

# THE LINK<sup>35</sup>

CONCORDIA'S INDEPENDENT NEWSPAPER SINCE 1980

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*editorial P. 15*

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## give me a home where the undergrads roam



### CSU Advances Student Housing Initiative

by Michelle Pucci @michellempucci

With a little time and investment, Concordia students will eventually be removed from Montreal's tenant market. At least that's the goal of the Concordia Student Union's ongoing housing campaign.

The project to develop cooperative housing for students is moving forward with the help of a student-led housing research group and social investors at the Chantier de l'économie sociale.

A question during last November's CSU by-election concerning the prioritization of the project passed easily—but now students need to approve the money to back it up.

The student union will ask undergrads to vote in next month's general election to transfer \$1.85 million from the Student Space, Accessible Education and Legal Contingency fund to a new fund dedicated to developing a housing complex.

The student space fund contains about \$12 million collected from an annual fee levy and can be used for initiatives that fulfill a broad mandate—essentially long-term projects that improve the student experience.

Last semester, students approved a \$102,536.79 transfer of funds to pay back start-up costs for the Hive Café co-ops, which opened in September on both campuses.

At the last CSU meeting, Nancy Neamtan, the CEO at the Chantier de l'économie sociale, agreed to invest up to \$1.5 million into the housing project. Desjardins has shown interest in financing the rest of the costs with a mortgage.

The Chantier de l'économie sociale specializes in “patient capital” or investments with long-term goals and low interest rates.

The idea is to charge residents 80 per cent of the rental market's median, based on the neighbourhood. Montreal's Sud-Ouest borough is a viable option, says VP Academic and Advocacy Terry Wilkings, for its low housing costs and proximity to Concordia.

Student co-ops are supposed to be the alternative to university-run residences and a speculative housing market.

“I don't believe that the university has the capacity to provide housing for the entire student population,” he said. “This isn't a problem that's isolated to Concordia.”

There are only 788 rooms at Concordia residences and they only house first-year students. Combined, student residences house about 5,000 students in Montreal, which is

home to over 190,000 students, according to a market study.

A feasibility study produced for the CSU also shows that students are targets in the renting market, usually when it comes to illegal deposits, documents and inhabitable conditions. Students from outside the city also pay on average \$100 more on rent per month.

The study was produced by the Unité de travail pour l'implantation de logement étudiant (UTILE)—a not-for-profit group working with student unions in Montreal and at the Université Laval on student tenant surveys.

UTILE is already working on its own housing co-op in the Sud-Ouest with \$2 million from the provincial government. A website for information on renting in Montreal was also launched with the CSU's Housing and Job Bank. Wilkings says he's also working on an information campaign.

Development and funding scenarios were presented to the CSU's council last semester, providing models for repurposing residential or commercial buildings, as well as a one-time equity investment or loan to finance the project.

Those methods are one-off projects that

won't really change the housing market for students, says Wilkings.

“Something that is a priority for the CSU is to make affordable housing as accessible as possible,” he said. This means having access to long-term finances.

Instead the CSU opted to set up an investment fund—the Popular University Student Housing fund—which will act like a loan that pays itself back to finance more projects.

Unlike a fee-levy, the PUSH fund will be created through a one-time transfer that will sustain itself.

“There is not going to be a need to continuously receive support from students in the form of student money for this fund,” Wilkings said.

The fund would be loaning money to develop a co-op, with a social mandate so that repayment is below standard market rates.

This means rent will be kept as low as possible, because the interest rate is kept as low as possible, but not so low that the fund loses value. Bank loans, on the other hand, tend to charge higher rates to make a profit.

“The whole model is structured around having access to cheap money,” said Wilkings.

The CSU decided to follow UTILE's

lead in designing a new building instead of repurposing one that might need substantial renovation. The building is supposed to be adapted to student needs and have 100 to 150 rooms for Concordia students.

Ideally everything would be in place by fall 2016. But realistically, Wilkings says students will probably be able to rent a room in 2017. If the initial project works out, the potential for more construction will be maintained through the PUSH fund's returns.

“Nothing prevents the CSU from continually benefitting from the fund and it allows us to seek further support from other organizations,” he said. In addition to the Chantier, the CSU is soliciting help from other unnamed social investors.

The concept for student co-op housing in Montreal and other parts of the province are inspired by similar projects in the Netherlands and Sherbrooke, Quebec.

University students across North America, like at Guelph and Minnesota, also run housing co-ops.

Nancy Neamtan is excited about bringing the idea to Montreal. Neamtan works on the board of UTILE.

“This would be the first time that we would have been approached and working with a student organization,” she said. “But we think it's a tremendous opportunity and a really interesting initiative.”

The Chantier, she says, uses “traditional economic tools for social good” to invest its \$52-million “patient capital” fund. These types of investment are considered good solid investments—not speculative—bringing stable returns.

“There's always the question, for many years what went on in the investment community was getting rid of the bad stuff, chemical weapons, child labour,” she said. “The challenge now is not taking in the bad stuff but investing in the good stuff.”

These projects are so successful, according to Neamtan, because they respond to specific needs. The survival rate of co-ops is three times the rate of traditional private businesses.

Organizations leading the projects are also scrutinized if they fail. The CSU can't sell out, cross the street and open up under a new name, for example.

“If the model has to be adjusted a little bit, then we'll figure out ways to adjust it,” she said. “We're not a bank that says yes or no.”

Graphic Laura Lalonde and Shaun Michaud



## self-love conquers all

Social Justice Days Offers  
Alternatives to V-Day

Nada Khashaba captivates the crowd at Self-Love Cabaret.



Winnie SuperHova eats cabbage goatee during her performance.



Malek El Hayja expressing her love for herself to the music of Beyoncé.

by Shaun Michaud @shaun\_mic

For the third straight year, the co-op Café L'Artère hosted the *Self-Love Cabaret: l'amour se conjugue à la première personne*, a show designed to challenge the consumerist auspices of Valentine's Day.

Presented as part of QPIRG-McGill's event series Social Justice Days, the show, held last Saturday evening, was an anti-V-Day artistic manifesto, a celebration of oneself and the love for oneself, as opposed to marketed coupledness.

"We celebrate ourselves instead of somebody else," said Kama La Mackerel, curator and founder of the event.

This year's show featured six artists of colour expressing their understanding of self-love in regards to race, gender and decolonization. Featuring bluesy singer Elena Stoodley, spoken-word poet Lady Sin Trayda, belly dancer Nada Khashaba, performance artists Kim Ninkuru and Winnie SuperHova and bombshell Malek El Hayja, the show attracted a tide of self-lovers.

Originally from Mauritius, La Mackerel herself delivered a spoken-word performance about the loss of gender through colonial history, and the reclaiming of the term zomfam—man-woman. She received a standing ovation.

"A lot of people felt nurtured by the show," she said. "It made them think differently about how they care for themselves."

The performers at this year's Self-Love Cabaret didn't all receive formal art education. La Mackerel said she picked them because she was "smitten by the quality of their work."

"These are grassroots artists with different narratives and ways to transmit their experiences," she said.

It served as a unique spot where minority artists expressed their feelings towards the insidious burdens they carry in modern society.

La Mackerel was pleased with the outcome.

"I got to create a space for artists of colour to perform," said the curator. "So for me it was very successful."

No stranger to hosting events, she holds the monthly open mic GENDER B(L)ENDER.

"It's a queer open space where people who aren't necessarily trained artists can come perform without the fear of being judged," she said. "Instead, we are supportive of artistic work. It's a queer space but it's also open to anyone."

