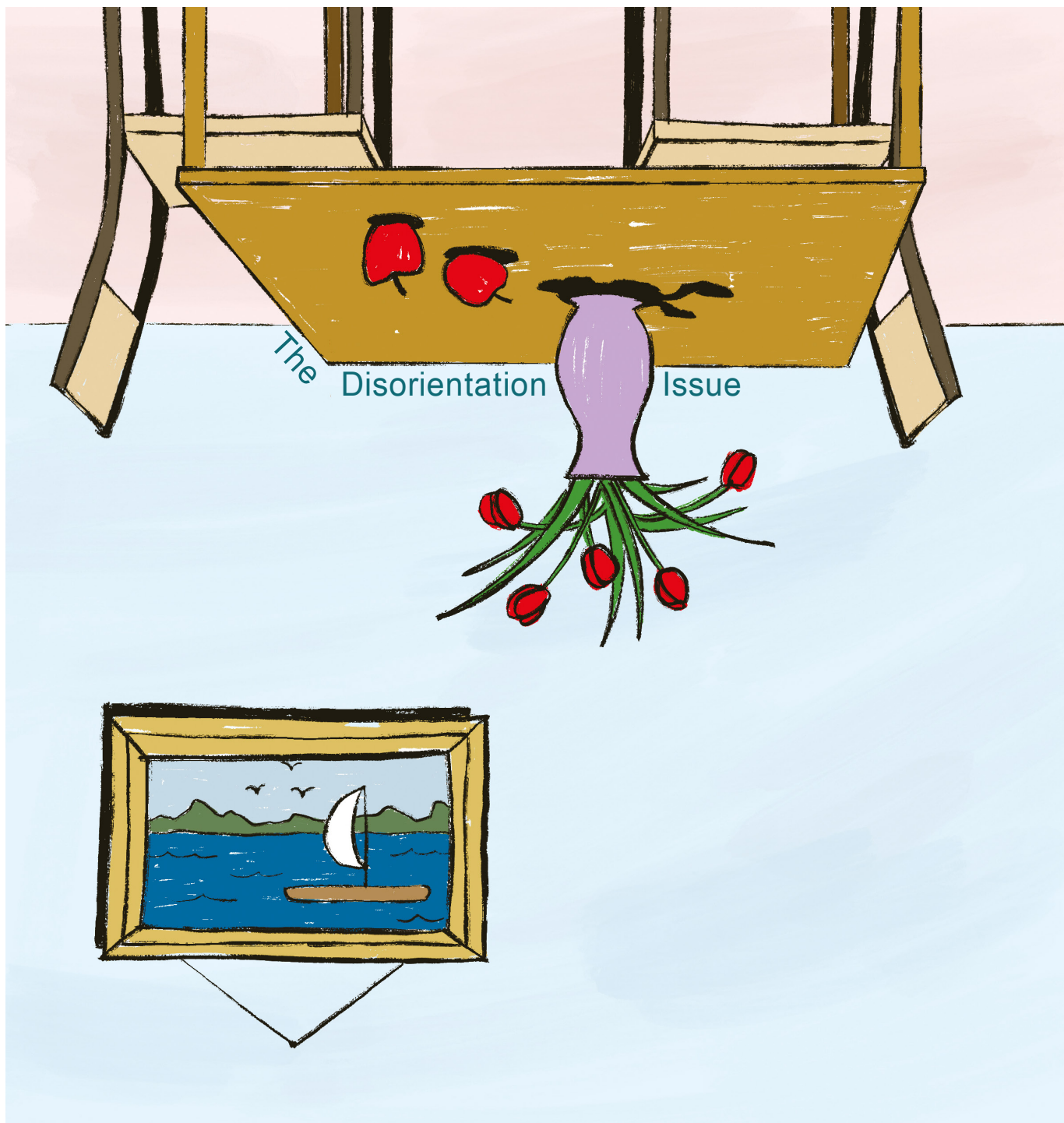


September 2020
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thelinknewspaper.ca



WELCOME!



2020 has been a year like no other, and we're here to prepare you for the challenges that come with such unprecedented times.

Whether you're in Montreal, elsewhere in Canada, or living abroad, we're ready and eager to welcome you to the Concordia community. Together, we'll learn to do things differently and do them well.

Have a great year!

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Graham Carr".

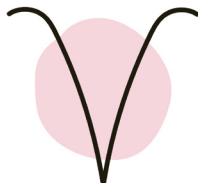
Graham Carr
President
graham.carr@concordia.ca



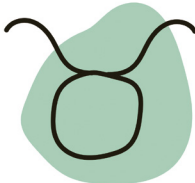
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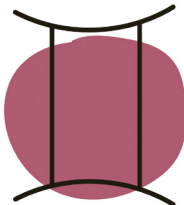
"I only care about three things: ayahuasca, hentai, and Carly Rae Jepsen," since 1980



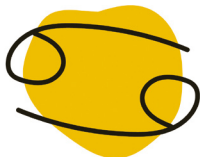
Aries (March 21-April 19): It doesn't matter where your Venus is, your love life is going to suck, so just a heads up on that. Disappointment and ghostings lie around every corner, so buckle up kiddo. Your lucky day was yesterday. Absolutely abysmal.



Taurus (April 20-May 20): You will meet the love of your life in ECON 201, but beware the interference of Jupiter, which could cause your wi-fi connection to drop. Zoom can't relaunch without a version update.



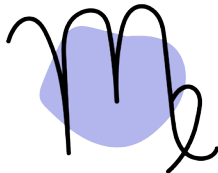
Gemini (May 21-June 20): Make this a self-care day, Gemini. After signing out of your analytical chemistry class, lay down on your living room floor and blast Drake's biggest hits from *Views* on your tinny phone speakers to bring you back to summer '16. It's all been downhill since.



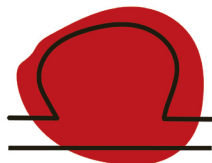
Cancer (June 21-July 22): Make sure to read up on tenants' rights as Pluto, which rules loss and common property, squares off with the moon, which rules the home. Renoviction season comes faster than you think!



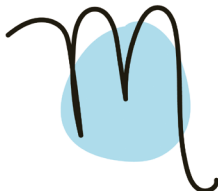
Leo (July 23-Aug. 22): The magnetism of Pluto symbolizes transformation and re-birth, but your liberal professors have brainwashed you into thinking it's a dwarf planet, no matter what your parents say. Therefore, everything will be in stasis forever.



Virgo (Aug. 23-Sept. 22): You certainly can't make out in the staircases anymore, so how are you going to get a thrill this year? Mars is in retrograde from Sept. 9 to Nov. 14, so get freaky in the breakout rooms.



Libra (Sept. 23-Oct. 22): You are entering your solar return! This is a great time for personal expansion and to gain new knowledge. Read *Are Prisons Obsolete?* by Angela Y. Davis.



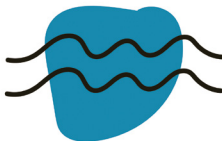
Scorpio (Oct. 23-Nov. 21): Be wary of cucumbers. Staying too hydrated will clear your mind to the point of radicalization. Drink up, but only if you want to get with it, comrade. Your lucky numbers are 17, 38.



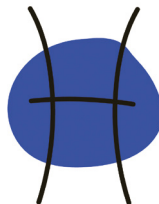
Sagittarius (Nov. 22-Dec. 21): I asked the stars about your GPA, and Mercury told me to tell you to keep your hopes lower than your 2.6 GPA, which will make it look bigger. This tip works for a variety of things.



Capricorn (Dec. 22-Jan. 19): Since all aspects of our lives are confined to our homes, Neptune cannot guide you to the wonderful surprises life has in store for you via happy coincidences. Error 404: Destination not found. You keep circling your living room.



Aquarius (Jan. 20-Feb. 18): Your attempts at humour may fall short.



Pisces (Feb. 19-March 20): Usually your lucky numbers are 3, 6, 14. This time, don't look out for them because it really doesn't matter.

Graphic Sheena Macmillan

Orientation: The Remix

An unusual year brings an unusual magazine, a digital magazine: The Disorientation Issue.

Orientation was our first issue after converting from newspaper to magazine in 2017 and has been a staple of *The Link* for much longer. As 2020 continues to throw the world for a loop, it was only appropriate that the inaugural issue of volume 41 reflect that.

We've lived a summer of isolation to contain a pandemic. We've experienced shock and grief from tragedies around the world and at home. Masked masses took to the streets in righteous anger at the violence endured by Black communities. Monuments to racists and colonizers have been torn down.

While most students probably didn't have school on their minds, the Concordia Student Union council has clashed all summer. Many of its members were subjected to a work environment poisoned by racism and transphobia as they lost narrow votes on meaningful issues.

We encourage incoming students to realize how much it matters who represents them at their student union, and we hope in 2021 to see an improved voter turnout. Last year, it was 5.6 per cent.

Reimagining our Orientation issue for a digital school experience has probably been as disorienting as starting university from your bedroom. What is a useful map of Concordia when students are scattered in isolation?

The Disorientation Issue, and our coverage to come in the months

ahead, aims to capture the breadth of this new learning experience. We, too, will spend the semester trying to figure out a balance between staying healthy—both physically and mentally—maintaining financial security, and maybe even passing our classes.

Amid the turmoil, some of us are finding ourselves in better situations. Fully online learning is an accessibility milestone. Yet, many students are feeling cheated out of core university experiences.

As we enter this semester we must remember that learning transcends the physical classroom. We must recognize which walls are barriers and which ones are load bearing. Within this chaotic and abrupt change we must find the pieces that will be the foundation of a better learning experience for all students.

Back-to-school season was already a hectic time for most of us, a dreaded end to summer fun intertwined with an uncool febrility for an environment that brings us sweet joy and bitter pain.

As we grapple with the fragility of everything we love, let's not forget to find joy where we can. You won't get to show up to your Friday 9 a.m. lecture with your hangover sunglasses or crack jokes to the desk over, but don't let that stop you from pioneering new stupid university experiences. Take a bong rip during your Zoom lecture, shoot your shot in the chat—whatever keeps you sane.

Wash your hands, tip your service workers, and hopefully we can soon walk again through the leaky tunnel. **LI**

Starting a New Chapter Virtually

My concerns as a first-year student

Mariana Chajon Oliveros

When I began imagining university, I saw myself walking through long corridors with friends and attending lectures in big conference rooms. I would've never imagined I'd be attending an 8 a.m. class in pyjamas with my dog on my lap.

My experience in CEGEP was wonderful: I found a program I was passionate about and friends who shared the same goals as me. Going to school felt less like a chore and more like an opportunity.

When I decided to apply to Concordia as my first choice, I did so because I felt it would be a way to keep this streak going. However, starting university online changes a lot of things.

There are memories in this first year that I intended to make—memories that will be replaced by me asking my brother to lower the TV volume because I'm in class. Instead of enjoying my university experience, I'll be sitting alone in my room. It feels as though I'm losing four months of my life.

I wanted to join Queer Concordia to have a safe space to rely on during the semester, but that will not be the same. For people like me who need those safe spaces because we cannot be ourselves at home, it will be rough not to have a physical space to fall back on.

There is also a lot to be concerned about academically. Online lectures are hard to follow, with way too many distractions and nobody to keep me grounded. When last semester went online, I found myself watching YouTube videos while in class; it's just that easy to lose track.

Besides, a big part of learning happens outside the classroom—be it in conversations about the lecture or even just studying with somebody, and these

will most likely not happen.

I'll no longer be surrounded by people who love the same things I do, helping each other to stay motivated during midterms and finals.

Worst of all, there is no sign that substantial personal counselling services will be available. While there will be some options, they aren't the same as having a weekly or bi-weekly therapy session with a counsellor you learn to trust and forge a connection with. As someone who benefited from this service in CEGEP and can't afford regular therapy, I can say it's one of the most

important student services.

I won't be able to take advantage of many compulsory fees included in tuition that I'm still expected to pay for. The quality of my courses will most likely diminish. It's as if I'm not getting what I'm paying for.

Hopefully, Concordia's administration will surprise me this fall with a procedure that will make this all easier to go through, like virtual counselling and advising, good training for teachers to adapt better to the online world, and opportunities for online internships or events that will keep school exciting. **L**



Graphic Carleen Loney

Concordia Resources Available to Students

How can Concordia's resources be accessed during the online-only semester?

Bree Rockbrand

Aboriginal Student Resource Centre

The ASRC is a resource centre and community hub for First Nations, Métis, and Inuit students.

