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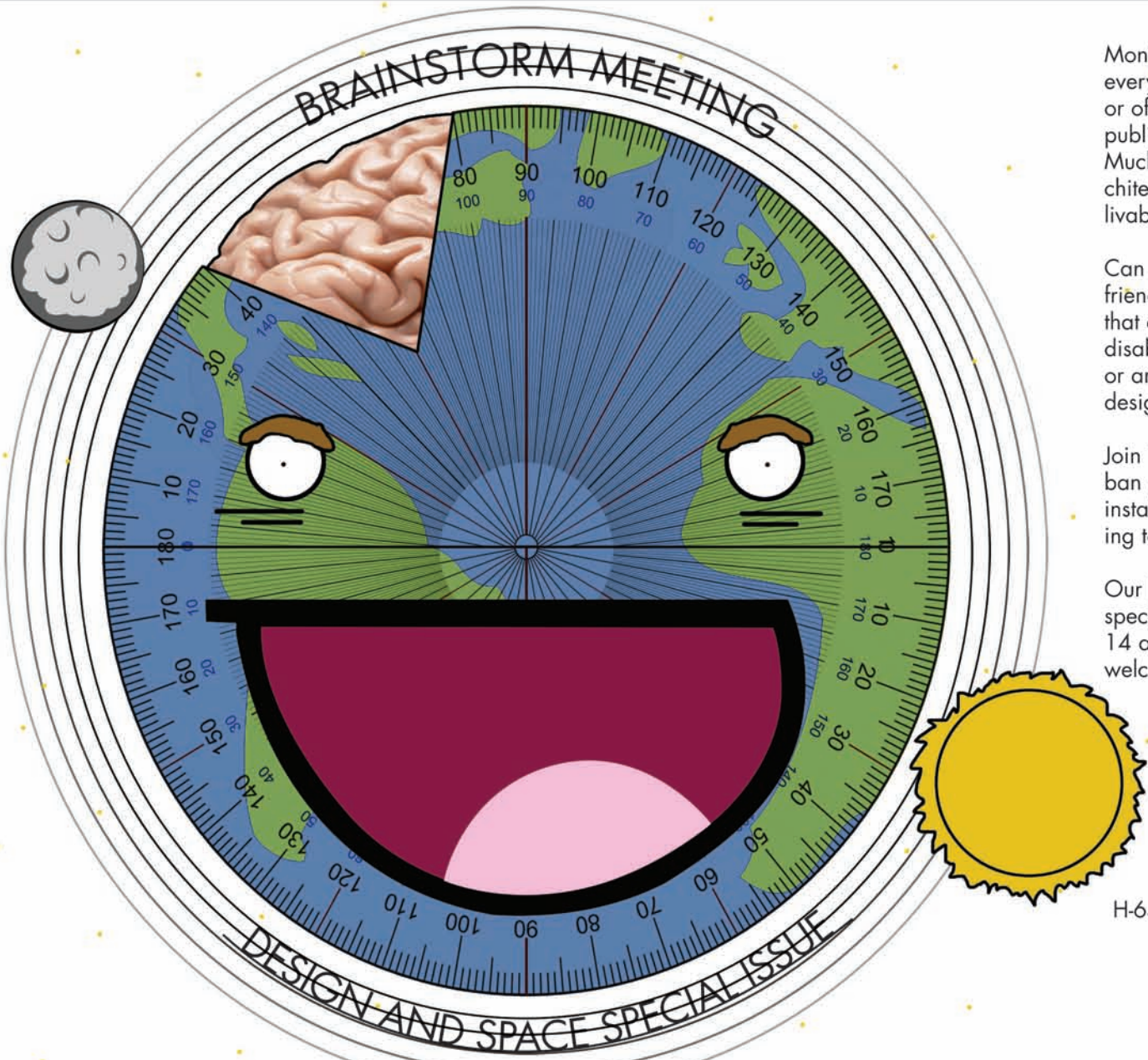
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BRAINSTORM MEETING



Montreal is a city on the move. It seems that everywhere you turn, new condo buildings or office towers are being built, and the city's public infrastructure is getting a major facelift. Much remains to be uncovered about how architects and urban planners can create more livable spaces.

Can Montreal be made into a more people-friendly city? How do we create public spaces that are more accessible to people with disabilities? Are aesthetics always subjective or are there universal principles to "good" design?

Join *The Link* as we discuss architecture, urban planning, interior and landscape design, installation art—anything and everything having to do with design and space.

Our brainstorm meeting for our upcoming special issue is taking place Wednesday, Jan. 14 at 4 p.m. in our office, H-649. All are welcome!

WEDNESDAY, JAN. 14 AT 4 P.M.

THE LINK'S OFFICE
H-649 (1455 DE MAISONNEUVE BLVD. W.)

Graphic Brandon Johnston

DESIGN AND SPACE SPECIAL ISSUE

current affairs

Invigilators Vote Yes to Unionization

Exam Supervisors to Form Bargaining Unit for Negotiations with Concordia

by Jane Gatensby

In a vote held in November and December, Concordia's exam supervisors opted to officially organize as a union group under the auspices of Teaching and Research Assistants at Concordia.

According to an email sent to Concordia invigilators by the Public Service Alliance of Canada—TRAC's parent union—an "overwhelming majority" voted yes to unionization.

The vote was delayed over the fall semester due to a dispute between Concordia and PSAC over which invigilators should qualify to vote on the issue. When the list of electors was finalized, a team of campaigners worked to get out the vote, which was conducted by postal ballot.

"We had to hunt these people down," said TRAC bargaining officer Isabelle Johnston in an interview with *The Link*. The team searched for the names of invigilators on Facebook and Google, contacted them through mutual friends and even went door-to-door to ensure that the ballots would be sent to the correct address.

"We had to contact every single person, either face-to-face or over the phone," Johnston said, explaining that any ballots not sent back to Concordia by the invigilator in question were counted as "No" votes.

Johnston deemed the majority vote "a big triumph" given these challenges.

Why Yes?

The vote is the culmination of a nearly year-long campaign to unionize, which began when a small number of invigilators raised their concerns over pay and working conditions with Concordia's Graduate Students Association. The GSA then joined with TRAC to organize a union drive.

The enthusiasm demonstrated by invigilators during the drive indicated that many were unhappy with their working conditions. An invigilator named Rupom told *The Link* that he began raising his concerns because he felt that the behaviour of Concordia's exams office was "unprofessional." However, he says that because invigilators have become more vocal, conditions during the last exam period were "better than before."

But Rupom, who was the GSA's 2013-14 Engineering and Com-

puter Science Director, still sees areas for improvement. A major one is pay, which he thinks should be increased. Another is the provision of breaks. "It's really tiresome to stand for three hours in a small room, he said. "It really hampers concentration."

"For me, a union means an institution which will work for the rights of invigilators," he concluded. "[It] will be the ultimate solution to handle these kinds of issues."

According to Johnston, other commonly expressed complaints include favouritism in hiring invigilators, the lack of a seniority system for determining who gets re-hired and the absence of job postings.

What now?

In coming weeks, the invigilators who make up the union will elect a bargaining committee to represent them in negotiations with Concordia. According to Johnston, the committee's priorities have yet to be determined, but will likely centre around "better pay, getting breaks and transparent hiring practices."

The collective agreement, which Johnston hopes will contain provisions to improve working conditions, will allow invigilators to file a grievance with the union if their employer does not respect the terms of their contract. "For example, if you're supposed to get a 15-minute break every four hours, and you're not getting [one], that would be something you would file a grievance for," she explained.

Johnston remains cautious about the committee's chances of success. "Right now we're facing austerity measures here, so the university isn't going to be very generous about giving people raises," she said.

However, she also commented that she "wouldn't be surprised" if Concordia proves to be more flexible on working conditions than on pay. "I think that's something they can make concessions about," she added.

When asked by *The Link* to comment on the unionization, Concordia president Alan Shepard said that "the university is ready to bargain with [the invigilators], and we'll negotiate with good faith, which is always what we try to do."

On the subject of invigilator pay, Shepard commented that "[Concordia] tries to pay fair wages for all the jobs at the university."

Concordia Teaching Assistant Union Put in Trusteeship

by Jane Gatensby

According to documents obtained by *The Link*, the union for Teaching and Research Assistants at Concordia has been put into trusteeship by its parent union, the Public Service Alliance of Canada.

The union's executive committee has been removed from office as of Jan. 7. Concordia's teaching and research assistants will now deal directly with PSAC for grievances and other issues regarding their collective agreement, and a special general meeting on the issue will be held before the end of the month.

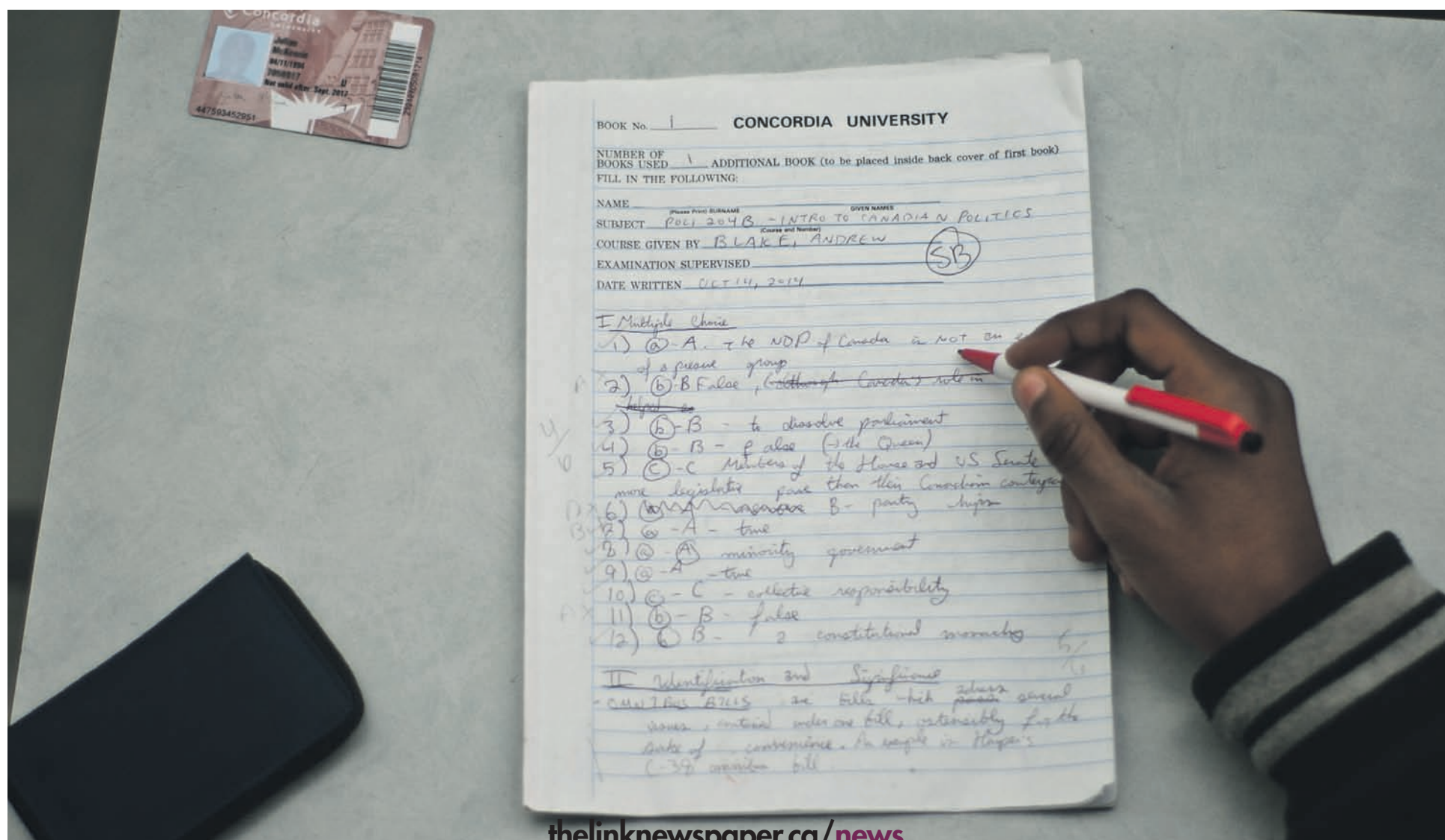
According to a final report of PSAC's investigation given to *The Link*, the organization found "evidence of harassment" on the part of TRAC's president, Nader Jafari Nodoushan, and deemed the executive committee "fully dysfunctional." The report was temporarily posted on the Concordia union's website, but has now been taken down.

The report states that PSAC policy defines harassment as an expression of power and superiority by one person or group over another person or group. It specifies that a "key element" of harassment includes any "series or repetition of incidents or behaviour towards an individual that is unwelcome, offensive, demeaning, belittling, humiliating, embarrassing, intimidating, or threatening."

The investigation was instigated by complaints from TRAC executives Daria Saryan, Isabelle Johnston and Robert Sonin concerning Nodoushan, as well as complaints made by Nodoushan against the complainants. A PSAC report concerning the affair reveals a deep schism within the TRAC leadership, with Saryan, Johnston and Sonin in conflict with Nodoushan and another executive, Gounash Pirnya, on a large number of issues.

PSAC representatives contacted by *The Link* were unable to comment. Nodoushan has also been unavailable for comment.

Photo Brandon Johnston



Counting Sheep? Don't Neglect a Routine Sleep Schedule

Ryerson University Doctor to Speak at Concordia about the Dangers of Insomnia and Its Link to Depression

by Jonathan Cook

Pick two: sleep, study or socialize. According to this old adage, balancing all three is as much of an option as “magic wand” is in a game of “rock, paper, scissors.”

For Dr. Colleen Carney, too many students are following the trends of greater adulthood by neglecting a routine sleep schedule. Students are prioritizing their own academic success, altering their bodies' internal clocks. According to Carney, this lack of routine is a main cause for chronic insomnia, which is a disorder closely linked to depression. She will address the issue at a talk at Concordia University on Tuesday night.

“That’s the big problem,” said Carney, who is the director of the Sleep and Depression Laboratory at Ryerson University in Toronto. “It’s that

people don’t maintain a regular schedule, so many people are jetlagged without traveling.”

Carney noted that parental figures usually create strict schedules for children that mandate a consistent sleep time. She said humans don’t outgrow the need for this type of routine and dismisses the notion that sleep is a learnable skill.

“Sleeping is like falling in love,” said Carney, who is also an associate professor at Ryerson. “You can set the stage to make it more likely to happen—if you want to clean yourself [and] put yourself out there—[but] it’s something you can’t force to happen.”