She said that all the profits of Self-Love Cabaret went to pay the performers and rent the venue.

La Mackerel said she hopes the show will go on.

"If I'm still doing well, I would love to do it again," she said. "Same time, same place."

Photos Shaun Michaud



Elena Stoodley sings her heart out on Valentine's Day.



Kama La Mackerel delivers a rousing spoken-word poem.



# racism, the canadian way

McGill Panel Explores Canada's Relationship to Slavery

by Verity Stevenson @vestevie

Canada's relationship to slavery dates back to the 17th century and it's its own problem—not part of the United States'.

To confront Canada's history of how it treats "the other," it needs to start telling that not-so-rosy history, panelists said at a talk at McGill Monday night organized by the university's Black Students' Network.

"I have yet to encounter the Canadian student who comes into that class, knowing that slavery happened in Canada," Charmaine Nelson, associate professor of art history at McGill, said of one of the courses she teaches.

The talk, held in the Students' Society of McGill University Ballroom on McTavish Street, also featured St. Mary's University assistant professor Darryl Leroux, author and historian Frank Mackey, and PhD candidate Rachel Zellars, who acted as moderator.

Much of Canada's Black history is not in education curriculums before university. And even at the postsecondary level, there is little space taken in Canadian academia on the subject, Nelson said. In Canada, there are no university programs that deal directly with African heritage. In contrast, such programs are available at nearly every university in the United States, she said.

That lack is represented in universities' faculties as well, she added, pointing to the fact that she is the only Black art historian in Canada. She admitted to the pressure she

feels as a result.

"I constantly feel isolated at McGill. This is not a safe space for me," she said. Indeed, the Canadian academic landscape has diminished in diversity over the past several years, Leroux chimed in.

Called "Discourses of Race: The United States, Canada and Transnational Anti-Blackness," the event originally had *The Atlantic* author Ta-Nehisi Coates as its headliner, but the writer couldn't make it, and is to speak at McGill on March 2 instead. Coates was slated to discuss his essay and *The Atlantic's* June 2014 cover story, "The Case for Reparations," in which he discusses the States' federal policies that created the deliberate discrimination and segregation of African Americans.

Monday night's talk echoed an intimate discussion held in Concordia's SCPA building on Mackay Street days before, when a small group of students gathered to watch *"Journey to Justice,"* a 2000 National Film Board film about a group of Canadians who challenged the country's racism.

The group, hosted by Concordia student Aminka Belvitt on Friday evening, pointed to the lack of openness about race in Canada.

"It's passive," Belvitt said, also pointing to the lack of media coverage of Montreal's Black communities outside of Black History Month.

Dwight Best, Concordia graduate and the founder of the African and Caribbean Students' Network of Canada, was at the movie's screening at Concordia Friday as well as Monday night's panel at McGill.

He says that like it or not, the four February weeks dedicated to Black history are a tool for awareness.

"Canada has a lot of work to do," he told *The Link* after Monday's talk. "I think we're really doing ourselves a disservice by not talking about how Canada came to be. There's a lot of myth, there's a lot of hampering the historical reality with what we would like it to be and that has been engineered."

"I think it's important that we have a more honest, a more mature understanding of who we are," he added.

Canada's reticence toward discussing its racial history has also been institutionalized, the three panelists agreed Monday. In Quebec, focus is directed at language and the oppression of francophones under British rule, which results in its problematic relationship with race being overlooked.

"A lot less attention needs to be paid to language and much more to race," Leroux said.

He dispelled a common myth that every Quebecois has Aboriginal blood in them. Records show that only 13 First Nations women married settlers, he countered.

"This is the logic of francophone racism in Quebec—that they don't have to talk about indigenous rights and indigenous land claims because they somehow are 'pure laine,'" Nelson added to Leroux, citing the common trope used by Quebecers, which refers to exclusively French settler ancestry and conflicts with the notion of widespread Aboriginal ancestry.

In fact, there were many liaisons between French and Irish settlers in the New France that predates Canada and Quebec.

Canada's slavery may have little to do with the whips and huts associated with that of the American South, but it was present. Slaves were smaller in number and proportion in Canada and lived in various parts of their owners' homes, Mackey explained.

But the reasons why slavery didn't transpire as it did in the States are mostly circumstantial, Leroux of St. Mary's said.

"Slavery is coded as Black History—it's not. It's a global history," said the professor, who linked Quebec's history with that of Saint-Domingue, a French colony in the Caribbean, where "brutal" slavery was practiced.

The country may have eventually been a place of refuge for slaves from the States, but discrimination transpired and was legal for years to come.

Nelson explained that though Canada's history with slavery may be labeled as "gentler" because it revolved less around intense manual labour, it was just as dehumanizing. Slaves were taken from the home they'd managed to create in places like Jamaica and the Caribbean, after being displaced from Africa, and put on yet another voyage, this time to Canada.

Because they were taken in small numbers to the British colony, they were often ripped from their families and communities, resulting in isolation, Nelson said.

Photo Drew Picklyk



## free punk, a new musical genre

Peregrine Falls To Introduce Free Punk To Montreal's Music Scene

by Catherine Dubé

Peregrine Falls is a Vancouver-based instrumental duo composed of drummer Kenton Loewen and guitarist Gordon Grdina. The musicians mix their musical backgrounds in jazz and heavy rock to create a rousing musical combination with an improvisational feel. Their unique sound is difficult to place in a single generic category, so the duo coined their own genre and called it "free punk".

Their EP *Two Fish*, released last year, received praise from a number of people, including CBC producer Brad Frenette, who described it as "a soundtrack to a Guy Ritchie film that Guy Ritchie hasn't made yet."

The songs on the EP are hard-hitting and energetic. They contain skillfully performed melodies, ripping guitar solos and powerful drum beats. The duo is currently about three quarters of the way through producing their first full-length album with Juno-nominated producer Jesse Zubot. Before putting out the new album, however, they are heading east in the next few weeks to play shows in Montreal as well as Ottawa and Toronto.

Gordon Grdina had lots to say about Montreal, the band's upcoming shows and album, and the mysterious term they use to describe it.

"This project is gaining a lot of momentum and we wanted to be able to come back to Montreal, Ottawa and Toronto fairly quickly. We came last fall and we were looking forward to coming back and building on the audience and fan base we had on those last shows. That and keeping the energy and the music alive," said Grdina.

Indeed, the Vancouver duo is very passionate about the energy they transmit through their music. PopShifter.com has described Peregrine Falls as "gritty, hard hitting, in your face," but Grdina claims there are other elements to what

their music is about.

"Our music gets described as gritty and dirty and all that but sometimes it gets misrepresented as really aggressive, where I feel like it's more energetic than that," explained Grdina.

"We always feel that aggression is this male, dominating kind of angry feeling, where as our music doesn't come from that. It's coming out of a more loving, excited and joyous kind of feeling. It just comes through in a more gritty kind of way."

Grdina stated that their music is about inspiration, a love of being alive and just letting those feelings out as openly and as loudly as possible.

The way he describes the band's energy greatly helps to understand the term they use in order to define their genre of music.

"Free punk is the name that makes the most sense to me. Our music is free and open but conceptually it's totally coming out of punk," said Grdina.

According to Grdina, a lot of punk music has radical lyrics and energy, but is quite formulaic when it comes to the actual music.

"Especially with the newer pop-punk music emerging in the early 2000s, there are the really simple melodic things that are happening and simple chords and that's not really true punk music to me."