- Counselling and academic support is being offered remotely
- External resources and helpful links are available online
- Private Facebook group continues to offer community

Access Centre for Students with Disabilities

- Virtual appointments with an advisor
- Resources for students with temporary or permanent disabilities, including accommodation planning, referral services, and self-advocacy skills
- Students must first register by email to take advantage of the programs offered
- Drop-in group sessions on Zoom on Thursday mornings focus on a theme or are open discussions with Q&A

Student Success Centre

The Student Success Centre is offering all its regular services online and by telephone

- Learning, career, advocacy, self-development, and skills development
- Peer support through the welcome crew mentors and math and writing assistants
- Call extension 3921 for any questions or support with online learning

Student Learning Services

- Video appointments with learning specialists
- Tailored workshops about organizational skills, time management, learning effectively from online classes, staying focused, tackling online exams, and more

Career and Planning Services

- One-on-one appointments with career counsellors and career advisors
- New workshops, panels, and virtual career fairs and networking events, with new additions to the workshop series

Sexual Assault Resource Centre

Concordia's Sexual Assault Resource Centre offers support services for Concordia students, staff, and faculty who have been affected by sexual violence.

- Services available remotely this semester, including counselling by telephone or video call
- Consultation, counselling, drop-in hours, referrals, workshops, and mandatory training
- 45-minute one-on-one sessions with a peer-support volunteer trained in active listening
- The mandatory Sexual Violence Awareness and Prevention Training for new students is available in an online format or small group sessions over video-conference
- Students who cannot complete the training for personal reasons can contact SARC to set up a one-on-one meeting
- SARC usually offers accompaniment to the police or hospital for victims, but this service is not available

Zen Dens

- Online resources help students cope with COVID-19, isolation, and school stress—a space to “reset or reflect” in cyberspace
- Online drop-in chats with psychologists, health promotion experts, and trained volunteers
- Zen chats, or peer check-ins, hosted by student wellness ambassadors
- Links to other resources at Concordia and beyond

Health Services

- Appointments this fall are available by telephone
- Health promotion specialists can help you achieve your health goals
- List of internal and external mental health services can be found on Health Services website

International Students Office

Most of the ISO's regular services will be available online in the fall.

- Advising on immigration—including Quebec acceptance certificate, study permit, work permits—and health insurance
- ISO webinar on themes like working in Canada, discovering your health insurance plan, and post-graduation work permit

FutureReady

- Launched fall series online, with events covering communication and digital skills, innovation and entrepreneurship, leadership and collaboration, and health and wellbeing

Student Advocacy Office

- Confidential virtual appointments for any student requiring help navigating university rules and regulations, specifically the Academic Code of Conduct and the Code of Rights and Responsibilities
- Tips and guidance to promote academic integrity

My Guitar Is No Longer a Dust Collector

Reina Ephrahim



One of the hobbies I was able to pick up was learning to play the acoustic guitar. I finally made use of the Martin & Co. Dreadnought Junior that had been sitting idly in the corner of my living room and collecting dust for the last 10 years or so—10 years of half-hearted excuses like “I don’t have the time for it” and “Maybe I’ll give it a try once I’m no longer busy in school.”

It is no longer an ornament with which to woo guests who come to visit; rather, it’s my little escape into the musical realm, just as I’d always dreamed.

Picking up the guitar allowed me not only to tap into my creative and artistic side, but it also saved me from the soul-crushing anxiousness I had been waking up to every day in quarantine. By imitating some of my favorite artists’ songs, I was able to improve not only my practice, but my writing.

I was able to tap into the emotions that make a song come to life. I learned how to write poetry in the form of song. For a beginner like myself, I took notes from artists like Taylor Swift, Phoebe Bridgers, Maggie Rogers, and Fleetwood Mac—artists with songs just moody enough to inspire and motivate my writing. Their lyricism evokes imagery that I believe embodies the human experience, allowing me to be introspective on topics like love, loss, hope, and bliss.

With just a few strums, I am immediately whisked away into what I can only describe as the fantastical dreamland of music. **L**

Travelling Home During a Pandemic

Olivia Piché

I’ve driven the Alberta–Quebec route many times, but I knew this would be different. Would public bathrooms be open? Will my answer—“I just want to see my family”—suffice when asked my reason for travelling during a pandemic? Where would be the safest place to sleep?

With Montreal the epicentre of the COVID-19 pandemic in Canada, I knew I wanted to go back home to my family in Alberta, at least for the summer. But how would I do it safely? That question lingered with me for months as the government put restrictions on provincial highway borders and my family feared me taking a plane.

After three months of strict self-isolation, I discovered a former co-worker was driving to B.C. She had recently purchased a dependable car for the trip and already had an itinerary. She took eagerly to my offer to chip in for gas.

The morning of departure, I packed the car with my belongings, hugged my roommates goodbye, and headed west. After an initial day of driving through 12 hours of rain and a surprising June snowstorm, our luck changed. We were relieved to find well-sanitized public bathrooms, and the accommodations we booked in advance were clean, with close to no contact with the host.

The third and final day was the shortest and most exciting. While most of the roads seemed familiar throughout the drive, after passing the “Welcome to Alberta” sign, the roads were ones I knew quite well. After a 39-hour journey, I could turn off the GPS and drive down the country roads thinking of the hugs I would finally be giving. **L**

The Chron Pandemic



My First Attempt at Unicycling

Nanor Froundjian

Whenever I tell someone I bought a unicycle, I get one of two replies. The first is “Oh my God, that’s so cool!”—which sparks a conversation with those who share my bizarre excitement for unicycling, an activity usually reserved for a circus number.

Then there’s the more common one: “Wait, what? But... why?” to which I can only reply with a not-so-clever “Why not?”

To be honest, I don’t really have a better answer. I can’t remember the specific moment I was overcome with the urge to learn unicycling, but it was sometime last summer. And finally I bought it, one year later.

When my package finally arrived, I opened the box and heard the angelic

~Aaaah~ harmonization, a halo of light beaming off the chrome finishing of my unicycle.

I assembled my unicycle—which I named Theodore, watched a couple of instructive YouTube videos, and I was ready for my first attempt.

The first few tries were surprisingly challenging; I couldn’t mount it without the pedal hitting my calf as I aggressively gripped onto whatever was beside me. I improved over the following weeks and documented my progress along the way.

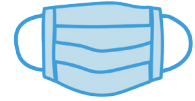
The learning curve is far from being linear, but at least it was entertaining for my friends. They eagerly volunteered to film the process, making videos I would then package into mini montages and share with them.

My latest idea was to use crutches as an aid, which was quite helpful, contrary to my previous idea to use an old mop.

It’s going to take a few more spins to get it right! **L**

Working on the Frontlines

Kailane Cook



After going through my entire reading list, I didn’t know what to do with my time. I wanted to help with the pandemic, and my mom convinced me to find a job in healthcare. I didn’t hesitate since she is a nurse herself and has always inspired me. So, I started working the night shift at a CHSLD called Villa-Bonheur in Granby.

I immediately loved my new job. The residents were charming, and I enjoyed spending time with them.

Everything went well concerning the pandemic. During my two months of work, we only had one case of COVID-19—an employee, who recovered. We closed an entire floor for two weeks, and those working had to wear a hazmat suit and visor. It was a very stressful time for me since I wanted everyone to remain safe. I got attached to the residents and my colleagues.

Fortunately, everyone was safe, and after the two-week lockdown, operations went back to “normal.”

I can’t say it was an easy summer job for me. I found it sometimes difficult to work with the staff who were always running around and didn’t have a lot of time to spare with the residents.

On more than one occasion, I went into a room and found a resident crying, asking me why they couldn’t go home. It broke my heart. Although it wasn’t the easiest job, I can honestly say this summer taught me the importance of spending and cherishing time with family and those you love. We never know how much time we have left. **L**



Graphic Sheena Macmillan

Q&A with President Graham Carr

How is Concordia finding its footing in tumultuous times?

Sheena Macmillan @seenamac &
Elias Grigoriadis @eligrigoriadis

COVID-19 and Black Lives Matter defined the summer. How is Concordia adapting to the moment, and can students take comfort in the administration's plans for the unprecedented days ahead? The Link sat down with President Graham Carr to discuss the university's preparations, expectations, and hopes.

Full interview available online. Answers have been edited for length.



Graham Carr's first September as president of Concordia is anything but ordinary. / Courtesy Concordia University

01 Did you find any good sourdough recipes?

No, that's one thing I didn't try! I must be the only person who didn't bake sourdough bread. I was worried early on that eating was becoming too easy of a habit, so I'm trying to do more on the fitness front.

02 Have any issues from the summer semester been addressed for the fall semester?

The people teaching in summer had very little time to turn around and develop those courses. We did surveys of students in the spring and summer to determine their experience. There's been a lot of conversation going on between our Centre for Teaching and Learning Services and faculty members, sometimes whole departments. They've had dozens of meetings with departments to help people think through how they can deliver their course content online in a more interesting fashion.

A big part of that conversation is encouraging faculty to rethink some of the assessment modules that they've used in the past, because the format is different, and familiarizing people with the kinds of technology and

teaching aides available in an online environment. There's been a lot of work behind the scenes this summer to give faculty a higher degree of comfort with this online design.

03 What conditions would have to be met to bring everyone back to campus in the winter?

That's a public health issue. We're working with the head of public health in Montreal, Dr. Drouin, to discuss and monitor the ongoing public health situation. There are particular challenges for a downtown university like Concordia because most of our teaching takes place in buildings that are 14, 17 storeys tall.

To respect the current physical distancing that's required, we did a calculation: if we wanted to move 30 per cent of the students into the Hall Building, where most of our teaching takes place—we've got two passenger elevators and a freight elevator, an escalator, and a stairwell. With social distancing, it would take nine-and-a-half hours to get the first class in. That's obviously not a viable option.

04 How do you justify keeping the tuition the same for online classes?

When students are paying for tuition, what are they paying for? Before COVID happened, if students were registered for an in-person or eConcordia version of finance 101, let's say, they paid the same tuition. Because the tuition is not for the delivery format, it's related to the competencies they develop in the course and the credit value assigned to the course.

The courses that are being delivered in the fall, like the courses that were being delivered in the summer, will have the same learning objectives in terms of competencies and skills that students develop and they'll be valued at the same credit level. So that's why tuition stays the same. For me, that's the most fundamental argument.

There's a secondary argument, which is important. The reality is that the cost of moving to an online environment is very significant for all universities at this moment. I know there's a perception that you go online and you're saving cost. I can assure you that the contrary is true. Right now, we're incurring very significant costs in terms of instructional technology and licenses that we've needed to acquire and building up our curriculum support teams.

05 There have been petitions circulating, some with over 1,000 signatures, calling for reduced tuition. Is the administration taking any of that into consideration?

In the Quebec context, tuition is set by the provincial government. So the government of Quebec mandated a 3.1 per cent increase in tuition, and we're implementing that. We don't have the luxury to modify the tuition at Concordia. *[Editor's note: This does not apply to international students, whose tuition is set by the university, with some exceptions.]*

06 There were also some calls to improve the university's sexual assault resources. How will those resources be adapted to serve students remotely?

We have made a number of changes to the policies on how we handle sexual assault, which were approved in the spring of this year. We've tried to simplify the process in that the Sexual Assault Resource Centre will become the point of entry for victims, for complaints.

We've also tried to develop—because this

was identified as a serious gap in our previous protocols—much better support for victims from the moment they come forward through the process as a whole. Those are a couple of actions we've taken. SARC, like all the other services the university offers, has adapted to an online environment. The activities and services they provide continue to be available. The major changes are the changes to the policy, but it's more the change and the approach we're taking in terms of the feedback that we got from the community engagement we did around sexual assault. For me, those are open issues. If there are things we don't do and have to modify and improve our practices, we should be open to that.

07 Your letter about Concordia's commitment to diversity was mentioned in the Black Lives Matter petition addressed to the university. What actions have been taken, and are any of them in line with what was laid out in it?

We've had many conversations over the course of the summer with different groups on campus, including some of the authors of the petition, including the Black Caucus, faculty members, staff, and students who are engaged in those issues.

It's been a really fruitful series of conversations over the course of the summer. We've discussed a number of actions that we feel collectively could and should be taken, we're just trying to finalize what we will be prepared to announce in the coming weeks. It's been a very active and positive summer in terms of discussions, and I think the thread of the conversations has been how can Concordia—which has a strong history of commitment to social justice issues and diversity—be a leader in the higher educational realm for how we're attempting to address the issues of Black Lives Matter on the one hand but other kinds of diversity as well.