“The hallmark of an insomniac is somebody who believes that they have to do something to sleep.”

Many different diagnostic systems exist for

chronic insomnia. Essentially, complaining about difficulty falling into or maintaining sleep for more than half the nights of the week in a three-month period is an indicator of the disorder. In addition, having daytime complaints of functioning, like mood or concentration problems and fatigue, are also telltale signs.

The National Institute of Health concluded in a State-of-the-Science Conference on Manifestations and Management of Chronic Insomnia in Adults that the condition is a major health problem affecting millions of individuals and their communities and families.

A term called “condition arousal” is also associated with chronic insomnia. It’s an unintentional learning that the body does so that when individuals get into bed, they suddenly feel wide-awake, according to Carney. Mentally link-

ing a bed to a feeling of wakefulness occurs due to factors such as being “plugged into” mobile and laptop devices.

The body has “beautiful” regulatory systems that compensate for occasional lack of qualitative and quantitative sleep, which works best within consistent bedding and waking times, Carney added. Too often, though, people—particularly students—are unable to utilize this bodily system. Late-night partying, early class times, substance abuse and even the stress of falling asleep contribute to chronic insomnia.

“Using alcohol or weed right before bed, these are things that, in the short term, may be helpful because you fall asleep faster,” Carney said about prevalent substance abuse in university. “But the quality of sleep under those substances [is] actually more negative [than] if you didn’t use it. It actually then starts disrupting sleep.”

A problem among psychiatric treatment providers is the belief that insomnia being a symptom of depression is not “meaningful,” Carney argued. It is believed that the sleep disorder is a symptom of depression that is relatively untreatable. Beginning with studies during her time at Duke University, Carney and other researchers found that over 50 per cent of insomniacs who recovered from depression relapsed.

Her team of researchers also discovered that a quarter of people with insomnia developed depression within a year’s time, while a little less than a quarter of the same sample developed an anxiety disorder. In addition, ten per cent of insomniacs turn to abuse of substances like alcohol. According to Carney, what is also commonly misunderstood is that many insomniacs are at increased risk of suicide.

“They think that it’s depression; it’s not,” she said. “People with insomnia are at risk of suicide and accidental overdoses because—think about a lot of celebrities who die this way—they’re very desperate to sleep.”

“They start layering alcohol and hypnotic medication, and they just overdo it and die.”

To combat this sleep disorder, Carney and her team of graduate and undergraduate students from Sleep and Depression Lab are researching the merits of and training health practitioners in Cognitive Behavioral Therapy. CBT is a “multi-component” treatment that is recognized as effective by the NIH.

“If I had to sum it up, it essentially is that we study a person’s sleep patterns over the course of a few weeks and then we make an adjustment based on what’s going on with that person,” said Carney.

Adjustments include limiting the time patients spend in bed, enforcing regular, early wake up and bed times or curbing intake of coffee and the like. CBT is a brief treatment of one to four sessions that is just as effective as sleep medication, according to Carney.

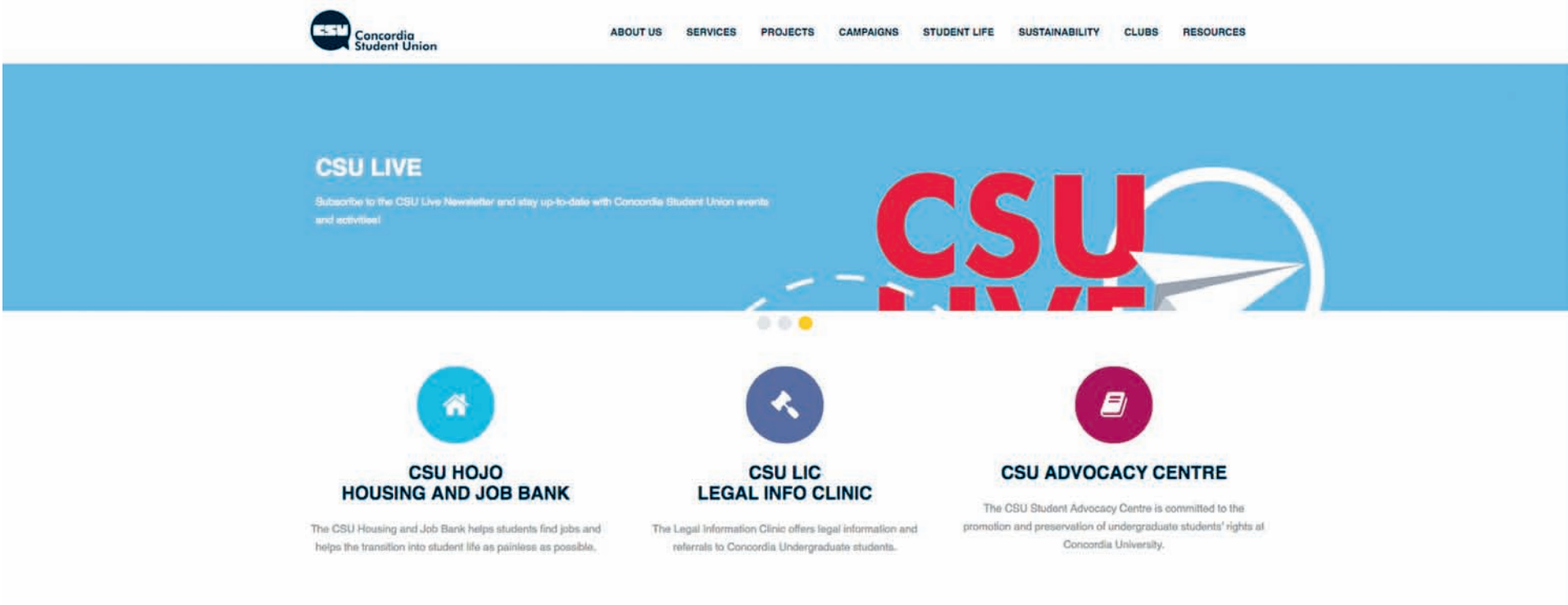
“Unlike medication, it lasts for years and years,” she continued. “It’s a good investment for people.”

In no way, though, does Carney suggest that CBT is an exclusive alternative to traditional treatments for depression like medication. Instead she said that pairing CBT for insomnia with antidepressants could be most effective.

PERFORM Colloquium on Depression and Insomnia: Which Comes First and Why It Doesn't Matter // Jan. 14, 4 to 5 p.m. // Room RF-120, Loyola Jesuit Hall and Conference Centre (7141 Sherbrooke St. W.) // Free

Graphic Sam Jones





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Eight Years Stagnant, CSU Website Redone in One Weekend by IT Guy

Student Union Site Remodeled for First Time Since 2007

by Noelle Didierjean @noellesolange

The Concordia Student Union’s almost decade-old website will be officially replaced this semester for the first time since the software running it became obsolete in 2007, CSU IT Coordinator Filip Pietruszewski told *The Link*.

A CSU IT committee formed at the beginning of the last academic year drew up a plan for a new website but wound up with a list of requirements that weren’t within their budget.

According to Pietruszewski, the committee “came up with [an extensive] document describing this massive, fancy website,” outlining their needs before opening a tender process and asking companies to send in proposals. The lowest quote for the website was \$150,000 and the most expensive was upwards of half a million.

According to Pietruszewski, the estimate ran so high because of the extensive features requested. “In that [website] description, you could find a description of Dropbox and Google Drive and somewhere along the line you would find a description of Skype,” he said.

“The websites that were proposed were more [like] student hubs, similar to what MyConcordia does, where students could log in and have access to a bunch of features,” CSU VP Student Life Charles Bourassa said of the original proposal.

Pietruszewski said he thought the extensive time spent planning the website “could have been avoided if they had taken a more realistic approach to the features that they wanted, rather than [asking for] everything and the kitchen sink.”

The project was scrapped when it was shown to not be financially feasible.

After more than a year of debating requirements for the site, the issue was more or less resolved after the IT Coordinator decided he had had enough.

“I was really frustrated, and I decided that weekend to make a new website,” he explained. “I showed it to them. I was like, ‘This is what you guys need and [it’s free]. And it can go live immediately.’ Luckily, Charles Bourassa was like, ‘Good idea, go for it.’”

After additional work was done by CSU graphic designer Laurence Pilon on the visual presentation of the website and CSU communications coordinator Nima Jalalvandi did additional web programming, the website soft-launched on Dec. 18.

There is no official launch date planned for the new website, but according to Bourassa, it

will “probably be more whole, definitely by the end of the semester,” and will “look much, much better in terms of content” in February.

The new website, at the address csu.qc.ca, runs on Drupal, a program “like Wordpress, but for bigger organizations,” Pietruszewski explained. This will allow it to be consistently updated more easily because it’s a supported platform, as opposed to the older website, which was built from scratch.

“Drupal is pretty open-ended in terms of where you can take it, in comparison with the platform we had before, which was built from the ground up,” Bourassa explained.

“It was like a maze,” CSU President Ben Prunty added.

Screenshot courtesy of the CSU website

Concordia Briefs

Bug Rumours Officially Put to Bed

by Jonathan Cook

After stating that there was “no evidence” of a bed bug infestation in the Webster Library last month, Concordia University president Alan Shepard made a startling revelation last week.

“I’m informed we found exactly one bed bug,” he told *The Link*.

The lone soldier was captured after “preventative” measures were taken over the holiday break. A crew inspected and steam cleaned the entire library floor by floor, according to Concordia spokesperson Chris Mota.

Any public city space visited by millions of people probably harbours a single bed bug, Shepard stressed. “There’s probably one bed bug everywhere,” he said.

“It’s not bad money to do the cleaning to make sure.”

Hoopla over the original rumour of a bed bug infestation started on the popular forum website Reddit, and the story gained further traction on local blogs, including *MTL Blog* and the satirical *Sooo MTL*.

“We didn’t find much, but it does tell you about the power of social media,” Shepard said about the rumour’s origin. “It’s a bit of a scary power to spread things around.”

First Phase of Webster Renovation Begins

by Gus Minter

For those already hitting the books in the Webster Library, parts of the downtown library will look disordered.

The library’s transformation project began this month after over a year of planning, and is scheduled for completion by fall 2017.

The work is a response to student requests for “more quality study spaces.” Study spaces are a major priority in a larger project, which will increase the number of seats in Webster from 1,550 to 3,300, as well as expand the library by 27 per cent.

The new LB3 East will also include two large study halls, three group study rooms and a new “friends of the library room,” according to Guylaine Beaudry, the chief administrator of Concordia’s Webster and Vanier libraries.

Beaudry explained that the “friends of the library room” would be a completely silent room.

“Not even typing on a keyboard will be allowed,” she said. “What we want to foster is the relation between the text and the reader.”

This first phase of renovation is indicative of the larger aims of the transformation project, which is directed at creating new and better spaces to study, rather than expanding increasingly unused book storage, though Beaudry said LB3 East will still house some shelves.

A step by step account of the renovation are posted on the Transformation Project blog, at <http://library.concordia.ca/webster-transformation/>.

L’Organe Fee Levy Suspended

by Michelle Pucci

Concordia’s only francophone publication, L’Organe, will have its fee levy suspended until 2017, while it makes use of the money collected since its last publication in 2011 to revive the magazine.

L’Organe normally collects \$0.06 per credit and has collected \$161,000 over the years. Before an agreement was reached at the last Board of Governors’ meeting, the funds were frozen.

“\$161,000 is more than enough money for them to function for two years, so it would be excessive to give them money until then,” said CSU President Benjamin Prunty at the last council meeting in December.

The publication will be reactivated this month and has promised to publish once a semester in order to retain access to its funding.

Since L’Organe’s last issue in April 2011, some students have tried but been unsuccessful in bringing back the francophone magazine, mainly due to legal and financial issues. Last year, Concordia’s Board of Governors voted to suspend its fee levy for three semesters.

Montreal Assembles for Charlie Hebdo

by Verity Stevenson

More than a thousand people attended a vigil Wednesday evening following the shootings at French satirical magazine *Charlie Hebdo*, gathering outside France's consulate in downtown Montreal.

According to the Facebook description of the event, it was organized to give support to the families and victims in the aftermath of the attack. Twelve people were killed by two people wearing masks at the office of the weekly magazine.

In 2011, the *Charlie Hebdo* offices were firebombed following an issue which satirized sharia law.

More demonstrations have been organized in Montreal and throughout Canada following the initial demonstration.

Photos Fatma Daldoul



THE LINK

CONCORDIA'S INDEPENDENT NEWSPAPER SINCE 1980

It's the start of a new year and we're looking to fill our editorial roster. We currently have three positions open. If you've contributed to four (4) separate issues of this year's volume of the *The Link* then you're eligible to run. Applicants must submit a letter of intent and three (3) samples of published work to The Link's office by 4 p.m. on Wednesday, Jan. 28.

Elections will be held on Wednesday, Feb. 4 at 4 p.m. in *The Link*'s office, H-649. All staff members (those who have contributed four times or more) are eligible and encouraged to vote in the election.

Wednesday, Jan. 28 4 p.m.
The Link Office (1455 de Maisonneuve Blvd. W., H-649)

Here are the current open positions:

Community Editor

You are the link between our editors, audience and contributors. Organize social events, help curate our online presence, and keep the community thriving.

Current Affairs Editor

You're in charge of the news portion of our weekly print issue. Keep tabs on student politicians, uncover corruption, and ensure that everyone's voice is heard in our weekly publication.

Graphics Editor

Every story needs a visual. Use your artistic prowess to help us illustrate unflattering portraits of bureaucrats, communicate with graphic contributors, and draw sexy pictures for sexy stories.