Peregrine Falls takes the punk vibe and frees it from its strict generic melody by mixing in improvisation and liberating guitar solos.

"I've always felt like a lot of the punk music out there should have a lot more freedom in it and a lot more melodic interest in it and stuff that's more dense. So that's why our music is kind of like punk music, but free and open."

Grdina says that we can expect the same musical vibe as the EP *Two Fish* in Peregrine Falls' first full-length album.

"The aesthetic of it is sort of coming from a

'rock' idea and how we're going about it in the studio is also coming up from our rock roots, but the improvisation and the experimentation is still there."

In fact, improvisation and experimentation are an important part of Grdina's musical background.

"I started playing rock music when I was like nine years old and then got into blues and jazz. I went to university to study improvisation and studied in New York too. Once I got out of university I started playing a lot more rock again."

Loewen and Grdina have been playing music together for more than a decade, but Peregrine Falls is their first project as a duo.

"It's our eleventh year making music together; we had our ten-year anniversary together last year. In basically every band we've played since we've met, we've played together."

When the duo began, it was called PinkBrown. Loewen and Grdina had to change the band name because other bands had similar titles. "We were almost killing each other coming up with a new name," Grdina said.

Peregrine Falls is excited about the upcoming events in their musical career, including coming back to Montreal.

"I'm looking forward to having some bagels and some smoked meat sandwiches," Grdina said. "I love coming to Montreal; there's a great vibe there. I love the people and the energy. We've also got lots of friends in the improv music scene as well as the rock scene. [...] We've got some great bands, I hope, that will be playing with us."

**Peregrine Falls // Feb. 22 2015 // La Vitrola (4602 St-Laurent Blvd.) // 10 p.m //**

Photo courtesy Peregrine Falls

# a roar to shake the world's foundations

Art Exhibition *Unground* Explores the Excesses of Capitalist Consumerism

by Mattha Busby @itsmattha

Prepare to be immersed in a land which you had thought to be inconceivable: a world without capitalism. This exhibition will whisk you away from the conservative grounding most of us are long-familiar with.

From Feb. 27 to March 15, Montrealers can take in *Unground*, a multi-dimensional, multi-channel video installation containing references to what the press release describes as “mineral understructures of the modern metropolis, financial meltdowns, thawing glaciers, archaic caves and volcanic, arctic wastelands at the border of the inhabitable world.”

The exhibition presented at Darling Foundry, a contemporary visual arts centre in the Old Port, will display the work of Gast Bouschet and Nadine Hilbert, Luxembourg artists who have collaborated for more than 30 years.

By juxtaposing images of modern cities and the Arctic tundra, the show suggests an alternative to capitalist realism—a term describing the ubiquitous influence of capitalism on virtually all aspects of life.

“Offering an alternative to capitalist realism is certainly a challenge isn’t it?” mused Bouschet.

“Despite all rational and pragmatic arguments in favour of capitalism as the lesser evil,” he continued, “The fact that it is easier for us nowadays to imagine the end of the world than the end of capitalism shows how effective its spell is.”

The content featured in the latter stages of the video installation, when the exhibition showed in Luxembourg in 2012, includes volcanic ash smeared over images of the backdrop of the modern landmarks in London’s financial centre, such as The Gherkin.

These shots are juxtaposed with footage shot in Iceland, slowed down so as to give the audience a glimpse of eternity. Expect something similar in Montreal this year to what

was on display in Luxembourg.

The Darling Foundry is a former metal works factory that is now a post-industrial re-appropriated space. The parallels between the exhibition space and the exhibition’s content itself are inescapable.

“We didn’t add anything; we just tried to take out all the things that were not usable anymore, like the heating system and poles all over the space,” said Caroline Andrieux, founder and artistic director at the Darling Foundry, in a 2013 interview with *The Link*.

“It was more a work of purification. We’re happy because we saved the building as it was.”

Capitalism is a ruthless economic system; it forgets and it never forgives. It sheds the disposable and retains only what it considers invaluable.

This exhibition challenges its audience to consider alternatives to the economic system political scientist Francis Fukuyama famously argued would mark “the end of history”—the neoliberal structure we live in today.

The artists invite their audience to “feel, think and meditate the forces which have cut off human beings from the rest of nature,” as explained on the Darling Foundry’s website.

Seeking to empower themselves and the audience by opening up the world to underground currents through the installation, the artists seek to create a zone where physical and mental experiences become accessible to the public.

As the ozone layer exposes further holes, like when you wear one of your grandmother’s sweatshirts for too long, our globe becomes further enveloped by the worldwide division of labour which the invisible hand of capitalism tends to demand.

The exhibition’s intention is to transform “these feelings of alienation and cultural estrangement into sorcerous gestures of insurrection.”

Bouschet explained that he and Hilbert aim to promote the “liberation and redistribution



of power” in creating a space where one ponders “the right to develop one’s own world view and create one’s own values.”

The exhibition features multiple installations on different platforms, which are as important as the tangible matter in the space. There’s an ironic parallel between the comprehensive submergence of the installation and the comprehensive experience of capitalism.

“The sound of the installation, developed by Stephen O’Malley, is as important as the visual noise that we are feeding into it,” Bouschet said.

Stephen O’Malley is one of two founding members of drone metal pioneers Sunn O))). The long-duration tones of drone and doom metal facilitate a meditative experience where one can become enveloped in sound in mere seconds.

Along with writers Bataille, Nietzsche and

Artaud, the artists are profoundly influenced by black metal theory and have previously collaborated with Amelia Ishmael, editor of black metal theory journal *Helvete*.

The artists are “excited to see what our work can do inside that huge industrial building,” according to Bouschet. “We have only seen images, and we can’t wait to experience the physicality of the space.”

Bouschet describes the exhibition, which opens next week, as where “today’s incredibly hectic world gets to meet something where time is stretched out and where various time zones [deep or geological time] run in parallel to each other.”

***Unground* // Feb. 26 to March 15 // Foundry Darling (745 Ottawa St.) // Free admission**

Photo courtesy of Gas Bouschet

# GENERAL ELECTION

## VOLUME 36

# THE LINK

CONCORDIA'S INDEPENDENT NEWSPAPER SINCE 1980

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In order to be eligible, candidates must be current Concordia students who will be returning in the fall. Applications for the positions must be posted by Feb. 25 in *The Link* office, H-649. Applicants must have contributed to at least four (4) issues during the winter semester of Volume 35 and must include a one-page letter of intent, as well as three (3) contribution samples.

Candidates for editor-in-chief must submit at least eight (8) samples of work from at least three (3) different sections.

For more information email  
editor@thelinknewspaper.ca

### Eligible to run:

Jennifer Aedy, Julien Assouline, Justin Blanchard, Yacine Bouhali, Alex Callard, Elysia-Marie Campbell, Alex Carriere, Evgenia Choros, Tristan D'Amours, Fatma Daldoul, Matt Garies, Jane Gatensby, Caity Hall, Daniele Iannarone, Jake Lakes, David Landsman, Verity Stevenson, Ester Straussova, Erik Trudel, Leigha Veigh, Shane Wright and all current *Link* masthead.

### One contribution needed:

Robert Arzenshek, Josh Fischlin, Bianca Gazinschi, Zach Goldberg, Colin Harris, Chanel Jacques, Alex Ocheoha, Joshua Rosenbaum

### Two more contributions needed:

Alex Bailey, Julia Bryant, Marco George Carriero, Emily Carson-Apstein, Mab Coates-Davies, Matt D'Amours, Alex Dallard, Noah Dayan, Michael Dorado, David Kelly, Nico Krawcyk, Gus Minter, Paul Molpeceres, Jordan Namur, Isabelle Thuy-Mai Nguyen, Joshua Rosenbaum, Jonathan Summers, Griffin Wright-Brown

Check out our workshops!