08 Can we get a more specific idea on what's been going on over the summer in regards to the petition?

We've had a number of meetings with the authors of the petition, with the Black Caucus, meetings with the CSU. One of the first meetings we had was with the CSU about these issues. The thrust of those meetings has been to have a conversation around "Okay, what are the actions that we could and should take as a university?" We've pretty much come to an agreement on that. Once it's finalized we'll move forward with an announcement. **L**

Incoming Students Using OnlyFans to Make Friends

How's this for an icebreaker? Students talk turn-ons and toys over OnlyFans.

Alaina Bush
@notalainabush



Graphic Florent Aniorte

Gags, G-spots, and grades aren't usually associated with a student's learning environment, but this semester things are different.

COVID-19 displaced many students from their homes and dormitories when all Concordia residences closed indefinitely in March. Most classes will be taught virtually, which leaves many incoming students wondering how they will make connections this fall.

However, some innovative students have come up with an idea to keep socializing: using OnlyFans, an online subscription service that provides racy media content to fans who subscribe to the models themselves.

One of these students is Cam Guirrel, a transfer student from the University of Ottawa. She decided to transfer after Prime Minister Justin Trudeau allegedly moved into a closet and began to leave never-ending trails of shit around the university hallways.

Guirrel was excited for student life. However, she had to reassess her plans when in-person classes were cancelled. She knew she had to get creative to make friends at her new university.

Guirrel started by joining the New Concordians 2020-2021 Facebook group. But in the mix of the hundreds

of white girl introductory posts, Guirrel wanted her own to stand out. She posted:

"Hiiiiii, my name is Cam Guirrel, I'm 19, I'm from Ottawa, and I'm going to be majoring in studio arts!!! My hobbies are TikTok, modelling, and hanging out with friends. My zodiac is a Capricorn rising, Libra sun, and Cancer moon, and my blood type is O negative, so you guys know I'm a good time. I do have Instagram and Snapchat, but you're gonna have to be clever or cool enough to find it uwu, so instead I'm gonna post my OnlyFans instead!"

Over a Facetime call, Guirrel explained, "Putting my Instagram or Snapchat in the post would've just put me in a sea of faces. I'm at Concordia, so obviously I'm a main character, and people need to know that and remember me because of that."

"I also didn't want to keep giving money to corporations like Facebook and Snapchat," she continued, "so I decided to make an OnlyFans account."

Guirrel promoted her OnlyFans in the Facebook group, where a number of other students have both subscribed to Guirrel's account and also made their own. Guirrel currently has 13,600 followers.

One of these followers is Richard Pix, an incoming psychology major from

Kingston, Ontario. After seeing Guirrel's Facebook post, he immediately made an account on the site.

According to Pix, OnlyFans allows for many cultural aspects of university to survive the closure of residences, classrooms, and clubs.

"I think sex is a really big part of the first-year university student's culture, and not being able to bang in the showers at residence really takes away from that," he said. "However, OnlyFans allows for both a hook-up culture and some social hierarchy to form."

Pix also enjoys the content of the service itself. "The babes are hot," he said, "and the money's going directly to them. I've subscribed to, like, six."

Self-described OnlyFans regular Hugh Jerker is an incoming first-year student who will study management at the John Molson School of Business. However, despite his rousing feelings towards OnlyFans, Jerker does not appear to be very keen on other students using the media platform.

A man of few words, Jerker criticised other students' OnlyFans accounts while allegedly getting a really tricky condiment out of its container. "Bad... bad...bad..." he said. "Oooh, they're bad. Don't...come..."

A few minutes later, some mayonnaise spilled onto his camera. **L**

Frosh 2020 Lives Online

Swiping out partying for virtual workshops

Jad Abukasm @JAbukasm

Graphic Maria Chabelnik

Funnelling three beers, being carried back to your dorm room, and losing your phone for the third time today are likely what come to mind when hearing the word frosh. But it won't look like that this year.

After weeks of scrambling, this year's Frosh will instead be about meeting fellow students over Zoom for online trivia nights, bingo, and even Zumba classes.

"[Organizing Frosh and Orientation] has been a huge challenge," said Eduardo Malorni, the Concordia Student Union's student life coordinator. "This year nobody really knows what is going on. Between waiting for government updates and university updates as to what is possible to do, it puts us in constant limbo."

Student associations had free rein over the types of events they were organizing. Some chose to follow typical structures by keeping frosh leaders and froshees, while others opted for more informative events.

The Fine Arts Student Alliance, for example, opted for more online art exhibits, meetings with local artists, and discussions about internships and expectations. They also worked on organizing online athletic events like yoga classes.

The Commerce and Administration Student Association offered in-person socially distanced activities such as a High Intensity Interval Training workout at the Percival Molson Memorial Stadium and a scavenger hunt throughout the Old Port.

One of the biggest challenges for student associations has been changing the nature of the events. Whereas last year's activities were targeted towards meeting fellow students,

this year's goal is to provide useful workshops and tools to virtually explore the school while also providing entertaining activities to get students off their couches, explained Malorni.

On top of preparing to manage thousands of students over Zoom, CSU staff worked on modifying the mandatory consent training that frosh leaders go through. Whereas in previous years consent training focused on proper behaviours at social events, this year's will be about avoiding harassment to fit the challenges of being online, explained Malorni.

"In past years we had to worry about things such as people inappropriately touching others or trying to pressure them into drinking or performing sexual acts. This year, in contrast, we need to worry about people inappropriately messaging people or beginning to stalk them on their social media and continuing the harassment, since it's much easier to find someone if their name is displayed at an online event," Malorni said. "Or sending unsolicited dick pics—the amount of time I spent talking about ways to prevent dick pics is ridiculous," he added.

Traditionally, frosh leaders were trained to spot individuals in distress and moderate the alcohol consumption. However, spotting those behaviours online is much more challenging.

Nevertheless, Malorni is confident the revamped consent training will be a success.

Though not all associations took the same avenue, they all shared the same goal: making frosh 2020 as memorable and enjoyable as possible despite the unordinary context of the pandemic. **LI**



A selection of online Orientation activities

09 Working Out and Healthy Eating with Concordia Recreation 1 p.m. BLM Panel 7 p.m. SEPTEMBER	15 Cooking With People's Potato 2 p.m. SEPTEMBER	16 Become a Radio DJ at Home! With CJLO 1 p.m. International Development: Saviorism vs Altruism With Creed 7 p.m. SEPTEMBER	17 Journalism is for Everyone with The Link 1 p.m. SEPTEMBER	21 Refugees in Montreal: Fulfilling Their Settlement & Integration Needs With the Refugee Center 1 p.m. SEPTEMBER
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Graphic Sheena Macmillan

Why I'm Happy to Stay Home This Fall

Concordia's move to remote learning is the only way through the pandemic for students like me

Kaity Brady

At the start of this historically shitty year, I was in the hospital battling a flare-up of my illness for six weeks when I should have been meeting my classmates and book shopping.

The school year was already complicated for me by my health, and it would only unravel further for all of us as the pandemic landed in Montreal.

As a disabled student, I'm used to constantly weighing options and adjusting plans, so when Concordia announced that the fall 2020 semester would be online, I breathed a sigh of relief.

Disability is different for everyone: I happened to be born with a chronic illness called cystic fibrosis. CF is a fatal and hugely time-consuming disease. It also makes me high-risk for "severe COVID-19 outcomes," meaning if I were to get coronavirus, chances are it would end in hospitalization, or worse. Before Concordia's announcement, I was dwelling on what the next academic year would look like for me.

My gut feeling was that I would pause my studies awaiting a vaccine. Correspondence education can suck, this I know too well, but this shift to online learning has alleviated some of the gravity of being disabled and vulnerable in a pandemic.

As a sick person, 2020 feels freakishly normal, like I've been training my whole life for this—staying away from people who could make me ill, spending weeks on end at home, and practicing strict disinfecting protocol.

But it's also a bit catastrophic, a long nightmare scenario where I can't do anything or trust anyone.

School felt like one of those things I

would just have to give up, so I'm happy Concordia's online transition gives me that back.

I've been a student at Concordia going on four years now, most of it part-time, and I'll probably be there at least two more years to complete my double major in journalism and Irish studies.

I can't remember how many times I've been hospitalized during my undergrad, and I can say with near certainty it will happen again before my time at Concordia is up.

On top of these "tune-ups," as I call my weeks-long stints of IV medications, my illness requires hours of daily treatments at home.

There are not many weeks that go by where I can say that I didn't skip a single treatment, class, meal, much needed sleep, or have to cab to school to get it, or enough of it, all in.

When navigating illness and education, something always has to give.

I'm rarely too ill to follow lessons, do readings, or write, but I am very often too ill to rush through morning physiotherapy, or pack up and trek across town through a snowstorm on a Montreal bus, full of hand-coughers with their colds and flus, just to watch something I could have from my couch if I had access and control over my education.

Student life is punctuated by the flurry of a new semester, spring's thaw into summer, or winding down into a cozy December with family, gathering readings, making introductions, adding and dropping courses ahead of the DISC deadline, and so on; so is mine, but there are some extra steps involved.

"As a sick person, 2020 feels freakishly normal, like I've been training my whole life for this."

-Kaity Brady



After months of jumping through hoops to study remotely, an entirely virtual fall semester came as a relief to Brady.



Preparing for what Brady calls a "tune-up," her chronic illness cystic fibrosis takes hours of treatments.

Photos Kaity Brady

First, I go through the dusty corners of Concordia's student portal to find the pages for students with disabilities. Then I "request accommodations," which provides two things, neither of which actually do anything to make the education I receive as a disabled student the same as non-disabled students.

The first is an email that goes out to your teachers saying that you are registered with the Access Centre for Students with Disabilities and may need accommodations.

The second is access to notetakers, anonymous students that upload notes of iffy quality and frequency to the portal for you, but usually stop posting mid-term anyway. I usually just reach out to people personally for help.

There is the odd professor who runs a pristine Moodle, but they come up far less often than the teacher who responds to your request for a lesson outline with, "I don't really do plans, I just kind of talk. You'll have to share notes."

This means the burden of accessing my education is still mine, whether I ask other students or my teachers to help me fill in the blanks of what I missed, or know I will miss if I have a

"tune-up" booked or appointments on the horizon.

Then, I have to explain why I need the help, disclosing that I'm not well, or say nothing and look like the lazy student who expects others to share their work.

Part of my seasonal school routine is dropping courses and revising my graduation plan, guessing what the next few semesters will look like if I give myself a break in the short term.

Every time I get out of the hospital, a well-meaning friend or relative will ask, "Are you going to take the semester off?" I can't blame them, it seems obvious: you get sick, you deal with it, you move on. Now, I'm getting this question about going back to school.

"No, I don't want to take any more breaks," I say, still wishing I could, and do some mental math to check if my abstract goal of graduating before I turn 30 is still possible. But with chronic illness, you don't really "get well," you just constantly manage.

What is the best use of my energy this week? What risks am I willing to take, what tasks do I prioritize? Sure, I'm "lucky" to get extensions, but in an inflexible course designed to be completed in person, the extension is not the great equalizer you'd imagine it is.

My absence robs me of the quality of education, but also of connections and opportunities with my classmates. When you miss class for good reasons, you usually get saddled with the student that misses class for no reason.

Accommodations are just the minimum when it comes to making education accessible; it's not equal if I have to ask, source, and plan it myself.

Because we're going online, I won't have to piece together my courses with the scraps for once.

This time things worked out for me, because Concordia is moving towards a model that finally suits me.

I don't need to take another break, be afraid for my health, or settle for less of an education than my classmates. I know this model will bring up accessibility issues for other people too.

We're not going to get it all right the first time or even all the time. We need to keep moving in this direction and actively consult with diverse student populations in how we design and deliver education long after we recover from 2020. **L**



A wildly contagious respiratory disease means Brady spent the majority of her summer at home.

Concordia Faculty Unlock the Digital Classroom

Professors navigate challenges this fall as classes resume

Abegail Ranaudo

“There are no office hours. It’s cyberspace,” chuckled Murari Singh, an assistant professor in mathematics and statistics at Concordia. “We are really interacting in a cool environment.”

Singh, who managed transitioning his lessons online, coined “cool hours,” redefining his office hours on the Zoom video conference app.

In the wake of the global pandemic, Concordia professors and instructors had two modes of online learning to familiarize themselves with. The Centre for Teaching and Learning highlighted the specific terms: synchronous and asynchronous.

