experience

by Emily Carsen

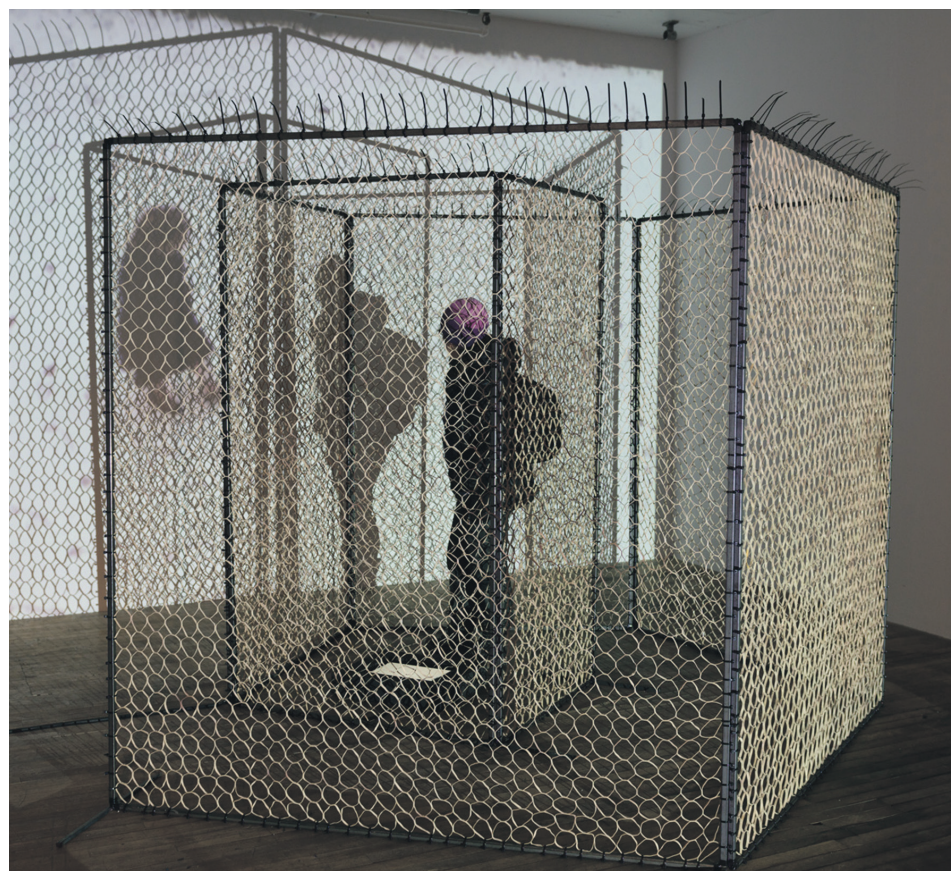
Artist Vessna Perunovich has a lot of experience with borders. Having lived in Canada for the past 25 years, the artist fled her birthplace Yugoslavia, a country on the brink of civil war, during the 1980s. It's fitting to say that the artist uses visual art and performance to explore her past and the world around her.

Perunovich's exhibit *Border Stitching* is now visiting Montreal at the Oboro and runs until Feb. 16. Perunovich explores the subjects of limitations, borders and boundaries. Her work starts from her personal experiences with limitations and spreads to broader contexts to understand what borders mean. Immigration and displacement are some of her primary themes. Understanding the senses of borders allows her to grasp the commonalities amongst human beings.

The exhibition features many mixed-media installations, from interactive video-sculptures to more traditional drawings, paintings, and photographs. Her art has been displayed around the world, from Cuba, Greece and Albania to her home country of Yugoslavia.

"This is a very universal theme. Borders and boundaries mean something, even in the era of technology when we think we've connected with the whole world," said Perunovich. "Borders, real physical borders, are still important to so many people and nationalities. It's something that defines people; people are ready to go and fight for those borders. In a way that's the inspiration for this work."

"In the exhibition you will see a display of



many different mediums. You will see drawings, you will see a lot of book works that I did over a long period of time, both expressing my own feelings and looking at books as an ideological tool," Perunovich continued. "You will see video and sculpture installations in the corner of the space that you can actually experience as the video is projected through that structure. In the video, I am walking in circles in the snow, and the audience is repeating my movements and mirroring what I'm doing. On the walls there are pieces that are more tactile and made of zip ties and you will also see a series of photo-based work."

Through the use of continuous lines of ink,

thread and graphite, Perunovich reinvents barriers such as walls and fences and represents them as soft configurations and woven, permeable structures. Perunovich bases her art on her personal experience with migration and crossing both literal and figurative borders, but she hopes the exhibition will give pause to consider more general examples of boundaries and connection.

"In this body of work you can see a little bit of a playful approach to what 'boundary' can mean, because I use materials that are flexible and elastic, that can stretch and be transformed. In a way I'm trying to say that borders can be transparent, they can be moved and

they can be broken," said Perunovich.

"It's the continuation of my concern and subjects that interest me. What defines us as human beings? What connects us? Not what makes us different, but what are the ways we live that are common to everyone? It's a mix of different mediums, but they all talk about borders and lines and how they intersect and define our human experience."

The architectural form of a wall or a fence is reproduced through processes that make reference to female practices such as sewing, knitting and crocheting. By using materials and techniques which were historically designed as "female," which run counter to our technology-information saturated age, the work stitches together the division between traditional women's needle work and fine arts.

The interplay between construction and craft in Perunovich's work also renegotiates the traditional gender stereotypes as defined by her Serbian heritage enacted through her immigration from one cultural context to another.

"We are fragile as human beings but we also need to be connected and in touch with each other. I would like people to realize their own limitations and also see how they can be breached," she said.

***Border Stitching* // Jan. 17—Feb. 16 // Oboro (4001 Berri St.) // Tuesday to Saturday 12 p.m. to 5 p.m. // Free**

Photo courtesy of Vessna Perunovich



# the heartbreaking tale of a cheese stealer

Canadian Author's Debut Novel Explores the Life and Mind Struggles Of a Writer

by Fiona Maynard

How can I begin to describe *The Cheese Stealer's Handbook*? The novella is everything from unique to heartbreaking and its ability to get under your skin is intense. The author uses his writing as a platform to confess every inch of his misfortunes and doesn't hesitate to share explicit details.

The writing is brilliant and quick-witted to the point where it makes you wonder how someone can have such farcical thoughts about nearly everything he encounters. Shoshaku Jushaku, an alias created by the author himself, means "one continuous mistake" and reflects his work in an accurate light.

The book is either an illuminated story told through some of the calamities endured in his life, or is just a straightforward autobiography

of everything he's ever experienced; hopefully, for his sake, it isn't the latter. The narrator of the *Handbook* indulges in a fair amount of drugs and alcohol while hoping to finish a novel.

"The need to write a book can destroy you—more than heroin, more than liquor, more than unrequited love," said Jushaku.

When asked why the need to write a book could be so consuming, the author's explanation was simple.

"Hyperbole, I guess; it's something that you can do in a bar," he said. "You can always steal pens. You can't go pawn your pen. It's a financial factor if anything else."

The book starts off with a breakup that isn't handled with any care whatsoever. The book actually emphasizes how little the narrator tries to mend things. He constantly struggles to find meaning in everyday life. Later on in the book, when he meets another girl, he immediately cuts himself short and underestimates his ability to succeed with her from the forefront.

This is the attitude he displays throughout the entire book. So here's the real question: what's the intrigue when reading about this man's inability to pick himself up, make at least one good decision and finally change?

The answer is in the writing. It causes you to really empathize with the narrator and imagine what it would be like to be so depressed and live in a world where the most powerful fix doesn't even cure those demonic thoughts. You experience life through the eyes of a true addict and, in essence, the tragedy you'll never know creeps up to you for those few seconds, sends shivers down your spine and then washes away in a beat.

"I kind of liked it as a title for its lack of meaning," said Jushaku when asked what jumped out at him when he named his book.

Ironically, throughout the story the narrator searches for meaning in his writing and daily life so his intent is reflective of general theme.

"I really didn't want my mom finding out about it," Jushaku said when asked about why he chose to use a synonym. "Yeah, unfortunately she read it, but she never brought it up. She did say 'I bought ten copies of a book that I can't give away to any of my friends.'"

Because the events in the book are so raw and dark, one has to wonder whether or not Jushaku has met others with rougher lives than him.

"Of course, lots of people," he said. "I was born in Canada; I haven't had that hard a life. Any bad things in my life are pretty much self-inflicted." This would be obvious to anyone who's read his tales.

Jushaku compares his writing to him being "the drunk at a party who picks up a guitar and plays for an hour, giant Spinal Tap air-band windmill arm motions, expending a ton of energy without knowing a single chord."

Quite the analogy.

"Sometimes I'll scribble stuff down as it's happening and other times it'll be later," Jushaku says of his process. "It gives me some detachment from [the characters and events] because you can treat them or change them."

Most of his characters are fictionalized, but he's sure that some of his representations are borrowed from certain real life happenings.

"I don't want to glorify misogyny or debauchery," he said. "I'm not sure you could do it in a movie, because it would either be too dark and I'd probably get sick of it too."

Jushaku says if he has any advice to give aspiring novel writers it would be to "not do drugs and to treat girls nicely."

This book is recommended because it's a good read and the author is charming. He's obviously a really smart guy ruled by a crappy lifestyle and his coping mechanism lies in writing. This is a great chance to look into the mind of a self-destructive but thought-provoking individual.

Graphic Gaby Hoole







# DESIGN

&

# SPACE





Photographer Ash Thayer Releases Book on Squat Communities in Manhattan's Lower East Side

## the memory keeper of new york city

by Athina Lugez @Athinalugez

In today's gentrified New York City contaminated by bourgeois bohemians, it's difficult to imagine how the sleepless Big Apple was once a cesspool of poverty and crime. Collective memories and photographs now serve as reminders of the city's grittier days.

Documentary photographer Ash Thayer is the memory keeper of the Lower East Side of Manhattan in the 1990s. Her new photography book, *Kill City: Lower East Side Squatters 1992-2000* is a window into the lives of individuals who occupied the many abandoned and decaying tenement buildings of the Lower East Side. Thayer offers a picture of New York's squatter community, its DIY scene and mayor Rudy Giuliani's gentrification initiatives.

During the 1970s, New York was affected by a serious budget crisis. Unable to pay property taxes, many landlords abandoned their properties or burnt them down in order to obtain insurance payouts. Between 1980 and 1986, the city took part in President Jimmy Carter's Urban Homesteading program, which helped residents rehabilitate these homes and granted ownership to their residents. But the program was mismanaged and then cancelled by the Reagan administration, prompting the Association of Community Organizations for Reform Now (ACORN) to launch squatting campaigns across the Lower East Side. People of low-income began settling in.

Thayer was one of those residents. A student at the School of Visual Arts, she decided to photograph the community for her assignments and for personal intentions.