Held every Friday at our office in room H-649 at 4 p.m.

## social media

Director of web communications at Concordia, Lucy Niro transitioned from journalism to corporate marketing communications over the course of her career. This workshop will be delving into internal and external communications strategies for effective marketing in a digital, global economy.

lucy niro  
feb. 20



Friday, March 13 at 4 p.m.

Composition and Photo Editing

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Join us at *The Link's* office: 1455 de Maisonneuve Blvd. W., H-649

?>

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<ul>

<<<<

<Head over to The Link office on Mar. 20. at 4 p.m./

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<?php endwhile; ?>

</ul>



## obsessive-despondent disorder

Concordia Graduates Perform Adam Rapp's at the Mainline

by Michelle Pucci @michellemucci

*Red Light Winter* is the story of two friends, Matt and Davis, who head to Amsterdam and end up in a love triangle with a prostitute, Christina.

Matt is depressed, and following his suicide attempt, Davis arrives at their place in Amsterdam with Christina to cheer him up.

Instead, the love triangle that ensues creates conflict and carries over to Manhattan when they return.

Adam Rapp's Pulitzer-nominated play is an analysis of the relationship between an obsessed, needy and vulnerable writer and his brash, overconfident friend.

Robert Montcalm, the director of the show, says he's fascinated by the troubles with modern relationships. His plays often analyze modern love, feelings of entitlement in love, and the insecurity fueling it all. This production is the second installment in a series of four plays focusing on themes of tainted love and loathing.

*Red Light Winter* follows *After the End*, which focuses on a man who kidnaps a woman and brings her to his fallout shelter. The woman, who is his coworker, is told that the man saved her from nuclear fallout. Throughout the play you believe he's telling the truth, until it becomes clear that he's actually obsessed with her. The rest of the play relies on suspense built from the question of escape.

"It's very dark; it's gritty," said Montcalm of *After the End*.

After one of the shows, Montcalm noticed a friend in the audience he hadn't seen since high school.

"She sat in tears for ten minutes after the show was done."

Other people get up after their shows, he says. They can be energized by it and able to

laugh at the presented situations. But he admits a number of his shows are hard to watch.

"I always try to play in-between comedies and sadness," Montcalm said. "Because I find there's a lot of truth that comes out when you're either going to laugh or you're going to cry."

Over the course of the four-part sequence, the storylines and characters, progress from simply harsh character arcs and people that are clearly crazy towards more subtle dramatic twists featuring seemingly normal people.

"A lot of the new-age media stuff that troubles me—it's kind of a Tinder generation [problem] that you don't know the people that you're interacting with sometimes," he said.

"And even if they seem completely normal on the surface, you really don't know a person until you know a person—and often then it's too late."

A recurring theme in these shows are male characters that seem trustworthy at first, then develop to be darker and more sinister.

*Red Light Winter*, however, focuses on obsession. For Matt, the writer, Christina is an interesting character.

"He's driven to fantasies of who she is without knowing her more than one night," said Montcalm.

"Everyone thinks they know each other well even though they've only really interacted for a few hours."

*Red Light Winter* is the fifth show for Lifelong Productions, a theatre group made up of current and graduated Concordia theatre students.

Montcalm joined Lifelong with *The Pillowman* in 2012, a black comedy about a writer accused of being connected to murders because his stories depict violence towards children, written by Martin McDonagh, that Montcalm found from a Facebook post on a Concordia theatre students' page.

At the Fringe Fest in 2013, they put on *Osama the Hero*, which follows a student that is tortured to death after writing an essay portraying Osama bin Laden as a hero.

Violence, sexuality and being up close and personal are part of the experience for Lifelong. Montcalm is a fight director, so he works to perfect choreography that could put actors at risk—that includes all the sex scenes.

"If the actors feel uncomfortable, the audience is going to feel uncomfortable—for the wrong reasons," he said.

He prefers fast-paced shows, not intellectual dramas, which means more action and passion.

"I hate boring theatre," Montcalm said.

All of Lifelong's shows are restricted to audiences aged 18 and over. The seating is even limited to only 34 people to add to the intimacy.

Chris Jadah plays Davis, the macho guy who picks on his friend Matt and doesn't really take anything too seriously. Jadah says this play is lighter than the last one and pretty much all the plays they've put together at Lifelong.

"He sometimes doesn't realize the difference between having fun and hurting someone's feelings," Jadah said about his character in *Red Light Winter*.

Apart from his Concordia credentials, Jadah's bio boasts a one-liner in *X-Men: Days of Future Past*.

"Don't go watch the movie for one line," he tells friends that want to be supportive, but don't watch the X-Men films.

"It's funny to go from a show at the Mainline with limited seating, to being on set with Michael Fassbender and Hugh Jackman in a huge budget movie," Jadah continued.

But he prefers theatre to the one-line "dance, monkey" feel of high budget movies.

"When you're doing theatre it's very intimate," he said.

***Red Light Winter* // Feb. 11 to Feb. 22 // Mainline Theatre (3997 St. Laurent Blvd.) // 8 p.m // \$12 for students**

Photo courtesy of Robert Montcalm





## dribbling out the snow

As Soccer Players Head Indoors, They Also Head into a Different Game

by Tristan D'Amours @tristandamours

The winter months aren't friendly to Canada, and the world of Quebec soccer isn't exempt from such harsh conditions. The only solution to protecting this beautiful game from the freezing wind and snow showers is to bring it indoors.

Unlike futsal, which is played in a gymnasium, the Réseau de sport étudiant du Québec's indoor soccer is played in indoor sports complexes. Players run on synthetic turf as opposed to wooden floor tiles and the pitch dimensions resemble the ones from the outdoor leagues.

Besides moving from under the sun to under a roof, are there differences between playing in the outdoor league in the mild autumn months and the indoor league during the cold winter months?

"It depends on the fields, but there is a big difference," explained Philippe Eullaffroy, the Montreal Impact Academy director who coaches a team playing in the RSEQ's indoor league. "[From] a more scientific standpoint we don't have the same wind resistance or temperature. We also don't have the same pitch size, and we don't even have the same depth perception."

The difficulties with depth seem to be shared by Concordia Stingers men's soccer coach Greg Sutton.

"It is a little harder. The way you pick up the ball is a little different because of the lighting and the whole aspect of the [Stingers] dome."

"Most of the times, the pitches are smaller plus the notion of depth since the walls are closer means the players don't have the same perception. We have problems with losing our groundings," said Eullaffroy. "For some reason, the human brain is made in a way that if someone has walls around them, they feel contained and that effects their depth perception."

Some even tend to enjoy the indoor game better than playing in the outdoors.

"Honestly, there's a little difference but I find it better to play indoors. The ball moves easier and the play goes along well," said Odaine Demar of the Stingers men's soccer team. "If the team has all their stuff sorted out, it's fine."

As the months go by and the snow melts, the soccer teams prepare to go outside and will then need to transition from playing in



a dome or a sports complex to a regular outdoor soccer pitch.

"There isn't a real issue with transitioning from indoor to outdoor but rather going from indoor to outdoor. We need some time to adapt when we go outdoors," confessed Eullaffroy. "That's why it's delicate for teams in Montreal and across the province to train and play indoors and then go outdoors and quickly go into a competitive match. That's tough on the players."