Synchronous means to orchestrate an entire class live online, a good example being a Zoom call, where everyone can tune in to the lesson taking place. Asynchronous is non-simultaneous, like Moodle’s online forum, where students and professors can post notes, comments, and critiques as it suits them.

This fall, Singh will blend both systems of online remote learning, posting drafted notes a week earlier with the virtual lectures to follow regularly. “It was quite hectic,” stated Singh, but he also noted that the transition overall was a good learning experience.

“It is tough propelling stuff from home in this moment,” said Simone Brugiapaglia, an associate professor also in the department of mathematics and statistics.

Before the university hallways vacated completely, Brugiapaglia was teaching two advanced vector calculus classes with close to 250 students present for each.

For his first live-streamed class on Zoom, 80 student profiles were logged in.

“I remember when I asked, ‘Okay, do you have any questions?’” he said. “The chat exploded. There was a lot of uncertainty.”

He restarted his math lectures with Powerpoint slides and a newly purchased document camera, a digital device that can capture him simultaneously writing down notes, since he did not have access to a blackboard.

“Fewer people were coming to the lecture, but I was trying to keep it as interactive as possible,” he said.

Brugiapaglia was worried for his teaching assistants. They struggled to adapt their practices and tutorials to a strictly virtual format because a minority of them did not have the technology to adapt coursework to the online environment. Luckily, most of them had iPads they could use, he said.

Online proctoring poses another crucial problem during the exam season. Since the online test software became fairly popular as the semester wound down, many are wary of the proctoring technology’s propensity for biased software and mass surveillance.

The technology uses facial recognition and eye tracking and accesses each student’s camera, audio, and website history. It perpetuates racism, sexism, and transphobia, according to an article published by *MIT Technology Review*.

As algorithmic invigilators monitor students during exams, Brugiapaglia said many students will take the

opportunity to cheat as well, which affects grading papers fairly and infringes academic integrity.

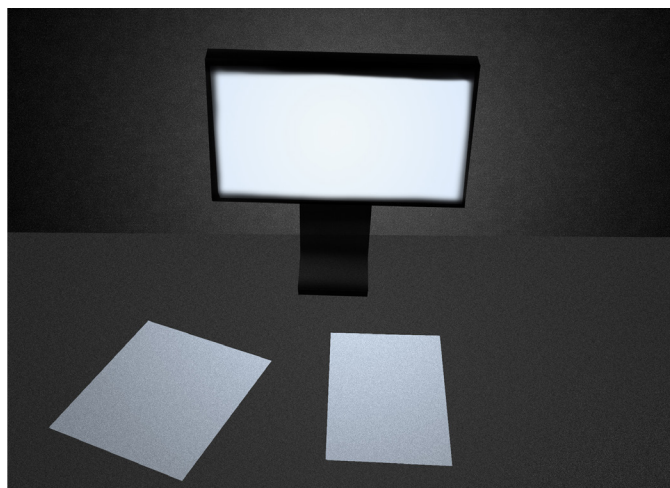
The relationships and connections formed between teacher and student must remain vital during periods of class participation, online or not, said Brugiapaglia. He believes the best moments happen when a student raises their hand to add something new and unexpected to the lecture.

“An unexpected interaction, an unexpected question happens, and that brings you in some kind of new territory to explore, bringing more reality into the lecture, more human interaction,” he said.

He hopes to recreate those moments on Zoom as well. “We’re not supposed to become machines all of a sudden.”

“There was no way that we could’ve reproduced what we were doing in class discussion in a remote style,” said Beverly Best, an associate professor of sociology.

In-class participation, dialogue, and debate are at the core of most coursework in the humanities. “There’s not an ele-



Graphic Joey Bruce

ment in life that hasn't turned inside-out lately," Best said. The subject matter of her course this fall, economic transformations in capitalist society, will be based on what's happening in real-time through the lens of the economic crisis.

"What before took some more time and analysis of unpacking is now just overtly on the surface of life [online]," she said.

She explained that access to knowledge is constantly evolving, but academia might not be completely ready to go digital. The university, which tends to be a more conservative environment, is suddenly being thrown into the rushing stream of the digital, popular arena.

Jim Hillman, who teaches jazz drumming in the private studies section of the music department, was interested in experimenting for the first time with Whatsapp video. He wanted to see what it was like to instruct remotely.

"It's a different experience," he said. "How could it not be?"

This fall, he will rely more on music scripts and sheet music, because the sounds produced by the percussion require in-person craft and evaluation and do not sound as accurate when played during a videoconference.

In person, Hillman could demonstrate the jazz improvisation of the rhythm with a drum set. Then, he would show his students the written version of the improvisation, so they could get a better understanding of the desired sound, beat, and tempo.

To avoid delay and confusion, Hillman said he will have to post the noted transcriptions with some sound samples a

week before the scheduled lessons.

Meanwhile, the fibres and material practices program in fine arts is facing more than one challenge.

"Fibres is having to jump through hoops to reconfigure and reimagine the curriculum," stated Mary Sui Yee Wong, a part-time faculty member.

Wong worries about the economic constraints of students, faculty, and support staff in her department. She is also busy putting in unpaid hours figuring out and adjusting a digital curriculum, all while assembling "toolkits," which her students will have to pick up individually at the campus this fall. The kits include tex-

tile, felt, and weaving materials so that fibres students will have the necessary materials and tools to accomplish their lab work.

"If we ask them to do basket-weaving, they're going to need a box with some materials to make baskets," she said. With art labs and studios out of reach, she said students' tuition will cover the necessary fees for the toolkits.

Wong still anticipates the economic and technical problems many students will endure relying heavily on internet data for Moodle and Zoom calls.

"We're going to run into a lot of problems with students who don't necessarily have good access to internet support," she said, speaking from ten years' experience teaching online. "We're basically asking them to set up a home studio."

"How do I develop a curriculum that's a little bit more diverse, that can be all-encompassing?" asked Wong. "That causes me anxiety." **L**

"There's not an element in life that hasn't turned inside-out lately."
— Bererlex Best



"Make sure your schedule won't ruin your day, both mentally and physically. Just because you're at home on Zoom doesn't mean the 9:15 a.m. class or back-to-back classes will work for you. University is pretty different from high school or even CEGEP in terms of both workload and energy demands. You need to take into account how much time you can realistically focus on class during a day."

— Olivier Cadotte, journalism

"Network. Socialize and get out of your comfort zone. Don't be afraid to ask for help if you need to."

— Hasan Alsan, finance



"There is an assumption that online classes are easier than regular in-person classes. Don't get me wrong, there are a number of reasons why online classes are beneficial, but a new routine must be formed in order to create a healthy online lifestyle. It goes without saying, making a schedule helps you keep track of the work you need to accomplish without forgetting to implement breaks to eat and rest. When at home, put a sign on your door to indicate you're in a class to avoid any interruption from others. Lastly, make your desk a desirable place to study; the ambiance you create will motivate you to keep going."

— Kiara Louise Palanca, political science and sociology



"Even though we can't meet in person, COVID has actually tied us together through Zoom. A lot of people are able to get connected through video calls, which will make people feel less alone."

— Peter Zhuang, music

"Value every step of the journey. Sometimes we are too busy looking at the imperfections of a situation only to realize a few years later how everything contributed to you being the person you are today. Cherish the start of this new phase and make the best out of it. If COVID has taught us anything, it's that we talk about the future so much that we actually forget about the present."

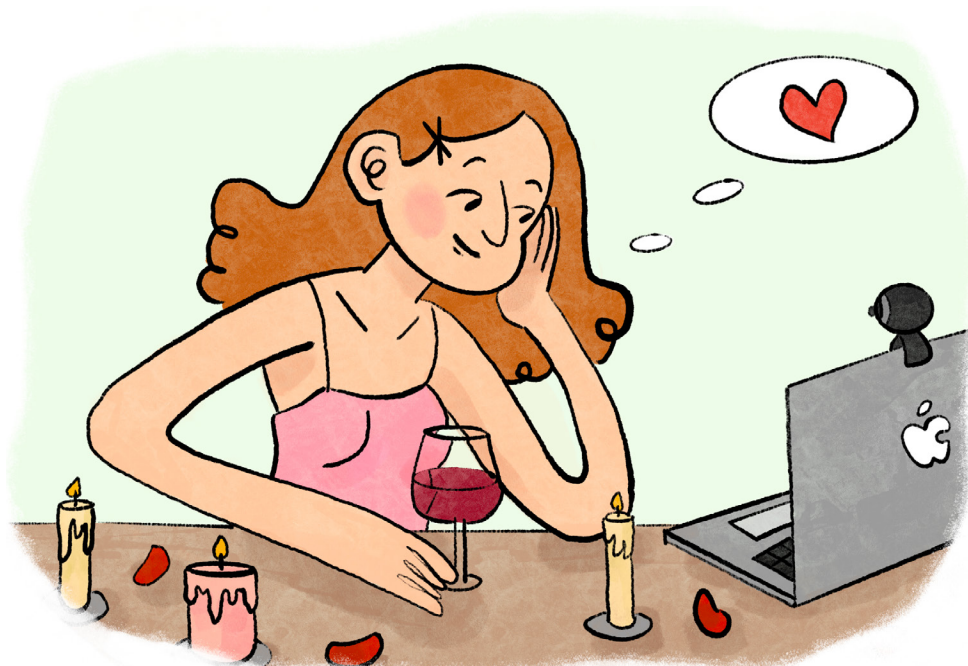
— Nicole Mireless, marketing



Zoom Into Your Next Relationship

How to flirt in online classes

Talia Kliot



Graphic Maria Chabelnik

A lousy pick-up line is just not going to cut it during a pandemic.

“[University] is a time where you should be able to explore relationships. And unfortunately, the first part of dating and meeting new people is personal contact,” explains Montreal dating coach and matchmaker Cheryl Besner.

That being said, with school being online, you’ll need to pull out all the stops if you want anyone to even consider linking up, even at two metres apart. Luckily, I’ve compiled some tips and tricks for flirting on Zoom that’ll help you step up your game.

A great way to start is by pinning your own video to ensure you look cute at all times. While it might seem a bit narcissistic to be staring at yourself during class, your appearance is the first thing

people will notice about you. If you’re set up with good lighting and the perfect outfit, anyone scrolling through gallery mode will do a double take when they get to your little box.

If you’re feeling bold, you can always couple your looks with making an excellent academic point to fill the Zoom awkward silence. However, that might be hard to do if you’re checking out other people during the entire lecture.

If you have a specific person in mind, I’d highly recommend continuously winking at the camera until you get their attention. Then, they’ll ask if you have something in your eye. It’s a riveting conversation starter!

You can also do some light and tasteful social media stalking (I’m not advocating for any of that *You* bullshit) and find out your crush’s interests. Curate a

collage compiling their fancies and set it as your green screen background. I’d be shocked if you didn’t get a private message from them.

“Get off into a private chat as quickly as you can,” advises Besner. She recommends complimenting the object of your attention about something they’ve said in class or picking up on a detail in their background. But, be warned that the host can see anything sent through the chat, regardless of who it’s intended for.

To avoid that problem completely, privately message your professor to put you two in the same breakout room, a zoom feature that allows the host to split participants into smaller groups. Could that be considered unprofessional? Possibly. But the best love stories are always unconventional. **L**

THE MILK'S GONE SOUR

Curtis McRae

[*Trigger warning at bottom of p. 23](#)

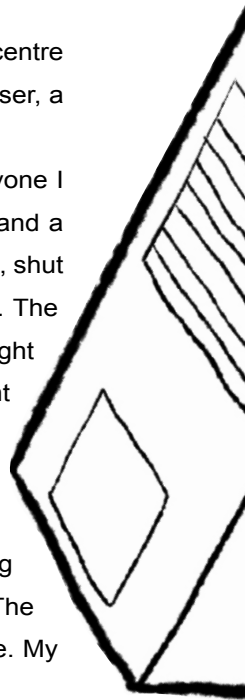
I was writing a paper on Virginia Woolf when my telephone rang. It hung in the air like a noose.