"In 1992, I moved to New York and studied photography. I got kicked out of my Brooklyn apartment and [was] on the verge of dropping out of school because I couldn't afford tuition and rent. I shared my situation with a young local punk guy, Brett, who I'd met in Tompkins Square Park and at punk shows. He offered me a place to stay in his building, and out of financial necessity, I was in," said Thayer.

The reclaimed urban space she moved into was See-Squat, located at 155 Avenue C. The building possessed minimal electricity, had no running water and was structurally unsound. Unsuitable for habitation, residents had to renovate the entire building themselves, at their own costs.

"This space was special and unique. It really

was a close community. I learned how to do construction work, to build walls, [to] handle electricity and plumbing work," Thayer said. "I learned how to live communally and the value of community while working on projects in groups. I learned how to make a difference together. It was an accomplishment to learn how to build stairs and refurbish an apartment. I was great to spend quality time with people I cared for."

Living conditions were not always easy, yet the act of squatting fit their anti-establishment views. Residents of the squats were advocates for the basic human right to possess a rooftop that wouldn't collapse and for improving conditions in low-income housing.

"The simple act of living in this space was a form of activism," Thayer asserted.

### The Lower East Side's Scene

The LES was also a cradle for punk rock subculture. Thayer explained that living in the squats exposed her to punk music and social activism. The subjects that appear in her photographs are her friends. Her goal was to capture the community surrounding her.

"I was photographing what was meaningful in my life. I had teachers who told me, 'photograph what's the most important thing in life to you,' so that, to me, [was] the community that I was involved in," Thayer explained.

Thayer's images portray the punk concerts that took place in basements, the communal restoration of the tenement buildings, the eccentric vibrancy of her community and their DIY ethics.

Her photographs also highlight how women within the scene fought against mainstream social definitions of beauty and femininity. Women rocked androgynous looks by sporting concert T-shirts or work uniforms with steel-toe boots.

In an interview featured in the book with Dana Hoey, a visual artist, Thayer explained that they were conscious feminists. "We shopped at thrift stores, and the new things we bought were utilitarian for the work we were doing or for warmth. [...] I think we were attempting to strip down the artifact to see what was underneath and then building from there," she said.

"One can argue that you cannot ever fully escape social construction, but we were trying our damndest. I wore Black Carat jeans [...] sewed the legs into a tighter fit, and military

cargo pants, both in the guys section of the army surplus store."

### Eviction

By 1995, the city's administration had started to evict communities out of squatter houses on East 13th Street. Mayor Giuliani sought to implement the "broken window policy," enforcing strict laws against urban disorder, vandalism and anti-social behaviour. According to *The New York Times*, Giuliani viewed squatters as dishonest cheaters who could easily afford to pay rent.

The "broken window" analogy derives from an article in *The Atlantic*, written by Georges L. Kelling in March 1982.

"Consider a building with a few broken windows. If the windows are not repaired, the tendency is for vandals to break a few more windows. Eventually, they may even break into the building, and if it's unoccupied, perhaps become squatters [and] light fires inside," wrote Kelling.

Thayer explained that intense organization and planning took place in order to delay eviction. Squatters gathered various objects to barricade their buildings and lead a fight from inside. Even aware of their approaching defeat, squatters stayed inside. Police broke into their homes and SWAT teams with dogs expelled residents.

"The LES has always been the shadier part of Manhattan and [the] more dangerous because of the tenement-style buildings, which made it harder for developers to gentrify the area," said Thayer. "It has a longstanding history [of] poverty, multi-ethnic communities and drugs during the '80s and '90s. Mayor Giuliani with his whole administration started a crackdown across New York City, so things started shifting into a police state."

Thayer's photography book is an important body of work because it is a historical recording of New York's forgotten past. In today's New York, where rent can cost \$2,500 for a room the size of a closet, this book pays homage to social activists such as Frank Morales and others appearing in Thayer's photographs, who have fought and continue to fight for affordable housing.

"No one has given a shit [about] these photographs until now. I've been trying to show this work since I made it. Not consistently, because you get tired after a while," said Thayer.

"It's weird to be a memory keeper of these people and period of life, but it's been great because it allowed me to stay in touch to find out what they are up to now and what's happening in their life."

Photos courtesy Ash Thayer







# is overdevelopment just par for the course?

the battle over turning meadowbrook golf course into a public park

by Michael Wrobel

For 25 years, activists and housing developers have fought over the Meadowbrook Golf Course. On Jan. 29, Montreal's agglomeration council finally waded into the debate, approving a new land-use plan that calls for Meadowbrook to be rezoned from "residential" to "large green space or recreational."

"By rezoning the land to prohibit development, the Land Use and Development Plan opens the door for a future Meadowbrook Park," said Campbell Stuart, a spokesperson for Friends of Meadowbrook, a group that has been fighting to protect the green space for over two decades.

Not far from Concordia University's Loyola campus, the golf course straddles the border between the suburb of Côte Saint-Luc, an independent municipality, and Montreal's Lachine borough. Côte Saint-Luc had rezoned the land to protect it from development, but plans had been in the works to build over 1,500 units on the Montreal side of the site.

The years-long battle around Meadowbrook has involved allegations of illegal lobbying, lawsuits against the cities of Montreal and Côte Saint-Luc and the "colonizing" of microphones by activists at public events.

## Decades of activism

Beginning in the late 1980s, residents began to form a grassroots movement with the goal of preserving the 57-hectare golf course as a green space. Canadian Pacific Railway owned the land on which the Meadowbrook Golf Course sits, and the company's real-estate arm, Marathon Realty, sought to build a residential development on the links.

"We were demonstrating and preparing leaflets and flyers, basically telling people 'Buyer Beware' because of the proximity to the

train tracks and the petrochemical industries in Lachine," said Dida Berku, who was first elected to Côte Saint-Luc's city council in 1990.

Environmental reasons and the site's proximity to CP's rail yards make it "not appropriate for development," she said, adding that residents of Côte Saint-Luc have frequently complained about the noise, vibration and pollution caused by the railway.

In 2000, Côte Saint-Luc's city council voted to rezone the land as recreational, squashing plans for housing development and prompting the developer to file a \$20-million lawsuit against the municipality.

Then, in 2006, real-estate development firm Groupe Pacific bought the land to build 1,600 residential units and 4,500 square metres of commercial space on the Lachine portion of the site.

## 'Great plan but really the wrong place'

Stuart became involved in Friends of Meadowbrook in 2010, after his term as mayor of Montreal-West ended. Also an independent municipality, Montreal-West butts up against the golf course. At the time, the developer was "getting a very friendly reception from the City of Montreal," he says.

Stuart admits that Groupe Pacific had a "great plan," but he added the project was to be built in "the wrong place." One member of Friends of Meadowbrook, he noted, has a favourite saying: "Low-flush toilets are not a substitute for green space."

Activists held a meeting in a school and a couple hundred people showed up. The message organizers told attendees was that construction was "imminent" and something had to be done about it, according to Stuart.

Among the environmental groups that voiced their support for protecting Meadowbrook were household names like the Sierra Club's Quebec wing, Greenpeace and the David

Suzuki Foundation. Stuart says this expanded the interest group that wanted Meadowbrook to be rezoned from "a local group of citizens" to "everybody on the island and beyond."

In 2010, municipal political parties Projet Montréal and Vision Montreal also came out in support of rezoning.

"By the end of the summer, I would think that we could safely say Groupe Pacific had lost all of their allies, with the exception of the building community," Stuart said.

## Allegedly illegal lobbying, lawsuits

Meanwhile, Stuart filed a complaint against Groupe Pacific with the province's lobbying commissioner. Groupe Pacific, he alleges, was meeting with city officials, despite the fact that it had not registered as lobbyists.

In 2006, the company hired Suzanne Deschamps as their Vice-President Legal. She had formerly headed up the paramunicipal Société de développement de Montréal. "They hired an insider from Montreal to lobby Montreal, which is unethical," Stuart says.

Deschamps did not respond to *The Link's* requests for an interview before press time, but she has previously denied wrongdoing.

Stuart says it took Quebec's lobbying commissioner three years to investigate the matter. The commissioner found the company engaged in 13 instances of lobbying while not registered, which is required by law.

The company was not sanctioned, but it was required to register and the registration was made "retroactive for six months," according to Stuart.

In November 2010, the City of Montreal and the borough of Lachine decided the costs of building infrastructure for sewage and water were too high for them to approve the project.

Groupe Pacific responded with a lawsuit against the City of Montreal almost three years later, seeking \$44 million for not being allowed to build, including approximately \$800,000 in damages.

"They are alleging that their rights to build on it were frustrated and that frustration by the City of Montreal amounts to a disguised expropriation," says Stuart. "They'd like the judge to order a formal expropriation of the southern

portion at a value of \$43 million. They paid \$3 million [for the land]."

Stuart, a lawyer, says the lawsuit is "wrong in law, wrong on the facts and wrong because it's not worth \$44 million." He hopes city officials will stand their ground and not negotiate.

When it purchased the land in 2006, Groupe Pacific also took over the earlier lawsuit filed against Côte Saint-Luc. Berku said the municipality's city council has decided to "revive the dead" by asking the court to dismiss the case. A decision should be made in April.

## From a golf course to a park

The decision to rezone the land from residential to recreational guarantees that Meadowbrook will not become the site of Montreal's latest large condo development, but it also falls short of activists' demands that the site become a public space accessible to all Montrealers.

Lachine city councillor Jean-François Cloutier says it'll now be up to the agglomeration council, not the borough, to decide how to proceed. The agglomeration council is composed of representatives from the City of Montreal and the 15 independent municipalities on the island, and one of its responsibilities is acquiring and maintaining the island's large nature parks.

Cloutier says the lawsuits will likely have to be resolved before the agglomeration council can proceed. Any future park will have to provide better access to the site for residents of Lachine.

"Lachine doesn't have access to [the golf course] presently, other than passing through Montreal-West and Côte Saint-Luc," Cloutier says. "There'll have to be either a footbridge or an underground passage under the railway or, from highway 20, an access ramp that'll pass over the railway."

"Now we have to start working with the boroughs, with the agglomeration, with the parks department, with the neighbouring towns. There's a lot of work to do," Stuart says.

"I think that people are ready for a park on Meadowbrook."