"When we play inside it's warm and cozy at around 20° Celsius, but when we go outdoors in April it's about 2° Celsius and there's still snow outside. On a physiological level it's difficult, on a wind resistance level also and we've got trouble adapting in the first few days on the energy that training outdoor demands."

"It's a completely different ballfield, from playing on the grass to playing indoors," said Demar. "Adjusting to the space that you have and to know the size of the field so you do have to adapt."

As for Sutton, he doesn't need to focus on getting players ready for a summer season and is not concerned about the transition. "I don't think we really have to adapt, we just move back outside," he said. "We're just happy to be back outside."

Indoor soccer is also less competitive than its outdoor counterpart. The league is used as an experimental period in which to prepare for the more competitive season.

The Montreal Impact Academy has a team that plays a friendly game against each team in the league. This is seen as a good, competi-

tive training for the under 18s.

"It's seven quality games that we can play between January and March, a difficult time frame to find quality friendly matches," said Eullaffroy. "It's great, and everyone, both the universities and us, are happy to be part of this league for what I believe is the fifth year now. It's a nice tool to use for us when we restart [our] season."

"For us, we look at the indoor season as more of a season for us to work on a lot of the individual work [...] and look at the player that maybe didn't play so much in the fall," added Sutton. "We're not so much concentrated on where we are as much as the progression of our team."

Photos Shaun Michaud

### BOX SCORES

### WEEK OF FEB. 10 TO FEB. 16

WEDNESDAY

11

Women's Hockey—Concordia 1, Team Quebec (U18) 2

FRIDAY

13

Women's Basketball—Concordia 67, Bishop's 46  
Men's Basketball—Concordia 72, Bishop's 76 (OT)  
Women's Hockey—Concordia 0, UdeM 3  
Men's Hockey—Concordia 0, McGill 5

SUNDAY

15

Men's Hockey—Concordia 6, McGill 3  
Women's Hockey—Concordia 1, Gee-Gees 2 (SO)

### UPCOMING GAMES

WEDNESDAY

18

6:00 p.m. Women's Basketball at Laval Rouge et Or  
8:00 p.m. Men's Basketball at Laval Rouge et Or

FRIDAY

20

7:00 p.m. Women's Hockey at Carleton Ravens

### COMING UP IN CONCORDIA SPORTS

SATURDAY

21

2:00 p.m. Women's Basketball vs. McGill Martlets (Concordia Gymnasium)  
4:00 p.m. Men's Basketball vs. McGill Redmen (Concordia Gymnasium)

SUNDAY

22

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



## an uphill battle ends in heartbreak

Stingers Can't Beat Top-Seeded Rival McGill, Eliminated From Playoffs

by David S. Landsman @dslands

The Concordia Stingers men's hockey team were eliminated by their bitter rivals, the McGill Redmen, in the first round of the Ontario University Athletics playoffs. The Stingers searched for their first playoff series win since 2001.

Concordia pulled off a series-opening win over McGill at McConnell Arena last Wednesday night 6-4, but after a masterful performance by McGill in Game 2, the Stingers couldn't obtain the series-clinching win, losing 6-3 at McGill on Feb. 15.

Stingers head coach Kevin Figsby remarked on how difficult it was for Concordia to knock off the top seeded team in the OUA conference.

"Having a very young team and finishing eighth and then playing number one ranked McGill, it's not easy," he said. "Beating them in the first game of the series really scared them and gave our guys the confidence—we just couldn't hold on."

"Our game plan was to get the pucks in deep and out-skate and out-shoot them," he added. "It's a solid game plan but always difficult when you face a team like McGill."

Concordia began the third game with the lead, when forward Ben Dubois scored past Redmen goalie Jacob Gervais-Chouinard 99 seconds into the game. The lead didn't last long, however, as McGill's Cedric McNicoll tied the game a little over two minutes later.

The Redmen got another goal by forward Mathieu Pompei before the end of the period, taking a 2-1 lead after one period of play.

McGill got off to a strong start in the second period, as forward David Rose scored his team's third goal of the game, forcing the Stingers to switch goalie Robin Billingham in favour of backup Alexandre St-Arnaud.

Despite the switch, St-Arnaud allowed McGill's fourth goal of the game from Pietro Antonelli with under six minutes to play in the second period.

With the score 4-1 late in the second, Concordia forward Philippe Hudon capped off a nice passing play cutting the deficit to two before the end of 40, but it seemed like the mountain was just too high to climb.

Two goals from McGill's Max Le Sieur overshadowed Concordia's lone marker from Dany Potvin in the third period. More importantly, it sealed the deal for the Redmen, who will face the Queen's Golden Gaels in the next round of the OUA Playoffs.

The Game three loss also marked the end of the university careers of Stingers forward Roberto Mormina, who watched the game from the rafters, and defenceman Sean Blunden, who was on the ice in the loss.

"It's gone fast, it's been great, but I've made a lot of great friends and teammates," Blunden said about the end of his run with the Stingers. "It has been a great experience all in all. I can't thank them and Kevin enough for all the memories. These are people I will talk to

for the rest of my life."

Blunden has had quite a career with the Stingers, but injuries have plagued him, including a shoulder injury last season and an injured elbow suffered this season. The defenceman was among the many walking wounded for Concordia this season and Figsby feels Concordia could've fared better had they escaped injuries.

"We had a stretch where during 12 games we had to dress three forwards as defence and we didn't fare well in those games," said Figsby. "I think those games cost us in the standings. I legitimately thought we would've done better this season had that not happened."

"The injuries are all a part of the game and really out of your control," said Blunden. "You try not to, but sometimes it just happens. [The key is] trying to stay positive and move on and get healthy."

Despite missing out on a chance to beat McGill in the playoffs for the first time

since 2001, Figsby was proud of how his team performed. Meanwhile his players also kept their heads held high, looking ahead to next season.

"They put everything on the line tonight and gave it their all. There was no quit in any of them," Figsby said.

"What a great ride in the playoffs; wish we could've gone further," said Hinse. "This season also had lots of ups and downs, but we always stuck together. [The team is] a great bunch of guys, I'm really so proud of being a captain of that team. Every guy is a friend to me now."

"I got a lot of experience and played a lot of games, more than I'm used to," said Billingham. "With a young team, it really helped me develop myself. These are a great group of guys—we're definitely a team to contend."

Photos Matt Garies



# opinions



## Cuts to Health Services: Necessity or Ideology?

Provincial Health Reforms Will Unquestionably Reduce Quality of Healthcare

by Michael Wrobel @michael\_wrobel

Racing to eliminate a budgetary deficit, Quebec's Liberal government is moving forward with reforming the province's healthcare services. Unfortunately, the system's stakeholders—doctors, nurses, support staff and, most importantly, patients—will be the real losers of it all.

Bill 10, the first of the Quebec majority government's healthcare reform bills, was passed on Feb. 6 with 62 yeas and 50 nays, despite opposition from Quebec's College of Physicians and the federation representing specialized doctors.

The bill will radically reorganize the province's health and social services network, eliminating 18 regional health agencies and merging 182 establishments into 33 larger "Integrated Health and Social Services Centres" (CISSS).

Bill 20, meanwhile, seeks to "optimize the utilization of the medical and financial resources of the health system with a view to improving access to family medicine and specialized medicine," according to the government.

If passed in the National Assembly, the bill will impose a quota on family doctors, forcing them to take on a minimum of 1,000 patients or lose 30 per cent of their salaries.

There seems to be a consensus among the province's two major political parties that government spending on healthcare is out of control.