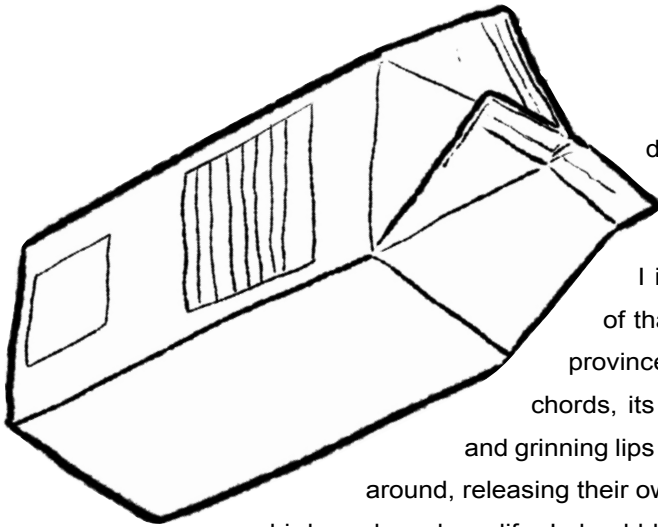
It was an undergraduate essay on Woolf's "The Cinema," and I was examining "life as it is when we have no part in it," but really, I hadn't a clue. The TV was playing in the room over, and I could hear it through the thin membrane separating my bedroom from the living room, where my roommate sat watching Bugs Bunny on a small relic of a television. We had picked up some secondhand electric box on the curb a few weeks prior, and I now felt the soundwaves moving through my room, shuffling my papers. I wondered how the television was so loud—the wall strained to stifle the low-frequency hum. I heard the murmur of dialogue playing through the drywall, the bottom half of all that was being said.

That day and the television now feel like an undercurrent: muffled, rushing. The centre of that day concentrates, the borders blur. I picture myself swimming to shore, getting closer, a hand pinching my toe and dragging me back out. The scene fades to black.

I reached for my phone, but hesitated before picking it up. I couldn't think of anyone I wanted to talk to and decided not to answer. A dog was barking outside. It was winter, and a particularly cold day; I wore two sweaters. I looked around my room and closed my laptop, shut the window, cracked my knuckles, and tried to figure how long I had been at this essay. The television carried through. I thought of a motel room I once stayed in with my family—a night rolling around in brittle sheets, everyone around me fast asleep, the sounds of late-night cable porn playing through the walls: muffled, croaking.

I left my unfinished paper and passed through the living room on my way to the kitchen. My roommate, David, sat on the couch eating a bowl of cereal without any milk. I stood in the door frame between the kitchen and the living room and felt the floors shaking beneath the weight of him, watched him keeled over laughing and slapping his knee. The floors dipped towards him; he had left a depression in the wood through his permanence. My entrance went unnoticed.





When they told me what my brother had done, I had a vision of a flock of seagulls circling overhead, a choir of these feathered saints singing on a beach. Then, somewhere else, I imagined a baby being born into the same song of that circulating air. The way that clouds travel over provinces, so too did this song. The infant cried its own chords, its fleshy bottom spanked bare as the eager eyes and grinning lips waited for their turn to hold it in their arms, circled around, releasing their own gasps of admirations, swallowing the songs of birds and newborn life. I should have called him more. He never got on well with our mom or dad. Maybe things might have taken a different course if I had made myself more available to him.

Life as it is.

The voice trickled from the receiver as it went on talking. I wanted to hear the television in the next room but what I heard was the dripping voice and the clock ticking next to me. I put the phone down without hanging up. The voice continued buzzing on my desk. Somewhere in the world, a man didn't know what my face looked like. He picked up a phone to tell me that somewhere else in the world, my brother wouldn't call.

I walked into the living room after hanging up the phone. I didn't know what to do with my hands. My roommate was sitting where I last saw him, staring at Elmer Fudd, who was still in pursuit of Bugs Bunny. I sat next to him on the couch and thought it was going to swallow me whole. Odd, the things we remember. Then, everything is sharp: The walls looked like they had a fresh coat of lime green paint. The TV looked smaller. I had breached the waves, crowned from beneath the dragging white waters, could hear the seagulls circling above. I felt the seaweed loosen its grip. I realized it was time to buy a new couch.

"Who was it?"

"My brother."

"How's he doing?"

"He's alright I guess, just sold one of his paintings."

"He still living out West?"

"Still living." I gazed into the shrunken TV screen, sinking further into the couch.

Bugs Bunny tied a stuffed rabbit to the fin of a shark, successfully tricking Fudd into chasing it into the ocean. Fudd hopped into his boat and chased "Bugs Bunny" into the horizon. Shortly into his pursuit, the shark turned and surfaced from below, exposing alabaster arrow-head teeth, swallowing Fudd's boat in a single gulp. Fudd remained suspended in the air. My roommate laughed. Fudd ran to shore for rescue, his legs serving as rotary propellers keeping him above surface, but was kidnapped by pirates along the way.

They sailed into a speck on the horizon and Bugs Bunny got away.

The iris wipe.

It was snowing outside, and I was sad that Bugs Bunny got away. A man with a gun always gets the hare. I wanted the kids to know.

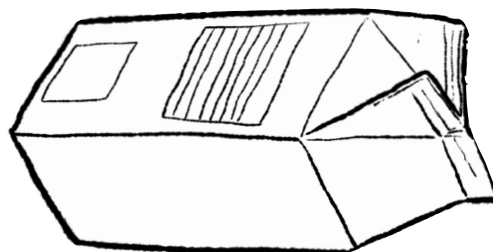
I got up to go to the kitchen and opened the cupboard. I found an empty box of cereal. I went to the fridge and picked up the carton of milk to give it a smell. It wasn't that bad, so I poured myself a bowl without any cereal and drank it.

When I was a child, my mother forced me to drink a glass of curdled milk. She thought I was making excuses to avoid drinking it and told me that I wouldn't be excused from the table until I finished it. I drank the first half and became nauseous. When she turned away, my brother took the opportunity to drink the rest. He looked at me and winked, as if to say, thanks for the spoiled milk, kid. It made sense for me to now do the same.

After I had finished the bowl of spoiled milk, I left the carton on the counter and went back to my room. I sat down where I had gotten the call. The phone was still where I left it, and I waited.

But it didn't ring. It sat there, as did I, day after day, until somebody called to ask if I had life insurance. It was spring, my roommate had left for Toronto, there were bowls stacked in piles around my room. The snow melted to reveal the ground beneath, and somewhere a dead rabbit thawed from under its rigor mortis—its coat of grey fur gone, the carcass slowly disintegrated by the enveloping forest, its bones a championed medallion around Death's collar. And all the while, as life unfolded around me, I remained seated, unsure of what to do with my hands.

I picked up the phone and dialed my brother's number. A strange man's voice rose on the other end. **L**



Graphic Joey Bruce

***Trigger warning: suicide**

Curtis McRae's fiction has appeared in Soliloquies Anthology, the QWF Chronicling the Days series, and will be forthcoming in an anthology published by Guernica Editions. He is the co-founder and creative director of yolk literary journal. Curtis has worked covering events for Blue Metropolis, and was a finalist in the 2019 QWF contest for emerging young writers. He has received a fellowship from Concordia University and will begin work on his MA in creative writing in the fall of 2020.

C U at Home

How Le Gym can help you stay active at home



Zoom classes aren't just for academia anymore—Le Gym's facilities and classes are being replaced by online alternatives.

Eleanor Sherry

“**H**ow do you make a writer exercise?”

Though it sounds like the setup of a bad joke, I used to ask myself this question all the time, usually while frowning at a particularly sinister reading on a scale or, more often, staring down into a bag of fatty, greasy chips. Like most questions writers ask themselves, I figured I could think up all sorts of clever ways to answer it. As it turned out, there were really only *two* answers: one long, one short.

The short answer? You can't.

The long answer? You get your best friend to buy you a membership to your local gym, drag yourself there three times a week, and hope the routine sticks.

In my case, that friend was Michael, the sweetest guy I know, the gym was the Econofitness near the Atwater

metro, and, against all odds, the routine really did stick. Starting our first workout together by saying “You'll have fun, I swear!” was a brilliant lie—I left the gym that day feeling like my limbs were made of jelly—but the craziest part was after a couple of weeks, it wasn't a lie anymore. Fitness had become a part of my life, and though it wasn't a match made in heaven, it was here to stay.

Nowadays, without my workout buddy, I find myself asking that question all over again, for reasons that are evident to anyone who's used to exercising in a gym.

At the start of March, Michael pushed me to get a membership at Le Gym. I thought he was being overly optimistic—the proverbial ink hadn't even begun to dry on our university applications—but it was only a week later that I'd realize how right I would end

up being.

On March 12, I received an email from Le Gym asking its members to clean workout equipment before and after using it. “In the event of the university closing,” it read, “Le Gym will also be closed for this period of time.” A day later, Le Gym sent a second email—the subject read: “Le Gym Closed March 14 to March 29.”

Since then, that deadline has been well overshot—for good reason, obviously: Concordia's doing its part to help stop the spread of COVID-19. But that still leaves us fitness freaks with no recreational facilities, no gym, and no in-person fitness classes.

Still, I'm nothing if not persistent. So one particularly hot summer evening in June, Michael and I hopped on Messenger, started a video call, and together browsed Concordia's website to see how Le Gym was faring online.

It's doing surprisingly well. Concordia's Department of Recreation and Athletics posts workout videos that students can follow at home. On Instagram, the hashtag #cuquickhits sends you to a decently long list of workouts that strike a good balance between training your muscles and getting your heart rate up. I've done some of them, plus or minus a few reps (usually minus), and they've helped me feel less cooped up while I'm stuck at home. Besides, now that most people's daily commute consists of a walk around the block, it feels great to get up and move instead of spending all day on the couch.

Michelle Dodds, manager of campus recreation, told me more. In the fall, the recreation department will be posting Strava challenges, cardio-based workout goals that can be set using the Strava app's built-in goal feature. For people craving something more competitive, the department is also holding an esports tournament in lieu of intramurals.

So went my routine. I followed the instructions of a pre-recorded personal trainer or read off a list of exercises until my lungs started to feel that familiar burn, and the curse of the jelly limbs came back to haunt me.

Just like the rest of quarantine, though, exercising by yourself can get pretty lonely after a while. Even though fitness had come back into my life, Michael's company hadn't. After a month

or so of working out on my own, I had to admit that it was much easier to exercise with a friend egging you on. I was starting to get lazy again; instead of counting reps or sets, I had begun to count minutes, running down the clock until enough time had passed for me to drop my weights and pat myself on the back for all the work I had done. Who was I kidding? I wasn't pushing myself. For that, I needed real human connection.

Staying in touch hasn't only been a problem for members, though. In light of the pandemic, the recreation department has been trying to figure out new ways of reaching out. "The university has rules for branding and other general guidelines," says Dodds, "so the only place we have to connect with students is the university website."

Working within these limitations, Concordia's rec staff often find themselves taking part in a broad range of school events in order to promote their new activities. For her part, Dodds will be getting involved in this year's online orientation.

"If people come to orientation, they'll learn how to stay healthy and meet new people," she said. "There'll be a big focus on the active living part of being at uni, because it's an important aspect of student life that often isn't talked about as much."

In terms of staying connected throughout the school year, Le Gym is currently offering online classes via

Zoom. While an at-home camera setup might not be as practical as weights or a dance studio, online classes offer a cheap, easy way to get in touch with other students looking to stay in shape. There aren't as many options as before—Latin dance classes aren't as easy to pull off on a dollar store yoga mat in the middle of your living room—but there's still a wide variety. Pilates for flexibility, interval training for those who like a challenge, and Zumba classes if you're really missing that Latin dance music.

As of Aug. 26, students have been able to register for fitness classes during the fall semester, and several new classes have been added, such as meditation and interval training.

Ultimately, both Concordia recreation and its members will have to adjust to the change in their own way. Before quarantine, I made it a point to visit the gym whenever I felt restless, or even anxious, and after a good workout I'd feel great, like I was celebrating what my body could do. I liked celebrating with friends. Some people might not, and that's okay.

"The important thing," said Dodds, "is that students have answers when they ask 'How can I be active? Where can I meet people? Where can I get involved?'"

So even though I won't be rushing back to the gym with Michael anytime soon, it's nice to know that working out with him is only an online class away. I just hope he picks an easy one. **L**

"The important thing is that students have answers when they ask 'How can I be active? Where can I meet people? Where can I get involved?'"

—Michelle Dodds



Photos Esteban Cuevas

Optimism Outweighs Doubt as Stingers Prepare for Fall Return

Players and staff excited to get back despite lingering concern over pandemic



The Stingers teams will be preparing for their respective domestic seasons while following government health and safety guidelines. / Photo Esteban Cuevas

William Cockerell

As the university gears up for its first online semester, questions remain regarding Stingers' athletics as the fall seasons draw near.