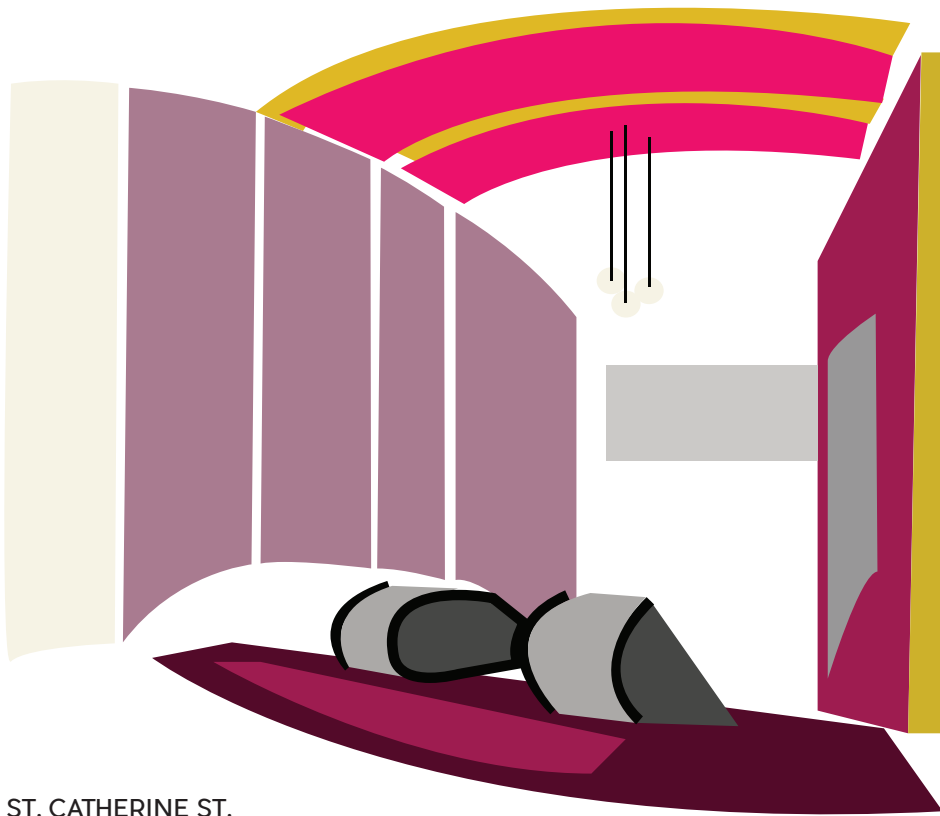
Photo Michael Wrobel, Graphic Madeleine Gendreau



# the beloved island

BY JANE GATENSBY  
GRAPHICS LAURA LALONDE

Two architects, a landscape architect and a historian of Montreal talk about their favourite spaces in the city



## ST. CATHERINE ST.

Antonin Labossière, Architect // Rayside Labossière

### WHY IT'S SPECIAL

"For everything it represents. The fact that it crosses through the city from east to west and from west to east, its variations, the changes in the type of commercial activity, the changes in general feeling. It's what's most evocative [about] the city of Montreal. Its design is a juxtaposition of many different elements, of different times, different styles and different purposes."

### HOW IT INFLUENCES HIS WORK

"In architecture and urban planning, we often forget to see things as evolving. [But] a precise moment of design or urban planning won't succeed in truly determining or influencing behaviour. You can plan, but not all that much. The economic aspect [of Ste. Catherine St.] is important, [but] in order for it to be an economic hub, people need to want to go there, so it has to be very social. There are a lot of ingredients [and] we don't necessarily have the recipe for all those ingredients, [but] when we see them, we should take advantage of them and make the most of them."

### ITS FUTURE

"We need to make it possible for [the street] to be made pedestrian-only one day; I think that would certainly improve it. We shouldn't become stuck in time by saying that cars are vital."

## ST. VIATEUR ST.

Claude Cormier, Landscape Architect // Claude Cormier + Associés

### WHY IT'S SPECIAL

"It feels real—it feels like real Montreal. It's not pretty, but it's a kind of a different type of beauty: real, cool, relaxed, urban and sexy. That's the Montreal that I like. There's a feeling of real life in it. It seems a little secluded as well, because the subway doesn't go there. You have everything in that street. All kinds of foods... You have coffee shops, you have little bars, you have cafés, rotisseries, flower shops, key places, some clothing. It's a real village."

### ITS SOCIAL SIDE

"People and the way they interact among themselves, with different races, age groups, *milieux*... I don't sense friction and tension and I just find there's a very nice flow of positive urbanity. It's the Montreal that I like very much. I feel that people are tolerant—that's my perception—maybe not—but there's kind of a sense of live and let live. The traffic and the pedestrians, the bikes, they deal with each other beautifully. It's not, 'you have a car, you're bad.' I think it's the place that makes people that way."

### WHY IT DOESN'T NEED A PROFESSIONAL

"It was not made, it was not created at all. But it just grew into that. We get sick of design. I do! I get sick of design that has no soul and it's more of a stylistic thing—everything gets flat, everything starts to look the same. I kinda like the contrast. Enough of this sameness! Sometimes anti-design is good."

## PARC DE L'ÎLE DE LA VISITATION

Paul-André Linteau, Historian // UQAM

### WHY IT'S SPECIAL

"It's a magical spot on the bank of Rivière des Praries. There are a lot of birds, and a lot of Montrealers who come to relax and enjoy the space. It's a really interesting natural landscape."

### ITS HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE

"It's on the site of Sault-au-Recollet, one of the first villages established on the island of Montreal. There were rapids there and so very early on, mills were built between the island of Montreal and Île de la Visitation—first for flour and then as part of an industrial complex, which remained in operation for a very long time. When the hydroelectric plant was built in the 1920s, it raised the water level of Rivière des Praries and some of the rapids disappeared, but there are still a few to the east of the plant."

### WHAT IT MEANS FOR THE CITY

"[The space] reminds us of the relationship between Montreal and the water that surrounds it. The water was used to power machines, then to produce electricity. But the space was given back to Montrealers. A large part of the park was reforested [and] nature is allowed to follow its own life cycle. A city is a place that's built by human beings so that they can live and work and have homes, but also so that they can amuse themselves and relax—that's all a part of what a city is."

## LUCIEN L'ALLIER METRO STATION

Howard Davies, Architect // Atelier Big City

### WHY IT'S SPECIAL

"It's very deep. The space is just on an epic scale. It's really a celebration of transportation in the grand tradition, it's almost like a cathedral. Isn't it kind of unique that there's really nothing there? It's just the space, there's no shops. It's very pure, kind of contemplative. The brown brick and concrete is not what I'd consider to be the most spectacular kind of materiality, but in terms of its space, I think it's really great."

### WHY THEY BUILT IT THAT WAY

"The station is deep by necessity, there was no other way to do it. Saint-Laurent metro is almost at the level of the street, it's like one floor down. But this one is five or six floors down. The high ceilings were inevitable. It's what you would call a lucky break. I suspect that is as close as they could get to put the platform. They said, 'Okay, we have to get up six floors, so make it interesting.'"

### ITS POTENTIAL

"You have this metro station, you have a link to the Bell Centre, you have a commuter rail station and they all kind of overlap in an exciting but also incomplete way on the same site. For all the grandeur of Lucien-L'Allier, it's waiting for the next step. If I was taking architects around I would say, 'Yeah, look at this place—can you just imagine what's gonna happen here, how the city's gonna get this incredible project eventually?'"

### AND...

"I think there was a party there once. Definitely a great place to have a party."

*These interviews have been condensed and edited.*







# how (in)accessible is montreal?

## Accessibility Groups Agitate for Change in the City's Structures

by Mattha Busby @itsmattha

Accessible or inaccessible, lift or no lift, stairs or ramp, announcements or silence—these dualisms are inescapable in the daily life of those with limited mobility.

Montreal's first metro station opened in 1966. In 2014, seven out of 68 metro stations were accessible for those with limited mobility. At this rate, the Montreal metro will be fully accessible in 2090; in contrast, Toronto's is set to be fully accessible by 2025.

Is the STM guilty of transit discrimination as Accessibilize Montreal, a working group of the Quebec Public Interest Research Group's Concordia chapter, claims? Or is it more a question of practical and economic feasibility?

"Only a few public buildings are accessible and many restaurants and bars are entirely inaccessible," said Paul Tshuma, a member of Accessibilize Montreal.

"Whilst new buildings and shopping centres are made to be accessible, old buildings remain inaccessible.

"Most companies do not prioritize making their buildings accessible," he continued. "They're more concerned with making money."

Figures vary in Montreal as to how many of us have limited mobility and a widely reported number does not exist—although it's likely higher than most would think.

A mere four metro stations on the Island of Montreal are accessible, according to Accessibilize Montreal. However, on the STM's website, the city's public transit corporation claims that "the Montmorency, De la Concorde, Cartier, Berri-UQAM, Champ-de-Mars, Lionel-Groulx,

Henri-Bourassa and Côte-Vertu metro stations are accessible at street level to wheelchair users."

The STM gets it. On their site they state that "an accessible transit system promotes independence and contributes to the social inclusion of persons with one or more functional limitations."

If this is the case, why are they failing to deliver on the issue?

Recently, pressure groups have been attending the STM's monthly open meetings and repeatedly asking questions on the topic of accessibility. These efforts, unfortunately, have yet to yield any positive results.

Accessibilize Montreal decries the fact that buses can only house one person using a limited mobility device; further, many buses have faulty ramps and drivers refuse service to certain clientele, such as people using mobility devices or who have assistance animals, in the absence of portable ramps. Often in adverse weather conditions (like we're experiencing now) the sheer volume of snow by the curb and lack of training for STM bus drivers means that the ramps are essentially useless.

Although Montreal mayor Denis Coderre says "universal accessibility is respected in 97 per cent of public buildings," in a recent op-ed for the *Montreal Gazette*, Aimee Louw and Laurent Parent of Accessibilize Montreal question the figure.

"We wonder what data the Mayor is using for his claims," they wrote. "We have extensive documentation and live the daily reality of a deeply inaccessible Montreal."

London has 66 of 270 tube stations accessible, along with a far more accessible bus service (perhaps in part due to a lack of snow); that

figure is 111 of 468 in New York, while in Paris it's a pitiful nine out of 303 stations.

"Montreal is bad, but New York is even worse in terms of accessibility," said Jason DaSilva, director of *When I Walk*, a documentary about accessibility.

AXS Map, a crowdsourced app developed by Jason DaSilva and Kevin Bleur, lists accessible buildings around you.

It was described as a "game-changer" for people of limited mobility by Wendy Levy, former creative director of the MacArthur Award-winning Bay Area Video Coalition.

However, governments cannot rely on the private sector to make urban areas more accessible.

"There are a lot of ways that real estate owners [in New York] are able to resist making their buildings accessible," said DaSilva.

At Concordia University things are a bit brighter, but like most places in Montreal its infrastructure is not without its flaws.

"Concordia is somewhat more accessible relative to Montreal; however, it still has a lot lacking," said Noah Eidelman, staff member at the Quebec Public Interest Research Group at Concordia.

Although there have been claims of a lack of protocol when fire drills and other evacuations have been undertaken, Concordia is certainly more accessible than most public buildings.

Nevertheless, we shouldn't congratulate anyone for being one of the best in a bad bunch. It should be the norm that buildings are entirely accessible.

Graphic Madeleine Gendreau





## sous la peau de la ville: a reflection on informal architecture

Concordia Alumnus Explores  
the Special Nature of Urban  
Construction Sites

by June Loper @LoperJune

Montreal's Centre for Sustainability presents the exhibition *Sous la peau de la ville* by Linda-Marlena Bucholtz Ross, raising a number of questions on our cultural relation with space and what symbolic meaning there is behind different spatial practices.

