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SOCIÉTÉ DES PUBLICATIONS DU DAILY

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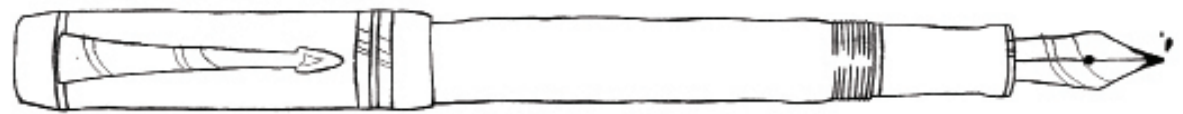
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The right to change your name: How McGill must support trans students

At McGill, it is impossible for students to change their names on official university documents without legal documentation. If you do not go by your birth name, and have not legally changed your name, the University will not display your chosen name on your official transcripts or diploma. Although McGill allows you to choose your “preferred” first name in some situations — such as on student cards and the myCourses class list — “preferred” names will not appear on your final degree, official transcripts, reports to the government, and other official documents. While this may seem reasonable to the McGill administration, it isn't to transgender and nonbinary students, who are adversely affected by McGill's request for legal documentation to approve name changes on official documents. Nor is McGill the norm: other universities do not require legal documentation to change trans students' names. McGill should acknowledge the difficulties already faced by trans students who want their identity to be recognized, and should take action to make name changes an easier and more accessible process.

Firstly, for some trans people, interacting with birth names can cause anxiety and gender dysphoria — intense discomfort over one's experience of gender in their body and in social relations. Secondly, the use of a trans person's birth name on official university documents could ‘out’ them as trans to people, placing them in unsafe situations. For example, a trans person may be outed without their consent in an interview where their official transcript is requested, potentially subjecting them to transphobia and discriminatory employment practices. It should always be a trans person's own decision to share their trans identity, not that of McGill through the forced use of legal names on official documents.

In addition, changing your legal name in Quebec is a long, expensive, and arduous process. The request must be brought directly to the Directeur de l'état civil, who then decides whether a name change is ‘appropriate’ given the applicant's situation. Trans people do not need cisgender gatekeepers to tell them what is and is not ‘appropriate’ for their situation. A name change in Quebec also involves the publishing of name change documents to the Directeur de l'état civil website, making it very easy to out a trans person after a name change. Furthermore, immigrants living in Quebec who are not Canadian citizens are unable to change their name and “sex designation” on their official documentation. Quebec is the only province in Canada where a person is required to be a Canadian citizen in order to legally change their name and “sex designation”. When McGill makes it impossible to change your name on official transcripts and diplomas without legal documentation, they make it very difficult for trans students to be recognized for who they are, and they make it impossible for trans students who are immigrants to Quebec to be recognized for who they are.

This needs to change. There is no reason why McGill cannot change its policy and practices, as other universities like McMaster do not require legal documentation from trans students in order to change official university documents. Students should support their trans peers who are attempting to change their name at McGill by pressing their student representatives to bring forward a motion urging McGill to improve the name-changing process. We demand that McGill create a task force to investigate the concrete ways in which changing your name on official documents can be done without need of legal documentation.

—The McGill Daily Editorial Board

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HanVoice hosts panel on North Korean humanitarian crisis

North Korean activists must be empowered, not victimized

RAYLEIGH LEE
The McGill Daily

On October 28, McGill Students for HanVoice hosted a panel called “What would you ask a North Korean.” The panel was attended by over 200 people, and featured Ellie Cha, a human rights advocate who left North Korea with her family in 2012. McGill Students for HanVoice is a non-profit grassroots organization created to raise awareness on the North Korean humanitarian crisis. The event was part of the HanVoice Pioneers Project (HPP), an initiative which aims to empower North Korean activists to lead the North Korean human rights movement. The event included an introduction by Dr. Juan Wang of the McGill Political Science department. Later, Cha shared a testimony on her life experiences followed by a Q&A session with the participants.

Barriers in resettlement

Danny Yeo, the president of HanVoice Ottawa, spoke on the challenges resettlement poses to many North Koreans, specifically, the difficulty of working around the immigration regulations of surrounding countries.

“When North Korean refugees [...] defect from North Korea, their goal is to get to Thailand. [...] It’s known as a safe haven, and more than 9 per cent of refugees end up there,” said Yeo, “In China, if they get caught, they will be deported back to North Korea.”

Thailand has become a popular transit destination for North Korean resettlement. In the first six months of 2016 alone, 385 North Koreans entered Thailand. While the Royal Thai Government (RTG) does not recognize North Koreans’ refugee status, they permit illegal entry.

Throughout the migration process, refugees face the risk of deportation back to North Korea. The North Korean government considers unauthorized departure a criminal offense, meaning that returning to North Korea leads to prosecution. Many choose to cross the eastern border out of the country, using a paid broker for travel arrangements. This route involves travelling through China, where North Korean refugees are considered economic migrants instead of asylum seekers.

Yeo explained that North Korean citizens face limited options after leaving the country. “Another problem is that when they arrive [in] Thailand, they only have two options; South Korea [or] the US,” said Yeo. “Currently, the US is not the best place to go, because of the [...] administration. [...] The process



Ellie Cha

JEEWON LEE | VP Communications, HanVoice

is very long, whereas South Korea is very quick.”

Under the South Korean Constitution, all North Koreans are recognized as South Korean citizens. Even so, North Koreans in South Korea face marginalization and other barriers in resettlement.

“In South Korea, there is another problem. [...] There is a lot of discrimination against the refugees,” said Yeo. “Most North Korean refugees [...] come as single mothers, meaning that [...] they themselves struggle to get by. [...] Even at home, [...] North Korean children do not receive [adequate] attention and help. Even the education system is very competitive.”

Yeo told the audience that HanVoice has been in talks with the Canadian federal government about establishing a program that would allow Canadians to sponsor North Korean refugees.

“I’d like to believe that Canada will take care of people who are displaced.”

—Danny Yeo
President of HanVoice
Ottawa

“We wanted to create an opportunity for these North Korean refugees to come over to Canada. [We] not only have a strong Korean-Canadian community, [...] but I’d

like to believe that Canada will take care of people who are displaced.”

Canada has historically shown favorable policies towards North Korean refugees, with a 90 per cent acceptance rate in 2011 and 2012. However, the Immigration Refugee Board of Canada (IRB) began rejecting applications in 2013 and 2014, citing that South Korean citizenship is guaranteed to North Koreans by default. In 2014, only one out of the 327 refugee claims was accepted.

Ellie Cha’s story

“Today I am here to share my personal story as a North Korean refugee,” said Cha. “I still remember my first visit to Pyongyang, I still remember the busy men and women rushing down the streets [...] to arrive to work, [...] the feeling of the sky, and young children playing by the grass. But most of all, I remember my father. I remember walking up the stairs of his university [...] and I remember his great uniform, which is allowed only for the very best in the country.”

Cha’s father was a high-ranking official before falling out of favour with the North Korean government. He was subsequently dismissed from his position as the vice president of a large mining company. The family’s socioeconomic situation deteriorated after this, and they decided to leave North Korea and seek asylum in South Korea.

“We would no longer be cared for in a way we were for the past eight years. [...] In North Korea, our family had no future anymore, especially for me and my brother.”

The family initially planned to

travel to the South Korean embassy and request asylum in Vietnam. However, the family was found by Vietnam authorities and detained, then sent to the Chinese Border. After five attempts to enter Vietnam from China, the family decided to enter South Korea through Thailand, where they met South Korean embassy officers. During this process, Cha was separated from her family for several days, during which her mother suffered a high fever and malaria.

“If I can do this, my friends, my family, and [...] the 23 million people in North Korea [...] can work to make North Korea change.”

—Ellie Cha
Speaker and human
rights advocate

“From North Korea, to China, to Vietnam, Laos, Burma, Thailand, and to South Korea, the world was a very big [place]. Even though I live in the South now, my home is in the North. [...] My family is still searching for our [new] home. [...] It’s only last year that we took our time to reflect, and to talk together, not as a refugee trying to survive, but as family, as people trying to move

forward.” Cha is currently pursuing a media communications degree at Seoul University in South Korea.

Empowerment, not victimization

When asked what motivated her to pursue advocacy work, Cha emphasized the importance of empowering North Korean activists as the leaders of their own movement.

“From these experiences I [have had], I couldn’t shut my eyes from the people who have had the same experiences as I did. [...] Personally, I am not an extrovert; I am an introvert and don’t like [...] public speaking. [...] But if I don’t do this, if we don’t do this because we don’t like it, who can? That’s why I decided to do advocacy. [...] North Korean refugees [...] can act as a bridge, and a [...] voice for North Koreans.”

“The power that resides in our shred humanity, [...] including North Koreans, this humanity gives us the same chance to live.”

—Ellie Cha
Speaker and human
rights advocate

“Even these days, people just see North Korean refugees as victims. [...] If the media and organizations paint us as victims, we can get more attention, but that’s it. There’s no change. [...] When you see them as agent of change, we can change, and we can change the world. [...] When I first arrived to South Korea, I was a victim of the [...] system. But I met people who saw me as an agent of change, and supported me. [...] If I can do this, my friends, my family, and [...] the 23 million people in North Korea [...] can work to make North Korea change, and you can support them.”

Cha concluded her testimony with a reminder of shared humanity. “Today I’m here because I believe that I will end my journey in freeing North Korea. [...] I don’t want you to feel sorry or pity hearing my stories. My story is not one of weakness. My story is one of great strength. It’s one of great power; the power of parents’ sacrifice for their family. The power that resides in our shared humanity, [...] including North Koreans, this humanity gives us the same chance to live.”

McGill community protests former Principal's honorary award

Statement criticises honouring of Heather Munroe-Blum

INORI ROY
The McGill Daily

On October 31, former Principal and Vice-Chancellor of McGill, Heather Munroe-Blum, was awarded an honorary doctorate at the University's fall 2017 convocation ceremony. Munroe-Blum was the 16th Principal of McGill, in office from 2003-2013. She was the first woman to fill the position, preceding current Principal Suzanne Fortier. The University announced Munroe-Blum's honorary doctorate award in early October, praising her dedication to "accessibility and innovation in higher education for all" and to "breaking down the barriers to learning." However, on-campus labour unions and SSMU have since expressed their disapproval and opposition to this decision. In a statement released to the press on Friday, co-signatories, the McGill University Non-Academic Certified Association (MUNACA), the McGill Course Lecturers and Instructors Union (MCLIU), and SSMU argue that Munroe-Blum's actions during her tenure "created rifts in McGill's social and academic fibre that have yet to heal."