An online semester means there will be no need for students to return to the university physically to attend class, with the odd exception.

The suspension of in-person classes has no effect on Stingers operations, so student athletes will have to return to Montreal should they wish to compete in the upcoming season for their respective sport. While all fall national championship competitions have been cancelled, Stingers teams will be preparing for their respective domestic seasons as expected.

For athletes like Stingers' soccer defender Kate Evoy, who is one of many athletes from outside Quebec, the idea of getting back to the game she loves outweighs her fears surrounding COVID-19.

"I feel fine about coming back for soccer. I was a bit cautious

and a little nervous at first, so I'm just trying to keep myself as informed as I can," Evoy said. "With the new info coming out, I'm feeling more comfortable returning to play."

The Réseau du sport étudiant du Québec announced that its member schools can resume extracurricular sport competitions beginning Sept. 14, meaning that Concordia's teams can at least begin their seasons.

The men's hockey team, however, will not be competing this fall, after the Ontario University Athletics association cancelled sanctioned sport programming until the end of 2020.

Greg Sutton, the head coach for both the men's and women's soccer teams, remains optimistic that the process to return to play will be a pleasant one.

"[There are] a lot of players from out of town," Sutton said. "We want to give them a good base so when soccer starts again, they can hopefully be ready to jump into that."

Recruiting new players to his teams, he admitted, was a challenge due to the circumstances.

"We've lost out on a couple of potential recruits simply because they didn't want to leave where they were," Sutton said. "It hasn't hurt us that much though, since we did most of our recruiting prior to the outbreak."

There does remain cause for concern with anyone travelling from their home back to Montreal for the upcoming season. In 2019, there were 101 Concordia athletes who were originally from outside Quebec, 12 of whom were American.

For new Stingers recruits, particularly those from outside Quebec, the COVID outbreak meant it was no longer safe for students to attend in-person recruitment meetings with schools, which usually consist of interviews and workouts to assess potential additions. U Sports and Concordia were quick to act, however.

"U Sports had set out guidelines fairly early on and actually had put in place a moratorium on in-person recruiting. All of our coaches quickly adapted to online recruiting and promoting our programs and teams," explained D'Arcy Ryan, director of recreation and athletics.

Ryan noted that student athletes have shown a great deal of enthusiasm to get back to playing the sports they love. That's not to say players will put themselves at risk should they feel they're in an unsafe environment.

"All of our coaches quickly adapted to online recruiting and promoting our programs and teams."

— D'Arcy Ryan

Stingers soccer midfielder Emilie Côté, while excited for the season, remains concerned for her health and safety. As someone leaving home in Ottawa to return to Montreal, she is concerned about the risks to herself and those like her with weakened immune systems. Côté hopes the school will take any precaution available to keep athletes and staff in good health.

"Just asking if you have symptoms isn't enough. Some places have been checking temperature, but I think we should just do full on COVID testing," said Côté.

"In Ottawa, we have testing centres, and you can just go whenever, so I feel testing athletes would be very helpful in preventing it from passing along," she added.

While there is no word on whether athletes will be subjected to regular COVID testing, Ryan ensured that the school is abiding by strict guidelines to avoid any potential outbreak amongst the Stingers.

"We are following closely the guidelines that are set out by the CNESST [Quebec's board of labor norms and safety] and the provincial sport organizations, along with the environmental health and safety department at the university, to make sure that we are putting safety of the students, staff, and others first," Ryan said. **L**



"To finish my undergrad online, I made an effort to connect with my classmates even though we weren't able to be physically together. This is vital. Engage as much as possible in the discussions, stay active in the forums, and reach out to others to work together in virtual meetings to keep the dialogue and community active. It may seem daunting, but one of the greatest things about uni life is this connection with each other. It is so worthwhile."

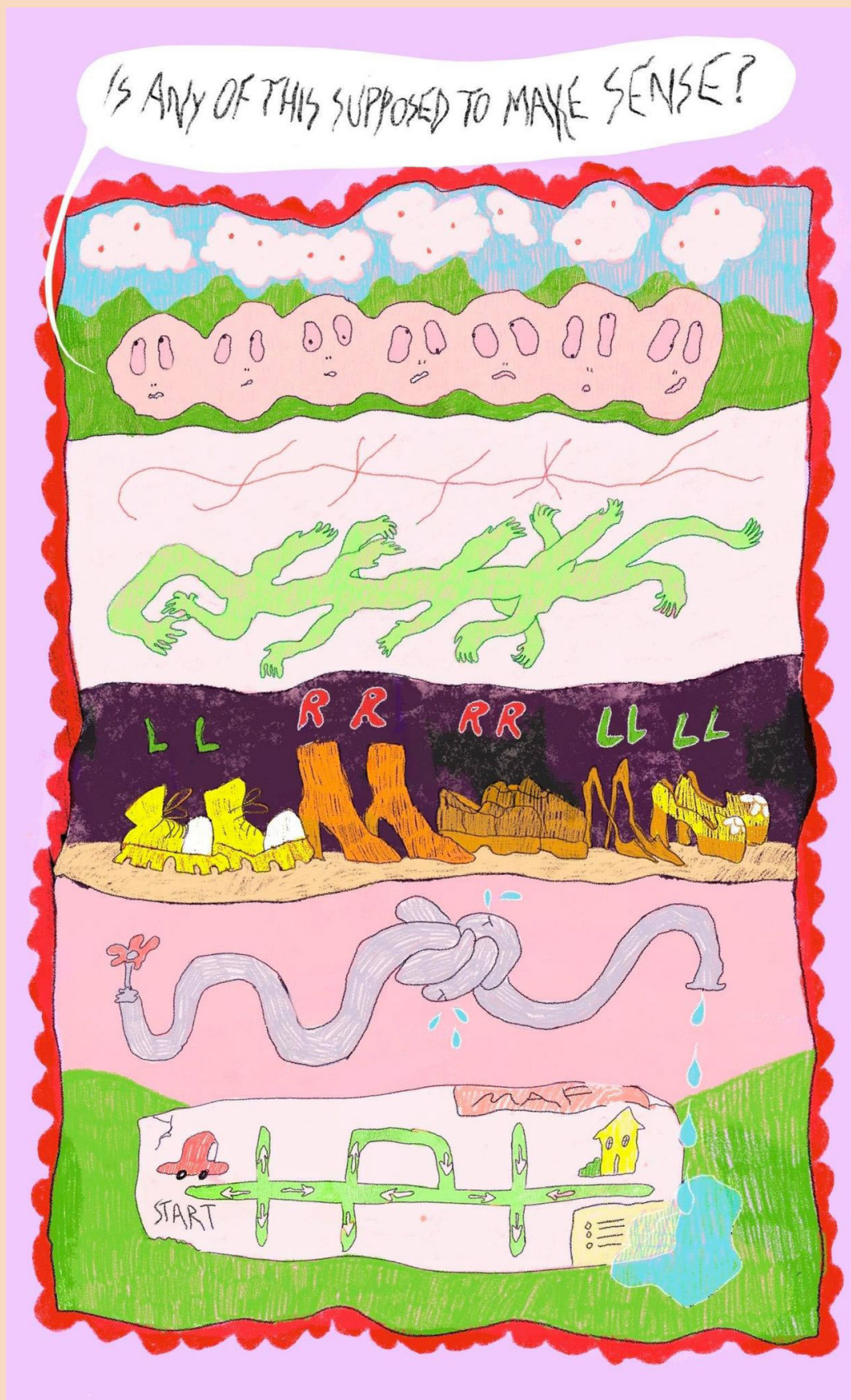
*— Sarah Swinwood,
creative writing*



"The beginning of the fall semester is usually a time for many students to move into a new place, discover their school, and meet like-minded peers. It's usually a very stressful and exciting time, but unfortunately, like many other things, it simply won't be the same this year. But just because something has changed, doesn't mean you can't get an equally enjoyable experience. Be open-minded, embrace change, explore new opportunities, get involved in your school community, and, most importantly, have fun along the way. Your undergrad is a period of rapid growth—make the most out of it!"

*— Patrick France, human
resource management*

Graphic Sheena Macmillan



Claire Latour @dumbgeon

Students X Gentrification

How Montreal's universities have quietly contributed to the housing crisis

Elias Grigoriadis @eligrigoriadis

Montreal is in the midst of a massive housing crisis, and some of the city's historically lower-income areas are being hit the hardest. The vacancy rate is its lowest in 15 years, dropping to 1.5 per cent in the Montreal area in 2019. Communities are being pushed out of their own neighbourhoods, and the reason is gentrification.

The cost of living in lower-income neighbourhoods has run rampant in most major cities. Symptoms of gentrification such as increasing rents and renovictions—when tenants are evicted to renovate and re-lease apartments for more money—all disproportionately affect low-income groups and immigrants.

The process is fairly universal, but one cause that Montreal has to deal with more than other cities in North America is students. With six universities either partly or entirely in the Greater Montreal Area, over 20 CEGEPs, and more than 200,000 post-secondary students, Montreal has the highest proportion of post-secondary students of any major city on the continent. Over the last 20 years, that population has made its presence increasingly felt in some of Montreal's lower-income neighbourhoods.

The history behind student gentrification

"In the late 1990s to early 2000s, parents would just buy condos for students for as long as their degree lasts and then flip them," says Tamara Filyavich, a tenant's rights and social housing activist. "That contributed to [gentrification] because it took away the availability of rentable housing. It's gotten a lot more amplified over the last decade where students would rent around universities or accept higher rents in poorer neighbourhoods."

Be it from not having any experience with standard rent prices, or living with a skewed idea of what regular prices should be, students became favourites amongst landlords given that more experienced tenants wouldn't agree to such an elevated price. According to Filyavich, it's a growing trend

amongst students who don't know they're paying rent above market prices.

More stringent regulations surrounding long-term leases mean some landlords consider temporary rentals as a more enticing business model, especially when it means they can extract higher rents.

Enter the common university student looking for an apartment to live in while they pursue their bachelor's degree and aren't looking to stay in the same place for more than a few years. This makes them a more attractive tenant to landlords, along with the fact that fixing rent is more advantageous for landlords in that scenario.

"Students also have more resources at their disposal. They can pay deposits. They can get a parent to cosign and then end up basically outbidding other low-income people in the



Photo Esteban Cuevas

neighbourhood,” said Brendan Cooke, a social rights worker for the tenants’ rights group Project Genesis. “A lot of people that have lived in these neighbourhoods for years end up being displaced just by simply being outbid.”

While there are more affluent students who do have the aforementioned resources and support systems at their disposal, that isn’t the case for all of them. Lower-income students also depend on social or affordable housing and may have to look at longer commutes to school because of that.

The gentrification of lower-income communities has a very strong correlation to their proximity to the campuses of Montreal’s many universities. One example is the construction of Université de Montréal’s MIL Campus, which has drawn the outrage of many Park-Extension residents and affordable housing advocates well before it opened in 2019.

Evictions are already on the rise in that low-income neighbourhood, which is a critical hub for new immigrants, especially those coming from South Asia. Recent apartment listings have sometimes stated an explicit preference for students.

The borough of Côte-Des-Neiges—Notre-Dame-De-Grâce, where Project Genesis is located and focuses much of its effort, is another one of the more recent boroughs being hit by student-led gentrification. With Concordia University’s Loyola Campus in the same neighbourhood, Cooke explained how what happened in so many other areas is spreading to NDG in the exact same way.

One of the first boroughs to be hit by student-driven gentrification was Plateau Mont-Royal, due to its proximity to McGill University. While some students can afford the elevated prices, it forces many others who want to live near campus to take whatever they can get.

“We ended up grabbing the first thing that was available—especially on our budget and with the location we wanted,” said Johana Desjardins, a third-year political science student at McGill who just moved into her second apartment in the Plateau. “At the back of your mind, you always want to make sure you’re not contributing to [gentrification], but we were in a pretty expensive area, so it was really first come first served.”



Johana Desjardins, a McGill student, is concerned with the role she plays in gentrifying Montreal. / Photos Elias Grigoriadis



A multifaceted problem

While students aren’t the only contributors to the gentrification of Montreal, their role cannot be ignored. And yet, large-scale issues being brought up by housing rights activists are also not being addressed, which means the role of students is not always at the forefront of the conversation.

“The lack of rental housing that’s been worsened by the rise of Airbnb and other forms of short-term renting has really occupied a lot of the discussion,” said Filyavich. “Students aren’t the only contributors, and the lack of progress on social and affordable housing is the biggest issue that needs to be addressed.”