Eligible to run:

Melissa Fuller, Caity Hall, Alex Carriere, Erica Pishdadian, Joshua Barkman, Leigha Veigh, Alex Callard, Daniele Iannarone, Matt Garies, L.A. Bonte, Ester Strausova, Gonzo Nieto, Jei Jei Stevens, Shane Wright, Tristan D'Amours, Jennifer Aedy, Sam Jones, Fatma Daldoul, Verity Stevenson, David Landsman

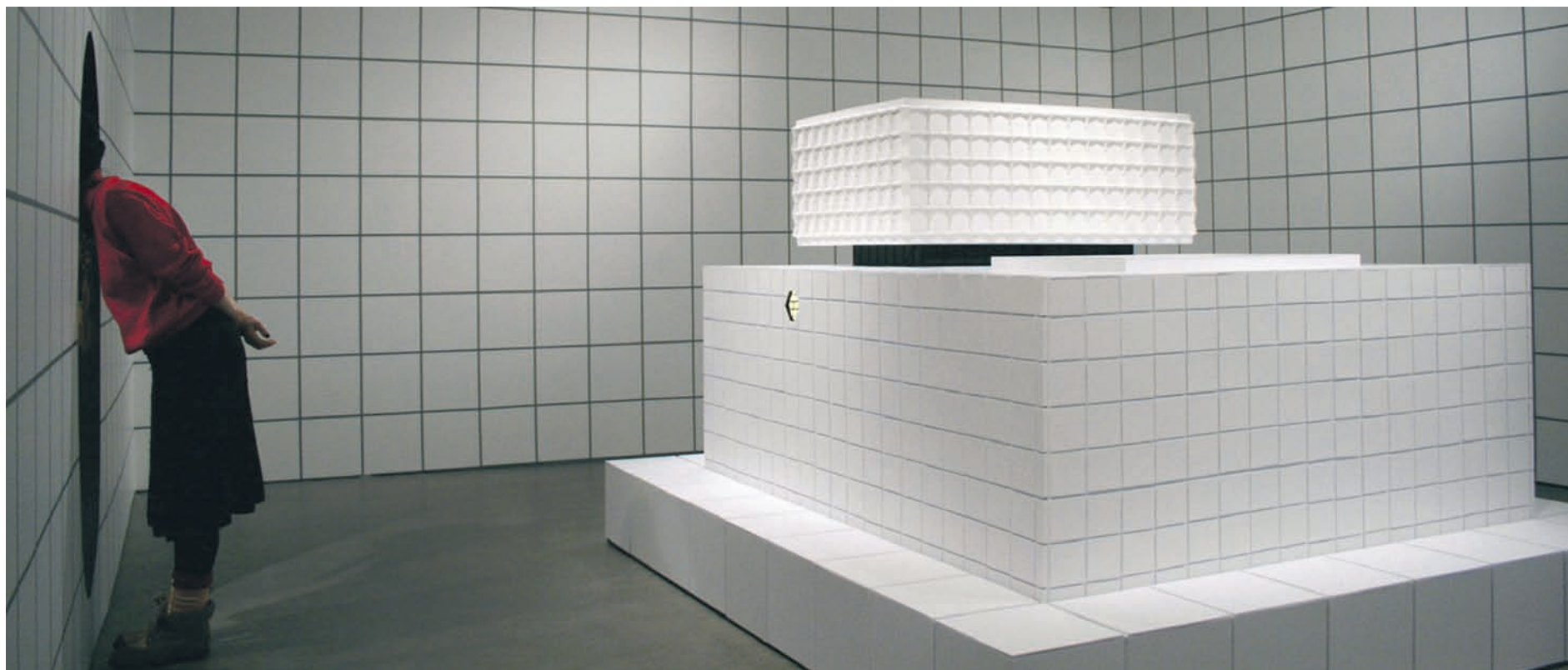
One contribution needed:

Andy Fidel, Bianca Gazinschi, Colin Harris, Robert Arzenshek, Erik Trudel

Two contributions needed:

Alex Ocheoha, Chanel Jacques, Jon Summers, Jordan Namur, Justin Ferrara, Marco George Carriero, Michael Dorado, Yacine Bouhali, Alex Bailey, Alex Dallaire, Gus Minter, Julien Assouline, Zach Goldberg

fringe arts



Get a Room!

Visual Artist Marie-Eve Martel

Uses Poetry and Philosophy
to Analyze the Architecture of
Spaces and Places of Knowledge

by June Loper @Loperjune

In a dialogue between architecture, poetry and philosophy, visual artist Marie-Eve Martel presents an immersive installation entitled *Transcender l'architecture*, depicting the duality of two architectural environments—Thoreau's cabin in the woods and Yale University's Beinecke Library in New Haven.

Clinical and sharp, the white gridded walls of the gallery's first room bounce off the bright lighting, which is directed towards a white monochrome miniature model of the Beinecke Library, standing erect on a podium in the center of the space.

"When I first saw the original building, I had the same feeling the humans must have had when they discovered the big black monolith on the moon in Stanley Kubrick's *2001: A Space Odyssey*. It was really mysterious and the feeling stuck with me. I wanted my piece to illustrate that impression," said Martel.

An oval opening in the wall marks the entrance to another room—the stark opposite of the first, with black painted walls and dim lighting. With quotes from Henry David Thoreau's 1845 book *Walden* handwritten with chalk on the walls, the atmosphere becomes one of poetry and nature. A series of paintings depict the cabin in the woods becoming gradually invaded by vegetation, turning into a micro universe. A radically different space of knowledge is represented here—a dream-like space in which one learns through contact with nature and introspection.

On one side, a space for knowledge is represented through a clean, controlled and imposing piece of architecture; on the other, Martel creates a metaphor for the exploration of one's infinite nature. In contrasting ways, both environments

reflect the psychological impact of physical structures, questioning the different ways we inhabit and interact with our built environment.

"The black is more attuned to the feeling that I had when I read Thoreau because it's so much about looking inside yourself to find yourself," Martel said. "He wasn't an antisocial person, not at all. He loved people, loved talking to people, but the retreat and the contact with nature is really crucial in the process of knowing who you are and getting in contact with your true self."

Containing some of the world's most precious manuscripts, the Beinecke Library is a highly secured and controlled building. Symbolizing both knowledge and institutionalized power, the building is at the heart of an interesting paradox that Martel seeks to underline in her representation of the building.

The accessibility of knowledge is at the centre of the problem. As Martel explained, the library's books are exclusively reserved for university students and researchers. An entire procedure and protocol has to be followed to be able to look at the documents. In an attempt to preserve the rich knowledge kept within this "sacred safe", this type of control simultaneously protects precious resources and limits free circulation of ideas.

"The whole emotional aura of the building is what got me working on that piece in parallel to Thoreau's cabin, which is kind of the opposite [of it]. But at the same time, some aspects link them together because both represent a form of access to knowledge," Martel said.

With thoughts nourished by philosophers such as Henri Lefebvre, Michel de Certeau and Michel Foucault, Martel's art practice puts forward cer-



tain concepts brought upon by theories around the relationship between space, built environment and socio-political order.

"Everything that is built around us has to do with the power in place. It's just the way societies are constructed. Everything that is built, from the university here to a barn in the country, has to do with the values that had them built. Architecture is a way for humankind to manifest its values into space."

Paralleling Michel Foucault's discourse on heterotopias—spaces with layered meanings that are meant to make utopias possible—the library is, as Martel underlined, a kind of modern-day utopia that aims to preserve knowledge in its entirety. But in doing so, the library's structures are made impermeable to nature, cut off from processes and contingencies of natural decay.

Nature is presented as a force that infiltrates or is—in the case of the Beinecke Library—absent from iconic architecture. Quoting Thoreau, Martel adds that the philosophy behind the

wooden cabin is in itself the complete opposite of the philosophy behind Yale's Library. Central to Thoreau's piece is the idea that absolute control is impossible and the need for the human being to be in contact with nature is essential to the learning process.

"If you look at private universities and private libraries, they are inaccessible to the broad public and then it becomes a symbol of power, elitism, state control and then there is a negation of nature in that," said Martel.

Leaving the dialogue open between the two different spaces, Martel challenges different layers of meaning and creates a poetic language, putting a strong emphasis on sensory representations.

Transcender l'Architecture // Jan. 9 to Feb. 21, 2015 // Galerie de l'UQAM (1400 Berri Street, Judith-Jasmin Pavilion, Room J-R120) // Free

Photos courtesy of Marie-Eve Martel



Two Tours in Two Years? Too Easy for G-Eazy

American Rapper G-Eazy Seeking to Promote Bay Area Culture During Upcoming Tour

by Tristan Geddes @DaYungThrilla

This Wednesday will mark G-Eazy's second show in Montreal in two years. What about our city makes it enjoyable for the 25-year-old rapper?

"That poutine!" said G-Eazy with a laugh. His appreciation of the city goes beyond the surface of such tawdry pleasures. "I got a friend that I grew up with. He went to college there [Montreal] and so he showed us around the city last time we were here. I love it there, the whole vibe, the aesthetic of the whole city."

This time around, G-Eazy is coming back to Montreal as part of the second leg of his very successful *From the Bay to the Universe* tour. The San Francisco Bay Area rapper hopes to give the people a taste of what his city has to offer.

"There's a pride that comes with growing up in the Bay Area that you just want to wave our flag and, you know, try to help put on and bring our culture around the world," G-Eazy said.

To accomplish that, the Oakland native has enlisted fellow Bay Area talent Jay Ant, Kool John and Kehlani for 22 of the 28 dates of this primarily North American tour.

"It's just a vibe. Like Kehlani's energy is completely different than Jay Ant and Kool John, but she's crazy talented and she puts on a hell of a show, as do Jay Ant and Kool John," explained G-Eazy.

The choice of openers could also be seen as the rapper's way of paying it forward to up-and-coming artists in the same way that certain rappers from his area did for him. In particular, he spoke with reverence when talking about Bay Area rap legend E-40.

"E-40 gave me a look on *Far Alone*," G-Eazy said. "When I first got the verse from E-40, I was like jumping around, I was like going crazy, I was like what the fuck! It's just hearing a voice that you're so familiar

with, especially when you've listened to it for years growing up.

"Hearing that same voice on a record that you made in the garage of a rented Airbnb house when [...] living out of a suitcase... Like *Far Alone* was made in a day, but I hear his voice on a song we made from scratch, it's crazy! That was the biggest moment of my career at the time."

That was March. A lot has changed for G-Eazy since then and he's had more big moments. His major label debut album *These Things Happen* made it to #3 on the Billboard 200 in its first week and has sold over 130,000 copies, he has embarked on a successful European tour and he was named one of the hottest college acts by *USA Today*.

Still, don't expect G-Eazy to release any verses proclaiming himself to be "King of Hip-Hop" any time soon.

"I don't look up and I don't look down. I just keep grinding," he said.

He doesn't seek to rank himself against other rappers and he'd prefer that the listeners didn't rank him either if they're only going to be comparing him to other white rappers.

The idea of white appropriation of hip-hop culture has been a very relevant conversation in the media and G-Eazy reflected on what contributes to the opinion people have of white artists in hip-hop.

"When somebody's doing something and it's genuine, then that's what matters. When it's not genuine, then that's not that chill," he said. "[Hip-hop] is the culture I grew up with and fell in love with when I was young. Music has always been my passion."

"I'm a fan of everybody from Kanye to Drake to Schoolboy Q."

The Kanye West mention is noteworthy because G-Eazy shares certain traits with the superstar. Not only does he rap, he also produces. His frequent collaborations with producer Cristoph Andersson have allowed him to take more of a backseat in that role and be more of an overseer of the production, akin to Diddy.

"It gives me more time to focus on lyrics. I think in the past, it was the opposite. I was more of a producer than a rapper," he said.

He is also a perfectionist with his craft. "When we were making the album, we took a crazy amount of time on every little detail. It was almost to an obsessive level. My management had to pull me away and say like, 'Look, you have to finish this! You can't just keep tinkering with it forever.'"

His perfectionism has led to critical self-evaluations of his own music. "The thing is, I hate a lot of my music as soon as it's out," he said. "I'm crazy over-critical of myself. While I'm making it; I'm listening to it over and over because I'm tinkering with it, but once it's out, I can't help but criticize every little detail and think about what I wish I would've done differently."

G-Eazy fans would disagree though, and many have proven it with their dollars, as the tour has resulted in dozens of sold-out shows.

This Wednesday will mark G-Eazy's second show in Montreal in as many years. So what's different this time around?

"I think I performed last time for maybe 100 people in a little hole in the wall. I've grown as a performer," he said. "It just gets bigger and bigger, the shows, the venues, the crowds."

It's safe to say that G-Eazy fans attending the show at the Corona Theatre are in for a G-Eazy with more skill and command of the stage than the G-Eazy that was here last year. These things happen when you add a world tour and 60-plus shows under your belt.

G-Eazy // Wednesday, Jan. 14 // 8 p.m. // Corona Theatre (2490 Notre-Dame St. W.)

Photo courtesy of The Chamber Group



science & technology

When you think science and technology, you think robots.

And to be fair, many of this year's stories reflect images of metal, wires and computing beep boops. In this special issue, we discuss everything from the gaming industry to sex work. We travel into the world of high-speed Baja racing and explore just why we love Apple so much.

As humans destroy the earth with its machines and skyscrapers, let's remember the natural beauties found all around us, from the simple change of leaves' colors in the fall to a distant star slowly imploding into a black hole.

Science and technology coexist. This is, of course, only possible if we (Homo sapiens) don't mess things up. Which we most likely will. Hey, at least we made it to the year Back to the Future II took place in, unfortunately without widespread use of hoverboards or self-tying shoes...

a game of life with crooked rules

Concordia Students and Faculty Create Video Game on the Lives of Sex Workers

by Verity Stevenson

There has been much ado about sex work since Canada's prostitution laws were struck down in December 2013 in the historic *Bedford v. Canada* decision.

But the media discussion surrounding the decision and the ensuing Bill C-36 may have been missing the point.

"It's a two-sided debate," Sandra Gabriele, chair of Communications Studies at Concordia, said of how the issue is often covered, in an interview with *The Link*.

"We end up back in the same position: to defend the work, which is often portrayed as by its very nature degrading to women," Gabriele continued.

The discourse gets stuck in questions of the work's morality, victimizing and marginalizing sex workers, she said.

Gabriele and journalism professor Lisa Lynch have responded by creating a newsgame—a video game engaged with the principles of journalism—with the help of a roster of Concordia students, including Amanda Feder, Martin Desrosiers, Esther Splett, Natalie Zina Walschots and Ben Spencer. The online game, called *The Oldest Game*, goes beyond the public discourse by addressing the intersections and issues of the sex trade, where new laws punishing clients may soon come into play.

It deals with the "kinds of choices sex workers face every day, every time they take on a new client."

The player moonlights as sex worker Andrea, picking what type of work she does. You start off in one of three Canadian cities—Montreal, Toronto or Vancouver—and once you've accumulated enough money, you can move.

In the game you're confronted with a number of situations similar to those Canadian sex workers face. Gabriele gave the example of hiring a driver to bring you to meet with your clients.

"Are you going to keep your driver with you [while you're with your client]? That'll cost you money," she says. "Oh, actually, your driver just quit because under the new law, he could be arrested for working with a sex worker."

In another scenario, Andrea has to navigate legal waters and counsel a colleague of hers who is an illegal immigrant.

Other obstacles in the game may feel closer to home, like incurring debt. The game also attempts to help the player understand how one might enter the sex trade.

But Gabriele says the team behind the game was careful not to create scenarios that would create a fixed narrative about the sex trade in players' minds, nor create a hierarchy of positions within the sex trade.