But many researchers disagree, pointing to data from Statistics Canada and the Canadian Institute for Health Information (CIHI) that paints a thoroughly different picture.

Quebec's finance ministry says healthcare accounts for 42.6 per cent of government spending, while the CIHI says it accounts for 29 per cent.

What's more, the finance ministry's data shows that the proportion going to healthcare is climbing dramatically, while the CIHI's statistics suggest relative stability. Who should

we believe?

In a report published last week by the Institut de recherche et d'informations socio-économiques (IRIS), Guillaume Hébert and Jennie-Laure Sully point out that the finance ministry uses the government's program spending as the denominator, while the CIHI uses "consolidated expenses," which takes into account the profits and losses of state-owned enterprises, various investment funds and interest payments on government debt.

The latter is the figure recommended by Quebec's auditor general, the report notes.

What's more, the two researchers argue that calculating healthcare spending as a percentage of the province's gross domestic product (GDP) is a better way of determining whether or not the province can afford to sustain its current healthcare services.

Their report shows that public spending on healthcare oscillated between 6 and 8 per cent of GDP from 1981 until the late 2000s, climbing to a peak of 8.7 per cent in 2009 in the midst of an economic recession.

Since then, the ratio has been in decline.

What all of these numbers show is that there's a degree of subjectivity in even supposedly "objective" statistics. Ultimately, cost-cutting measures in the healthcare sector are more a matter of ideology than a strict fiscal necessity.

Even if healthcare spending actually were as unsustainable as the government suggests, consolidating healthcare institutions wouldn't be a viable cost-saving measure.

Quebec has been down the road of centralization before; and it wasn't a particularly successful experiment.

Another IRIS report, titled "La gouvernance en santé au Québec" and published last February, details the province's various attempts at reforming its healthcare system since the 1970s.

Beginning in 2000, the report notes, the government has merged healthcare institutions, allowed doctors to incorporate themselves and implemented "patient-based

funding" so that how much a hospital receives from the government is directly related to how many medical interventions its employees perform, as opposed to the quality of their interactions with patients.

The end result of those private sector-inspired reforms was to foster competition between hospitals and increase administrative costs.

All of the additional paperwork required to keep track of what types of treatments were provided to patients meant the number of office workers employed in the health sector increased by 4 per cent, according to the report.

The government has also been slowly reducing local control over healthcare. In 2011, the Liberals changed the composition of health institutions' governing boards with Bill 127, decreasing the number of spots on the board reserved for users to two from four and the number reserved for personnel to four from six.

Meanwhile, the number of "independent" board members—businesspeople who are supposedly objective—was increased from two to six, the IRIS report notes.

Now, Bill 10 takes it all a step further. The 182 governing boards of the province's medical establishments will be dissolved, replaced by larger geographic authorities appointed by Quebec's health minister.

Institutions ranging from rehabilitation centres to old-age residences, from youth services centres to hospitals, will be lumped together for administrative purposes as a single public institution.

Once the bill has been fully implemented, the opportunities for citizen engagement will be even fewer, as the bill provides for only one representative of the institutions' users on the new governing boards.

In an opinions piece published in the *Montreal Gazette*, Brian Gore, a family physician in Westmount, wrote that a considerable amount of expertise will be lost through the reforms.

The new regional structures "will most certainly struggle to retain the level of competency acquired locally," he noted.

It's highly improbable that the regional institutions created by the bill will be better at responsibly allocating resources than local boards and senior administrators that have an understanding of local needs.

Bill 20 completes the entire process of dehumanizing the system that began with the passage of Bill 10. It reduces family medicine to a simple numbers game, encouraging doctors to prioritize quantity over quality of medical care.

Not every patient is the same; some require more attention from their doctors than others.

Medical lawyer Jean-Pierre Ménard rightly suggested in a news conference at the start of the month that imposing a quota would only encourage medical professionals to take on patients with clean bills of health, leaving those with the greatest need even worse off.

In their report, Hébert and Sully point out that countries like Denmark, the United Kingdom, Brazil and Sweden have fostered greater accountability and a better allocation of resources by decentralizing and democratizing public services.

They describe a number of ways that citizen participation can be increased: input on institutional budgets, the election of institutions' directors and senior health administrators, citizens' forums that would make recommendations to legislators, etc.

Such a system would be far more accountable to stakeholders.

Improving the province's healthcare system requires that we allow for more citizen participation in the decision-making process, not less.

Bills 10 and 20 present easy solutions to complex problems, and while they may help the government skim off some savings, patients will be left wanting with a system even less responsive to their needs.

Graphic Sam Jones

# A Guide to MDMA Harm Reduction

by Gonzo Nieto @gonzebo

One of the most important things when taking drugs of any sort is to be well educated on their possible risks and complications and to use that information to make your use as responsible and safe as possible.

Unfortunately, much of what we're taught about drugs from school or public education campaigns is fear-based or in support of abstinence rather than education and harm reduction, reducing the accessibility of credible information about drugs.

This week, I decided to share some important harm reduction information for MDMA usage. This substance is quite widely used among college and university students. I've written about its therapeutic benefits in the past, but it's important to also talk about its risks.

## Testing

One of the difficulties in discussing MDMA use is that, in many cases, people have no certainty that what they're taking is in fact MDMA.

For example, it's not uncommon for methylenedione or MDA to be sold as MDMA or for other stimulants to be mixed with it. This is one of the things that makes purchasing drugs from someone at an event and taking it that night dangerous—you have no opportunity to verify the identity of what you've purchased.

To verify the identity of your drugs, it's recommended that you purchase a testing kit.

This is a collection of solvents that can be dripped onto a small sample, and the resulting colour change will help you in identifying the substance.

You can purchase testing kits from Dance-Safe, a harm reduction organization made up of members of the electronic music community.

## First Time

Before taking a full dose for the first time, it's recommended that you first take a quarter dose



(approximately 20-30 mg), sometimes called an "allergy test."

The reason for this is that a portion of the population has a deficiency in a liver enzyme involved in processing MDMA and other drugs.

This is called "fatty liver disease" and often goes undiagnosed. The impaired metabolism of MDMA results in far stronger effects at dosages that are normal for others and the likelihood of overheating or overdose is increased.

## Main Risks

Pure MDMA is a rather safe substance with a significantly better safety profile than alcohol, tobacco, or cannabis.

Nonetheless, important points to discuss surrounding the risks of MDMA include over-

heating, dehydration and overhydration.

Deaths and serious harm resulting from MDMA use are quite rare in proportion to how much it is used. Overdoses can and do occur, but many complications of MDMA use are often due to preventable situational factors such as not having taken breaks to cool off or drinking too little (or too much) water.

Especially at higher doses, MDMA impairs your body's ability to regulate its temperature—you may notice you get warm or cold quite easily depending on the ambient temperature.

If you are dancing or otherwise exerting yourself physically for long periods of time, especially in a hot and humid venue, you run the risk of overheating.

In severe cases, body temperature can reach upwards of 41-42° C, and this can result in

unstoppable bleeding (blood is unable to clot at higher temperatures) and organ failures, namely of the kidneys and liver.

Dehydration is also something to watch out for on MDMA, especially for people taking it at raves or nightclubs. With the sweating and increase in body temperature of dancing comes significant water loss and this can lead to dehydration if you are not pausing to drink water.

It is also easy to overlook feelings of thirst or dehydration during the high.

To prevent overheating and dehydration, users are advised to take regular breaks from dancing to cool off, if possible in a cooler room, and to remember to drink water.