On-campus labour unions and SSMU have since expressed their disapproval and opposition to this decision.

The University's press release regarding Munroe-Blum's honorary doctorate described her as "a vocal champion for education accessibility, and increasing financial support for students, academics and research." In contrast to this assertion, the union's statement points out the ways in which Munroe-Blum facilitated an increase in pay and benefits to managers and administrative executives, while students and staff on campus were left in financially precarious positions.

During her time as Principal, Munroe-Blum made a \$369,000 base salary and earned additional "contract benefits" ranging from \$128,000 to \$226,000. Now, despite no longer teaching or working at the University, Munroe-Blum has access to a supplementary pension of \$284,000 annually, in addition to the \$87,000 she receives as part of her

regular pension from McGill and the University of Toronto. These funds are paid for in part by the university's students and employees.

"To just present a very un-nuanced, very basic overview of her work on campus, which ignores [...] how it affected students and labour unions, is really troubling."

—Connor Spencer,
SSMU VP External

"One of the reasons that the Unions and I are working together on this is the fact that, as I was mentioning before, they mobilise very specific language to champion her work, but that directly contradicts the lived history of what happened," said SSMU VP External Connor Spencer in an interview on CKUT. "[This language] is not reflective of the true story and history of her work on campus. To just present a very un-nuanced, very basic overview of her work on campus, which ignores a lot of how it affected students and labour unions, is really troubling."

In tandem with the increases in executive salaries and benefits, and, according to the union's statement, a drastic increase in the number of managers and executives in the McGill administration, students and staff on campus saw cuts to the resources available to them. The union's statement reads, "Dr. Munroe-Blum led efforts to cut \$2 million from staff benefits. This was followed by a massive claw-back of front-line, education, and student support salaries worth tens of millions of dollars when it was decided that employees would bear the brunt of shortfalls in the University's pension plan."

The union's statement acknowledges that Munroe-Blum was proficient in her work as a fundraiser for the University, but goes on to criticise the lack of scrutiny directed at the spending of these funds by the University itself.



LAURA BRENNAN | The McGill Daily

"McGill was put on probation by the three principal federal granting agencies because of inadequate financial oversight and processes. McGill's residency programs were put on probation, as well, notably because of insufficient resources for residents, the very students the programs were established to educate."

"The truth of the matter is, she actively advocated for tuition hikes, therefore affecting the actual accessibility of education."

—Connor Spencer,
SSMU VP External

While course lecturers, students, and casual employees made wages below the national standard during Munroe-Blum's tenure, her impact shaped the experiences of all students on campus, not only those working McGill jobs.

"The truth of the matter is, she actively advocated for tuition hikes, therefore affecting the actual accessibility of education," Spencer says. "Also, she's the reason that riot cops were called onto campus in November of 2011...[during] a peaceful protest. In general, a lot of the change in policy around how protest is allowed on campus was under her as well."

"It's really frustrating, and it feels a little insensitive - it's only been a few years since she's left, we're still kind of reeling from the implications that her term had on campus, it seems really insensitive to be applauding her when the lived reality of her term is still a very real thing felt by all of our members," Spencer concludes.

This frustration was echoed by MUNACA Labour Relations officer David Roseman. "It's pretty difficult for people who've worked at McGill during [her tenure] to

"It's pretty difficult for people who've worked at McGill during [her tenure] to not have a visceral reaction to the announcement [of her award]."

—David Roseman, McGill University Non-Academic Certified Association Labour relations Officer

not have a visceral reaction to the announcement [of her award]. It makes it extremely difficult, when one is supposed to be celebrating somebody... it's not really compatible with discussing, in a critical way, that person's career or their actions."



International News

26 casualties in Yemen market after Saudi-led airstrike

ZARA REHAN
News Writer

Saudi-led warplanes reportedly bombed a hotel and marketplace in the Sahar district of Saada province on November 1. According to Saba News, a rebel-controlled news agency, the area where the attack took place was crowded with workers, stall owners, and shoppers. At least 26 were killed, and 17 wounded. The strike destroyed the hotel and reduced “the [marketplace] stalls to heaps of metal.”

The Saudi coalition, which has backed Yemen’s government in its war against the Houthi movement for the past two and a half years, has not released a comment. Allegations from human rights groups claim that the coalition has been involved in bombing schools, hospitals, and markets, among other civilian areas.

The coalition has been accused of carrying out a total of 38 attacks on residential areas, including school and hospitals, and reports state that their actions have caused 683 child casualties in 2016. The coalition has been blacklisted by the United Nations in their annual report this October.

According to UN statistics, approximately 8,670 people have been killed by airstrikes and similar acts of violence. 60 per cent of these victims have been civilians. Nearly 50,000 people have been injured.

The conflict between Yemen’s government and its rebel forces has resulted in the world’s largest food security emergency, with over 20 million people in need of humanitarian aid. The lack of sanitation and widespread internal displacement caused by the conflict has exacerbated Yemen’s cholera outbreak, now affecting at least 600,000 children.

Spain takes control of Catalonia following vote to secede

MARINA CUPIDO
The McGill Daily

Tensions surrounding the Catalan independence movement escalated last week, as the Spanish government moved ahead with its crackdown on the region. On October 28, Spain took control of Catalonia and dissolved its parliament, after MPs voted overwhelmingly in favour of creating an independent Catalan republic. Regional elections to replace the deposed government will take place on December 21. Until then, Catalonia will be under direct rule by Spain through article 155 of the country’s constitution. Article 155 allows Spain to dissolve Catalonia’s government and take control of its civil service, law enforcement, finances, and public media. It has never been used before.

The independence referendum itself was another unprecedented event. It was declared illegal by Spanish courts, and Spain’s state police behaved violently towards Catalan voters attempting to reach the polls. The deposed Catalan president, Carles Puigdemont, urged a peaceful response from the region’s people, saying: “In the days ahead, we must keep to our values of pacifism and dignity. It’s in our – in your – hands to build the republic.” Puigdemont is currently in Belgium, and his

lawyer claims that the Spanish government has issued a warrant for his arrest.

The European Union, the US, and the UK have expressed support for Spain’s actions to suppress the independence movement and maintain control over Catalonia, refusing to recognize the short-lived Catalan national government. A substantial number of Catalans also support continued unity with Spain, and the political crisis of recent weeks has been marked by some demonstrations against independence. Moreover, dozens of MPs boycotted the vote itself in a gesture of protest. In the week since the vote occurred, this faction has criticized the referendum for being allegedly undemocratic.

The left, meanwhile, has been divided in its response to the independence movement, with the Catalan socialist party along with the centre-left Ciutadans party siding with Spanish unity. The far-left CUP party, on the other hand, has vehemently supported independence, partly on the grounds that it would improve the condition of the working class. This week, in the wake of the crackdown, one Catalan union has called a ten-day strike.



I'm Jewish, and I voted against ratifying Noah Lew

Here's why I decided to take a stand

TALI IOSELEVICH
Commentary Writer

I was born in Israel. Both my father and my mother come from a long line of Ashkenazi Jews. When I was four years old, my mother brought me here to Canada. Being transposed from one settler colonial state to another shaped much of my identity and later, my activism. The recent tensions on campus surrounding Noah Lew's failure to be ratified onto the Students' Society of McGill University (SSMU) Board of Directors (BoD), and the allegations of anti-Semitism against Democratize SSMU and pro-Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions (BDS) groups, have compelled me to set the record straight: I am sick and tired of people equating Jewishness with Zionism. As a white Jewish student who is vehemently anti-Zionist, it is absolutely vital for me to explain why I support Democratize SSMU and BDS, why I opposed the SSMU ruling concerning BDS, and how it's not only possible, but necessary, to have a whole Jewish identity that's separate from Zionism.

I would first like to acknowledge that I speak solely from my experience coming from Soviet Ashkenazi Jewish heritage, and I do not represent the vast and varied experiences of Sephardic, Mizrahi and other Jewries, which I encourage you to seek out and listen to. In what then is my Jewish identity rooted? It definitely does not come from my practice of Judaism, whose teachings have long been abandoned by my single mother and whose last shred of influence over my life was extinguished in the secular suburbia in which I grew up. I don't speak Yiddish, and despite learning Hebrew in elementary school, I've lost all traces of it. This begs the question: if not religion, if not language, then what? Is my Jewish identity found in the shakshouka my mother taught me how to make, or in the matzo ball soup I

eat once a year? Is it nested in the intricate braids of the Challah bread I once baked? Is that where it hides?

The simple answer, the same one propagated ceaselessly by the Israeli state, is that my identity is somehow irrevocably bound to the land I was born in. I am meant to believe that the center and core of my existence as a Jew is tied to a strip of land an ocean away that can be crossed by car from tip to tail in less than six hours. A land that has been grabbed by force and violently occupied by white settlers since even before the night of the Nakba in 1948, and has since been defined by increasing military expansionism, state-sanctioned brutality, and discrimination against its non-Jewish citizens. A land whose government has built a literal wall to separate those it deems to be second-class and has refused to provide the most basic of services to these people, and whose fertile soils and trees have been razed to the ground by the military to deny Palestinians any means of securing their livelihoods. And what a fitting image that is, an uprooted olive tree to symbolize Israel's violence.

We exist, and our voices must be heard.

"Zionism and antisemitism – two sides of the same coin, both maintaining that Jews do not belong in the countries where they've lived over the centuries", writes Leon Rosselson, a British poet and singer-songwriter as well as a prominent anti-Zionist activist. To claim that Jews must relocate to Israel to be considered whole is to deny the range of Jewish experiences across the world that cannot be collapsed into one tangible identity. Jews from New York, Argentina, Ethiopia, Germany, and Russia all have different

histories to tell which have been undeniably shaped by anti-Jewish oppression, and which Israel attempts to reduce to a single, hegemonic narrative.

The freedom to question the legitimacy of higher authorities, spiritual or not, is the hallmark of a just society.

My Jewish identity need not be confined to ethno-nationalism to be considered valid. Instead, in Isaac Babel's own words, "I am a Jew because of my unconditional solidarity with the persecuted and the exterminated." I identify with the legacy of radical Jews who've seen the injustices of the world, and labored tirelessly to correct them. It is precisely *because* Jews are so intimately familiar with violence and persecution that we must fight against them in all their forms, especially when they are being perpetrated by a government that claims to act in our name. Judaism is the only religion I know of in which you're encouraged to argue with your God and community leaders. And while I am non-practicing, this sentiment appeals to me. The freedom to question the legitimacy of higher authorities, spiritual or not, is the hallmark of a just society.