The team, mostly funded by the university, hired sex worker Marilyne Hudon as a consultant to make the game as realistic

as possible.

Lynch, of the journalism department, said they had already made a series of changes within the game following Hudon's suggestions. For one, she helped make it less explicit, she said.

The group's stance is clear in the fact that the game recognizes sex work as work, Gabriele says, as does the Supreme Court of Canada following the *Bedford* challenge.

"We don't even engage with that question," she said, adding that it would be "foolish" to treat sex work as a normal line of work, but that that's also why sex workers' rights are crucial. "There are risks attached."

She says she believes the new laws would force sex workers into dangerous situations by isolating them from their support systems.

The game isn't only a response to the current events and conversations surrounding sex work in Canada.

It's also a result of Gabriele and Lynch's fascination with newsgames—*The Oldest Game* is partly inspired by *Budget Hero*, which is also a game "in which players learn the parameters of a complex system, and from role-playing games that provoke empathy and identification," according to the game's website.

The game is mainly being developed by students in Computation Arts right now, but Lynch and Gabriele say they hope the venture will lead to the creation of an ongoing project that communications and journalism students can learn skills from and participate in.

"It's also about us as a group, learning how to take on something which is journalism represented in a really kind of problematic way—sex work and games—and figure out how you do that," Lynch said.

The game was a learning process, a way for the teachers to cut their teeth. And, sex work was the perfect subject to tackle because "it's just work that's not going to go away," Gabriele said.

"It's not like trying to write a game about a conflict and then all of a sudden the conflict ends," Lynch said during her own interview with *The Link*.

The game's trailer was recently released on its website and Lynch and Gabriele say they're almost ready to have the prototype tested.

Once it's out there, they plan on having it tested by gamers and sex workers alike.

There's one main kink to iron out, according to Gabriele.

"Vancouver's missing a mechanic, where you can't move from it," she said. "We don't want people to get stuck in a city [...] even though lots of people get stuck in cities."

Graphic Jennifer Aedy





the pixel is mightier than the sword

Video Games Don't Have to Be Violent—But “Indie” Isn't a Total Fix

by Nick Rudzicz (@newton64)

One of the more popular narratives about video games these days is that they're kids' toys at best and murder simulators at worst. To be fair, there's a lot going on in the mainstream media to back up the latter claim. Most popular games use belligerent conquest and visceral conflict as their primary motifs (see *Grand Theft Auto*, *Angry Birds*, or *Chess*).

Is that endemic to the medium, or merely overrepresented by the massive, international blockbuster factories? Does the emergence of the “indie” games scene—small, independent teams of creators publishing their own works—represent a sea change in how games are done?

Violence is in fact endemic to the current market, not the medium, but the “indie” scene is not some cleansing force for the pacification of games. Now, full disclosure: I'm a cofounder and board member of the Mount Royal Game Society, a nonprofit community group looking to engage new game makers; and an employee/member of KOOP, a local video game company of sixish people. The views presented here are my own, though they are necessarily informed by and subject to a broader ongoing conversation.

In her feature “No Girls Allowed,” journalist Tracey Lien charts the medium's journey from the arcades of the late 1970s into the living rooms of the early 1980s and headlong into the wall of the 1983 industry crash. The causes were multiple, but when the dust settled two years later, the industry had contracted by over 95 per cent.

Lien presents a convincing case that this commercial catastrophe paved the way for new market-driven approaches to game making. Whereas before the crash games were being marketed and played across generational and gender lines, after the crash they were packaged exclusively and aggressively for young males.

A closed circuit was formed: marketing, purchasing and production, all bound together in a profit-driven cycle. The industry found itself back in control by focusing its energies, budget and advertising power very specifically on boys and young men, to the often antagonistic exclusion of everyone else. Boys, according to the dominant ideology, love blowing shit up, and when all you produce is games about boys blowing shit up, that's all that sells (and it sells a lot). QED.

Incidentally, anecdotal evidence also points to the mid-'80s as a turning point after which a huge number of women began leaving the tech industry. A correlation, naturally, but one that possibly indicates a broader cultural shift.

The point being that for around the last thirty years, self-fulfilling market prophecies have fostered an environment in which technology is king, women are viewed as suspicious interlopers and games without explicitly tallied conquests are delegitimized.

When the “indie scene” gained major visibility and, paradoxically, became profitable (to some extent) in the mid-2000s, many people leapt at the promise of new creative freedoms. Surely indie games—like craft beer and indie music—would overthrow the industry and serve us all a more varied, richer and somehow more authentic experience.

However, by merely existing in the same space of production and distribution as the larger companies, the majority of gaming startups (if they don't fold in the first six months) find themselves subject to identical market forces—only they're expected to deliver on a fraction of the budget. Not only that, but shrewd salespeople have learnt to appropriate and cash in on the perceived legitimacy and cultural capital of “indie.” Combined, these factors have diluted the supposed counterculture—like craft beer, like indie music—which now more often than not enacts familiar tropes of conquest and violence that reinforce, rather than challenge, the status quo.

Alternatives do exist, though as in any medium the fringe voices lack viability on the market and are generally dismissed or chased out. Disillusioned and/or disenfranchised makers are increasingly relying on self-published, socially active models of distribution (like the sneakerbots, bulletin board systems and shareware disks of the '80s and '90s).

Websites such as itch.io, GameJolt, Kongregate and even Dropbox and torrent sites serve as free hosting platforms, while curated lists such as Forest Ambassador, Warp Door, Games We Care About and the #altgames Twitter tag all perform a curatorial role for those interested in experiences that eschew the traditional narratives.

As a rule, violence is not endemic to the medium of video games. Just as importantly, though, the “indie” label no longer identifies, if it ever did, a diametrically opposed game-making philosophy, or even an ideology at all divorced from market-driven, conservative production.

Hopefully this brief overview has made it a bit more clear how misleading the (manufactured) “AAA vs. indie” divide is. To anyone interested in exploring the non-traditional, thought-provoking, absurd, personal, emotional and revolutionary side of video games, my one suggestion is to look anywhere but within the games industry.

Graphic Graeme Shorten-Adams

will androids dream of killing electric sheep?

A Violent Robot-Filled Future Might Not Be Far Away

by Shaun Michaud @ShaunMic

The tall engineering student was eloquent in speech. His brain acted like a lightning rod for his words leaping from his lips to my doubting mind, blazing trails of portentous discovery.

"We have a campaign against killer robots," he said with a straight face. "Remember Skynet? As roboticists, we are fighting that. We see it coming."

Omid Danesh smiled, perhaps aware that his Terminator reference—replete with visual cues of time-traveling laconic bodybuilding killing machines—stoked flickers of incredulity on my poker face. Regardless, his steady gaze was bolstered by studies on hive-minded unmanned aerial vehicles and the Campaign to Stop Killer Robots.

As we inch closer to elucidating the mystery of artificial intelligence—the Holy Grail of robotics—and accelerating the clock on technological singularity, scientists and laymen alike have warned that birthing the ghost in the shell could spell tentative doom for humankind.

According to a scientific theory espoused by notable experts and sci-fi writers alike, in the near future, progress in robotics will allow humans to enhance their bodies by fusing to machines.

On his news website KurzweilAI.net, futurist and inventor Ray Kurzweil purports that within the next thirty years "nonbiological intelligence will have access to its own design and will be able to improve itself in an increasingly rapid redesign cycle."

This event is known as the singularity.

"Technical progress will be so fast that unenhanced human intelligence will be unable to follow it," Kurzweil wrote in an essay.

Sounds far-fetched, I know. I'm the last person to be convinced that an army of T-800s will zap you to nuclear ashes or that the tabernacle from *Zardoz* will bequeath you eternal life spent wearing a ridiculous outfit. Besides, Kurzweil wrote that AI would be beneficial to its creators rather than humiliating.

In any case, the vast advances we have witnessed in this young century are undeniable. They've already altered the information technology landscape. In North America, the quick spread of technology has promoted IT outsourcing to India and the Philippines.

Manuel Gullickson is a young IT contractor at an agency firm that provides services to big-name companies such as IBM. The wiry techie could have passed for a triple-A athlete if it weren't for his pale, almost see-through skin that attests to endless hours spent indoors staring at computer screens.

"They really know their stuff," said Gullickson. "The only reason companies haven't outsourced everything

yet is because they need to increase customer satisfaction by having somebody with a Canadian accent you can relate to."

The techie tried to persuade me that the growing number of tech-savvy workers in non-traditional places is the first sign of the impending singularity. He said it's only a matter of time until robots are able to communicate like humans and take over call centres screaming, "I am Spartacus."

"We already have Skype translation in real time," he said. "Like the pentecost effect [a science fiction trope where a person hears a foreign language as their own]."

The IT prophet went on about job-stealing robots, stirring my skeptical grumblings.

"Everyone wants to speak to a human, right," he said. "But if a robot can simulate a Canadian accent knowing automatically what a caller needs, they could outsource everything to India."

But this doubting Thomas still wasn't convinced future auto mechanics would be replacing batteries on robots with electrical outlets for buttholes. Not anytime soon, anyway.

"Actually, we are close to AI in many different fields," Omid Danesh said. "We have self-driving cars already."

The slender Danesh is doing a master's degree at Concordia University; he has specialized in aircraft systems simulation engineering. His research and that of his colleagues help airline pilots accrue hours of training in simulated cockpits.

The robot whisperer uses game theory to devise algorithms in order to control flocks of quadcopters—more commonly known as drones.

"Imagine a school of ants," he said. "We want to do that with robots."

So far, Danesh has explored the possibility of four drones working together in unison, communicating and collaborating to accomplish a single goal.

"Humans can work together; how does that extend to robots?"

He is also part of The Campaign to Stop Killer Robots, a collective of NGOs that thinks humanity faces imminent danger as we inch closer to the instant when machines overtake humans in terms of intellectual efficiency. Reminiscent of the Three Laws of Robotics, the campaign aims to curtail the robotic arms race and prohibit fully autonomous weapons.

However, Danesh is quick to point out that we are far from fighting machines under a sun blotted out from the sky—see *The Matrix*.

"For instance, if I show you any kind of door, you'll know it's a door," he said. "A robot wouldn't be able to make the difference unless I somehow successfully managed to program it to recognize every single kind of door."

Still, research in Unmanned Aerial Vehicles has pushed

the boundaries of science fiction. At the cutting edge of technology, Simultaneous Localization and Mapping (SLAM) has allowed drones to work in cooperation. Similar to Danesh's own thesis subject, these robots have to ability to locate each other in urban landscapes thanks to installed GPS systems, laser rangefinders and multi-lens cameras.

Danesh said the recent popularity of drones has fueled these latest breakthroughs.

"Microprocessors are becoming cheaper. Popular topics foster research because we get more funds," he continued. "Who knows what the future holds?"

"Less than twenty years after the Wright brothers' first flight, we had nothing that looked like their plane."

Similar to Kurzweil's prediction of neural implants enhancing human bodies, the Concordia mechanical engineering grad revealed that some of his colleagues were conducting research on mind-controlled UAVs.

"Based on EEG activities in your mind, you can control this flying device," he said. "Kind of like Iron Man."

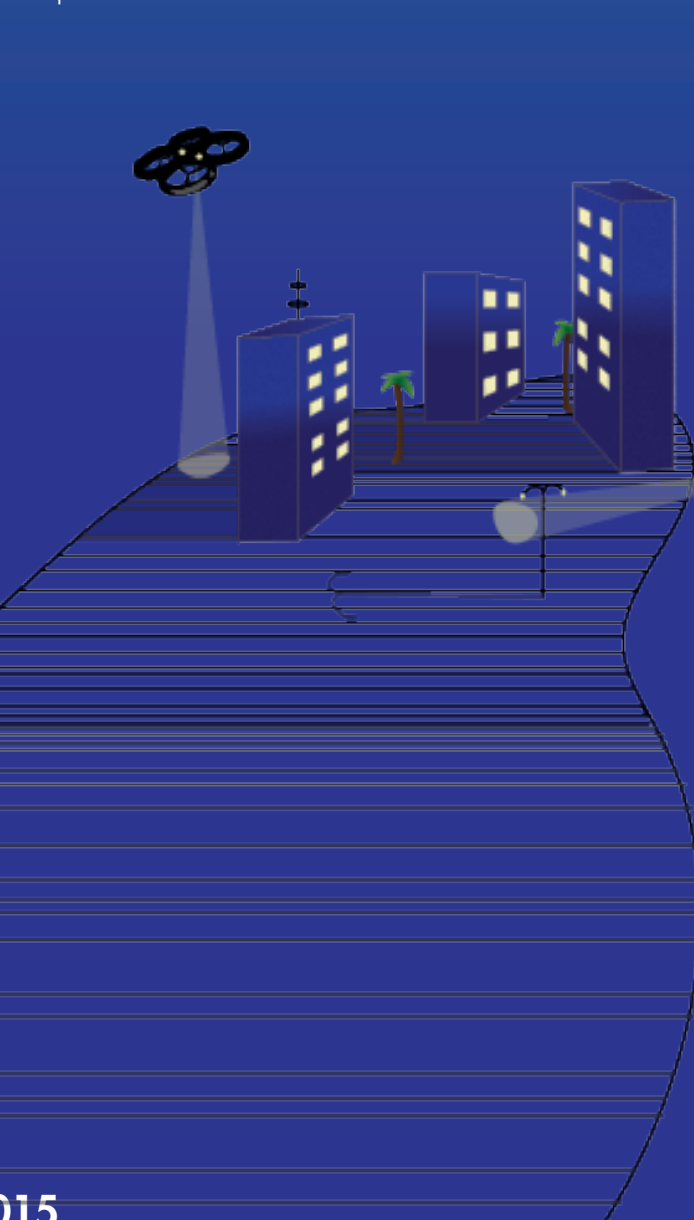
And the killer robots?

History has shown that technology has often served militaristic endeavours. Although its name seems fantastic, The Campaign to Stop Killer Robots is serious in nature, and was designed as a preemptive measure against the worst-case scenario.

Gullickson wasn't particularly vocal about joining the Resistance, but he did offer a few choice words.

"Who knows what will happen when robots think independently like humans. Technological singularity will change our perception of life. What makes us human if a robot feels what we feel?"

Graphic Laura Lalonde



off-road righteousness

Concordia's Automotive Engineers Gear Up for Baja Races

by Alex Ocheoha

The Baja racing team at Concordia has set lofty goals of top ten finishes in all competitions they're slated to compete in this year. Preparation for their first race is already underway.

Concordia's Society of Automotive Engineers Baja team is readying themselves to compete in the 2015 Épreuve du Nord. The tenth edition of the competition will be hosted on the University of Laval's Quebec City campus on Feb. 6 and 7.