Good rules of thumb are to take a 15-minute break every hour, and to drink around half a litre of water per hour if you are exerting yourself (but probably less if you have difficulty peeing on MDMA, which is common).

However, be sure not to drink more than that, because it can lead to overhydration.

Overhydration is a bit of a misnomer—the real complications are a result of a low concentration of electrolytes in the bloodstream, called "hyponatremia."

This occurs when the blood becomes diluted from drinking too much water. Some people experience water retention on MDMA (read: difficulty peeing) and too much sweating without peeing can also result in hyponatremia.

In serious cases, this electrolyte imbalance can be potentially fatal. To prevent this, drink sports drinks or other electrolyte-containing liquids instead of water.

This is much safer as it maintains your electrolyte levels while keeping you hydrated.

Make sure you don't forget to keep yourself hydrated, as being dehydrated contributes a lot to your hangover the following day.

You can read an extended version of this article at [thelinknewspaper.ca](http://thelinknewspaper.ca)

Graphic Gaby Hoole

# Unwittingly Becoming an Agent of Gentrification



by Kyle McLoughlin

For many students who have signed rental agreements that began on July 1st, spring is the season of rent hikes and lease renewals.

This can be a frustrating time for many tenants who must decide whether to stay or go and whether or not it's worth dealing with the landlord's proposed hikes.

When I wanted to move from my first apartment in Montreal, I had assumed that my agreement with my landlord would simply expire at the end of the stated term in our contract.

What I didn't know was that the lease automatically renews and that it's the responsibility of the tenant to inform their landlord in writing of their desire to end the lease.

While searching the Internet for a new place to live, between the scams and privately-run student residence monoliths that occupy my browser's advertising, I found my old apartment.

## Landlords in Montreal are Putting Students in Competition with Long-Term Residents

Much to my surprise, the landlord was advertising the apartment for nearly \$150 more than I'd been paying already at an apartment that I believed to be expensive as it was. I thought very little of this at first.

I later moved in with a friend of mine to a large, three-bedroom apartment in the South-West where I finally felt I was getting my money's worth—the place wasn't nice, but it was cheap.

While cleaning out bags of garbage, books, toys and children's clothes left behind it dawned on me that somebody with children lived here before we signed our new lease.

Later I discovered that a single parent—with three children—who'd lived there for nearly eight years had been pushed out by rising rents.

My neighbour said that the only way he and his roommates could stay was by doing odd repair jobs for the landlord in lieu of accepting or contesting rental increases.

Near the developing monstrosity of the Turcot interchange, my new apartment was in prime territory to house the future workers of the McGill University Health Centre, a project that has many a property owner salivating at the prospect of a higher income pool of tenants and big money to be had by converting rental units into condos.

These factors influence the general trend of rent increases for the neighbourhood, which overtime has been displacing long-term residents.

I realized that my roommate and I had

inadvertently become part of the vanguard of gentrification.

We aren't wealthy, we don't shop at designer vintage stores and we prefer to loiter outside of cafés to sneak onto their Wi-Fi.

But, we have two incomes that together can pay more in rent than the single parent we displaced by moving into this apartment and it still feels like we got a good deal. But is it a good deal for the neighbourhood?

Do we want students to be in competition with families for the relatively low number of affordable, multi-bedroom units available on the island?

We never knew how much the previous tenant was paying as our landlord had "forgotten" to fill out that so often overlooked Section G of the official Quebec Lease Agreement, where they are required to inform you of the previous rents paid.

Had we had that information we could've contested any rent increase in between the leases at the Régie du logement.

We could have also searched more actively for a lease transfer instead of taking the easy route of signing a new contract, the benefit of this being that you can pay exactly the same amount as the tenant who transferred their agreement to you by bypassing the landlord almost entirely.

One thing we did do, and will continue to do, is refuse our rent increase. This in itself is not a solution. It helps, but the fight against

displacement and gentrification will require more than mitigation.

Whenever we move, we leave behind the traces of our touch on our former apartments: higher rents, businesses in the community left unsupported because we spent all of our time on campus or in the Plateau or wherever we wish we could afford to live and a sense that these dwellings were just a temporary pad before we launch off to the next neighbourhood.

Gentrification is an economic, social and political phenomenon, but it is also a mentality that has become omnipresent in our decisions of where in the city we want to live.

Neighbourhoods are more than places where we can spend money; more than the bars, cafés and stores that compete for our wages and debts.

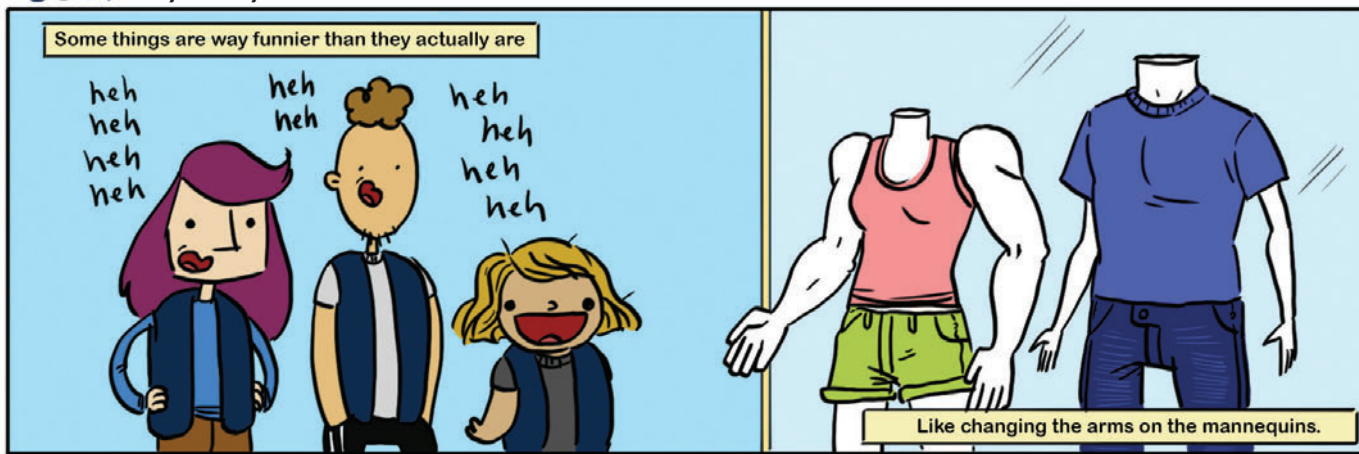
Mitigating these issues can be done in part by lease transfers, refusing rental increases and taking your landlord to the proving grounds of the Régie.

Also at stake is a shift in consciousness that should make us think deeply about who was there before we arrived and what will be left once we depart.

Kyle McLoughlin is studying for BA French Translation at Concordia. He is also an Assistant at Concordia's Off-Campus Housing and Job Bank.