It has become increasingly clear that this is not the type of freedom afforded at my university campus. In the aftermath of the General Assembly (GA) on October 23, the proverbial shit hit the fan. In what was misconstrued as an act of anti-Semitism, Noah Lew was not ratified to the BoD. Later in

the GA, SSMU President Muna Tojiboeva alleged that Democratize SSMU and others were motivated by anti-Jewish sentiment when voting down Lew. At best, those involved conflate what it means to be Jewish with what it means to be a Zionist, essentially stating that one cannot exist without the other. At worst, they fall into anti-Semitic tropes that further alienate either side.

Allegations of anti-Semitism must be taken seriously, and I extend my solidarity to every Jewish-identifying person, both on campus and off, who has experienced this form of discrimination. However, it must be made explicitly clear that when Jewish and non-Jewish students criticize the Israeli state, or call someone out for being affiliated with Zionist organizations, it is not inherently an anti-Semitic act. To state otherwise—as the McGill administration and Tojiboeva have done—is to adopt a reductionist view that silences our very democratic call for justice.

This is why, sitting in the humid SSMU Ballroom at this past General Assembly, I voted against Noah Lew's re-election to the BoD. Amidst growing evidence against his competency, from his illegal campaigning for Muna as well to his failure to recuse himself from the BDS ruling, I stood with fellow students in exercising my right to unseat a member of a political institution whose policies I don't agree with. While Democratize SSMU made a misstep in adopting anti-Semitic language when calling Lew out, they later apologized, their error does not invalidate their goal of holding student representatives accountable. Nor should it be a reason for Lew and Tojiboeva to point fingers without first understanding the basis of students' critiques. Lew crying anti-Semitism only reinforces the conflation between Jewishness and Zionism, and erases anti- and non-Zionist Jewish voices. We exist, and our voices must be heard.

HAVE YOUR SAY.

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We need to talk about Zionism

Equating Zionism and Judaism is a dangerous mistake that needs to be remedied

MO BARBIER
Commentary Writer

I am both Arab and Jewish. My Baba was born in Beirut, Lebanon, and while he does not identify with his heritage—choosing to speak French rather than Arabic—my siblings and I do identify as Arab, and this is important to us. My Ma was born in Massachusetts to a Jewish-American woman whose family escaped Germany in the 1860s among the rise of anti-Semitism in Europe, and assimilated into Christian American life. I hold tightly to both my Jewish and Arab identities, but this places me in a difficult spot when Jewish high holidays come around. With the recent controversies surrounding the SSMU General Assembly, it is obvious to me why.

Zionism is an idea that was concretely founded by Theodor Herzl in late 19th century Germany in reaction to the same violent anti-Semitism and ghettoization that my ancestors fled. His now infamous piece *Der Judenstaat* (“The Jewish State”) outlined his desires for a return of Jewish people to their homeland in the Levant from the diaspora. Zionism changed, however, from the desire for safety from anti-Semitism in a land holy to Judaism into an ideology of manifest destiny justifying the genocide and forced removal of Palestinians from their native land. Zionism has become a variant of white supremacy. Israel is not a Jewish state but a white Jewish state which has historically treated Jews of color (from Mizrahim to Beta Israel) as inferior, denying them the same rights and liberties as Ashkenazim in Israel.

The racism Israel is founded on, and the racism it continues to perpetuate, very obviously conflict with the Jewish principle of *tikkun olam* or “repairing the world.” Judaism is less focused on achieving the best afterlife and instead is about working towards making sure the world we leave behind us is better for what we have done on this Earth. When Zionists claim that Israel is imperative for *tikkun olam*, they are essentially saying that Arabs are not the same, equal images of God that other humans are. The idea that Arabs do not deserve right to their native land, or the same rights and liberties as white Jews, directly contradicts *tikkun olam*, one of the most central ideas of Judaism.

So when Noah Lew equated Zionism to Judaism in his Facebook post (which has now been shared over 1,700 times), accusing McGill’s BDS (Boycott, Divestment, Sanctions)



group of being anti-Semitic specifically because they are anti-Zionist, I was reminded of all the times I have been told I am not “truly Jewish.” I am told that I am dirtied by being Arab, I am told my Judaism is illegitimate because I do not believe in a colonialist Jewish state, I have been told to pick my Jewish heritage over my other for it to be real. But if Judaism is about leaving our world better than when we entered it, then how can racism, occupation, and genocide be an intrinsic part of being Jewish?

Lew’s claim that BDS is discriminatory and therefore unconstitutional makes it very clear that he does not comprehend his privilege as a white Jew over Jews of color and Arab goyim alike. This was what McGill BDS was responding to, this was what BDS was combatting. If this university’s administration finds it unconstitutional to fight racism and occupation through protest as peaceful as boycotting, then this administration has very clearly taken its stance as pro-colonial-

ism. If this university allows its student and administrative leaders to justify bigotry with religion, then it cannot claim to be inclusive.

Professor Suzanne Fortier, Principal and Vice-Chancellor of the University, recently sent out an email to all students, both undergraduate and graduate, stating that the accusations of anti-Semitism are being taken very seriously. Anti-Semitism should always be taken seriously, but in the words of first year student Misha Mykitiuk, “The persistent claim that these [anti-Israel protests] are or constitute anti-Semitism diminishes and undermines the anti-Semitism that occurs every day, here and across the world.”

While it is true that there are many who use anti-Semitism as fuel in their fight for Palestine, BDS is no such perpetrator in this case. In their emails regarding this issue, they used very clear language that did not at all target Jews, but instead identified specifically the claims by the SSMU board that BDS is unconstitutional. The letter-form

and statement BDS spread to be sent to the SSMU Board of Directors never resorts to anti-Semitic stereotypes, and even goes so far as to clarify that Israelis, both in Israel and of the Diaspora, are not a homogeneity which unequivocally agrees with its government. We must always make sure to identify and shut down anti-Semitism, but it is equally important to distinguish between anti-Zionism and anti-Semitism.

It is of utmost importance that we approach this current controversy with such nuance in mind and a clear understanding of Zionism and the Arab-Israeli conflict. The occupation of Palestine is an issue which has been simplified into one of “Arab v. Jew”, when the religious and ethnic identities in Palestine and Israel are not so binary and oppositional. To resist racism and colonialism, we must resist Zionism. This means allying with groups like BDS and ensuring that such protests are not condemned in our university.

SONIA IONESCU | The McGill Daily

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Banning the veil is an exercise in futility

The farce of “security, religious neutrality, and protection of women”

MILA GHORAYEB
Commentary Writer

“I didn’t recognize you for sh*t!” my friend called back at my greeting as I biked past her the other day. My everyday commute has me covering my face while biking in this sunny, yet freezing, city: helmet, sunglasses, and a scarf covering my neck and face. I am certainly not identifiable.

Many can probably relate to this in public spaces. We all hide our faces - particularly in the winter - and that does not make a significant difference in everyday political society. No one is really concerned with not seeing peoples’ noses and mouths on the bus. Yet the niqab captures peoples’ attention—and not because people genuinely believe that seeing someone’s nose, mouth, and hair will make us safer. Rather, the fact is that the veil is racialized and symbolically represents a class of people which a majority of Quebec (and Western society) is afraid of and intolerant towards. There is no epidemic of niqabi women posing systematic danger to the everyday Quebec resident in public spaces.

Even lawmakers are not pretending this is about security this time around. While supporters of Bill 62 may exhibit some rage about security-despite the fact that most niqabi women believe that they have a responsibility to remove their veils when they need to be identified-the bill is supposedly addressing religious neutrality. I say “supposedly” because while it is

deemed secular, ministers scrambling to justify it will hop from the religious neutrality foot to the security one if it serves as a more convenient defense.

If we assume, for the sake of argument, that Quebec (whose legislators deliberate under a crucifix) is concerned with secularism, fine. I’ve been non-religious for long enough that I can personally deliberate on

What exactly is this going to do for women that are forced to veil? Will the abusive man in her life suddenly acquiesce when Quebec will not allow her to ride the bus anymore?

what best fosters a religiously neutral society. I fail to see how a niqab ban in public institutions is actually going to promote religious neutrality. First, Quebec is positioning this problem as though niqabi women are a prominent demographic—when there is an estimated 50-100 women in total who wear the niqab. I find it hard to believe that 100 women (at most) are standing in the way of a strongly secular Quebec.

Second, the bill does not stop women from wearing the niqab generally; only when enforced in use of public services. This perhaps discourages but does not eradicate the practice of wearing a niqab—it only excludes women from wearing it

in various places. It thus inconveniences niqabi women, but doesn’t really do much for the province.

Third, the bill does not target any other expressions of religion, Islamic or otherwise. Even if we assume that the target is just Islam, this bill does not target all expressions of Islam; it does not ban all forms of veiling (e.g. the hijab), or any

other accessories with Islamic symbolism. If this is at any point brought up, advocates of Bill 62 will simply hop back onto the “security” foot again—until security’s consistency is attacked, at which point they’ll then hop back to ‘religious neutrality’. Repeat the cycle *ad nauseum*.

When these arguments get tiresome, the final argument that the West loves to jump onto is that issue of non-consensual veiling. People will argue that laws like Bill 62 are necessary because ‘many’ women who wear the niqab do so under coercion. Personally, I take this concern very seriously. I do not doubt that some women are forced to veil.

But let’s get into the pragmatics again. What exactly is this bill going to do for women that are forced to veil? Will the abusive man in her life suddenly acquiesce when Quebec will not allow her to ride the bus anymore? Somehow, the man in question is abusive enough to force a woman to cover most of her face and body, and to continually divorce this woman of her will. Yet he will crumble when he realizes that she can’t go to public school or ride the bus in niqab, and so end his abuse forever.

It seems ridiculous, but this is a common narrative. The trope of the “coerced niqabi” is often contrasted with the “empowered western woman”, who paradoxically finds empowerment by publicly appealing to the male gaze. We thus define agency through that lense; a white woman’s agency is the archetype of agency itself. Arab and Muslim niqabi women who do not emulate white standards cannot be seen as agents. Instead, they are docile objects that can be saved by the power of the mighty Quebec legislature.

In sum, Bill 62 is pointless and geared at a made up problem. The three common arguments for banning veils in this case—security, religious neutrality, and protection of women—are inconsistent and sloppy. It’s clear that the motives behind this bill are dishonestly racist at worst, pointless at best. Security, religious neutrality, and the protection of women are all genuine concerns, but Quebec is taking the wrong approach if it purports to tackle them.

On Monday, November 13

the staff of

The McGill Daily

→ will elect the rest of

the 2017-18 editorial board.

deadlines:

The Daily requires all candidates to submit a one-page application that includes your qualifications and interest in running.

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the positions:

Commentary, Design + Production, Multimedia, News, Web + Social Media

Candidate statement

November

10

11:59 p.m.