Through a series of large-format photographs, multimedia artist and Concordia alumni Linda-Marlena reflects on temporary architecture in the specific context of construction sites.

Describing her work as "capturing the unedited beauty and the unintended aesthetic of the city," Linda-Marlena offers a perspective on urban construction sites that not only evokes the city's backstage in its built environment but also brings forward a certain conception of the city and its shape as a living organic entity.

Representing the vector for change and transformation, the site of construction is challenged and questioned in regards to the role it has to play within the cultural and physical landscape.

Alongside the exhibition, a roundtable which brought together the artist Linda-Marlena and three panelists—designers and architects Jean Baptiste Bouillant, Daniel Smith and Kevin Grégoire—focused on the hidden potential of construction sites and the different types of initiatives that could be brought on by the larger public.

Gaëtane Lamarche-Vadel—philosophy of aesthetics professor at the École Nationale Supérieure d'Art in Dijon, France who worked on construction sites in Arsenal—explains that the expression of this mutation can be regarded as an integral component of the city. It should be assessed not only as a nuisance but also as a resource, not simply a phenomenon to dissimulate behind barricades but an area to practice as a living space for metamorphosis.

In her own words, "[Le chantier] peut être regardé comme une composante de la ville à part entière, non pas nuisance mais ressources, non pas phé-

nomène à dissimuler derrière les palissades mais à pratiquer comme lieu vivant des métamorphoses."

Through her artistic interaction with the site, Linda-Marlena transforms architecture. Not only does her art practice shed light on certain issues at stake with urban planning; it also helps redefine how we consider formal and informal architecture.

As a transformative procedure, photography of architecture and, to a larger extent, representations of architecture have their place in the field of architecture.

In order to dig a little bit deeper into the meaning of informal architecture, *The Link* spoke to Stefan Jovanovic, a professor at Concordia who thoroughly researched the topic for his thesis and later taught a class on the subject in the Fine Arts department.

According to him, architecture should be looked at in the widest scope possible to include both the physical construction of a structure but also any intervention to that structure, anything that could add meaning or interact with the structure.

In this case, Linda-Marlena's approach looks at the means of architecture, the city's bone structure in its minimal unit and how these means can legitimately qualify as forms of architecture.

Taking the center stage in this exhibition, spatial practice in the everyday life has always had deep political meaning and connotations. By focusing on the construction site which has often times limited public access, the artist demonstrates a conscious desire of showing the invisible, the inaccessible. In a sense, it reveals the impact of physical human interaction on the built environment but also reveals the potential there is for the use of space.

"The most profound political questions have been around this. Wars have been fought over this, as we know it. In the ideology of space, there's always this idea that, in the human imagination, we always go back to wanting to control space in some ways. This idea that the space has to be controlled, has to be claimed," said Jovanovic.

In this context, the political resonances in the physical urban landscape are evidently present in other forms such as the presence of monuments in the urban landscape or even in the streets named after political figures.

"There is always a connection between space and power and space has to be overseen by some form of power. When you look at the protest in Egypt, protests in Istanbul, all of them take place in the most symbolic spaces thus giving the protest a symbolic efficiency. Why is that? Because the spaces are symbolic," he continued.

The theme of the commons—which defines the cultural and natural resources accessible to all—has gained a lot of traction over the recent years in contemporary philosophy. According to Jovanovic, the city space is the modern type of commons and any restriction to this space is a form of enclosure of the commons. "It performs the same thing. It's dispossessing the masses, the majority, from what should be shared space," Jovanovic said.

Thus, questioning the use of public space within the construction site framework also resonates with the idea of re-appropriating space and control over shared resources.

Graphic Madeleine Gendreau



# Smile! You're on (a Lot of) Cameras

## Surveillance, Safety and Sacrifice in the Age of the "Smart City"

BY GRAEME SHORTEN ADAMS @ELEVENBATS



You've probably heard about it from ads on the metro, chipper TED Talk speakers or even Montreal mayor Denis Coderre: some futuristic quasi-utopia, the "smart city," is apparently on its way.

What this means, exactly, isn't clear. Underground Wi-Fi? QR codes on trees? Turning the statement "there's an app for everything" into a horrifyingly literal truth?

Though definitions vary, at the core of the smart city concept is the digital enhancement of civic functions. There's a moral dimension to this enhancement, with some definitions of the smart city prioritizing environmental sustainability or empowerment of the citizen. This is, understandably, an exciting idea for many.

But there's a sinister side to this enthusiasm. If a smarter city is one that knows more in general, then it's bound to know more about its inhabitants. The data zeitgeist has swept over police departments worldwide, enhancing the recent practice of "predictive policing"—a methodology that sounds good in theory and looks like bloated surveillance in practice.

London, for instance, is infamously covered in security cameras—there's one for every six people in a city with a metropolitan population of over 13 million. Swedish security camera manufacturer Axis Communications boasts of 150,000 of its cameras installed in the Stockholm transit system alone. In North America, moves to supplement policing with additional data are producing some morbidly fascinating work.

Leon Neyfakh's recent article in *The Atlantic*, "The Future of Getting Arrested," lists microphones that analyze loud noises to see if they're gunshots, marijuana breathalyzers and tablets with facial-recognition software among developments in police technology. These outlandish developments accompany more familiar features

like police body cameras, which have yet to become widespread but are ostensibly meant to keep cops in check just as much as the people they interact with.

If these solutions sound too simple, they should. It's easy to picture the police rushing to the scene of what a computer told them was a gunfight and was actually something as simple as fireworks. More disturbingly, we've seen from the case of Eric Garner, who died last July after a New York City police officer placed him in a chokehold, that clear video evidence has absolutely no effect on an unjust status quo. Almost every example of "smart policing" that Neyfakh investigates is only useful for skewing the imbalance of power even further in favour of the police. Exactly how powerful the police stand to become, though, is an open question.

The closed-circuit TV cameras we already have aren't proving to be very useful. The Campbell Collaboration, an international social sciences research group, found that CCTV cameras work well in parking lots but don't make much of a difference in crime rates in city centers, public housing or around public transportation. In 2009, an internal report by the London Metropolitan Police found that for every 1,000 cameras in London, only one crime was solved. The report further noted that CCTV helped solve only eight out of 269 robberies in a single month.

Surveillance techniques deployed by cities can even be used against them. In its Safe Cities Index 2015 White Paper, *The Economist* reported on a Russian website that streamed live video from CCTV schemes and webcams across the world. Those cameras had been hacked using default password settings found online.

If the technology we have to make us feel safer is often ineffectual or can be co-opted, then the

prime function of surveillance is nothing short of messing with our heads. This is so widely understood, intuitively or explicitly, that fake security cameras are widely available for use in the home or in businesses. Even real security cameras, turned off, aren't uncommon as deterrents. Surveillance is as much symbolic, or even more so, than it is practical. As it becomes more ubiquitous, increased psychological manipulation can only follow suit.

Are we on our way to dystopia where someone watches our every move? There's room for a little optimism here.

In Neyfakh's article, University of Missouri computer-science professor Kannappan Palaniappan notes that data storage is still way behind what would be needed for 24/7 citywide video monitoring. Surveillance on that scale is unappealing to pretty much everyone, and it's feasible that citizens' rights groups and city councils could effectively stop such developments in their tracks.

Still, as Jay Stanley of the American Civil Liberties Union points out in Neyfakh's piece, "there's a lag between when people lose their privacy and when they really start to feel it." We're already being monitored, but not everyone is worried yet.

The smart city won't be dystopian (and, of course, not utopian either), but even if sufficient "smartness" is ever achieved, the city of the future will likely have many of the same problems it does today. So long as we continue to treat crime as a cause in itself and not a symptom of social conditions we can fix and so long as we treat our privacy as an option rather than a right, policing in the smart city will be little more than a chrome facelift on a malfunctioning system that tends to fail more people than it helps.

Graphic Sam Jones





## a modern urban jungle

### field of possibilities brings green to industrialized area

by Michelle Pucci @michellempucci

In the corner of the Mile End, behind the industrial buildings and near the train tracks residents often cross illegally, there's a stretch of land locals refer to as the "Champ des Possibles."

It's not an especially dazzling piece of land, but for the residents stopping by for lunch or with children, it's a refuge from the concrete surroundings.

"It's important to make sure there's a real point of contact between nature and people who live in urban environments," said Marke Ambard, president of the citizen's association Les Amis du Champ des Possibles.

The Champ des Possibles is made up of two parts, a large 1.5-hectare plot that is now legally designated as a park and a thinner strip outlining a southern part of the Canadian Pacific railroad that crosses the city.

Everyone considers that thinner portion to be part of the park and it wasn't until last fall, when CP bulldozed the land for a rail switch, that residents were reminded how unprotected it actually is.

In October, some friends of the Champ found CP tracks hastily placed over mud, construction vehicles stood by the fence. The green grass, albeit still on contaminated land, had been razed.

Within 12 hours the friends of the park mobilized, calling out to residents, media

and friends of friends. It wasn't long before CP sent out an apology.

"It was an accident," they tweeted. "We thought we owned the land."

That's not a far-off idea. Ownership of the Champ has always been a bit confusing.

Ambard says the field was bought by the city in 2006 from Canadian Pacific Rails, but it was pretty much abandoned for decades before that. It wasn't until artists and residents started using the space for creative and leisurely endeavours that a plan for the Champ came into creation.

"We all thought that CP owned it at that point," Ambard said.

Around that time the artists mobilized against city plans to industrialize the Champ. A Banner of Peace symbolic of the Roerich Pact (which concluded that defence of culture is of paramount importance) was installed and Les Amis du Champ des Possibles was created.

Since then, the city has changed the zoning of the larger part to a greenspace and park. Municipal parks become the responsibility of the borough so the Plateau Mont-Royal co-manages with the Amis du Champ.

The Amis are responsible for events on site, maintaining links with community and making sure residents' voices are heard. The ideas for innovating the site and biodiversity come from residents.

The arm of the park—the part razed by CP—remains a no-man's land in terms of

designation. It isn't a park, and promises were made after the CP debacle to protect the land.

CP says it's working with the citizen group to remedy the issue, but there's no word on how or how much.

The park is still in a transitional phase. Working out the best way to decontaminate the former rail scrap yard is priority number one.

The Amis have brainstormed adding benches and pathways, even gazebos. Art installations are still encouraged, as long as they don't permanently change the nature of the park.

Ambard also brought up the idea for a wetland. The borough hasn't approved it, but a small wetland could be used to filter water, catch rain and help increase the biodiversity of the site.

That means moving the plant design away from a lot of invasive species like weeds that crowd out other plants, towards planting native ones to attract pollinators, butterflies and birds.

"From the beginning it's always been understood that we were thriving to be innovative in our approach to decontamination," said Ambard.