Graphic Sam Jones

Boop by Caitly Hall



Balloon Ventures by Mengekko Jones



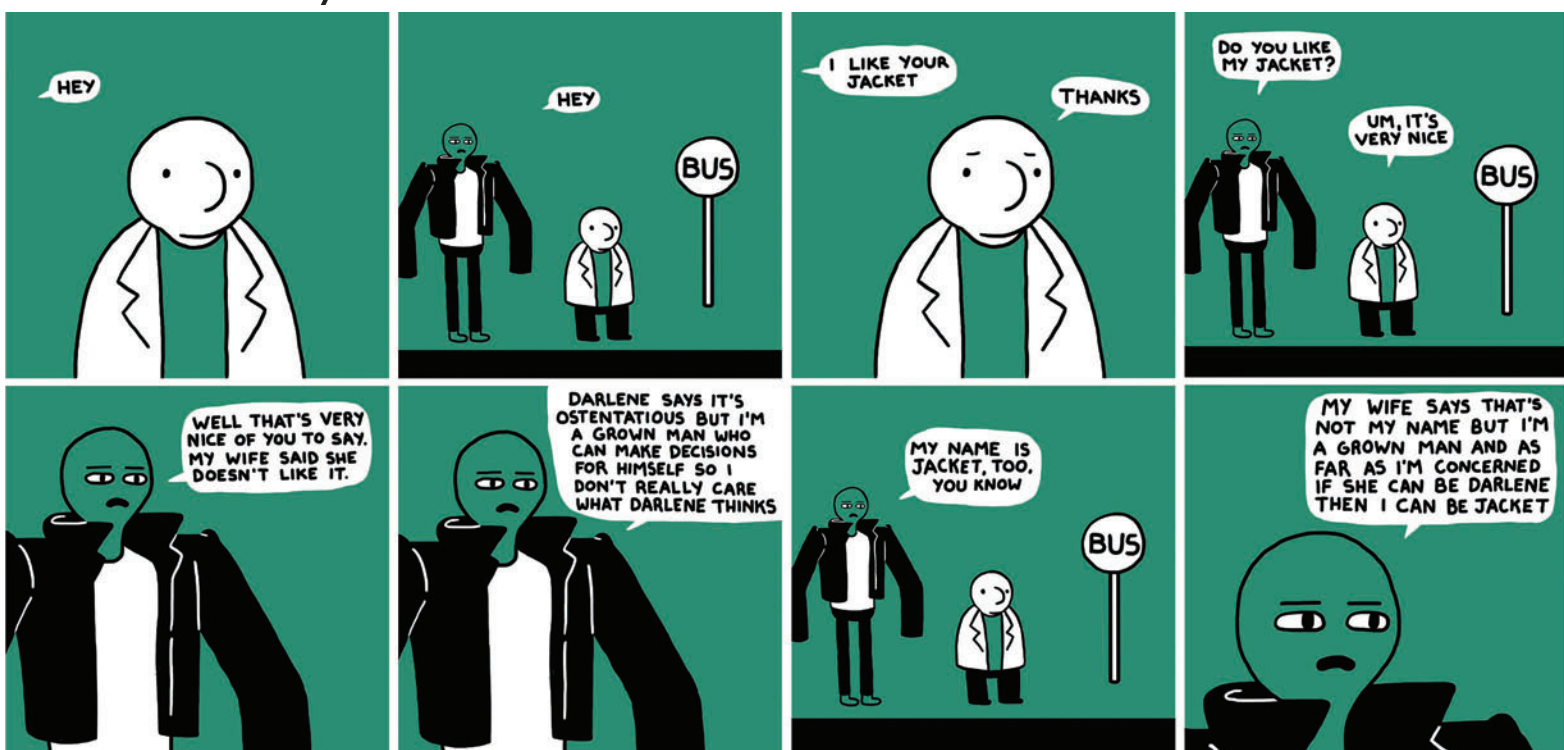
Filbert by LA Bonté



By: L. A. Bonté

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Power Theatre by Alex Callard





## editorial

### Making the Case for a Student Housing Co-op

Once upon a time, in downtown Montreal, there was a first-year international student desperately searching for housing. Because of work-related time constraints and the high costs of flying into the city and renting a hotel, she was only able to search for apartments over the course of 36 hours.

The pressures of finding an apartment in a new city, visiting it, negotiating numbers and signing a lease are taxing enough, but doing so with so little time leaves most first-years out of luck when it comes to finding a good deal. And so, this student lived “happily” ever after, to the tune of \$900 per month.

By 2017, “fairy tales” like these will become a little less common if Concordia undergrads vote in the upcoming CSU election for the student union to reallocate funds towards a student housing co-op project.

The rental market, like every other faction of free trade, preys on the unsuspecting. Nine tenants out of 10 have received excessive rent increases that added up to about \$200 last year.

Landlords aren’t respecting the guideline set out by the province’s Régie du logement, according to the resident advocate group Regroupement des comités logement et associations de locataires du Québec.

The university offers little protection for this type of predation. Currently, Concordia’s residences only provide housing to first-year students and spots are limited. Universities around the world, especially in the United States, prioritize upperclassmen as well as freshmen living spaces as many provide options for first-years transitioning outside the standard dorm rooms.

Where the university administration’s influence wanes, the CSU sees an opportunity to fulfill their mandate and help students keep their expenses to a minimum. The pressures of not making rent and juggling a part-time job on top of a demanding course load is not conducive for studying well and ultimately earning a degree.

This initiative could help ease the pressure on students in these situations, since the CSU’s Housing Co-op, presumably, will

provide fair prices and not change the rules of the game mid-contract.

Removing students from the housing market, at least for their first year, is a concrete way to remedy the issue. Having an alternative to brutalist prison look-alikes at Loyola and a beautiful but expensive former nunnery would be a welcome addition for future first-years weighing their housing options.

With room for a little over 900 students, the residences at Concordia are inaccessible to much of the 36,000-strong undergraduate student body. Aside from the issue of availability, the rental cost is also a hurdle, compounded by the low-quality, high-cost meal plan imposed on students living in residence to the benefit of a massive multinational corporation.

If all goes to plan, in three years a new building will be erected in the inner city, offering up to 150 rooms with stabilized rent that won’t succumb to the spikes of the wider rental market. According to VP Academic and Advocacy Terry Wilkings, this is possible due to a loan from the

CSU that will eventually repay itself, allowing for more housing projects in the future.

By taking some students out of the rental market, this housing co-op would also reduce students’ unwitting contribution to gentrification.

Two or more students renting an apartment together can often (begrudgingly) afford to pay more than a single parent or young family; landlords often take advantage of that, charging higher rent in neighbourhoods that appeal to students. Students having less of a reason to search for cheap rent elsewhere in the city will help to stop the displacement of long-time residents and families in gentrifying areas.

The CSU’s student space fund has accrued over \$12 million and that money has sat dormant over the years as there has previously been little agreement on how to spend the funds. Approving the use of a portion of the fund on a housing co-op is a no-brainer.

Graphic Sam Jones

## THE LINK<sup>35</sup>

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Join us in thinking about our future – attend one of these sessions. Advance registration required. Visit [concordia.ca/directions](http://concordia.ca/directions) to register.



### WEDNESDAY, MARCH 4

WHAT WILL FUTURE STUDENTS WANT AND NEED FROM UNIVERSITIES?

Noon to 1 p.m.

MB-10.121, John Molson School of Business Building, 1450 Guy St.

**Carl Amrhein**

Former provost, University of Alberta

**Diana MacKay**

Executive Director of Education, Skills and Immigration, Conference Board of Canada



### TUESDAY, MARCH 10

HOW CAN UNIVERSITIES GO FROM GOOD TO GREAT?

Noon to 1 p.m.

H-767, Henry F. Hall Building, 1455 De Maisonneuve Blvd. W.

**Elizabeth Cannon**

President, University of Calgary



### MONDAY, MARCH 23

HOW CAN UNIVERSITIES HELP BUILD THRIVING, INNOVATIVE CITIES?

Noon to 1 p.m.

MB-10.121, John Molson School of Business Building, 1450 Guy St.

**Stephen Huddart**

President, J.W. McConnell Family Foundation

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