Submit a one-page letter of intent to coordinating@mcgilldaily.com.

Candidate rundown

November

13

6:00 p.m.

All staffers who want to vote in the election must attend rundowns in Shatner B-24.

Elections

November

13

7:00 p.m.

Candidates will interview in front of all voters at the election in Shatner B-24.

Never not nostalgic

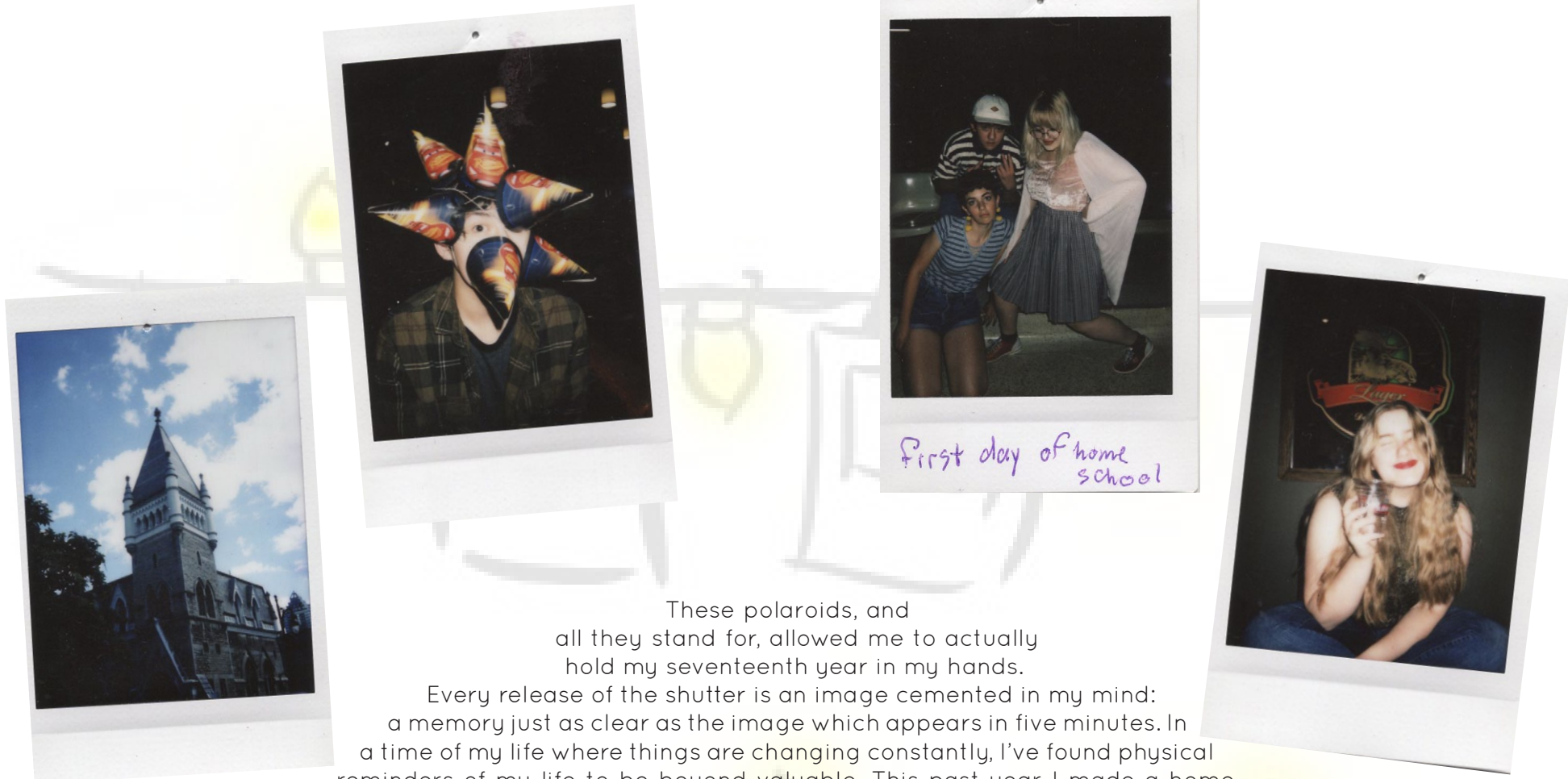
A year in the life of a dancing queen through polaroids



On Sunday, October 29, I celebrated my 18th birthday. I saw a lot of changes in my seventeenth year. Lasts and firsts coloured the tones of my days. Last days of high school, first time leaving home, last summer to be a 'kid,' and the first year I found myself in the company of truly extraordinary people whom I had the pleasure of calling my friends. For most of my life, I haven't really had friends. I don't say this to elicit pity or sympathy; I say it to state a fact, and to emphasize how meaningful the friends I have found are to me.

I have always been someone with a desire to document, yet I lacked things to document outside of my own teenage angst. With friends, I felt compelled to snap shots of them any time and all the time. As a result, I now have a rather storied collection of polaroid pictures from the last year. Photos in and of themselves are deeply nostalgic in how they capture and rehash memories. But polaroids capture a very particular kind of nostalgia — the medium in itself is nostalgic, evoking a sense of living in a time before digital photographs, the Internet, cell phones, all the complexities of the digital age. Working with Polaroid film limited the number of memories I could capture — there are only ten shots in a cartridge — giving each moment I did choose to photograph a certain kind of weight, a significance, a meaning exclusive to film photographs. Film pictures function as memories beautifully materialized, a moment of time given shape and colour and physical form.





These polaroids, and all they stand for, allowed me to actually hold my seventeenth year in my hands.

Every release of the shutter is an image cemented in my mind: a memory just as clear as the image which appears in five minutes. In a time of my life where things are changing constantly, I've found physical reminders of my life to be beyond valuable. This past year I made a home through my friends, and by coming to Montreal I had to pack up and leave it. So this collection, a sort of teenage graveyard, represents a year of simultaneously living in the moment and moving forward. Some of these pictures are from my first two months in Montreal, but the majority of them are from birthday parties, general hangouts, and casual glitter-faced excursions with my friends back in my hometown. In review, I loved being the dancing queen (young and sweet, only seventeeeeeen). My eighteenth birthday marked the end of this phase of my life, and I was surprised by how much that hurt. I've always been told how "adult" I am, but I wasn't quite prepared to equate myself with the term's legal equivalent. Putting these photos together, and subsequently being swept away by the tide of nostalgia, represented a small form of letting go for me. I got to look back on the year I had in the company of my wonderful friends, and revel in the times we shared, while simultaneously preparing for the next few years without their constant companionship. In Montreal, I have started to make some solid connections and grow roots. I am genuinely excited about the connections I am making here. But at the same time, I fucking miss my friends. Consider this collection of polaroids a love letter for the people who made my seventeenth year worth capturing on film. I will always be a dancing queen in my memories, my dreams, and ultimately these photos. I love the friends I spent this past year with deeply and intensely, and want to sincerely thank them for the treasured memories to guide me into my ~future~.





Uniting autism researchers in Quebec

A new consortium brings Quebec autism researchers together

TAI (RITCHIE) VINH TRUONG
Sc+Tech Writer

Autism spectrum disorder (ASD) denotes a group of developmental conditions that includes a wide range of atypical development in communication, sociability, and repetitive behaviors. ASD not only affects lives of children, but often has a negative impact on the mental well-being of parents.

Scientists have discovered inherited genetic mutations that are accountable for the development of autism. However, there is still no medication for treating ASD. A majority of the efforts have aimed to alleviate the symptoms and to help patients cope better with daily life. Experienced by 1 in 68 children, ASD has become the fastest growing and most commonly diagnosed developmental condition in Canada. This alarming fact presents a major challenge to scientists and clinicians alike. In response, pioneers in the ASD field have created the Transforming Autism Care Consortium (TACC).

The inauguration of TACC on Oct 23rd, 2017, helped to promote autism care in Quebec and advance autism research in general. The TACC network involves 44 member researchers from seven universities and five university hospital centers, and 227 member trainees from the community and overseas.

There seems to be a lack of communication amongst researchers, clinicians, and families in the process of seeking better care for autistic individuals.

There seems to be a lack of communication amongst researchers, clinicians, and families in the process of seeking better care for autistic individuals. A researcher's work on animal models might not apply to humans. Clinicians are unaware of novel treatments that ameliorate or reverse symptoms in animals. Behavioral treatments that yield positive outcomes in affected families are not effectively communicated to the other two groups. The lack of integration amongst the three main players leaves an enormous amount of available information squandered. Hence, the main purpose of TACC is to act as

a communication hub for scientists and patients. Ultimately, TACC works toward bringing findings from basic research to clinical trials and from there to hospitals and families, and back.

The clinical scientists

The two-day conference has seen the participation of leaders in autism research not only from Canada, but also the United Kingdom, the United States, and France. Dr. Andrew Pickles, Director of King's Clinical Unit at King's College London, shared his approach to autism care with the Preschool Autism Communication Therapy. The program trains parents to better anticipate and cope with autistic children's behaviors. Dr. David H. Skuse from University College London presented the cost-effective and accurate Developmental and Well Being Assessment (DAWBA) to generate clinically relevant diagnoses.

The geneticists

Simultaneously, geneticists are working industriously to identify the root causes of neurodevelopmental conditions. For autism, the origin lies within the DNA. Dr. Stephen Scherer of University of Toronto emphasized the importance of genome-wide association studies to develop an ASD gene list, which is crucial for precision medicine. He noted that ASD individuals need to be categorized into groups based on their genetic mutations, thus allowing for customized clinical care. This idea was a recurrent theme of TACC and was also advocated by Dr. Thomas Bourgeron from Institut Pasteur.

The basic researchers

The setbacks of most scientific conferences is that they involve either a majority of basic or clinical research. Basic research focuses on developing scientific theories, whereas clinical research focuses on applying these theories to practically solve problems. This creates an understanding gap that translational science needs to fill before developments can benefit patients. TACC recognizes this problem, and thus invited Dr. Nahum Sonenberg, a notable basic research scientist from McGill University, to be on its board of directors. At the conference, Dr. Sonenberg presented his recent finding: using metformin to reverse symptoms in mice that have Fragile X Syndrome, a genetic disease often co-diagnosed with autism. The talk gave clinicians more insights into how basic research is performed. Researchers and clinicians discussed the usefulness, the choice, and

the translatability of animal models. They emphasized the importance of model organisms that harbour human mutations. This form of communication will undoubtedly facilitate the quality of basic research, which, in turn, will advance clinical research, and ultimately, healthcare.

Ultimately, TACC works toward bringing findings from basic research to clinical trials and from there to hospitals and families, and back.