The Épreuve du Nord is a friendly competition which consists of a two-hour endurance race on snow and ice. 15 teams will be competing in this competition.

The goal of SAE Baja competitions is to design and build a prototype single-seat all-terrain sporting vehicle capable of supporting the weight of its driver. The vehicle must comply with strict rules set by the SAE. All vehicles must use a single Briggs & Stratton ten-horsepower OHV Intek engine, donated by the Briggs & Stratton Corporation.

"Right now we are testing every weekend we can to make sure that everything is going to be working properly for competitions, just to work out all the bugs and little problems that are going to surface," said Mathieu Bérubé, Concordia SAE's Baja Racing Coordinator.

Concordia has been using the same vehicle for about three

years but have made changes to it. All aspects of the design are done in-house by students.

"We are basically re-building the same vehicle but if we need to change something we have to validate it first," said Andrea Cartile, president of Concordia University SAE. "The theme of the year is to validate all the systems before making any changes."

"We made changes to the rear suspension; we made some changes to the frames to meet the rules," added Bérubé. "We changed the front suspension also to make it fit better and get better performance out of it."

Concordia had a 50th place finish in the 2013 competition, which took place in Rochester, New York (McGill took first place). The lower finish had to do with a mechanical issue, a problem team leaders hope they won't repeat this year.

"The last time we had rear suspension issues," said Bérubé. "Two hours into the race it started bending but we ended up finishing anyway another two hours later."

The Épreuve du Nord competition will help prepare Concordia's Baja team for the upcoming Baja SAE Maryland competition, which will take place on May 7-10 in Baltimore, Maryland. Over 100 teams compete in SAE's international Baja competitions, which originated in 1976.

Graphic Laura Lalonde



the germs of growth: montreal's promising biotech startups

by Mariana Voronovska

Montreal is brimming with academic activity and the innovation centres popping up around the city are a fertile ground for biotech research. Organizations are trying to harness the innovation generated within the city's educational institutions, some of which are at Concordia University.

Two biotech companies have been collaborating with Concordia's District 3 innovation centre: Hyasynth Bio, a biotech company aiming to develop engineered yeast that can produce synthetic cannabinoids like tetrahydrocannabinol (THC) and Cannabidiol (CBD); and BiogeniQ, an award-winning health management company that uses genetic information, family and clinical history to help its clients.

"Synthetic biology isn't just a new or better set of genetic engineering techniques. It also refers to the social and economic aspects of life that are changed by those techniques," Hyasynth CEO Sarah Choukah told the *The Link*.

She praised the young company's culture and openness toward research, adding that "synthetic biology is the ground of very enriching and passionate discussions on the new kinds of microscopic 'critters' we can invent, what it really means to 'invent' or 'program' life this way and how we came to develop those notions on life."

Hyasynth can sell these synthetic cannabinoid medicines to companies, like GW Pharmaceuticals, who are interested in carrying out clinical trials on patients with many illnesses from cancer pain to spasticity or epilepsy.

Hyasynth plans to work alongside pharmaceutical giants by producing the isolated molecular compounds required for testing in a much shorter time frame than farming plants would take.

Collaboration is at the heart of the innovation. For those with no science background, citizens science groups such as Bricobio exist to exchange science knowledge and encourage the inclusion of anyone curious. They occasionally host workshops and recently taught members how to build a 400x microscope for \$10.

"DIY labs are actually blooming all around the world," said Philippe Castonguay of Bricobio, a company that is only a year old.

"The aim of those associative labs is to offer a meeting place where people could work on multidisciplinary projects," Castonguay said. "[By creating] a place dedicated to the education and knowledge-sharing associated with biotechnology on an open-source basis—where people could learn and exchange their expertise by working together on cool and intellectually challenging sciences projects."

"Hyasynth emerged out of Bricobio," Choukah explained, adding that the organization came to be through an online collaboration platform called Synbiota. After a successful four-month accelerator program called Indie Bio in Ireland, they returned to Montreal last fall.

Though Bricobio was born of Hyasynth Bio, the teams decided to keep each company's identity separate, she said.

Some organizations take things to the next level by applying the can-do hacker attitude to projects among clinicians and technology experts.

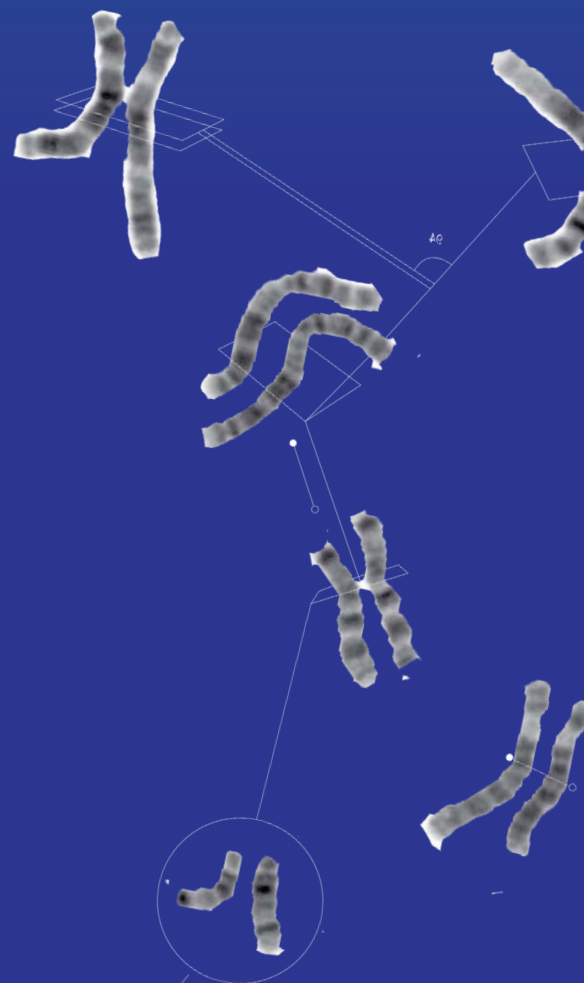
For one, Hacking Health focuses on rapid construction of low-cost prototypes. It also hosts workshops and hackathons across Canada. Its interdisciplinary, experimental approach has guided the creation of projects such as remote physiotherapy care plans as well as education and communication apps for patients and doctors.

Montreal's academic environment also received praise from Inception Sciences Chief Operating Officer Clare Ozawa. She says the environment creates a favorable market for venture and accelerator companies, like Inception Sciences, looking to grow and capitalize on profitable biosciences assets.

As the population and pace of technological advancements increases every year, the potential benefits of learning to manipulate biology continues to captivate the imaginations of institutions and citizens alike.

"I hope that by encouraging a maximum of people to have access to knowledge and giving them tools to use it efficiently, DIY associations may become the incubator of tomorrow's ideas that may change our world," Castonguay said.

Graphic Laura Lalonde



the spending culture of science

Funding Redistribution Threatens Science Promoters

by Michelle Pucci @michellempucci

When the Quebec government decided to reverse spending cuts to science publications, it proved two points: science funding is in a fragile state and the austerity project isn't all that well thought out.

Days before the holidays, Josée Nadia Drouin, general director at the Agence Science Presse, received notice from Quebec's economic development ministry to say the publication's funding would be withdrawn.

ASP has received government support for decades and the money it gets from the government makes up 70 per cent of the non-profit's budget. Drouin says she was surprised when she got the call but that it falls in the direction of the ministry's increasingly economic-driven demands. ASP receives \$123,000 a year.

"The fact that we're in the ministry of economy gives a good idea that it has to be economically profitable," she said.

"It's not easy to find other sources for financing in the domain of cultural science," Drouin said about the likelihood of thriving without government support. "Sponsors aren't knocking on our door."

She wasn't alone. Publications BLD would also be losing funding, *Le Devoir* discovered, along with the Association francophone pour le savoir (Acfas), Science pour tous, the Conseil de développement du loisir scientifique and its regional chapters.

In fact, the money shared by these groups under the NovaScience programme cost the government a little over \$1 million.

Scientific revolution

The news broke Friday. By Monday the issue was resolved.

Thanks to some small social media outrage spearheaded by *Les Debrouillards*, one of the magazines under Publications BLD, the minister of economic development, innovation and export trade, Jacques Daoust, decided to leave the funds where they were.

Les Debrouillards is a science magazine for nine- to 14-year-olds, its sister magazine *Les Explorateurs* covers nature for six- to nine-year olds, and *Curium* appeals to teenagers. Cutting subsidies to magazines that continue to mark the childhoods of many Quebecers would have been difficult to justify. "Despite the current difficult financial situation," Daoust said in a press release, the ministry would continue to support the organizations.

According to the minister's press attaché Melissa Turgeon, there was never a risk of losing funding, but rather redistributing the money to different projects.

"It was never a question of a cut at the base," Turgeon said.

In fact, she says, the idea was just a proposition by the ministry's "administration," and was never accepted by the minister—despite her comment in *Le Devoir* days earlier.

Critics aren't impressed. Yves Gingras, who is the Canada

Research Chair in the History and Sociology of Science as well as a professor at UQAM, says it was business versus science when the government announced reorienting funds to entrepreneurial projects.

"This doesn't mean there won't be cuts, it just means they've been delayed," he said of the ministry's backtrack.

Gingras is particularly unsettled by the cuts that would have affected Acfas. The francophone association is the only one of its kind in Quebec and has promoted science and research since its founding in 1923. It would have lost 30 per cent of its funding—over \$300,000.

"The government proposing to cut \$300,000 from Acfas shows that it has no understanding of what is an organization that promotes science and university research," said Gingras. "It's a scandal."

"Cuts to science culture will discourage future generations from investing themselves in research," Gingras continued. "The politics of research for the past five, six years don't actually understand research."

In an interview with Radio-Canada mid-December, Philippe Couillard said he was shocked by the proposal. Couillard is a neurologist, as well as the son of a prominent biologist—who was active in science clubs and science culture, according to Gingras.

"It was the catastrophe," said Esther Gaudreault, director general of Acfas, about getting the first call. "Cutting a budget in the middle of a fiscal year—for the first of April—put Acfas in a precarious position."

While Gaudreault isn't accusing Couillard's government of attacking science and research, it is working to pin down the province's debt. She says the next budget will show where science falls on the government's priority list.

All parties agree the current science funding predicament doesn't compare to the Canadian one. Couillard's government may just be blinded by their eagerness to tie down the deficit.

On a national level, Stephen Harper's government is being accused of censoring scientists. Over 800 scientists signed a letter in October demanding funding and communication be restored in government departments. Funding sources are being merged and leadership through research chairs is being cut down to "super chairs," says Gingras.

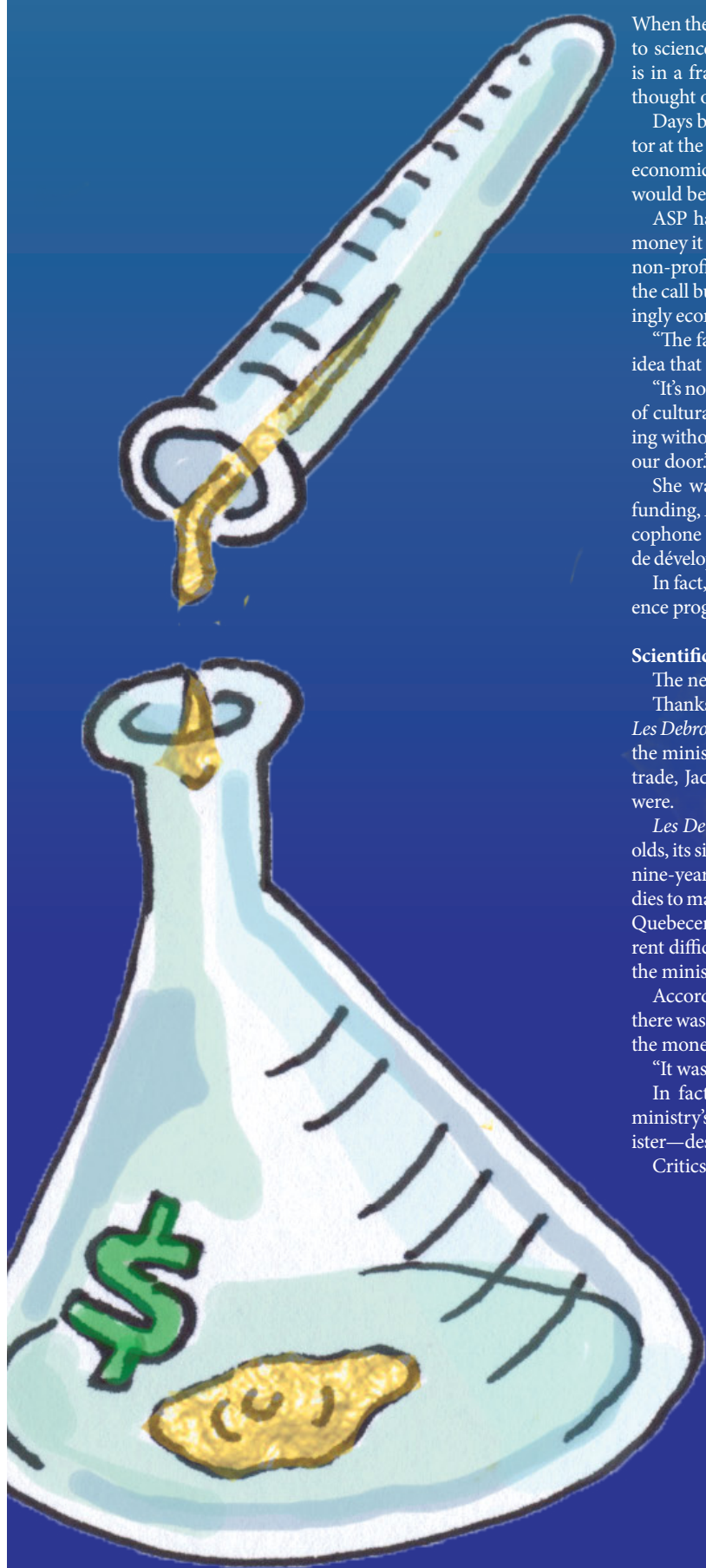
Meanwhile Drouin says she's not getting too comfortable. The groups involved are still waiting for a meeting with the ministry.