"Not just by digging up all the dirt and dumping it somewhere else, but using different natural approaches."

One approach is bioventing—covering it up and waiting—or using plants, microbes or mushrooms to take out contaminants.

The group is in the process of building up arguments and figuring out which to present to the province.

The ongoing evolution of the site is supposed to also encourage it to become more diverse in function.

Meanwhile the space continues to be primarily used as a shortcut to the metro. People in the area will cut through the park and then illegally through the CP tracks to avoid a 20-minute detour to get across.

A Mile End woman is contesting a \$146 fine she received in 2011 after crossing over the tracks. Several crossings exist in the area. Residents have been demanding level crossings for years; NDP leader Tom Mulcair raised the issue when he was a representative for Outremont in 2010.

Further north community groups are trying to save the Parc des Gorilles at the corner of Beaubien St. and St. Urbain St. where trees were cleared in the night by a condo developer without city permission.

Like the Champ, the area was owned by CP until 2013 and served as the last green space in the industrial area. Residents only learned the plot had been sold when the trees were uprooted and asphalt laid.

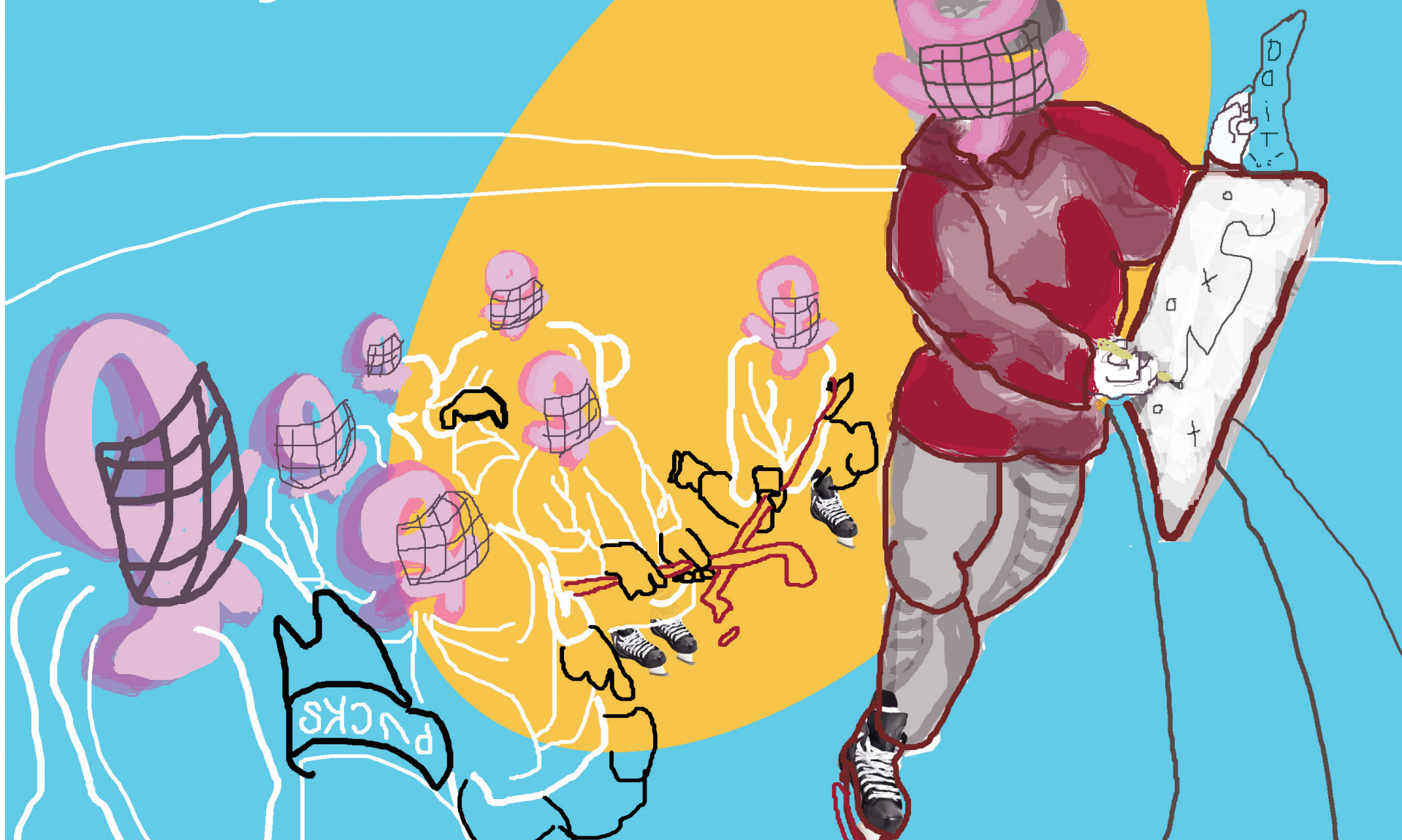
Since then, Les Amis du Parc des Gorilles have been petitioning the city.

In September, Montreal set up cinder blocks to protect the area for a future park, but the project will have to wait a few years.

Photo courtesy Christine Prefontaine



# a call for more female hockey coaches



## The Importance of Having Women Coach Women's Hockey Teams

by Alexandra Robertson

*Robertson is a coach for the Midget AA Lac-St-Louis Selects for the Ligue Hockey Feminin du Quebec.*

We are a community of women who are trying to make a difference in sports. We are mentors, but we are also role models for the young women that require leadership from behind the bench. But most of the time we don't get the recognition we deserve for being a positive influence on girls.

In a male-dominated field, women are often overlooked as hockey coaches. Some may not see the positive impact we have on adolescent women. There is only so much a father-turned-coach can teach a girl's hockey team.

For the past four years that I have been coaching, I have been the only female coach in Lac Saint-Louis at the competitive level.

Not many have realized that as former athletes, we can teach these girls much more than anyone can imagine.

According to the Coaching Association of Canada, women only hold 19 per cent of head coaching positions. 19 per cent of Canadian women participate in sport, compared to 35 percent of men. While girls' teams with male head coaches have been successful, it takes

more than just physical preparation to win games.

As women, we understand the psychological makeup of young girls. The life experiences that girls go through are very different from that of boys. They're taught to act and think differently.

It's important for a coach to understand how a girl mentally prepares for her sport. This is where we as female coaches come in. We are there to share our knowledge with the girls and give them an experience of a lifetime.

Hopefully, this will encourage them to continue with their competitive natures and take up coaching themselves.

The values and leadership models that are currently in place are based off on a system where males hold these head coaching positions. We as women need to change this model for the young girls we coach. A new system must be created based on them.

The female view of competition and independence needs to be changed as well. The traditional model has shaped the sport culture to suit men's hockey.

It's time for change, a time where the girls have their own system where they can feel important. This starts with us, the female coaches that are willing to step up and be leaders.

Since there is a significant lack of women in coaching positions in girls'

hockey, this process may take a while before it takes off. A program needs to be put in place to support the female coaches, like myself, that dream of moving up and being behind the bench of the national team.

The Coaching Association of Canada is trying to combat this problem and aims on increasing the number of coaching opportunities for women.

This program is giving coaches the opportunity to experience their sport on another level. There are apprenticeship programs and team workshops that coaches can attend to further enhance their knowledge.

According to studies done by the CAC, since the late 1980s, close to 500 female coaches have received more than three million dollars in the form of development grants and even National Coaching Institute grants.

There are people willing to help women make a difference in the lives of the young women we coach. We need to stand our ground as leaders and prove how important we are.

Although men lead this profession, this is our time to change the value system and mould it towards young women. One day we will stand, leading our team on the ice in proper roles as head coaches.

Graphic Madeleine Gendreau

### BOX SCORES

#### WEEK OF FEB. 3 TO FEB. 9

THURSDAY	5	Women's Basketball—Concordia 54, McGill 65 Men's Basketball—Concordia 60, McGill 65
FRIDAY	6	Men's Hockey—Concordia 3, McGill 4 (2OT)
SATURDAY	7	Women's Basketball—Concordia 48, McGill 72 Men's Basketball—Concordia 51, McGill 44 Women's Hockey—Concordia 1, McGill 2 (SO)

### UPCOMING GAMES

#### COMING UP IN CONCORDIA SPORTS

WEDNESDAY	11	5:30 p.m. Women's Hockey vs. Team Quebec (U18) 7:00 p.m. Men's Hockey at McGill Redmen (OUA Playoffs)
THURSDAY	13	6:00 p.m. Women's Basketball at Bishop's Gaiters 7:00 p.m. Women's Hockey at UdeM Carabins 8:00 p.m. Men's Basketball at Bishop's Gaiters
SATURDAY	15	7:30 p.m. Women's Hockey vs. Ottawa Gee-Gees (Ed Meagher Arena)





# state of the rivalry

The Concordia Stingers basketball and hockey teams were all in action this past weekend against McGill. Above, the Stingers men's basketball team edged the McGill Redmen 51-44 this past Saturday.

## A Glimpse At the Storied Concordia-McGill Rivalry In the Present Day

by Julian McKenzie, Vince Morello and David S. Landsman

@JulianTheIntern @vinnyorellz @dslands

Stingers, Redmen and Martlets haven't gotten along since the dawn of man, or so we've been led to believe. In the world of university athletics, there is no shortage of history between "Concordians" and "McGillionaires."

Concordia-McGill matchups are easy to build up from a promotional and sports news point of view. They're the two anglophone universities in Montreal, making it natural to group them together.

While the McGill football team has seen better days, both Stingers and Redmen have had some notable clashes in their history. This past November, the Stingers won their first rugby championship since 2005 over McGill, a team that denied them the crown four years in a row.

It's impressive to point out, however, the parallel between how both hockey and basketball teams view the rivalry.

This past weekend, Concordia and McGill squared off in both winter sports. The Stingers were only able to grab one win, a 51-44 victory over McGill in men's basketball, while both hockey teams lost to McGill in thrilling overtime and shootout games.

The hockey teams are clearly into it. Despite the gap in the standings between the men's and women's teams, it is believed that these match ups bring out the best in both sides.

"It's a crosstown rivalry as good as it gets," said McGill's head coach Kelly Nobes. "A lot of these guys played [junior hockey] and

know each other from their time doing that," he continued. "There's always bragging rights there."

"I think [Concordia gets] up for the games against McGill," said Stingers coach Kevin Figsby. "I don't think anyone's going home thinking that they didn't see a good hockey game tonight and that's what we look forward to when we play those guys."

The men's team have faced each other twice this season, and while McGill has won both encounters, the deficit has never been larger than two goals. The two will face each other in the upcoming OUA playoffs this week and they're preparing for the battle ahead.

"They have a good team, we've got to respect them," said Redmen forward Benoit Lévesque. "[We're going to] watch some video and get ready to play them in playoffs."

The women's hockey teams have been more competitive than the men. On Nov. 7, Concordia beat McGill for the first time in over eight years.