The pioneers

When the word "pioneers" is mentioned in science, it often implies researchers and clinicians who have worked diligently to produce breakthroughs in a certain subject or disease. However, many people forget that new treatments also require tremendous courage from families and patients, who were the pioneers to participate in novel clinical trials.

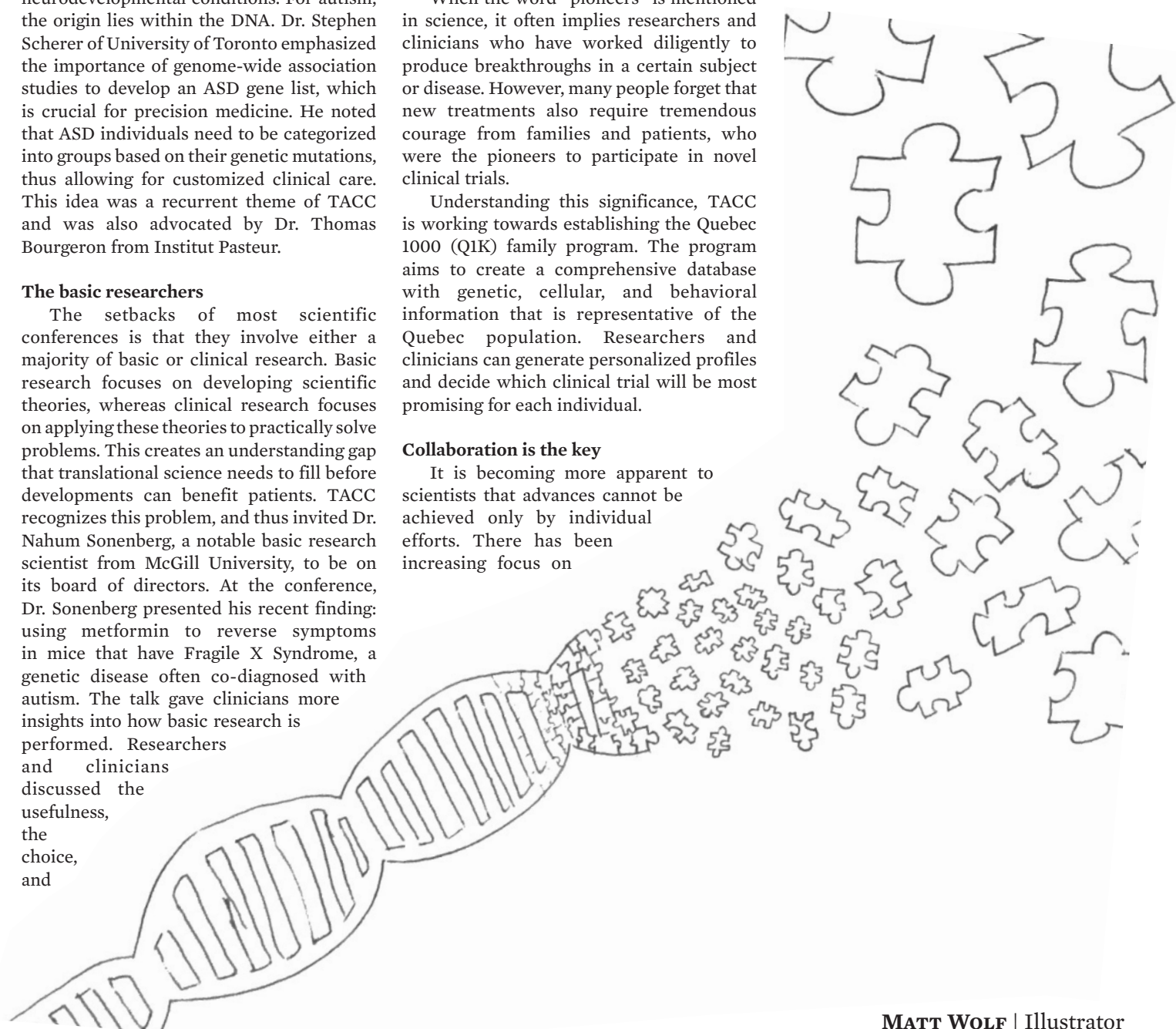
Understanding this significance, TACC is working towards establishing the Quebec 1000 (Q1K) family program. The program aims to create a comprehensive database with genetic, cellular, and behavioral information that is representative of the Quebec population. Researchers and clinicians can generate personalized profiles and decide which clinical trial will be most promising for each individual.

Collaboration is the key

It is becoming more apparent to scientists that advances cannot be achieved only by individual efforts. There has been increasing focus on

multidisciplinary research and emphasis on collaboration. This idea was not missed during the TACC conference. Leaders in the field shared and allowed public access to databases such as MSSNG, Imagine ID, and mousetube. The conference also featured a networking activity, allowing young trainees to interact with each other and principal investigators from other universities within Quebec. This opportunity could potentially lead to new and exciting collaborations which might further autism research.

Bren Neale, a professor of University of Leeds, once said: "Simply put, let the data be free." And when the data is free, there will be people who will make good use of it. I agree with Dr. Laurent Mottron, one of the consortium's scientific directors, who stated that "the future of the autism field looks much brighter with the creation of TACC." I am hopeful for the future of autism research and I look forward to attending future TACC conferences as we move forward in solving neurodevelopmental puzzles such as ASD.



Shedding light on controlling neurons

A new proton pump discovery in the field of optogenetics

NAZ SUTCUOGLU
Sci+Tech Writer

Research in optogenetics is not often mentioned in everyday conversation, but perhaps it should be. Optogenetics is a very new and fast-growing area of research in the field of neuroscience which focusses on the functions of certain cells in the brain. In 2010, this area of research was named the “Method of the Year” by the Nature Methods scientific journal. Optogenetics is different from other areas of research because it uses light to control the neurons of interest in order to identify their functions. Recently, scientists have found a new proton ‘starter’ that can be used to control muscles as well as neurons when using optogenetics. This finding has the potential to change lives in the near future, as well as to enrich our understanding of the body in unimaginable ways.

How optogenetics works is quite unique. First, the desired neurons for research are genetically modified to express a light sensitive protein, opsin, which can take the form of an ion channel, for example. Optogenetics works with Channel-rhodopsins (ChRs), which are light-gated ion channels. Light-gated ion channels like ChRs are activated only when struck by a specific frequency of light. When the correct frequency is used to illuminate these neurons, it leads to an ion channel opening. When these chan-

as an action potential. The ability to control specific neurons by manipulating their activation and deactivation using light has led scientists to better understand mood disorders, addiction, and even Parkinson’s disease. The key to understanding why and how such disorders and diseases occur: to first find the path in which it takes place, and then what exactly goes wrong in that path.

The ability to control specific neurons by manipulating their activation and deactivation using light has allowed scientists to better understand mood disorders, addiction, and even Parkinson’s disease.

The proton ‘starter’ that was recently discovered is known as nanohalosarchaeon Nanosalina (NsXeR), and it belongs to the class of proteins called xenorhodopsins. Xenorhodopsins functions have been better understood because of this discovery.

NsXeR is a powerful pump which has been shown to induce action potentials in hippocampal neuronal cells to the perfect frequency which opens those frequency gated channels in rat brains. They have been characterized as inward opening pumps that are an alternative to the ChRs that have been used in research until now. NsXeR is very selective and only pumps protons into the cell, regardless of the cells concentration. Due to its



NISHAT PROVA | Illustrator

Recently, scientists have found a new proton ‘starter’ that can be used to control muscles as well as neurons.

nels are open, it allows the passage of positively-charged ions, which causes depolarisation, also known

selectivity and unique features, it is considered to be much more advantageous than ChRs. For instance, NsXeRs selectivity makes it safer to use during research, because unlike ChRs, only one specific positive ion is being transported, lowering the risk of possible cellular side effects during research trials.

Optogenetic techniques have only been used in one human clinical trial in 2016. A blind Texan woman underwent the first clinical trial using optogenetic techniques. This has been the only human trial done so far because the methods are quite invasive.

First, the brain needs to be genetically altered, and then a light delivering device must be implanted into the brain. However, research in the field is rapid, and hopes of continuing human clinical trials are high. The discovery of NsXeR brings researchers closer to the possibility, which in turn brings them closer to advancements in treatments for various diseases and disorders researched in the field of neuroscience. This field of research may be the key we need to unlock treatments for millions of people around the world.

The paper on the finding of

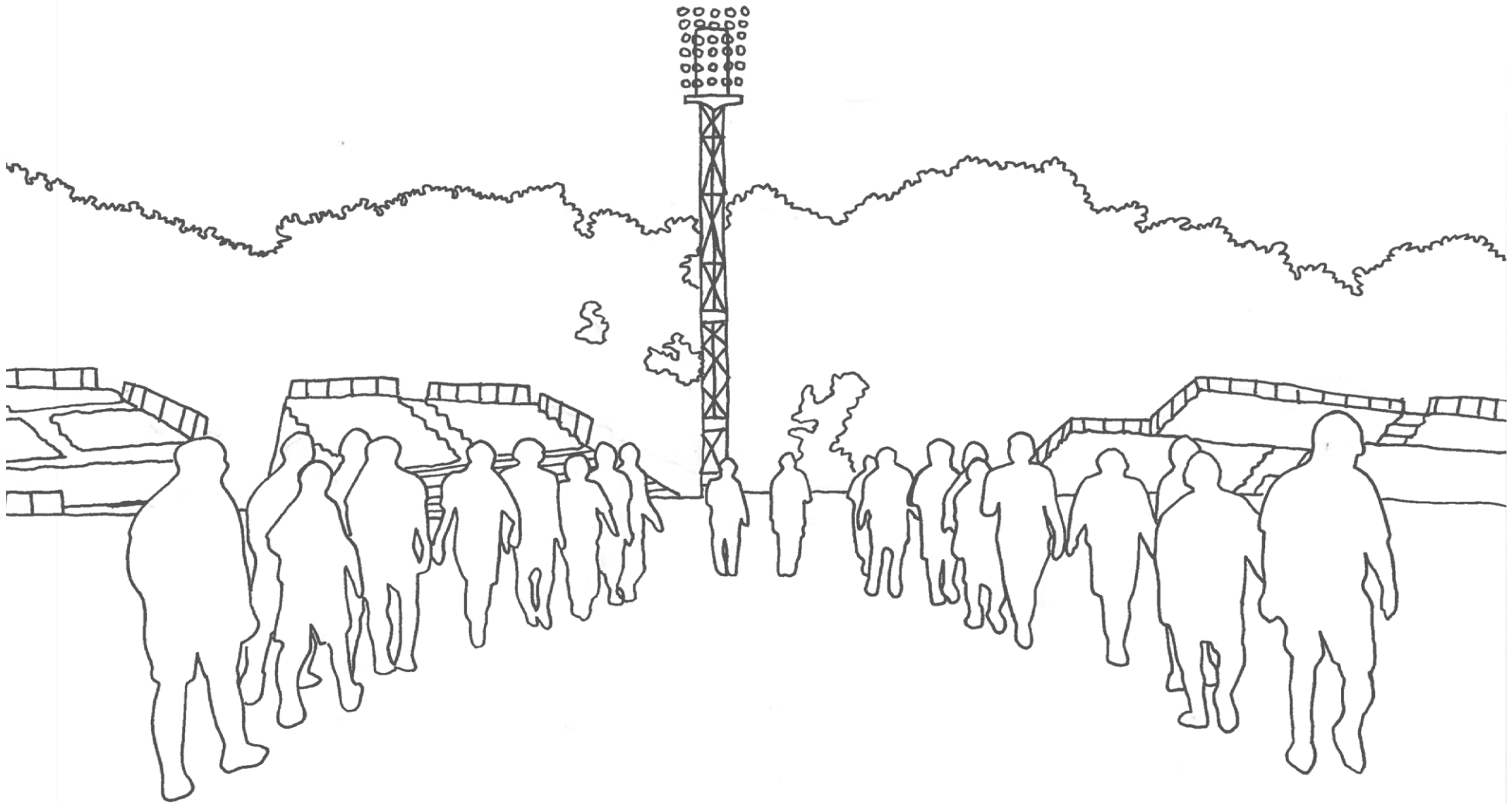
the NsXeR protein was published in Science Advances by an international team of researchers from Moscow Institute of Physics and Technology, Forschungszentrum Jülich, and Institut de Biologie Structurale. Vitaly Shevchenko, the lead author of the paper and a staff member at the MIPT Laboratory for Advanced Studies of Membrane Proteins stated, “So far we have all the necessary data on how the protein functions. This will become the basis of our further research aimed at optimizing and adjusting the protein parameters to the needs of optogenetics.”