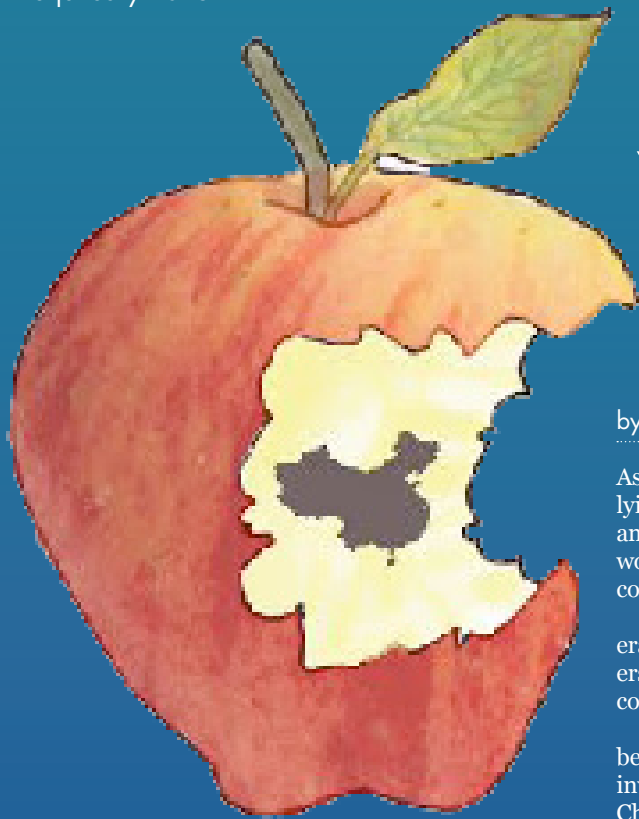
Turgeon says publications will get to discuss the situation at regular consultations with the ministry in the near future. She also said she doesn't know when they will be.

The ministry's press release, from Dec. 14, 2014, said those talks would take place within days.

But maybe they changed their minds.

Graphic Sam Jones





you can't have your apple and eat it too

How Corporately Irresponsible is Apple?

by Mattha Busby @itsmattha

As I write this article on my MacBook Pro with an iPhone5 lying by its side, I'm aware of the inherent contradiction and apparent hypocrisy I'm about to engage in. But this won't disqualify me from advocating for better working conditions for Apple's manufacturers.

On their website, Apple says that "We're working to eradicate unethical hiring and the exploitation of workers—even when local laws permit such practices. We're continuing our efforts to end excessive work hours."

Organizations like the China Labor Watch (which has been doing watchdog work in China for the past 15 years, investigating and often criticizing labour conditions in China) are challenging Apple to live up to the image the corporation wants to exude.

It's thanks to all of us that Apple has become the most valuable brand on the planet.

However, it's not healthy when one product (or brand)—which invariably will be controlled by a multinational corporation—becomes so engrained in our culture that it exercises monopolistic control. Capitalism needs competition.

This is embodied by the fact that Apple typically makes between a 30 and 40 per cent profit on their products. They can charge ludicrous prices because no other product is, frankly, as good.

In a recent report by CLW (in conjunction with Green America) on Apple parts manufacturer Catcher Technology entitled "Two Years of Broken Promises," a broad range of labour abuses were detailed.

In order to get a greater insight into this report, the CLW's Kevin Slaten elaborated on its conception.

"CLW is well known for undercover probes," he told me. "We send in investigators as workers. They get hired and work there for weeks and sometimes months."

This has led to the CLW documenting discriminatory hiring policies, stumbling blocks which make it difficult for workers to dispute labor conditions, an absence of sufficient training, mandatory overtime and an absence of functional unions.

Without overtime, an average worker in one of the third-party plants in China will earn around 2,000RMB a month, the equivalent of about \$320 in US dollars.

"That's not a living wage," Slaten said. "You can't live on that in a big city, especially if you have a family."

There are plenty of effective deductions to this wage, including a one-off \$40 for social insurance, \$0.81 per day for lunch (workers aren't allowed to leave the factory to eat), \$9.72 per month for accommodation, \$7.31 per month per person for energy bills at accommodation and \$0.24 for a bottle of Kangshi Boshan water. This water isn't provided for free, bottled or dispensed, and is \$0.08 above the price it is sold in stores outside of the plant.

"Workers are living in the most base conditions possible because they're trying to save as much of that money as possible," Slaten asserted.

I think this illustrates what kind of subsistence wage the third parties that Apple deals with pay their workers.

They brag on their Supplier Responsibility page on their website that "All overtime must be absolutely voluntary." However, the findings of CLW's report directly contradict this.

In December, the BBC broadcasted a documentary called "Apple's Broken Promises" that included video footage of workers being intimidated into working overtime. According to Slaten, this proves that beneath the surface of corporate spiel "the details are more murky. Overtime is not voluntary—the manager said, 'You do overtime or you leave, I don't need you around here if you're not going to work.'"

Another report by China Labor Watch entitled "iExploitation: Apple Supplier Jabil Exploits Workers to Meet iPhone6 Demands" states that "even after accumulating up to 158 hours of overtime per month, Jabil workers will earn less than the local average wage."

Conveniently, however, it's not actually Apple who does the exploiting.

Firms like Jabil and Catcher bid for contracts and then Apple leaves everything in their hands, thus allowing the corporation to distance itself from its suppliers' actions while painting itself as an interventionist mediator.

Although Apple has promoted a Supplier Code of Conduct since 2005—which details standard practices for employee rights under third parties—it's naïve to presume they will always be followed.

It is my opinion that Apple ought to build their own factories, employ their own staff and ensure standard practices are upheld themselves. They are the third-most profitable company on earth and registered a profit of \$39 billion last year, on top of their \$155 billion in the bank. They're worth nearly a quarter of a trillion dollars.

Apple is back in the spotlight once again after *The New York Times* document ed poor working conditions in 2012 amidst an explosion at an iPad assembly factory which killed four and injured 18.

Employees at Apple's factories in China are typically domestic workers who queue for hours at recruitment centres in gender-segregated cattle pens.

At the Foxconn Shenzhen Longhua employee accommodation centres, where 235,000 workers live in rooms of eight for slave wages, suicide nets were famously erected in 2010—and it was actually covered in the Western media. One lede read, "A suicide cluster in 2010 saw 18 workers throw themselves from the tops of the company's buildings, with 14 deaths."

Men and women travel for hours to work at these Apple plants and once they arrive they cannot leave, since they have nowhere else to go. In some instances, it's either overtime or suicide.

Employing workers domestically would eat into Apple's profits, so in order to minimize their production expenditures Apple, a company based in San Francisco, has the bulk of their manufacturing and assembly plants in China and other parts of Asia.

This is largely to avoid minimum wages in the West that are tenfold of those in the East. A starting wage would often be around \$1.78 per hour, so low that China does not deduct any payroll taxes.

When I spoke to Apple spokesperson Tara Hendela, she assured us that Apple was "combating excessive recruitment fees and bonded labour."

The reports cited above clearly contradict this claim, which suggests Apple isn't doing enough. Are they being willfully, or un-willfully ignorant?

Hendela continued, "Since 2008, our suppliers have reimbursed a total of US\$16.9 million to contract workers, including US\$3.9 million in 2013."

If that \$3.9 million was divided solely between the 235,000 employees at the Foxconn Shenzhen factory it would be a mere \$16.60 each: that's small change, to say the least.

When I made this point, amongst others, Hendela stated that she had "no official comment to add to [my] story" and directed me towards an open letter from Apple in response to the BBC's "Apple's Broken Promises" which was published in conservative newspaper *The Telegraph*.

It primarily recycled corporate speak that the BBC's documentary disproved with video evidence.

It's very easy to blame third parties that are based in authoritarian states for the shortcomings in your supply chain. One of the most profitable company of all time ought to begin taking responsibility and cease to outsource their labour to countries whose employment laws fall way below those in North America.

You can read the CLW report for yourself at chinalaborwatch.org

You can also read an extended version of this article at thelinknewspaper.ca.

Graphic Sam Jones



simplifying the student user experience

How Smartphone Apps are Changing Universities

by Michelle Pucci @michellempucci

There's an app for everything. Whether you're looking for a ride, medical advice or girl scout cookies, a 20-second download is the only thing in your way.

With most Canadian university students experiencing the majority of their social and academic lives in a digital realm, app developers are looking to tap into the market of people that are technologically literate.

While not limited to those in higher education, a Nielsen study showed over 85 per cent of 18- to 34-year-olds own a smartphone. In Canada, that number is expected to be even higher; some estimates say as much as 79 per cent of Canadians own a smartphone.

Even so, actually getting through to students has become more of a challenge.

"If today as a student I want to know what's going on at my campus, my choices are 20 different Facebook groups, ten different Twitter feeds—it gets really fragmented," said Danial Jameel from OOH LALA, an app development company focused on tools for university students.

Student life: There's an app for that

Fresh out of university, young developers in Montreal are gauging ways to get freshmen more involved in campus life.

"When I come to campus it's a very stressful time," Jameel said. "What do I have to do, where do I have to go, where are all my services?"

Created by University of Toronto and McGill students, OOH LALA now works with over 100 universities in the U.S., Canada, the U.K. and Ireland. Its developers have already won numerous business competitions and landed on the Forbes 30 Under 30 list for education.

The team based in Montreal works with uni-

versity administrators and student unions to set up software that organizes student services like advising, maps, campus events and calendars.

McGill launched an official OOH LALA app in September that was downloaded by some 80 per cent of first-years and worked with the developers to set up a campus treasure hunt in 2012.

The Concordia counterpart is a lot more bare-bones, meant to help organize student's time by personalizing their schedule and event functions. OOH LALA offers a free ConU version, but has yet to work with officials here, says Jameel, who has been focusing a lot on U.S. schools so far.

"If it helps you better organize yourself, if it helps you engage with your campus, chances are you're going to do really well," said Jameel about apps and student engagement.

Student engagement might solve the problem of university dropouts, who take on debt and end up costing universities.

Tom Zheng from Kreate, another developer targeted at non-profits, hopes to raise student interest in campus life and associations.

"The existing channels that they're using, such as Facebook or Twitter, are not made for the purpose of increasing engagement," said Zheng about university groups.

Zheng says the year-old startup is adamant about reducing political apathy.

Their software curates social media content to apps for student groups like the Arts and Science Federation of Associations (ASFA) and the Finance and Investment Students' Association (FISA) at Concordia.

Last November, Kreate worked with Robert Vagramov on an app during his bid for city council in the B.C. town of Port Moody. Plans to develop a system for student association elections will hopefully see the light by the end of the school year.

But some of the more successful apps are created

to keep up with virtual marketplaces, many of them providing freelancers new venues to sell their skills and buyers and sellers new platforms for exchange.

Recent Concordia finance grad Matthew Bruna launched a used book exchange app for university students last month. Sellers create a listing, scan their book's barcode, upload a photo and set the price.

Concordia's campus retail store offers a similar app, but Bruna says his app studEtree extends beyond Concordia and offers a lower commission.

"When you're dealing with bookstores you're constantly getting ripped off," he said.

The project was picked up by Fondation Montreal, which supports new start-ups by offering them professional resources.

Academic mobil-IT

Meanwhile in Concordia's IT offices, a new Student Information System (SIS) is being touched up and set for release by the end of the month.

The university's services portal, MyConcordia, never made it into the app market, and with a new system launching soon, an app probably won't exist in the immediate future.

"Whatever app would have been created would have had to be reworked from scratch," said Alex Aragano, director of the application portfolio management.

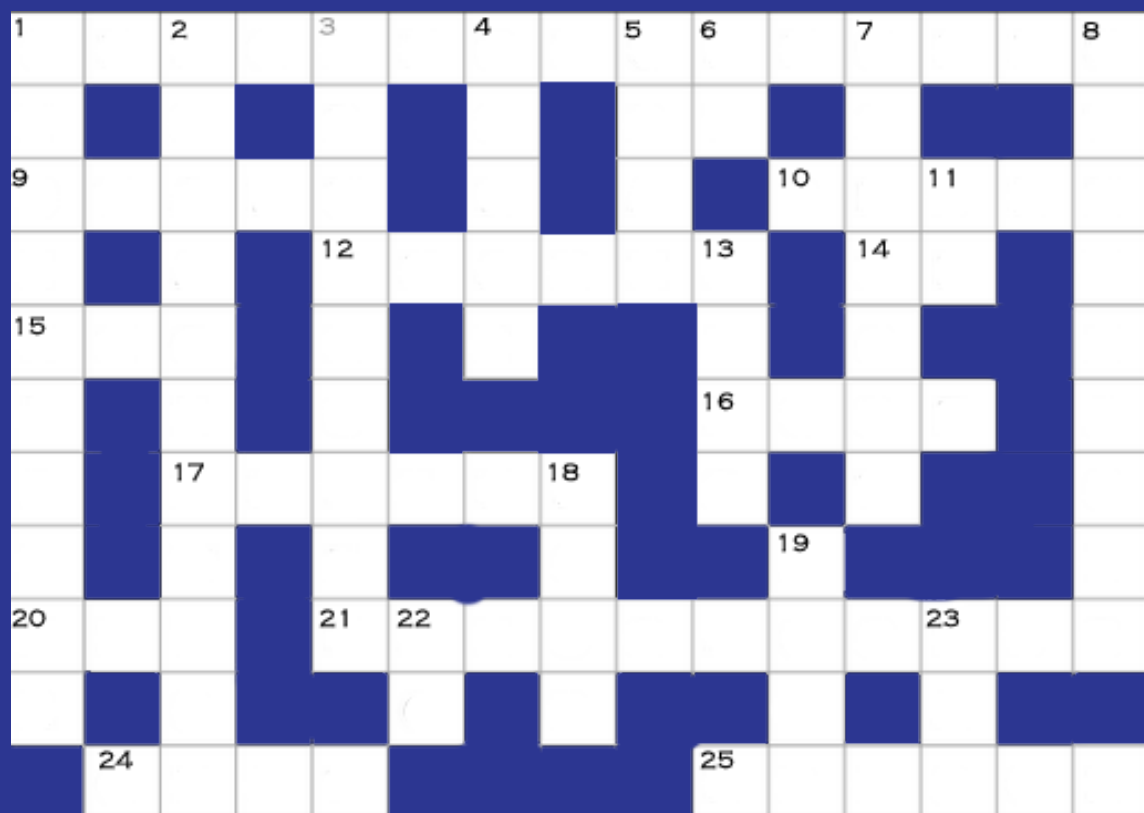
An app is planned for later this year if all goes well, says Aragano, hopefully involving student in Concordia's software engineering program.

"This is something that we're working on. We haven't officially decided to move forward," he said.

And though the SIS will revamp the old portal and include new mobile features for people using browsers on their phones and tablets, looking towards McGill and the École de Technologie Supérieure, Concordia's in the market for a new app.

Graphic Laura Lalonde

Neil Degrasse Tyson couldn't finish this crossword, can you?