They have played each other five times this season. Concordia may have only won once, but all games but one have been decided by one goal. The lone game that wasn't was a 5-3 decision when the fifth goal was scored on an empty net.

Stingers women's hockey team head coach Les Lawton said they're closing the gap, getting to .500 against the number two team in the nation. "Getting five out of 10 points and playing each game really hard has built this up to a respectful rivalry," he said. "We finally earned our respect. There might even be some fear in them."

Every game brings the intensity that one would expect from a crosstown rivalry, but seeing how close these games are gives Concordia the intensity and enthusiasm it will need come playoffs at the end of the month, where they'll likely have a first-round matchup against McGill.

"I'm really [looking] forward to playing them [and beating them] in the playoffs; they're actually the team I want to play against," said Stingers alternate captain Alyssa Sherrard. "We know we can compete against them."

"I think the levels of our league in general has gotten so much better," said Martlet captain Katia Clement-Heydra. "Concordia always gives us a challenge every game and it's intense and stressful each and every game. It's the best rivalry out there. I think it's great for our game."

Basketball, however, is a different story.

"I don't know if the [rivalry] really exists," said McGill Martlets basketball head coach Ryan Thorne. "These girls all played on the same CEGEP teams. During the game they compete like competitors should and I think after the game they're cordial enough to make sure [they say] 'hey, you know what? Good game.' There's no big animosity there."

There are only five teams in each of the conferences, meaning that Concordia and McGill frequently meet. Despite this, the hate is spread equally throughout the Réseau de sport étudiant du Québec conference.

"It's a great rivalry, but which team in this league do we not have a great rivalry with?" said Stingers women's basketball head coach Keith Pruden. "Everybody hates everybody."

It's a big game every time we play everybody."

"It's such a small conference that everything gets personal," said Stingers men's basketball guard Mukiya Post. "Every team is a team that's very competitive, where you don't like the other team. Especially when you lose, you don't like the other team."

In an earlier encounter between the Stingers and the Redmen this season, a fight broke out, resulting in four ejections, three of them given to Concordia Stingers. Such a skirmish has been downplayed and left aside by the Stingers.

"That's in the past," said Stingers men's basketball forward Michael Fosu. "We just focus on the basketball game now."

Naturally, a number of players on both sides have grown up and played together before separating to their respective universities.

In a rivalry, teams must have some sort of contempt for one another. Hockey clearly has some hate and playful banter going on, but the present-day rivalry has a long way to go before reaching the level of other rivalries in the Canadian Interuniversity Sport realm.

"You know when there's a rivalry? When we put 10,000 people in the gym like Ottawa and Carleton. That's when it becomes a rivalry," said McGill Redmen men's basketball head coach David DeAveiro.

Despite how athletes on both sides feel, Martlets, Redmen and Stingers will forever be linked, until another English school tries to establish itself in Montreal.

Photos: 1. Julian McKenzie, 2. Matt Garies, 3. Julian McKenzie



2



Both men’s and women’s hockey teams lost thrilling games to McGill over the weekend. The men’s team lost 4-3 in double overtime, while the women lost 2-1 in a shootout.

3



Kaylah Barrett (left) and the Stingers women’s basketball team couldn’t keep up with the McGill Martlets in their game on Saturday, losing 72-48.



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# GENERAL ELECTION VOLUME 36

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## Ritalin: The Key to Academic Success?

A Look at the Popularity of ADD Meds as Study Aids

by Andre Fontecilla

Juggling school, work and the gym - and still having time for a social life - isn't easy.

Students resort to different strategies to cope with the pressure. Some don't work during the school year and possibly accumulate debt. Others take fewer classes and prolong their stay.

Sophia Nelson, an accounting student at UQAM, is able to do all of it while still scoring "A's" in her classes.

Her secret: Ritalin.

"I found that I often got distracted and bored when studying," Nelson said. "Ritalin helps me stay focused and give that extra push in completing my tasks."

Students are increasingly using drugs like Ritalin and Adderall as study aids.

According to the Canadian Centre on Substance Abuse, five to 35 per cent of North American adolescents and young adults are using Ritalin without a prescription.

With midterms just around the corner, students are finding themselves cramming for exams and rushing to meet deadlines.

"I have a really busy schedule and therefore have very little time to study," said Nelson.

Seeing as this can be a stressful time for university students, some are resorting to stimulants to help them get through the exam period.

Nelson said that she uses Ritalin to boost her productivity in the little time she has. "I use it to maximize my study sessions," she said.

Statistics suggest that the use of Ritalin in Canada is a growing issue, especially in Quebec.

Statistics Canada reports that prescriptions for psychostimulants have tripled since Quebec introduced mandatory drug insurance in 1997.

The effects of psychostimulants that appeal so much to students are wakefulness and an improved ability to focus.

Nelson says she uses Ritalin to study even though she does not have ADHD or ADD.

"One study day could mean I use one to two pills," she said.

Nelson admits that using 40 pills a semester isn't uncommon. Her main concern is her dependence on the drug and the consequences it might have on her future.

"I feel like there's so much to always do that I can't do it without Ritalin," she said.

The Controlled Drug and Substance Act of Canada classifies methylphenidate (the chemical name for Ritalin) as a Schedule III narcotic—the same category as LSD and mescaline.

To obtain a prescription for Ritalin, one usually has to go through several tests so that a physician can assess whether medication

is necessary.

But contrary to what one might think, getting hold of Ritalin can be rather easy.

"I told my doctor I was feeling distracted at work and he gave me a prescription for Ritalin," said Tyler Bridge, a former Concordia student.

According to the Canadian Drug Shortage Database, the over-prescription of Ritalin accounts for several of its back orders this year.

Diagnosis and treatment for ADD and ADHD has increased tremendously and has become a commonly diagnosed disorder in children.

The fact that Ritalin is now so frequently prescribed means that it is now also more available on the black market.

According to the Canadian Centre on Substance Abuse, Ritalin users who are not diagnosed with ADD or ADHD often get medication through a friend or buy it from a drug dealer who has a legitimate prescription of the drug.

"I got Ritalin off friends who usually sell me a pill for \$5," Nelson said.

Stimulants are federally controlled medications, yet some students are using them without considering the possible risks. There have been reports of sudden deaths from people taking drugs of this kind.

Health Canada even banned Adderall XR—a longer-lasting type of stimulant—in

2005 for this reason.

Yves Dubeau, a pharmacist for Jean Coutu, explains that in terms of chemical composition Ritalin is similar to street drugs.

"It's like speed," he said. "It causes insomnia, which is why a lot of students are using it to study through the night."

Experts say that teens and young adults use Ritalin for recreational purposes as well. "Sometimes I was so happy I couldn't concentrate," Nelson said.

Pills can be consumed orally, intravenously or through nasal inhalation, in which case the medication is crushed into a powder form.

People have reported taking Ritalin to enhance alertness during a night of partying or simply to get high. To produce an even greater high, they combine an excessive amount of pills with alcohol or energy drinks.

Other than restlessness, common side effects include heart palpitations, decreased appetite, anxiety and irritability. Nelson explains that the "happy period" of her Ritalin sessions was short lived.

"I usually felt very isolated and easily aggravated towards the end" said Nelson. She also says that she doesn't eat while on Ritalin and that she has trouble swallowing.

She often felt guilty if she got little work done. "My thoughts had a much more negative ring to them," Nelson says.

As her happiness decreased, so did her appetite. For this reason, people looking to

lose weight often resort to Ritalin and its sister drugs to slim down.

Questions have been raised about the impact Ritalin has on student's grades and if people abusing Ritalin have an advantage over others.

Studies suggest that the illegal use of Ritalin does not improve grades. Still, some professionals argue that using Ritalin without a prescription is equivalent to cheating.

To prevent this trend from accelerating, many schools provide students with services to help them cope.

Concordia University has an Access Centre for Students with Disabilities and the Student Success Centre offers tutors and workshops, in addition to Counselling and Development and Health Services.

Health Canada studies show that Ritalin abuse continues to be a rising issue, but Dubeau is not too concerned about long-term dependency. "For most students it's only a temporary thing," he said.

Nelson hopes she doesn't use Ritalin for the rest of her life, but worries about her ability to concentrate without it.

"It's not going to get easier and I'll probably still need it after I graduate," she said.

*Names have been changed to protect the identity of those interviewed.*

Graphics Sam Jones





# Poutine Week Pandemonium

Last Week, Montreal Celebrated Gravy, Curds and Frites

by Claire Loewen

What characterizes Montreal? Many say it's a city of romance or that it's far too cold and windy. Some like the city; others not so much.

There is one unmistakable Montreal trait, however, that makes romance better and the weather bearable—Quebec's comfort food, poutine.

Loads of restaurants have their own version of the poutine, each one making the classic snack a little more their own. And what better way to celebrate such a diverse, dirty, delicious meal than by dedicating a whole week to it?

Montreal's annual La Poutine Week is currently in its third year, with 45 participating restaurants in the city alone. From Feb. 1 to 7, Montrealers had the opportunity to vote for the best specialty poutine in the city.

All participating restaurants and their specially-made poutines are listed on [lapoutineweek.com](http://lapoutineweek.com).

The event has expanded to Toronto, Quebec City, Ottawa and Sherbrooke, La Poutine Week creator Naeem Adam told *Global News Montreal*. "Canada loves poutine," said Adam, "And they love taking our Quebec poutine and [adding] their own little mix or twist to it."

The potato fries, gravy and cheese curds of a classic poutine is by no means the standard for those participating in La Poutine Week—the creativity and variety of contestants has caused the poutines to stray far from the norm.

We're talking waffle poutines, vegan

poutines, kimchi poutines, curry poutines—the list goes on. These are the ones I found most interesting, whether that means it was delicious, strange or just plain not poutine.

## La Banquise's La Folie Poutine – Madness Indeed

This Tex-Mex style poutine is loaded with toppings. On top of cheese curds, fries and sauce, La Folie contains spicy sausage, bacon, sautéed mushrooms and onions, pepper sauce, sour cream, a lettuce leaf and a jalapeño popper on top. Needless to say, I devoured it as fast as possible.

I enjoyed how every bite was a little different and how well the spicy and salty flavours complemented each other.