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A shameful World Cup

Questioning Qatar's influence on the beautiful sport



Bribery, labour deaths, and questionable finances cast a shadow over Qatar 2022.

Laura Brennan | The McGill Daily

DORIAN DESBLANCS
Sports Writer

“I am available if the Swiss federal prosecutors want to see me again. I arrived calm and remain calm as I leave.” These were the words uttered by soccer team Paris-Saint-Germain’s (PSG) president and Qatar Sports Investment chairman Nasser Al-Khelaifi on the way out of his hearing in Berne, Switzerland on Wednesday October 25. This seven-hour hearing was the consequence of recent bribery allegations involving himself and the Qatari-owned beIN Media group, a prominent sports broadcaster of which he is the chairman and CEO. Al-Khelaifi is suspected to have criminally bribed former Fédération Internationale de Football Association (FIFA) secretary general Jérôme Valcke in order to buy the TV rights for the 2026 and 2030 soccer World Cups.

This recent scandal served as a reminder of the unsettling truths surrounding Qatar’s involvement in soccer over the past few years. Since FIFA’s highly contested decision to elect Qatar as the host country for the 2022 World Cup, Qatar has been involved in numerous controversies surrounding the organization of the event.

The country is expected to spend more than \$220 billion in order to host the World Cup. It

is also expected to recruit more than 500,000 foreign workers to aid with the construction of stadiums and other facilities. This comprises nearly twenty per cent of its total population. Qatar’s treatment of its workers, however, remains a source of major criticism.

In 2016, Amnesty International dubbed the 2022 event the “Qatar World Cup of Shame” due to the country’s mistreatment of its 1.4 million migrant workers. Between 2011 and 2013, the death toll of workers building Qatari world cup infrastructure surpassed 1,800. It is predicted that more than 4,000 migrant workers will die for Qatar’s World Cup. In comparison, only two workers died during the preparation of the 2010 World Cup in South Africa. These poor conditions are in part due to the legacy of Qatar’s kafala system, or sponsorship system, which requires migrant workers to have a sponsor within the country in order to work. These “sponsors” essentially own the worker, and decide when the worker can work, leave, or earn money. Although Qatar reformed its labour laws in 2016, working conditions still remain unbearable and in line with the former kafala system.

The majority of migrants coming to the country are in pursuit of higher wages and better living conditions. It is estimated that 60 per cent of Qatar’s migrants are

Indian and Nepalese. Other prominent countries of origin include Pakistan and Bangladesh. Most workers are recruited by agents in their home countries. They are promised higher wages and a better life for themselves and their families. Recruitment fees range from \$500USD to \$4,300, while salaries are on average only \$200 per month. Since 2010, there have been countless testimonies of workers detailing the conditions they face in Qatar.

Many have talked about their salaries being halved, or even withheld completely for several months. Most often, this is a problem with recruitment agents, as migrants cannot pay off the debt they face due to the high recruitment fees. Working conditions are also appalling, and generally not in accordance with even Qatari labour laws. Typically, migrants are forced to work more than fifteen hours a day in the sweltering heat, and are not allowed to leave the camp premises. When complaints arise, managers are known to confiscate the passports and ID cards which allow migrants to work in Qatar. Without them, workers are at risk of being imprisoned or sent back to their country with nothing. Managers are also known to extend contracts without the consent of workers, virtually binding them for up to five more years.

Although labour laws have been updated this past summer to fix some of these problems, the Qatari government still hasn’t created a system to hold managers accountable for any violations that may occur. These new laws also still don’t conform with the International Labour Organization’s Domestic Workers Convention, the international treaty on domestic workers’ rights.

Also concerning is the fact that Qatari officials have been linked to a string of corruption scandals involving highly ranked members of FIFA’s executive committee. In December 2012, Mohamed bin Hammam, previously the president of the Asian Football Confederation, was banned from football-related activities for life. He was found guilty of “repeated violations” of the FIFA ethics code while serving the FIFA executive committee between 2008 and 2011. A 2014 report by the Sunday Times found that, amongst other violations, there was evidence that he had made payments worth more than \$5 million to FIFA executive members voting in the 2010 ballot which elected Qatar as host for the 2022 World Cup. Ten days before the controversial ballot, soon-to-be PSG owner and close friend of Khelaifi Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani was seen at the

Elysée Palace with Michel Platini, one of the executives voting, and Nicholas Sarkozy, the French president at the time and long-standing Paris-Saint-Germain fan. Shortly after, Paris Saint-Germain (PSG) was purchased by Qatar Sports Investments, and the beIN Media group started making significant investments to broadcast some of the most prominent leagues around Europe such as the Spanish La Liga, the German Bundesliga, and the French Ligue 1.

The corruption scandals involving the World Cup have already had numerous repercussions on the FIFA executive committee that gave Qatar the World Cup in 2010. More than half have been punished or accused of corruption, while its two most prominent figures (Sepp Blatter and Michel Platini) have been banned from all football-related activities for six years. It remains to be seen if the 2022 World Cup will be the source of more scandals, but Al-Khelaifi’s recent trip to Switzerland proved that the controversy surrounding Qatari involvement in soccer, a sport the whole world cherishes, might not end just yet. PSG’s recent signings of Neymar Jr. and Kylian Mbappé for more than \$400 million over two years hint that the real battles may move away from the field and towards the question of financial fair play.

Football's scoundrels

Confederation of Independent Football Associations: "the rebel world cup"

SEAN SOKOLOV
Sports Writer

Dubbed "the rebel world cup" by the Guardian, the Confederation of Independent Football Associations (CONIFA) provides an alternative to FIFA for unrecognized nations, stateless peoples, ethnic minorities, and isolated territories. The organization is based out of Luleå, Sweden, the same country in which the first CONIFA World Cup took place in 2014. It was held in the northern city of Östersund by the traditionally nomadic Sami people of Lapland. Now, more than forty peoples are members of CONIFA, from the Republic of Artsakh in the Nagorno-Karabakh region of Azerbaijan, to Kurds across the Middle East, to our very familiar Quebec. Hosting both European and World Cups, CONIFA brings global sporting events to areas that would otherwise never be able to participate in the international community's athletic competitions, let alone see validating international attention. The 2018 edition will be played in London, England from May 31-June 9, and will feature teams like Western Armenia, Abkhazia, Tibet, and Barawa.

As a result of the high percentage of displaced peoples who are members of CONIFA, it is sometimes impossible to host a global sporting event in the regions represented. This

is the case with the 2018 CONIFA World Cup, with Barawa Football Association representing the Somali diaspora while hosting the event in London. Despite the obvious difficulties for a people abroad from their homeland, it is advantageous both to CONIFA and the hosting groups to have their sporting events in large international cities, London being both the largest and most cosmopolitan location of a CONIFA tournament yet. Drawing attention to the sports of underrepresented and unrecognized peoples is one of the few paths to international

validation that is available to these groups, and hosting the event in London will bring a larger audience than ever to the tournament. Only nine countries recognized Abkhazia as a state and about half of those are themselves unrecognized. It is widely considered to be an illegitimate state, and one with a very bloody history at that. The U.S. state department describes the country as a "Russian occupied" region of Georgia. In 2008, Georgia fought a disastrous war in the region, attempting to forcibly re-integrate the breakaway republics of Abkhazia and South Ossetia (another CO-

NIFA member). South Ossetia has also conducted ethnic cleansing against Georgians and has displaced more than a hundred thousand people. Still, Abkhazia remains the most successful member of CONIFA and favourite for the 2018 tournament. CONIFA's vision claims to support international understanding and global relations through the joy of playing football. It is important, however, to recognize that while self-determination is a right for many of the minority groups and regions that CONIFA represents, many of these groups have problematic histories of their own. Sport is never, as CONIFA hopes, simple.