Filyavich went on to explain that it doesn’t mean a student’s impact isn’t negligible, but there are other important legislative obstacles that affect housing, affordability, and gentrifi-

cation in the city as a whole.

Decreasing your impact

When it comes to finding a new apartment while doing your best to diminish the impact of gentrification, a student’s most powerful tool is research—both in terms of the community they’re moving into and the rent they’re going to pay throughout their lease.

The Régie du logement du Québec was created to oversee the

relationship between landlord and tenant and prevent predatory behaviour. However, over the course of the last few years, the Régie's stance has begun to soften, according to Filyavich.

"Things have changed drastically now which also contributed [to gentrification]," said Filyavich. "The Régie is siding more and more with landlords. One new measure is making security deposits legal, but only if they're offered up by a prospective tenant. However, given the kind of competitiveness that we're experiencing with housing, people who can offer one up are going to win."

One resource that Cooke and the workers at Project Genesis often recommend everyone use is the ability for prospective tenants to research the past rents paid. If at any point in the 12 months prior a lower rent was paid for that apartment, you can go to the Régie and have yours decreased to that amount.

"In every neighbourhood in Montreal, there's at least one comité de logement or community organization that helps people understand their housing rights," said Cooke. "They'll be able to explain mechanisms that exist like the past rent researching. You can always find information in the news and online about what is important to the history and culture of that specific community you're moving into."

That is a problem in nearly every gentrified neighbourhood. When the cost of living goes up for residents, rents for shops, restaurants, and other street-level businesses do too, meaning community-owned businesses find it harder and harder to survive without catering to students and their needs. Multi-national franchises and upscale businesses take those spots and further continue gentrification's vicious cycle.

Aside from shopping at local businesses, there are many tools and resources at a student's disposal to at least curb the effect of gentrification in their neighbourhood after they've moved in.

One of the most important ones is a lease transfer.

Cooke explains that landlords will offer to buy tenants out of their lease. That allows these landlords to then increase the rent as they see fit and increase their profit margin, all while

"At the back of your mind, you always want to make sure you're not contributing to [gentrification], but we were in a pretty expensive area, so it was really first come first served."

- Johana Desjardins

gentrification worsens. This is one of the most common practices used that not only drives up the rent but makes it harder for lower-income people to find a place to live.

Rather than simply moving out, tenants can transfer their lease to another person with the same terms. Transferring a lease not only slows rent inflation, but also helps longstanding, low-income residents from being pushed out of their own neighbourhoods.

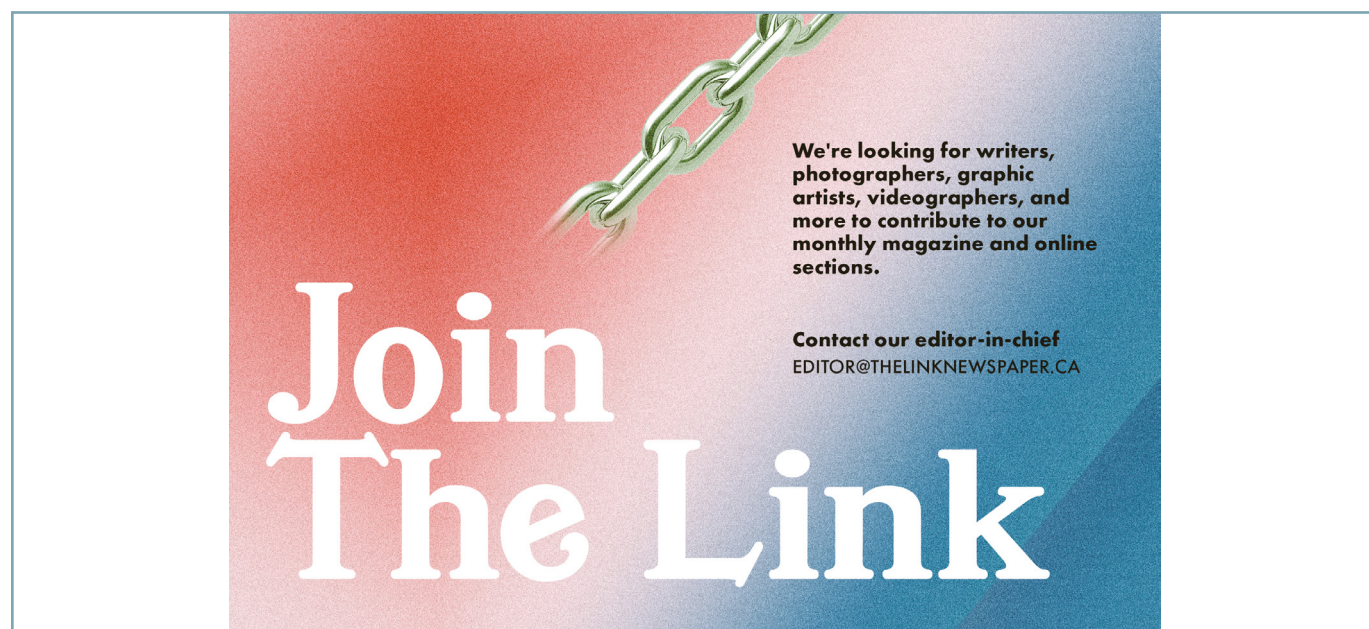
Landlords have 15 days to refuse a transfer after you've given notice but can only do so for serious reasons, and even those can be contested with the Régie. Once the transfer passes, it legally requires the following tenant's rent to be the same that you paid.

Cooke's main argument in favour of a lease transfer is simple: class solidarity.

"Sometimes it's more beneficial for an individual to just take the cash settlement, but in terms of preserving a low rent for everyone, that's a really important strategy," said Cooke. "It's another example of a community working for what's in the best interest of the people that live there."

When asked about one piece of advice he could give any student looking for their first apartment, he stressed the importance of community.

"You can't be thinking of your living condition as temporary even if it is, in fact, temporary for you," said Cooke. "When you leave an apartment, you need to be conscious of the fact that you leaving will have consequences on that neighbourhood even if it's something that won't affect you. That's why mechanisms like lease transfers are so vital to the city." **L**



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How to Demolish Burnout

Work, school, social life, and a pandemic

Autumn Darey

The world is exhausting at the best of times, but life moving online due to the pandemic seems to have made matters worse for a lot of people.

"You can fall into that trap of every time you have a free block of time, you feel like 'I can do it later, I'm home all the time,' or what can happen is people end up not taking any breaks, and that's really difficult too," said Courtney MacDonald, a learning specialist at the Student Success Centre.

She also stresses the importance of using tools to keep organized. "It can't all live in your head. You will burn out very quickly," MacDonald said.

Many people are close to burning out without ever realizing it, but there are a few things to look out for in yourself and your friends, and a few things you can do if burnout is setting in.

What is burnout?

Loss of sleep or insomnia: While this can be related to many things, it's a telltale sign that something is off.

Forgetfulness, lack of concentration, and lack of productivity: Being inspired to do coursework can be hard for many people, but being in an environment that has a lot of distractions can be detrimental to your productivity and can cause you to fall behind in your work.

Negative mood or thoughts: People who are burning out are often anxious, angry, pessimistic, irritable, or depressed. Many realize they feel this way but can't determine why.

Isolation: Many people who are experiencing burnout may not want to socialize the way they usually would. Having social connections has been known to strengthen our immune systems and lower rates of depression and anxiety.

Perfectionism: Many aspire to perfection to obtain good grades, which can take a lot of time and energy, but it doesn't always pay off the way they hope it will. Perfection is meaningless if it all comes crashing down.

"These are things that if you leave it to 'I'll do it if I feel like it' on a day-to-day basis, often you won't feel like doing it."

— Courtney MacDonald

How to avoid it?

Plan ahead: Getting your class syllabus can be overwhelming, but planning out when you can work on assignments and setting mini-due dates can help you stay on track and make sure everything is done on time. You can also set reminders or alerts on your phone or email to remind yourself of what needs to be done.

"These are things that if you leave it to 'I'll do it if I feel like it' on a day-to-day basis, often you won't feel like doing it," said MacDonald.

"We need to move from 'I'll do what I feel like' to being much more proactive and really planning out 'What does my week look like? What does my day look like? What kind of habits can I build that will support me?' because it's all the little habits and routines that make the difference."

Don't overwork yourself: When possible, reduce your work hours or assign only certain days in the week to school work.

Unplug: There is a difference between being unproductive and taking a break. Take time off and watch some trash TV or that documentary you've been waiting to see.

Eat properly: Skipping meals or constantly eating unhealthy snacks can dampen your mood, so plan out your meals if you have to, but make sure you eat right. **LI**

How to Be Demolished by Burnout

Marcus Bankuti @marcusbankuti



Graphic Wilda Casado

Nobody wants to get burnt out, but how can you avoid it? Fortunately, there are some tried and true tips for students at Con U.

Live with your parents: The skyrocketing cost of rent in Montreal doesn't have to be a drain on your budget. Just stay in your childhood home on the West Island. Bills are for suckers and people without a stable family life.

Wait, you don't have that? That's OK. There's tons of jobs people don't want to do during a pandemic. Sure, the hours are long and it'll take you away from your studies, but I'm sure your professors will understand.

Resign yourself to an unrewarding career: Your personal life is your business, so you really should be able to juggle two jobs, a full course load, grad school applications, and maybe even a friend or two. If you can't pull off your obligations as adeptly as your classmate on Zoom whose mattress isn't on the floor, have you thought about trying harder?

If elbow grease isn't your thing, don't fret. There's plenty of work out there for the tenacious liberal arts grad, even if you didn't have time to join Model UN. The best part is, you probably don't even need to look for a new job.

Break up with your partner: This one's easy—there's lots to fight about these days. Besides, a warm, loving embrace is just time spent not doing something more productive. If you really insist on staying in your relationship, maybe you could at least try thinking about the allegory of the cave during sex?

Drink alcohol: Ah, nothing like kicking your feet up after a long day and cracking a beer or six. Of course, it's COVID, so you'll be drinking alone.

Not convinced? Come on, it took the edge off for your parents' generation. Sure, they had cheap tuition, a living wage, and affordable housing, but we all have our problems. I guess you forgot how lucky you are to live in Canada.

Give up: OK, so any way you slice it, it's a little too much. Well, there's always the nuclear option. Have you considered dropping out of school? Concordia wasn't going to impress that McGill undergrad on Tinder anyways. **LI**



Graphic Dalyen Conserve

"In three minutes that could also be me, there isn't really much that could separate me from that."
 — Dalyen Conserve

Read the full interview with the artist on *The Link's* website.

The Everlasting Spirit of Activism: A Reflection on This Summer's Protests

Where do we go from here? —————

Mzwandile Poncana
@mzwandile_p

It is understood that your work seldom merges with your personal life—but this has proved false for me in the summer of 2020.

As a reporter for *The Link*, I covered various protests and movements that were advocating for people who look like me.

As an international student, I covered a protest in July demanding regularization for immigrants, including international students.

As a Black person, I covered a noise demonstration in June calling for the abolition of prisons and police in a country—Canada—where Black people are disproportionately mistreated by law enforcement.

However, looking like the person I'm representing doesn't matter, which is the beauty of being a journalist—we can envelop ourselves in other people's stories and concerns, empathize with

them, and use our medium to amplify their truths. At least we should.

This summer, there has been a momentous push towards political and social justice. This has mostly been fuelled by years of ignorance towards racism, labour rights, immigrant rights, and a whole slew of other issues. *The Link's* writers have reported on historic events this summer, continuing a legacy of covering protests in the spirit of advocacy journalism.

Reflections on summer activism

Montreal's first major protest against anti-Black racism happened on May 31. What started out as a peaceful protest ultimately turned violent and chaotic due to the SPVM. Rubber bullets were shot, and teargas was launched into the crowd—three reporters from *The Link* had riot guns raised directly at them whilst covering the event. They were unsure whether these weapons shot rubber bullets or teargas canisters.

Even though the protests responded to a larger trend of activism that exploded first in the United States after the murder of George Floyd by police, the protests highlighted years of anti-Black policing in Canada.

One of the protests' main demands was to end random searches. Activists also called for the government to implement an anti-racism committee that would craft measures to fight racial discrimination.

Some of the government officials who responded include Mayor Valérie Plante, promising a new street check policy, and Premier François Legault, who signalled the creation of an anti-racism task force, while simultaneously claiming that systemic racism does not exist in the province.