ACROSS

1. This book became the foundation for all of modern biology. "On the..." (6, 2, 7)
9. A Japanese term typically referring to a young person obsessed with anime, manga or video games; a shade more specific than "geek." (5)
10. Although it's known as a means of dyeing hair, more generally this word refers to the blending of one colour to another. (5)
12. A sector of industry that's behind a lot of what you get over the counter. Big _____. (5)
14. This brief initialism measures alkalinity. (2)
15. Einstein's famous thesis, minus the number. (3)
16. The amount of a drug you take. Don't overdo it. (4)
17. Gustav designed a particularly famous tower. (6)
20. Medical acronym for the orifices on and around our head. (3)
21. 1,000,000,000 of these multiplied by 60 equals a minute. (11)
24. Similar to a mosquito. Perhaps they swarm more. (4)
25. Thanks to this guy we can illuminate our rooms without an oil lamp. Surname only. (6)

DOWN

1. The Montreal Protocol helped to ease depletion of this sky shield. (5, 5)
2. This scientist famously had a brainwave after an incident in an orchard. (5, 6)
3. Got a headache but ran out of aspirin: what on earth would you administer? (9)
4. Paddle, swim or sail in this wet place. (5)
5. This tinned ham clogs your inbox sans filter. (4)
6. It sounds delicious, and its decimals run into the trillions. (2)
7. Biodegradable waste that can become a home for worms in your backyard. (7)
8. This entrepreneur who died in 2011 divides opinion. (5, 4)
11. Bohrium's symbol on the periodic table. (2)
13. This highly stigmatized disease is best known by its acronym. (4)
18. A complete circuit for an electric current. (4)
19. A substance with a pH level below 7 gets this designation. (4)
22. Gold on the periodic table. (2)
23. U.S. administration that deals with everything beyond our earth. Whether it's worth the money it gets is another question. Acronym, minus the final letter. (3)



the longest dream in the world

*Concordia Student Jakub Muda Prepares
For Eight-Month Expedition Across Canada*

by Julien Assouline @julienassouline

In February 2014, Jakub Muda, a student at Concordia University, was looking to embark on a grand adventure. By the time you read this article, Muda will be preparing for an expedition that has been described as “the longest dream in the world.”

“I [was] looking for something a few years ago, to do something big in my life,” Muda told *The Link*. “I decided to do some kind of adventure, [something] that nobody had done before.”

On Jan. 15, Muda will begin an 8,000 km expedition across Canada, trekking from the city of Victoria, British Columbia to finish about eight months later in Cape Spear, Newfoundland, the most eastern point of the country.

Muda’s reasoning for the journey is to bring awareness to technological development, as well as the fields of chemistry and science. During the expedition, he will be raising money through online donations to complete his majors in chemistry and mathematics at Concordia, in order to fulfill his dreams of working for the Canadian Space Agency and going on a spaceflight.

In preparation for his journey, Muda went through a long and demanding training regimen, both physical and mental, that began last February. The 21-year-old student met with a psychologist at Concordia for four months, while also acclimatizing himself to the cold conditions.

“I was running with equipment, with my backpack. It’s really heavy,” said Muda. “I was going out of Montreal for a few days with all the equipment to [train]. I was walking a lot of kilometres, more

than one hundred.”

“I like the outdoors,” he continued. “But in Canada, it’s extremely cold, extremely windy, so that’s why I had to repeat everything and I have to be prepared [mentally] for the worst.”

Muda also worked with nutritionist Thea Demmers, who teaches healthy eating classes at Concordia’s PERFORM Centre at Loyola Campus. The two met on two occasions where Demmers helped to evaluate Muda’s progress. Demmers planned strategies and created a food menu for the student to use during his expedition.

“We were preparing all kinds of food, adjusting the amount of calories, the amount of proteins,” said Muda. “Everything must be perfect.”

Muda will be stopping at different hotels during his journey, meaning he will have the chance to warm up and eat hotel food, but otherwise he’ll have to survive on snacks and freeze-dried food during his trek, a necessity for hungry backpackers.

Some of Muda’s frozen foods contain up to 500 calories in 100 grams of food. However, Demmers has instilled in Muda that he needs more than frozen food to nourish himself.

“In terms of food group portions he can’t just have any type of protein, mostly fried and frozen food, to have a balanced diet,” said Demmers.

Demmers is confident that Muda is up to the challenge.

“It was a great experience [working with Muda]. He’s very courageous, very ambitious and very eager to learn and is trying to be in the best shape as possible.”

Muda doesn’t deny that he had his doubts about the expedition during his training, but he found inspiration in someone else who attempted a similar journey—Terry Fox, who attempted a countrywide run with a prosthetic leg to raise money for cancer awareness. Muda even pays tribute to Terry Fox on his website, www.8000kmacrosscanada.com.

“Terry Fox was the biggest [inspiration],” Muda said. “Raising money for cancer, running basically on one leg, it’s tremendous, it’s amazing.”

“[He] basically inspired me to do something great, and I decided that I needed to do this marathon.”

Through his website, Muda has gained a wide array of sponsors and supporters, including Polish explorer Marek Kaminski, who holds the Guinness World Record for being one of the first people to walk from the North to the South Pole. Muda will document his journey through videos and posts on his website, as well as Twitter, Facebook, YouTube, and Google+.

The student also plans on creating a documentary and writing a book composed of his journal entries from the journey once it has been completed.

“200-something days, everyday. One page [a day],” said Muda. “It [will be] pretty nice book.”

Photo Shaun Michaud

from the slopes
to the silver screen



BOX SCORES

WEEK OF JAN. 6 TO JAN 12

FRIDAY

9

Women's Hockey—Concordia 0, UdeM 2
Men's Hockey—Concordia 5, UofT 3

SATURDAY

10

Men's Hockey—Concordia 2, Ryerson 3

UPCOMING GAMES

COMING UP IN CONCORDIA SPORTS

THURSDAY

15

6:00 p.m. Women's Basketball vs. Bishop's Gaiters (Concordia Gymnasium)
8:00 p.m. Men's Basketball vs. Bishop's Gaiters (Concordia Gymnasium)

FRIDAY

16

7:30 p.m. Women's Hockey vs. McGill Martlets (Ed Meagher Arena)

SATURDAY

17

6:00 p.m. Women's Basketball at Bishop's Gaiters
7:30 p.m. Men's Hockey at Windsor Lancers
8:00 p.m. Men's Basketball at Bishop's Gaiters

Banff Mountain Film Festival Kicks Off Quebec Tour at Concordia University

by Erik Trudel

This coming Wednesday evening, outdoor sports fans can partake in a cinematic experience that will bring together adventure and sport, which is sure to bring a thrill to all movie-goers.

"There's a lot of movies that marry both human adventure and active adventure. So, you have a well-balanced kind of evening."

The Banff Mountain Film Festival World Tour will kick off the Quebec leg of its tour on Wednesday, Jan. 14 at Concordia University's Hall Building. The film festival will be showcasing nine films that will appeal to adventurers, outdoor enthusiasts and travellers.

The tour will be showcasing 24 shows in 18 cities across Quebec from January to March, including six shows in Montreal, which will be the only date to feature animation in English.

"This is something we're testing right now at Concordia and it should be a good hit," said Stéphane Corbeil, director of the World Tour in Quebec.

Corbeil added that the short films tend to be more adrenaline-oriented, such as "Arctic Swell: Surfing the Ends of the Earth," which focuses on photographer Chris Burkard capturing surfers under extreme conditions. He thinks there are a few longer movies that attendees should pay attention to as well.

"There's two movies, *Cerro Torre: A Snowball's Chance in Hell* and *Valley Uprising: The Golden Age*," Corbeil said. "That would be the two most intense movies we're going to be presenting this year. *Cerro Torre* was filmed in Patagonia with a very well known climber in the industry whose name is David Lama. The other film is about the golden age in the Yosemite Valley at Camp 4."

Corbeil has always had the mindset of having variety in the films shown at the festival, rather than 150 minutes of only extreme movies.

"I'm looking for movies that are going to inspire people and in which the protagonist is someone who can make a close contact [with the audience]," Corbeil said.

Enthusiasts will be watching movies Corbeil viewed four to ten times during the selection process. A jury selected 80 films

out of a pool of 300. The lucky ones were presented over several days before the tour hosts built their own program from an even shorter list.

"For working for a long time, I think I developed a good sense for what people are expecting," said Corbeil. "So I try to select diversity from where the action is being taken, where the movie brings us ... it's a matter of balance."

The festival has received films from both experienced and first-time directors.

"When I'm on stage, I always tell people you don't have to be a professional with five or ten films in your background," said Corbeil. "Each year, I see about ten films being presented to the public of Banff where it's only the filmmaker's first movie."

Corbeil remarked that he has seen a consistent rise in terms of quality of the production during his years at the helm. He said it has become more dense and intense in terms of emotions. Today, the films have stories and a penchant for art.

"You have more art in adventure-oriented movies compared to 20 years ago, where the art part of the movie was more in the European movies that we didn't see so frequently," he said. "Right now, you can have Canadians doing adventure films that have very interesting tandems of engagement and determination, but also in terms of an artistic way of doing them."

Corbeil is amazed by people's attachment to the festival and is preparing for a growth in attendance for this year's edition.

"Most people buy the tickets without even knowing what the movies are because they know in the past they always had a very good evening, so I guess we have a relationship of trust being built during the years," Corbeil said.

"Last year around 18,000 people attended the festival and this year we're adding new cities and new venues, so I would believe it would be around 18,000 to 20,000 people in the province."

The Banff Mountain Film Festival will be held in the Hall building at the H-110 Alumni Auditorium on Wednesday, Jan. 14 at 7 p.m.

Photos courtesy of Banff Winter Festival



Franky the Mobster (above) takes a kick to the chest during Battlewar 24 at the Fougounes Électriques bar this past Sunday night. Franky the Mobster is one of the many wrestlers who make up Battlewar, a wrestling collective that has been in existence since 2012.

welcome to the (battle) war

Battlewar Brings the Ruckus to Fougounes Électriques



by Julian McKenzie @JulianTheIntern

Standing at five-foot-ten and 140 pounds in the confines of Fougounes Électriques, James McGee, better known as Twiggy, isn't your prototypical wrestler. Donning shades, a Michael Jackson jacket from the "Thriller" music video, a red headband and red, white and black chaps, he resembles a trick-or-treater more than your average wrestler.

"What are you trying to say?" Twiggy said, insulted at *The Link's* suggestion that he doesn't fit the stereotype of a wrestler. "What I lack in muscle, I make up for in speed, poise and agility."

"Can you imagine what it's like if I bunch these skinny fingers up, balled them into a fist and punch you in the face? It's like getting hit in the face with a jagged stone. It's all bone."

Lacking in burliness, but not in confidence, Twiggy is one of the major players of Battlewar, a wrestling collective set up at Fougounes Électriques by Twiggy's mild-mannered alter-ego, James McGee, and his business partner and fellow wrestler, Mike Dupont (a.k.a. Giant Tiger).

"Me and [Mike] were talking about how it was a shame that there wasn't really that over-the-top

wrestling company in the city that audiences flock to," said McGee.

McGee and Dupont committed to doing a wrestling show in 2012 and haven't looked back since. Twenty-three shows later, Battlewar will celebrate its third year of existence this year.

This past weekend Battlewar 24 took place, featuring a full slate of solo and tag-team matches.

In addition to Twiggy, Battlewar 24 featured a mixed bag of wrestlers who all differ in size, strength and personalities.

"You're seeing a variety show of professional wrestlers," said McGee. "There's big guys, there's small guys, there's fat guys, there's skinny guys and they're all doing different things to characters unique to who they are."

For starters, there's the demonic Dirty Buxx Belmar, whose voice sounds like a raspy, chilling mixture of Batman and The Joker. The reigning champion of Battlewar sports black marker on his face and chest.

"I'm a dirty man; I do weird stuff and I like to do it," he grunts. "I do exactly what I want, is there a problem with that? You can get in the ring with me if you wish," he told *The Link* menacingly.

There's Twiggy's former tag-team partner, Franky the Mobster, who boasts a six-foot-one, 220-plus pound frame; veins bulge from his neck and muscular, tattoo-adorned arms.

The two were once a fearsome tandem known as The Rock 'N' Roid Express, who served painful takedowns onto their opponents and became crowd favourites. This past Sunday, however, the duo was forced to part ways after losing their tag-team match against The Tankmen, a match where the winners would remain together and the losers would separate.

After their defeat, Franky addressed the crowd, saddened at the thought of no longer being able to fight with his scrawny mate. The crowd gave a mixture of cheers and taunts. Once Franky couldn't handle the taunts, he fought back.

"I wish cancer upon all of your mothers," Franky said, prompting "ooohhs" and boos from the crowd.

Giant Tiger is another character, a short, chunky man who wears a tiger mask and boasts of his sexual prowess in the arena. He wished for "something heavy" on Sunday night and he got it in Mike Gibson, a massive man who was practically

unmovable. Giant Tiger comically attempted to lift Gibson off his feet numerous times, but to no avail.

Tiger soon met his fate as Gibson manhandled and crushed his opponent with slams and take-downs. It didn't stop Tiger from boogieing to his entrance music "Getting Jiggy With It" by Will Smith in defeat.

Scenes in Battlewar are choreographed beforehand, decisions are predetermined and, of course, the reactions to pain are loud and excessive. However, there is real physicality—in some cases, even blood.

Body slams, flips, and takedowns. Punches, slaps, kicks and shoves. The bodies fly and land painfully on the canvas, or in the audience. Meanwhile, an animated crowd cheers and heckles the wrestlers, while delivering "ooohs" and "ahhhs" to every slam.

"It's physical theatre," said McGee.

"We were just looking for something to capture the imagination of wrestling audiences in the city of Montreal where we showcase the best pro wrestlers that the city has to offer."

Photos Elysia-Marie Campbell

opinions

Let's Talk Academic Freedom

A Response to Concordia President Alan Shepard About the BDS Movement

by Nakina Stratos

I would like to pose a question in response to the Concordia University president's message about the Boycott, Divest and Sanctions Against Israel Movement where he accused it of contradicting academic freedom on campus.

Does academic freedom at Concordia University entail Concordia's adoption of a sole narrative of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict?

To give some context to this question, we should shed some light on Concordia's infamous Azrieli Institute of Israel Studies, which is named after David Joshua Azrieli, a man who, according to the *Financial Post*, fought in the Arab-Israeli war in 1948 alongside the Jewish paramilitary organization Haganah. Haganah played a significant role in killing and displacing hundreds of thousands of Palestinians, according to infamous Israeli historian Ilan Pappé.