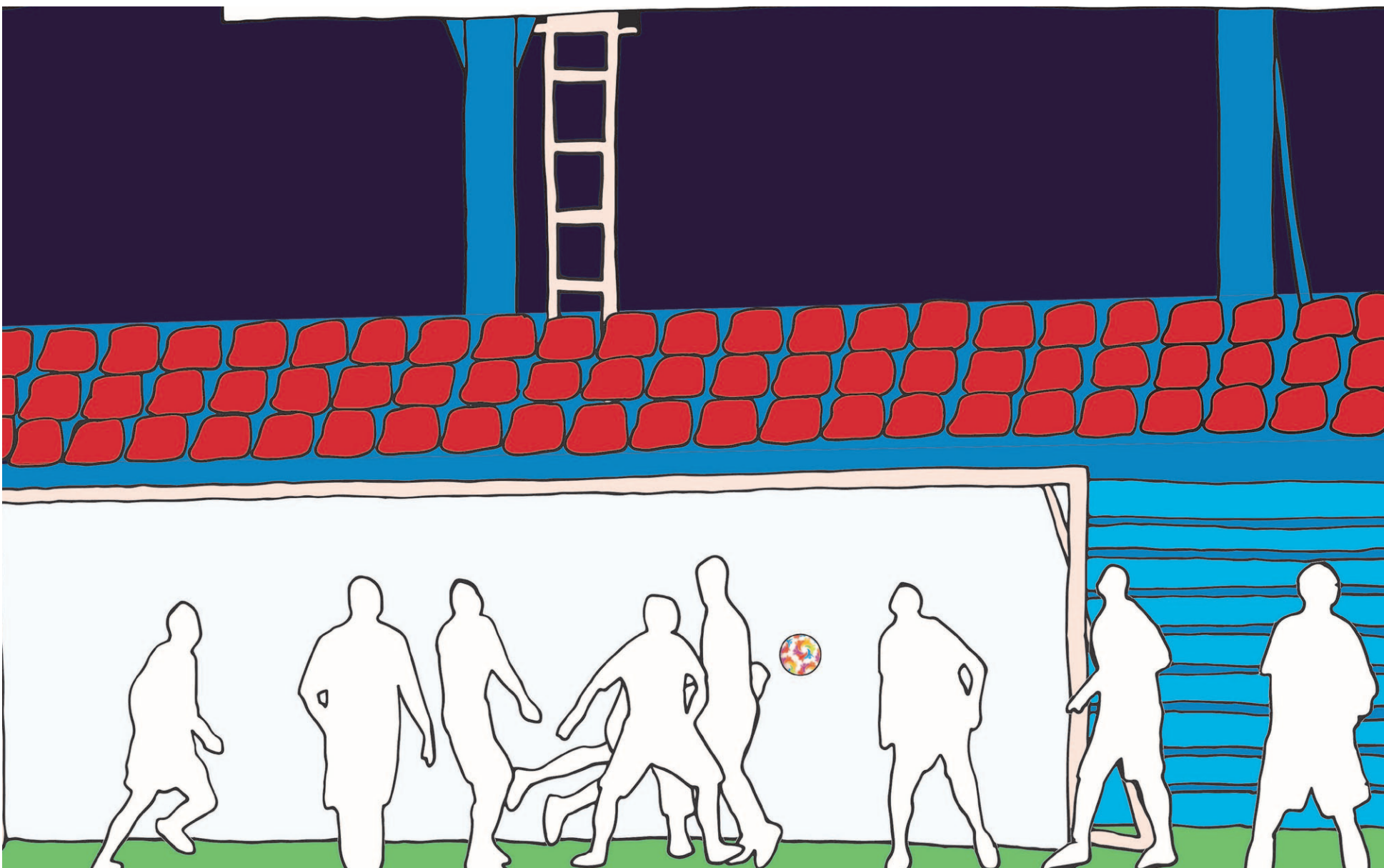
The rebel world cup is a mixed bag in other ways too: it includes, for example, Cascadia, a supposed cultural union of British Columbia, Washington state, and Oregon — more an elaborate joke than an unrecognized people. Other teams, such as that of Iraqi Kurdistan, enjoy fairly broad international support and seem well on their path to independence. Some teams also represent populations separated from their homeland, such as the United Koreans of Japan.

Perhaps CONIFA's greatest value is in its alternative position to the Fédération Internationale de Football Association (FIFA), a deeply corrupt and problematic organisation. CONIFA, while problematic itself, allows football fans to imagine a world without FIFA, where the sport has a mostly positive political effect on marginalized groups.

CONIFA brings global sporting events to areas that would otherwise never be able to participate in the international community's athletic competitions, let alone see validating international attention.

validation that is available to these groups, and hosting the event in London will bring a larger audience than ever to the tournament.

It is in the very nature of CONIFA to attract controversy. In providing an opportunity for unrecognized groups to participate in the international community, it also validates those that have extremely difficult and sometimes problematic histories. CONIFA's 2016 World Cup was hosted in Abkhazia, a break-



The 2018 CONIFA World Cup will be held in London.

Diasporas meeting through cinema

Reporting from the 7th Annual South Asian Film Festival

ARVAA BALSARA
Culture Writer

For the seventh year in a row, the Kabir Culture Centre is hosting the South Asian Film Festival (SAFF), which will run on two separate weekends, October 27-29 and November 5-7. This year, SAFF is partnering once more with the Mel Hoppenheim School of Cinema at Concordia University to bring some of the most unique films to the big screen. Broadly speaking, the films explore the importance of cinema in the twenty-first century, and specifically how cinema relates to South Asia and its diasporic communities around the world.

This year's festival includes a wide variety of pieces, ranging from shorts to feature length films, including both fiction and non-fiction. Focusing on South Asian stories and art, the festival provides an opportunity to engage with perspectives from a community underrepresented in Western culture.

In addition to the many films being screened over the two weekends of the festival, there has been panel discussions with professors and filmmakers including Rock Demers, Ali Kazimi, and Padmakumar Narasimhamurthy, which have provided additional insights into these stories.

Manto

The festival opened with the screening of a scene from an upcoming Hindi language film written and directed by Nandita Das, *Manto*. The film chronicles the life of Saadat Hasan Manto, an Indo-Pakistani author, journalist, and essayist, with Nawazuddin Siddiqui playing the titular role. The scene presented was initially released as a short film, *In Defense of Freedom*, and is truly spectacular — even as a standalone piece. Set in a classroom, Manto gives a lecture on the importance of free speech in a democracy. In a white kurta and black rimmed glasses, pacing across the classroom, Siddiqui delivers a powerful message on the importance of critiquing society despite the backlash one might face. The scene perfectly summarizes Manto's beliefs on the importance of literature and freedom of expression, which are recurring themes in his works.

Manto wrote in time periods immediately before and after the partition of India and Pakistan, addressing ethnic and religious tensions between and within the two countries. Those issues continue to be relevant, not just in India and Pakistan but all around the world. Das' biopic is particularly poignant today, when our right to expression is infringed upon by various social institutions.

Cinema Travellers

The highlight of opening night was the screening of Shirley Abraham and Amit Madheshiya's astonishing documentary, *Cinema Travellers*. The film explores the legacy of India's tent travelling cinemas, which have delivered movies to rural communities for the better part of seven decades. It also highlights the slow obsolescence of the projector and film reels by following two caravan cinemas that roam around Maharashtra in rust-covered trucks, struggling to keep



FREDERIQUE BLANCHARD | Illustrator

their operations running in the face of the slow but steady proliferation of technologies that threaten to replace them.

[*Cinema Travellers*] explores the legacy of India's tent travelling cinemas, which have delivered movies to rural communities for the better part of seven decades.

Over the the film's ninety-minute duration we meet Mohammad and Bapu, the leaders of the two travelling tent cinemas, and a beguiling projector repairman in his seventies, Prakash. The three of them are inspired to engage in cinema this way after experiencing the magic of movies in their childhood.

Cinema Travellers begins in the heart of a Maharashtra town during a religious festival. The colour and the noise of the scene are overwhelming, but the hustle and bustle of the town fades as the camera reaches the entrance of the cinema tent, where a sign promises to show you "movies that touch your soul." The power of cinema is explored through the reactions of the cine-goers in the tent as the film is filled with Madheshiya's photos of the audience. There are pictures of children with wide smiles watching blockbuster films on the big screen, as well as elderly folks enjoying their heyday favourites. Even among the many emotionally evocative moments throughout the films, Madheshiya's photography stands out.

The film contains a handful of bittersweet

moments as the old crumbling projectors are finally replaced with modern equipment. Ironically, the film is shot in digital format and is projected in the same way, attesting that we can simultaneously appreciate the past and pave a way for the future.

The film evokes a sense of hopefulness and was well-received by everyone, but where are the women? Throughout the film we follow the lives of the men who participate in the travelling cinema. But aside from a few women patrons at the beginning of the film it would seem as though women simply are not a part of this cinematic tradition — which seems highly unlikely. There are certainly women-only cinematic associations in India like the Women in Cinema Collective, but they are not represented in the film at all.

Through black and white, Narasimhamurthy wants to convey the ways in which Hari is unaware of the abstract differences that have been drawn between communities.

Nonetheless, *Cinema Travellers* is an ode to the enduring power of cinema. More than 120 years after its birth, cinema retains its power to amaze its spectators. Abraham and Madheshiya pay tribute to the magicians that keep the magic of cinema alive even in the most remote parts of the country. It's a tribute to India's cinematic caravan tradition

and the disappearing art of 35mm projection. More generally, it's a portrait of a past being replaced by a supposedly brighter future, and suggests that not everyone is equipped to face such change.

A Billion Colour Story

Amongst the many films screened thus far, one that stands out is Padmakumar Narasimhamurthy's directorial debut, *A Billion Colour Story*. Tracing the life of 11-year old Hari Aziz in Mumbai, Narasimhamurthy explores the Hindu-Muslim tensions in present-day India.

Hari learns of the social realities that plague his country and challenge his family's existence. Driven from their house due to financial hardships, Hari's parents — a Hindu woman and a Muslim man, neither one particularly observant of religion — both suffer religious intolerance from both communities. The family bounces from one apartment complex to another, each time confronted by their landlords about their religious beliefs.

Through black and white, Narasimhamurthy wants to convey the ways in which Hari is unaware of the abstract differences that have been drawn between communities. In a question answer period after the film, Narasimhamurthy explains that "it is a film about colour, and I wanted it be in black and white so that people could imagine the colour." During a particularly poignant scene in the film, Hari's maternal grandmother asks him to change his kurta because he's wearing "a very Muslim colour." The point then, to Narasimhamurthy, is to face the ways we see and experience the world and challenge the prejudices that shape our worldview.

Despite the overall hopefulness of the film, at times the dialogue is excessively dramatic, making one squirm in their seat from second-hand embarrassment for the actors. Furthermore, the film certainly required another round of editing, as there are unnecessarily long montages that don't actually contribute to the progression of the film, nor do they provide insight into the character's states of mind.

However, for a first film and a tight budget, Narasimhamurthy does a great job of drawing our attention to the senseless divisions between peoples. Although the film depicts the relations between Hindus and Muslims in India, his message remains relevant for societies all over the world.

Conclusion

A wide variety of thought-provoking and heartwarming films brought together the experiences of South Asian people from all over the globe. Although there has been a focus on Hindi language films, the SAFF organizers included films that represented Bengali, Nepali, Marathi, Tamil and Urdu languages as well. However, widely spoken languages such as Telegu, Punjabi and Gujarati were left out entirely.