June 7: Protesters take a knee and raise their fists at the summer's second BLM protest.





The new street check policy was officially announced on July 8. Black communities saw it as flawed, criticizing it for only ensuring certain stops will require collecting data on race.

Critics also suggested the policy should make sure people who do get their data collected by police should also be informed whether that information will appear on a criminal background check. Another suggestion was to sanction police officers who violate the policy.

Marlihan Lopez is an Afrofeminist activist who works as a coordinator at Concordia's Simone de Beauvoir Institute. She is also a part of Black Lives Matter Montreal, which was part of a coalition calling to defund the SPVM on July 7. On behalf of this coalition, she said the new arrest policy is disappointing.

One of her main concerns was that it still gives police complete control over whom to arrest and doesn't address the systemic issues behind racial profiling.

The coalition has become completely distrustful of the police's ability to make any reasonable decisions, so the primary objective now is defunding the police and reinvesting the money into other sectors of society, such as community initiatives and housing.

Lopez said Legault's anti-racism task force had many pitfalls, including the fact that it had two police officers on it, one of whom policed Indigenous communities.

Even though two Black members were added to the task force and given leadership positions to add a sense of legitimacy, Lopez said there was no Indigenous

representation. This is incredibly problematic as Indigenous people bear the brunt of the negative effects of policing in the country, said Lopez.

"The Indigenous members of our coalition were disappointed in this lack of representation," she said. "But we weren't expecting much from a government that legislates racist laws such as Law 21," she added, referring to the law banning religious symbols, such as Muslim face coverings, in Quebec.

Hady Anne is a representative from Solidarity Across Borders, which organized an immigrant rights protest in June.

"While protest and direct action are absolutely important, they are not the only activism that needs to happen. Mutual aid and direct support of marginalized communities is equally radical."

— Wade Walker

The group has led calls for regularization of all immigrants across Canada.

Anne told *The Link* that the summer protests have not aroused any response from government officials yet—but their momentum hasn't slowed, and the group will be hosting follow-up protests whilst also creating petitions.

The Anti-Carceral Group—which organized the noise demonstration—continued its cries to dismantle the prison industrial complex, holding a vigil on Prisoners' Justice Day on Aug. 10 to commemorate those who have died in prison.

How students can carry the torch in the fall

Rushdia Mehreen is a Concordia alumna involved with Solidarity Across Borders and India Civil Watch. She was

heavily involved in the Quebec student protests in 2012.

One hopeful ounce of progress she has witnessed in recent movements is the increase in racial diversity, and how there are more BIPOC at the forefront.

She said Black students and Students of Colour are usually at the margins of these large movements—such as the 2012 students rights protests, in the beginning—even whilst they are among the most heavily affected.

She also highlighted the importance of Concordia Student Union committees. If the CSU doesn't have a committee for an issue you need to address, she said, then you should begin the steps of creating the committee.

"Petitions aren't enough," said Mehreen. "They're a good start because they can make you aware of how many people you can reach and how many people support your cause. But instead of being the end, they should be the means to get someplace else."

One of the main things she recommends is to constantly push the limits of your demands and tactics and aim higher. She used the 2012 students movement as an example—how it began with small teach-ins and demonstrations that eventually resulted in larger mobilizations.

Another of her recommendations is to rely on structural facilities to push change. Students should not be apprehensive about joining the CSU or clubs and associations around political issues they're passionate about. The bigger the number, the better.



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Left: Tens of thousands of protesters march past Dorchester Square during the summer's first BLM protest on May 31.

Right: Police and protesters stand face to face on May 31. "No justice, no peace" ring in the air.

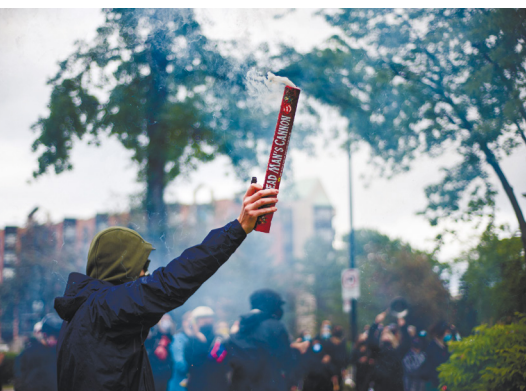
Photos Alexandre Denis

p. 37

Top: June 7. "I can't breathe" has become synonymous with the BLM movement.

Bottom: Fireworks and firecrackers go off on June 13 as protesters demand an end to prisoner mistreatment and racist policing.

Photos Caroline Marsh



This could also be useful for cross-university solidarity, she said. If the CSU and student unions at other universities collectively decry similar issues, it is more likely that the universities will be receptive to their demands.

She also recommends the Quebec Public Interest Research Group at Concordia, which is one of the many ways incoming and returning students can get involved in advocacy work.

QPIRG is a resource centre for students and a hub of community-research organizing that strives to raise support and awareness around grassroots organizing around social and environmental issues.

Wade Walker, the finance and organizational planning coordinator for QPIRG,

said students can get involved through the group's various events, publications, and working groups.

"We host Anti-Colonial Week in collaboration with Frigo Vert in November, with events where people can learn about anti-colonialism, how to be a better ally to Indigenous people, and are invited to come to the Anti-Colonial Dinner," Walker said.

Beyond just participating in events, students can join QPIRG's board of directors. "On the board, they learn about how a small non-profit functions and a lot about the grassroots activism happening throughout the city," they added.

Walker said students have also found value in joining one of the 30 different working groups QPIRG has around the city, where they directly immerse themselves in activist groups.

An example of one of these groups is Accessibilize Montreal, a group that attempts to make Montreal more accessible for its diverse bodies by using cultural production and peer advocacy.

The life of an activist can be a precarious one—if not because of the risk of getting arrested or brutalized by police at a protest, then because of the stigma sur-

rounding it.

Walker recalled consoling students who felt trepidations towards activist work by reminding them that activism doesn't look like one thing.

"While protest and direct action are absolutely important, they are not the only activism that needs to happen," they said. "Mutual aid and direct support of marginalized communities is equally radical."

Helping cook free meals for people who need them, fundraising for non-status people living in the city, or being a pen-pal to an LGBTQ2S prisoner are all forms of activism, said Walker.

For Black students specifically, Lopez said, they should think about getting involved in the Black Caucus at Concordia, which is a collective of students, staff, and faculty organizing to sustain Black solidarity and support to combat anti-Black racism on campus.

"There's currently a lot of organizing around BLM and the advancement of Black students at Concordia, so taking part in the movement to push for specific measures that address systemic racism and the expansion of Black scholarship is a very important way to involve yourself," Lopez said. **LI**

Masthead

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Nanor Froundjian	creative director
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OPEN	copy editor
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Contributors

Alaina Bush	Wilda Casado
Jad Abukasm	Caroline Marsh
Talia Kliot	Carleen Loney
Autumn Darey	Sarah Swinwood
Daylen Conserve	Patrick France
Maria Chabelnik	Olivier Cadotte
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Kaity Brady	Nicole Mireless
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Bree Rockbrand	Olivia Piché
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Curtis McRae	Claire Latour
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Cover

Maria Chabelnik

House ad

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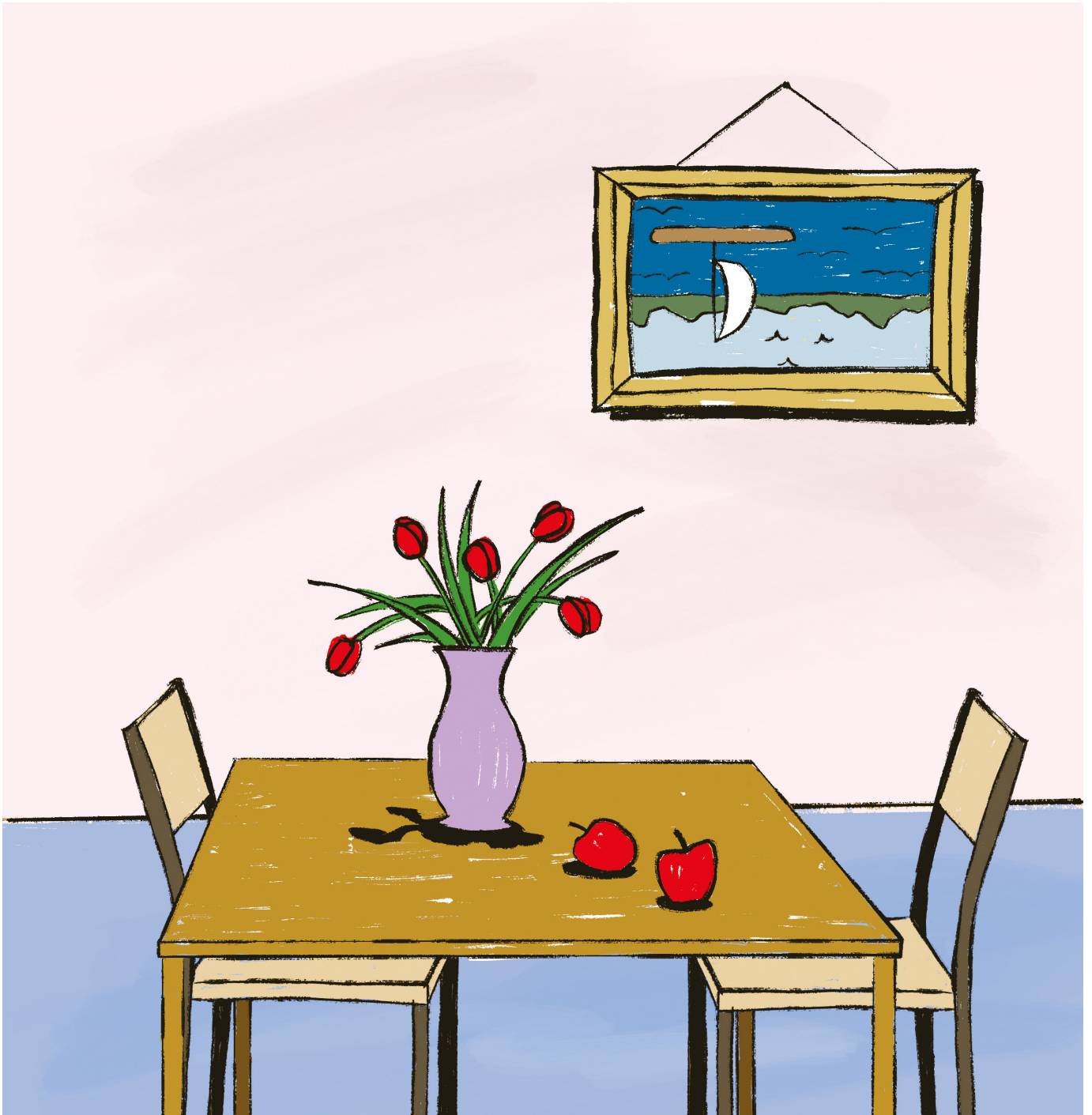
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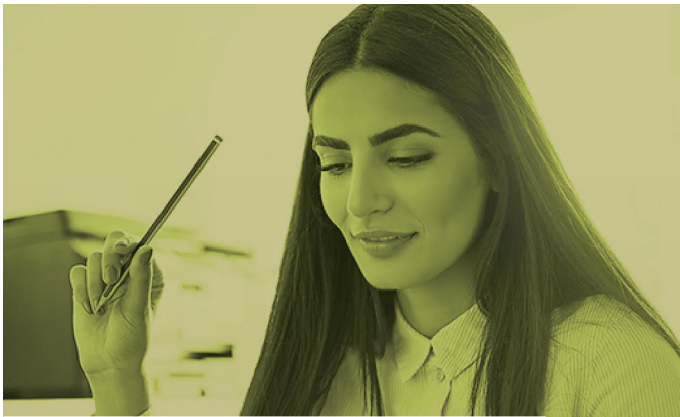
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The Link acknowledges our location on unceded Indigenous land. The Kanien'kehá:ka Nation is recognized as the custodians of these lands and waters. Tiohtiá:ke is historically known as a gathering place for many First Nations.

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The Link office:
Concordia University
Hall Building, Room H-580-3
and H-511
1455 de Maisonneuve Blvd. W.
Montreal, Quebec H3G 1M8
Editor: 514-848-2424 x. 7407
Arts: 514-848-2424 x. 5813
News: 514-848-2424 x. 8682
Business: 514-848-7406





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