This organization was also outlawed by the British authority who were governing the Mandate of Palestine at the time.

Concordia University has accepted five million dollars from Mr. Azrieli and named the sole institute at Concordia devoted to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict after him.

The story does not end here. Browsing the website of the Azrieli Institute of Israel Studies, you will never find the words "Palestine" or "Palestinian people."

I searched the keyword "Palestine" multiple times in the website search engine, and nothing was retrieved.

The million-dollar question here is: how can the only institute at Concordia University that teaches about Israeli

history neglect to mention Palestine even once?

This, to me, aligns with the far-right Israeli narrative, which is a total elimination of Palestinian history in an attempt to erase the concept of Palestine from the dictionary of the Middle East.

If Concordia university is interested in academic freedom, it would not close the door on any exchange programs with Palestinian universities (there are many good ones) while widely opening the door to Israeli universities, such as Technion-Israel Institute of Technology and Ben-Gurion University of the Negev, which have direct military projects with the Israeli Army.

This leads me to the last question: if we are ardent supporters of academic freedom, shouldn't we have a stance against all of the countries that stifle academic freedom?

The Israeli Army has arrested thousands of Palestinian students and professors, bombarded hundreds of Palestinian schools and universities and deprived all Gaza and West Bank students from entering its educational system.

I am a huge supporter of academic freedom, but I think it will only be fully achieved when we ensure that both sides of the narrative are equally represented and portrayed.

Renowned universities like Concordia should aspire to offer their students a balanced story of world conflicts, instead of trying to create smokescreens and hollow justifications whenever the students protest the one narrative that they are being taught.

Graphic Jennifer Aedy

ALAN SHEPARD SAYS:



Nah'msayin?

Feel Olive My Rage At Once

When one loads up on Greco greens at Al-Taib or any downtown deli, one may accidentally encounter an olive lurking somewhere in the belly of one's Mediterranean smorgasbord.

Invariably, these will be unpitted.

You lift your fork, with your salad suspended in midair; it enters your mouth like a train to a tunnel, you chew. Something tough hits.

Cue: molar splintering—which precedes choking akin to a scene featuring a Heimlich maneuver reminiscent of a Mrs. Doubtfire prank turned would-be manslaughter.

Why the fuck did nobody tell me there was a massive pit in my fucking meal?!?!? Too late now.

I died. I'm writing this from beyond the grave.

Why is it that in our politically correct, nutritiously conscious, ultra-informative society deli-people can omit to mention the existence of such deadly pits?

Moral of the story: delve into this salad headfirst and you may choke.

— Mattha Busby
Opinions Editor

Graphic Celine Cardineau





Committing to Your Sexuality

Is there anything that you regularly see in people that is impeding them from more fully enjoying their sexuality?

There are many things I see impeding people, myself included. I'll focus on one thing that has been on my mind recently: a lack of commitment to learning about and exploring one's sexuality.

I've been thinking about this because one of the most common things people tend to ask me is how I know so much about sex.

The simple answer is that I've made a commitment to reading and exposing myself to a variety of perspectives and resources in order to better understand my own sexuality and to help others do the same.

I'm drawn to material that presents views or ideas I'm unfamiliar with and this has led me to the voices that have most informed and shaped my views on sex.

Making this sort of commitment can be difficult for some people, but in order to grow you need to first be learning something to grow from.

There are two major hurdles to making this commitment to learning: being unwilling to make

the effort or being embarrassed to.

Many people seem to want to acquire all the knowledge while expending the least effort possible.

When I'm asked questions about sex and relationships, or to recommend specific books or articles related to what someone is facing, they often respond with "can you just tell me the gist of it?" as though I could do a decade of relationship research justice or tell them everything about every birth control method in a five-minute conversation.

If an issue you're facing is important to you, then it's probably worth investing some time into it.

Often, the people we assume are naturally gifted and knowledgeable when it comes to sex and relationships have just invested more time into learning about and improving those areas of their lives.

It really comes down to how much effort you're willing to put into your desired outcomes, and an unwillingness to even consider reading a book says a lot.

If your hurdle to learning is embarrassment, try breaking out of the idea that seeking knowledge on any topic is embarrassing.

I admit, I haven't yet mastered this myself.

I'm not above shying away from reading certain books in public or blushing when someone sees my search history.

The last two books I read, despite being brilliant and life-changing, never left my home simply due to their titles—"Vagina" (Naomi Wolf) and "What Makes Love Last?" (John Gottman).*

Still, I think it's important to seek and create strategies to learn about the topics that matter to you, whether it's by reading them in spaces where you feel safe and comfortable or by working towards owning the discomfort.

Some people will say they can't make this commitment to learning because they don't have the time. Between school and working, I know it can be difficult to find time for anything else.

However, if you're like most people, sex and relationships are a pretty key component of your life, so it's worth reflecting on why you might not invest time despite wishing these areas would change.

People tend to neglect putting time into maintenance and only look into how to make improvements once they are already struggling, which is often when it's most difficult to do so.

Putting some time in before then will likely result in less time spent on issues at a later date.

There are small ways to start doing this if you're not sure where to start.

You can search online for articles on topics you're curious about and look into other work by the authors. Look into sexuality workshops and events happening in the city**, or even just engage in conversations on these topics with people in your life to gain different perspectives.

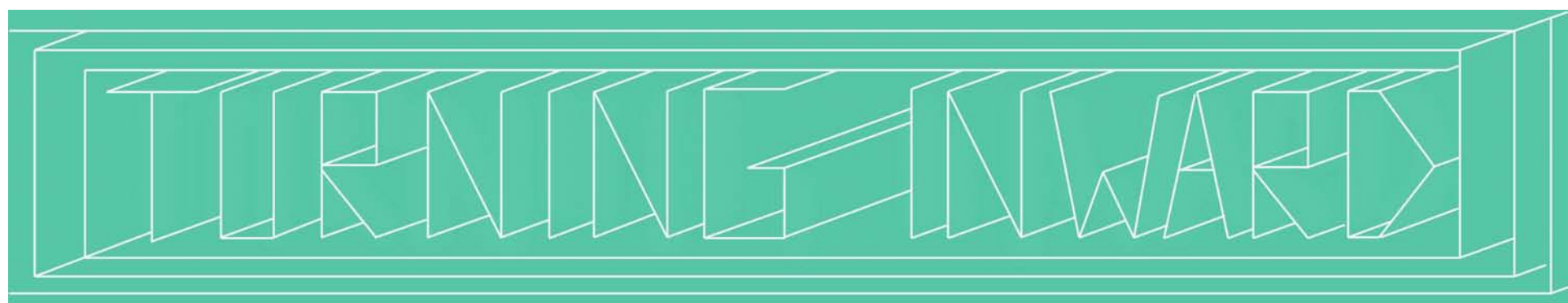
If you're not sure where to start, articles on sexuality and relationships are also regularly shared on the Sex & Pancakes Facebook group so you can head over there and start exploring.

-Melissa Fuller @mel_full

For more, like "Sex & Pancakes" on Facebook and check out melissafuller.ca

*I highly recommend these books if either topic interests you!

**Le Salon de l'Amour et de la Séduction is an event worth checking out Jan. 16-18th at Place Bonaventure: amouretseduction.com



Distractable Minds

Who's Got Who On A Leash

by Gonzo Nieto

A mind that wanders unmanageably can be a costly and wasteful ride with a host of unwanted consequences.

Streams of unrelated thoughts sometimes cause you to miss parts of a conversation or to be thinking rather than really listening when someone else is talking; half an hour after you pull up a browser window, you've got 15 tabs open but you haven't read a single one through to the end; you find yourself having to reread segments of a book because you weren't really paying attention to what you read; you have difficulty focusing on schoolwork because your mind wanders seemingly on its own, ignoring your pleas and leaving you feeling out of control and easily distractible.

Attention and focus are implicated in everything we do, so how well we can harness our attention has a significant impact on our lived experience and quality of life.

The moments in which we need presence of mind the most are when it's hardest to summon, such as when we're in an argument, feeling anxious or stressed or working under a deadline.

Times like these can feel as though we are at the whim of a sometimes short and often erratic attention span.

Some people speak of their inability to focus as something they have, the way one has green eyes or a third arm.

I've fallen into this thinking trap in the past as well. It can easily seem to be a part of ourselves, an unchanging and defining characteristic.

For many people, school has done a good job of drilling into them that they are someone who has attention issues.

This belief can also quickly become a self-fulfilling prophecy.

But our ability to deploy attention is less a static trait and more a muscle.

It grows stronger through practice and deteriorates if neglected. It takes effort to refocus when we catch ourselves getting distracted.

Sometimes we can supply that effort and sometimes we get frustrated and give up.

A lot of the time, we don't even notice that our mind is elsewhere.

The ability to maintain one's awareness on the present situation is known as mindfulness.

It's about not being distracted from the here-and-now of whatever it is you are doing so that you may be more present and aware.

Developing mindfulness is in part a process of bringing attention under conscious, willful control, instead of being at the whim of whatever catches your mind's eye.

With that in mind, I wanted to share a simple meditative practice that can help develop mindfulness and reign in your mind's tendency to wander.

It has proven very beneficial for me, and it's something you can easily do on your own.

To start, sit or lie down in a comfortable spot. Close your eyes and relax; on each exhale of your breath, allow the warmth of that relaxation to sweep over your body.

Begin to draw your breaths from your abdomen, and bring your attention to the sensations of breathing. Focus on the feeling of air rushing through your nose and throat, and your belly rising and falling.

Begin to count each time you breathe out. Count in this way until ten, and then start again.

It seems simple, but in the beginning a lot of people get distracted before one full count.

And so this is the exercise: each time you catch your mind wandering, simply recognize it and allow the thought to pass, then return your focus to counting and the sensations of breathing.

Breathing is the point of focus because it is always present; it is always now. It is an anchor to be returned to when your mind wanders.

As you continue this practice over a couple of weeks, it has the effect of unlearning the idea that your mind can wander whenever it pleases, replac-

ing it with the idea that awareness ought to be on the present moment, what you are choosing to do.

This meditation can be done for however long you like.

Some people might do it for 5-7 minutes when they are feeling overwhelmed or distracted, while others might do a longer meditation once a day. It's entirely up to your personal preference, but what's important is consistency.

After having done this for 15 minutes once a day for two months, I began noticing differences: I was more present in listening and was not thinking at the same time; I could read or focus on other things for longer without getting distracted as easily; and I could reflect and follow my own thoughts for longer and with more intention.

It felt as though I had not only more attention resources available at all times, but more control over them as well.

It's easy to feel like there's nothing we can do to help our distractible nature. I know I felt that way for a long time.

However, my experience with simple techniques such as the example above have shown me that we are not nearly as helpless as we might think, and that through practice it's possible to come into much more balanced relationships with our awareness and sense of presence.

Try it out!

Boop by Caity Hall



Balloon Ventures by Mengekko Jones



False Knees by Joshua Barkman





On Charlie Hebdo: Government Suppression and Media Hypocrisy

In the wake of the attacks on French satirical magazine *Charlie Hebdo*, people around the globe have taken to the streets in a show of support for both the victims and for free speech itself.

It's important to remember, however, that governments that repress the media are the greatest threat posed to free speech and uncensored expression. During the last two years alone, 177 journalists around the world have been imprisoned, according to Reporters Without Borders.

The United States' internal investigation of torture revealed that the CIA purposefully misled members of the press by "leaking" false information, while the Canadian government, under Prime Minister Stephen Harper, has made it impossible for environmental scientists working for the government to publish or disseminate their work. This has effectively created a wall of public relations between information and the public.

In late 2011, two Swedish journalists interviewing people in the conflict-prone Ogaden region in Ethiopia were sentenced to 11 years in prison for

"rendering support to terrorism."

While the attacks on *Charlie Hebdo* have raised support for free speech, the popular narrative has leaned more towards nationalism, demagoguery, and populist rhetoric. The public, European and North American alike, must be wary of governmental tendency to use tragedy to further a xenophobic agenda.

This was evident in Stephen Harper's speech following the shooting on Parliament Hill. It was evident in the hastily legislated laws issued in the wake of the Sydney café attack in Australia. And now it's happening in France.

Calling to "libérer la parole" or liberate speech, reactionary extremists of the French far-right party Le Front National, such as Marine Le Pen, have jumped at the opportunity to legitimate an Islamophobic discourse.

Instrumentalizing the attack, Le Pen has also announced her wish to reopen the debate on the death penalty in France. Careful in her choice of words, she points at the dangers of "Islamic

fundamentalism," leaving her rhetoric open to interpretation.

With such a broad statement and total lack of nuance, her words heighten feelings of xenophobia and resentment. It fuels a dialogue which pins the blame for France's security issues on immigration, a large part of which is from traditionally Muslim countries in North Africa.

We have already seen this in the United States. In the immediate aftermath of 9/11, American media struggled to piece together the tragedy. Because little else was confirmed at the time, they focused on the identities of the hijackers, emphasizing their radical religious beliefs and Middle Eastern backgrounds.

It is reasonable that media outlets consistently referred to the 9/11 hijackers as terrorists. Today, however, Western media has adopted a troubling habit of only applying the label "terrorist" in situations where the perpetrator is Muslim.

Case in point: in 2011, right-wing extremist

Anders Breivik of Norway bombed government buildings in Oslo and slaughtered 69 people in a mass shooting, killing 77 in total. Breivik, who committed his crimes in the name of Christianity and specifically targeted Norway's Labour Party, was a terrorist by definition, but nearly all media coverage of his massacre referred to him as "deranged," "a lunatic," or "a mass killer."

All of these characterizations may be valid, but the ugly truth is that in our media coverage today Muslim criminals are categorized as terrorists and non-Muslim criminals are simply "crazy."

While mass media outlets do a disappointing job of guiding the discourse in times of unthinkable tragedy, we must reiterate the pivotal role played by writers, illustrators, reporters, editors and anyone who makes a living re-examining the politics and social concerns of the cultural milieu in any democratic country.

Graphic Jennifer Aedy

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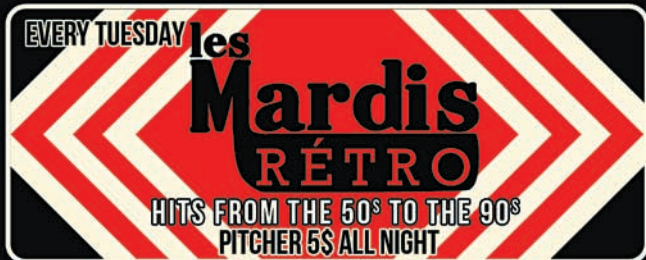
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