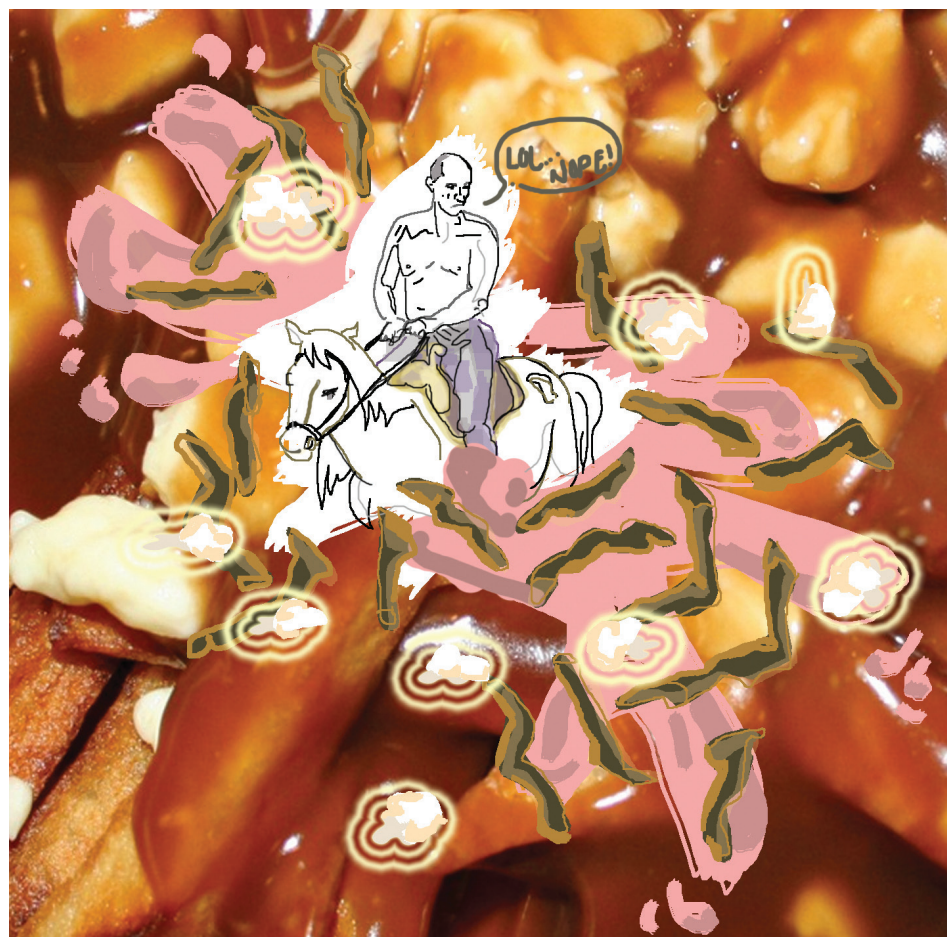
I was satisfied, but for a restaurant that's known for its poutine, I think La Banquise could have gotten more creative. To me, they chose quantity over quality.

## Chez Boris's Vladimir Végétariénovich Poutine – Most Creative

Chez Boris is well-known for their savoury donuts, so savoury donut fries were a pleasant surprise in their poutine.

On top of them was a beet and three-bean chili, with smoked chipotle and cheese curds. Though I can't take points away for creativity, this one was not a big hit for me.

There was a good mix of flavours, but the beets threw me off and I was craving some kind of meat, probably in gravy. To me, this was not a real poutine.



## Fabergé's Gaufre du Peuple Poutine – The Best Ever

Wow. Just wow. This potato waffle topped with duck confit, cheese and gravy was the perfect combination of delicious and creative.

The very slight sweetness of the waffles went perfectly with the salty cheese and gravy, served with a side of spicy coleslaw.

Everything on my plate seemed to melt together in the perfect way. Fabergé definitely gets my vote.

Honourable mention goes to **Copper Branch's Vegan Poutine** for making the

world's unhealthiest food healthy and **Shawarmaz's #ShawarmazManic** for being a scrumptious mixture of cultures.

Despite wanting to try all 45 participating poutine restaurants, my budget and stomach are only so big. I wish I could have tried them all, but one week is simply not enough even if you eat poutine for breakfast, lunch and dinner every day.

Maybe La Poutine Month is in order. In any case, thank you Quebec for creating such an amazing food. I'm full.

Graphic Madeleine Gendreau

# Nah'msayin?

Pizza and Ice Cream: Mix. Them.

by Shaun Michaud @shaun\_mic

At night, when all the peasants go to sleep, I tiptoe to the kitchen, burglarize the fridge and make love to my food.

I know how this sounds. But don't worry, I haven't gone mad. I'm just upset.

People don't enjoy victuals anymore. They only eat to nourish their empty stomachs. Nobody makes time to get a second helping.

I often dream of days past, when people would have those communal Friday food orgies. Gastric satisfaction has never been the same since.

Nowadays, people feed for comfort, to satisfy their base desires.

Just today I tried to convert a few heathens, but my efforts were in vain.

Trying to spread my love to the masses, I divulged the greatest fast food secret of all time.

*Hot pizza and ice cream.* Loved by soldiers and toothless toddlers alike, this combination is the ultimate aphrodisiac of the fast food world.

Bad on your hips but good for your bum,

pizza and ice cream are like Amy Poehler and Tina Fey: excellent on their own but divine when combined.

The gourmet flavour of anchovy pizza and Neapolitan ice cream is my personal weakness.

The greatest chefs swear by its succulence. Just ask Gordon Ramsey.

Yet, to my awful dismay, this revelation garnered nothing but incredulity and ridicule from the simpletons around me.

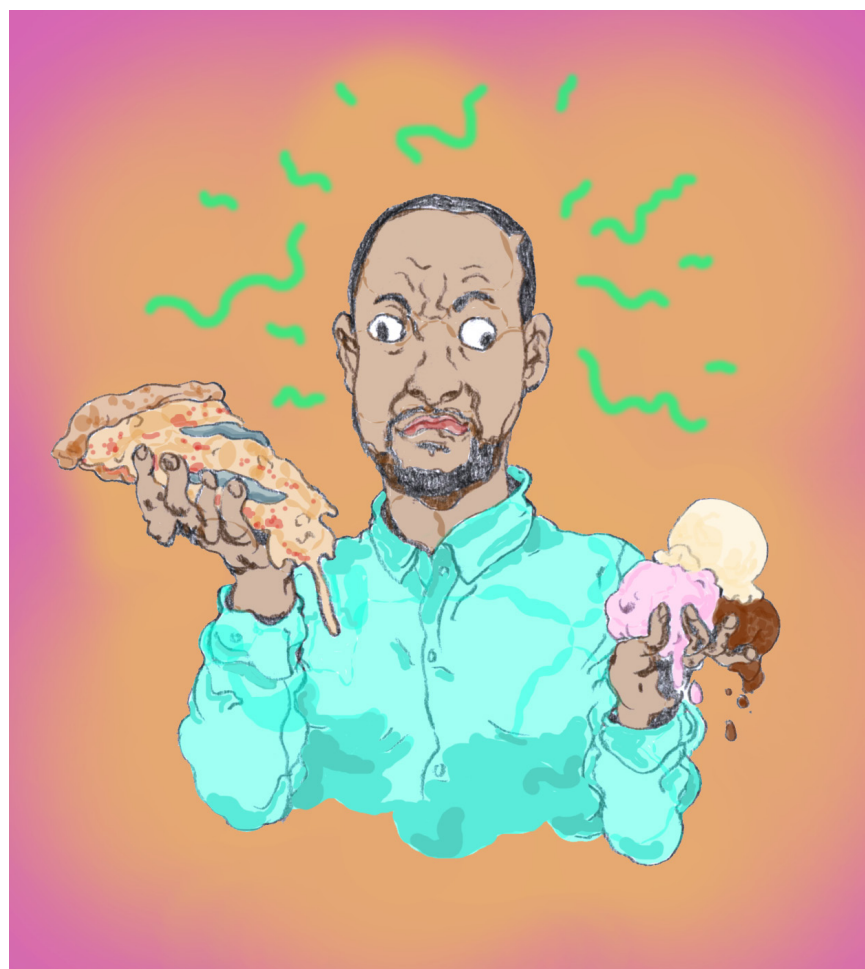
Still, these fatheads are only the products of their barren environment.

The true culprits are those nasty celebrity fitness gurus who have the gall to fling the n-word—the all-dreaded “nutrition”—like it's a thirty-ounce piece of sirloin steak.

I write this diatribe in the hopes of reaching tired and famished dieters. May your tummy grumble you awake tonight and force you into the kitchen to murder your fridge. I want you to.

Peace.

graphic Graphic Graeme Shorten-Adams







## Feeling Whipped by the Commercialization of Valentine's Day?

by Melissa Fuller @mel\_full

February 14th was my anniversary with my high school sweetheart.

Though we had been dating for a while, we waited until Valentine's Day to become official—because that's what you do when you're a teenager falling in love for the first time.

We were together for a pretty long time, and after several years the pressure of Valentine's Day anniversaries got pretty intense—expectations rose along with our expenditures.

However, we eventually became bitter about how excited we used to get about the day.

I realized I actually kind of hated it the first Valentine's Day after we broke up.

I disliked the commercialization of love along with the pressure to spend money on generic cards.

Mostly I disliked the need to express affection through grand gestures and gifts rather than through a daily practice of love.

I decided that I didn't want to continue this tradition in new relationships, so I basically ignored Valentine's Day for the following six years—unless you count passive-aggressive comments about how lame it is.

Last year was the first time I acknowledged Valentine's Day in years—well, actually it was my partner who initially acknowledged it.

So this year I'm reclaiming Valentine's Day as a day of adventure—a day to try something new with a partner, on your own, or with a friend.

All this brings me to a Valentine's Day list, where you will find some less generic things to do this year in Montreal.

My advice is to pick something you've never done before and go into it with no expectations other than to have a new experience.

If you're looking to learn something, you can take a **bondage workshop** at the Alternative

Lifestyles Community Centre (ALCC).

On Feb. 14 they're offering two bondage workshops: *Basic Bondage* at 2 p.m. and *Intermediate Bondage* at 4 p.m.

Bonus: on Feb. 15 they have a *Spank Like a Pro* workshop at 1:30 p.m. Prices vary but these three workshops are \$20 each and spaces are limited so reserve your place in advance.

If you're itching to spend some time outdoors, then a **City lights snowshoeing excursion** might be your adventure!

Les Amis de la Montagne offer guided winter night excursions of Mount Royal most weekends.

Their Valentine's Day special tour includes mulled wine and a chocolate truffle for \$28 on Feb. 13 (English) and Feb. 14 (French). Snowshoes are included. Check out this and other winter activities on Mount Royal at <http://bit.ly/1ukTCWh>

If you'd rather avoid the cold and get physical indoors, Happy Tree Yoga is hosting a **Couples Yoga workshop** for \$40 per couple from 4-5:30 p.m. on Feb. 14.

Learning shared breathing and stillness together can be a great way to deepen both physical and emotional intimacy. For more info: <http://bit.ly/1DJlZgs>

On the more adventurous side, Moksha Yoga NDG is offering an **Acro Yoga Basics workshop** for \$17 on Feb. 15 from 1:30-3:30 p.m. This would be a lot of fun to do with your partner or a friend and you don't need previous experience! For more info: <http://bit.ly/1D6pH5L>

If you're looking to just sit back and watch, then there are some great shows happening this weekend.

**The Self-Love Cabaret** is "an evening of self-love with an explicitly feminist, queer,

anti-racist and anti-colonial mandate" that you won't want to miss.