Nonetheless, the festival provided an opportunity to explore perspectives that generally tend to be excluded from popular discourse.

Shedding light on the horrors of racism

Thoughts after the DPS screening of Jordan Peele's *Get Out*



EMILY CARROLL | Illustrator

GINIKA UME-ONYIDO
Culture Writer

Content warning: white supremacy, racism, horror

This article contains spoilers.

On October 26, I found myself watching Jordan Peele's acclaimed movie *Get Out* in the DPS office. *Get Out* explores racism and the overall position of Black people in America – in its full horror. The director presents social issues in the American context, but the same systems of oppression extend to all corners of the map.

The film focuses on Chris, a young African-American who goes on a weekend getaway with Rose, his white girlfriend, to ultimately meet her parents. The strange behavior of the parents increasingly becomes more nerve-racking as the weekend progresses. The weekend quickly turns from a simple getaway to a nightmare depicted in a classic horror movie fashion.

The first recurring symbol in the film, and when I knew this movie would have me on the edge of my seat, was when the young couple hit a deer on the way to Rose's parent's home. After it was hit, Chris goes on to check the deer's pulse. Upon touching it, a sort of emotional transfer occurs. This transfer develops throughout the film as Chris encounters repeated references to deer. For instance, the very first exchange between Chris and Rose's father includes him wishing that he could kill all deer, calling to mind for the audience similar white supremacist feelings towards people of color.

The movie touches on the internalization of white supremacy happening in America, by metaphorically representing white supremacy as a process of brainwashing and assimilating racialized bodies. The movie ties its story to America through colors – indeed, the American flag is repeatedly evoked by the prevalence of blue, white and red elements. This reminded me of the history of slav-

ery, colonialism, racism and exclusion in which the North American continent takes its roots.

In a second part of the movie, we are introduced to the sunken place. In a pivotal scene there, Rose's mother forces Chris to blend

I see the sunken place as present day America. It's a feeling. It's a place where myself, as a young Black woman with American citizenship, am taken to whenever I leave my home.

into the darkness of the place after hypnotizing him. I see the sunken place as present day America. It's a feeling. It's where some people are born into. It's a place where myself, as a young Black woman with American citizenship, am taken to whenever I leave my home. In the film, the sunken place is a place that light does not touch. The sunken place represents the loneliness

white supremacy seeks to enforce on people of color, trying to weaken communities and resistance. Jordan Peele achieves his goal of showing a "suspended animation of how we look a race in America" through his bold imagery and resonant mu-

ter, one would expect to feel a sense of safety when hearing sirens from a cop car. However, after Peele took the audience through the micro-aggressions, and unsettling feeling that occurs with self-awareness about one's own ethnicity, the audience does not feel the usual safety associated with police, but rather, disappointment and fear for Chris' life. In fact, the sirens evoke the images of police officers killing Black people point-blank, images that audience sees regularly.

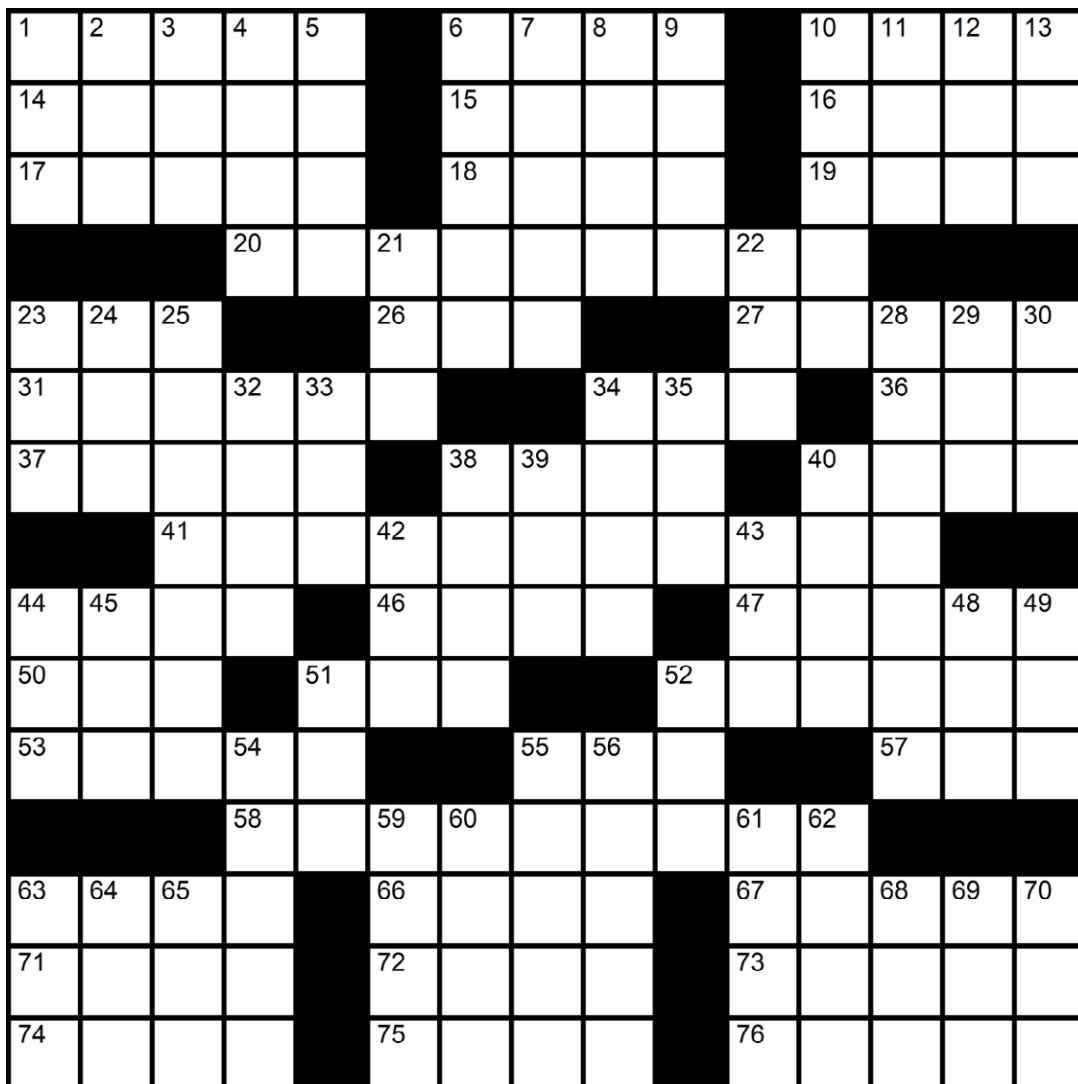
Jordan Peele's use of horror is a successful critic of it. Horror movies have had a tendency to look for fictional futures or monsters, as if the present is not horrific. In telling his story within the horror genre, Peele sheds light on the horrors of racism in a new way to the usual horror film goer. Because the film talks about topics of slavery and white ownership of Black bodies through an ingenious subversion of the horror genre, it truly deserves a 100% rating. This is why I watched this film four times.

Lies, half-truths, and thanks for all the samosas!

Crossword

JAY VAN PUT
Official Crossword Wizard

“Caution: Watch for Birds!”



ACROSS

1. Kingdom
6. Creator of Genesis
10. Zodiac killer, Ted
14. Come to terms
15. Russia's ___ Mountains
16. Water tube
17. They write rhyming literature
18. Organize
19. Kind of tea
20. Veggie mixing vessel
23. Chart
26. -eip
27. 'The Tell-Tale Heart' Author Poe
31. Assigns fault
34. Amazement
36. Baseball stat
37. Put on television
38. Paddles
40. Shocked reaction
41. Symbols of the British Monarchy
44. Soreness
46. "What a shame!"
47. Hadron ___ Collider
50. Saint Catherine is one
51. Small ___
52. Merciless
53. Chest material
55. Barry B. Benson's species
57. ___-eyed
58. High quality Pizza cookers
63. Diva's solo
66. NBA player, Dwyane
67. Playful aquatic animal
71. Calf-length skirt
72. Genesis garden
73. Mythology for the Vikings
74. Announce online
75. Back talk
76. Long stories

DOWN

1. Eminems music genre
2. Self center
3. "___ we there yet?"
4. Allows

5. Elevated land with a flat top
6. Black-Eyed ___
7. Lose ground
8. Dress
9. Voice above tenor
10. Little one
11. Mythological eagle
12. Utilize
13. Z in british english
21. ___ Alamos, N.M.
22. Minute
23. Degree after B.Comm
24. Rope-a-dope boxer
25. Thirsty
28. Took a hold of
29. Stomach muscles, for short
30. Shred
32. Mother in Quebec
33. Tokyo, formerly
34. God of war
35. Direction opposite ENE
38. Sole
39. 1977 double-platinum Steely Dan album
40. Stick together
42. "This means ___!"
43. "C'___ la vie!"
44. ___ welder
45. Signal to an actor
48. 'Mr. Blue Sky' Band
49. Type of alcohol or bread
51. To and ___
52. Observe
54. Anticipate
55. Indicates
56. Opposite of odds
59. Has debts
60. 20th century art movement against reason
61. All's opposite
62. Words on a road sign
63. Electric guitar hookup
64. ___ Grande
65. Driver's lic. and others
68. Prefix: three
69. Upper-left button on a keyboard
70. Hi-___ graphics

Montreal to set up slow lane for pedestrians and cyclists

XIAOXIAO (ALICE) LIU

The City of Montreal may have found an ingenious solution to ease the frequent annoyance for fast walkers and bikers. Yesterday at 9:23pm, after some careful debate, the city council launched a project which would separate lazy dawdlers from inconveniencing those who have a destination. Controversy has been flying around since the announcement.

"I feel personally discriminated against," one Mr Ambleur voiced his discontent, "Folks in a rush should know that it's their own fault that they're late. I just want to block the whole sidewalk while window shopping with my wife. We enjoy the leisurely pace, you know? It shouldn't make us worse than those who can't even arrive work on time without bumping into a dozen innocent people! And now they won't even need to apologize!"

In addition to the new installment on the sidewalks, the city also expressed desires to restructure its bike lanes so that "those who are less comfortable with speed would no longer be deterred by average cyclists."

When the Daily reached out to a professional-looking cyclist at the intersection between Mackay and Maisonneuve, he answered, in French, "Catch me if you really want to know," before speeding across the road. A car coming down rue Mackay was forced to slam on the brakes to avoid the collision.

It is also rumoured that the mayor of the city was spotted striding down Rene-Levesque, humming L'enfer C'est Les Autres by HMHB early this morning. The city council declined to comment.