The event is pay-what-you-can and you can check out their Facebook event for details: *The Self-Love Cabaret: l'amour se conjugue à la première personne*.

**Blue Light Burlesque** is also hosting a Valentine's Day event at Café Campus on the Feb. 14. Tickets are \$25 in advance and you can find out more at [bluelightburlesque.com](http://bluelightburlesque.com)

If you're not interested in leaving the house (or your bed), you can spend the night in with **MakeLoveNotPorn.tv**.

They host and curate an awesome collection of porn that is "of the people, by the people, and for the people who believe that the sex we have in our everyday life is the hottest sex there is."

Check them out, rent a video, or make and submit a video of your own—the possibilities are endless and oh so hot!

Finally, if you must give a gift keep it simple and personal.

I suggest mailing a handwritten letter to someone you love. We're not used to receiving letters anymore, unless it's bills or government mail, so it's pretty exciting to get a surprise letter!

If you're having trouble with what to write, you can share your favorite memory of them; what qualities you admire in them; or tell them the story of the day you met from your perspective.

If you don't have their address, just check next time you're over or look up the area on Google maps. You can also find postal codes online once you have the address: which is only creepy if you think it is!

Submit your question anonymously at [melisafuller.ca](mailto:melisafuller.ca) and check out "Sex & Pancakes" on Facebook.

# The Global Movement to Divest from Fossil Fuels Gains Momentum

International support from the UN, political attacks from Jean Charest and a looming day of global action scheduled for Feb. 13. Will Concordia do the right thing?



Alex Tyrrell, provincial Green Party Leader and Concordia student

by Alex Tyrrell @AlexTyrrellPVQ

Last fall, Concordia's administration announced that they would shift four per cent of the university's endowment funds to sustainable investments.

While many pragmatic environmentalists acknowledged this as a valuable first step, others criticized the action as a mere public relations stunt.

Nevertheless, Concordia became the first post-secondary institution in Canada to take some kind of action as a result of the fossil fuel divestment campaign.

It came as no surprise that former Quebec premier Jean Charest published an open letter in *La Presse* last week denouncing the divestment campaign, which he criticized for being "organized by students" and for unfairly targeting the "big bad oil companies."

He went further by taking direct aim at Concordia's micro-divestment by suggesting that the fund managers acted irresponsibly.

According to Charest, investments should be made with one thing in mind: profits.

Of course, this type of response was to be expected from someone like Jean Charest, who is well known for his promotion of hydraulic fracturing, the Canadian tar sands and a number of other reckless environmental policies.

The fundamental argument behind the divestment movement is that investing in fossil fuel companies is unethical, contributes to global climate change and that academic institutions should be a driving force behind the societal transformation necessary to combat environmental collapse.

Investment bankers are quick to point out that placing funds in the fossil fuel industry is profitable, reliable and relatively secure.

These corporations have demonstrated their extraordinary ability to manipulate elected officials and public opinion in Canada by pouring millions of dollars into public relations campaigns and advertising.

Few investments are more secure than investing in the Canadian oil sands, where environmental regulation is virtually non-existent, taxes are low and the government subsidies keep on flowing to the sector, despite widespread austerity measures being imposed on the population.

In such a context, fossil fuel investments may be

profitable, but they're certainly not ethical.

Divestment got a boost in November 2014 when United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon urged pension funds and insurance companies to shift their investments towards renewable energy.

United Nations climate chief Christiana Figueres went further by saying that academic institutions still invested in fossil fuels "should ask themselves whether they are in breach of their social responsibility to serve the community, the nation and the world."

Barack Obama, Naomi Klein and Al Gore have also shown their support recently.

There is an emerging consensus amongst leading intellectuals, scholars and world leaders that divestment is a worthwhile, significant and necessary step in the fight against climate change.

One of the main questions that divestment campaigners are faced with is what sort of investments should replace fossil fuels and how the institution can guarantee that their moral decision to pull back investments will not affect the institution's financial bottom line.

This question has been on the lips of Concordia president Alan Shepard since the campaign began on campus in early 2013.

Fossil fuel divestment is about getting people and institutions to take a principled stand in the face of easy money.

There are many ways in which profits can be gained by engaging in unethical behaviour.

Academic institutions speaking out and divesting from fossil fuels makes it more difficult for elected officials to continue taking us down a road that many scientists argue will lead to our extinction.

Although the actions taken by the Concordia admin to date are superficial, they will become significant if and only if the admin moves towards 100 per cent divestment from fossil fuels.

This is a golden opportunity for Concordia to show outstanding leadership on the international level.

The sooner Concordia takes meaningful action, the better. Let's keep up the pressure.

Alex Tyrrell is the leader of the Green Party of Quebec. He also studies Environmental Science at Concordia.

Photo Erin Sparks



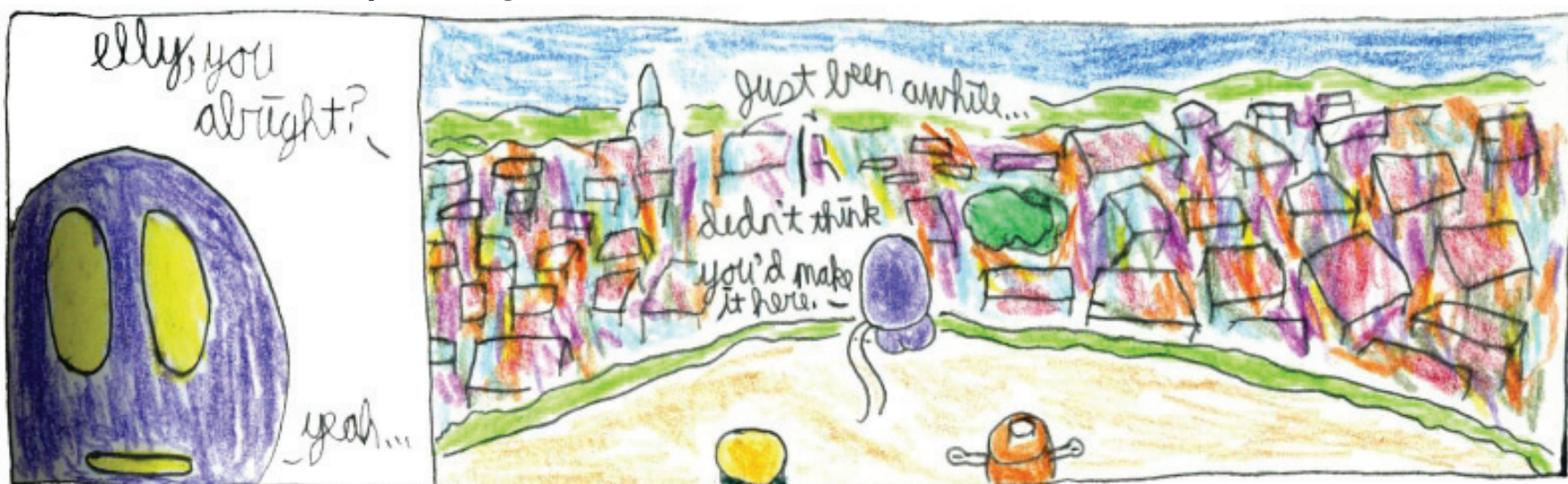
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## editorial

### Working Towards Better Food Services at Concordia

Concordia University's food services are approaching a crossroad and its students are hoping to have a say in its new direction.

On Sunday, the Concordia Student Union organized and hosted a daylong event called "Concordia Transitions."

Jam-packed with speakers and workshops that included everything from learning how to make sauerkraut in a jar to understanding how food activism plays an essential part of social movements, Transitions is only one initiative demonstrating that students care about what they eat.

The university's 12-year contract with multinational food service Chartwells will reach its conclusion at the semester's end.

A request for proposal (RFP) for a new campus-wide food service provider has not yet been released, despite assurances from university spokesperson Chris Mota last month that it would be ready by the end of January or early February.

This was after she told *The Link* that its release would come sometime at the end of last semester.

This delay in the public procurement process is likely frustrating to the players looking to bid in the RFP, especially for the new, less established bidders who have never dealt with such a legal document before.

The Concordia Food Coalition is coordi-

nating with one such bidder. A consortium of potentially eight local food vendors is teaming up to try to steer university administrators into uncharted yet groundbreaking, and indeed welcome, territory.

At a collaborative event last month with the charity Meal Exchange, CFC members expressed that they were working "blindly" in the bidding process, as they only have the previous, clearly outdated RFP document from 2002 to advise their consortium with.

"If you're not giving us anything, you're only making it easy for a corporation [that] has these business models already to successfully bid on the RFP," Lauren Aghabozorgi, the coalition's office coordinator, told *The Link* last month.

The process of learning when the RFP, a public document, becomes available is problematic, since the university is under no obligation to inform any bidder about its release.

In fact, Aghabozorgi and her team are responsible for checking, on a daily basis, the difficult-to-navigate, province-run website where the bidding process on government contracts are announced.

After the RFP's unveiling, bidders will only have roughly 20 days to create a business proposal, which Aghabozorgi understandably calls "unreasonable."

Most telling of all, Aghabozorgi said the

administration might have chosen a successor and will "greenwash" their model to appease students asking for more sustainable options.

If her suspicions are true, then this is a troubling realization to grasp.

*The Link* would like to endorse the consortium bid or any other potential alternative over a multinational or national corporation like Chartwells, Aramark or Sodexo.

This isn't simple anti-corporation sentiment; Chartwells and companies like them have repeatedly demonstrated incompetence and corporate irresponsibility.

In a feature last semester, Newton Jr. Jegu, the general manager of Concordia Food Services and a representative of Chartwells, said he was unable to accommodate a handful of first-year students who have food allergies and live in residence (and are thus required to buy into a meal plan) due to constraints from their third-party food supplier Sysco.

He said his staff is at the mercy of Sysco, which doesn't keep up-to-date on specific dietary products and trends.

It's a legitimate excuse but also a transferring of blame, a passing of the buck due to a corporate division of labour which in itself is a method to keep costs to a minimum.

Can these companies, who register profit in the millions, not handle the needs of a few

students like Anisa Ben-Saud, who has Celiac disease and had to supplement her \$1,975 meal plan with approximately \$400 of vitamins and gluten-free groceries every month?

This is without mentioning students who choose specific diets like veganism. There's only so much sans fromage pizza and salad that one can eat.

So if another corporation is chosen, what comes next for students? The possibility of the university making more kiosks available for rent by student organizations on both campuses exists.

Also, the Hive Café co-ops, which are located on both the Loyola and downtown campuses, are currently thriving and will most likely only grow in membership.

Hopefully more co-ops will be opened on and around both campuses, as making students key stakeholders in what they eat is as important in terms of diet as it is in reducing exploitation.

Not all is doom and gloom; no decision has been made and the administration has demonstrated a willingness to discuss the future of food at Concordia with students.

Maybe at this crossroad, the university will follow Robert Frost's wisdom and take the road less traveled by. It could make all the difference.

Graphic Sam Jones

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